



MINUTES OF MEETING OF ASHURST WOOD VILLAGE COUNCIL held on
Tuesday 4th February 2020, 7.45 pm at the Council Meeting Room.

PRESENT: Cllrs Forbes (Chair), Draper, Haite, Loveday, Phillips, Spoor and Tyrrell.

IN ATTENDANCE: Rebecca Roberts (Clerk) and RFO Sam Booker, Inspector Dommett & PC Tichband

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: 2

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

1. a. County and District Councillors Reports

West Sussex County Cllr Russell reported that she had spoken with Richard Speller from Highways and contractors will be back to complete the works in Maypole Road. Cllr Russell had also discussed with Richard the desire for a path leading from the top of Wall Hill to the entrance of John Pears. This has gone through Community Highways 3 times, but keeps failing the criteria as any path put in would be substandard due to the narrowness of the road. Cllr Russell said that she has written to the Cabinet Member for Highways to try and break the deadlock, especially since WSCC have a walking and cycling strategy in place, but the lack of pathway to John Pears along the road, causes residents to drive to the park.

Cllr Russell reported that a new Chief executive started on the 6th January. Ofsted had reported that there had been signs of improvement within Children's Services and the next Ofsted inspection will be in May. The new Director of Children's Services (DCS) will be Lucy Butler, who is currently at Oxfordshire County Council. She is very well qualified and starts in May.

Cabinet have agreed a 3.99% precept increase which will be ratified week commencing 10th February at the full Council Meeting. Children's Services will be taking the majority of the increase. Three Children's Homes will be reopening (previously closed as not fit for purpose), which should help alleviate finances as it is expensive to put the children in private homes.

Fire & Rescue Service has been inspected and tangible improvement found – no further action is required until the next inspection.

Cllr Russell confirmed that the next CLC meeting will be on 26th February.

Mid Sussex District Cllr Belsey thanked Cllr Forbes, the Clerk, Karen Lindsay and Anne Fergus for attending the meeting at John Pears earlier in the day at short notice, where the condition of the tennis courts was discussed. He reported that the existing posts and nets will be replaced and that the Tennis Club will be given stiff brooms to help clear away the moss.

Cllr Belsey reported that tenders had now gone out for the new playground improvements at John Pears and that he had brought up the need for improved parking at the park.

The state of the Three Crowns pub was also discussed, including the fly-tipping in the pub garden.

Cllr Belsey also reported that the cabinet would be meeting on the 10th February to confirm which Parishes will be selected to take part in the new Food Waste Recycling Trial. It is hoped that Ashurst Wood will be selected.

Cllr Belsey also mentioned that he has referred 2 residents to Donna Shore, the Anti-Social Behaviour Officer at Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC), as they had been subjected to intimidation.

Finally, he reported that he was working with a homeowner in Lewes Road with regards to problems caused by the building works at Spinney Hill and Willowtrees.



b. Public Questions

A resident commented that groups of young men had begun walking round the village in response to the on-going anti-social behaviour. It was felt that just walking around the village with a friend can act as a deterring presence.

The resident was advised that the possibility of re-starting Neighbourhood Watch would be on the agenda for the next Public Services Meeting.

2. Apologies for absence

Cllr Arnott and Lee – 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

It was agreed to move item 12 forward and Cllr Forbes suspended Standing Orders and invited Inspector Pete Dommatt and PC Sam Tichband to speak

12. To receive an update on Policing in the Village

Inspector Dommatt stated that there were 12 recorded crimes in the Village in December 2019, one burglary; one assault and the rest were for criminal damage and antisocial behaviour.

There has been an increase in the Police precept and the money that the Prime Minister Boris Johnson had promised has been allocated and there will be an increase in Police numbers and Inspector Dommatt said this was a very positive thing for Sussex. He reported that in November last year the Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC) announced an initiative for a named PCSO for every village in Sussex. As a result there will be 5 PCSO's to cover East Grinstead and the surrounding areas, which will go up to 12 in April 2020, covering Mid Sussex and Crawley. 2020 will see more funding for the Police, allowing designated teams for Rural Crime, Heritage Crime and funding to equine rangers (neighbourhood watch on horses). Policing is done in partnership and Sussex police work with MSDC who give funding to them which helps the police give talks to pupils in secondary schools and includes a programme for parents to have support (which will eventually be rolled out to every secondary school).

In relation to the recent anti-social behaviour in the village, the Police and Youth Offending officer are working with both education and social services departments. Jack Heslip has been arrested and prosecuted for breach of the Community Protection Notice (CPN) and there are further breaches of the CPN to go in front of the courts, and evidence is being collected to try and get a more effective order made.

In response to residents' questions about Police response, the Police are documenting every call and getting statements. There may not be an immediate response to a call if the Police know who is responsible and can pick them up later. The risk is assessed when a call is made.

The Council thanked Inspector Dommatt and PC Tichband

8.46pm Inspector Dommatt, PC Tichband and one member of the public left

Standing orders were reinstated

4. Chairman's Announcements – None

5. To confirm the Minutes of the Village Council meeting held on 3rd December 2019

The minutes were approved and signed by the Chairman as a true and correct account of the meeting subject to an amendment to item 7b.

