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| Graphical user interface, text, application  Description automatically generated | **Clerk to the Council:** Emily Simpson**Tel:** 07881714526 **e-mail:** ashurstclerk@outlook.com |
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**DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF ASHURST PARISH COUNCIL, HELD AT ASHURST VILLAGE HALL ON THURSDAY 16th NOVEMBER 2023 AT 7.30PM**

**Attendance.**

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| **Chairman** |  |
| **Ashurst Parish Council (APC)** | Cllrs Russell (Vice Chair), Hammond, Nicholson and Knight |
| **Horsham District Council (HDC)** | Victoria Finnegan and Nicholas Marks |
| **Clerk** | Emily Simpson |
| **Public** | There was one member of the public.  |

1. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Councillor Fischel which Councillors **RESOLVED** to accept.

1. **Declaration of Members’ Interests, notification of changes to Members’ Interests, and consideration of any requests for dispensation**

Councillor Russell declared an interest in agenda item 7.

1. **Public Session**

A member of the public discussed the planning application in item 7(a). He said the idea was to convert what was there already as opposed to extend. He said that water neutrality had been considered which included harvesting rainwater. A councillor asked if he would be using the existing footprint, to which the member of the public said the glazing of the three open bays facing south would have glass in there which would be the main difference. He said that the rest would look similar from the roadside, with the inclusion of windows at the back for the bedrooms. With regard to the rest of the field, he said he would possibly try to convert it into a meadow or plant trees and that planting to the south of the plot should provide a decent screen as well. There would also be some parking and a fence. He noted a shortage of holiday lets locally so hoped the application would be supported and that the ponies would be rehomed locally.

1. **Approve the Minutes of the last Council Meeting on 21st September 2023**

Councillors **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes from the last meeting as a true and accurate record.

1. **Reports from District Councillors**

District Councillor Victoria Finnegan reported on the latest news from Horsham District Council (HDC) which included access to the Rural Prosperity Fund which had a deadline of 30th November 2023.

Relating to planning, she reported that Bramber Brooks had been purchased by HDC and said that if there were any planning applications within the Parish which the Council felt would benefit from going to Committee, then to please get in touch with her and she would do her best to help. Councillor Finnegan also spoke of HDC’s new Plan and, amongst other things, said its aim was to support local people and communities whilst inspiring green initiatives. She also said that, at present, everyone who is a Councillor at HDC sits on the Planning Committee which is currently split between North and South. It was now investigating whether to have either smaller committees or have one North Committee and one South Committee.

 Councillor Finnegan said professional dog walkers taking large groups of dogs which sometimes they could not control had become an issue in Steyning, but Councillors said they had not noted any issues in Ashurst.

 Regarding the Local Plan, details should be available from 1st December and Parish Councils would receive a newsletter to explain the process and timeframes. The Plan included items on climate, biodiversity and active transport. Alongside the Local Plan was the Sussex North Offsetting Water Scheme (SNOWS), HDC’s own mitigation strategy. She said it was being trialled in Crawley at present.

 Councillor Finnegan said that food waste would become mandatory to collect weekly by April 2026. She queried whether compost heaps and hot bins could be more beneficial over huge trucks travelling through the streets, especially in rural areas such as Ashurst.

 Lastly, Councillor Finnegan said there was now a Facebook Page for the Steyning & Ashurst District Councillors which would be updated regularly.

 District Councillor Nicholas Marks added that he had a lot of experience in applying for grants so to please speak to him if any assistance was ever needed.

1. **HALC update**

As the Chair was not at the meeting, this item was deferred until the next meeting. Post meeting Note – Recent WSALC Meeting on 20.10.23. This included interesting discussions from Steve Tilbury regarding the current complex issues involved in planning and talking about the function and role of our County Records.

1. **Planning Applications**
2. **DC/23/1979 Stables at Glebe Meadow Church Lane Ashurst Steyning**

Change of use of existing stable building into a holiday let, alongside building operations including the introduction of infill glazing and windows, together with the provision of parking and other associated works.

Councillors discussed the above application and **RESOVLED** to remain neutral.

1. **DC/23/2042 Jessups Farm Honeybridge Lane Ashurst West Sussex**

Retention of the buildings identified as the Flower Studio and Potting Shed and outbuilding for use as a single residential dwelling. Erection of an infill link extension between the flower studio and potting shed (Retrospective).

Councillors discussed the above application and **RESOLVED** to remain neutral.

1. **To discuss any planning applications since the publication of the agenda**

There were none.

1. **Planning Decisions from HDC**

There were none.

1. **Planning Appeals**

There were none.

1. **Payments and bank reconciliation**
2. **Review and approve the schedule of payments and bank reconciliation since the last meeting (21st September 2023).**

The Clerk presented the latest bank reconciliation (31st October 2023) which showed a balance of £22,395.07 (See Appendix 1) and detailed all expenditure as below since the last meeting on 21st September, which Councillors **RESOLVED** to approve.

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| 18.10.23 | E Simpson  | Salary September | 237.63 |
| 18.10.23 | E Simpson  | Office Allowance September | 13.33 |
| 18.10.23 | E Simpson  | Stamps | 3.1 |
| 19.10.23 | Business Water Stream | Water rates | 57.02 |
| 19.10.23 | Bartlett | Works to oak tree | 144 |
| 25.10.23 | HMRC | PAYE  | 177.99 |
| 10.11.23 | E Simpson  | Office allowance - Jul, Aug, Oct | 39.99 |
| 10.11.23 | Wicksteed | Annual playground inspection | 158.4 |
| 10.11.23 | E Simpson  | Salary October | 237.43 |
| 10.11.23 | Sussex Land Services | Grass cutting September | 282.86 |
|  |  |  | **1351.75** |

The Clerk reminded Councillors that payments usually made by the Recreation Ground were being paid by the Council out of funds granted by the Council to the Recreation Ground as per the 2023-24 budget.

