



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF ASHURST WOOD VILLAGE COUNCIL held on Tuesday 3rd October 2017, 7.42 pm at the Council Meeting Room.

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

IN ATTENDANCE: Caroline Leet (Clerk)

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: 3

Before the full Council meeting, Pat Buesnel and Tony Reid of the Conservators of Ashdown Forest gave a presentation on Ashdown Forest and the work of the Conservators. They also outlined the financial difficulties they have found themselves to be in due to East Sussex County Council (ESCC) reducing its funding year on year. The Forest is currently administered as a Charitable Trust by ESCC. The Forest receives 4,900 visits a day, with only 1% of these holiday makers. There is a team of 150 volunteers and 17 part-time employees who oversee the management of 6,500 acres of heathland and woodland.

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

Cllr Phillips proposed that as the Conservators of Ashdown Forest had given a presentation before the meeting, to bring forward agenda item 17 to after item 6. Members agreed and **resolved to consider item 17, Grants, after the formalities of the agenda and after item 6 on the agenda.**

538. County and District Councillors' Reports

Responsibility of

- a. County Councillor Jacquie Russell and the District Councillor John Belsey had both sent their apologies; they were attending the Conservative Party Conference. Cllr Phillips said that he had received reports from both Councillors.

Cllr Phillips wanted to minute his appreciation for the email Cllr Belsey had sent to senior officers at Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) supporting the Village Council's complaints discussed at last month's meeting, and this prompting MSDC to resolve a number of outstanding issues. This included the two village pubs which had now been added to the Register of Assets Community Value.

Cllr Belsey's report included an update on the District Plan; following the inspector's report there had been some modifications to the housing numbers, this included a new strategic site in Hassocks. For Ashurst Wood there were no changes to the minimum housing requirements over the plan period (up to 2031) of 102 dwellings; of which, 60 was the minimum requirement up to 2023/24. Cllr Phillips said that this meant that the Council would not have to review its Neighbourhood Plan, unless it decided to do so voluntarily. Cllr Forbes added that the 102 were already accounted for and that there was no outstanding balance. However, this did not mean that any new applications would not be approved.

Cllr Phillips reported Cllr Russell had provided an update on the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) for additional zigzag and yellow lines near the Primary School; and the School Transport which was on the agenda for the next County Local Committees (CLC) meeting on 7th November. Both of these would be covered later on the agenda.

b. Public Questions

A resident from Forest Row said that he had recently joined the Events Working Group (EWG) for Ashstock as a volunteer and was supportive for the event to continue in 2018. His expertise was in stage and lighting and he already had some ideas for next year's event. Cllr Phillips welcomed him joining the group.

539. Apologies for absence

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

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

Cllr Samways declared a personal interest in item 8a, for mileage expenses. Cllr Bright declared a personal interest with item 17; he was a volunteer with the Conservators of Ashdown Forest.

541. Chairman's Announcements

Cllr Phillips thanked Cllrs Bussell, Samways and Geoff Bussell for offering to help the Handyman with the needed tidying of the stores.

542. To confirm the Minutes of the meeting of the Council Meeting held on 5th September 2017

The minutes were **approved as a true and correct account of the meeting.**

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

544. Grants

a To receive a proposal from the Conservators of Ashdown Forest for a financial contribution towards the management and maintenance of the North Chase of Ashdown Forest for two years (2018/2019 and 2019/2020)

The earlier presentation had already outlined the financial issues they faced hence why they were now changing its governance and structure and working with the Charities Commission to amend their charitable status; it was anticipated that this would take another two years. This would open up many income opportunities for the Forest including the ability to fundraise and reclaim some of the VAT expenditure. The Conservators of Ashdown Forest were requesting a financial contribution of £700 per year, for two years, to support the management and maintenance of Ashdown Forest whilst they go through the transitional period. Cllr Phillips said that the current grants budget was £1k; of which £250 had already been allocated. He asked members for their views.

