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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 |

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF ASHURST PARISH COUNCIL, HELD AT ASHURST VILLAGE HALL ON THURSDAY 20th MARCH 2025 AT 7.30PM**

**Attendance:**

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

1. **Attendance and Apologies for Absence**

There were none.

1. **To Receive Declarations of Interest, Notification of Changes to Members’ Interests and consider any requests for a dispensation**

There were none.

1. **Public Session** **(members of the public may speak for up to 5 minutes at the discretion of the Chair about items on the agenda)**

There were no members of the public who wished to speak. However, a resident had passed on a letter about Rampion and had requested that Councillor Nicholson share its content with the rest of the Council. As it was not related to an item on the agenda, the Councillor said he would respond to her after the meeting.

1. **Approval of the Minutes from the Council meeting held on 16th January 2025**

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

1. **District Councillor Reports**

District Councillor Victoria Finnegan spoke about the Local Plan and confirmed HDC had published its action points and were expecting an update from the Inspector next week.

She said tomorrow was the deadline for submission for District Councils to put forward their thoughts on devolution and local government reorganisation. She reiterated that HDC was keen for more local responsibilities and an Extraordinary Meeting was held recently at HDC to approve payment for a development planner to help the District through the devolution process. Councillor Finnegan also said that Crawley would be issuing a statement tomorrow.

The Chair confirmed she would be attending an interparish meeting at Henfield on 8th April which would discuss devolution further, and she also reminded Councillors to submit their response to the public consultation by April 13th.

Councillor Finnegan gave details of grant funding for businesses to cut greenhouse emissions as well as the Volunteer Awards (nominations close on the 11th April). Paws on the Doors was also discussed, which was a new initiative and would provide ratings for animal welfare throughout the District.

Lastly, it was confirmed that HDC would no longer be carrying out playground inspections for parish and town councils but would provide training for Councillors who wished to take this task upon themselves.

1. **Conservation and Biodiversity Initiatives**

Councillor Knight and the Chair were scheduled to meet representatives from Sussex Wildlife Trust on the 3rd April to discuss the findings of wildlife in Ashurst. Councillor Knight attended a meeting with the Climate Action Network at HDC and said there had been good progress of reporting initiatives on the One Planet platform. He requested the website have a section on environmental issues where content could be added, which the Clerk said she would add.

Councillor Knight had received correspondence from the Adur Project and thought they could be a suitable speaker for the Annual Parish Meeting to which the Chair said she would investigate further.

1. **HALC/Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation**

The Chair attended the recent HALC meeting where the main topic discussed was devolution. She reiterated the deadline for the public consultation and said a link to it would be included in the local newsletter.

1. **Planning Applications**
2. **To consider the following planning applications:**

DC/25/0259 North Blows Chapmans Farm Bines Green Partridge Green Horsham West Sussex

Updates to the internal layout and parking arrangements of the residential dwelling approved under planning application DC/18/1669. (Retrospective).

Councillors considered the above planning application and **RESOLVED** not to comment.

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

DC/25/0356 Moors Mead Honeybridge Lane Ashurst West Sussex

Erection of a double garage and garden store with room over.

Councillors considered the above planning application and **RESOLVED** to have no objection.

1. **Planning Decisions from HDC**

To receive any decisions on planning applications from Horsham District Council.

DC/25/0013 Description: Otters Church Lane Ashurst West Sussex BN44 3AR

Demolition of existing side garage and conservatory and the erection of a single storey side extension. Replacement windows to all elevations.

Decision: Application Permitted

Parish: Ashurst PC Application Number: DC/24/0710 Site: Furlong Shaw Bines Green Partridge Green Horsham West Sussex RH13 8EH Description: Retrospective application for the erection of a shepherds hut and kitchen/bathroom for holiday accommodation Decision: Application Refused Date of Decision: 28/01/2025

Councillors noted the above planning decisions from HDC.

1. **Policies and administration**
2. **To review and approve the updated Financial Regulations**

Councillors considered the updated Financial Regulations and **RESOLVED** to adopt them.

