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MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF ASHURST PARISH COUNCIL, REMOTELY VIA ZOOM, ON THURSDAY 14th MAY 2020 AT 6.30PM

Attendance.

Chairman	Cllr Fischel
Ashurst Parish Council (APC)	Cllrs Hammond, Hedley, Jesse, Knight, Nicholson and Russell
Horsham District Council (HDC)	Cllrs Lloyd and Platt
West Sussex County Council (WSCC)	Cllr Barling
Clerk	Elizabeth Leggo

Further to the Coronavirus Act 2020, this meeting was held remotely via Zoom. Members of the public were given the opportunity to email or telephone the Clerk in advance with any questions or statements and were invited to ask for a link to observe the meeting remotely.

1. Election of Chairman.

The presiding Chairman, Cllr Fischel, asked for nominations for a Chairman for the forthcoming year. Cllr Fischel was nominated by Cllr Russell and seconded by Cllr Nicholson and it was unanimously agreed. Cllr Fischel accepted the position and remained in the Chair. It was noted that the Chairman automatically becomes Chairman of the Ashurst Recreation Ground Trust in addition to that of the Council. Cllr Fischel signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office for Chairman. This would be posted to the Clerk.

2. Election of Vice Chairman.

Cllr Russell was nominated by Cllr Fischel and seconded by Cllr Nicholson and it was unanimously agreed. Cllr Russell accepted the position and remained the Vice Chairman. Cllr Russell signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office for Vice Chairman. This would be posted to the Clerk.

To discuss any questions submitted by the public.

One member of the public attended the meeting and reported some potholes in and around Church Lane. Cllr Barling agreed to visit the area and photograph the potholes, and to send these on to WSCC. Cllr Barling informed the Council and public that WSCC has caught up on its pothole repairs with the quieter roads during the Coronavirus pandemic.

3. Apologies for Absence.

None for this meeting.

4. Declaration of Members' Interests.

None for this meeting.

5. Approve the Minutes of the Meeting of 12th March 2020.

The minutes were circulated to all councillors and taken as read. It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes are a true record of the meeting and were signed by the Chairman. The Chairman would post these to the Clerk.

6. Update on Covid-19.

The Coronavirus Act 2020 has been implemented by the Government. The Clerk informed the Council that the Government had changed legislation up until May 2021, enabling councils to hold meetings via remote platforms such as Zoom or Skype. During this time the Council was reminded that it need only hold four meetings, not six.

The only item which was mandatory for the Annual Meeting was the approval of the accounts for audit (see below), and items such as the approval of standing orders and financial regulations and re-affirming the General Power of Competence could be deferred until next year. There is also no legal requirement to hold an Annual Meeting of the Parish – this had already been cancelled, having been scheduled for April 2020.

Although there had been some relaxation of regulations, such as an extension for the Annual Return and the ability for the Chairman to remain in office without re-election, Ashurst Parish Council had decided to proceed as normal with these items.

The Clerk has been sharing all emails regarding Covid-19 with the Council. These emails are mainly from WSCC, HDC and SSALC. Relevant links are being added to the Ashurst Parish Council website.

7. The Council's role in the Community.

Cllr Fischel was conscious that the Council has had to do very little relating to the Coronavirus pandemic. She felt this was because Ashurst residents were very independent and self-sufficient. They were also well catered for by the newly formed 'Isolation Group', which has 23 volunteers who have only had just one request for assistance!

Cllr Fischel reminded the Council that a Newsletter is being sent out soon and asked for any Council contributions. Cllr Nicholson had suggested the inclusion of information about small business rates and Cllr Russell kindly volunteered to help any members of the community with certain maintenance work if they were struggling to get things done.

8. Reports from District & County Councillors.

Cllr Lloyd updated the meeting on Broadband. There had been some money available from WSCC but this has now all been allocated. The Universal Service Obligation should have come into effect in late March, meaning that property owners have the right to ask the supplier to give a minimum of 10 megabytes, provided that the cost is less than £3,400.

Cllr Lloyd recommended that Cllr Nicholson continues to talk to Greg Merrett at WSCC.

HDC is attempting to bring in more income by charging for some of the rural carparks. There is a lot of property in Horsham to which rent holidays are having to be applied and income from business rates has also been reduced. HDC is running extremely efficiently, and the Zoom meetings are very effective.

Cllr Platt gave an update on a meeting that HDC had held which had looked at reopening parks and cinemas.

Cllr Barling advised that WSCC does not use Zoom due to alleged security issues and that it uses its own internal system, which members of the public can listen in on. Amenity tips have now reopened, but people must attend in cars not vans. There has been a highways staffing reorganisation to better realign the component parts. Chris Stark has moved on and Mike Thomas is the new manager for Highways. Cllr Barling reported that he had never been busier than during this extraordinary time! He has been walking the footpaths in Ashurst and has reported broken bridges and styles to Nigel Bird, the WSCC countryside access ranger.

