



MINUTES OF MEETING OF ASHURST WOOD VILLAGE COUNCIL held on
Tuesday 3rd December 2019, 7.45 pm at the Council Meeting Room.

PRESENT: Cllrs Forbes (Chair), T Draper, J Haite, B Spoor and A Tyrrell.

IN ATTENDANCE: Rebecca Roberts (Clerk) and RFO Sam Booker **MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:** 0

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

1. a. County and District Councillors Reports

West Sussex County Cllr Russell reported that she had chased Highways regarding the resurfacing of Maypole Road, but had no update as yet.

She also confirmed that Ashurst Wood Village would not have minor roads gritted due to cuts. The A22 will be gritted. The grit bins are for use on pavements. These cuts were reported at the recent Emergency Planning meeting (EPLG) – the cuts to gritting have occurred because other services need the money. 31% of the County's roads will be treated – reduced from 41% (the Government's Code of Practice advises 28%). However, Cllr Russell informed members that if there are roads in the village where it is felt there is good reason for gritting, to contact Richard Speller who will assess the road and if it meets the necessary criteria, it might be added to the gritting route.

Cllr Russell reported that the Chief Executive of Hampshire County Council was appointed by the Department of Education as a Commissioner to report on Children's Services following the failed Ofsted report in June 2019. Children's Services is currently in special measures and is on its way to being put into a trust. This may not happen if the service improves. Cllr Russell is working alongside the Commissioner (she is now Cabinet member for Children and Young People). The Commissioner's final report cannot be published due to Election purdah (although details have been leaked).

The toucan crossing outside Sackville School needs detector pads put in to stop the lights changing to red when no-one is using the crossing. Cllr Russell reported that she will chase the installation of the pads.

Mid Sussex District Cllr Belsey thanked everyone for organising the Christmas Market.

He reported that following a complaint about the tennis courts that they will continue to be maintained and he is hopeful that we will receive an update on the tennis court access system soon.

Cllr Belsey reported that Idverde who are contracted by MSDC to cut the grass and trim hedges at parks and open spaces are supposed to litter pick before they trim. If there is litter left over, they can be reported and they have one hour to return and tidy up the area. MSDC is in year 6 of a 7-year contract with Idverde and the contract is currently based on the frequency of cuts, not the length of the grass. MSDC would like this changed after the current contract ends.

b. Public Questions

(Matters raised by Cllr Belsey on behalf of members of the public): Clarification on the opening of the Three Crowns was requested and it was reported that the prospective tenants had advised that they pulled out because Star Pubs were dragging their heels.

A footpath from Woods Hill Close through to the rec has been fly-tipped with wood. No one is taking responsibility for the land. It was suggested that the Handyman could take a look and clear up.

2. Apologies for absence

Cllrs Arnot, Lee, Loveday and Phillips – 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

None.

4. Chair's Announcements

Cllr Forbes welcomed the new RFO/Assistant Clerk, Sam Booker to the meeting. She thanked the Clerk, RFO, Members and volunteers who had helped with the Christmas Market.

5. To confirm the Minutes of the Meeting of the Village Council held on 5th November 2019

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 2nd July 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 Planning meetings were received and noted.

b. Finance and Administration Committee

The Chairman of the Finance and Administration (F&A) committee was absent. The draft budget was received and the precept for 2020/21 was agreed in principle to be £69,500 which is a 1.74% increase. The Clerk was asked to put the draft budget on the website to be viewed by residents. The F&A committee will meet again in January 2020 and the full Council will approve in February subject to comments from the public and members.

c. Staffing Committee

The Council had previously agreed to separate the role of the Clerk and RFO and as a result, Sam Booker has now been appointed. A job description and person specification were prepared by Cllrs Forbes, Haite and Phillips after consultation with the Clerk. The position was advertised locally and 5 applications received, all from residents of the village. Applicants completed an application form available on the website or from the office. One applicant sent a letter and they were emailed to say a completed application form was needed – this was eventually hand delivered though the applicants' letter box and the form was completed and returned to the office. The recruitment panel shortlisted the applicants for interview by scoring each candidate against the essential and desirable criteria found in the person specification within the job description, using only the information supplied from each application form. Four candidates received scores of 20 and above and were invited for interview. Interviews took place on 19th November and the same list of questions were put to each candidate and they were marked on their responses. All candidates were excellent and more than competent to undertake some or all aspects of the job. Sam Booker received the highest mark and the panel unanimously agreed she was the ideal person for the job, which she has since accepted and has started work and was an enormous help with the Christmas Market.

d. Youth Club

Cllr Tyrrell reported that 24 members of the club turn up regularly and that they are hoping to find a volunteer DJ to come to the club's Christmas Party on 12th December.

e. Events Working Group (EWG)

- i. **Ashstock** - Cllr Forbes has contacted a group called Sussex Community Support who are available to help with community events such as Ashstock. For a donation, they will provide support with tasks such as helping with car parking and selling programmes at the gate. An Ashstock meeting will be scheduled in January.
- ii. **Christmas Market** – Sam gave a breakdown of income and expenditure from the market and was pleased to inform members that the event made a surplus of £625.61. It was reported that all raffle prizes had been collected and it was agreed not to hold a children's raffle in future.

8. Clerk's report

The Clerk's report was received and noted. It was reported that the play equipment consultation finished on 1st December and MSDC are going through the responses.

9. Finance

a. Accounts to pay

The accounts payable from 7th November to 5th December **were approved by the Council**; The file of invoices was available to be viewed

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

The RBS/Alpha income and expenditure report was received.

c. To agree staff overtime for the Christmas Market

Resolved: members agreed to pay overtime of 8 hours to the Clerk and RFO.

10. To receive an update on proposed celebrations for the 75th anniversary of VE Day on 8th May 2020

Cllr Draper reminded members that at 3pm on 8th May 1945, Winston Churchill announced the official peace declaration. Buglers will be playing The Last Post at 2.55 pm throughout the UK followed by a toast at 3pm. MSDC have offered grants of £250 towards organised celebrations. Ideas are to hold a street party, quiz or a tea dance, but this would require volunteers. It was agreed to ask residents in the next E-News, what celebrations they would like to see and if they would be happy to volunteer.

11. To receive an update on the tennis court access system

Cllr Belsey reported that there was no update as yet, but there will hopefully be news soon.

12. To receive an update on Policing in the village

A full update is in the Clerks report, but members were informed that the Community Protection Notice issued in November has been breached several times by the offender and he is due back in court on 12th December. It was also reported that the Police are patrolling the village on a more regular basis. Inspector Dommatt hopes to attend the February Council Meeting.

13. Consultations

None

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

Cllr Forbes and Phillips attended the Cluster Meeting on 20th November. Richard Speller from West Sussex Highways reported that the new contracts will start on 1st April after the one with Balfour Beatty expires. There are now separate contracts for different services.

Ash Dieback continues to be a problem and a project manager has now been recruited to deal with the problem and hopefully recoup some of the cost from the sale of the timber. There are over half a million ash trees across the County that need felling.

As previously reported, low frequency bus routes will not be gritted this winter. Buses will revert to the A22, avoiding travelling through the village if the roads are poor.

Cllr Forbes also attended the Village Centre Trustees' AGM and reported that the Trustees have agreed to pay 50 percent of the CCTV installation up to £750.

15. Items of correspondence

a. correspondence previously circulated

Received.

16. Any Items for reporting or inclusion on future agenda

The Three Crowns

Setting up a working group as a result of the Visioning exercise

Ashstock

Date of next meeting – 4th February 2020

Meeting closed: 9.06pm

Chairman.....

Date.....