



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF ASHURST WOOD VILLAGE COUNCIL held on Tuesday 5th December 2017, 7.45 pm at the Council Meeting Room.

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

IN ATTENDANCE: Caroline Leet (Clerk)

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: 1

Before the full Council meeting, Kate Bennet and Edward Belsey of the Dementia Action Alliance gave a presentation on the role of the Alliance and action plans for councils.

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

576. County and District Councillors' Reports

Responsibility of

- a. Cllr Samways said County Councillor Jacquie Russell sent her apologies, but she had sent a report which he read out: she had hoped to have a definitive date for the yellow line marking outside the school but was still waiting to hear from the West Sussex County Council (WSCC) Safer Routes to School (SRTS) officer. Equally, she was also waiting for an update from the WSCC Highways and Infrastructure team regarding the revisit to Wellfield to examine the road surface. Referring to the School Transport issues, following last month's County Local Committee (CLC) meeting, she had spoken to the Cabinet Member for Education and was hopeful an officer would attend the next CLC meeting which would take place in East Grinstead in March. In the meantime, it would be helpful to collect data concerning the amount of children needing the service for short journeys. Something slightly outside the Parish but affects the Parish, she had been in meetings with representatives from the from Sackville School, the SRTS team and WSCC Highways to discuss putting a cycle lane in from the school to a newly installed Toucan crossing to enable kids to cycle from school, across the A22 into Herontye Drive or South/North direction. This scheme had been confirmed as doable, but the school now needed to gather evidence in terms of how many people would use the crossing point. She also referred to a recent West Sussex Cycle Forum (WSCF) meeting and the East Grinstead Town Council Clerk was looking at setting up a working party to draw up a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.

Members discussed. Referring to the School Transport, Cllr Lindsay suggested the Clerk could write to Sackville School to formally request the number of pupils who attend from Ashurst Wood. Cllr Judge added that it would also be worth doing a head count of pupils who currently use the bus service in the mornings. There was some discussion regarding the proposed Toucan and that this could have an impact on traffic backing-up along the A22, but if it enabled children to cross the road safely then it should be supported. Cllr Lindsay said that she had signed-up to the WSCF but had not received any communications.

Clerk

District Councillor John Belsey said he had a few items to report. The District Plan public consultation had closed and there had been 1,260 responses.

Most of these were related to Hassocks and concerns to East Grinstead and the increase to the housing numbers of over 1,100. These were not allocated in the Neighbourhood Plan and there were issues with the infrastructure constraints. The Inspector's report was still anticipated for December with adoption of the Plan in the New Year. The outstanding planning application for Dirty Lane: he had been advised that a decision notice was expected soon. He touched on communication issues with Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) and recent issues the Clerk had recently experienced obtaining feedback from officers for the basketball project; he assured members that he sympathised with these concerns and was working with MSDC to ensure responses were on a timely basis. Play equipment: he said that several residents had been in touch about the play equipment in the two play areas. He confirmed that money had been allocated in the budget for John Pears Recreation Ground to replace the play/climbing frame. As for the Recreation Ground play area, he said that he would investigate if there were any funds which had not yet been allocated. Cllr Loveday said that perhaps an approach to the housing association, Affinity Sutton, could be considered. 89-93 Hammerwood Road update: Cllr Belsey had spoken to the case officer who confirmed that the developer had submitted a proposal for the landscaping and that they had also voluntarily stopped work on the site. However, a resident had been regularly contacting the planning department with various issues. The case officer was aware of the sensitivity with the site, but they cannot be unreasonable with any decisions. Finally, he mentioned that there were plans to upgrade the broadband network, though this was in its early days of development.

Cllr Wailes referred to the Hammerwood Road development and said that he had spoken to MSDC planning department and they had confirmed that the developer had stopped work voluntarily and was not at the request of MSDC. He added that he was concerned that misinformation was being communicated by one or two residents. Cllr Forbes added that in the approved planning application number 89 was part of the application and had plans for extending it, but understood that this property was no longer part of the application. She questioned if this would now affect the visibility splays, but that this should be addressed under the planning conditions.

b. Public Questions

None.

577. Apologies for absence

Cllr Phillips' apologies were received and **resolved; the reason was accepted.**

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

Cllr Lindsay declared a personal interest with 9a, expenses.

579. Chairman's Announcements

Cllr Samways read a message from Cllr Phillips with his apologies for not being able to attend the meeting and said he hoped to see everyone soon.

580. To confirm the Minutes of the meeting of the Council Meeting held on 7th November 2017

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

581. Recorded meetings: to approve deletion of recording – *there were no*

recordings currently being held.

