



22 Elder Close
Portslade
Brighton
BN41 2ER

Clerk to the Council: Elizabeth Leggo
Tel: 07738664449
e-mail: ashurstclerk@outlook.com

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF ASHURST PARISH COUNCIL, REMOTELY VIA ZOOM ON THURSDAY 1st OCTOBER 2020 AT 7.00PM

Attendance

Chairman	Cllr Fischel
Ashurst Parish Council (APC)	Cllrs Hedley, Jesse, Knight, Nicholson and Russell
Horsham District Council (HDC)	Cllr Platt
West Sussex County Council (WSCC)	
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.

To discuss any questions submitted by the public.

No members of the public were present at the meeting.

1. Apologies for Absence.

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Lloyd (HDC).

2. Declaration of Members' Interests.

None for this meeting.

3. Approve the Minutes of the Meetings of 2nd July and 6th August 2020

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

4. Update on Covid-19

It was noted that given government guidelines on social distancing, along with guidance from SSALC and NALC, meetings for the coming months would continue to be held remotely via Zoom.

The play equipment which was closed for several months has now been re-opened with signage informing the public that the equipment is not cleaned and that it is at all users' own risk. Cllrs Fischel and Russell had undertaken a risk assessment at the Ground prior to this reopening.

The Cricket Pavilion and the John Eaton Hut (including the toilets) have remained closed since the start of lockdown in March. This position now needs to be reviewed since the Partridge Green Football Club (PGFC) will be coming to play at Ashurst this Autumn. (Note: - See the minutes of the Annual Recreation Ground Meeting held immediately prior to this meeting for a detailed discussion and consideration of PGFC's use of the Recreation Ground this winter.)

5. Reports from District & County Councillors

HDC has revised the budget which is with the auditors. Revenues have reduced. Some redundancies have been made at the museum and theatre. Last year the Council declared a climate emergency and has achieved the following:

- A team of consultants measured the Council's carbon footprint.
- Another consultancy firm looked at how this could be reduced. There were two targets:-
reduce direct emissions under the Council's control to 0% by 2030.
reduce the other 81% (ie. those outside its control, e.g. rented buildings, contractors etc.) to 0 by 2050.

HDC continues to work on the Local plan. Much of this work remains confidential. The Council's senior planning officers are fighting the new housing target set by central government.

It was agreed that Ashurst feels very strongly that the housing numbers, which were already too high when the Local Plan was first drafted, are now ludicrously so. Cllr Platt was asked to convey this sentiment to the appropriate authorities and to take any action he can on this. Cllr Fischel thanked Cllr Platt.

6. Outstanding Actions

Action	Outcome
Cllr Fischel to speak to the Landlord of the Fountain Inn regarding its registration as an Asset of Community Value.	To carry over until Covid-19 restrictions are relaxed.
Cllr Fischel to find out more about the VAS and what Planning permission was required.	To carry over until after Covid-19 restrictions are relaxed.
Cllr Nicholson to continue talking to Greg Merrett and WSCC regarding Broadband and the Universal Service Obligation.	Ongoing. See item 13 below.
Clerk and Chairman to follow up the outstanding payment for the School's use of the Recreation Ground.	Cllr Fischel is liaising with the Chair of Governors of Ashurst Primary School.
Clerk to email the Cricket Club Chairman to advise that no charges would be made for this season.	Completed.
Clerk to advise PGFC of the Council's decision regarding match Fees & that the John Eaton Hut remains closed due to Covid-19.	Completed.
Cllrs Fischel and Russell to meet at the playground to undertake a risk assessment.	Completed.
Clerk to email Norris and Fisher, the Council's insurance provider, to find out if they have any further guidance on reopening the play equipment.	No further guidance available, other than to complete a risk assessment and put up signage. Completed.
Cllr Fischel to draft a letter for the Clerk to send regarding the Horsham District Local Plan.	Cllr Fischel has been in touch with HDC. Completed. See 10 below.
Cllrs Nicholson and Knight to arrange the formation of a sub-committee regarding Broadband in Ashurst and to consider how to take this initiative forward.	Ongoing. See 13 below.
Cllr Nicholson to continue with setting up the Community Speedwatch Group.	Ongoing. See 14 below.
Clerk to email HDC regarding the availability of S106 funds for The purchase of equipment for the Community Speedwatch Group.	Email to WSCC – Peter Smith had passed on query. Clerk has chased and also asked Cllr Barling for assistance on this.
Cllrs Fischel and Hedley and the Tree Warden to agree the timing and extent of the cutting back of the trees on the Recreation Ground this Autumn and to review the planting scheme for the new trees.	They had met and discussed. To meet again once the saplings arrive. Ongoing. See 15 below.
Cllrs Fischel, Hedley and Russell to set up a planting programme of the new trees which, if circumstances allow, will involve the Ashurst community - both its residents and the School.	Ongoing. See 15 below.

Cllrs Knight and Russell to discuss applying for more Operation Watershed funds for Peppers Lane, with a view to submitting an application before the end of the financial year.	Ongoing. See 16 below.
Clerk to set up a Zoom meeting with Cllrs Knight and Nicholson for her review.	Review by email. Completed.

