
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE VILLAGE COUNCIL held remotely on
Tuesday 2nd June 2020, 7.00 pm using Zoom

PRESENT: Cllrs Forbes (Chair), Phillips (Vice-Chair) Haite, Lee, Spoor and Tyrrell

IN ATTENDANCE: Rebecca Roberts (Clerk) and Sam Booker (RFO), West Sussex County Cllr Jacquie Russell, Mid Sussex District Cllr John Belsey, **MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:** 0

The chair opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

1. a. County and District Councillors' Reports

County Cllr Russell reported that the SGN equipment that has been left since the gas works started have a permit in place until 26th June, but it will remain under review.

There is no progress on the pathway to John Pears Field, but she hopes that more details will come once West Sussex County Council (WSCC) starts getting back to normal.

There are traffic lights on the A22 due to UK Power Networks doing some work. Permit is until the 12th June.

Yesterday, the restrictions on household waste recycling sites were lifted further, with more types of waste accepted, but trailers are still not accepted.

Schools are beginning to start back, early years, reception and years 1 and 6 in Primary schools as well as years 10 and 11 in alternative provision. Years 10 and 12 in Secondary schools will return for face to face tuition to complement continued online provision. Schools will still be expected to provide schooling for the children of key workers and the vulnerable. The Government hope that all Primary School children will be able to return to school for a period of time before the summer break. There is some anxiety appearing in the schools over social distancing, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and cleaning. WSCC are looking at the possibility of testing in schools for coronavirus. The current guidelines are that if anyone (teacher or pupil) are showing symptoms, then they must return home and self-isolate for 7 days.

The attendance at school is currently running at 3.5% across the county compared to the national average of 2%.

The primary focus for Highways is the funding for emergency active travel – WSCC obtained funding from the Government in the first wave for £784,000, with the main purpose of the funding is to promote cycling as a replacement for journeys previously made by public transport for short and local journeys. Schemes are expected to be temporary but some may well become permanent. Proposals need to be submitted by the 5th June. The Department for Transport (DfT) will determine if the schemes are suitable for funding. WSCC is working with Districts and Boroughs to draw up a list of priority schemes to be submitted to the DfT. The work needs to start within 4 weeks, or the funding will go back. There are 3 types of proposals which are: pop up cycling routes along the roads, reallocation of road space and town centre amendments.

Highways maintenance overall funding from the Government for 2021 is £500million of which WSCC get £9.8 million. This is more than they thought they would get and gives WSCC more scope for carriage way repairs and patching.

Adult Services – Public Health England have reported 518 deaths from Covid-19 in West Sussex up to the 15th May. In Mid Sussex this equates to 0 deaths in homes, 64 in hospital and 82 in care homes and 1 in a hospice. Testing capacity at the moment is focused on homes caring for elderly and people with dementia. Testing funding for WSCC is £13.623 million which has been allocated by the Government. WSCC is required to pass the majority of this funding (75%) on to care homes.

Children's Services – continues to improve and cope with the challenges of Covid-19. The service is adapting and maintaining its statutory responsibilities. Face to face visits are now occurring for children with protection plans in place and virtual visits also continue. Safeguarding referrals are down by about 37% but a surge is being anticipated.

The financial cost of the Covid-19 lockdown until June is estimated at £85million to WSCC and they have received somewhere in the region of £36.4million from the Government so far from the Covid funding.

District Cllr Belsey said that he thought one of the cycle forums had put forward a scheme for the A22 cycle route from Ashurst Wood towards Sackville school. Cllr Russell confirmed that it was on the list, but under East Grinstead. If it isn't one of the schemes that goes forward, one of the best chances would be via the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP).

MSDC had its first public meeting on 1st June via Zoom. It was reported that £22million had so far been distributed in business grants. Additionally there is now a discretionary fund of £1.5million for those businesses who don't pay rates and have shared office space, market traders and businesses that have not previously qualified for a business grant.

The kerb side collections are back for garden waste.

On 8th June, car parking charges will resume in MSDC car parks. The idea behind this is to stop cars being left in car parks all day.

There has been an increase in anti-social behaviour in parks in East Grinstead with barbeques, alcohol and drug use by young adults. MSDC is working closely with the Police.

