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MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF ASHURST PARISH COUNCIL, REMOTELY VIA ZOOM ON THURSDAY 2nd JULY 2020 AT 6.30PM

Attendance

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Chairman | Cllr Fischel |
| Ashurst Parish Council (APC) | Cllrs Hedley, Knight, Nicholson and Russell |
| Horsham District Council (HDC) | Cllr Platt |
| West Sussex County Council (WSCC) | Cllr Barling |
| Clerk | Elizabeth Leggo |

Further to the Coronavirus Act 2020, this meeting was held remotely via Zoom. Members of the public were given the opportunity to email or telephone the Clerk in advance with any questions or statements and were invited to ask for a link to observe the meeting remotely.

To discuss any questions submitted by the public.

Two members of the public were present to observe the meeting but did not have any questions or comments.

1. Apologies for Absence.

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Lloyd (HDC) and Cllrs Hammond and Jesse (APC).

2. Declaration of Members' Interests.

None for this meeting.

3. Approve the Minutes of the Meeting of 14th May 2020

The minutes were circulated to all councillors and taken as read. It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes are a true record of the meeting and were signed by the Chairman. The Chairman would post these to the Clerk.

4. Update on Covid-19

An email received from SSALC had given an update of face-to-face meetings, as suggested by NALC. NALC strongly recommends continuing with remote meetings despite the relaxation in lockdown measures. The Council **AGREED** to follow NALC's guidance on this and hold the next meeting in October via Zoom.

The play equipment can be opened from 4th July – see below.

5. Reports from District & County Councillors

Cllr Platt informed the Council that Horsham District Council is currently in the process of re-opening the 50 playgrounds in the District and displaying Covid-19 advice/caution notices. HDC is also advising local restaurants on re-opening measures. Cllr Platt also reported that HDC has taken the decision to cancel all outstanding public events for the rest of 2020. Unfortunately, HDC has had to use a lot of its reserves as revenue has reduced significantly since Covid-19.

*Draft minutes of the Annual Meeting of Ashurst Parish Council on 2nd July 2020
Minutes subject to approval by the Council on 1st October 2020*

Regarding the Climate Change Strategy at HDC, Cllr Platt said that two motions had recently been put to the Council, neither of which had been passed. The first was the proposal that Horsham Homes Ltd should adopt a Passive House Standard, whilst the second was to re-organise the Council's structure for climate change action.

Cllr Barling informed the Council that West Sussex County Council has a Climate Change Advisory Group which advises the cabinet member for the environment. Cllr Barling would circulate the minutes of the last meeting of the group, held on 19th May. WSCC has a 10-year plan to be carbon neutral by 2030, a target that Cllr Barling said WSCC is well on the way to achieve.

As with HDC, WSCC has also spent large sums on Covid-19 – Cllr Barling advised that the latest figure was a cost of £80-85 million to the County Council.

With regard to Ashurst, Cllr Barling had reported the repair of the potholes on Church Lane which had subsequently been repaired as well as referring a bridge in the Parish which has also now been fixed. The Chairman thanked Cllr Barling for his assistance in these two matters.

6. Outstanding Actions

| Action | Outcome |
|--|--|
| Cllr Fischel to speak to the Landlord of the Fountain Inn regarding its registration as an Asset of Community Value. | To carry over until Covid-19 restrictions are relaxed. |
| Clerk to send the parish online log in details to Cllr Fischel. | Complete. |
| The Clerk was asked to submit the Trust's Annual Return to the Charity Commission. | Complete. |
| Cllr Fischel to liaise with Cllr Hedley and the tree warden in preparing for the arrival of the saplings. | Outstanding – to be done later this Autumn prior to the November delivery. |
| Cllr Fischel to find out more about the VAS and what Planning permission was required. | To carry over until after Covid-19 restrictions are relaxed. |
| Cllr Nicholson to speak to the Police in preparation of setting up the Speedwatch Group. | Complete – see item below. |
| Cllr Nicholson to continue his dialogue with Greg Merrett and WSCC regarding Broadband and the Universal Service Obligation. | Ongoing – see item below. |
| Cllr Russell and Cllr Barling to follow up with WSCC on the whereabouts of the promised cheque for Operation Watershed. | Complete – cheque now received and paid in. |
| Clerk to upload new meeting schedule onto the website and email a list to all councillors. | Complete |

7. Recreation Ground Matters.

The bank balance at HSBC as at 20th June 2020 was **£9,112.58**

| Income received 15 th May – 2 nd July 2020 | | |
|---|------------------------|---------|
| None for this period | | |
| Expenditure authorised 15 th May – 2 nd July 2020 | | |
| Sussex Land Services Ltd | Grass cutting May | £229.50 |
| Sussex Land Services Ltd | Grass cutting June | £229.50 |
| EDF Energy | Electricity | £28 |
| Business Stream | Water | £19.96 |
| Horsham District Council | Playground Inspections | £72 |

a. Rent for the Primary School's use of the Recreation Ground

West Sussex County Council has advised that it will no longer pay this charge and that the School must pay from now on. The Chairman and Clerk have been in touch with the Chairman of the School Governors who has been speaking to WSCC. Hopefully this issue will be resolved soon. The Council AGREED that the School could continue to use the Ground for the foreseeable future.