6. Recorded meetings

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

Action: Clerk



8.50pm member of the public left

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 following recommendations from the Finance and Administration Committee were considered:

- i. To agree for the Clerk & RFO to attend End of Year Training at the cost of £140** - Resolved – members approved the expenditure
- ii. To approve the expenditure of £150 for the Clerk & RFO to attend the SLCC Regional Seminar in June** – Resolved, members approved the expenditure
- iii. To agree for RBS to remotely help with the End of Year procedure at the cost of £360** – Resolved – members approved the expenditure
- iv. To confirm the assistant Youth Worker increases her hours by 30 minutes per week** – members approved the additional hours from April
- v. To receive the annual pay increments as per contract of employment and to include the cleaner** - Resolved – members agreed and approved that the staff pay will increase by one scale point (where applicable) and by the annual increment as from April.
- vi. To receive and approve the draft budget & precept recommendations for 2020/21** – Cllr Phillips reported that the tax base had changed which makes the precept for Ashurst Wood show as an increase of 1.87%. **Members approved the precept of £69,500.**

It was to be noted that the budget for 2020/21 includes £8,500 for Ashstock expenditure

c. Youth Club

Cllr Tyrrell reported that an extra volunteer is needed at the club, although not every week.

d. Events Working Group (EWG)

- i. Ashstock** - Cllr Forbes gave a brief report following another meeting with High Gain Events at John Pears and informed the Council that all is going according to plan and Jonathan Samways is researching the beers. Youth bands are coming forward and two food vendors are confirmed.
- ii. Christmas Market** – it was noted that the Village Council received a 'Thank You' card from the Peanut Ward at the Queen Victoria Hospital in response to the Councils' donation of surplus grotto gifts from the Christmas Market.

8. Clerk's report

The Clerk's report was received and noted.

9. Finance

- a. To receive the RBS income & expenditure report** – Cllr Phillips reported that the Council was in a healthy position for the end of year

b. Accounts to pay

The accounts payable from 5th December 2019 to 6th February 2020 **were approved by the Council**; The file of invoices was available to be viewed

c. To consider Grant requests from:

- a. St Catherine's Hospice for £200** – resolved - members agreed to the request
- b. 4Sight Vision Support for £200** – resolved - members agreed to the request
- c. Short Mat Bowls for £150** – resolved – members agreed to the request

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

Cllr Draper reported that she held a meeting which was well attended and enough volunteers have come forward to make the event viable to commemorate VE & VJ Day. It is agreed that residents will bring their own picnic, dress up in 1940's clothing and enjoy some live music. The event will be free to attend, but donations would



be asked for supporting the charity Help 4 Heroes. A grant from MSDC for £250 has been applied for. It has been agreed that there will be no road closure, but that the car park for the Village Centre Car Park will be closed off. It was also confirmed that the Council is happy to support the event.

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

Cllr Belsey, Forbes and the Clerk attended a meeting with MSDC at the tennis courts about the general state of the courts, but also the court access system. Members were informed that everything is in place, apart from the accounting aspect.

12. To receive an update on Policing in the village – see above

13. To receive an update on CCTV for the office and Village Centre

It was reported that the CCTV had been installed and was working well.

14. To consider future Council meetings starting at 7.00pm

It was noted that East Grinstead Town Council's meetings start at 7.00pm. Members discussed and resolved to start future meetings at 7.00pm, with any Planning Meetings commencing at 6.45pm.

15. To discuss procedures to be taken when dealing with aggressive or abusive members of the public

Members agreed that aggressive and abusive behaviour towards staff will not be tolerated. It was agreed to prepare a statement to this effect to be displayed in the office and that officers should terminate any abusive telephone call after giving a warning to the caller.

16. To discuss concerns about the future of the Three Crowns Pub and decide on any action to be taken by the Village Council

Members received a report from Cllr Forbes. Members noted the fly-tipping that had occurred in the pub garden and that the overall state of the property is getting worse and worse. The pub is listed as an Asset of Community Value and has been closed since April 2017. Prospective tenants recently withdrew, apparently because of delays by the brewery. Members agreed to write to the brewery and request a meeting at the Council offices in order to discuss the future of the premises.

It was also agreed to canvass the community for their views.

17. To discuss arrangements for the Annual Village Meeting (AVM) taking place on 21st April 2020

It was agreed to launch a survey at the AVM asking the residents what projects they would like to see the Council undertake, following the Visioning Exercise.

Speakers have been organised and it was also agreed to see if any Village group wanted to come along and promote their organisation.

18. Consultations

None

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

- a. **Village Centre Trustees meeting** – Cllr Forbes attended the meeting and reported that new windows were being installed.

20. Items of correspondence

- a. **correspondence previously circulated**

21. Any items for reporting or inclusion on future agenda

None

Date of next meeting – 3rd March 2020 at 7.00pm



Meeting closed: 9.38pm

Chairman.....

Date.....