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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 19th SEPTEMBER 2024 AT 7.30PM**

**Attendance:**

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| **Chairman** | Cllr Fischel |
| **Ashurst Parish Council (APC)** | Cllrs Hammond, Nicholson, Knight 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).

A member of the public spoke about the verges on Church Lane which he deemed to be quite hazardous and said that the ditch was overgrown. He thought the land was common land belonging to the Duke of Norfolk but the Councillors did not think this was the case and suggested that this was reported to West Sussex County Council in the first instance.

1. **Approval of the Minutes from the Council meeting held on 11th July 2024**

 To review and approve.

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

1. **District Councillor Reports**

District Councillor Finnegan said the SDNP Planning Authority had finished undertaking an early-stage participation of their Local Plan. HDC had previously been contracted by SDNP to carry out planning work on their behalf for the areas of Horsham within the SDNP but it had now been confirmed that the contract will not be renewed after it ends later this year. She said that new guidance would be issued in due course.

Councillor Finnegan also spoke about the proposed reforms to the NPPF and of the newly proposed housing allocation for the Horsham District, which was currently set at 917 but the new plans would require an increase to 1,294. She advised that this figure may be reduced slightly to reflect water neutrality. HDC had responded to the Consultation.

Grants were available, such as some for the volunteer sector, climate friendly projects to future-proof businesses, as well as the People’s Budget. She would send details to the Clerk.

Councillor Finnegan also spoke about the proposed development of Glebe Farm (King Farm Lane in Steyning). This had taken up a lot of her time. It was going to Committee next week, but she felt it was unlikely to impact Ashurst significantly. It was a proposal for 265 new homes as well as the building of a new roundabout off the Steyning bypass. Councillors commented on the additional strain to public services that would result if this development went ahead, as well as congestion on the Steyning bypass.

The Council considered whether we should take another look at preparing a Neighbourhood Plan. It was agreed to discuss this further at a future meeting.

1. **Conservation and Biodiversity**

Cllr Knight had recently attended a meeting arranged by HDC. HDC had 5 years to become carbon neutral in its own resources and had a target of 2050 to make the wider community carbon neutral. APC has spoken in the past of its wish to take up green initiatives. He felt we should now focus on biodiversity within Ashurst with the Council looking into a nature recovery programme which could help any endangered species in our area.

The Village Hall was a good example of an ecofriendly building, with the potential of a solar battery to increase sustainability. At the Recreation Ground, the newly planted trees and hedgerow were now flourishing. All Councillors were keen for the new sports pavilion, to be as ‘green’ as possible ie to try and make it carbon neutral if possible.

He said that landowners in Ashurst played a crucial role, and ideas could be shared for best practice. He referenced the online platform, One Planet, as a useful tool as it helps people and organisations to tackle climate change. Warnham Parish Council had had some interesting initiatives – swift boxes, and specific wild flower areas, etc. A good starting point was to liaise with Sussex Wildlife Trust and the Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre to see what records concerning Ashurst were already held and how the Parish could build on these and contribute effectively.

Councillor Finnegan said that grants were available and a member of the Sussex Wildlife Trust should be available to do a walk around the village and advise further.

The Chair said an item on the topic would be included in the next Parish Newsletter.

1. **Recreation Ground**
2. **To receive a report on the Recreation Ground Trust’s Income and Expenditure since the last meeting (11th July).**

The Clerk reported that there had been two payments to EDF and two payments to Sussex Land Services since the last meeting, as detailed in the schedule of payments (see Appendix 1). No income had been received since the last meeting.

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

The Chair reminded the meeting, that we had previously obtained 4 quotations, and it had been **RESOLVED** to instruct G E Paul to draw up initial draft plans for the new sports building. Once the draft plans had been received, the Council would discuss these with users of the current buildings and it would also hold a meeting for local residents.

1. **HALC Update**

The Chair advised that the last meeting had been cancelled so there was no update.

1. **Planning Applications**
2. **To review any planning applications received since the publication of the agenda**

There were none.

1. **Planning Decisions from HDC**

To receive decisions on planning applications from Horsham District Council.

