



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF ASHURST WOOD PUBLIC SERVICES COMMITTEE held on Tuesday 15th May 2018 7.45 pm at the Council Meeting Room.

PRESENT: Cllrs: D Loveday (Chair), R Bright, M Bussell, J Forbes, K Lindsay, B Phillips and J Samways

IN ATTENDANCE: Caroline Leet (Clerk)

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: 2

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. He noted that the meeting would be recorded.

230. Public Questions

Responsibility of

A resident made representation about Dirty Lane. Since August 2016, he had been corresponding with South East Water (SEW) about their escaped water which had caused damage to the surface of the lane and also washing down the ditches. Eventually, SEW loss adjusters agreed to clearing the ditches and resurfacing the lane to get it back to some form of normality; these works took place in April 2018. However, this was only part of the problem. Essentially what was happening is the drain that takes the water from highways, the street drains and the SEW network exits onto the grass verge next to the school and is directing water down Dirty Lane; this is especially bad when there are heavier times of rain. The contractors have resurfaced the lane and dug up ditches and added a ditch in the verge intended to act as informal soak away, but the quantity of water in bad weather means that although it acts partially as a soakaway, a proper soakaway is needed to cope with volumes of water during certain times of the year. The alternative is to somehow pipe out down the field (at the back of the school), but that's more complicated in terms of ownership. His question to the Village Council: would they be prepared to take the matter up with highways, it is their water coming out of that drain; could they be persuaded to provide a proper soakaway to conclude this process to deal with waste water.

Cllr Brian Phillips asked was it an adopted road? Cllrs Forbes and Bright clarified, no; only up to the first two houses. West Sussex County Council (WSCC) Highways do not have responsibility for the actual road. Cllr Forbes said that it was the drainage coming from the highways which was being piped along the side of Dirty Lane. She added there was an initial leak of SEW, which had been resolved, but because the pipe alongside the school was broken, the water that comes through the drains when it rains was flowing loose at the moment and out on to the lane. She had already mentioned to Richard Speller (Area Manager Highways (Mid-Sussex)) that she thought because of Riparian Responsibility, where if there is a ditch/watercourse which runs alongside your land, WSCC were considered responsible for keeping it clear. The other option would be to complete an Operation Watershed application which the Village Council would have to do and apply to WSCC. She had already looked at the application process and the points scoring which she thought came in just under the threshold of 65 due to the number of houses it would benefit, but might be worth getting back on to highways to discuss this point.

A second resident, added that the water still gushed out, but now also in to the field.

Cllr Loveday proposed in view of public attendance, to bring forward item 15 to

after item 5 on the agenda. Members agreed and **resolved to discuss item 15 after the formalities on the agenda and after item 5.**

231. Apologies for absence

Apologies from Cllr Judge and the Handyman were received and **resolved; the reasons were accepted.**

232. To receive Declarations of Interests from Members in respect of any matter on the agenda

Cllr Lindsay declared a personal interest in item 17 on the agenda as Membership Secretary to the Ashurst Wood Community Tennis Club (AWCTC).

233. To confirm the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 20th February 2018

The minutes were **approved as an accurate account of the meeting.**

234. Recorded meetings: to approve deletion of recording – 20th February 2018

Approved.

235. To receive an update on Dirty Lane

Following on from the discussions during Public Questions, Members discussed the issues of excess water in Dirty Lane. Cllr Loveday said that he felt that it would be worth taking the matter up with Highways; if the water was coming from your property, land or area of responsibility, he understood that they must have a responsibility to get rid of that water safely. Cllr Bright noted that since the repairs the water was directed in to the field and flooding it at the bottom; he questioned if it was controlled through a pipe would it be as severe? It was discussed further and agreed that a proper solution such as a soakaway was needed and one that WSCC Highways should fund. The Clerk was asked to write to Richard Speller advising that the flooding issues at Dirty Lane had been brought to the Council's attention and what would they suggest as there was still a continuing problem and what should be done about this. Failing this an Operation Watershed application should be considered; Cllr Forbes said that she would help with an application if need. Cllr Phillips pointed out that quotes for the work would be needed and the extent of the works and specification would be required; this would be a lot of work.

