



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF ASHURST WOOD VILLAGE COUNCIL held on Tuesday 6th February, 7.45 pm at the Council Meeting Room.

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

IN ATTENDANCE: Caroline Leet (Clerk)

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: 1

Before the full Council meeting, Esme Wild from Forest Row Energy gave a presentation on energy saving tips and advice available to residents.

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

595. County and District Councillors' Reports

Responsibility of

- a. County Councillor Jacquie Russell opened by saying that she had seen the community Facebook page which had several comments/complaints regarding the newly painted zigzag and yellow lines for School Lane/Hammerwood Road. She had spoken to Pene Mather (Local Transport Improvements Project Officer) who had confirm that there was some outstanding work to be carried out before the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) would be confirmed and be enforceable.

Moving on, she said that the South East Water (SEW) works on the Lewes Road, East Grinstead near Woodbury Avenue was causing mayhem; the works were due to a burst water main. She was sympathetic and equally frustrated with the traffic problems this had been causing. She had been monitoring the situation and had had conversations with West Sussex Street Works Team and the utility providers. SEW responded to an emergency last Friday, and duly informed the strategical authority within two hours of being on site. They then applied for a permit from the Friday through to Tuesday (five days). Why five days to fix what appeared to be a small area was unclear especially, when there seemed to be no activity on many days. Then at the weekend the traffic lights stopped working to add frustration. She did report this to SEW and they did fix the lights. However, she was disappointed that the lights were still there as SEW had told her the reinstatement works would be completed today (Tuesday). She would be following this up. In the meantime, her main issue with utility companies, not all of them, are setting up traffic management systems and applying for unusually lengthy permits from West Sussex County Council (WSCC) and then not actually being on site every day of that permit time. For emergency works, the work should be carried out immediately and she did not understand the excessive periods required. She said that she had written to the WSCC Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure about the boundaries of the remit, in so far as if a provider says they need a permit for, say 10-days, do we have to accept that on face value or can the County Council put pressure on them. She added that WSCC needs to be more proactive.

Referring to the School Transport issues, WSCC are not going to commit any of its own funds to children who do not qualify under the statutory obligations, which she finds very sad and unfortunate. She has spoken to the transport

officer who suggested she speak to the bus companies and she had an appointment with Metrobus on 14th February. The Chair of the County Local Committees (CLC) was also attending as there were similar issues for students from Crawley Down attending Imberhorne School. The bus companies are a commercial entity and yet they do not want to put on more buses to encourage people to use the buses. At the same time WSCC say their vision is to leave the car at home and use more sustainable transport, yet there wasn't anything on offer. However, she does understand fiscally they are much challenged and perhaps they need to go to the higher body to get more money. In the meantime, she had spoken to the Nicky Clapson, the Business Manager at Sackville School to see if anything could be done on a community collaborative manner and maybe they could loan one of their buses with the Village Council providing a volunteer driver to take the children to school in the mornings; there are 79 children in Ashurst Wood who attend Sackville. At the last meeting with Ms Clapson, Cllr Lindsay had advised that she wasn't sure that enough children would use the service as the numbers that used the bus were now small. There was some discussion between members and Cllr Russell and it was noted that the bus costs were expensive; parents drive their children to school in the winter, but less in the summer so the bus numbers may increase then.

Cllr Russell mentioned that the next CLC meeting was on 1st March at East Grinstead library. School Transport would be on the agenda and Debra Myers, Director of Education (WSCC) was expected to be attending. Before the meeting, there would be a session to talk about the new funding mechanism being proposed by WSCC to replace the current small grants scheme (Community Initiative Fund/CIF).

The proposed closure of the Forest Row Amenity site was not directly a WSCC matter, but Cllr Russell said she had been contacted by some of her constituents. East Sussex County Council (ESCC) was voting on 6th February on the proposal for a formal consultation. She would respond to the consultation as closure would have an impact on the East Grinstead Recycling Amenity site.

Finally, a CIF application had been submitted by the Village Council for Ashstock. The CLC pre-meeting had agreed, in principal, to award a grant; this was subject to formal approval its meeting on 1st March.

District Councillor John Belsey updated members on the draft District Plan. The inspector had considered representations received on the main modifications and had held a hearing on the issues relating to the Hassocks new site allocation on 5th February 2018. A report was expected in March. He advised that the Council Tax for Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) was likely to increase by 3.2%.

b. Public Questions

None.

596. Apologies for absence

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

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

None.

598. Chairman's Announcements

Cllr Phillips said that the new line markings for School Lane/Hammerwood Road had now been painted. Pene Mather (WSCC Project Officer) had pointed out that the litter bin on the railings and the single post should be relocated; the Clerk was liaising with her. He also mentioned that the primary school had been talking about having the verges along the pavements of School Lane cut back. Richard Speller (WSCC Area Highways Manager) had given his permission and it was up to the school to organise a team of volunteers to carry out this work. He also mentioned that the Pene Mather had said that that the junction for Maypole Road/School Lane may be suitable for white hatch markings and could be something for the school to include in its Travel Plan. The school Travel Plan was also looking at flashing lights along Maypole Road and at the school end of Hammerwood Road.

