



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF ASHURST WOOD VILLAGE COUNCIL held remotely on
Tuesday 6th October 2020, 7.00 pm using Zoom

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

IN ATTENDANCE: Rebecca Roberts (Clerk), Sam Booker (Assistant Clerk/RFO) County Cllr Jacquie Russell and Mid Sussex District Cllr John Belsey, **MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:** 1

ABSENT: Cllr Arnott

The chair opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

1. a. County and District Councillors' Reports

County Cllr Russell informed the Council that roadworks would be taking place on the Lewes Road again due to BT. The permit is for 2 days. East Grinstead A22 Felbridge to Lingfield Rd scheme is up and running and a review on its impact will take place on 9th November – the review will cover the impact on traffic and how much the lane has been used by cyclists. Tranche 2 funding which is designed to look at permanent schemes is being considered and Cllr Russell has put forward for a cycle lane implementation from the McIndoe Statue in the High St to Sackville School. It was also hoped to get a shared cycle lane in conjunction with pavement repairs along the Lewes Road from Ashurst Wood to Sackville School but West Sussex Highways have said this is not possible.

Covid-19 – there has been a report of one child testing positive for Covid-19 at a Sussex school. West Sussex is currently under a code yellow which means there is a raised local alert. There are currently 3693 confirmed covid-19 cases in the county, 763 of which are in Mid Sussex. As a positive, there have been no recent recorded deaths.

Children's Services – due to have an Ofsted inspection on 20th October which will be a focused visit on education. There is now a full leadership team in place and it is hoped this will promote stability within Children's Services.

Children's Trust – Also on 20th October, a decision will be taken on the memorandum of understanding between West Sussex County Council and the Department of Education for setting up a Children's Trust

District Cllr Belsey reiterated to members that Covid-19 has had a big impact on the MSDC budget; reserves will be drawn on and savings will be made. The reserves are there for exactly this scenario.

There has been much positive feedback from residents on the new play equipment at John Pears.

Leisure Centres are open again and the public have embraced going back and using the facilities again.

Most residents should have now received a letter from MSDC confirming that the food waste pilot has been cancelled. Food recycling will be looked at, but without the pilot, and residents will be consulted about how to improve recycling rates.

Cllr Belsey also informed the Council that he would like to lay a wreath on behalf of MSDC at the War Memorial on Remembrance Sunday.

- b. **Public Questions** - None
2. **Apologies for absence** - Cllr Arnott; 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** – Cllr Forbes extended a huge thank you to Mid Sussex District Council for the new playground at John Pears.
5. **To confirm the Minutes of the meeting of the Village Council held on 1st September 2020** – the minutes were **approved** and signed by the Chair as a true and correct account of the meeting.
6. **To receive the minutes of Committees and reports from working groups and to consider any matters arising:**
- Planning Committee – the minutes were received from 22nd September 2020. It was noted that the Wealden House Appeal had taken place on 22nd September and was held virtually. The Inspector had not visited the site prior to the appeal, but went the following day. There had been no decision to date
 - Finance & Administration – no minutes to receive, but it was noted a meeting had been set for 13th October 2020
 - Public Services – no minutes to receive
 - Allotment Working Group – no reports
 - Youth Club – currently closed due to Covid-19
 - Events Working Group (EWG) – no reports
7. **Clerk's Report** – the Clerk's report was received and noted. Cllr Draper enquired as to why the amenity collections had been cancelled by MSDC and could the Village Council pay for them. Cllr Draper was informed that the Village Council had always paid for the amenity collections and Cllr Belsey informed members that the decision to stop the service was due to Mid Sussex District Council not being able to obtain insurance for the freighters whilst they are on private property. Cllr Belsey will make further enquiries.
8. **Finance**
- Accounts to pay**
The accounts payable from 1st September 2020 to 30th September 2020 totalling £4,798.26 were **ratified and approved by the Council**. **The RBS income and expenditure report up to 30th September** were received and noted. Cllr Phillips informed members that the budget had been updated; staffing had gone up to £35,000; the budget for Community Transport had been cut by 50% due to covid-19 restrictions and the budget for street furniture had increased due to the new noticeboard. Community Events had been cut to zero as everything had been cancelled, again due to the pandemic. £500 has been left in the allotment reserves, but it was doubtful that any expenditure on this would take place this financial year.
 - To approve a donation of £25 to cover the cost of the Remembrance Sunday wreath** – Cllr Draper suggested that because 100% of donations actually go to the British Legion; that the donation is upped to £50 for the wreath – **Approved** – members agreed to increase the donation from £25 to £50.
9. **To discuss the re-opening of the office to members of the public** – a hand sanitiser unit has been installed just inside the office next to the door. Signs asking residents to wear masks had been put up and a QR code for track and trace had also been obtained and placed in the hallway to the office. A paper track and trace system was also available for those without smartphones. Details would be kept for 21 days. Cllr Lee offered to help with completing a Covid-19 risk assessment. It was **agreed** that the office should be re-opened to members of the public. It was also agreed to look into the purchasing of a digital thermometer.

