



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF ASHURST WOOD VILLAGE COUNCIL held on Tuesday 3rd April, 7.45 pm at the Council Meeting Room.

PRESENT: Cllrs B Phillips (Chairman); R Bright, M Bussell, J Forbes, C Judge, J Samways and D Wailes.

IN ATTENDANCE: Caroline Leet (Clerk)

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: 2

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

637. County and District Councillors' Reports

Responsibility of

- a. Cllr Phillips passed on County Councillor Jacquie Russell's apologies and read from her emailed report: she was due to meet with Richard Speller (West Sussex Area Manager Highways (Mid-Sussex)) and residents of Woods Hill Close re the ongoing issue of the road surface. Following a meeting with West Sussex County Council (WSSCC) and Metrobus on 19th March, Metrobus had agreed to discuss possible bus service improvements to Sackville School along with some infrastructure works and then look at a package that should include a better offer for young people i.e. lower fares. The aim was to use core funding along with S106 monies to include a design/feasibility study which would put delivery at 2-3 years. The timescale to finalise the zig-zag line painting outside Ashurst Wood Primary School was still not known. To reiterate, Cllr Russell was very disappointed at the level of funding awarded to Ashstock (£1,000) from the Community Initiative Funding (CIF) by the County Local Committee (CLC) at their recent meeting. She had also volunteered as a helper on the day.

District Councillor John Belsey reported that following detailed examination by the independent Inspector Jonathan Bore, the District Plan had been adopted by the Mid Sussex District Councillors at its meeting on 28th March 2018. The key points were:

- the plan was from 2014 to 2031 (already 4-years in to the Plan)
- a target of 876 homes per year had been set between now and 2024
- after this, the target was set at 1076 homes per year to 2031
- the Inspector considered the impact on the Ashdown Forest and did not see any need for any derogation. However, Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) were going to meet with Wealden District Council (WDC) to discuss
- the five year land supply had been demonstrated and this included the new development of 500 homes in Hassocks; there was some anxiety for residents in the south of the district
- the Plan would be reviewed in five years' time; this was a requirement of all Plans

Cllr Forbes commented that the Inspector's report was fairly short compared to the detailed report from the Inspector for the Ashurst Wood Neighbourhood Plan.

b. Public Questions

None.

638. Apologies for absence

Cllrs Lindsay and Loveday's apologies were received and **resolved; the reasons were accepted.**

639. To receive Declaration of Interests from Members in respect of any matter on the Agenda

None.

640. Chairman's Announcements

None

641. To confirm the Minutes of the meeting of the Council Meeting held on 6th March 2018

Cllr Forbes noted a typographical error on the first page, 'particular' should read 'particularly'; and under the County Councillor's report, the Director of Education had been referred to by her first name (which was actually spelt Deborah) when it should have been in full (Deborah Myers) or job title only. Otherwise, the minutes were **approved as a true and correct account of the meeting.**

642. Recorded meetings: to approve deletion of recording – *there were no recordings currently being held.*

Cllr Phillips proposed that as a representative for the Ashurst Wood Historians was in attendance, to bring forward agenda item 19. Members agreed and **resolved to move item 19a, Grant applications, and to discuss before proceeding with other items on the agenda.**

643. Grants

a Ashurst Wood Historians

Cllr Phillips reminded members that it was the start of a new financial year and the grants budget was £1,000. He summarised the Historian's application which was asking for funding to digitalise its scrap books and to produce a paper bounded version of each; each book would cost £294 to scan and produce. The Historians were asking for funding for the first three books; £794. Cllr Bussell thought that it was a very good project, however, she had concerns that this was the first grant application of the year and would use a large proportion of the grants budget; this said, she did advise that the Council could consider going over budget at a later date. Cllrs Forbes and Samways suggested starting by funding one book. Cllr Wailes asked if this was the only quote and thought it sound expensive for one book. Keith Stacy, from the Historians, said that they had only one quote, but the cost was because of work involved in scanning each page. Also this needed to be done in grey scale as a lot of the old news articles were of sepia tones. Councillors discussed and wondered if perhaps there were other options for the Historians to achieve digitalising their archives and producing bounded books. Cllrs Bright and Wailes offered to investigate scanning options and printing options and the costs.

Members supported the principle of preserving the Historians archives, but felt there were maybe alternative options. Cllrs Bright and Wailes would report back to the Council at its next meeting. It was agreed to defer its decision.

Cllr Bright apologised as he hadn't declared an interest as member of the Historians.

