



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF ASHURST WOOD VILLAGE COUNCIL held on Tuesday 5th February 2019, 7.53 pm at the Council Meeting Room.

PRESENT: Cllrs B Phillips (Chairman); R Bright, M Bussell, J Forbes, K Lindsay, D Loveday, J Samways and D Wailes.

IN ATTENDANCE: Caroline Leet (Clerk)

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: 5

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

815. County and District Councillors' Reports

Responsibility of

- a. District Councillor Belsey reported £19m had been allocated for West Sussex County Council (WSSCC) and Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) to create a network of High Speed Broadband; the plan was to do this using the railway lines network starting with the London to Brighton line. To begin with, this would be more beneficial to the south of the district; MSDC recognised this and officers were trying to get this brought to East Grinstead and surrounding areas as soon as possible. Cllr Samways commented that a recent press report had said that it was proving too expensive to put alongside the railway lines and the scheme may have to be reconsidered.

Cllr Belsey reported that at the February budget meeting the Council Tax would increase by £4.95 for a band D property. He mentioned the tree budget was not, in his view, sufficient; MSDC owns/looks after 25,000 trees and had only one tree officer, so pretty much could only address emergency works. He had written to the Cabinet officer to introduce a new strategy and increase the funding. Finally, he mentioned a resident from the Worsted ward had written to him asking for litter pickers to be put in to the grit bins for residents' use; East Grinstead Town Council (EGTC) were considering this.

Cllr Phillips gave County Councillor Russell's apologies; she was attending the County Local Committee (CLC) meeting. She had emailed to say that she understands the concessionary bus travel was progressing. However, she had a meeting scheduled with the officer and had also been asked to Chair a small executive committee working on the Bus Strategy going forward.

Public Questions

- b. None.

Apologies for absence

- 816.** Cllr Judge's apologies were received and **resolved; the reason was accepted.**

To receive Declaration of Interests from Members in respect of any matter on the Agenda

- 817.** None.

Chairman's Announcements

None.

- 818.**

To confirm the Minutes of the meeting of Meeting of the Village Council held on 4th December 2018

- 819.** The minutes were **approved as a true and correct account of the meeting.**

Recorded meetings: to approve deletion of recording – *there were no recordings*

820.

Cllr Phillips proposed to bring forward agenda item 10 in view that the Revd. Angela Martin was in attendance. Members agreed and **resolved to move item 10, to receive the draft Mourning Protocol, and to discuss before proceeding with other items on the agenda.**

To receive the draft Mourning Protocol

- 821.** Cllr Forbes referred to the draft Mourning Protocol document and her explanatory notes. The Clerk had prepared an initial draft which she had redrafted using the National Association of Civic Officers (NACO) template and advice from the MSDC London Bridge protocol. NACO advice that that the protocol can be adapted for use in other circumstance; for example, the Manchester Arena bombing. At the Council's meeting in May, the Revd. Angela Martin had suggested the Book of Condolence could be opened in the Church foyer. However, on reflection it was now proposed that the Council's meeting room would provide a more private space. The Church would still help with finding volunteers to be in attendance. She went on to say that there were variances with NACOs advice and MSDC; for example, NACO listed the top four members of the Royal Family and other Councils included the Mayor and previous councillors. MSDC had said they would only open books of condolence for HM The Queen, HRH The Duke of Edinburgh, HRH The Prince of Wales and HRH The Duchess of Cornwall; they would open e-books for other members of the Royal Family. It also said books may be opened by Parish Councils. Cllr Forbes continued and touched on various other points and as outlined in the explanatory notes: arrangements for the Book of Condolence; the Mourning period; proclamation; events; making a Silence; designated area for flowers. The Revd. Angela Martin said that it was important to have a detailed protocol in place so as these events happened suddenly and that the Council should be prepared to prevent disarray or confusion. The more precise the details, the easier it would be to get volunteers. She said that people would want to be involved and show their respects; she added death affects people differently; some may like to leave flowers and so there should be a designated place and there should also be a marking of Silence. These could both be at the Church, and then regardless of the weather, people would be inside. She added that the Church would organise a service for all faiths on the evening of the funeral and on the day of the funeral.

Members discussed. The Clerk reminded members the Council had already agreed timings for the Book of Condolence to be open, 2.00–7.00 pm. Cllr Forbes said that she would amend the draft Protocol and re-submit to the Council.

To receive the minutes of Committees and reports from working groups and to consider any recommendations arising:

Planning Committee

- 822.** The minutes of the meetings on 17th December and 8th January were received. The meeting of 5th February was noted.

a Public Services Committee

The minutes of the meeting on 11th December were received.

