



MINUTES OF MEETING OF ASHURST WOOD VILLAGE COUNCIL held on
Tuesday 2nd July 2019, 7.45 pm at the Council Meeting Room.

PRESENT: Cllrs Forbes (Chair), B Phillips (Vice-Chair), T Draper, J Haite, J Lee, D Loveday and B Spoor.

IN ATTENDANCE: Rebecca Roberts (Acting Clerk)

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: 0

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

1. a. County and District Councillors Reports

West Sussex County Councillor Jacquie Russell was pleased to announce that the Toucan Crossing by Sackville School was approved by the County Local Committee and work should commence on 29th July as it needs to be done during the summer holidays. There has been criticism that the proposal was a whitewash, and had been pre-determined as it was put in the 2019/20 plan two years ago. This was necessary in order to plan the work schedule for the summer and if the project had not been approved it would have been removed from the plan. Road works will return to the Lewes Road for a new gas main on 22nd – 26th July inclusive. Cllr Russell gave an update on the recent Fire Service and Children's Service reports. WSCC has had problems going back years, especially in Social Worker recruitment and retention. Five million pounds had been invested into Children's Services and they now have up to 80/90% of full time employed social workers and 10% of agency staff. Funding cuts to the Fire Service were well known, but the criticism against the Service was for a lack of diversity in recruitment, lack of a diversity officer and bullying across the force. Apparently more funding has been set aside for the Fire Service to help with this. Cllr Russell returned to the bus strategy that they have been working on for the County Council. They are trying to deliver an Enhanced Bus Pass. Where commercial services are cut, they may try to organise community transport schemes to cover these areas. It will have to go to scrutiny, but in time, there will be a document coming out to Parish Councils, possibly in the form of a consultation. Talks are continuing with the bus company regarding concessionary fares for children from Ashurst Wood and Crawley Down. Finally, it was mentioned that the Liberal Democrat Councillor who spoke in County Hall about huge budget cuts and closure of libraries was talking out of context – nothing has been decided and these are only ideas being floated about as to how to deal with these budget cuts.

Mid Sussex District Councillor John Belsey reported he had attended the first proper full Council Meeting last Wednesday and he'd previously raised an issue of Clarion tenants not being able to move to other housing association accommodation. MSDC has approved amendments to the housing allocation scheme and now everyone in housing need, will be able to apply for any social housing in Mid Sussex.

Cllr Belsey reported on the ongoing issue of grass cutting and he has spoken to the senior landscaping team at Mid Sussex, who admit that the service hasn't been very efficient, but they hope to get it right going forwards, however it is very difficult to keep on top of the cutting when there are periods of rain and sun as everything suddenly starts to sprout very quickly and the demand for cutting increases with this.

If there is a desire for parishes to take on a piece of land themselves, this could be possible after discussion with MSDC.

There is a scheduled rota for the contractor, idverde, to follow which can be made available on request. They try to work around events. Some sites get up to 16 cuts a year, others only two.

However, if there are problems, the advice is that Parish Councils should deal with the senior members of the landscaping team.

Cllr Belsey reported that he had attended the Design Review Panel meeting for the Wealden House application where he spoke as much as he could against the design. There was a lot of discussion amongst the panel, and he was very pleased that they appeared to know Ashurst Wood and understand why the Village Council and residents were against the proposal. The developer argued that they were delivering the housing required by the Neighbourhood Plan, but as Cllr Belsey pointed out, we are meeting the numbers elsewhere. Six out of seven Panel members rated the scheme as amber, which means that they weren't happy with it, but that they wouldn't object to it. The developer was asked to go away and make some changes to the plans.

Cllr Belsey attended a Cabinet meeting last week. It is hoped that Mid Sussex will be the first District Council to take part in a pilot for food waste recycling. This is a collaboration between WSCC and MSDC, and MSDC is hoping to be the first to lead in this area.

Finally, Cllr Belsey mentioned the need to ensure that planning officers are requiring new builds to be as sustainable as possible.

b. Public Questions (*Public Bodies (Admission to meetings) Act 1960*)

None

2. Apologies for absence

Cllrs Arnott and Tyrrell's apologies were received and **resolved**: the reasons were accepted.