DW/RB

20:00 one member of the public left the meeting.

644. To receive the minutes of Committees and reports from working groups and to consider any recommendations arising:

a Planning Committee

The minutes of the meetings on 6th and 20th March were received.

b Finance and Administration Committee

The minutes of the meeting 20th March were received.

To receive and approve the following recommendation:

i. To appoint the Clerk as the Data Protection Officer

Cllr Phillips said that the Finance and Administration Committee had looked at the new General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and some of this would be covered under agenda item 16. The Committee was recommending appointing a Data Protection Officer (DPO) and until advised otherwise, the recommendation was to appoint the Clerk. Members **resolved the appointment of the Clerk as the Data Protection Officer.**

Clerk

c Youth Club

The Clerk gave an update: attendance numbers had averaged 22 per session this half term; activities had included a DJ taster evening, Street Art, cupcake baking and an Easter egg hunt. The Club's car wash fundraiser was cancelled, but would now take place on Sunday 22nd April, 11 am – 1.00 pm at the Village Centre car park. She also reported that Brendan Joyce, a volunteer and committee member had announced that he would be stepping down from Wednesday nights from July.

Cllr Phillips mentioned that the arrangements for the Clerk as the Youth Leader were a temporary arrangement to re-establish the Club and was with the view to eventually appoint a Youth Leader. Whilst the Clerk was happy to continue, there should be a discussion to consider the long-term and also the time scale for recruitment. He asked if this could go on the May or the June agenda.

Clerk

d Events Working Group – Ashstock Saturday 7th July

Cllrs Forbes and Samways reported on the recent Events Working Group meeting (12th March). The headline act had been confirmed as Bedrock and they had generously offered to waive their fee; Terry Sumner would be the compere and provide the PA; first aid attenders had been confirmed; and security costs were being finalised. Cllr Forbes said that the CLC grant awarded was £1,000 which was less than requested. She and the Clerk had debated applying for a further grant, but having reviewed the budget and noting that there were not going to be any band fees this year, it was hoped with other sources of income e.g. advertising sales, the income and expenditure should at least balance. It was also noted that the tender with the Maypole Inn was still to be confirmed.

Cllr Forbes reported that the Forest Row Festival was not going ahead this year.

645. Clerk's report

The Clerk's report was received.

a To note: The registration of the Lease with the Land Registry for John Pears Recreation Ground for the Street Snooker Wall is now complete

Noted.

b To note: Mid Sussex District Council have confirmed support for the Great British Tennis Weekend 2018 providing free access to the tennis courts at John Pears Recreation Ground – Weekends: 12/13th May and/or 21/22 July

Noted.

c To note: The renewal due for Clerk and the Assistant Clerk's membership for Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) (resolution 461a made at the Annual Meeting, May)

Noted. Cllr Phillips reminded members that the Clerk and Assistant Clerk's membership to the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) renewed in April, but the Council approved its annual subscriptions at the Council's Annual meeting in the preceding May (along with other annual expenditure, provisions etc.).

d To approve the expenditure of £40 per person to attend a Planning training session at East Grinstead Town Council with Lindsay Frost on 30th April

Members resolved expenditure of £200 for up to five people to attend the Planning Training organised by East Grinstead Town Council; Cllrs Bright, Forbes, Samways, the Clerk and the Assistant Clerk to attend.

Clerk

646. Finance

a Accounts to pay

The accounts paid from 6th to 31st March 2018 were ratified; the FairFX prepaid debit card accounts payments from 6th to 31st March were ratified; and the accounts payable for 3rd April were approved by the Council. The file of invoices was available to be viewed.

Clerk

b To receive the RBS income and expenditure report for end of year 2017/18

The RBS/Alpha income and expenditure report was received, dated up to 31st March. There were no questions.

647. Pensions

a To review and confirm the Pensions Discretion Policy

Cllr Phillips referred to an email from West Sussex Pension Fund (WSPF) advising that councils were required to review their Pensions Discretionary Policy annually. This policy had been put in place last year, and from what he could see there was no need to amend it. Members agreed to continue with the existing policy. The Clerk was asked to advise the WSPF administration.