1. **Budget**
2. **To consider a draft budget for 2024/25**

Councillors discussed the draft budget and **AGREED** to look at it further with a view to approving it at the January meeting.

1. **Grants**
2. **To discuss a grant application from St Barnabas House**

Councillors discussed the grant application for £100 from St Barnabas House for their Hospice ‘At Night Service’ and **RESOLVED** to approve it.

1. **Recreation Ground**
2. **To receive a report on the Recreation Ground Trust’s income and expenditure since the last meeting (21st September)**

Councillors **RESOLVED** to approve the report on the Recreation Ground’s income and expenditure since the last meeting (See Appendix 2).

1. **To receive an update on the switch from HSBC to LLoyds**

The Clerk reported that the new Lloyds account had started to receive income and currently had a balance of £425.00. The rest of the funds were still in the HSBC account which had received the paperwork to close the account and transfer the funds but there was an issue with the previous Clerk’s signature so the Chair had agreed to contact HSBC to establish what needed to be done.

1. **To note the annual playground inspection and consider any works**

Councillors discussed the annual playground report and decided to monitor the monthly reports before taking any action. It was noted that there were no urgent repairs required to any of the playground equipment other than a medium risk to the bench which was already in the process of being replaced. Councillor Russell said he would remove the bench for now to mitigate the risk. It was also discussed that the algae and moss on the surface of the rubber tiles would be cleaned and treated next year.

1. **To receive an update on the rebuild/replacement of the John Eaton Hut**

Councillors discussed their recent visit to West Chiltington’s sports pavilion which was most helpful and agreed that costs needed to be carefully considered and that the size of the replacement pavilion in Ashurst should reflect its use and not be too large. It was agreed that another meeting in the new year to discuss further would be beneficial and then architects could be invited to discuss their proposals.

**(e) To receive an update on the Oak Tree**

The Vice Chair reported that the potassium phosphate solution had been applied to the oak tree.

**(f) To receive an update on Ashurst Football Club**

The Clerk reported that the football agreement had been signed and the first installment of £375 had been received. The Club had been asked to give advance notice of matches and to also take care to remember switching off the water heater.

**(g) To receive an update on Ashurst CofE Primary School**

The Chair was not there to provide a report but it was noted that the school had recently celebrated 150 years which was a fantastic achievement.

1. **Speeding in Ashurst**
2. **To receive an update from SpeedWatch**

Councillor Nicholson advised that SpeedWatch continued and, as always, the group was still keen for more volunteers. More volunteers would allow more sessions to take place.

Councillor Nicholson also reported that Sussex Police would be undertaking a review of all speeding signs within the County. As a result, every one of their signs to help slow speed, such as ‘Kill your Speed’, had been taken down. They would then re-evaluate when and where they would install new signs. Consequently, Councillor Nicholson felt this would result in an even longer delay before the Parish Council would receive its speed calming signs. He also said he had not heard back from Sussex Police after his last two attempts at contacting them. He advised that County Councillor, Paul Lineham, had suggested a meeting with him so this would hopefully take place in the forthcoming weeks and he would therefore be able to provide a further update at the next meeting.

1. **To discuss Ashurst Parish Council’s proposal for the implementation of a 40mph speed limit north of the village**

It was noted that the recent consultation results showed residents were broadly in favour but Councillors **AGREED** to defer further discussions until the next meeting.

1. **Rampion**

Councillor Knight said they were still waiting for the Planning Inspectorate to grant approval.

1. **Broadband**

Councillor Knight said approximately 12 properties remained and they should hopefully be online by the end of this week with the entire project completed in early January 2024. He reported that everybody he had spoken to who had already been connected seemed to be very pleased.

1. **Date of next meeting**

To agree meeting dates for 2024

It was **AGREED** that the next Council meeting would take place on 4th January 2024 and that future dates would be agreed at that meeting.

The meeting was closed at 8.48pm.

Appendix 1

Bank reconciliation for Ashurst Parish Council as at 31st October 2023

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| **Closing balance 31st October 2023** | 22,395.07 |
|  |  |
| **Add: outstanding receipts** | 0.00 |
| **Less: outstanding payments** |  |
|  |  |
| **Net balances**  | 22,395.07 |
|  |  |
| **Cashbook** (balance as of 1st April 2023) | 15,155.91 |
| Add receipts (from 1st April - 31st October 2023) | 13,400 |
| Less payments (from 1st April - 31st October 2023) | -6160.84 |
| **Net balance** | **22395.07** |

Appendix 2

Recreation Ground expenditure since the last meeting

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Business Water Stream Water rates from 11th June to 10th September | 57.02 |
| Bartlett & Co | Potassium phosphite solution to oak tree | 144 |
| Wicksteed | Annual playground inspection | 158.4 |
| Sussex Land Services | Grass cutting September 2023 | 282.86 |

 **642.28**

All of the above payments have been made from the Lloyds Parish Council account whilst we await the funds from HSBC to be transferred to the new Lloyds Recreation Ground account.

Income received since the last meeting

28.09.23 David Fischel Cricket matches x2 50.00

11.10.23 UK Power Networks Compensation for power cut 75.00

25.10.23 Ashurst United Football Club First installment 375.00

 **500.00**