



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF ASHURST WOOD VILLAGE COUNCIL** held remotely on  
Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021, 7.00 pm using Zoom

**PRESENT:** Cllrs Forbes (Chair), Phillips (Vice-Chair), Arnott, 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:** 0

**ABSENT:** Cllr Draper

The chair opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

**1. a. County and District Councillors' Reports**

Cllr Russell reported the following:

**Local Matters**

**Pathway along Wall Hill Bends**

Cllr Russell spoke to Richard Speller who confirmed that he hoped to get the work completed within the financial year, but he stated that there was a financial strain with other safety works taking priority. He had no date as yet for the works to start, but it was certainly not forgotten.

**Roadworks**

There will be 3-way traffic lights for one day on 3<sup>rd</sup> February at the junction of Hammerwood Road and on 8<sup>th</sup> February, potholes in Woods Hill Lane will be repaired

**Covid-19**

Cllr Russell reported that the Covid-19 transmission rates in Mid Sussex were the second lowest and was pleased to report that 80 percent of the over 80's had now received their first vaccination. This is a slightly lower rate than the national average due to the high aging population of the district.

**Budget**

The proposed precept increase will be 4.99% and the budget gap has been balanced with no cuts to front line services

**Children's Services** – Cllr Russell was pleased to announce that the Children's Minister had suspended plans to remove West Sussex Children's Services from WSCC control and placed into a Trust. This was unprecedented and followed improvements in the running of the service. The next 6 months are vital for implementing new procedures and include improved offers for Foster Carers and Social Workers so that they are not so reliant on agency workers. Children's Services are due a further Ofsted Inspection. Cllr Russell is hopeful that the notion of an independent Trust would be dropped as this would be a great saving on the national purse and the money would be better spent on safe guarding.

**District Cllr Belsey** reported that it had been a challenging year and although there is a lot going on, it is a case of waiting and seeing when leisure centres for example can re-open. Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) are applying to the National Leisure Fund to bridge the gap for funding losses as leisure centres are closed and therefore receiving no revenue, but staff and bills still need to be paid.

Cllr Belsey also reported that although MSDC were hoping to include the restructure of waste services in the first quarter of the year, it is now more likely that this will happen in the second quarter. It is hoped that food waste collections will be introduced. MSDC are leading the way with waste improvements and West Sussex County Council is also working closely with them. MSDC are

working to understand the implications of CO2 emissions and understanding the pattern of changing waste.

Cllr Belsey advised that the Cabinet Grants Panel has awarded a £2,000 micro business grant to Jon's Hairdressers in the Village to help them create a coffee shop within the premises. Hyper Tune had also applied for a grant to help with sound proofing the business but this was turned down mainly because it felt that Ivy Dene Industrial Estate was not the correct premises for the business. However, MSDC will work with the business to help find them a more appropriate location for their unit.

Finally, Cllr Belsey had been receiving complaints over construction hours at the building site; 98-104 Maypole Road. Discussions have been had, and hopefully this situation is resolved.

b. **Public Questions – None**

2. **Apologies for absence - None**

3. **To receive Declaration of Interests from Members in respect of any matter on the Agenda**  
Cllr Loveday declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in item 11

4. **Chairman's Announcements –** Cllr Forbes spoke about the sad passing of Gwen Shuttleworth who was a huge character in Village life. She was on the original Community Association and was instrumental in setting up the Parish Council. Her funeral will take place on 3<sup>rd</sup> February and will be live-streamed. Her family are planning a memorial later in the year.

5. **To confirm the Minutes of the meeting of the Village Council held on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2020 –** the minutes were **approved** and signed by the Chair as a true and correct account of the meeting.

6. **Clerk's Report –** the Clerk's report was received and noted. Cllr Forbes highlighted that residents are able to call Community Transport Sussex (CTS) for help getting to the Covid vaccination centre in East Grinstead free of charge. However, this service is only available between the hours of 10am and 2pm. It was also highlighted that during the vaccination process, residents with a bus pass will temporarily be able to use these for early morning travel.  
Cllr Forbes also reported that she had updated the Winter Management Plan and put on the Council Website.