Clerk

b To receive a letter from West Sussex Pension Fund re Ill Health and pensions and to consider if an insurance policy is needed

Cllr Phillips said he had looked at the correspondence sent by WSPF asking councils to consider the need for a pension's ill health insurance policy. To summarise, pensions pay money in to one pot/pool and then pays out of this pot when an individual retires. If however, a person becomes long-term ill or permanently disabled and unable to work the individual is entitled to a pension for the rest of their life. The issue was from an actuarial position, if the pool did not have enough money in it, it could face a deficit position. In which case, the Fund could ask the employer for a surcharge or those councils that pay in to the Fund could be charged a higher contribution rate. Smaller employers, such as the Village Council, are lumped together in to one pot, if the pot gives a deficit it could result in the council having to pay a premium. There was an insurance which could be considered and this would be used to top up the contributions in the event of an ill health pay out. Members discussed. Cllr Forbes said that from what she read, she understood that if the Council was to have its own ill health insurance, the council's pension contribution rate would be reduced. Cllr Bussell asked how many councils/employers were in the pot and therefore what would the risk be of a lump sum having to be found. Members concluded that they would like further information:

- cost of the insurance
- the reduction in pension contribution rate if they were to have ill health insurance
- the size of the pension pool (how many Councils and people)
- if at a later date the council changed its mind could they drop the insurance and become again susceptible to a surcharge if the fund went into deficit due to ill health claimant

It was agreed to defer a decision until more information was available.

Clerk/BP

648. War Memorial

a To receive an update

Cllr Phillips reported that MSDC planning department were still yet to advise if a planning application for the cleaning and renovations work was required. Work could not commence until this was known

b To approve the expenditure of up to £100 for the hedge to be cut back to allow for the repairs to the rear wall

Cllr Bussell said that she and the Clerk had met with the resident of Highcliff to discuss the boundary hedge between Highcliff and the War Memorial. The hedge growth overhangs the rear wall and would need to be cut back to allow for the renovations work. The resident was agreeable for the work to be carried out. Cllr Bussell had spoken to a local landscaper who had advised the hedge should be cut by hand and not a hedge cutter and had commented that it would look quite severe if the full height of the hedge was cut back. He recommended cutting right back immediately above the wall to a minimum height above the wall to allow access to the top of the wall. From there to slope the cut back until it met the existing hedge line. This would leave some greenery above. Cllr Phillips added that the hedge had to be cut to allow access to the wall and referred to a mock-up which he had prepared to show part of the hedge cut or the full height cut back.

Members **resolved the expenditure of up to £100 for the hedge to be cut back sufficiently to allow for the repairs to the rear wall of the War Memorial.** The Clerk was asked to write to the resident and to offer the hedge cuttings.

Clerk

649. To receive an update on the preparations for the Annual Village Meeting – Tuesday 24th April

Cllr Phillips ran through the proposed agenda and suggested as many councillors as possible should meet to discuss the content and run-through. Thursday 12th April, 7.30 pm at the Council's meeting room was agreed.

ALL

650. Village Centre Development / Car Park resurfacing

Cllr Phillips said that a specification for the office heating had now been prepared and was ready to be circulated for quotes (the December Council meeting agreed for the Office Working Group to take this on and had resolved the expenditure of up to £2,000 to procure a suitable system).

a To receive an update on the specification and quotation for the car park resurfacing

Referring to the car park resurfacing, Cllr Phillips said that he was delighted to report that at the Village Centre Trustees meeting on 7th March, they had agreed to make a donation to the Council of up to £10,000.

Cllr Forbes informed members that there was a query regarding the Council's eligibility to reclaim the VAT on the full costs of the car park resurfacing and the Clerk had contacted the SLCC for further advice. The Clerk reported that

the advice from the SLCC confirmed that VAT could only be reclaimed on the car park resurfacing project if the Council paid for the costs in full. If another body made a donation towards the project then the Council could not claim the VAT on any part of the work

b To approve the expenditure of up to £18,000 (includes VAT) to make good and resurface the Village Centre car park

Members resolved the expenditure of up to £18,000 (including VAT) to make good and resurface the Village Centre car park. It was noted that the budget had allowed for up to £9,000 and the Village Centre Trustees had agreed a donation of up to £10,000.

c To approve the appointment of the contractor to resurface the Village Centre car park

Cllr Phillips reported that Marilyn Greateorex (Village Centre Trustee), Cllrs Bussell (and Trustee), Forbes and himself had met with a contractor to discuss the quote and confirm the details including the edging kerbs. He proposed that R J West Limited be appointed as the contractor to carry out the car park resurfacing works. **Members resolved the appointment of the R J West Limited as contractor for the Village Centre car park resurfacing works.**

BP/Clerk

651. To consider the long-term maintenance of the Village Council building

Cllr Phillips asked members if someone should be appointed to check on routine maintenance of the building e.g. gutters cleaning, repairs and general maintenance, as well as highlight any repairs that may be necessary. Members discussed. It was agreed that the Handyman could carry out basic duties such as window cleaning, gutter cleaning and light repairs. Other maintenance should be presented to the Council on a need be basis. The Clerk was asked to update the Handyman's check list/timesheet record to incorporate this.

