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| Graphical user interface, text, application  Description automatically generated | **Clerk to the Council: Oliver Last** **e-mail:** ashurstclerk@outlook.com |

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF ASHURST PARISH COUNCIL, HELD AT ASHURST VILLAGE HALL ON THURSDAY 17th July 2025 AT 7.30PM**

**Attendance:**

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| **Ashurst Parish Council (APC)** | Cllr Fischel (Chair), Cllr Hammond, Cllr Knight, and Cllr Russell (Vice Chair), Cllr Bunce.  |
| **Horsham District Council (HDC)** | District Cllr Finnegan and Cllr Marks |
| **Clerk** | Oliver Last |
| **Public** | 2 |

1. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Cllr Les Nicholson

1. **Declarations of interest**

Councillors were reminded to return any revised Declarations of Interest, as defined under the Localism Act 2011.

There were no declarations of interest on any agenda items in this meeting.

1. **Public forum and questions**

Questions were received from the public regarding speeding through the village which was discussed as part of agenda item 21. Speedwatch and Speed Restrictions within the Parish.

1. **Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held** [**Draft minutes AGM 15th May 2025**](https://www.ashurstparishcouncil.org/resources/Draft%20AGM%20minutes%20May%202025.docx)

It was **resolved** to approve the minutes from the last meeting as a true and accurate record.

1. **Co-Option - To Receive application.**

The Chair invited Mr Marc Bunce to present his application for co-option. Thereafter, the Councillors agreed for Mr Bunce to join the Parish Council. He signed his Acceptance of Office paper and joined the meeting. The Chair welcomed him to his new role and thanked him for agreeing to being co-opted.

1. **District Councillor Reports**

Cllr Finnegan gave an update covering the work taking place at Horsham District Council (HDC), including the status of the Local Plan. It was explained that the Planning Inspector has cancelled the Horsham District Local Plan, citing concerns regarding its overall soundness, although no detailed feedback was provided. HDC was subsequently informed that the plan lacked sufficient legal compliance, particularly in relation to the duty to cooperate. Additionally, the proposed approach to water neutrality was deemed not robust enough to effectively restrict housing numbers. As a result, HDC has formally withdrawn the current plan and is beginning to develop a new version, which is expected to be submitted in late 2027, following public engagement. In the meantime, the “Facilitating Appropriate Development” (FAD) policy has been renamed the Shaping Development District Advice Note, which reinforces the presumption in favour of development.

Cllr Finnegan also provided an update on Local Government Reorganisation, encouraging residents to complete the engagement survey by 13th August to provide feedback on the proposals.

The first mayoral election for the new structure is scheduled for May 2026, with the new arrangements taking effect from 1st April 2027.

Regarding asset transfers, parish councils have been asked to review and check for a list of potential assets under consideration. Cllr Finnegan would check and confirm that Ashurst has no such assets.

In relation to planning, Cllr Finnegan reported that on 2nd July, permission was granted for 265 homes at Glebe Farm. The site will not be connected to the mains gas network; instead, many of the homes will be fitted with heat pumps and solar panels to support low-carbon living.

On the topic of biodiversity, Cllr Martin Boffey intends to write to Parliament requesting the rescinding of Part 3, with the aim of ensuring that individual and local biodiversity requirements are included in future planning agreements.

Finally, the District Council has expressed support for introducing a 20mph speed limit in Storrington and is looking to support other appropriate applications for reduced speed limits in the district.

1. **HALC Update**

At the June Joint Meeting between HALC and HDC, the key items discussed were the withdrawal of HDC’s Local Plan, a progress report on the LGR, and Community Asset Transfers. (These items were discussed in more detail by Cllr Finnegan in 2.6 above.) Finally there was a discussion on the reform of Planning Committees.

It was **resolved** to note the update.