Parish: Ashurst PC Application Number: DC/24/0180 Site: Ford Farm Ford Lane Ashurst West Sussex BN44 3AT Description: Change of use from 3 farm buildings to B8 storage (Retrospective). Decision: Application Refused Date of Decision: 14/08/2024

Councillors noted the above planning decision.

1. **Payments and bank reconciliation**
2. To review and approve the schedule of payments and bank reconciliation since the last meeting (11th July).
3. To consider a grant request of £150 from the Steyning Responders
4. To appoint an internal auditor for 2024/25.
5. Councillors **RESOLVED** to approve the schedule of payments since the last meeting (see Appendix 1) and the bank reconciliation to 18th September. The Clerk also confirmed that the Council had received £33.08 in income since the last meeting as a result of an overpayment for printer ink. It was also reported that Councillor Nicholson had now been added as a signatory to the Parish Council bank account.
6. After consideration, Councillors **RESOLVED** to approve the grant request from the Steyning Responders for £150.
7. After discussion, Mulberry & Co were appointed as the internal auditor for 2024/25.
8. **Speeding and Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs)**

Councillors Nicholson and Russell had looked at potential sites for the poles for the mobile SIDs. They proposed to place them southbound before the Village Hall, near the pub sign if possible, and then a further 3 northbound sites: one on the hill in the 30mph zone, one on the corner of School Lane with a final pole opposite the pub. The device would be easy to move from one pole to another. The next step was to liaise with WSCC to confirm the pole locations. The cost of the SIDs had been researched. One with a solar panel cost in the region of £3,650 and if data capture was included, this would be an additional £300. It was agreed not to commit to purchasing a SID at this stage and to defer to the next meeting.

The Council had also discussed a reduction of the 30mph stretch north of the village, but to then introduce a 40mph buffer zone, to begin just before the Golden Lane exit. (This had been consulted on and had met with a favorable response at the same time as the Partridge Green traffic measures.)

It was agreed that Councillor Nicholson would write to County Councillor Paul Lineham to keep him appraised and would see whether any further public consultation for the speed limit change was required.

1. **Correspondence**

The founder of Flix on the Stix, Bob Harari, said the recent film night was a success with 40-45 attendees. Half of the proceeds went to the Village Hall and the other half goes to charity.

Councillor Russell advised that the grit bin near the school seems to have been stolen. He said that the salt had been emptied into a pile but the grit bin was no longer there. The Clerk said she would report this to WSCC.

**Next meeting date:** 14th November at 7.30pm.

Appendix 1

Ashurst Parish Council schedule of payments since the last meeting (11th July 2024)

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| 10.7.24 | ICO | Annual payment | 35.00 |
| 25.7.24 | HMRC | Quarterly tax (April – June 2024) | 191.00 |
| 14.8.24 | E Simpson  | Office Allowance July | 13.33 |
| 14.8.24 | E Simpson | Salary July | 254.70 |
| 14.8.24 | Air Ambulance Charity | Grant | 150.00 |
| 2.9.24 | PWLB | Loan repayment | 1390.00 |
| 9.9.24 | E Simpson  | Salary August | 254.70 |
| 9.9.24 | E Simpson | Office Allowance August | 13.33 |
| 13.9.24 | G E Paul | Survey, design meeting, initial visuals for new pavillion | 2160.00 |
|  |  |  | **£4,462.06** |

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| **Ashurst Parish Council Bank reconciliation**

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| Balance per bank statement  |  |
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| **Closing balance 18th September 2024** | 14,903.21 |
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| **Add: outstanding receipts** | 0.00 |
| **Less: outstanding payments** |  |
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| **Net balances**  | 14,903.21 |
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| **Cashbook** (balance as of 1st April 2024) | 14,260.51 |
| Add receipts (from 1st April - 31st March 2025) | 7,479.81 |
| Less payments (from 1st April - 31st March 2025) |  6,837.11  |
| **Net balance** | **£14,903.21** |

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**Recreation Ground schedule of payments since 11th July**

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| 29.7.24 | EDF | Electricity | 60.00 |
| 28.8.24 | EDF | Electricity | 60.00 |
| 9.9.24 | Sussex Land Services | Grass Cutting June & July 2024 | 565.70 |
| 13.9.24 | Sussex Land Services | Grass Cutting August 2024 (not yet paid) | 282.85 |
|  |  |  | **TOTAL £968.55** |