3. To receive Declaration of Interests from Members in respect of any matter on the Agenda (*Localism Act 2011 s31 (1)*)

None.

4. Chairman's Announcements

Cllr Forbes welcomed Rebecca Roberts to her first Village Council Meeting.

She also reported the invitation received from the primary school to Mary Poppins and asked Councillors to respond directly to the school should they wish to go.

5. To confirm the Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Village Council held on 4th June 2019 (*Local Government Act 1972 s12 para 41 (1)*)

The minutes were approved and signed by the Chairman as a true and correct account of the meeting

6. Recorded meetings

Resolved: members resolved to delete the recording of the meeting held on 3rd March 2019.

Action: Clerk

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

a. Planning Committee

The minutes from the meeting on 24th June were noted.

b. Tennis Club

To be discussed under item 10.

c. Youth Club

Youth Club has now closed for the summer. The end of year barbeque was well attended, especially by the current year 6 students

- i. It was agreed that the staffing committee would be delegated to recruit a new youth leader before September. The vacancy for a new Youth Worker has been advertised.

d. Events Working Group (EWG)

- i. **Kids for Tennis scheme** - it was noted that there will not be a children's summer event this year as it had not been possible to organise the proposed summer tennis coaching scheme.
- ii. **Premises Licence** – the Premises Licence at John Pears has been renewed at £70.
- iii. **Ashstock** – the EWG will report to the September meeting the viability and proposed date for Ashstock 2020. Cllr Loveday will send out an email to ascertain how many people want to be involved in the Ashstock working group and will arrange a meeting.
(Local Government Act 1972 s145(a))
Action: Cllr Loveday

8. Clerk's report

The Clerk's report was received and noted.

- a. To ratify the expenditure of £140 for two new Councillor SSALC briefing training sessions:
(Local Government Act 1972 s111(1)/s112)
Resolved: Members ratified the expenditure
- b. It was noted that all members Register of Interests have been submitted to the Monitoring Officer at MSDC and are on the Council's website.
- c. It was noted that all Councillors now have e-mail addresses with the ashurstwood-vc.gov.uk domain.
- d. It was noted that the Visioning Exercise is due to take place on 10th August as arranged with Chris Rolley Associates. Cllrs Arnott and Lee need to let the Clerk know if they are able to attend.
Action: Cllrs Arnott and Lee
- e. To ratify the expenditure of up to £100 for the electrician's call out fee and replacement of faulty call point in the meeting room
Resolved: Members approved the expenditure
- f. It was noted that Ashurst Wood would receive the Cluster Group Speed Indicator Device (SID) on 15th July for 4 weeks. (Since the meeting, the dates have changed and we will now receive the SID on 22nd July). The SID will need to be collected from East Grinstead Town Council.
Action: Handyman
- g. To nominate two Councillors to be responsible for the site locations and collation of the data
Resolved: Cllrs Phillips and Spoor were nominated

9. Finance

a. Accounts to pay

The accounts paid from 5th June to 2nd July **were ratified**; the FairFX prepaid debit card accounts payments from 5th June to 2nd July were **ratified**; and the accounts payable for 3rd July **were approved by the Council**. The file of invoices was available to be viewed.
(These had either resolutions under the General Power of Competence or powers now identified in the

minutes or powers within Local Government Act 1972 (sections 111, or 137))

b. To receive RBS income and expenditure report up to 2nd July

The RBS/Alpha income and expenditure report was received; it was noted it was dated up to 4th June. Cllr Phillips spoke about the RBS reports and has produced a spreadsheet that he is happy to go through with members. It allows members to think about what the end of year projection will be as an on-going document. It is a legal requirement to send out the RBS income and expenditure report and it was agreed to refer to the Finance and Administration Committee to look at different packages to make the reporting easier.

c. To confirm that Rebecca Roberts is now authorised on the Unity Trust Account (current account) and the new nominated Councillors are also authorised

d. It was noted that the FairFX prepaid debit in the name of Caroline Leet will be closed and the balance transferred to the second card in the name of Rebecca Roberts.