Clerk

599. To confirm the Minutes of the meeting of the Council Meeting held on 5th December 2017

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

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

601. 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 5th December 2017 and 16th January 2018 were received.

b Public Services Committee

The minutes of the meeting on 12th December 2017 were received.

The following resolutions were noted:

- i The expenditure of up to £75 to purchase a wheelbarrow for the handyman.**
- ii The expenditure of £267 to purchase a replacement litter bin for Hammerwood Road outside the News Store.**
- iii It was agreed that the Clerk would submit the second phase of the grant application to the War Memorials Trust.**

c Finance and Administration Committee

The minutes of the meeting held on 16th January 2018 were received.

To receive and approve the following recommendation:

- i The internal audit arrangements should be reviewed every three years**
Members resolved the internal audit arrangements should be reviewed every three years.
- ii A new internal auditor for the Council should be appointed**
Members discussed and considered three possible candidates. Members **resolved to appoint a new internal auditor, Keith Robertson and it was noted that his fees were comparable with the existing arrangements.** It was agreed that this would be an initial one-year agreement.
- iii To increase the audit budget code 4057 (this includes internal and external audit costs) from £600 to £1000 for the budget year 2018/19**
Members **resolved to increase the budget for audit expenditure (4057) to £1,000.**
- iv To increase the Youth Club budget (4040) for 2018/19 from £1,400 to £1,700**

Clerk

Clerk

Cllr Phillips noted that a few years ago the budget for Youth Club wages was £2,000, but had been reduced over the years to reflect the unpredictability of

the Club. However, with its current popularity and the forthcoming review of the Youth Leader position in April, the budget needed to be increased. Members **resolved to increase the Youth Club budget (4040) to £2,000.**

- v To adopt the new Financial Regulations (as prepared January 2018)** Clerk
Cllr Phillips acknowledged Cllr Forbes extensive work in preparing the draft Financial Regulations. They were very comprehensive and he noted under the orders of work (section 10) and contracts and procurement (11) the move from percentages to absolute numbers. Cllr Forbes responded this was based on the threshold for publishing contracts (£25k and over) on the Contracts Finders website. The Council would continue to get three quotes for other works. Members **resolved to adopt the new Financial Regulations.** Clerk
- vi To note: it was agreed to amend the Standing Orders accordingly to reflect the new Financial Regulations – these affect Accounts and Financial Statement (19c) and Tenders and Contracts (28)** Clerk
Members noted that the Standing Orders, Accounts and Financial Statement (19c) and Tenders and Contracts (28) would now refer to the new Financial Regulations. Clerk
- vii To receive the Council’s Risk Assessment document** Clerk/JS
The Clerk’s report noted the Risk Assessment (RA) covered the general risks and other specific risks had specific RA such as the Financial Risk Assessment. These were working documents and updated as needed. Members received the Council’s Risk Assessment document.
- d Youth Club**
The Clerk advised that the Club had started back on 10th January. Current membership was 29 with attendance figures ranging from 19 to 26. Each week had had different activities from Smoove Attitude (Zumba style dancing), slime making and banana splits. The management committee had a meeting on 8th February to look at possible grant applications and fundraising to replace/buy new equipment. Cllr Phillips asked whether the Club has considered applying for a grant from the Village Council. The Clerk said that as present they were looking at other sources of funding.
- e Events Working Group – Ashstock Saturday 7th July**
Cllr Loveday said that the Events Working Group had met on 15th January and preparations were going on in the background. The Councillors had organised a quiz night on 10th February, which was sold out, to raise funds to support the costs of staging Ashstock.
- 602. Clerk’s report**
The Clerk’s report was received.
- a To note: the Clerk will be attending the West Sussex Pension Fund meeting 28th February**
- b Noted.**
To note: Historic England has awarded the Ashurst Wood War Memorial Listed Building Status (entry number 1452735)
Noted.
- c To note the proposed meeting dates for the new Council year 2018/19**
It was noted that these would be approved at the Annual Meeting of the Council (1st May).
- d To receive an update of the new General Data Protection Regulations (following the recent webinar training)**
The Clerk’s report on the recent Society of Local Councils Clerk (SLCC) recent training webinar was received.
- e To set a date for the Councillors GDPR training**
Cllr Wailes said that he was looking at how the new General Data Protection

Regulations (GDPR) would actually impact on the Council. A session looking at the principles of the GDPR and setting a list of action points was proposed for Thursday 15th February. The Clerk would liaise and organise.