Cllr Forbes reminded members that the Council held the General Power of Competence; *this means councils may incur expenditure which, in their opinion, is in the interests of and will bring direct benefit to, their area or any part of it or all or some of its inhabitants.* She said that she thinks the residents of the village valued the facility and proximity of the Ashdown Forest as well as the protection it gives the village. Cllr Bussell, said that the Forest was a very good cause for the Council to support. She suggested that if it was agreed to offer a grant, though as it was only half way through the financial year, perhaps an award could be considered, and if there was any grants budget remaining at the end of the year a second award could be given. Cllr Samways said that the grants policy did not normally support running costs, unless in

unusual circumstances and perhaps a contribution could be considered under a different funding code. Cllr Wailes said that when the Conservators first approached the Council earlier in the year, he had been quite sceptical. He still feels that ESCC should be providing funding for the Forest, however, having attended the liaison meetings of the Conservators and read their papers his opinion had changed and he would fully support a contribution and to consider budgeting for a financial contribution over two years. He added that he had spoken to several residents; all valued the facility the Forest offered and would be supportive of the Council supporting the Conservators. Members discussed at length.

Members **agreed** in principle, to support a two year commitment (2018/19 and 2019/20) to the Conservators of Ashdown Forest and referred it to the Finance and Administration Committee to consider an appropriate amount in the 2018/19 budget. Cllr Judge suggested that it would also be appropriate to grant a sum from this year's budget. Members unanimously **resolved to award a grant to the Conservators of Ashdown Forest of £500.**

F&A

Clerk

20:07 Cllr Phillips suspended the meeting.

20:10 Cllr Phillips reopened the meeting.

20:11 Two members of the public left the meeting.

Cllr Phillips proposed to bring forward agenda item 15 as there was a member of the public who had made a representation for this item. Members agreed and **resolved to bring forward item 15, Ashtock, to considering the viability and ongoing of the event.**

545. Ashstock: To consider continuing with Ashstock 2018 or to move to alternate years

Cllr Phillips said that his only comment was that if the event was to continue, it must have a team of paid security. He invited the Members to discuss. Cllr Forbes said the EWG had had a debrief meeting after Ashstock 2017 and another meeting to consider the viability of 2018. Overall, the EWG were supportive for the event to continue and had already set out several changes in the organisation of the event including paid security, first aid facilities and the need for more volunteers on the day of the event. Cllr Bussell said that the budget for the event needed to include security and paid helpers even if this meant that the event did not make surplus. Cllr Wailes noted that the event was popular with residents, but had become a victim of its own success. Overall, members were supportive of Ashstock and for it to continue. Members **resolved to go ahead with Ashstock 2018 provided that the budget allowed for some paid services, that grants were applied for and there were enough volunteers.**

EWG/Clerk

It was suggested that the Annual Village Meeting promoted the need for volunteers to help with selling programmes and clearing-up.

Clerk

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

a Planning Committee

The minutes of the meeting 5th September were received.

b Public Services Committee

The minutes of the meeting 19th September were received.

To receive and approve the following recommendations and resolutions:

- i. The expenditure of up to £40 to purchase suitable lighting for the phone kiosk**

Noted. Cllr Phillips thanks Cllr Bright for installing new light bulbs at the kiosk.

ii. To support extending the basketball court area at John Pears Recreation Ground and to use the s106 funds in Formal Sport (£6,214) and play space (£2,400) to fund the project

Cllr Phillips said the Committee had agreed a half sized basketball court was financially the most realistic to achieve, although there would be sufficient space for a three-quarters pitch if enough funding was available. A half-sized pitch was estimated at about £7k including a second post and net provided. Members **resolved to support extending the basketball court area at John Pears Recreation Ground and to use the s106 funds in Formal Sport (£6,214) and play space (£2,400) to fund the project**

Clerk

iii. To note: the Committee agreed that due to lack of public attendance at Forum meetings, to invite the PCSOs to provide quarterly reports prior to Village Council meetings as an alternative to the Forum

Noted. Cllr Bright updated members, saying the PCSO Stephen Lowe had confirmed that he would be quite happy to attend a Council meeting on a quarterly basis provided that it coincided with his shifts.

c Youth Club report/update

Cllr Lindsay said that the Clerk's report provided a summary of past four weeks and it was pleasing to see the attendance numbers ranged between 16 and 20.

d Events Working Group – Christmas Market, 24th November

Cllr Bussell reported the EWG for the Christmas Market had met and arrangements were in place for setting-up, Father Christmas, the stall holders and Cllr Bright said that the Conservators of Ashdown Forest were donating a Christmas Tree. The budget for the Christmas Market was in the budget and the income usually covered any expenditure.