Action: Clerk

e. To approve the maintained balance on the FairFX card in the name of Rebecca Roberts will increase from £200 to £400 until further notice

Resolved: Members agreed the increase

f. To consider the expenditure of £80 to increase the e-mail space on the server to accommodate the new Councillor e-mail addresses. It was noted that this will mean a budget overspend on Website (code 4027) (*Local Government Act 1972 s111(1)*) and (*General Data Protection Act 2018*)

Cllr Forbes stated that the quota of space for the .gov.uk addresses is very small and that the Council does need more storage space.

Resolved: members agreed the expenditure of £179.99 for 10240MB and noted the budget overspends.

Action: Clerk

g. It was noted that the final repayment to PWLB for the purchase of the Village Hall will be paid on 17th July and the Council will then own the Village Hall outright.

10. To receive an update on the new court access system to the tennis courts in partnership with the Ashurst Wood Community Tennis Club (AWCTC) and Mid Sussex District Council

Cllr Forbes reported that a meeting was held on 24th June with AWCTC, MSDC and the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA). The new access system will make it easier for players to get on the courts. The electricity for the gate system will come from the pavilion at John Pears. The Council already resolved to a budget of £1000 to help pay for the supply. The LTA is working with MSDC to make sure all the park courts in the district are on their system, but Ashurst Wood will be the first to trial the new access gate system. At the meeting, AWCTC had considered dissolving the club, but have since decided against this for the time being. There are further details to sort out.

11. To receive an update on the current vacancies (*LGA 1972 s112*)

a. To ratify the Assistant Clerk as the Acting Clerk whilst the office staffing is reviewed:
Resolved: members approved the Assistant Clerk as the Acting Clerk.

b. To ratify the appointment of the new cleaner for the Pavilion and Council facilities (*resolution 71*)

Resolved: Members agreed the appointment.

- c To consider establishing a Staffing Committee to deal with recruitment and other employment matters (*Councillors already nominated to manage the recruitment process for the new Clerk and review of the Assistant Clerks role; resolution 69*)
Resolved: members approved the Committee and appointed Cllrs Forbes, Haite, Loveday and Phillips
12. **To consider adopting the Disciplinary and Grievance Policies based on the NALC model policies**
Resolved: Members agreed to adopt the policies and to add 'conduct bringing the Council into disrepute' to the list of examples of misconduct.
Action: Cllr Forbes
13. **To approve the expenditure of up to £150 for the electrician to conduct the full electrical 5-yearly test**, as required by the Village Centre insurers, and also to conduct an annual PAT test* (*LGA 1972 s111*)
Resolved: members approved the expenditure
14. **To approve the expenditure of £312** for Wired Electrics to further investigate the fault with the fire alarm, locate and replace the faulty cabling and to fit a new smoke detector head in the loft area (*LGA 1972 s111*)
Resolved: members approved the expenditure
15. **To consider holding a pre-meeting discussion** which would allow all Councillors to be briefed on the agenda items
Cllr Haite explained that this could help clarify agenda items or provide background information before the meeting. No decisions would be made until the meeting.
Resolved: Members agreed to pre-meeting discussions for clarification
16. **To consider confirming the establishment of the following Committees, now that all the Council's seats are filled:**
a. Finance and Administration Committee (proposed first meeting in October 2019)
b. Public Services Committee (proposed first meeting to be in February 2020)
Resolved: Members agreed to re-establish the Finance and Administration Committee and to hold the first meeting in October 2019. The Committee has Terms of Reference, but these will be looked over in case they need updating.
Members also agreed to re-establish the Public Services Committee which will meet in February 2020.
17. **To appoint members for each Committee**
Resolved: committee members for the Finance and Administration Committee to be Cllrs Draper, Forbes, Loveday and Phillips
Committee members for the Public Services Committee to be Cllrs Draper, Forbes, Haite, Lee, Loveday and Spoor
18. **To elect Chair and Vice-Chair for each Committee**
Councillor Phillips was appointed as Chair of the Finance and Administration Committee
Councillor Loveday was appointed as Chair of the Public Services Committee
It was agreed that Vice-Chairs to both Committees would be appointed at the first meetings.
Action: Clerk/All

