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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](mailto:ashurstclerk@outlook.com) |
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**DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF ASHURST PARISH COUNCIL, HELD AT ASHURST VILLAGE HALL ON THURSDAY 4th JANUARY 2024 AT 7.30PM**

**Attendance.**

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

**To discuss any questions submitted by the public**

There were none.

1. **Apologies for Absence**

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

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

There were none.

1. **Approve the Minutes of the last Council Meeting on 16th November 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 informed the Councillors, who were already aware, of the very sad news that HALC Chairman Malcolm Eastwood had passed away. A memorial on 16th February would take place in Henfield.

She also reported on the Horsham District Council’s (HDC’s) Local Plan. Various strategic sites were included within the Plan with the consultation opening on 19th January and running until 1st March 2024. She felt there were some positive amendments in the Plan including topics on biodiversity as well as the removal of Bucks Barn as a settlement. She also said that planning numbers had gone down from 1,100 to 826 per annum as a result of water neutrality.

Councillor Finnegan said biodiversity net gain (BNG) was now a legal requirement and set at 10% but HDC had increased this figure to 12% in its Plan. She advised that this could be offset. With regards to water neutrality, reserve matters now had to prove water neutrality. She said that further information could be found on the HDC website.

Both District Councillors attended an HDC meeting on 13th December which reported on a number of employees moving on to other positions and some retiring. There was also a new position under the heading ‘Sustainability and Green Space’. Councillor Marks said a ‘Rivers’ motion was discussed and carried which proposed to ensure rivers were at the forefront of HDC’s thinking.

Councillor Finnegan also reported that garden waste bin prices were set to increase slightly. She also brought to the Council’s attention the existence of a free collection service for textile and small electrical items, also, the recycling centre will accept and recycle Christmas trees.

Lastly, she reminded the Council of funds available from the Community Climate Fund and the Nature Recovery Award.

1. **Recreation Ground Matters**
2. **To receive and approve a report on the Recreation Ground Trust’s income and expenditure since the last meeting (16th November 2023)**

The Clerk reported that there had been no income or expenditure since the last meeting. She could still not access the HSBC account but reminded Councillors there was a small monthly charge for this account (approximately £5 per month). The Chair agreed that the Council should make a case to not have to pay this fee seeing as the account cannot be accessed by the Clerk.

1. **To receive an update on HSBC and Lloyds**

The Chair said that the previous Clerk, Liz Leggo, needed to provide another signature for HSBC as they did not recognise the one she had provided. Failing this, a new form should be signed by the Chair, Councillor Russell and the previous Clerk in a further attempt to close the HSBC account and have the funds transferred to the new Lloyds account.

Action: Clerk to draft a letter for the previous clerk to sign and send to HSBC.

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

The Chair said it had been useful to see the West Chiltington Cricket Pavilion but all agreed that Ashurst needed something much smaller. The Chair confirmed she had spoken with Passmores, a company that provides and puts up pre-fabricated structures. They had asked for a plan and said they would provide a rough quote. It was estimated that 15m x 7m would be an adequate size and this would include a 1.8m veranda as well as some rear storage. It was also agreed that a pre-fab would be advantageous as it could be erected in a short space of time. District Councillor Marks said there was a charity fund in Steyning called The Wilson Trust that may be worth approaching to see if they had any available funding.

Actions: The Chair agreed to obtain a quote ahead of the next meeting.

She would follow up with the Wilson Trust re availability of a possible grant.

1. **To receive an update on the Football Club**

The Chair confirmed that the Football Club contract for this year had now been signed by both parties. Representatives from the Club hoped to attend the next Council meeting and meanwhile they would send through their fixtures list. The Chair said she had received a complaint about parking on a recent match day and would discuss this with the Club.

Action: Chair to speak to the Football Club re parking on a Club match day.

1. **Other matters:** The Chair advised that the smaller trees by the fence had been cut back and looked good.
2. **Broadband in Ashurst**

Councillor Knight said the project was near completion with only 5 properties to go. A heartfelt thank you was given again to Councillor Knight and all those involved for all their hard work.

1. **Planning applications**

To discuss any planning applications since the publication of the agenda

There were none.

1. **Planning Decisions from HDC**

The following planning decisions were noted by Councillors:

Parish: Ashurst PC Application Number: DC/21/2599 Site: Eatons Farm The Village Ashurst Steyning West Sussex BN44 3AP Description: Change of use of agricultural building to an events venue (Full Application). Decision: Application Permitted Date of Decision: 27/11/2023

Application Number: DC/21/2600 Site: Eatons Farm The Village Ashurst Steyning West Sussex BN44 3AP Description: Internal alterations to agricultural building (Listed Building Consent). Decision: Application Permitted Date of Decision: 27/11/2023

1. **Planning Appeals**

There were none.

