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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 ANNUAL MEETING OF ASHURST PARISH COUNCIL, HELD AT ASHURST VILLAGE HALL ON THURSDAY 9th MAY 2024 AT 7.30PM**

**Attendance**

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

1. **Election of a Chairman**
2. **To elect a Chairman for the next Council year**

Councillors **RESOLVED** to elect Councillor Fischel as Chairman and it was noted that the Chairman automatically becomes Chairman of the Ashurst Recreation Ground Trust in addition to that of the Council. Councillor Fischel signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office for Chairman.

1. **To elect a Vice Chairman for the next Council year**

Councillors **RESOLVED** to elect Councillor Russell as Vice Chairman.

1. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillor Hammond.

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

There were none.

1. **Appointments to outside bodies**

Councillors **RESOLVED** to make the following appointments to outside bodies:

**WSALC:** Councillors Fischel and Russell

**HALC:** Councillors Fischel and Russell

**HDC Climate Rep:** Councillors Fischel and Knight (add to list)

**Climate Action Group:** Councillor Knight agreed to attend one of their meetings to find out more information.

1. **Public Session**

One member of the public spoke about how to better engage with residents to get them more involved with the Parish Council and about a widespread general lack of enthusiasm.

1. **Approval of the Minutes of the last Council Meeting on 21st March 2024**

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

1. **District Councillor Reports**

District Councillor Nicholas Marks spoke about the upcoming electric vehicle and sustainable monitoring event on May 24th. Further details can be found in Appendix 1. He also said that more electric vehicle charging points had been installed within the District.

District Councillor Victoria Finnegan updated the Council on the Weald to Waves initiative, aimed at connecting nature across Sussex. Further information can be found in Appendix 1.

It was reported that there were issues surrounding speculative development whilst the Local Plan had not yet been adopted. The Plan had received a lot of comments which were being reviewed.

Councillor Finnegan also updated the meeting on changes to the Warmer Homes project and said the income threshold had been raised to £36,000. See Appendix 1 for further details.

It was confirmed that, after further consideration, HDC was not putting in a bid for Swan Walk.

Councillor Finnegan advised that the chains were formally handed over yesterday to the new Chair of Horsham District, Councillor Nigel Emery.

1. **HALC Update**

Post Meeting Note: The Chair was unable to attend the last meeting, but see Appendix 2.

1. **Certificate of Exemption**

Councillors **RESOLVED** to certify that they were exempt from a Limited Assurance Review for 2023/24.

1. **Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)**
2. **Internal Audit Report**

Councillors reviewed the internal audit report for 2023-24 and **RESOLVED** to approve it.

1. **Section 1 of the AGAR**

Councillors reviewed Section 1 and **RESOLVED** to approve it. This was then signed by the Chairman and Clerk.

1. **Section 2 of the AGAR**

Councillors reviewed Section 2 and **RESOLVED** to approve it. This was then signed by the Chairman, having already been signed by the Responsible Financial Officer.

1. **Notice of electors’ rights**

Councillors confirmed dates for the notice for electors’ rights as 3rd June to 12th July 2024.

1. **Insurance Renewal**

The Clerk informed the Council that the policy had been in a 3-year long term agreement and this was coming to an end on June 1st 2024. After discussion, Councillors **RESOLVED** to approve the renewal premium of £455.78 with Clear Councils on a 3-year contract.

1. **Review of the following policies:**
2. **Financial Regulations**
3. **Standing Orders**
4. **Financial Risk assessment**
5. **Grants Policy**

Councillors reviewed the above policies and **RESOLVED** to adopt them, with the only amendment being an increase from £150 to £200 for the grants policy.

1. **Planning Applications**

**Review any planning applications**

There were none.

1. **Planning Decisions**

Councillors noted the following planning decisions from HDC:

Application Number: DC/23/1294 Site: Land at Soper's Farm Honeybridge Lane Ashurst Steyning West Sussex BN44 3AX Description: Change of use of land to allow for the siting of 3no. holiday cabins, together with associated landscaping and parking and water butts. Decision: Application Permitted. Date of Decision: 20/03/2024

Application Number: DC/23/1772 Site: Jessups Farm Honeybridge Lane Ashurst West Sussex BN44 3AW Description: Erection of an agricultural building (Retrospective) Decision: Application Refused. Date of Decision: 15/03/2024.

1. **Appeals Determined**

Councillors noted the following application which had been dismissed by HDC:

DC/21/1068 Small Piece of Woodland Known As Furlong Shaw. Situated Approximately 200M North of 1 Merrion Cottages RH13 8EH A single shepherds hut rented out for holiday use and an associated kitchen and bathroom. (Lawful Development Certificate - Existing). Ref No: Site Address: Description: Date Appeal Decided: 10/04/2024 Appeal Status: Appeal Type: Appeal Dismissed.