i. To approve the expenditure of up to £400 (as budgeted 2017/18)

Members **resolved the expenditure of up to £400 for the Christmas Market.**

547. Clerk's report

The Clerk's report was received.

a To nominate a Councillor to attend the West Sussex CLC meeting on 7th November (being held at Ashurst Wood Primary School)

Members discussed, and felt that it was important to support the CLC agenda item on School Transport issues for Ashurst Wood. Cllr Lindsay said that she would put an announcement of the CLC meeting on the village Facebook page and Cllr Judge said that she would also let parents of primary and secondary school children know about the meeting. It was agreed that as the CLC meeting started at 7.00 pm, councillors would attend the CLC meeting before the Council's meeting at 7.45 pm. Cllrs Bussell, Samways and Wailes would open the Council's meeting at 7.45 pm and suspend the meeting after the first few agenda item formalities, if other councillors were delayed at the CLC meeting.

KL/CJ

All

b To note: The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) will come in to force on 25th May 2018. This will have an effect on the Council for example, a designated Data Protection Officer will need to be appointed (this can be the Clerk) and training required. Further details will be reported to the Finance and Administration Committee

Noted. Cllr Wailes said the new General Date Protection Regulation (GDPR) would become a hot topic. He said that some of the information currently coming through was not accurate, but that there would be some mandatory regulations which all councils would have to comply with and others which

would be more applicable at a district level. He also added that there had been an increase in the number of fines being issued for none compliance with Data Protection. He said that he would be able prepare a training session for all councillors, the Clerk and the Assistant Clerk to attend in the new year. Cllr Forbes added that the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) had useful information on its website. She also added that it would be worth approaching MSDC to see if they were considering appointing a Data Protection Officer who would also oversee parish councils.

DW/Clerk

Cllr Phillips thanked Cllr Wailes and agreed all Councillors, the Clerk and Assistant should attend the training to be delivered by Cllr Wailes.

20:45 Cllr Lindsay left the meeting

- c To approve the expenditure of £110 for a the five-yearly electrical inspection for the solar panels (a requirement on the insurance schedule from Fire Protection Association and as specified on the installation certificate)**
Members resolved the expenditure of £110 for a the five-yearly electrical inspection for the solar panels.

Clerk

548. Finance

a Accounts to pay

The accounts paid from 6th September to 2nd October 2017 **were ratified**; the FairFX prepaid debit card accounts payments from 6th September to 3rd October **were ratified**; the accounts payable for 3rd October **were approved by the Council**. The file of invoices was available to be viewed.

Clerk

Cllr Phillips added that the invoice from MSDC for the lease of a small section of John Pears Field for the Street Snooker Wall had been received.

20.47 Cllr Lindsay re-joined the meeting

b To receive the income and expenditure report up to 3rd September

The Alpha income and expenditure report was received. There were no questions.

549. To receive an update on the Village Centre Development

Cllr Phillips reported that he had approached a number of contractors with regard to resurfacing the car park with either tarmac or block paving. It seemed difficult to get responses and then only one of those who did meet on site has provided a provisional estimate. With regard to the Meeting room heating; it was working, but needed to be tested when the weather turned colder.

550. To receive an update on the Defibrillator project

Cllr Phillips said that the training awareness session on 23rd September provided by the Community Heartbeat Trust, was attended by 40 people. It was a very good session. The defibrillator was now in the cabinet and the code for the cabinet was available for anyone in the village who wanted to note it. The code had also been issued to the Loco shop and the Maypole. However, it was unfortunate that the Ambulance Service were unable to add it to their database until a software update was completed.

551. To receive an update on the assets of Community Value and request to Mid Sussex District Council to include The Three Crowns and The Maypole Inn

Cllr Phillips confirmed that the Council's nomination for the Three Crowns and the Maypole Inn to be added to the Register of Assets of Community Value

had been successful. (This is for a period of five years). He added that the owner(s) do have the right to appeal this decision.

Cllr Forbes mentioned that this means if the owner(s) does decide to sell, then the community will have the chance to consider a bid.

