



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF ASHURST WOOD VILLAGE COUNCIL held remotely on
Tuesday 2nd March 2021, 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) Mid Sussex District Cllr John Belsey, **MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:** 1

ABSENT: Cllr Arnott, County Councillor Russell

The chair opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

1. a. County and District Councillors' Reports

Cllr Russell sent her apologies. She was unable to attend the meeting due to speaking at Youth Cabinet.

District Cllr Belsey reported that he had been getting a lot of queries from residents over various issues. He informed members that the Budget Council was meeting the next day (3rd March) and the precept would be going up to £4.95 for a Band D property.

From 29th March, organised outdoor sports will be allowed again, with indoor sports being allowed from 12th April with people from the same household.

Cllr Belsey also reported that the vegetation around the tennis courts had been cut back in a further attempt to treat the on-going moss problems on the courts.

b. Public Questions – Karen Lindsay as Chair of the Ashurst Wood Community Tennis Club expressed their delight that Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) are cutting back the trees and vegetation around the tennis courts to help alleviate the moss problems. Karen had also been discussing the membership of the tennis club with MSDC and this is on-going in light of the pandemic and the temporary closure of the tennis club.

As Chair of the Youth Club Management Committee, Karen Lindsay wanted to express her sincere shock at the way the termination of employment was handled and that the management committee wasn't consulted over it. She advised that the youth workers would be prepared to move to zero hours contracts. Karen queried if the Village Council should take over the running of the Youth Club and dissolve the management committee. There is the possibility that outdoor events with the Youth Club could happen towards the end of June but clarification would be needed by the Government on this as the road out of lockdown progresses. A decision would need to be made about the staffing if this was to happen.

Cllr Forbes pointed out that the Youth Workers will have been paid full salary for the whole year and that the Village Council had tried different avenues to reopen the club, including trying to rent the Village Centre, but the Trustees of the hall were not happy to reopen the hall at the time. There was also very little interest, when asked, from the members of the Youth Club to return whilst they had to socially distance and wear masks.

2. **Apologies for absence** - County Councillor Russell and 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 said that the Council could continue to meet virtually until 7th May and we wait to hear if this will be extended in Parliament.

As a Council, we will be able to organise outdoor events from 12th April, but only as long as they are Covid safe.

5. **To confirm the Minutes of the meeting of the Village Council held on 2nd February 2021** – the minutes were **approved** and will be 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 noted that the Winter Management Plan has been updated and a copy is on the website. Open Reach and the developer on the Lewes Road have both been contacted about the graffiti on the telecom units and the hoarding respectively. It was also noted that there are issues over inadequate emptying of the dog bins. Some bins are emptied by MSDC at their own expense and some are paid for by the Village Council. Clarity on who pays for the emptying of the 10 bins situated around the village is required.
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 2nd February 2021
 - b. Finance & Administration Committee – the next meeting will be held later in March
8. **Finance**
 - a. **Accounts to pay**

The accounts payable from 1st to 28th February 2021 totalling £5,081.64 were **ratified and approved by the Council** - it was noted that these payments included the £700 grant payment to The Ashdown Forest Conservators as previously approved by the Council. **The RBS income and expenditure reports up to 28th February 2021** were received and noted.
 - b. To receive the bank reconciliations for January 2021 – these were received and noted
 - c. To approve the expenditure of £160.87 excl. VAT for a replacement bin- **Resolved, members approved the expenditure**
 - d. To approve and ratify the expenditure of £400.00 to Forest Row Parish Council for the annual maintenance cost of cemetery maintenance - **Resolved, members approved and ratified the expenditure**
 - e. To approve staff to carry over annual leave hours – **Resolved, members agreed to allow unused hours to be carried over into the next financial year.**
9. **To decide whether the Council should retain its membership of WSALC and NALC** – since the Annual General Meeting of WSALC, it appears that WSALC will now not go ahead with the planned deal with Hampshire. Cllr Forbes suggested that the Village Council remain members and see how the next few months play out – **Resolved; members agreed to continue membership**
10. **To consider when and how to hold the Annual Village Meeting** – Cllr Forbes reminded members that this event had been cancelled in 2020 and that it is not a Council Meeting, but a meeting of the electors and there is no penalty for not holding it. It was discussed that the meeting could be held via Zoom, but due to the pandemic, there is little for the Council to report. Many residents attend because it is a social occasion. Cllr Philips suggested postponing the Annual Village Meeting until it can be done face to face, potentially in September – **Resolved; members agreed to postpone the Annual Village Meeting**
11. **To consider arrangements for the future re-opening of the Youth Club** – Cllr Forbes stated that the Village Council was committed to re-opening the Youth Club as soon as possible. Having heard that the Youth Workers are keen to remain as employees under zero hours contracts, Cllr Forbes proposed a separate meeting to discuss the matter with them further. An extraordinary meeting could be held if necessary to consider any new arrangements.

12. **To review and update the Council's Protocol for marking the death of a Senior National Figure** – there is strict protocol in place as to the order of events that mark the death of a Senior Member of the Royal Family or Senior National Figure and the protocol, which was made after discussions with Mid Sussex District Council and the Vicar, should be reviewed regularly. Operation London Bridge sets out what happens on the death of The Queen and Operation Forth Bridge for the death of Prince Philip. It was noted that volunteers would be required to oversee the signing of the book of condolence which will take place in the Council Office Meeting room. **The Protocol was reviewed and updated** and a copy will be sent to MSDC and the Vicar
13. **To receive a report about the Electoral Review of Mid Sussex District Council by the Local Boundary Commission (England)** – this review has already begun and the Village Council will be asked for its opinion in time. It was noted that Mid Sussex District Council has not had a boundary review for 20 years.
14. **Consultations** – None
15. **To receive reports from Councillors who have attended outside bodies**
 - a. WSALC AGM – Cllr Forbes has distributed a report
 - b. SSALC Chair's Networking Forum – Cllr Forbes attended the meeting and reported that there was another drive to encourage Councils to take up Speed Watch as well as discussions on employment during Covid.
16. **Items of correspondence** - Previously circulated.
17. **Items for reporting or inclusion on future agenda:**
MSDC tendering for maintenance contracts
Newsletter
18. **Date of next meeting** - 6th April 2021

Meeting closed: 8.05pm

Chairman.....

Date.....