Clerk/DW

603. Finance

a Accounts to pay

The accounts paid from 7th December 2017 to 5th February 2018 **were ratified**; the FairFX prepaid debit card accounts payments from 5th December 2017 to 6th February 2018 **were ratified**; and the accounts payable for 6th February **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 6th February

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

604. To approve the draft budget and precept for 2018/19 as approved in principle at the Council's December meeting, but to also consider the recommendations of the Finance and Administration Committee

Members discussed the draft budget presented at the December meeting. The amendments to the audit (4057) and Youth Club (4040) were noted. Cllr Phillips had updated the Council Tax projections with the increases for WSCC (4.95%), MSDC (3.2%), and the Police (7.8%). The Tax Base used for calculating the precept was 745.8. At the December meeting the Council had approved in principle a precept of £66,500 or 2.98% increase; however, with the change to the Tax Base the figure on Council Tax demands would only be 2.19%. Members discussed the draft budget for 2018/19 including the Village Centre car park resurfacing costs, the Youth Club salary and audit expenditure. Members agreed to increase the Precept to £67,000, which together with the Tax Base change, would mean an increase for residents of 2.96%. Looking at a band D property this was a £2.59 increase per year or 0.22p per month. The end-of-year projected carried forward for 2018/19 was £31,861 and was still within the guidelines for recommended reserves.

Members **unanimously resolved budget and the precept of £67,000 2018/19**.

Clerk

605. Village Centre Development

a To receive an update on the office and meeting room replacement heating options

Following the December meeting when the Council resolved to replace the heating system and expenditure up £2,000 (resolution 586b), the Office Working Group (OWG) had met in December and had agreed to find a consultant to give a view on the most suitable type of heating. Cllr Phillips said that it had not been possible to find a consultant and so Don Sinclair would prepare a specification based on the office and meeting room sizes and also to consider the options for the heating and ventilation for the toilet. This would then be used to obtain quotes and select a contractor.

OWG/BP

b To receive an update on the car park resurfacing project

Cllr Phillips reported that he had prepared a summary document which included three quotes for resurfacing the car park; four contractors had been approached. This would be presented to the next Council meeting on 6th March and the Village Centre Trustees meeting on 7th March.

BP

606. School Transport: to receive an update on the issues regarding the costs of bus travel and to consider how the Council can support promoting the

issues further

Cllr Phillips asked, following on from Cllr Russell's comprehensive update, if there was anything else the Council could do to obtain information on student transport. Cllr Judge said that she had already put a question on the community Facebook page about the current bus service, but she could put another question asking 'if there was a school minibus service for the mornings, would they/their children use it?' The Clerk said that she could devise a questionnaire for the youth club members. Cllr Forbes said that the Council had already researched the issues and when WSCC did their consultation to abolish the 3 in 1 student discount card, the Council did object at the time.

CJ/Clerk

607. To approve the expenditure of up to £1,000 (from office furniture budget (4070)) to purchase either a television or a laptop suitable for public viewing of the online planning applications

Cllr Phillips reminded members that as of 1st April, all planning applications would only be available to view electronically. At present, the Planning Committee project applications on to the wall using a projector and old laptop, but this means a bright light is directed into the face of some members. Also, the Council needed to consider how best applications could be presented for residents to view; using the office computers was not practical. Members discussed. It was agreed that the light from the projector was an issue, that the Council's laptop did need replacing and that viewing applications on a television screen would be more suitable. Cllr Phillips said that he would research options and costs for a decision at the Council's March meeting.

BP

608. Grants

Cllr Phillips reminded members that there was £250 left in the grants budget; however, it had been discussed previously that the Council could consider going over budget as 50% of the grants budget had been awarded to the Conservators of Ashdown Forest. Members discussed the two grant applications.

a St Catherine's Hospice

In recognition of the support St Catherine's Hospice gives to residents when needed, the Council unanimously **resolved to award a grant for £200 to St Catherine's Hospice.**

Clerk

b The Royal British Legion WW1 Centenary Commemorations 2018 – to consider sponsoring 'The Silent Soldier'

Members discussed at length. They supported the work of the Royal British Legion and would consider awarding a grant, but they did not consider sponsoring 'The Silent Soldier' appropriate. The Clerk was asked to write suggesting they complete a grants application form for consideration at a future meeting.

Clerk

609. Consultations

a West Sussex County Council draft Public Rights of Way (PROW) Management Plan consultation – closes 31st January 2018

The consultation was noted.

b West Sussex County Council Joint Minerals Local Plan: Proposed modifications consultation – closes 9th March 2018

The consultation was noted.

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

Cllr Forbes, the Clerk and Assistant Clerk had attended the Cluster Group meeting on 23rd January; minutes were available.



611. List on Clerk's report, correspondence previously circulated
Received.

612. Any Items for reporting or inclusion on future agenda
To reconsider membership of Sussex Surrey Association of Local Council (SSALC) Clerk
To consider attending any of the SSLAC forthcoming training events

613. Date of next meeting - Tuesday 6th March 2018

Meeting closed: 21:19

Chairman.....

Date.....