The new play equipment at John Pears is waiting for the tender to be accepted and at this point, the design will be released.

b. Public Questions - None

2. **Apologies for absence** - Cllr Draper 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. **Chairman's Announcements**
None
5. **To confirm the Minutes of the meeting of the Annual Meeting of the Village Council held on 5th May 2020** – the minutes were **approved** and signed by the Chair as a true and correct account of the meeting.
6. **Recorded Meeting**
Resolved: members resolved to delete the recording of the meeting held on 4th February 2020
7. **To receive the minutes of Committees and reports from working groups and to consider any matters arising:**
 - a. Planning Committee – the minutes were received from 26th May 2020
 - b. Finance & Administration – no minutes to receive
 - c. Public Services – no minutes to receive
 - d. Allotment Working Group – see agenda item 14

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- e. Youth Club – currently closed due to Covid-19
 - f. Events Working Group (EWG) – no reports
8. **Clerk's Report** – the Clerk's report was received and noted.
9. **To receive a report of the Community Policing meeting held by Zoom on 6th May** - it was reported that Ashurst Wood has a new PCSO, Christopher Lovelock. Officers are regularly making contact with the office. There are no further updates regarding the anti-social behaviour or the upcoming court case.
10. **Finance**
- a. **Accounts to pay**
The accounts payable from 1st May 2020 to 31st May 2020 totalling £4,231.03 were **ratified and approved by the Council**
 - b. **To receive the RBS income & expenditure report up to 31st May** – the reports were received and noted - Cllr Phillips commented that the financial spreadsheet was up to date and he and the Clerk have updated the predicted year end, which is the same as the budget with a few exceptions; staffing has been pushed up; street furniture has been increased as there may be a requirement for a new salt grit bin. The reserve for allotments was £4,000, the predicted year end is now £5,000. The year-end figure is sitting at 78% of the precept.
 - c. **To consider a proposal to increase the working hours for the RFO from 11 hours a week to 13** – resolved, members agreed to increase the RFO's hours from 11 to 13 and this will be backdated to the beginning of May.
11. **Annual Governance and Accountability Return**
- a. **To receive the internal auditors report** – the report was received and circulated and it was noted; there were no issues. Cllr Forbes mentioned that the internal audit was completed via Zoom. The internal audit will go to the external auditor.
 - b. **To approve the annual governance statement for 2019/20** – the Chairman read aloud each of the annual governance statements. The Council **approved the statements 1-8; statement 9 was not applicable** (*The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 reg 6 (2b)*)
 - c. **To review and approve the accounting statement for 2019/20** - the end-of-year accounting figures were presented to the Council for approval; total balances carried forward were £57,824. The Council **approved the accounting statements for 2019/20; the Chairman signed the end-of-year return.** (*The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 reg 9 (2)*)
12. **To confirm the schedule and dates of meetings for the ensuing year** – Members resolved to agree a schedule at a future meeting and to agree meeting dates as and when required during the Corona Virus Pandemic
13. **Standing Orders – to approve and adopt new Standing Orders based on the NALC model document** – draft standing orders were circulated to all members by the Clerk. It was agreed to defer approval and adoption for another month to give members more of a chance to read through the document.
14. **To receive an update on the proposed allotments in Hammerwood Road and to agree a draft budget for the project** – members were reminded that the land in question is owned by 4 siblings and the land is to be divided. Part of the land is suitable for allotments. Cllr Phillips drafted a report to ascertain rough costings including; mains water, deer fencing, gates, car parking, storage container, social area, harrowing of the field and legal costs. The figures obtained are budgetary and not quotes. Figures are approximately £10,000. The Council has £4,000 already in the budget, and would hope to get a grant towards the cost of at least the same amount. It currently looks as though the site can house 20, quarter sized plots. Cllr Phillips and Forbes have met the landowners on the site. The next stage is to make sure that the land will be divided up and transferred between the siblings. Grant applications will be looked at. Planning on the site will also be required for change of use and a new access from the road. **Resolved:** members agreed to continue to work on the proposed allotments.

15. **To discuss on-going issues with the Three Crowns public house** – Cllr Forbes reported that a meeting that was to take place with Star Pubs and the Council on 1st April was cancelled due to the Covid-19 outbreak. The brewery has now fenced off the car park. Cllr Belsey mentioned the growing angst on social media over the site and would like to push for another meeting with the brewery, either on Zoom or face to face, with social distancing in place. **Resolved;** members agreed to arrange for another meeting with the brewery.
16. **To discuss relocating and the replacement of the broken grit bin on the Maypole Road/ Box Lane junction** - Cllr Spoor mentioned that the owner of the pub wishes to move the bin in order to carry out some work, but it is broken. **Resolved;** Cllr Spoor will have a look for suitable sites; pass this information to the Clerk who will seek advice and approval from Highways.
17. **Consultations** - None
18. **To receive reports from Councillors who have attended outside bodies** - none
19. **Items of correspondence**
 - a. Previously circulated
20. **Items for reporting or inclusion on future agenda** – Jonathan Samways, previously a Councillor is still updating all the bus and train timetables and sending to the Council and the Council wanted to extend their thanks to him.
It was reported that the next Cluster Meeting will take place on 7th July.
21. **Date of next meeting** - 7th July 2020

Meeting closed: 8.05pm

Chairman.....

Date.....