582. 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 28th November were received and the meeting on 5th December was noted.

b Finance and Administration Committee

The minutes of the meeting held on 28th November were received.

To receive and approve the following recommendation:

- i. To continue to award pay increments as per employee contracts and when an employee reaches the maximum spinal level within their scale to receive only the increases as and when agreed by the National Joint Council for Local Government**

Members resolved to continue to award pay increments as per employee contracts and when an employee reaches the maximum spinal level within their scale to receive only the increases as and when agreed by the National Joint Council for Local Government

Clerk

c Youth Club

Cllr Lindsay reported that the Youth Club continued to thrive with membership numbers and was now at full capacity, 30. The past three weeks there had been a bake-off competition which was judged by the district councillor, Cllr John Belsey. On 1st December there was the Club's first ever night walk which had been a great success; she thanked Cllr Bussell, Geoff Bussell, Brendon Joyce and the Clerk. The last two sessions of the term would be, 6th December, first aid session run by Jo Crerar our local paramedic; and 13th December was the Youth Club Christmas Party. Finally, she mentioned that Sackville School would be providing two Duke of Edinburgh students as helpers from next term.

d Events Working Group – feedback from the Christmas Market

Cllr Loveday said that the Christmas Market was a great success and thanked the councillors for their help, and Geoff Bussell. The event made a surplus of £806; 300 adults paid on the door, 84 children visited Father Christmas and the Christmas Hamper raffle raised £308. He added that for next year's event, the Events Working Group would need to reconsider the use of the stage. Cllr Bright asked the Clerk to write a letter of thanks to Father and Mother Christmas. Cllr Loveday added that the Christmas tree this year looked really good and asked the Clerk to write to Karol Stockley thanking her for the decorations.

Clerk

Referring to Ashstock, he said that the Councillors were going to organise a fundraising event to help raise money for Ashstock 2018; this would be organised away from the office staff.

583. Clerk's report

The Clerk's report was received.

a To note: the defibrillator at Maypole Road/School Lane junction is now live with the ambulance service

Noted.

b To note: the PCSOs will attend a Community Forum meeting on Tuesday 20th February, 7.00 pm before the Public Services Committee meeting

Noted.

584. Finance

a Accounts to pay

The accounts paid from 8th November to 4th December **were ratified**; the FairFX prepaid debit card accounts payments from 8th November to 4th December **were ratified** and 5th December **approved**; and the accounts payable for 5th and 6th December **were approved by the Council**. The file of invoices was available to be viewed.

Clerk

b To receive the income and expenditure report up to 5th December

The Alpha income and expenditure report was received. There were no questions. Cllr Bussell mentioned that there was very little difference to this report and the one discussed at the recent Finance and Administration Committee meeting.

585. To receive the budget and precept recommendations for 2018/19 from the Finance and Administration Committee

Cllr Bussell said that she hope everyone had seen the minutes from the Finance and Administration Committee meeting on 28th November when they had reviewed the draft budget and looked at the figures thoroughly. The two new items were:

- Village Centre car park resurfacing project (4089). The 2017/18 budget had allowed £7k in the reserves for Council office and facilities (5007). £6k had been moved from 5007 in to budgeted expenditure with a further £3k added; total allowed £9k. This project would be a shared cost with the Village Centre trustees
- The Ashdown Forest Conservators grant (4066). Previously, the Council had agreed that it would like to support the Conservators with a two year commitment towards the management and maintenance of the Ashdown Forest whilst they go through a transitional period with the Charities Commission. £700 had been allocated in the budget.

At the end of this year the projected 2017/18 income and expenditure surplus was £2,960; however, there were the heating issues with the office facilities which was likely to cost money to resolve. Looking at the 2018/19 carried forward end-of-year total reserves projected figure was £31,500 (but would be less any expenditure to the heating).

Referring to the Precept (1076), Cllr Bussell said that the Committee had discussed and after some deliberation, three members supported a proposal to increase the precept by 2.21%, from £64,575 to £66,000; two members thought it should be more.

Members discussed the precept and agreed that an increase to the precept was necessary as its costs were increasing with inflation (3%) and to support the car park resurfacing project, as well as the unexpected costs to the heating. They also noted the tax base (the means for calculating the precept) for Ashurst Wood had increased from 740.1 to 745.8.

After carefully considering the impact of any increase, members supported an increase of 2.98% from £64,575 to £66,500 which, on a Band D property was a £1.92 increase per year or 16p per month.