9. Outstanding Actions.

Action	Outcome
Cllr Fischel to speak to the Landlord of the Fountain Inn regarding registration as an Asset of Community Value.	To carry over until after Covid-19 and the pub re-opens!
Posters to be designed to encourage volunteers for the Community Speedwatch Scheme.	We now have sufficient volunteers to commence scheme. No further action needed.
Clerk has sent Cllrs Lloyd and Platt details of Broadband enquiry regarding the extent and use of funds held for broadband by HDC for them to follow up with WSCC.	Cllr Lloyd advised that WSCC no longer has any available funds. Cllr Nicholson to pursue. (See Point 20 below.) Complete.
Clerk to cancel Glen Chipp who was due to attend an APC meeting on 3 rd September	Complete.
Clerk to add a link to the website to the Love West Sussex site for the public to report issues such as potholes.	Complete.
Cllr Russell agreed to check the swing chains.	Done – Climbing Frame repaired but all Play equipment currently closed.
A meter reading is required for EDF Energy. Cllr Fischel agreed to provide this.	Complete.
Horsham District Local Plan.	Circular distributed to residents Council's comments submitted to HDC.
Clerk to chase for an updated bank statement	Complete.
Clerk to write a cheque for the Air Ambulance and to add an item to the agenda for the May meeting to discuss a donation to St Barnabas.	Complete.
Cancellation of Invitees for the Annual Meeting - Better Connected and Police.	Done by Cllrs Nicholson and Fischel.

Actions:

Cllr Fischel to approach the pub re possible Asset of Community Value once it re-opens.

Clerk to send the parish online log in details to Cllr Fischel.

10. Recreation Ground Matters.

The bank balance at HSBC as at 20th April 2020 was **£6,627.58**

Income received 12 th March – 14 th May 2020		
Partridge Green Football Club	2 x additional football matches	£100
EDF Energy	Refund for overpayment of electricity	£148.65 (Note this is included in last financial year accounts)
Expenditure authorised 12 th March – 14 th May 2020		
Sussex Land Services Ltd	Grass cutting March & April	£459

To approve Annual Accounts for 2019/20. Income and expenditure for 2019/20 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

For 2019/20:

Income = £5,083.65 Expenditure = £4,657.54

It was noted that HDC has cancelled the non-domestic rates for the Recreation Ground, with 'Retail Relief (Coronavirus)' appearing on the latest statement with a charge of £0.

Action: The Clerk was asked to submit the Trust's Annual Return to the Charity Commission.

*Draft minutes of the Annual Meeting of Ashurst Parish Council on 14th May 2020
Minutes subject to approval by the Council on 2nd July 2020*

11. Planning Matters.

DC/20/0713

Proposal: Demolition of existing rear extension and erection of a single storey rear extension (Householder Application) Site Address: South Blows Bines Green Partridge Green Horsham West Sussex RH13 8EH

The Clerk was asked to submit the following:

Stance: Neutral

Comments: No comments/no objection

DC/20/0714

Application as above, listed building consent

For the above two applications it was noted by the Council that HDC had informed the Clerk 'We cannot agree to an extension of time as the Government set the dates, we can accept your comments after the due date but you should be warned that if the officer has written up their report, then they won't be taken into consideration also you would not be able to call the application in should you so wish'.

DC/20/0797

Proposal: Erection of a single storey side extension and modification and refurbishment of existing outbuilding. Site Address: Merrion House Bines Green Partridge Green Horsham West Sussex RH13 8EH

The Clerk was asked to submit the following:

Stance: Neutral

Comments: No comments/no objection

12. Planning Decisions from HDC.

DC/20/0225

Site: Batts Cottage School Lane Ashurst Steyning West Sussex BN44 3AY

Description: Demolition of existing two bay brick garage. Erection of a three bay oak framed garage with above storage space. Installation of solar panels on the south elevation.

Decision: Application Permitted

Date of Decision: 06/04/2020

DC/20/0233

Site: Bines Brook Cottage Bines Green Partridge Green Horsham West Sussex RH13 8EH

Description: Erection of a two storey side extension for the use as a granny annex

Decision: Application Permitted

Date of Decision: 01/04/2020

DC/19/1871

Site: New Wharf Farm Horsebridge Common Ashurst BN44 3AL

Description: Change of use of agricultural barn to an indoor dog exercise area, alterations to the external elevations of the barn. Erection of 1.8-metre-high deer fencing and change of use of part of an agricultural field to a fenced dog exercise area. Provision of car parking.