Clerk

236. Clerk's report

- a To note: Dog bin invoice 2017/18 was received after year end and will appear in 2018/19 payments. This invoice included collections for the two new bins (Hectors Lane/Lewes Road and Ivy Dene Lane)**

Noted.

- b To note: Mid Sussex District Council have reduced the height of the hedges at the John Pears playground to the same height as the gate**

Members noted that at the request of Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC), they had previously discussed and considered the removal of two of the hedges leaving the chestnut post and rail fence, to allow better visibility in to the park. However, MSDC Landscapes team had since advised against this and instead to reduce the hedge height to level with the gate. Members agreed it would have been a shame to have lost of the beech hedge and that visibility in to the park had been improved sufficiently by height reduction. Cllr Samways said that the Handyman should keep an eye on brambles that come

through the hedge and cut these back as needed; especially, before Ashstock.

c Tree Warden: to consider a request to assess the Walnut tree, Bishops Green

Cllr Bright said that he had looked at the Walnut tree. It would benefit from pruning; however, Walnut trees should not be cut until September and he would then look at removing a few of the lower branches.

RB

20:06 Two members of the public left the meeting

237. To receive a report from the Handyman

The Clerk referred to the Handyman's report from which highlighted an incident of broken glass bottles on the tennis courts recently and litter in the village being an ongoing issue.

a To approve the expenditure of up to £50 to purchase a water pressure sprayer

The Clerk said that the idea was to provide a water container with spray to aid the Handyman for cleaning the Street Snooker Wall, Street signs, the bus shelters and other street furniture. Members discussed and agreed that they did not think a water pressure sprayer was suitable especially as the manual water sprayers were not very effective. They concluded that the appropriate cleaning materials should be purchased which would help with removing dirt and algae as well as a long handled brush and container to transport water.

Members **resolved the expenditure of up to £50 to buy adequate cleaning tools and materials for cleaning the Council's street furniture and Street Snooker Wall.**

Clerk

238. Winter Management Plan

a Update for winter 2017/18

The Clerk's report was received, in which it noted the snow during week 26th February. WSCC Winter Service Statement issued over the course of that week, advised Town and Parish Council's to remain prepared to enact their Winter Management Plan but that they were not instructing snow clearance and those parishes that did instruct contractors would do so at their own cost. WSCC also recommended that Councils did not use up their resources prematurely.

Members discussed the Council's Winter Management Plan. Cllr Forbes noted that it did include some names and addresses and under the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) these could not be published; an edited version would need to be prepared if it was to be on the website. Cllr Samways said that the government advice for clearing snow could be included and that residents were safe to clear the snow from the pavements outside their properties contrary to previous myths of being sued.

JS/Clerk

b To note: The audit for 2018/19 grit salt supplies is due 8th June

The Clerk reported that the Handyman was in the process of checking the salt/grit bins supplies; WSCC would replenish the supplies where the bins were less than 75% full. Members discussed if the reserve supplies should be increased, but it was agreed replenishing the existing grit bins and reserves was sufficient.

Handyman
/Clerk

c To consider the Council taking on the costs directly for the contractor to plough and to grit

- the village's minor roads during extreme weather conditions
- in the event that WSCC do not consider the weather severe enough for the main through roads as identified in the winter management plan

- **To approve an expenditure budget based on approximately £35 per hour**

It was noted that this had been raised at March meeting of the full Council. After some discussion, Members **resolved the expenditure of up to £250 (or approximately 6 hours) to allow for additional snow ploughing of the villages roads when WSCC did not initiate the Winter Management Plan.**

It was **agreed** that the local contractor could use his judgement to clear the village's roads at a prevention level of two inches. WSCC should initiate the snow ploughing at four inches.

Clerk

239. War Memorial

a To receive an update of the cleaning and renovations work

It was noted that this was also being reported to the full Council. MSDC had now confirmed that planning permission would not be required for the cleaning and renovations work to the War Memorial. Cllr Phillips reported he had met with the contractor together with Cllr Bussell and the Clerk on 14th May. The contractor had agreed that cutting the hedge right back immediately above the wall to a minimum height above the wall to allow access to the top of the wall would be sufficient. He had also suggested replacing the upright bollard with a larger stone which would fit where the wall had eroded. He would also resecure the loose handrail epoxy resin. The JCT minor works contract had been signed and it was hoped that work would commence late June.