1. **To review and approve the Standing Orders**

Councillors considered the Standing Orders and **RESOLVED** to adopt them.

1. **To review and approve the Asset Register**

Councillors considered the Asset Register which remained unchanged from the previous year and **RESOLVED** to approve it.

1. **To review and approve the Council’s Risk Assessment**

Councillors considered the updated Risk Assessment and **RESOLVED** to approve it.

1. **Payments and bank reconciliation**
2. **To review and approve the schedule of payments and bank reconciliation since the**

**last meeting (16th January 2025).**

Councillors **RESOLVED** to approve the schedule of payments and bank reconciliation since the last meeting (16th January 2025). See Appendix 1.

1. **To review the Council’s income since the last meeting (16th January 2025).**

The Clerk informed the Council that no income had been received since the last meeting and that the bank balance as of 20th March 2025 was £17,334.47.

1. **Recreation Ground**
2. **To receive a report on the Recreation Ground Trust’s income and expenditure since the meeting on 16th January 2025\*.**

Councillors approved the previously circulated report on the Recreation Ground Trust’s income and expenditure since the last meeting. It was noted that the bank balance as of 20th March 2025 was £11,595.87. See Appendix 2.

1. **To receive an update on the energy contract with EDF.**

The Clerk advised that the energy contract needed to be renewed at the end of the month and had previously circulated a selection of quotes to Councillors which had been obtained by Utility Aid. After consideration, Councillors **RESOLVED** to approve the quote from British Gas for 12 months.

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

The Chair had met architect GE Paul and received the updated plans which consisted of home and away changing rooms, two showers in each, toilets, a disabled toilet, umpire shower and toilet, a kitchen and spectator space. There was also provision for three storage containers: one for the school, one for the cricket club and one for the football club. The veranda would be wide enough for seating. A Councillor suggested shutters to keep the glass secure during cricket matches, as well as from a security perspective. Materials and the roof needed to be discussed, but Councillors agreed it should look as traditional as possible, with timber or composite timber frontage being suggested. The architect estimated £150,000 for the build. An informal meeting would take place between Councillors and the architect to discuss the plans in more detail and then a consultation with the public would take place.

1. **To receive a general update**

The Chair said the tree warden had reported that the hedge was doing well and had been cut back. The trees were doing quite well but were overgrown and the brambles should be cut back, to which Councillors agreed. The Chair said she would ask the tree warden to look at the oak tree again and to confirm it was safe.

The Chair said the school wanted to donate a bench in memory of Roy Powell, governor at the school and long-standing resident of the village who sadly died last year. Councillors unanimously agreed that this would be a lovely idea and tribute.

1. **Annual Litter Pick held on Sunday 16th March/Fly Tipping**

The Chair said the Annual Litter Pick was a success and, as well as rubbish, they collected three bins worth of recycling. It was agreed there was not as much rubbish as last year, however Councillor Nicholson commented on the fly tipping on Spithandle Lane and said he felt the issue seemed to be getting worse. Thanks was given to Councillor Russell for arranging the equipment, and to the 20 residents who joined in.

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

There was no update.

1. **To discuss the proposed purchase of a Speed Indicator Device (SID).**
2. **To discuss the proposed change of speed limits north of the village.**
3. **To receive an update on a meeting with WSCC Highways.**

Items 14(b, c and d) were discussed as one item. Councillor Nicholson attended a meeting last week with WSCC representatives to discuss the sitings for the SID poles. However, every site proposed by APC was rejected. WSCC said it would not install a pole on WSCC land or highway as they did not want to maintain the pole. They would only install a pole if there was 75m of direct line sight and providing it was within a certain distance of the 30mph one. They said poles could be installed on private land so this could potentially happen on the Duke of Norfolk estate. WSCC had suggested village gates but the Council had already expressed it was not supportive of this idea.

