



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF ASHURST WOOD VILLAGE COUNCIL held on
Tuesday 7th February 2023, 7.00 pm at the Council's Meeting Room

PRESENT: Cllrs Forbes (Chair), Draper, Haite, Lee, Loveday, Phillips & Tyrrell

IN ATTENDANCE: Rebecca Roberts (Clerk), Samantha Booker (Assistant Clerk), County Councillor Russell and **MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:** 0

ABSENT: Cllrs Owen & Spoor

1. a. County and District Councillors' Reports
County Cllr Russell gave the following report:

Area Highways Manager

Richard Speller leaves this week. A new Area Highways Manager has been appointed but the details have not yet been announced. There is a temporary contact to cover the usual notice periods.

Roads

Cansiron Lane road closure for up to 5 days from 27th February by SE Water. There will be footway access and it is acknowledged that it is a cul-de-sac and cross border also. There will be a letter drop to residents this week where they will advise that access for vehicles will be permitted for residents but it will require that they move machinery etc so may take some time.

SGN works

Contractor went bust so SGN have reinstated Lewes Rd for now and have stated that for any works that are remaining they may well be back later in the year or plan in works for next year.

Children's Services

Waiting for a date for an Ofsted full inspection.

County Budget

Draft budget proposals show a 4.99% increase which is 2.99% core tax and 2% for adult social care. Budget is just under 1.9bn for the year with a Council tax precept of £708m – the remainder being made up of government grants, other income. Band D £77.67 increase. Adults take up 40% of the budget at a gross figure of 434m with 242m coming from council tax. – 95% of this budget goes on the cost of social care meeting the needs of 8500 residents eligible under the Care Act. Children's take up 16% of the budget with a gross figure of 174m with 148m raised through Council tax. 92% of this budget is spent on statutory intervention into the lives of around 5400 children with 882 (December) in foster placement or residential provision. The remainder is on Early Help where we have 2130 children and families on Early Help Plans, youth offending and young people's mental health.

Environment and Climate Change has a gross budget of 84m with 73m coming from Council tax. The focus here is on reducing waste going to landfill through education, refuse derived fuel and separate food waste collections where 66m of the net revenue budget is dedicated to supporting waste disposal and recycling infrastructure.

7.06pm – Cllr Lee arrived

Highways budget has a gross budget of 80m with 47m coming from council tax to service approximately 2500 miles of roads and an equal amount of footpaths and bridleways. Highways gets 8% of the council tax budget.

Lane Rental

The New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 as amended by the Transport Act 2000 and Traffic Management Act of 2004 contains provision for Highways Authorities to operate lane rental schemes that involves charging

promoters of street and roadworks for their time their works occupy the highway network. The lane rental scheme will enable to Council to charge for occupation of the most traffic sensitive streets at traffic sensitive times. Surplus income will be ring-fenced for reinvestment into highway network improvements.

Capital Investment

Highways capital investment includes 48.2m for Highways. In addition, 4.5m revenue spending on highways maintenance to include flooding and drainage that sits outside of the core budget to address immediate issues.

Cllr Belsey sent his apologies.