Finance and Administration Committee

JF

- b The minutes of the meeting 15th January were received.
To receive the following recommendations were received:
- c i. **To recommend the proposed annual pay increments are accepted**
Members **approved the annual pay increments**. Cllr Phillips noted this was a formality, as the conditions were a part of the contracts of employment and could only be varied if there had been a serious performance issue.
- ii. **To remove GDPR from the agenda and to carry out the annual GDPR audit in the same period as the Financial Risk Assessment (October)**
Members noted and **agreed** that GDPR no longer needed to be a regular agenda item.
- iii. **To make a gift of £100 (cash or vouchers) to the cleaner who has been with the Council for over 12 years using the Chairman's allowance**
Members **resolved the gift of £100 to the cleaner as a gesture of thanks for her long service and loyalty**. A presentation will be made on 19th February prior to the Public Services Committee meeting.
- iv. **To prepare a recruitment advert for a new cleaner for 7.5 hours per month on an employed or self-employed basis**
Members **agreed** the Cleaner's position should be advertised on self-employed or employed basis. The Clerk was asked to prepare an advertisement for the newsletter and Facebook. Cllr Phillips noted that the Cleaner's hours were variable between 7 to 12 hours per month.

Clerk

Clerk

Youth Club

- Cllr Lindsay referred to the Clerk's report: membership numbers had been reviewed; having removed some non-attenders membership was currently at 28 with two new members' paperwork waiting to receive. Attendance in January had been lower; 10 to 15, but this was a not an unusual pattern. The 30th January session had been cancelled due to icy conditions. Cllr Loveday would be running a Slime night and plastic morph moulding sessions in February.
- d

Clerk

Events Working Group - Christmas Market, 30th November 2018

- Cllr Loveday said that he had missed the meetings which had previously discussed the following recommendations. With regard to the marquee purchases, Cllr Bussell said that they were usable for any event and were therefore more of a general council asset.
- e

- i. **To consider transferring the cost of the two new marquees (£112) purchased for the Christmas Market (3020) to expenditure code Community Equipment (4241)**

Members **agreed** to move the expenditure of £112 for the cost of two marquees from the Christmas Market (3020) to Community Equipment (4241)

- ii. **To consider leaving the funds raised from the Christmas Market barbeque in Christmas Market income (1046) and thus not move into Ashstock income (1040) as this income was not from the Ashstock event**

Members **agreed** to leave the income from the barbeque under Christmas Market income (1040). It was noted that the overall events surplus goes in to the general reserves and could at any time be redirected to Ashstock.

Clerk's report

The Clerk's report was received.

Priority Fire Services: To receive a summary report from the recent fire inspection and to note the recommendations, including:

823. i. **Emergency lighting is not working and will need an electrician to resolve**

Members noted the importance of the emergency lighting. Cllr Loveday and Cllr Phillips said that the emergency light batteries need testing annually. The lights needed to be left on for three hours, after which the building, in theory should not

be used for 24 hours to allow the batteries to recharge. Cllr Bussell said that she was yet to confirm the date with the electrician for the 5-yearly general electrical check.

ii. Automatic Fire Alarm system not working. An engineer needs to be appointed to fix; and the system will need six-monthly inspections

Members noted that as there was a built-in system that this should be working, however, the current battery alarms were working. Cllr Phillips pointed out that the contractor who installed the alarms was never paid after the building contractor went in to voluntary liquidation (the Council had paid the contractor). Hence, the Council had no documentation. The Clerk would obtain a quote from an engineer to service.

MB/Clerk

20:27 Cllr Belsey left the meeting.

iii. Council needs to prepare a Risk Assessment

Cllr Bussell mentioned that she already has a fire risk assessment for the Village Hall. Members agreed that Cllr Bussell would adapt the Risk Assessment for the Council facilities and send to Cllr Loveday to check.

Clerk

iv. Fire training for all staff

Cllr Loveday said that it was only necessary to record the training advice given to employees; this should be recorded in the Fire Book.

Training:

i. At the November 2017 Council meeting, the expenditure of £299 was approved for the Clerk to attend a business writing skill course; the course was cancelled. A new course is running on 22nd March and the Clerk would like to attend

MB/DL

b Members **agreed** this was still valid and the Clerk should still book onto a business writing course.

ii. The Clerk and Assistant Clerk would like to attend the session 'Discover Gatwick' on 30th April

Members **agreed** the 'Discover Gatwick' tour would be useful for both the Clerk and Assistant Clerk to attend.

iii. To note: 3rd April, the Clerk will be attending a pensions training session on end of year returns organised by the new WSPF provider Hampshire Pensions Services

Clerk

Noted.

MSDC Emergency Plan: To confirm the Village Hall as the most suitable and viable site as an emergency rest centre

Clerk

Members **agreed** the Village Hall was a suitable site as an emergency rest centre. The Clerk will advise MSDC.