10. **To discuss appointing a contractor to carry out regular maintenance inspections of the Council Office building** – Cllr Phillips had suggested (as a result of the Village Centre’s caretaker noticing some tiles missing from the Council office roof) that Mr Willicombe be appointed as a self-employed contractor to inspect the Council Office building once every 6 months and then invoice the Council directly. The cost would be approximately £30 per inspection. Resolved: members **agreed** to ask Mr Willicombe to inspect the office building twice a year.
11. **To discuss arrangements for Remembrance Sunday** - it was noted that many Remembrance Sunday arrangements have changed this year due to Covid-19; for example, there will not be a parade in East Grinstead. A temporary road closure has been applied for by the Clerk for the roads in the vicinity of the War Memorial. The Village Council agreed that the Remembrance Sunday service should go ahead at the War Memorial, with social distancing observed. As a bugler will not be available, a recording of The Last Post will be downloaded and played after the Exhortation is recited and then the two Minute Silence will be observed. It was agreed to put signs up in advance to notify residents of the road closure and to have stewards manning the points where the roads will be closed.
12. **To discuss website compliance** – Cllr Forbes informed members that the Accessibility Statement is on the Village Council website. Cllr Forbes has also spent a lot of time accessibility checking the pages on the website. As agreed at the previous Council meeting, website compliance is on the agenda for the Finance and Administration Committee meeting on 13th October 2020.
13. **To receive a report on the meeting with Star Pubs & Bars on 9th September** – members received a report on the meeting from the Assistant Clerk. The Council was informed that a prospective proprietor was interested in the Three Crowns and was aware that a lot of money needed to be spent on the venue to get it up and running again as a pub. Star Pubs confirmed that if negotiations fail on this occasion, they will look at selling the site. As the Three Crowns is listed as a Community Asset, the community will have the opportunity to put in a bid. Since the meeting, the Clerk has been chasing the brewery for further news about the progress of negotiations.
14. **To receive an update on John Pears Playground** – the new playground has been completed and is open to the public. Members all agreed it looked fantastic.
15. **To receive an update on the Tennis Court access system** – there is currently no update on the new gate, but the Clubspark booking system went live on 1st October. Members and non-members now book courts by creating a Clubspark account and using the website or app.
16. **To receive an update on anti-social behaviour in the village** – no additional updates; waiting to hear the results of the offenders sentencing.
17. **Consultations** –
 - a. Extending the Public Space Protection Order – the order expires this month and needs to be potentially renewed for a further 3 years. The consultation is to ask residents if they would like the protection order renewed. Members **agreed** for the Village Council to send a response by the expiry date of 22nd October. The link to the consultation is also on the Village Council website.
 - b. Planning for the future – Cllr Forbes will attend an online briefing by SALC on 8th October. There are 3 zones; Growth, Renewal and Protected. The protected zone would cover the AONB. There will be local design codes and a new local plan covering 10 years as opposed to 15. Cllr Russell stated that very few Sussex MP’s are in favour of the new plans and are asking for changes. The proposals mean that there would have to be a new District Plan within a few years, even though one has only just been adopted. The consultation ends on 29th October.
 - c. Pavement parking; options for change – there are 3 options with this consultation; keep things as they are; allow MSDC to fine drivers who park on pavements or legislate to ban parking on pavements completely. Members **agreed** to defer the consultation and put on the next agenda as the due date is not until 22nd November.
18. **To receive reports from Councillors who have attended outside bodies** –
 - a. Village Centre Trustees Meeting – Cllr Forbes attended the meeting where they agreed changes to the constitution and agreed plans for the re-opening of the hall to hirers. Cllr

Forbes confirmed that the hall was Covid-19 compliant. The pandemic has had a financial impact on the hall, but they did receive a £10,000 grant which has helped.

- b. Cllr Lee attended the EPLG meeting where it was confirmed that the 2021 winter management plan was the same as last year. There is also a concern regarding a second wave of Covid-19 along with the cold and flu season and the impact that this will have on the NHS.

19. **Items of correspondence** - Previously circulated.

20. **Items for reporting or inclusion on future agenda** – None

21. **Date of next meeting** - 3rd November 2020

Meeting closed: 8.11pm

Chairman.....

Date.....