1. **Payments and bank reconciliation**

The Clerk presented the schedule of payments since the last meeting on 21st March (Appendix 3) and the bank reconciliation to April 30th (Appendix 4) which Councillors **RESOLVED** to approve.

The Clerk also informed the Council that the outstanding balance with PWLB was £40,000.

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

Councillors considered the report which had been circulated prior to the meeting and **RESOLVED** to approve it. (See Appendix 5) and the Bank Reconciliation as at 31st March 2024. (See Appendix 6).

1. **To review 2024/25 charge for WSCC to hire the Recreation Ground for the school.**

Councillorsnotedthat a 3-year agreement was in place and would next be reviewed in 2026.

1. **To review a 2024/25 contract and charge for Ashurst United Football Club to hire the Recreation Ground**

After discussion, Councillors **AGREED** to defer any decision to the next meeting.

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

Councillors had arranged to meet with a builder and architect on May 18th and would also be meeting with others in the coming months to discuss various options and costings. It was agreed that the new building should be functional and low maintenance and that attempts would be made to ensure it was sustainable.

1. **To receive a general update on activities past and future on the Recreation Ground**

The FAPs had organised for the school children and parents to run the equivalent of a marathon around the Recreation Ground. It was reportedly a great success and all the children had had a lot of fun.

The new trees recently planted round the Ground’s perimeter continued to do well.

1. **Speedwatch and Speed Restrictions within the Parish**

Concillor Nicholson spoke about Speed Indicator Devices (SID) and said he was exploring funding possibilities to purchase one for the village. He had approached the National Lottery but they said it was outside of their remit to fund Highways issues. The cheapest SID was approximately £2,750 and the more sophisticated ones were in the region of £3,550, and it would most likely be run by solar panels. He confirmed that WSCC had indicated it would be prepared to install posts for the SID. He also said that after conversations with County Councillor Paul Linehan, early signs were positive in creating a 40mph buffer zone between the national speed limit zone and the village. It was **AGREED** that Councillor Nicholson would approach WSCC for a meeting to discuss further. With regard to funding, the Clerk also advised that there were reserve funds available for the purchase of a SID.

Councillor Nicholson referred to the incorrect location of the posts and said the police officer had followed health and safety guidelines. Therefore, whilst the posts were not where the council would like them, it’s unlikely they would be re-sited. He also confirmed there was a third post.

Lastly, Councillor Nicholson said Speedwatch would still like more volunteers. There were only 10 of them and, if more signed up, they would be able to carry out more sessions.

1. **Rampion**

Councillor Knight said public consultations and meetings were being held but there was no update.

1. **GDPR**

Councillors were reminded to delete emails over 6 months old.

1. **Correspondence**

There was no correspondence.

**Next meeting date: 11th July 2024**

The meeting closed at 8.50pm.

**Appendix 1**

**EV details**:

As you may be aware, the Council is hosting an electric vehicle and sustainable motoring event at its Parkside offices (in the Park Suite and the upper level of the car park) on Friday 24 May from 9am to 2pm. The event is free to attend.

This event will inform residents and businesses about low emission forms of transport. This is an important part of the Council’s climate change and health agenda, as transport is the largest source of carbon and is responsible for much of our roadside air pollution.

It will include talks from electric vehicle experts, such as the Energy Savings Trust, and opportunities to speak to relevant exhibitors such as Connected Kerb which is rolling out a new network of charge points across West Sussex. There will also be some e-bikes in the exhibition.

One of the event's main draws, is the opportunity to take free test drives in a variety of electric vehicles, including cars and vans. Leading car dealerships will be displaying their vehicles in the car park, with at least 11 vehicles to test drive. If you want to take a test drive, you will need to bring your driving license and be able to quote your National Insurance number.

The event is being promoted regionally to both businesses and residents and is being organised by [Let’s Experience Electric](https://www.lets-experience-electric.co.uk/) .

**Register your interest!**

Please do come along to support the event on the day.

To help us keep a track of attendance numbers please register your interest and book a place here:

[**https://discover-electric.eventbrite.co.uk**](https://discover-electric.eventbrite.co.uk/)

This event is being jointly supported by Horsham District Council’s Sustainability, Environmental Health and Economic Development teams and West Sussex County Council.