Clerk

652. School Transport update/report from the County Local Committees meeting

Report received under the County Councillor's report.

653. General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

a To receive an update on the preparations for GDPR

Cllr Wailes said that following the discussions at the Finance and Administration Committee, the SLCC had today (3rd April) issued guidance and documents relating to GDPR. At first look, this was quite comprehensive and had some good templates. He added that the SLCC were discussing some issues with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and the National Association of Local Councils (NALC), in particular regarding the specific point of whether a Clerk can, in certain cases, fulfil the role of the DPO. For now, he advised that the Council continue with the best advice that they had.

b To receive an update on the Data Audit

Cllr Wailes said that although he had started with the Audit Data, the SLCC's template was comprehensive, so he was effectively going to start again and would then pass to the Clerk and Cllr Forbes to review.

DW/JF/Clerk

654. To review how the Council and Councillors conduct business using the email

Cllr Forbes mentioned that the SLCC had a new policy on Social Media which covered councillors' use of email and social media.

Cllr Bright said that he had asked for this to be on the agenda as there had been an incident recently where there was a trail of emails with back and forth

discussion. He felt that if there was a matter for discussion it should be saved for a meeting. There was also the matter of 'reply to all' which can create a long ream of correspondence and thus spirals out of control. Members discussed; it was noted that it is difficult to make a rule and there are occasions when discussion would be generated, but this should be directed through the Clerk. The Clerk was also advised to keep correspondence with residents to a minimum to avoid similar misunderstandings.

655. Council's website

a To receive an update following a recent possible hack. The site has currently been taken off line

Cllr Wailes confirmed that the Council's website had been hacked and that he had since removed the site from Wordpress completely. The reason had been a problem with the site which had been in the process of being fixed however, the word-fence didn't upgrade automatically and so left it vulnerable.

b To consider the arrangements for hosting and management of the site

Cllr Wailes continued advising that the Council needed to start again with a new website. The Clerk had researched quotes from Vison (who had previously hosted the Council's website) and e-mango another provider who advertised council website services. The costs ranged from £780 to £1,675, this included website design; reducing to an annual hosting cost of around £300. Easyspace who the Council currently used to host its site now offered a dedicated Wordpress server environment that they would maintain and keep up to date from a technical perspective; the annual cost of this was £120. The Council would remain the designers and administrators. Cllr Wailes recommended members remained with Easyspace and using Wordpress. Staff and Councillors who input data were already familiar with it and it provided everything the Council needed, the new arrangement would take over the technical and maintenance issues. He added that the arrangements for the Council's domain were already with Easyspace. Members discussed. It was agreed to remain with Easyspace but on the upgraded package. It was agreed that the Council's website needed to be reinstated as soon as possible (but noted that this would involve considerable time and effort).

c To consider reviewing the expenditure for the website and increasing the website budget from £200 to up to £500

Members resolved to upgrade its website hosting and maintenance arrangements with Easyspace and the annual additional expenditure of £120. It was noted that the budget for 2018/19 would go over budget (total website expenditure for 2018/19 from £200 to up to £500).

DW/Clerk

656. Consultations

a South East Water Draft Water Resources Management Plan 2020 to 2080; 12 week consultation. Closes 18th May 2018

Cllr Phillips reported that he had attended a recent South East Water workshop (28th March). The consultation was noted.

657. To receive reports from Councillors who have attended outside bodies

Cllr Bright had attended the Conservators of Ashdown Forest Parish Liaison meeting (21st March). Cllrs Forbes and Lindsay had attended the CLC meeting which had been rescheduled from 1st to 21st March. Cllrs Forbes and Phillips had attended the Village Centre Trustees meeting (7th March).

658. List on Clerk's report, correspondence previously circulated

a Received.



659. Any Items for reporting or inclusion on future agenda

Clerk

Potential Highways projects (refer to Public Services Committee)
To consider a file hosting service for central access to council meeting documents

Cllr Samways said the revised draft Health and Safety Policy would be ready for the May meeting.

JS

660. Date of next meeting - Tuesday 1st May Annual Meeting of the Village Council

Meeting closed: 21:31

Chairman.....

Date.....