Decision: Application Permitted

Date of Decision: 17/04/2020

13. Financial Matters.

Mulberry and Co were confirmed as the Internal Auditors for the Council and Moore Stephens as the External Auditor.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Council did not wish to have a Limited Assurance Review of the 2019/20 accounts.

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The balance of the Public Works Loan was noted as £44,000. A copy of the statement had been circulated to all councillors in advance of the meeting.

The bank balance at Lloyds TSB as at 11th April 2020 was **£6,547.79**

Income received 12th March – 14th May 2020		
None for this period		
Expenditure authorised 12th March – 14th May 2020		
E Leggo (reimbursement)	Microsoft Office 365 subscription	£113.76
E Leggo (reimbursement)	Yola domain renewal	£11.45
E Leggo (reimbursement)	Yola information privacy	£7.95
E Leggo (reimbursement)	Yola Silver hosting annual renewal	£101.45
WSALC Limited	WSALC & NALC subscription	£86.82
Ashurst Public Recreation Ground Trust	Annual Grant 2020/21	£3,000
Grant to Kent, Surrey & Sussex Air Ambulance	Grant	£130
Norris & Fisher Insurance Brokers	Parish Council Insurance (including Recreation Ground activity)	£547.01
E Leggo	Office Allowance (April-June 2020)	£40
E Leggo	Salary (April-June 2020)	£681.37
HMRC	Tax E Leggo (April-June 2020)	£170.20

14. Annual Governance Statement.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Annual Governance Statement for 2019/20 is a correct record of a sound system of internal control and accounting. The Annual Governance Statement was approved and signed by the Chairman and Clerk/RFO.

15. Accounting Statements.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Accounting Statement for 2019/20 is a true record of the Council's income and expenditure. The Accounting Statement was Agreed and signed by the Chairman and the Clerk/RFO.

16. Grants.

The Council **RESOLVED** to make a grant of £100 to St Barnabas Hospice.
The Council **RESOLVED** to make a grant of £150 to Steyning Swimming Pool.

17. Appointment of Two Representatives for HALC & Voting Representatives for WSALC.

It was **AGREED** that Cllrs Fischel and Knight remain as the representatives for the Horsham Association of Local Councils and as voting representatives for the West Sussex Association of Local Councils.

18. Correspondence.

None for this meeting.

19. Reports from Outside Bodies.

Village Hall – Cllr Jesse reported that the Annual Meeting was scheduled via Zoom for next week.
Flix in the Stix – There is an idea to hold a screening on the Recreation Ground if the Council is agreeable.

Action: Clerk to respond to Flix in the Stix after further enquiries.

20. Update on non-urgent matters.

Cllr Fischel gave an update on this.

- Fallen tree adjacent to the Recreation Ground: a resident of a property adjoining the Recreation Ground had asked the Trustees to inspect a fallen tree, which he believed belonged to the Trust and had damaged his property. It was discovered that this tree was not on the Recreation Ground and the resident was informed accordingly.

- Woodland Trust: The Recreation Ground Trust was successful in its application for 420 saplings from the Woodland Trust. The Trustees hoped that social distancing measures would be eased by autumn to enable the planting to be supported by the Primary School. The Council was keen that this should be a community event.
- Vehicle Activated Sign (VAS): Cllr Fischel had discovered that it might be possible to purchase a sign for around £2,000 plus VAT. The question of what Planning permission was required needed to be investigated further.
- Cllr Nicholson has had some more volunteers for the Community Speedwatch so was keen to proceed with this initiative.
- Broadband: Cllr Nicholson had organised for Greg Merrett from WSCC to attend the Annual Parish Meeting, which had to be cancelled due to Covid-19.
- Operation Watershed: We had been promised the cheque some time ago!

Actions:

Cllr Fischel to liaise with Cllr Hedley and the tree warden in preparing for the arrival of the saplings.

Cllr Fischel to find out more about the VAS and what Planning permission was required.

Cllr Nicholson to speak to the Police in preparation of setting up the Speedwatch Group.

Cllr Nicholson to continue his dialogue with Greg Merrett and WSCC regarding Broadband and the Universal Service Obligation.

Cllr Russell and Cllr Barling to follow up with WSCC on the whereabouts of the promised cheque!

21. Information Items.

None for this meeting.

22. Future meetings.

A revised schedule was agreed for the next year further to the Coronavirus Act 2020. It was noted that this may be subject to change as lockdown measures may be eased in the coming months.

The revised dates are all Thursdays at 6.30pm via Zoom:

- 2nd July 2020
- 1st October 2020 (note Annual Recreation Ground Meeting at 6pm followed by Council Meeting at 6.30pm)
- 7th January 2021

Action: Clerk to upload onto the website and email a list to all councillors.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 19.30

Signed Chairman Dated