To consider the options and costs for an additional bollard to protect the wall to the War Memorial

In view of the suggestion to use a larger stone to sit where the bollard was located was considered sufficient.

240. To receive an update on the project for the basketball court extension for John Pears Recreation Ground

Cllr Loveday was delighted to report that MSDC had carried out the basketball court extension works and said that it looked very good. There had unfortunately been a delay with the basketball post backboards delivery and as soon as there were received the posts would be installed.

241. To review the outstanding highways projects and consider other potential issues

a Maypole Road / School Lane

Summary from Clerk's report: In May 2012 the Council started to look at how safety could be improved at this junction. Over the years there had been numerous meetings with WSCC Highways Officers and schemes drawn-up and considered. In 2014, new white lines were painted; June 2016, a Community Application was made to consider a speed table at this junction; in 2017, WSCC informally advised the highways consultants had said the junction was not suitable. Cllr Phillips said that under the Safer Routes to School scheme the primary school could request a hatched white line box for the junction; this would provide a visual and hopefully aid with improving safety. He said he would speak to the head teacher.

BP

b School Lane grass verges

Summary from Clerk's report: This was last discussed in May 2016, when it was noted WSCC Highways were updating its grass verges policy, but if the Council were to consider grasscreting the grass verges, costs were in the region of £150 per sqm. Cllr Loveday said that he thought the overall costs were expensive; members agreed. Members were sympathetic with the damage caused to verges by vehicles, especially, by commercial vehicles, but

agreed that the Council could not take set a precedent for one verge by taking on the costs to grasscrete.

c Wall Hill Road bends

Summary from Clerk's report: In 2012 the Council prepared a report on the issues with the Wall Hill Bends and has since had several meetings with WSCC Highways Officers. In June 2016, a Community Application was also submitted. Richard Speller has since advised that a safety audit had been carried out a substandard path of about two feet wide could be created, which would be a part solution. This would need to be included on the WSCC Integrated Works Programme (IWP) and only a limited number of schemes get added to this. Members discussed; it was noted that it would not be possible to have a proper footpath/pavement at these bends, but to have the bends widened by removing vegetation and new painted lines would be an improvement. The Clerk was asked to follow this up with Richard Speller.

Clerk

d Any other projects to consider

Members discussed highways issues and other possible projects. The following were proposed:

- To create a footpath from Maypole Road/School Lane junction to the Village Hall
- To create a gravel pathway through Bishops Green along Hammerwood Road to meet Maypole Road junction
- To install wooden bollards with reflectors at the grass verges for Hammerwood Road/Maypole Road

Clerk

242. To consider purchasing a Speed Indicator Device. Potential expenditure ranges from £1,400 to £2,500

It was noted that a resident had written to the Council offering to pay for a Speed Indicator Device (SID). Members agreed that this would not be appropriate. Members considered if the Committee should consider funding its own SID for the village. They concluded that SIDs have less of an affect where they are in static locations and to wait for the SID which is on a shared rota between the Cluster Group parishes; it was agreed they did have an impact when they pop-up from time to time. It was noted that the shared SID (recently stolen from a site in East Grinstead) was still waiting to be replaced by West Sussex County Local Committees (CLC).

243. To consider funding (approximate cost £150) a speed survey for the Lewes Road

Cllr Loveday reminded members that this had been raised at the Annual Village Meeting (24th April). Members discussed; they agreed a speed survey would provide some useful information of traffic and speeds on the A22 notably between after the junction of Hammerward Road towards Forest Row. Members **resolved the expenditure of £150 for a speed survey on the Lewes Road.**

Clerk

244. To consider a fundraising project to review and update the children's playground at the Recreation Ground (noting that this is an MSDC owned playground)

The Clerk said that the District Councillor John Belsey had been approached by residents about the playground equipment at the Rec. He thought that MSDC would consider match funding. Cllr Forbes said that Section 106 money was a good source to improve playgrounds; unfortunately the Council did not have any available to them at present. Members discussed and concluded that they did not have the resources to fundraise; however, if a resident did want to

fundraise for play equipment they would consider offering support.