Councillor Nicholson had updated County Councillor Paul Lineham and he said he would speak to those involved at WSCC as he had always been supportive.

Councillor Nicholson also said the TRO limit had increased from £3,000 to £5,000 and it was thought that the buffer zone would cost more than this to implement. He recommended submitting the TRO anyway which Councillors **RESOLVED** to approve. It was **AGREED** that Cllrs Nicholson and Russell would submit the application on behalf of the Council.

Lastly, Councillor Nicholson said WSCC had provided some statistics from 2023 on average speeds in the village from satellite navigation data and said the results were not overly discouraging. See Appendix 3.

1. **Recruitment**

Councillors **RESOLVED** to approve the appointment of the new Clerk for 5 hours per week at SCP 23 following the recent interviews which took place. The current Clerk would have a handover at the end of the month/early April.

1. **Co-option of another Councillor**

The Chair said a resident had expressed an interest in potentially becoming a Councillor and it was agreed to send him the co-option form and invite him to the next council meeting so he could be considered.

1. **GDPR**

Councillors were reminded delete all emails over 6 months old.

1. **Meeting dates**

The Annual Council Meeting was scheduled for the 15th May 2025 at 6.30pm and this would be followed by the Annual Parish Meeting at 7.30pm.

**Appendix 1**

Bank reconciliation to March 20th 2025

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| Balance per bank statement  |  |
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|  |  |
| **Closing balance 20th March 2025** | 17,334.47 |
|  |  |
| **Add: outstanding receipts** | 0.00 |
| **Less: outstanding payments** |  |
|  |  |
| **Net balances**  | 17,334.47 |
|  |  |
| **Cashbook** (balance as of 1st April 2024) | 14,260.51 |
| Add receipts (from 1st April - 31st March 2025) |  £ 14,529.81  |
| Less payments (from 1st April - 31st March 2025) |  £ 11,455.85  |
| **Net balance** | **17334.47** |

Schedule of payments since the last meeting

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 6.01.25  | E Simpson |  Salary December 2024 |  £265.75 |
|  6.01.25  | E Simpson | Office Allowance December 2024 |  £13.33 |
|  8.01.25  | Community Minibus |  Grant |  £100.0 |
|  8.01.25  | E Simpson |  Salary January 2025 |  £265.75 |
|  8.01.25  | E Simpson | Office Allowance January 2025 |  £13.33 |
| 23.01.25 | HMRC | Quarterly PAYE | £196.40 |
| 30.01.25 | Sussex Wildlife Trust | Biodiversity report | £150.00 |
| 30.01.25 | S Fischel | Reimbursement for bench  | £269.10 |
| 10.02.25 | E Simpson | Salary  | £265.75 |
| 10.02.25 | E Simpson | Office Allowance | £13.33 |
| 3.3.25 | E Simpson | Salary | £265.55 |
| 3.3.25 | E Simpson | Office Allowance | £13.33 |
| 3.3.25 | PWLB | Loan repayment | £1378.88 |
| 18.03.25 | Service charge |  | £4.25 |
|  |  |  | **£3214.75** |

Income received since the last meeting (16th January 2025)

There was none.

**Appendix 2**

**Recreation Ground Account**

The balance as of 20th March 2025 was £11,595.87.

Income received since the last meeting on 16th January 2025

£50 was received from Partridge Green Football Club in relation to hire of the Recreation Ground in March 2025.

Expenditure since the last meeting to 20 March 2025 totals £259.81 and comprises:

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| --- | --- | --- |
| EDF | Electricity | £60.00  |
| EDF  | Electricity | £60.00 |
| Business Stream | Water rates | £67.81  |
| HDC  | Playground inspections October 2024-March 2025 | £72.00 |
|  |  | **£259.81** |

The Parish Council is yet to pay the grant of £5,000 to the Recreation Ground but has paid for the G E Paul invoice which was £2,160 and bench for the recreation ground, leaving a further £2,570.90 to be transferred before the end of the financial year.

**Appendix 3**

WSCC 2023 statistics