1. **Planning Applications and Planning Decisions from HDC**

**Parish:** Ashurst PC
**Ward:** Steyning and Ashurst
**Case No:** DC/25/0672
**Date Valid:** 15 May 2025
**Decision Level:** Delegated Decision
**Comments by:** 12 June 2025
**App Type:** Minor Other
**Agent:** Jayne Harding
**Applicant:** Diocese of Chichester
**Proposal:**
Installation of 2no. air source heat pumps to the rear of the school and associated works, including provision of new metal mesh fence with access gate between heat pumps and the existing external cabin. (Full Application).
**Site Address:** Ashurst Church of England School, School Lane, Ashurst, Steyning, West Sussex, BN44 3AY
**Grid Ref:** 517566 116035

It was **resolved** to support this application

**Parish:** Ashurst PC **Ward:** Steyning and Ashurst
**Case No:** DC/25/0673
**Date Valid:** 15 May 2025
**Decision Level:** Delegated Decision
**Comments by:** 12 June 2025
**App Type:** LBC Alteration
**Agent:** Jayne Harding
**Applicant:** Diocese of Chichester
**Proposal:**
Installation of 2no. air source heat pumps to the rear of the school and associated works, including provision of new metal mesh fence with access gate between heat pumps and the existing external cabin. (Listed Building Consent).
**Site Address:** Ashurst Church of England School, School Lane, Ashurst, Steyning, West Sussex, BN44 3AY
**Grid Ref:** 517566 116035

It was **resolved** to support this application

**Parish:** Ashurst PC
**Ward:** Steyning and Ashurst
**Case No:** DC/25/0823
**Date Valid:** 15 May 2025
**Decision Level:** Delegated Decision
**Comments by:** 12 June 2025

**App Type:** Not Required on Return
**Agent:** Mr Daniel Holmes
**Applicant:** Mr John Eager
**Proposal:**
Prior Notification for the change of use of an agricultural building to 3No. residential dwellings with associated operational development.
**Site Address:** Jessups Farm, Honeybridge Lane, Ashurst, West Sussex, BN44 3AW
**Grid Ref:** 515884 116073

It was **resolved** to object to the application on the grounds of overdevelopment, as well as concerns regarding the setting of a precedent and the cumulative impact on the surrounding area.

The Clerk gave an update on the past application outcomes which was noted.

1. **Payments and bank reconciliation**
2. Councillors **resolved** to approve the schedule of payments and bank reconciliation since the last meeting (15th May 2025) (See Appendix 1.) and noted the outstanding PWLB loan. £39,500.
3. It was **resolved** to note the value of the outstanding CIL money £289.19.
4. **Recreation Ground**
5. The Chair provided an update regarding the Recreation Ground. It was noted that a follow-up is required to make sure the agreement with the Football Club has been signed and returned. Additionally, clarification is needed on the status of outstanding payments. The Clerk will liaise with the Football Club to ensure these matters are resolved promptly and in accordance with the terms agreed.

It was **resolved** to note the update.

1. An update was provided on the proposed rebuild of the John Eaton Hut. It was noted that as part of the consultation process, a presentation of the draft plan will take place at the Annual Parish Meeting on 23rd July, offering an opportunity for residents to learn more and ask questions. A questionnaire will then be circulated asking for further feedback.

During the discussion, members also considered a potential option of laying down astro turf as an additional cricket strip, with options and costings to be further explored as part of the wider project.

It was **resolved** to note the update.

1. A general update on the Recreation Ground was provided by the Chair. This included confirmation that the Annual General Meeting (AGM) will take place in September this year. However, moving forward, the AGM should be scheduled for April from next year onwards to better align with the council’s reporting and governance cycle.

It was **resolved** to note the update.

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

An update was given regarding the application for a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO). Support has been received from Cllr Lineham, and the aim is to align the proposed speed limits, 30mph and 40mph, with existing limits to the north and south of the area. It was agreed that a public consultation will be carried out to ascertain the level of local support for this TRO. Additionally, a Speed Indicator Device (SID) is being considered at a new location on private land, subject to the necessary permissions.

It was **resolved** to note the update.

1. **Operation Watershed**

An update was provided following a recent meeting between Cllr Knight and Landbuild at Peppers Farm. The meeting focused on potential solutions to stop the water building up there, one possibility suggested was to raise the road to address ongoing drainage issues. They are currently waiting on three quotes for the proposed works. Once received, these will be considered as to whether they are appropriate for the preparation of an application to Operation Watershed. If so this will be submitted for consideration at a council meeting.

It was **resolved** to notethe update.

1. **Conservation and Biodiversity Update**

Cllr Knight provided an update on the work being carried out to identify and list significant trees within the parish, taking into account factors such as age, size, and location. In addition, checks are being made along footpaths to monitor any removal of hedgerows and to identify the locations of ponds. This is part of a broader effort to protect and record key environmental features, and it was noted that the success of this work will require the support and input of other councillors and members of the community. The plan was to involve residents of Ashurst in this initiative.