b. Cancellation of rent for the Cricket Club for Summer 2020

It was RESOLVED not to ask the Cricket Club for rent for the Summer 2020 period as the Club was unlikely to play any games this season.

c. Update from Partridge Green Football Club (PGFC)

The Clerk has emailed the Club Chairman. He advised that PGFC would give some thought to a possible proposal regarding the renovation of the John Eaton Hut. He hoped to provide an update at the Annual Recreation Ground Meeting this October.

The Club Chairman had also asked the Recreation Ground Trust to consider keeping the rental fees for use of the Ground by PGFC at the same level as last season (£300 fixed fee for six matches with a £50 charge for any further games). The Trustees AGREED to this.

d. Reopening of the play equipment

Further to the easing of lockdown measures, the play equipment can be reopened from 4th July. The Trustees agreed that they would put up laminated signs using the wording suggested by HDC. In addition, Cllrs Fischel and Russell agreed that they would meet in the Recreation Ground to undertake a risk assessment following the inspection by HDC and Wicksteed, due in the coming week. The Clerk suggested a rota to clean down surfaces that would be frequently touched. This risk assessment would be recorded, and the Clerk was asked to email the insurer before reopening the equipment to see if there is any further advice the Council needs to consider.

e. Items for the Annual Recreation Ground Meeting:

Cllr Fischel asked councillors to email her any items for the meeting.

Actions:

- *Clerk and Chairman to follow up the outstanding payment for the School's use of the Recreation Ground.*
- *Clerk to email the Cricket Club Chairman to advise that no charges would be made for this season.*
- *Clerk to inform PGFC of the Council's decision regarding match fees, and to advise that the John Eaton Hut remains closed due to Covid-19.*
- *Cllrs Fischel and Russell to meet at the playground to undertake a risk assessment.*
- *Clerk to email Norris and Fisher, the Council's insurance provider, to find out if they have any further guidance on reopening the play equipment.*
- *Councillors to email the Chairman any items to be considered at the Recreation Ground AGM.*

8. Planning Matters.

DC/20/0948: Change of use of existing agricultural barns to a single dwelling (Use Class C3), and erection of replacement garage, with associated landscaping. Site Address: Hawking Sopers Barn Spithandle Lane Wiston Steyning West Sussex BN44 3DY Grid Ref:515706 115283

The Clerk was asked to submit the following:

Stance: Neutral

Comments: No comments

DC/20/0957: Erection of a detached garage with accommodation over. Loves Cottage Horsham Road Steyning West Sussex

The Clerk was asked to submit the following:

Stance: Neutral

Comments: No comments

9. Planning Decisions from HDC

DC/20/0577: Merrion House Bines Green Partridge Green Horsham West Sussex RH13 8EH

Prior notification for excavations or deposits of waste material reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture

Decision: Prior Approval Required and REFUSED

Date of Decision:13/05/2020

DC/20/0797: Merrion House Bines Green Partridge Green Horsham West Sussex RH13 8EH

Erection of a single storey side extension and modification and alterations

Decision: Application Permitted

Date of Decision:22/06/2020

10. Horsham District Local Plan

The Council was disappointed at Horsham District Council's inadequate response and reaction to submitted comments on the Draft Plan. Despite Covid-19 and its long term implications, the government still insists that HDC's Plan needs to be finalised by November 2020. It was RESOLVED that the Council should write to HDC with further representations regarding Ashurst Parish Council's strong objections to HDC's proposal to reclassify Ashurst in the new Local Plan from an 'Unclassified Settlement' which it has always been, to a 'Secondary Settlement', which it clearly is not. The proposed reclassification is quite inappropriate.

Action: Cllr Fischel to draft a letter for the Clerk to send.

11. Financial Matters

The Clerk informed the Council that the internal audit had been passed, and that all the necessary documents had been displayed on the noticeboard and website. The certificate of exemption from external audit had been sent to the external auditor.

The Clerk has re-enrolled with the Pension Regulator to declare that no pension contributions are required to be made by the Council.