Members **unanimously approved in principle the draft budget and the precept of £66,500**. The budget would be displayed on the Council's website for public viewing and presented at the Council's next meeting (February) for a formal resolution.

586. To receive an update on the Village Centre Development

Cllr Samways said that the Office Working Group (OWG) had met on 4th December to discuss the issues with the heating system and their recommendation was to accept that the warm air ventilation system did not

work and was not suitable or fit for purpose. Cllr Wailes said that legal action should be taken against the builder, Vasahus and Cissbury. Cllr Forbes said that as Vasahus had gone into liquidation and Cissbury had ceased trading therefore, there was no money in either company. The heating had been sub contracted to a heating engineer, but would have still been the builders' responsibility. The retention had been used to try to rectify the issues.

a To consider further exploration in to the problems with the heating system and the possible expenditure of up to £57 for an airflow tester device and up to £100 for the exploratory investigations

In view of the OWG recommendation, members agreed that this was no longer worth pursuing further.

b To consider expenditure of up to £1,000 for possible costs to rectify/replace the existing heating system, and for the Office Working Group to have the authority to authorise this expenditure as required (this is to allow heating to be rectified without a Council meeting before February)

Members considered the options available and the two initial quotes for electric heating. Some members thought that it was not necessary to spend £1,500-2000 on electrical heating system when there were plug in heaters with seven day timers for a lot less money. Cllr Bussell said that she thought it was the Council's responsibility to provide staff with reliable heating and would be sensible to invest in a system which would hopefully last for 20 years or more. She mentioned that the office had been 10 degrees and had taken all day to reach 15 degrees with two free-standing oil heaters. Cllr Bright mentioned that the OWG had also discussed the ventilation in the toilet which was part of the building requirements and that the existing system should be removed from the loft space; he did not think this this was necessary and that the vents could just be blocked off. Some members still felt that purchasing a couple of heaters would be sufficient. However, members agreed that a specification should be drawn-up and several quotes obtain. They **agreed to pass this to the OWG and resolved the expenditure of up to £2,000 to procure a suitable system; expenditure would come out of the general reserves.**

Clerk

As an interim measure, members instructed the Clerk to purchase two additional temporary heaters (fan or oil) to be used to boost the temperature quickly.

Clerk

Cllr Samways said that background checks would be worth doing in order to determine the possibility of any potential legal action.

587. To approve a new contract for the office photocopier

The Council's photocopier arrangement with Kent Copier Services (KCS) was on a 3-year contract up to August 2017. The Clerk had spoken to KCS and there was not an issue to continue with the same arrangement (£104.71 per quarter). However, having obtained alternative quotes, the Clerk was recommending a new contract with KCS which provided a new copier machine, a lower quarterly lease fee and copying charges. Members **resolved to enter into a new service agreement with KCS for five years and the quarterly expenditure of £69.76 (total cost £1,395.26) plus copying charges.**

Clerk

588. War Memorial: To receive notification of designation application from Historic England for the War Memorial to be added to the List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic interest and to consider any response

Cllr Samways said that he had looked at the application online but there was little information available as to how and why this had been submitted. Cllr



Wailes said that if the War Memorial was listed then it would help to facilitate funding opportunities. Members had no objections to the War Memorial being added to the List of Special Architectural or Historic interest.

Clerk

589. To consider a new address/street name for the development at 89-93 Hammerwood Road (as per the MSDCs street naming and numbering policy)

Cllr Samways said that the developer had already started to advertise the site as Ashurst Copse and had submitted this to MSDC. However, the MSDC Street Naming policy does say that it always consults with the relevant local council over proposed street names and will generally support the adoption of the name proposed by the local council. Members discussed. They felt that Ashurst Copse could be confused with other properties which already have the name Ashurst and the place Ashurst; also as Hammerwood Road was already a long road it would not be clear for any post or other deliveries. Members **agreed** to recommend Hammerwood Close or Hammerwood Gardens.

Clerk

The Clerk confirmed that street signs in the village were white lettering on green.

590. Consultations

a West Sussex County Council Consultation on School Admissions Arrangements 2019/2020 – closes 15th January 2018

Cllr Wailes said that he had looked at this and didn't think there was a need to respond. The consultation was noted, though Cllr Lindsay said that she would look at it.

KL

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

Cllr Forbes and the Clerk had attended a MSDC planning workshop.

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

Received.

593. Any Items for reporting or inclusion on future agenda

None.

594. Date of next meeting - Tuesday 6th February 2018

Meeting closed: 21:05

Chairman.....

Date.....