1. **Payments and bank reconciliation**
2. **Review and approve the schedule of payments since the last meeting (16th November 2023) and the bank reconciliation for December 2023.**

The Clerk presented the latest bank reconciliation (19th December 2023) which showed a balance of £21,643.53 (See Appendix 1) and detailed all expenditure as below since the last meeting on 16th November, which Councillors **RESOLVED** to approve.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 30.11.23 | E Simpson | Salary November and backdated pay to 1 April 2023 | 377.43 |
| 30.11.23 | E Simpson | Office allowance November | 13.33 |
| 30.11.23 | St Barnabas Hospice | Annual Grant | 100.00 |
|  |  |  | **£490.76** |

1. **To receive a report on the Council’s income since the last meeting (16th November 2023)**

The Clerk confirmed that no income had been received since the last meeting.

1. **Budget**

**To consider and approve the draft budget for 2024/25**

Councillors discussed the draft budget and **RESOLVED** to approve it. (See Appendix II.)

1. **WSALC/NALC update**

The Clerk reported on the latest training schedule on offer from WSALC and agreed to send further details to Councillors. She also advised that a new contract of employment would be released by NALC in the near future.

1. **HALC update including Local Plan**

The Chair expressed her sadness at the passing of Malcolm Eastwood. There was no further update as the District Councillors had reported on HDC’s Local Plan.

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

A member of the public who had taken part in a recent Speedwatch reported that they had seen an increase in traffic in the area. The Chair advised that the additional speed signs had now apparently arrived and would hopefully be erected within the next few weeks. She also reported that Councillor Nicholson hoped to be meeting County Councillor Paul Lineham soon to discuss further options to help reduce speeding in Ashurst. The Chair expressed her thanks to all who helped with the Community Speedwatch.

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

It was agreed to defer this item to the next meeting when hopefully Councillor Nicholson would be present. It was also agreed to invite County Councillor Paul Lineham to this meeting.

Action: Clerk to invite County Councillor to the next meeting

1. **Rampion**

Councillor Knight said a further consultation was shortly due to take place but he had no further update at present.

1. **Grants**

There were no applications.

1. **GDPR**

Councillors were reminded to delete emails over 6 months old.

1. **Correspondence**

There was none.

1. **Reports from outside bodies**

Flix in the Sticks founder reported that numbers had increased with 44 attendees at the last film and 41 at the previous showing. He said attendees from Southwater, Steyning and Henfield were attending regularly which was most encouraging. He also advised that there was a Facebook page.

The Chair said the recent pantomime at the Village Hall had been a great success. It was held over three nights and had been sold out on each night.

1. **Information items**

It was agreed that the Village Clean Up would be scheduled for Saturday 16th March and details would be shared via the Village WhatsApp group, the Parish Newsletter as well as being put on the Council website.

Action: Chair to arrange suitable advertising of the Village Clean Up

1. **Future dates for Council meetings in 2024**

Councillors considered the proposed dates previously circulated and **RESOLVED** to approve them. The below dates were agreed:

14th March 2024 (NB Post meeting note – now changed to Thursday 21st March 2024.)

9th May 2024

11th July 2024

19th September 2024

14th November 2024

**The meeting closed at 8.45pm.**

Appendix I

**Bank reconciliation December 2023**

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| --- | --- |
| Balance per bank statement |  |
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|  |  |
| **Closing balance 19th December 2023** | 21,643.53 |
|  |  |
| **Add: outstanding receipts** | 0.00 |
| **Less: outstanding payments** |  |
|  |  |
| **Net balances** | 21,643.53 |
|  |  |
| **Cashbook** (balance as of 1st April 2023) | 15,155.91 |
| Add receipts (from 1st April - 19th December 2023) | 13,757.90 |
| Less payments (from 1st April - 19th December 2023) | -7270.28 |
| **Net balance** | **21,643.53** |

Appendix II

**Budget 2024-25**

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| --- | --- |
| **BUDGET 2024-25** |  |
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| **Income** |  |
| Precept | 14100 |
| VAT |  |
| **Total** | 14100 |
|  |  |
| **Expenditure** |  |
| PWLB (Village Hall) | 2768.88 |
| Insurance (including rec) | 405.00 |
| Village Hall Hire | 250.00 |
| Donation for dog show (nominal) | -250.00 |
| WSALC subscription | 95.10 |
| HALC subscription | 20.00 |
| Grants (rec ground) | 5000.00 |
| Grant mini bus | 50.00 |
| Grant swimming pool | 100.00 |
| Other grants | 300.00 |
| Audit (internal) | 94.50 |
| Office 365 | 126.00 |
| Internet hosting | 154.19 |
| Admin expenses | 51.37 |
| Clerks salary | 4082.00 |
| Courses & training | 200.00 |
| Travel allowance & expenses | 50.00 |
| Chairmans allowance | 50.00 |
| Office allowance | 167.96 |
| Green Initiatives | 250.00 |
| Newsletter contribution | 100.00 |
| Data protection (ICO) | 35.00 |
|  |  |
| **Total Expenditure** | **£ 14,100.00** |