

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF ASHURST WOOD VILLAGE COUNCIL held on
Tuesday 7th December 2021, 7.00 pm at the Council's Meeting Room

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

IN ATTENDANCE: Rebecca Roberts (Clerk), Sam Booker (Assistant Clerk/RFO), County Councillor Russell, District Councillor Belsey and **MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:** 3

ABSENT: Cllrs Lee & Spoor

1. a. County and District Councillors' Reports

County Cllr Russell informed members that she had spoken to Richard Speller of West Sussex Highways about the footpath at Wall Hill bends and he confirmed that he had not yet had the time to inspect the work previously carried out. The general feeling is that the work so far is insufficient.

Road works will be taking place on the Lewes Road (Brambletye bends) on 16th December for drainage works.

Bus Fares for young people – Cllr Russell reported that a Cabinet member was onside for the proposals for concessionary fares for school children, but also for young people up to the age of 25.

The budgets are set and the financial settlement is due next week. The base rate for tax is expected to be 1.99% with 1% for adult care. There is a small budget gap, but County have received Government funding which is very helpful and as a result, there won't be any horrific cuts.

Children's Services continues to improve, although there is still work to do with social work practice. All 6 children homes are open with the 3 in the north region rated as outstanding and the 3 in the south are state of the art. These are for West Sussex children only. Cllr Russell also reminded members that it has been a year since the decision was made to pause the moving of Children's Services into a Trust. That decision is due for review soon.

Finally, Cllr Russell reported that she has now been co-opted as a Governor to Ashurst Wood Primary School.

District Cllr Belsey reported that Cabinet approved the Food Waste trial. This will involve 3,000 houses in Mid Sussex and is the largest ever trial in West Sussex. It will be about 9 months before the trial starts as West Sussex need to find a suitable disposal facility. A reminder that MSDC is the collection authority for the trial, but West Sussex County Council are the disposal authority. The trial is for food waste as well as for absorbent hygiene products. Serco have decided where the trial areas will be and it is hoped that Ashurst Wood will be one of the trial areas.

Cllr Belsey confirmed that a meeting regarding the hedge along Wall Hill will take place with MSDC next week.

Cllr Belsey is still in discussions with Clarion regarding the garages in Wray Close and hopes to arrange a meeting along with the Village Council.

Cllr Belsey also commented on parking in the Village and is trying to get a parking inspector out to help the situation.

21 School Lane has been let. This may have caused a disappointment to some residents who had been on the housing list. Cllr Belsey stated that he will find out whether due process was followed.

Finally, with regard to the Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan, it looks as if the route will be from the Woodbury to the A264 by the Crown Plaza. Sadly this means that there won't be a cycle route from Ashurst Wood, although it is still hoped that this can be pushed for in the future.

b. Public Questions – None

2. **Apologies for absence** - Cllrs Lee & 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**
Cllr Loveday declared a personal interest in item 8c as his wife is the Youth Leader
4. **Chairman's Announcements** – Cllr Forbes thanked everyone for their help with the Christmas Market and particularly to Rebecca and Samantha for cooking in the kitchen and decorating. The market went well.
5. **To confirm the Minutes of the meeting of the Village Council held on 2nd November 2021**– the minutes were **approved** and were signed by the Chair as a true and correct account of the meeting.
6. To co-opt a new member to the Village Council:
 - a. To receive and consider applications and vote to fill the vacancy – the applicants were invited to tell the Council a little bit about themselves, having previously received their applications.
Cllr Loveday then proposed and Cllr Haite seconded that the public left the room whilst members discussed the applications.
7.37pm - the public left the room
7.44pm – the public returned to the room
Members voted and by a majority of 5:1, Wayne Owen was co-opted.
Cllr Forbes thanked all applicants for their interest and said all were great candidates – it was a shame there was only one vacancy. However, she urged them to consider standing at the next election.
 - b. To receive the new Councillor's Declaration of Acceptance of Office – received
7. **Clerk's Report** – the Clerk's report was received and noted.
8. **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 2nd November
 - b. Finance & Administration Committee – the minutes were received from the meeting held on 23rd November. To receive and consider draft budget and precept recommendations for 2022-2023 – Cllr Phillips reported that the predicted end of year for staffing (which has now been split with HMRC and pensions payments), currently looks low, but the pay increases from April 2021 have yet to come through.
The electricity is fixed until November 2022 – the budget for this has been increased by inflation and slightly more to cover expected price rises.
Website and publicity – currently over budget, but this is due to changing website provider.

Gym equipment – budgeted for £9,500 for 7 pieces of equipment with a further £1,000 contingency.
Road safety/community equipment - £7,000 moved to next year for improvements to Wall Hill Bends.
Summer Event – there is £2,000 in the budget for this year and £6,000 in the budget for next year. Anything not spent this year, will be moved over, resulting in a total of £8,000 and an expected income of around £400.

Allotments – this is not going to happen this financial year, so £6,000 has been allocated to next year. Cllr Phillips will contact the landowner for an update.
Road safety – members feel that traffic calming measures are a good idea for the Village and have therefore allocated £6,000

Precept – the recommendation from the Finance & Administration Committee is to keep the precept at £70,000.