- a To note: at the last meeting it had been agreed to send a formal letter to MSDC noting the delay with processing these nominations however, due to Cllr Belsey's intervention this matter has now been escalated at MSDC Noted.**

552. To receive an update on the TRO for Ashurst Wood Primary School 'Keep Clear' markings and yellow lines

Cllr Phillips reported on the recent meeting attended by Cllr Russell, Richard Speller, (West Sussex County Council (WSCC) Highways Manager), Pene Mather (WSCC Local Transport Improvements Project Officer), Lisa Hobby (Head Teacher, Ashurst Wood Primary School) and Cllrs Bussell and himself. Lisa Hobby said that she was supportive of the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) for additional zigzag lines and double yellow lines with an all-day restriction along School Lane as there had been issues with emergency vehicles getting access to the school. Whilst the mirrored zig-zags were seen as appropriate, Cllr Phillips had suggested reducing the restriction times, but Pene Mather had said that WSCC did not offer this option. Cllr Phillips and Bussell had said at the meeting that they had some concern that introducing double yellow lines at the School Lane/Hammerwood Rd end would give a sense of creeping urbanisation into the village which the Council was trying to avoid. Pene Mather had said that if the double yellow lines were excluded from the start and at a later date it was felt they were needed, it would be a complicated process for another TRO to be approved. However, Richard Speller suggested that if he received a number of evidenced objections, then he would be able to arrange for the double yellow lines to be removed. The meeting had agreed that the zigzag lines would go in as per the TRO and also the extension of the double yellow lines. This was expected to be completed by December 2017.

Cllr Bussell added that WSCC said that they had a team of 30 enforcement officers in the safety for schools project.

553. Youth Club: To consider the viability and ongoing Council support for the Club

Cllr Lindsay said that in her opinion the Youth Club should continue; as predicted with the new year 7s, there had been between 16-20 young people the past few weeks. She had been reporting each week on the village Facebook page of activities covered and had received lots of positive feedback. She also said that the Club was receiving support for some subsidised activities from Sussex Clubs for Young People. She added that there was now a team of volunteers and would like to formally thank Brendan Joyce, Chris Loveday, Karol Stockley and Alice Tyrrell. She also said that Caroline was doing an excellent job as Youth Leader. Cllr Phillips added his thanks to Caroline and asked if she was willing to continue for the present as Youth Leader; she confirmed she was happy to continue. If the numbers attending continued at a healthy level over the winter months then it was suggested that the Council advertise for another Youth Leader. Members discussed and **agreed** that as the Club was a success to continue and review again in April.

Clerk

554. Annual Village Meeting: To consider outside presenters



Cllr Phillips said that Richard Speller had offered to attend the Annual Village Meeting (AVM) again to take questions on highways matters. The Conservators of Ashdown Forest had said they would be able to attend and provide a talk about the Ashdown Forest and their work. Following the defibrillator awareness session Joanna Crerar a Paramedic Officer for the South East Coast Ambulance Service and lives in the village, offered to speak at the AVM. Members agreed to the three speakers.

BP/Clerk

555. Consultations

a Mid Sussex District Council Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability (SHELAA) – Call for sites – closing date 30th October 2017

Noted.

b South East Water Draft Drought Plan for 2018 to 2023 – closing date 29th October (representation to the Secretary of State)

Noted.

c East Sussex, South Downs and Brighton & Hove Waste and Minerals Local Plan review – closing date 20th November

Noted.

Cllr Forbes mentioned the District Plan Main Modifications Consultation started on the 2nd October and closed on 13th November. This had been received too late this agenda, but that any comments would need to be made to the inspector.

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

Cllrs Phillips and Wailes had attended the Conservators of Ashdown Forest meeting for parish and town councils.

Cllrs Forbes and Phillips had attended the Surrey and Sussex Association of Local Councils (SSALC) Chairman's Networking day on 28th September.

Cllr Samways had attended the MSDC Emergency Planning and Liaison Group meeting; his report was received.

Cllrs Bright and Forbes had attended the MSDC District Plan update.

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

Received.

558. Any Items for reporting or inclusion on future agenda

None.

Cllr Wailes reported that the Village Hall had now got Wi-Fi facilities and that the booster installed worked well using the Council's broadband.

559. Date of next meeting - Tuesday 7th November 2017

Cllr Phillips said that he would not be able to attend the meeting and confirmed Cllr Samways would be chairing the meeting.

Meeting closed: 21:18

Chairman.....

Date.....