

Minutes of Ashurst Annual Parish Meeting held on Tuesday 14th May at 7pm at Ashurst Village Hall

Present: 10 members of the public 5 Parish Councillors and the Clerk to Ashurst Parish Council

1. Introduction and welcome from the Chairman

Cllr Chas Hammond, as Chairman to Ashurst Parish Council for 2018/19, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

The Chairman announced that following the local elections on 2nd May, there was a vacancy on the Council which could be filled by a co-option. He invited members of the Parish to contact the Clerk for more information. The deadline for applications would be Thursday 23rd May, with a meeting to see applicants and vote upon co-option to be held on Thursday 30th May.

2. To agree and sign the minutes of the meeting of 20th April 2018

The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of 5th April 2018 were signed by the Chairman as a true record of the meeting.

3. Dementia Friends Information Session

The Clerk, as a volunteer Dementia Champion for the Alzheimer's Society, delivered a Dementia Friends Information Session to the Parish, creating 15 Dementia Friends.

4. Chairman's Annual Report and reports from other Parish Groups and Societies

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and thanked his fellow councillors and the Clerk for the great job that they do for the Parish.

The Chairman also informed those attending that Nick Hedley had decided to step down as a Parish Councillor, after over 30 years of service. He said that the Council and members of the Parish were very grateful to Nick for all that he had done over the years and that they were sorry that he was leaving.

The Chairman informed the meeting that the Council intended to apply for funding from the Community Highways Scheme to fund a vehicle activated speed sign on the B2135. He said that if people supported the scheme, then they should sign the petition of support.

The Chairman reported that the Council has been working on a number of matters during 2018/19, including:

- Road surfacing has been undertaken on the car park at the Village Hall
- Speed checks had been commissioned by the Parish Council from West Sussex County Council on the B2135 to provide the necessary evidence for an application for a vehicle activated speed sign
- General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) – the Council has ensured that it is compliant with GDPR legislation

Ashurst Public Recreation Ground

- Funds that previously would have been spent on the joint youth service initiative with Steyning are being used to update the play equipment on the Recreation Ground
- Health and safety checks have been commissioned for legionnaires' disease, and the glass in the front windows of the cricket pavilion has been replaced with safety glass
- New sewerage treatment works – The treatment works are being replaced and will be moved underground, hopefully creating up to six additional parking spaces at the Recreation Ground, which should ease congestion at school drop-off and pick-up times

The Chairman also reported on grants made out on behalf of the Parish:

- Towards the Memorial plaque for Cllr George Cockman
- Age UK Horsham District
- Steyning Swimming Pool
- Kent, Surrey & Sussex Air Ambulance
- Community Minibus

The Chairman thanked West Sussex County Council for maintaining our footpaths and bridleways, and for the new bridge linking the Parish to Henfield.

Finally, the Chairman thanked Cllr David Barling from West Sussex County Council for the work he has done to support Ashurst.

Speeding on the B2135

Cllr Nicholson reported on speeding and shared some figures with the meeting. He reported that the speeds were slightly lower southbound on the B2135, which indicates that the current 'slow down' vehicle activated sign is having an impact. This supports the Council's intention to apply for funding for a vehicle activated sign for the northbound B2135.

Cllr Nicholson also reported on other measures that the Parish could implement, with the support of WSCC, such as gates at the entrance to the village, chicanes or red tarmac. A further option would be the setting up of a speed watch group, with the support of the Police. Cllr Nicholson asked the meeting whether anyone was interested in forming a speed watch group.

Other members of the Council and groups were invited to report as follows:

Ashurst Cricket Club

David Fischel, Chairman of Ashurst Cricket Club, was present and gave the following report:

Overview

After a successful 2017 with eight victories and a draw out of 10 games, it was very disappointing that we only managed two games in 2018, including our annual charity game v. S. Duffett XI in aid of St Barnabas Hospice, and against Tillington, near Petworth. We also hosted one junior game for an Ashurst resident.

A number of games were cancelled by the opposition but we were also ourselves guilty of failing to produce a side on a number of occasions. The progress of England to the football World Cup semi-finals keeping interest in football alive well into July was a definite distraction.

But, as pointed out in previous years, traditional Sunday village cricket across the county is suffering from a number of underlying challenges. Most notably that available players are predominantly either under 16 or over 40 with very little in-between because of family and other commitments. Regular cricketers in the in-between age bracket are generally playing league cricket on Saturdays and so not available on Sunday. Cancellations are rife and a number of village teams have actually closed (eg. Washington).

