



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF ASHURST WOOD VILLAGE COUNCIL held remotely on
Tuesday 3rd November 2020, 7.00 pm using Zoom

PRESENT: Cllrs Forbes (Chair), Phillips (Vice-Chair), Draper, Haite, Lee, 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:** 0

ABSENT: Cllr Arnott and Loveday

The chair opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

1. a. County and District Councillors' Reports

County Cllr Russell informed the Council that a zoom meeting regarding the formation of the substandard footpath will take place with Richard Speller on 10th November at 10am. Cllr Russell reported that the Highways authority has rights over land a metre from the highway, even though it is owned by a resident, but further information is awaited. It is especially important to have a footpath as the County Council are encouraging residents to walk rather than drive when they can.

It has also been announced that all of the temporary pop-up cycle lanes will be removed. The impact of the schemes has been monitored during their operation and feedback showed that the majority of responses were opposed to the cycle-ways, citing increased congestion as a key issue. Automatic traffic counters also indicated relatively low usage by cyclists in comparison with other traffic. Tranche 2 funding which is designed to look at permanent schemes should go ahead; funding is due to be released in September, however East Grinstead and the surrounding area had no schemes but Cllr Russell has put forward a request for a scheme from the McIndoe Statue in the High St to Sackville School and this is now in the system.

Covid-19 – West Sussex is a tier 1 authority with 92 people per 100,000 testing positive. The national rate is 228. However, we are all going into lockdown, but we should revert to tier 1 on the 3rd December.

Children's Services had a 2 week focused visit from Ofsted and although the report has not yet been released the feedback was in line with the Children's services self-assessment which is a good thing.

Finally, budget setting is underway but as yet, County has no idea what the Government funding will be. Currently, the County Council has a significant funding gap, mainly due to the pandemic.

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 reported that parks and playgrounds, including those in Ashurst Wood will remain open during the second lockdown. However, leisure centres and tennis courts will be closed.

Serco will continue to operate waste collections as normal and it was noted that the WSCC Imberhorne Lane tip will also remain open.

The East Grinstead Action group will not re-open during for the next lockdown as most people are now being referred to the West Sussex Community Hub.

Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) have further grants available to businesses disrupted by the next lockdown, including a grant of up to £3,000 for those businesses with a rateable value of up to £51,000. A discretionary fund is also available for those who do not fit the other criteria. MSDC have also put aside £300,000 for businesses post lockdown who have to diversify or make Covid-19 adjustments to their business.

Corporate grants have also been reopened as well as micro business grants.

- b. **Public Questions** - None
2. **Apologies for absence** - Cllr Loveday; 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 announced that the Council office will close again to members of the public for the duration of the second lockdown.
 5. **To confirm the Minutes of the meeting of the Village Council held on 6th October 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:**
 - a. Planning Committee – the minutes were received from the 6th and 20th October 2020.
 - b. Finance & Administration Committee – the minutes were received from the meeting of 13th October 2020. It was noted that website accessibility had been discussed and it was agreed that the Clerk and RFO should have more training. The Council also needs to establish how many people visit the website and which pages. Allotments were also discussed and it was agreed that since costs will be higher than initially expected, due to legal fees and fencing that the budget for the allotments needs to rise from an estimate of £10,000 to £12,000, with a reserve of £6,000 as the Council would need to match any grants.
 7. **Clerk's Report** – the Clerk's report was received and noted.
 8. **Finance**
 - a. **Accounts to pay**
The accounts payable from 1st October 2020 to 31st October 2020 totalling £3,829.75 were **ratified and approved by the Council. The RBS income and expenditure report up to 31st October** was received and noted. Cllr Phillips mentioned the budget and stated that the Council is within 77% of the budget spend to date.
 9. **Public Services**
 - a. To discuss the purchase of a Christmas tree for the Village Centre car park – members agreed in principle that the Village Council will purchase a tree for the car park at the beginning of December.
 - b. To discuss purchasing a new bench for Bishops Green – the current bench, despite having repairs made to it, is still in a sorry state. Members agreed that the clerk should get some quotes for a replacement bench to present at a future meeting.
 10. **To discuss the future of the Youth Club; notably staffing** – the Council were reminded that they employ two part time youth workers, who have both been on full pay since the Youth Club was closed in March 2020 due to lockdown. There is no prospect of it re-opening in the coming few months, mainly due to not having a venue. Cllr Phillips reminded members that the staffing cost was already in the budget for this financial year. It was agreed that the youth workers would be asked to provide a report to the Council for the next meeting with ideas for the re-opening of the club including the possibility of occasional events, outside games/structured activities and a risk assessment.
 11. **To discuss final arrangements for Remembrance Sunday** – the temporary road closure notice has been granted and the Remembrance Sunday service will go ahead at the War Memorial, with social distancing observed. The service will be kept short with the focus being on the laying of the wreaths. Members of the public are legally permitted to stop and observe the proceedings, but must remain in their household groups or bubble. Volunteers for the road closure should arrive by 10.40am.
 12. **To discuss winter management arrangements for 2020-2021** – last year's winter management plan needs updating. There will be no snow ploughing through the village, apart from the A22, but the

gritting routes will remain the same as previous years. The grit bins around the village are currently full.

13. **To receive an update on the Three Crowns** – the Clerk chased Star Pubs for an update and it was reported that there are now 2 interested parties interested in the pub. The planned project is going to rent panel. If all proceeds and is signed off by the Operations Director, then the potential candidates will be invited to produce a business plan. It was agreed to continue asking Star Pubs for further updates.
14. **To receive an update on anti-social behaviour in the Village**– members were informed that a resident from East Grinstead who had a criminal behaviour order preventing him coming into the Village had been remanded in custody and is due to appear in court on 14th December for sentencing related to other criminal behaviour.
15. **Consultations** –
 - a. 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 respond and Cllr Forbes will submit the response on-line.
16. **To receive reports from Councillors who have attended outside bodies** – None
17. **Items of correspondence** - Previously circulated.
18. **Items for reporting or inclusion on future agenda** – Report from the Youth Workers
19. **Date of next meeting** - 1st December 2020

Meeting closed: 8.09pm

Chairman.....

Date.....