b. **Public Questions – None**

2. **Apologies for absence – Cllr Owen & Spoor; apologies were received and resolved; the reasons were accepted**
3. **To receive Declaration of Interests from Members in respect of any matter on the Agenda:**
None
4. **Chairman’s Announcements –** Cllr Forbes reminded everyone present that the elections are due to be held on the 4th May. There is information on the website and in the newsletter that will go out in March. If anyone knows anyone who may be interested in becoming a Councillor, encourage them to pop into the office for more details. Cllr Forbes also encouraged the current Councillors to consider if they will stand again or not.
5. **To confirm the Minutes of the Meeting of the Village Council held on 6th December 2022 –** the minutes were **approved** and were signed by the Chair as a true and accurate account of the meetings.
6. **Clerk’s Report –** the Clerk’s report was received and noted.
7. **To receive the minutes of Committees and reports from working groups and to consider any matters arising:**
 - a. Planning Committee – the minutes were received and noted from 13th December 2022 & 31st January 2023
 - b. Finance & Administration Committee – the next meeting is scheduled for 28th March
8. Highways
 - a. To receive an update for dealing with overgrown hedges – it was noted that overgrown hedges (as well as other Highways issues) can now be reported online at www.westsussex.gov.uk, but it was agreed that the leaflet can still be posted to offending addresses.
 - b. To receive an update on the application to West Sussex Highways for a Community Highway Scheme application for a 20mph zone in the village – since receiving confirmation from Richard Speller that the application of 7th November 2022 had been received, we have not heard anything more. Cllr Russell kindly offered to enquire after our application and see if there are any updates.
9. **Finance**
 - a. **Accounts to pay**
The accounts payable from 1st to 31st December 2022 totalling £10,197.34 and from 1st to 31st January totalling £7,433.50 were **ratified and approved by the Council**.
 - b. To receive and approve the Finance Pack for December 2022 & January 2023 (which includes the RBS income & expenditure report, statutory balance sheet & bank reconciliations) – **the Finance Pack was received and noted**
 - c. To confirm the precept for 2023-2024 at £73,000, as recommended by the Finance & Administration Committee and provisionally agreed by the Full Council on the 6th December 2022 – Cllr Tyrrell proposed to set the precept at £73,000 and this was seconded by Cllr Haite; **resolved – members agreed to set the precept for 2023-2024 at £73,000**

- d. To ratify the expenditure of £399.90 for 2 new office chairs – **resolved; members approved the expenditure**
 - e. To consider the quotation from WSP to implement a design study scope for the Footway improvement on Wall Hill Bends – Members agreed **not to go ahead** with the quotation, due to the high cost and that West Sussex Highways consider the proposed idea as a non-compliant footpath. Cllr Russell said that she will give the Council an introduction to Joy Dennis who is the Cabinet Member for Highways to see if she will come and visit the site so that it can be shown that the scheme would only be non-compliant in the middle section for about a metre and not over the whole length.
10. To resolve that all staff members holding an employment contract with Ashurst Wood Village Council and any future staff members, are eligible to join the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). (Membership is not extended to any other individual not in employment with the Council). – **Resolved; members agreed that all staff members holding an employment contract with Ashurst Wood Village Council and any future staff members will be eligible to join the LGPS.**
11. **To consider Grant Applications** – (amount spent so far this year is £1,850 and the budget was £1,500) - None
12. **Events**
- a. To discuss whether the Council should organise an event to mark the Coronation of King Charles III – members discussed that the Coronation coincided with the elections and this would make it difficult to organise a big event. It was agreed to organise a ‘Blooming Marvellous Coronation’ Event, where households would be encouraged to decorate the front of their houses with a Royal theme using flowers, flags and bunting or whatever they have to hand. The three best dressed homes will receive a voucher for a garden centre. The competition will be judged by Councillors.
13. **Consultations** – None
14. **To receive reports from Councillors who have attended outside bodies** – Cllr Forbes attended the Village Centre Trustees meeting – they are updating the halls kitchen and getting another quote to erect a flagpole on the tower. Cllr Forbes also attended the WSALC Chairs Forum as well as the MSALC meeting. Elections were discussed as well as the General Power of Competence – NALC is trying to persuade the Government to extend the General Power of Competence to all local Councils regardless of the number of elected or non-contested Councillors they have. Martyn’s Law was also discussed, which will come into Law and will provide new guidelines to adhere to with regards terrorism at Community Events. Cllr Lee offered to help with advising and writing any new policy documents.
15. **Items of correspondence** - Previously circulated.
16. **Items for reporting or inclusion on future agenda:**
- the office water heater has broken and needs urgent replacement – a quote has been obtained for £250
 - The date of the Annual Village Meeting
17. **Date of next meeting** – 7th March 2023

Meeting closed: 8.07pm

Chairman.....

Date.....