Clerk

c Cllr Lindsay interjected to say that there was a member of the public present who had attended for item 18, Grants and asked if this item on the agenda could be brought forward. Cllr Phillips agreed and proposed to bring forward agenda item 18. Members agreed and **resolved to move item 18, Grant applications, and to discuss before proceeding with the rest of the items on the agenda.**

Clerk

Grants

Cllr Phillips reminded members of the £1,000 budget, £600 had already been awarded this year.

4Sight Vision Support

Tara Beesley, an Outreach worker for 4Sight thanked the Council. She made representation for 4Sight who provide support for people with low vision.

824. Support can include providing outreach low vision assessments; equipment including magnifiers, gadgets to indicate how full a cup is or a rattle for a pan or

tactile bump stickers used for remote controls, scales, oven, and telephones.

- a 4Sight were looking to start-up a drop in clinic at the East Grinstead library for blind veterans. They currently had one resident in Ashurst Wood for whom they provided support and 46 in the wider East Grinstead area. The drop-in sessions were expected to significantly increase these numbers.

Members discussed. It was suggested that the Council's meeting room could be used for a drop in session. Members **resolved to award a grant for the requested amount of £240.00 to 4Sight.**

St Catherine's Hospice

Members **resolved to continue supporting St Catherine's Hospice and awarded a grant of £200.00.** It was noted that the grants budget (4085) would incur an overspend of £40.

20:42 Tara Beesely left the meeting.

Clerk

b Finance

Accounts to pay

The accounts paid from 5th December 2018 to 4th February 2019 **were ratified**; the FairFX prepaid debit card accounts payments from 5th December to 5th February **were ratified**; and the accounts payable for 5th February **were approved by the Council.** The file of invoices was available to be viewed.

Clerk

To receive the RBS income and expenditure report up to 31st January

825. The RBS/Alpha income and expenditure report was received and dated 31st January 2019. There were no questions.

a

To receive an update on details for possible electronic bus stop information and indicative costs

Cllr Samways said that he had no further information at this stage to report.

Clerk

b

To approve the draft budget and precept for 2019/20 as approved in principle at the Council's December meeting, but to also consider the recommendations of the Finance and Administration Committee

826. Cllr Bright said that the Finance and Administration Committee had reviewed and reconsidered the draft budget. He mentioned that at the January meeting of the Finance and Administration Committee, he had proposed to increase the salaries budget (4000) to £37k, but had miscalculated the employer's National Insurance contribution and that this would actually only be incurred on the Clerk's salary; therefore, the initial budget forecast of £35,200 would be sustainable. Cllr Phillips referred to the Precept and Council Tax forecasts. WSCC were increasing by 4.99%; the Police 14.95%; MSDC percentage increase was not yet known (proposed £4.95 on band D). The increase proposed for Ashurst Wood and as agreed in principle by the Council was a Precept increase from £67,000 to £68,000, 1.49%, but with the tax base increase this reflected as a 0.35% increase.

827.

Looking at the projections, the end-of-year 2019/20 carry forward reserves was £33,699; 2018/19 budget carry forward was £34,708. It was noted that there were also allocated earmarked reserves. Members discussed. Cllr Wailes and Cllr Phillips suggested the Council could consider increasing the Precept further.

20:52 Cllr Lindsay left the meeting.

Cllr Forbes noted the Police Precept increase would have an annual impact on a band D property of £24. She could not see how the Council could justify a further increase.

20:54 Cllr Lindsay re-joined the meeting.

Members voted on increasing the Precept by more than £68,000: 4 no to increase more than £68k; 3 yes to increase more; one abstained.

Members **resolved to approve the 2019/20 budget with a Precept increase from £67,000 to £68,000.**

General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

It was noted that this was no longer necessary as a regular agenda item.

Winter Management: To receive an update on the snow clearance contractor and the WSCC Winter Management arrangements

828. It was noted that WSCC local farmer agreements have been a sticking point with the Council's local contractor; although he has adequate vehicle insurance, the Public Liability element would be covered by the Council's policy. WSCC would prefer the contractor to have his/her own Public Liability insurance to ensure there is no risk of any third party liability; however, they had said they would review and consider amending the agreement. In the meantime, despite some snow fall it had not been enough to trigger snow ploughing. The grit salt in the grit bins had been used by residents and the Handyman had been out gritting junctions and pavements. The Clerk was asked to look at purchasing some shovels to be kept in the grit bins.
- 829.