245. Tennis court improvements – John Pears Recreation Ground

a To receive a report following a meeting with the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) Parks and Recreation Officer and to consider if proposals for improved court access should be looked in to further

Cllr Lindsay provides a summary of a meeting with Amy Gardner (Lawn Tennis (LTA) Local Authority Engagement Manager) and the Clerk. The LTA were working with local clubs and authorities to increase tennis participation of communities and use of park courts as their research had shown that this was where the majority of people played social tennis.

Before the meeting, Amy visited John Pears Recreation Ground to view the tennis courts and facilities. She thought the courts were of a very good standard and well maintained, but that the access was off putting with the padlock and lack of signage. She said that people would play more tennis if the experience was smoother. She had also looked at MSDC's fees: £8.30 per adult court booking; £4.15 per junior booking. These were high when compared to the average, even in London which was £5.00. She also thought that the AWCTC membership fees and MSDC season ticket prices were expensive when compared to research which indicated membership fees in the region of £35 to £50. Finally, the key locked courts was restrictive and dated.

Cllr Lindsay said that AWCTC had improved the access process and value for tennis players. She mentioned that MSDC did have an online booking system, but it wasn't easy and did not provide any information how to access the courts.

However, there were solutions available:

1. Improved signage: this would provide information how to access the courts, hiring them and costs, and membership
2. 'Tennis for Free' scheme: This is a charity that runs workshops/ introduction sessions at the courts to encourage people to play tennis. They also provide free equipment that is kept in a strong box (near the courts) with a combination lock for anyone to use.
3. Lower membership fees: AWCTC could consider lowering its annual fee, streamlining membership to be one cost per household and a simple rolling 12-month fee without a dated season. Other places had tried this and almost doubled take up. Problem was AWCTC had only just started a new 12 month membership season and did not have the administration resources for rolling memberships. It would also be difficult to manage with the current padlock/lockbox system.
4. New gate access system: This would allow people to pay, book and access courts via internet/app and would issue a personal activation code. The LTA research showed that streamlined access is easy to use and where it is in place at other local authorities it has encouraged greater use of the courts and thus increased income. It also looks great and just what we need to make the user experience smoother and increase tennis in Ashurst Wood.

However, there are several issues:

- a. MSDC would need to agree to the new system
- b. Clubspark online booking system would be needed as it works alongside the gate access system. This is an online booking programme which the LTA has been promoting for several years. AWCTC was currently a LTA member and therefore would be able to access this free of charge. Otherwise, it can cost in excess of £500 per Club; discounts could be



negotiated for district councils.

Cllr Lindsey mentioned as a side note, that AWCTC may not be able to renew its LTA membership in October due to a change in the membership criteria which required a welfare officer/representative to be appointed. This was being considered by the Club.

- c. A new single gate, electric power and SIM card.
- d. The gate access system would cost approximately £5,000; plus the cost of getting power to the courts, a new gate and an annual maintenance of approx. £300.

Cllr Lindsay went on to say that the system really did look very good and modern and the evidence shown had increased participation and revenue. This may be a project where the Council could work in partnership with MSDC and Ashurst Wood could pilot the scheme. It may also be a project worthy of an MSDC grant or for the new County Local Committees (CLC) Crowdfunding scheme.

Members discussed and agreed that it was something that could benefit residents and asked Cllr Lindsay and the Clerk to arrange a meeting with the District Councillor John Belsey to explore further.

KL/Clerk

b To consider expenditure for new signage for the courts

Members agreed that the information available to the public on accessing the courts was poor and **resolved expenditure of up to £100 for improved signage for the tennis courts.**

KL/Clerk

246. Any items for reporting or inclusion on future agenda

None.

Cllr Samways advised that the bus and train times were changing and these would be updated on the website.

JS

247. Date of next meeting – Tuesday 15th May

Meeting closed: 21:21

Chairman.....

Date.....