7. Recreation Ground Matters.

The bank balance at HSBC as at 20th September 2020 was **£8,477.62**

Income received 3rd July 2020 – 1st Oct 2020		
None for this period		
Expenditure authorised 3rd July 2020 – 1st Oct 2020		
Sussex Land Services Ltd	Grass cutting July	£229.50
Sussex Land Services Ltd	Grass cutting Aug	£229.50
EDF Energy	Electricity - July, Aug & Sept	£84

Please note that the Annual Recreation Ground Meeting was held via Zoom at 6pm prior to this meeting, and other issues concerning the Ground are included in the minutes of that meeting.

The following should be noted:

- i) Coronavirus has impacted on income for the Recreation Ground this year as the Cricket Club has been unable to play this summer. The Annual Dog Show was also cancelled.
- ii) West Sussex County Council has not yet agreed to pay for Ashurst Primary School's use of the Recreation Ground by. An amount of £1,200, due in April, remains outstanding. Cllr Fischel has been in contact with the Chair of the Governors of the School. He believes that the monies will be received soon.
- iii) Partridge Green Football Club (PGFC) would like to return to Ashurst on the same terms as last year ie to pay £300 upfront for 6 games and then pay £50 for each additional game.

Matters requiring Council attention:

- a) To review Horsham District Council and the Annual Wicksteed Playground Inspection results. It was noted that the Wicksteed inspection had recommended some medium level risk rating, including replacing the matting around the swings and the slide. It was agreed that the long-term action would be considered when councillors met at the Recreation Ground this autumn. Meanwhile, in the short-term, Cllr Russell agreed to speak to Cllr Hammond about making the repairs and improvements recommended. In addition they would be willing to repair the recently broken pane of glass in the Cricket Pavilion.
- b) To note an offer of a donation of £60 from Slinfold Concert Band. The Trustees were informed that the band had donated £60 following use of the Ground to rehearse.
- c) To organise an electricity meter reading. Cllr Fischel to take a reading and advise the Clerk.
- d) To decide whether to use a free service from Utility Aid to save on water and electrics at the Ground. The Clerk has been contacted frequently by Utility Aid which offers a free service of seeing if cheaper options for water and electricity are available to the Recreation Ground as a charitable trust. It requires copies of the latest bills to do this. It was AGREED that the Clerk would proceed with this.
- e) Cllr Fischel suggested that the councillors should get together at the Recreation Ground to look at what work needs to be done. The Clerk was asked to circulate some possible Sundays (early afternoons).

Actions:

- *Cllr Fischel to continue dialogue with Chair of the School Governors re outstanding payment.*
- *Cllrs Russell and Hammond to act on the Wicksteed inspection reports and also replace the window.*
- *Cllr Fischel to send the Clerk the meter reading.*
- *Clerk to contact Utility Aid to ask it to proceed with its search for cheaper water and electricity.*
- *Clerk to send councillors some dates to meet at the Recreation Ground.*

8. Planning Matters.

Application Number: DC/20/1769

Site Address: Merrion Farm Bines

Proposal: Installation of a 36m x 50m clay-lined earth walled slurry lagoon with associated surrounding engineering works.

The Clerk was asked to submit the following:

Stance: Support

Comments: Ashurst Parish Council supports the development as a local business. It is concerned, however, about extra traffic during construction and would ask that any disruption is kept to a minimum.

9. Planning Decisions from HDC

Application Number: DC/20/1337

Site: The Wisp North Blows Bines Green Partridge Green Horsham West Sussex RH13 8EH

Description: Conversion of existing ancillary accommodation to a holiday let.

Decision: Application Permitted Date of Decision: 23/09/2020

10. Horsham District Local Plan

Cllr Fischel has been trying in vain to contact the liaison officer at HDC about Ashurst's comments on the Local Plan. She has taken this higher at HDC and is hoping to hear back. The Council objects to Ashurst being reclassified in the Draft Local Plan from an 'Unclassified Settlement' which it has always been, to a 'Secondary Settlement', which it clearly is not. The proposed reclassification is quite inappropriate.

Action: Cllrs Fischel and Knight agreed to discuss this, hopefully, once a response has been received.

11. Financial Matters

The bank balance at Lloyds TSB as at 1st September 2020 was **£16,034.28**

Income received 3 rd July 2020 – 1 st Oct 2020		
None for this period		
Expenditure Authorised 3 rd July 2020 – 1 st Oct 2020		
Information Commissioner	Data Protection Fee	£35
Public Works Loans Board	Loan repayment - Village Hall	£1,479
E Leggo	Salary July-Sept	£694.93
E Leggo	Back pay Apr-Sept	£37.78
E Leggo	Office Allowance	£40
HMRC	E Leggo tax for both of above	£183.20
HALC	Annual subscription	£15
4Sight Vision Support	Grant	£50

It was RESOLVED to once again opt out of an interim internal audit.

Lloyds Bank has offered to refund the safe custody standing order fees of £300 paid over the last 20 years, as it is unable to establish what exactly the Council has been paying for. It was RESOLVED to accept this.