It was **resolved** to note the update.

1. **Website Update**

The Clerk provided an update on the current parish council website, outlining the ongoing difficulties with its usability and functionality. Alternative website options were presented for councillors to consider, with the aim of improving accessibility and ease of management.

It was **resolved** that councillors would review the various website options and bring their findings and recommendations to the next council meeting for further discussion and a decision.

1. **Council Laptop**

The Clerk gave a report on the condition of the council laptop, highlighting ongoing issues that were affecting its performance and usability. The problems raised were considered significant enough to warrant the purchase of a replacement device.

It was **resolved** that Cllr Bunce would research suitable replacement laptop options and present them at the next council meeting for consideration and approval.

1. **Finance System**

The Clerk provided an explanation of the current financial setup, outlining how financial records and reporting are currently managed. It was acknowledged that improvements could be made to enhance clarity and usability.

It was **resolved** that the Chair and the Clerk would meet to review the existing arrangements and work together to improve the financial reporting format.

1. **Government email addresses**

The Clerk updated the Councillors regarding the recent requirement for councils to adopt a .gov.uk email address for official communications. The implications and benefits of this change were discussed.

It was **resolved** that the Clerk would investigate further details, including associated costs, and report back to the Council at a future meeting.

1. **Correspondence**

None.

1. **Forthcoming Dates**

Thursday September 18th - Council Meeting at 7.30 preceded by the Recreation Ground AGM 7pm.

Thursday November 20th - Council Meeting 7:30pm

**There being no further business the meeting ended at 21.01.**

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| Appendix 1 APC Account |
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| Schedule of payments since the last meeting (15th May 2025) |
|  |  |  |  |
| 19 May 25 | Service Charges | Bank  | £4.25 |
| 27 May 25 | Mulberry Local | Audit | £231.00 |
| 12 June 25 | May Salary | Salary | £293.93 |
| 17 June 25 | Service Charges | Bank | £4.25 |
| 07 July 25 | Business Stream | Utilities | £87.80 |
| 07 July 25 | Clear Insurance | Council Insurance | £562.60 |
| 07 July 25 | Sussex Land Service | Grass Cutting April | £288.50 |
| 07 July 25 | Sussex Land Service | Grass Cutting May | £288.50 |
| 10 July 25 | ICO (DD) | Data Protection fee | £47.00 |
| 14 July 25 | June Salary | Salary | £276.60 |
| Total Payments |  |  | **£2,084.43** |

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| Schedule of receipts since the last meeting (15th May 2025) |
|  |  |  |  |
| Total Receipts |  |  | **£0** |

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| Bank Reconciliation as at 17th July 2025 |
| Balance per Bank Statement | **£22,497.34** |
| Add: Outstanding receipts | £0.00 |
| Less: Outstanding payments | £276.60 |
| Adjusted balance as at 17th July 2025 | **£22,220.74** |
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| Cashbook balance as at 15th May 2025 | **£24,305.17** |
| Plus Receipts for the period | £0 |
| Less Payments for the period  |  (£2,084.43) |
| Cashbook Balance as at 17th July 2025 | **£22,220.74** |

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| Appendix 2 Recreation Ground Account  |
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| Schedule of payments since the last meeting (15th May 2025) |
| 28 May 25 | EDF (DD) | Utilities | £60.00 |
| 30 June 25 | EDF (DD) | Utilities | £60.00 |
|  Total Payments | **£120.00** |

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| Schedule of receipts since the last meeting (15th May 2025) |
|  3 June 25  | WSCC | School Hire of Rec Ground  | £1,500.00 |
|  Total Receipts | **£1,500.00** |
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| Bank Reconciliation as at 17th July 2025 |
| Balance per Bank Statement | **£12,545.26** |
| Add: Outstanding receipts | £0.00 |
| Less: Outstanding payments | £0.00 |
| Adjusted balance as at 17th July 2025 | **£12,545.26** |
|  |  |
| Cashbook balance as at 15th May 2025 | **£11,165.26** |
| Plus Receipts for the period | £1,500.00 |
| Less Payments for the Period | (£120.00) |
| Cashbook balance as at 17th July 2025 | **£12,545.26** |