- 19. To review and approve the draft winter management plan for 2019/20** so that it can be submitted to West Sussex County Council (WSSC).
The winter management plan has not been requested as yet by WSSC. Cllr Forbes considered that a few changes should be made to the current plan. There have been a lot of problems finding a contractor to clear heavy snow due to issues with public liability and contractors having to sign a contract with WSSC. Cllr Phillips suggested writing our own contract with the suggested contractor who is a local resident provided that our insurers and WSSC were happy with this. West Sussex Highways have had their budget cut and may now only clear A and B roads, so they may be happy for the Village Council to undertake the work.

Resolved: members agreed to work on the winter management plans and for the Public Services Committee to discuss purchasing a push-along gritter.

Action: Clerk and Cllr Forbes

- 20. To consider if there is a need to** review the Village's dog bins and if new ones are needed/additional collections*

Resolved: members agreed to defer to Public Services

Councillor Belsey said that Mid Sussex District Council have been doing a dog bin audit since September last year and he will ask them to send any changes and a map of the dog bin positions to the Clerk.

- 21. To receive an update on the wild flower meadow** at John Pears Recreation Ground
The background of the wild flower meadow was explained. More recently, MSDC said they were going to re-instate the meadow and a meeting was held to discuss suitable locations and it was agreed that the wild flower meadow would be situated near the Community Orchard and the other side of the new footpath. This was to be reviewed after one year with the possibility of planting seeds in other areas in the future. Within a few weeks the contractors used by MSDC mowed some of the meadow and more recently, it has been mowed again. Cllr Belsey said that he would try to find out why it was cut – there seems to be a lack of communication between MSDC and their contractors.

It was noted that John Pears Field is not a nature reserve, but a park for all residents to enjoy. Cllr Belsey also stated that Mid Sussex have asked for local Councils to deal with the higher tier of management, in this instance, our contact would be Rob Anderton who is the Divisional Leader of Commercial Services and Contracts at Mid Sussex District Council.

It was also agreed to refer the subject of the wild flower meadow to Public Services.

- 22. Consultations**

None.

- 23. To receive reports from Councillors who have attended outside bodies**

Cllr Phillips attended the meeting of The Conservators of Ashdown Forest. He gave a brief explanation of the background of the Conservators. They have now set up a new charity, but it has taken 3 years, so in the meantime they have asked parishes for funding and raised £10,000. They also sell licences to professional dog walkers. There are many car parks on the forest, but they have decided against parking charges and have instead decided to sell voluntary Ashdown Forest Car Stickers which can be purchased for £100, £50 or £25 and Cllr Phillips offered to try to sell them from the office. (Since the meeting, delivery of the stickers has taken place). Fires, out of control dogs and fly-tipping are the biggest problem for the forest. If anyone sees a dog worrying sheep, take a photograph to aid prosecution.

Cllr Forbes attended the Cluster meeting on 19th June with the Assistant Clerk. Richard Speller from West Sussex Highways reported that his budget had been cut from £14m to £7m. As a result of cuts, services such as grass cutting will be reduced to 2 cuts a year – one will be an edge cut, the other a full verge cut. He also produced the annual delivery programme and it was noted that Maypole Road is due to be re-surfaced. It was also noted that the delivery programme can change throughout the year. Richard Speller also offered to do training on the Speed Indicator Device and on how to run the software. Cllr Phillips agreed to contact Richard to arrange this. Cllr Forbes also attended the CLC meeting in Balcombe and reported that the next meeting will be held on 21st October.

24. Items of correspondence

List on Clerk's report, correspondence previously circulated

Received.

25. Any Items for reporting or inclusion on future agenda

An e-mail had been received from MSDC about nominations for Community Awards. The Clerk will email MDSC to ask for an extension as there is no August meeting.

Burial Contribution to Forest Row Parish Council. Extension of the agreement to be put on the September agenda. Cllr Spoor would find out how many residents from Ashurst Wood have been buried/cremated in Forest Row in the past year.

Action: Cllr Spoor

Date of next meeting – 3rd September

Meeting closed: 21:30

Chairman.....

Date.....