Clerk

Office Equipment

To consider purchasing new screens for the Clerk and Assistant Clerk. Two screens with mounting bracket, two graphics cards and installation would cost £369 per work station (total £738)

830. Cllr Phillips said that he supported the need for two computer screens; he also noted that when working on spreadsheets it would be particularly useful rather than printing off sheets. Cllr Wailes said the research which he had provided for Councillors reference supported the argument for improving productivity. Cllr Bright objected, saying that new screens were not needed, that this was not the Stock Exchange or what residents would want money spent on. Members discussed at length. Cllr Loveday mentioned that he used three screens at his place of work. Cllr Wailes mentioned that the current positioning of the screens was inadequate and would not meet the Display Screen Equipment (DSE) assessment requirements. Cllr Forbes said that she could see no justification, especially for part-time hours and noting the Assistant Clerk's 10 hours per week. Cllr Loveday proposed to change the Clerk's screens to two screens with mounting bracket and provide a suitable screen stand for the Assistant Clerk. The proposal went to vote; Cllr Forbes asked for the vote to be recorded: 4 voted in favour (Cllrs Phillips, Loveday, Samways and Wailes) 3 objected (Cllrs Bright, Bussell and Forbes); one abstained (Cllr Lindsay). The motion was carried and **resolved to purchase two new screens with graphic cards and mounting bracket for the Clerk and a suitable screen stand for the Assistant Clerk.**

Clerk

To consider purchasing a new lockable 4-drawer filing cabinet and the expenditure of up to £138

Members **resolved the expenditure of £138 to purchase a new lockable 4-drawer filing cabinet for the office.**

To consider bringing forward the Annual Village Meeting to March; this would allow an opportunity to promote the call for new councillors for the forthcoming May elections

Clerk

- b Cllr Phillips said that to plan the Annual Village Meeting (AVM) takes about six weeks; this allowed for preparing and collating the slide presentations and a draft run through so that councillors could have the opportunity to

- comment/amend. Organising external speakers started much earlier and should the AVM be brought forward, this could be a challenge to rearrange. He believed the Council's format which included external speakers was successful. He also added that due to other commitments, he would not be able to prepare the presentations any earlier than already planned, 21st May.

Clerk

831.

Cllr Forbes said that she was proposing to bring forward the AVM so that the Council could promote the election and call for new councillors; there had not been a contested election since 2011. The AVM was always well attended; EGTC had held an event recently and West Hoathly were holding their AVM in March. It was already known that several councillors would not be standing again and there were nine seats on the Council up for election. It would be good for democracy if there was an election.

Members discussed. Cllr Bussell mentioned that she and Cllr Judge had spoken at the last AVM about 'becoming a councillor'. She suggested that a leaflet or the newsletter through everyone's door might be more successful and to invite residents to come along to chat with councillors to find out more. She also added that the Village Hall would need to cancel a hirer if the AVM was moved. Members agreed to:

- Keep the AVM to the 21st May
- To hold councillor surgeries on Tuesday 26th February and 12th March, from 7.00 pm and also prior to the next full Council meeting on 5th March
- To use the forthcoming Newsletter to promote 'being a councillor'

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

To receive the response from MSDC following a letter sent by the Cluster Group regarding why hasn't the CIL scheme yet been implemented in Mid Sussex

It was noted MSDC had replied to the Cluster Group's letter asking why the Community Infrastructure Levey (CIL) scheme was not yet implement and said, in light of the proposed changes to CIL, it was agreed that the District Council would await further guidance from Government before progressing with the adoption of CIL.

Clerk

832. **To consider reviewing/updating the projects on the Infrastructure Development Plan**

a

Cllr Forbes said that projects for the Section 106 had already been identified and were on the Infrastructure Development Plan (IWP). However, these could be reviewed and should be kept up-to-date.

b

To consider in principle whether to purchase a badge and ribbon to be worn by the Chairperson or Council's representative when attending public engagements. A simple engraved disc would be approximately £250, one with the Council's logo more.

833.

Cllr Phillips introduced this, saying that during his four years as Chairman, he had attended several civic functions to promote the Council. He had noted that other councils did have badge and ribbon, but Ashurst Wood did not. As it was the end of his term, he was proposing for his successor, perhaps the Council should consider having its own badge and ribbon. Initial research had indicated an approximate cost of £250. He asked if this was something that the Council should consider researching further. Cllr Bright said the idea should be scrapped as there was no benefit. Cllr Forbes said she could see it was a step up, but wondered if it was necessary. Cllr Wailes suggested perhaps a lapel badge or something more reasonably priced. Members discussed. Cllr Bright said that plastic sleeved name badges were enough. Members agreed to leave this for the new Council to consider.

Consultations

None.

To receive reports from Councillors who have attended outside bodies

Cllr Forbes reported on the Cluster Group meeting attended also by the Clerk and Assistant Clerk; the minutes from this meeting had been circulated.

Items of correspondence

List on Clerk's report, correspondence previously circulated

Received.

Clerk

834.

a Any Items for reporting or inclusion on future agenda

None.

835.

Date of next meeting - Tuesday 5th March, 2019

836.

a

837.

838.

Meeting closed: 21:29

Chairman.....

Date.....