The bank balance at Lloyds TSB as at 27th May 2020 was **£17,833.10**

| Income received 15th May – 2nd July 2020 | | |
|--|---------------------------|--------|
| West Sussex County Council | Operation Watershed Grant | £8,376 |
| Horsham District Council | Half precept | £6,150 |
| | | |
| Expenditure authorised 15th May – 2nd July 2020 | | |
| E Leggo | Admin expenses | £22.82 |
| St Barnabas House | Grant | £100 |
| Mulberry & Co | Internal Audit | £162 |

12. Broadband in Ashurst

Cllr Nicholson advised that there are currently two schemes that residents could apply to for funding for superfast Broadband, but that a sub-committee was now required to take this forward.

It was AGREED that Cllrs Nicholson and Knight would arrange to discuss this further and might consider appointing a member of the public to work with them. Applications to WSCC for the scheme are open until March 2021.

Cllr Fischel thanked Cllr Nicholson for all the work that he has put in on pursuing this.

Action: Cllrs Nicholson and Knight to arrange the formation of a sub-committee and consider how to take this initiative forward.

13. Community Speedwatch

Cllr Nicholson was delighted to inform the Council that great progress has been made on setting up the Community Speedwatch Group. There are now five volunteers, including Cllrs Nicholson and Russell. Once Cllr Nicholson has completed his online training, he can invite the other four volunteers to undertake theirs and then the Police will come and help them set up and run the first couple of sessions.

The kit required costs in the region of £500. Other councils have been successful in applying for Section 106 funds for this. The Clerk was asked to email HDC to find out whether this was an option.

Again, the Chairman thanked Cllr Nicholson for his efforts in getting this important project off the ground.

Actions:

- *Cllr Nicholson to continue with setting up the Group.*
- *Clerk to email HDC regarding the availability of S106 funds.*

14. Trees and Footpaths

Cllr Fischel updated the Council on the substantial cutting back of a dead oak tree which was on property adjacent to the Recreation Ground. Neither the Recreation Ground Trust nor the School had been informed that the work was going to take place, which was disappointing. It was AGREED that a letter should be sent to the landowner advising that, when further work is needed on his other trees which border the Recreation Ground, the Trust needs to be given sufficient advance notice and the area needs to be adequately cordoned off. The Recreation Ground is a public area used on a daily basis by the School as well as being frequented by members of the public and due care needs to be taken as to their safety.

Cllrs Fischel and Hedley will discuss the cutting back of trees in the Recreation Ground later this Autumn.

The planting of the new trees from the Woodland Trust would take place in November.

Actions:

- *Cllr Fischel to draft a letter regarding cutting down trees adjacent to the Recreation Ground.*
- *Cllrs Fischel and Hedley and the Tree Warden to agree the timing and extent of the cutting back of the trees on the Recreation Ground this Autumn and to review the planting scheme for the new trees.*
- *Cllrs Fischel, Hedley and Russell to liaise later this summer to draw up a planting programme for the new trees and to consider the involvement of the school and Ashurst residents, if circumstances allow.*

15. Operation Watershed

Cllr Russell was pleased to inform the Council that the funds have finally been received from WSCC and that he has instructed Landbuild to start the work. The contractor is just awaiting permission from WSCC to work on the highway and is hoping to start on 20th July.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Russell for all his hard work on this and congratulated him on getting the project to this stage!

It was AGREED that a further application would be put in for flooding on Peppers Lane. Cllr Knight offered to take the lead on this application.

Action: Cllrs Knight and Russell to discuss applying for more Operation Watershed funds for Peppers Lane, with a view to this application being submitted for approval before the end of the financial year.

16. Annual Parish Meeting

The Clerk reminded the Council that this is not a mandatory annual meeting, and that since Covid-19, NALC and SSALC had advised that these should not be held. The Council AGREED that it was best to cancel this meeting and plan to hold next year’s meeting in April 2021.

17. HALC Update

Cllr Fischel informed the Council that there have not been any HALC meetings since lockdown. The Clerk noted that an invoice had not been received for HALC membership either, but she has emailed the Secretary to HALC to check for any updates on this.

18. Grants

The Council received a grant application from 4Sight Vision Support and RESOLVED to make a £50 donation.

Action: Clerk to raise a cheque for this grant

19. To arrange the Clerk’s annual performance review

Cllrs Knight and Nicholson agreed to carry this out again and would liaise with the Clerk.

Action: Clerk to set up a Zoom meeting with Cllrs Knight and Nicholson for her review.

20. Correspondence.

None for this meeting.

21. Reports from Outside Bodies.

Since the Village Hall remains closed for the present, Flix-in-the-Stix does not have any screenings planned.

22. Information Items.

None for this meeting.

23. Future meetings

A revised schedule was agreed for the next year further to the Coronavirus Act 2020. It was noted that this may be subject to change as lockdown measures are eased in the coming months.

The revised dates are all Thursdays at 6.30pm via Zoom:

- 1st October 2020 (Annual Recreation Ground Meeting at 6pm followed by Council Meeting at 6.30pm).
- 7th January 2021.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 7.50pm

Signed Chairman Dated