
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE VILLAGE COUNCIL held remotely on
Tuesday 7th July 2020, 7.00 pm using Zoom

PRESENT: Cllrs Forbes (Chair), Phillips (Vice-Chair), Arnott, Draper, Haite, and Spoor

IN ATTENDANCE: Rebecca Roberts (Clerk) West Sussex County Cllr Jacquie Russell and 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 she has chased Richard Speller regarding the substandard path by Quarry Cottages. He will be arranging a meeting with the residents and the Council to discuss the implementation.

The SGN roadworks were supposed to resume on 6th July, but East Sussex County Council is unable to issue a permit until 27th July, so there is a further delay.

Cllr Russell has been in contact with West Sussex Highways regarding an update on the discussions with Metrobus about the potential for concessionary travel for children travelling from Ashurst Wood to Sackville School. There has been a proposal on the table for a while, but has not got any further, possibly due to funding.

The first tranche of the pop-up cycle lane funding has been awarded to West Sussex County Council (WSSCC). The nearest lane to Ashurst Wood will be on London Road from the Felbridge traffic lights on the A264 junction to the Lingfield Road roundabout. It is intended that this will be permanent as opposed to a pop-up scheme.

With regards the desired cycle lane from Ashurst Wood to Sackville, Cllr Russell was advised that Tranche 2 funding which has yet to be applied for by WSSCC will incorporate permanent schemes that are already listed in the walking and cycling strategy. Sadly, the route from Ashurst Wood to Sackville is not one of them. As a result, Cllr Russell has emailed Richard Speller to see if there is a way forward.

As of 6th July, Household waste recycling sites began to take a wider range of items and usual social distancing measures apply.

Cllr Russell reported that WSSCC have now produced a Covid-19 local outbreak control plan as required by the Government which was published on 30th June. As of 19th June, there were 5 reported Covid-19 related deaths across the County.

Children's Services – safeguarding referrals are now getting up to more normal numbers – there are normally around 235 a week. This had dipped to around 92 at the start of the pandemic and is now around 200.

The service continues to improve and the Commissioner is due to submit his next report to the Department for Education. Two more permanent directors have now been appointed in Corporate Parenting and Quality Assurance which adds to further stability.

District Cllr Belsey reported that playgrounds in Mid Sussex could legally be opened from 4th July but risk assessments were needed to maximise safety. Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) has 134 playgrounds and outside gyms and 9 of the larger playgrounds will be open from 13th July. East Grinstead Town Council and Forest Row Parish Council are not opening their playgrounds. It is hoped that the playground in the Ashurst Wood Recreation ground will be opened soon after 13th July,

but as John Pears playground is going to be redeveloped, with work starting on 13th July, this ground will not reopen until the work is complete in September.

Leisure centres will legally remain closed. There is no intention by MSDC to permanently close any leisure centre. It is costing £160,000 a month to keep them closed, but would cost more to reopen them at this stage. The difficulties of re-opening surround the heated pools and soft-play areas.

Cllr Belsey reported that the discretionary grant fund had reopened, with a total of £25 million available for local business struggling due to the pandemic. However, the Cabinet Grant Panel has closed until September and they will be reviewing their terms of reference.

Cllr Belsey reported that he had surveyed the Three Crowns and could not see any fly-tipping, but mentioned how generally messy and unkempt the garden and front of the building look. He hoped that the Village Council would keep the pressure up on Star Pubs to set up a meeting.

b. Public Questions - None

2. **Apologies for absence** - Cllrs Lee, Loveday and Tyrrell; 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 Village Council held on 2nd June 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 3rd March 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 23rd June 2020
 - b. Finance & Administration – no minutes to receive
 - c. Public Services – no minutes to receive
 - d. Allotment Working Group – no reports
 - 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. In particular, it was noted that further action to deal with Dor's Patch is needed.
9. **Finance**
 - a. **Accounts to pay**
The accounts payable from 1st June 2020 to 30th June 2020 totalling £9,990.38 were **ratified and approved by the Council**
 - b. **To receive the RBS income & expenditure report up to 30th June** – the reports were received and noted - Cllr Phillips commented that the Council was 25% through the year, but staffing was already at 26% – the predicted year end will increase for staffing as the pay increments are still not known and will be back dated. The year-end figure is sitting at 76% of the precept.
 - c. **To consider applying for a Unity Trust corporate multi-pay card** – resolved, members agreed to apply for the card and noted there would be a one-off set up fee of £50 and an annual fee of £36 (£3 per month)

10. **To Consider Grant applications** – members were reminded that the annual budget for grants is £1000 and the Council is only a quarter way through the financial year, with £500 awarded so far.
 - a. Ashurst Wood Primary School requested £550 to purchase a fibre-optic tail – resolved; members agreed to award a grant of £250 although the school is welcome to apply again in early 2021.

11. **To receive an update on the Three Crowns** – the Clerk had emailed Star Pubs requesting a meeting, either on site in the car park whilst social distancing or via Zoom. They currently would not commit to a meeting, stating that they did not know what plans they have for the site at the moment and that they would be in touch with the Council in the next few weeks. Fly-tipping on the site was reported to Star Pubs as well as vegetation encroaching onto the pavement of the A22 – this was also reported by West Sussex Highways. Members agreed to contact Star Pubs again and push for a meeting, noting that the pub has now been closed for over 3 years.

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** – resolved; members agreed to adopt the new Standing Orders.

14. **To discuss relocating and the replacement of the broken grit bin on the Maypole Road/ Box Lane junction** - Cllr Spoor will discuss relocating a bin by Allan Martin Meets **Resolved**; Cllr Spoor will discuss plans with the butchers; pass this information to the Clerk who will seek advice and approval from Highways.

15. **Consultations** - None

16. **To receive reports from Councillors who have attended outside bodies**
 - a. A report from the Ashdown Forest Conservators was received and circulated to members by the Clerk. It was noted that during the pandemic, the Ashdown Forest had more people visiting it, but also that there was an increased amount of litter and fly-tipping. Campers and BBQs have also been a problem.
 - b. Cluster Meeting – Cllrs Forbes and Phillips as well as the Clerk attended the Cluster meeting on 7th July via Zoom. During the meeting, it was agreed to resume the Speed Indicator Device (SID) rota and to extend the time for each Parish to have the SID from 4 to 6 weeks. During the pandemic, most Parish Councils have been working from home, but East Grinstead Town Council has now re-opened to the public whilst operating social distancing restrictions.
Anti-social behaviour was also discussed, most notably the increased use of nitrous oxide capsules, especially during lockdown.

17. **Items of correspondence**
 - a. Previously circulated. An email sent by Tom Clark, the Monitoring Officer at Mid Sussex District Council was noted. The email reminded members to be careful about using social media and if members are to comment on it, to stick to the facts and not opinions.

18. **Items for reporting or inclusion on future agenda** – Covid-19 Risk Assessment for the office.

19. **Date of next meeting** - TBC

Meeting closed: 7.50pm

Chairman.....

Date.....