The draft precept had been circulated to all councillors. The draft proposes a precept of £13,050. This is a 6% increase on last year's precept of £12,300. The main reason for the increase is the anticipated lack of income that will be received by the Recreation Ground as a result of Covid-19. The Council AGREED this draft figure in principal, but it can be reviewed in January prior to submission to HDC.

Actions:

- *Clerk to inform Mulberry & Co that the Council does not require an interim audit.*
- *Clerk to inform Lloyds Bank that the Council will accept the offer of £300.*

12. Website Update.

The Clerk was pleased to inform the Council that the plug in for the website provided by Cllr Knight earlier had enabled her to amend every page of the website to ensure that it meets accessibility requirements, and this was achieved from September 2020 as per new legislation. Uploading agendas and minutes is a more time-consuming job as they need to be embedded into a page of the site to allow the plug in to be used.

13. Broadband in Ashurst

Cllrs Nicholson and Knight had met previously to discuss setting up a sub-committee to take forward a scheme to enable residents to apply for superfast Broadband. It was decided that they needed to find out how many households in the Parish would be interested in the Gigabit Scheme. To this end, they would write to households via the Village e-mail, the Village Newsletter and even by doing an individual letter drop. Cllr Nicholson suggested that the additional cost of setting this up could be added to the precept.

14. Community Speedwatch

Cllr Nicholson was pleased to advise that good progress has been made. There are five volunteers in the Group, all of whom have completed their online training. The next step was to meet for 'on-the-job' training.

Cllr Nicholson reported that several other councils had been successful in applying to WSCC to pay for the cost of the equipment (around £500) from available s106 funds. The Clerk informed the Council that she had not had any response from WSCC or Cllr Barling regarding the s106 funds which have apparently already been used on a different project without the knowledge of the Council. She agreed to chase this again.

Actions:

- *Cllr Nicholson and the Community Speedwatch Group to continue with their live training.*
- *Cllr Nicholson to continue his online research regarding a possible grant for the equipment.*
- *Clerk to email WSCC again to find out more about using s106 funds for this & if any funds are left over after the allocation for PROW works of which Ashurst Parish Council was unaware.*

15. Trees and Footpaths

Cllr Fischel advised that Cllr Hedley has kindly agreed to cut back the hedges on the East side of the Recreation Ground, following on from his thorough job on the South side. It was agreed that the Council would ask someone else to do the necessary tree surgery as Cllr Hedley has done a lot of work on the Recreation Ground already and is now busy with his own work.

The 420 trees from the Woodland Trust will be delivered during November. The local community will be invited to get involved in planting, including the School, residents, as well as councillors and the Clerk!

Actions:

- *Cllr Fischel would contact the tree surgeon recommended by Cllr Hedley to see if he was able to do the required tree surgery on the Recreation Ground.*
- *Cllr Fischel agreed that she would inform everyone when the trees have been delivered.*
- *Cllr Fischel will speak to a member of the public about his concerns for an old oak tree on the Ground.*

16. Operation Watershed

Cllr Russell was pleased to inform the Council that the work on the B2135 is due to begin on 2nd November.

Cllr Knight had agreed to take up an Operation Watershed application for work on Peppers Lane. Residents in adjacent properties were not keen as they felt any excess water would drain through their land. It was AGREED that Cllr Russell would contact Landbuild when it next flooded for any other suggested solutions.

17. SSALC Update

The Council discussed recent correspondence about the 'Value for Money' review commissioned by WSALC. It was RESOLVED that the Clerk would write to the administrator for this project to ask that any vote on the outcome of the research, and future membership of SSALC would be put to all West Sussex parishes in a transparent manner. She should suggest they have a postal ballot, overseen by an independent body.

18. HALC Update

Cllr Fischel informed the Council that not much has happened on the HALC front in recent months. The Clerk reminded councillors that the annual meeting of HALC and HDC was taking place on Wednesday 21st October at 7pm. Cllr Knight suggested that the 'Value for Money' project, as above, should be a tabled item at this HALC meeting. The Council asked the Clerk to write to the secretary of HALC to request this.

19. Grants

- a. It was RESOLVED to make a grant of £100 to Age UK Horsham District for its Bags of Support Scheme.
- b. The Clerk has twice emailed Places for People who look after Steyning Leisure Centre to find out where to send the cheque for the Swimming Pool donation. To date, she has heard nothing back.

Actions:

- *Clerk to draw up a cheque for Age UK.*
- *Cllr Knight to ask at Steyning Leisure Centre who the Swimming Pool donation was payable to/where to send it.*

20. To note the Clerk’s pay increase following the National Salary Review

Cllrs Knight and Nicholson gave the Clerk positive feedback via an email appraisal. It was noted that she was now at SCP 16 with just one further increment until she is at the top of the LC1 payscale. In addition, a 2.7% pay-rise was applied as per the national salary review for local government.

21. GDPR

All councillors were reminded to delete any emails over 6 months old.

22. Correspondence.

None for this meeting.

23. Reports from Outside Bodies.

None for this meeting.

24. Information Items.

None for this meeting.

25. Future meetings

- 7th January 2021 by zoom.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 20:10

Signed Chairman Dated