Resolved: members approved the draft budget and provisionally agreed to maintain the precept at £70,000.00 for 2022-2023. The draft budget will be placed on the website and the precept confirmed at the meeting of the Full Council in February.

- c. Youth Club – there are two more sessions before the end of term

9. Finance

a. Accounts to pay

The accounts payable from 1st to 30th November 2021 totalling £4,083.78 were **reconciled and approved by the Council.**

- b. To receive the RBS income and expenditure report up to 30th November 2021 – the report was received and noted.
- c. To receive the bank reconciliations for November 2021 – the reconciliations were received and noted
- d. To approve the sum of £380 excl. VAT for Wired Electrics to install a defibrillator outside the News Store – **resolved;** members agreed and approved the expenditure
- e. To approve the use of Sensible Solutions to provide online automatic back-up service and technical assistance when required. The back-up solution will cost £75 per annum – **resolved;** members approved the expenditure and agreed to use the services of Sensible Solutions
- f. To approve staff overtime from the Christmas Market (as recommended by the Finance and Administration Committee)– **resolved;** members approved 6 hours each for the Clerk and Assistant Clerk

- 10. To receive an update on the Three Crowns – Star Pubs informed the Clerk that the refurbishment of the pub would start week commencing 6th December and contractors are already on site. The brewery hopes that the pub will reopen at the end of February or early March 2022

11. To consider Grant Applications

- a. To ratify the donation of £100 to the Royal British Legion for the Council's Remembrance wreath– **Resolved;** members approved the donation of £100.

12. Public Services

- a. To receive an update on the Film Club – a volunteer has tentatively stepped forward, but nothing will happen until the new year
- b. To consider action to be taken in order to level the ground in front of the Street Snooker Wall at John Pears – the Clerk has spoken to Playinnovation, the supplier, who will send a quote. MDSC have confirmed that they would have no issue with the ground works being carried out.

- c. To receive an update on proposed outdoor gym equipment at John Pears – a meeting has been scheduled with MSDC’s landscape architect on 11th January at John Pears to discuss the proposal.
- d. To receive an update about work to the boundary hedge at John Pears – a meeting has been scheduled with MSDC for 14th December.
- e. To receive an update on the Queen’s Green Canopy Project – members agreed that planting should take place on the Rec. MSDC have asked for a location marked on a map and sent to them.

13. Events – to discuss the following events:

- a. Remembrance Sunday – The event was organised together with the Royal British Legion and St Dunstan’s Church. Cllr Phillips advised that there were approximately 100 residents present at the War Memorial. Cllr Forbes reminded everyone that it is now the responsibility of the Village Council to organise the road closures and the event for Remembrance Sunday. Members were informed that we have booked the bugler for 2022. A check list is needed to make sure everything has been done and an order of service prepared.
- b. Christmas Market –26th November 2021 – the event was a success and the RFO reported that a surplus of £404.51 was raised. The event was free to attend.
- c. Queen’s Platinum Jubilee 2022 – Cllr Forbes said that the date of the event, Thursday, 2nd June was a Public Holiday and that this event will be more along the lines of a ‘Party in the Park’, similar to the event held for the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee in 2012. The Madhatter’s Tea Party has been booked and confirmed as the headline act and a deposit paid. Other entertainment is also scheduled, including a choir and another band. The Clerk has registered the Councils intention to light the Beacon at 9.15pm on 2nd June. Members agreed to hold a meeting of the Events Working Group in January 2022.

14. Consultations

- a. West Sussex Fire Service Public Consultation – there is no provision to make a response from the Council; members will submit their own responses.
- b. Mid Sussex District Council Site Allocations Development Plan Document: Main Modifications Consultation – the inspector has now published the proposed modifications to the document for consultation. It was noted that Policy 26 has been kept, which means that land south of Hammerwood Road will be allocated for 12 houses. The Inspector has only made minor modifications to the policy and has included the requirement that the landowner must investigate vehicular access arrangements from either Yewhurst Close or Hammerwood Road; despite the Village Council’s objections to access through Yewhurst Close.
The Ivy Dene Industrial Estate is protected as employment land unless it can be proved that it is no longer viable for such use.
One new policy has been inserted about the provision for housing for the elderly and care homes, but these will need to have good public transport links. Responses are required by 24th January 2022, but as there are no modifications affecting the village, and the Council has responded to the two previous consultations, a further response will not be sent.

- 15. To receive reports from Councillors who have attended outside bodies** – Cllr Forbes attended the Village Centre Trustees Annual General Meeting and a regular meeting. It was reported that the hall was getting well used and the regular hirers have returned. So too have one-off parties. A new back door from the kitchen has been fitted and it is hoped that further improvements to the premises will be made, including updating the lavatories .

- 16. Items of correspondence** - Previously circulated.

- 17. **Items for reporting or inclusion on future agenda:**
Uninterrupted power supplies for the office computers

- 18. **Date of next meeting** - 1st February 2022

Meeting closed: 8.49pm

Chairman.....

Date.....