A lot of our good under 16s from previous years had progressed to taking A levels so became unavailable and, despite a theoretical list of over 20 potential players, the over 40s were not available in sufficient numbers to plug the gap.

We also suffered from Steyning CC playing an increased number of unscheduled games on Sundays, especially 20-20 matches.

Plans

Our plans for 2019 entail

- * A more limited fixture list of say five fixtures, unless we find sufficient player demand for more.
- * Identifying a new and younger group of officers (Captain, Fixtures Secretary, Groundsman etc).

We will also explore longer-term options

- * A more overt linkage with a larger club to provide a deeper and readier pool of players.

* Youth cricket.

* Women's cricket.

Ground and Pavilion

* The pitch played well on the limited occasions it was used. Rabbit invasion has been reduced as we replaced the fencing surrounding the square which had reached the end of its useful life.

* We appreciated generally good quality grass cutting from the external contractor.

* The cricket Pavilion was made available for the School on a number of occasions, for the Dog Show and other village events.

Financial

* Match fee income was minimal in 2018 so the rent of £800 and other outgoings (in particular, replacement fence and mower repair) were financed by the Chairman. The rent is clearly out of line with the Club's current reduced activities.

Partridge Green Football Club

Richard Moules, Chairman of PGFC, gave his apologies but asked the Clerk to give the following report:

The 2018/19 season has just been completed. The season has been a very difficult year for both the 1st XI and 2nd XI. The 1st XI finishing bottom of the championship, and 2nd XI 7th (out of 9) in Div 5 north. However, some comfort is taken from the fact that we have never struggled to field to sides and, with all the youngsters coming through, the future looks bright. The Winter was very kind weather-wise, but still a period where the park in Partridge Green was unplayable, hence having the Rec proving beneficial once more. Completion of this season brings the FC and Rec Committee to the end of the 3 year agreement. My thanks to Liz and the committee in agreeing to an annual agreement for 2019/20, bringing the FC in line with the Cricket Club and school and my general thanks to the support shown by the committee to keep the Rec being used for football. As always, we are looking for new players for the forth-coming season, so if any of the parishioners are interested in playing, please drop me a line (Liz has my email). Apologies again I can't be at the meeting, hope it all goes well. Richard (Moules) Hon Treasurer - PGFC.

Ashurst CE Primary School

Janet Williams, Head Teacher of Ashurst Primary School gave her apologies, but had 'phoned the Clerk to pass on the gratitude of the School for the ongoing use of the Recreation Ground. Mrs Williams said that the Ground is a huge asset to the children and parents.

Neighbourhood Plan & Affordable Housing

The Chairman informed the meeting that The Council still had no intention of creating a Neighbourhood Plan for Ashurst. Also, the affordable housing scheme proposed at last year's Annual Parish Meeting by the Rural Housing Trust had not received the Council's support, primarily as the housing was not 'affordable'.

St James' Church

The Rector of Ashurst, who also has the role of Vicar of Steyning, was present and reported that he has worked in the Parish for two years and people are very welcome to come to services, which are fun to attend. In July there will be a pet service, where people can bring their pets!

Village Hall

Cllr Jesse reported that the Village Hall Committee had finished paying off its loans. He was pleased to report that, thanks to a grant, the Village Hall now had solar panels installed on the roof. He thanked Cllr Russell for putting up some bars on the ceiling to hold up the lights.

The Village Hall Committee is also planning to apply for Operation Watershed funding to alleviate flooding outside the Hall.

Cllr Chris Jesse reported on events which are planned to raise money for the Village Hall including the Dog Show, Harvest Supper and the Pantomime.

Flix in the Stix

Bob Harari reported that Flix in the Stix evenings are held regularly, and that people are encouraged to suggest films for screening, and that there will be Dementia Friendly viewings in July.

District & County Councillors

Cllrs Lloyd and Platt (Horsham District Council) and Cllr Barling (West Sussex County Council) gave their apologies. Cllr Hammond thanked the District and County Councillors for all that they do for Ashurst.

Community Policing

Cllr Nicholson has recently met with Erica Baxter from Sussex Police to discuss crime in rural communities. Cllr Nicholson reported that the Police encourage all crimes and suspicious behaviour to be reported. If people are interested in knowing what is going on, they can sign up to County Watch on the Sussex Police website.

The meeting was closed at 8.40pm

Signed _____

Date _____