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 the meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2020, 15<sup>th</sup> December 2020, 12<sup>th</sup> January 2021 and 26<sup>th</sup> January 2021
- b. Finance & Administration Committee – No meetings

8. **Finance**

a. **Accounts to pay**

The accounts payable from 1<sup>st</sup> December 2020 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020 totalling £8,428.17 and from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021 to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021 totalling £3,972.09 were **ratified and approved by the Council. The RBS income and expenditure reports up to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020 and 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021** were received and noted.

b. To receive the bank reconciliations for December 2020 – these were received and noted

c. To confirm the precept for 2021/22 at £70,000, as recommended by the Finance & Administration Committee and provisionally agreed by the Full Council on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2020 – Cllr Phillips reported to members that the Council will end up with £60,684 this year, but the new financial year will incur a lot of expenditure with spending on allotments and the proposed footpath on the Wall Hill bends, which means that by the end of the next financial year, the Council should end up with around £40,000.

The proposed increase of the precept will equate to 1.21% for a Band D property.  
Members **resolved to agree to set the precept at £70,000.**

d. To approve and ratify the expenditure of £194.00 excl. VAT for a Perspex screen for the office desks – **Resolved, members approved and ratified the expenditure**

- e. To approve and ratify the expenditure of £198.00 excl VAT for 2 new batteries for the Speed Indicator Device (the cost to be divided between 6 parishes, so AWVC's share will be £33)–  
**Resolved, members approved and ratified the expenditure**
- f. To consider making a donation to the Sussex Branch of the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal in memory of Gwen Shuttleworth who did so much for the Village – Members decided not to make a donation, but to ask the family if they would be happy for a memorial plaque to go on a new bench at Bishops Green (see item 9). Cllr Phillips will discuss this with Gwen's daughter.

9. **Public Services**

- a. To receive quotations for a new bench at Bishops Green – members **approved** to accept the quotation from Eric Lamprell for a bespoke bench priced at £1,436 excl VAT which includes a shot blast and hot zinc spray to protect against rusting long term.

10. **To Consider Grant applications**

- a. 4Sight Vision request £245 to support 5 people for a year – members **resolved to award the charity £250**

7.45pm – Cllr Loveday left the meeting

11. **To consider the future of the Youth Club, as it has now been closed due to the pandemic since 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020, with the Youth Workers on Full pay** – members discussed that the uptake of children wanting to come back but having to socially distance from each other and wear masks was very low. Members felt that there was no timeline in place for when Youth Club could re-open and when the pavilion would be available for hire.

Members were reminded that the Youth Workers would require 4 weeks' notice as per their contracts. It was, with regret, **resolved to close the Youth Club for the foreseeable future and to cease the Youth Workers employment.** However, despite only requiring 4 weeks' notice, members agreed to pay the Youth Workers until the end of the financial year. It is hoped that the Youth Club will be started up again in the future.

7.55pm – Cllr Loveday re-joined the meeting

12. **To receive an update on the proposed footpath at Wall Hill to John Pears Field** - Cllr Phillips reported that a meeting had been held between himself, Richard Speller and the owners of Cottage 1. The owner of Cottage 1 agreed to cut back his hedge and this has indeed been done. Richard Speller confirmed that Highways will take away the bank of grass in front of the cottage 1 and 2 to flatten the verge and provide an area to walk along. At a later date, a proper path will be laid. There is no date at present for this work as it is sitting behind other priority safety needs. However, the initial work is hoped to be started in this financial year, with it being finished in 2021/22.

13. **To receive an update on the Three Crowns** – the Clerk is asking for monthly updates from Star Pubs who have confirmed that the potential proprietor is still interested and they are currently going through due diligence.

14. **Consultations** – None

15. **To receive reports from Councillors who have attended outside bodies** : None

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

17. **Items for reporting or inclusion on future agenda** –

- The Council is a member of WSALC in order to be a member of NALC (the National Association of Local Councils), but SSALC is the company used by WSALC to provide member services. WSALC want to stop using SSALC and obtain their services from the Hampshire Association of Local Councils. West Sussex Parish and Town Councils have huge concerns about this and the way it is being handled. This will be discussed at the WSALC AGM on the 25<sup>th</sup> February and we may wish to reconsider our subscription in the future.
- The Annual Village Meeting

- Allotments

18. **Date of next meeting** - 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2021

Meeting closed: 8.01pm

Chairman.....

Date.....