**Weald to Waves - joining gardens and green spaces**:

<https://www.wealdtowaves.co.uk/get-involved/gardens-and-greenspaces/?utm_source=mailerlite&utm_medium=email&utm_term=2024-05-08&utm_campaign=+Your+Weald+to+Waves+Spring+Update>

**Warmer homes - household income threshold for grant**:

# More local residents can now access free home energy saving measures

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| More residents in the Horsham District can now benefit from warmer homes that are cheaper to run following a change to eligibility rules for the Government's Home Upgrade Grant.  The maximum household income threshold for the grant has risen to £36,000, increasing the eligible pool of local households who can access free energy saving upgrades by nearly 20%.  The funding is accessible through the Warmer Homes Programme, which is open to new applications. If your household annual income is **£36,000 or less** and you don't use a gas boiler as your main heating system, you can apply to receive free energy-saving upgrades for your home. These include insulation, air source heat pumps, solar panels and more, up to the value of £38,000.  You can contact the Warmer Homes team by calling 0800 038 5737 or email [retrofit@warmerhomes.org.uk](mailto:retrofit@warmerhomes.org.uk) |

**Appendix 2**

**Summary of HALC meeting on 29th April 24 from Anna Beams**

Main points to note:

* 2 agenda items were removed – S106 which will be dealt with via consultation through the HALC network and Update on Planning Peer Challenge which will be dealt with at another meeting.
* In response to a question raised regarding review of Neighbourhood Plans - The Local Plan is currently under review and it is therefore high risk to formally review Neighbourhood Plans as they should mirror the Local Plan. The process needs to link in with the Local Plan.
* HDC are looking at ways to improve engagement with parish and neighbourhood councils.

There were many updates and questions which will be covered in the minutes, it was a fairly successful and engaged meeting although disappointment was expressed that the two agenda items above were removed at late notice.

**Appendix 3**

Schedule of payments since the last meeting (21st March 2024)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2.4.24 | E Simpson | Salary March (already paid) | 254.90 |
| 2.4.24 | E Simpson | Office Allowance March (already paid) | 13.33 |
| 2.4.24 | E Simpson | D-Day Flag of Peace reimbursement (already paid) | 28.80 |
| 25.4.24 | HMRC | Tax for previous quarter (Jan-March 2024) (already paid) | 191.00 |
| 30.4.24 | E Simpson | Salary April | 254.90 |
| 30.4.24 | E Simpson | Office Allowance April | 13.33 |
| 30.4.24 | E Simpson | Reimbursement for ink cartridge and printer paper | 32.88 |
| 9.5.24 | E Simpson | Reimbursement for website expenditure (Yola) | 146.85 |
| 9.5.24 | E Simpson | Reimbursement for Microsoft 365 | 123.84 |
| 9.5.24 | WSALC | Subscription for 2024/25 | 95.10 |
| 9.5.24 | Mulberry & Co. | Internal audit 2023/24 | 195.00 |
|  |  |  | **£1,349.93** |

**Appendix 4**

Bank Reconciliation April 30th 2024

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Balance per bank statement |  |
|  |  |
| **Closing balance 30th April 2024** | 21,111.67 |
|  |  |
| **Add: outstanding receipts** | 0.00 |
| **Less: outstanding payments** |  |
|  |  |
| **Net balances** | 21,111.67 |
|  |  |
| **Cashbook** (balance as of 1st April 2024) | 14,260.51 |
| Add receipts (from 1st April - 31st March 2025) | 7,339.19 |
| Less payments (from 1st April - 31st March 2024) | * 488.03 |
| **Net balance** | **£21,111.67** |

**Appendix 5**

Recreation Ground Income and Expenditure

Closing balance as at 5th May was **£12,517.29**

Income received since April 1st 2024

£375.00 income from Ashurst United Football Club

Expenditure since April 1st 2024

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 8.4.24 | EDF | Electricity | 58.38 |
| 8.4.24 | EDF | Electricity | 317.74 |
| 9.4.24 | EDF | Electricity | 60.00 |
| 29.4.24 | EDF | Electricity | 60.00 |
| 9.4.24 | Horsham District Council | Non-domestic Rates 2024/25 | 98.80 |
| 9.4.24 | Sussex Land Services | Grass Cutting April | 282.85 |
|  |  |  | **TOTAL £877.77** |

**Appendix 6**

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| **Bank Reconciliation**  **Closing balance 31st March 2024** | 12,638.41 |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Add: outstanding receipts** |  |  |  |
| **Less: outstanding payments** | -184.12 | (cheques 414/417) | |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Net balances** | 12,454.29 |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Cashbook** (balance as of 1st April 2023) | 6,484.57 |  |  |
| Add receipts (from 1st April - 31st March 2024) | 6,880.00 |  |  |
| Less payments (from 1st April - 31st March 2024) | -910.28 |  |  |
| **Net balance** | **12,454.29** |  |  |