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MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF ASHURST PARISH COUNCIL, HELD AT ASHURST VILLAGE HALL ON THURSDAY 2nd DECEMBER 2021 AT 7.30PM

Attendance.

Chairman	Cllr Fischel
Ashurst Parish Council (APC)	Cllrs Hammond, Hedley, Knight, Nicholson and Russell
Horsham District Council (HDC)	Cllr Platt
Clerk	Elizabeth Leggo
Public	One member of the public was present

To discuss any questions submitted by the public.

1. Apologies for Absence.

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Jesse (APC), Cllr Lloyd (HDC) and Cllr Lineham (WSCC).

2. Declaration of Members' Interests.

None for this meeting.

3. Approve the Minutes of the Meeting of 30th September 2021

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.

4. Update on Covid-19.

Meetings must still be held face to face. Face coverings are recommended, and Councils can ask attendees to wear face coverings but cannot enforce it.

5. Reports from District & County Councillors.

Cllr Platt provided an update on the HDC 5-year plan, which has been delayed again, this time by Natural England which is insisting on a water neutrality requirement for any new building. (See 18 below.)

Cllr Tim Lloyd has been voted in as Chairman of the Planning South Committee.

Cllr Paul Clerk has stood down as Leader of the Council and Conservative Group. Cllr Jonathan Chowen has been voted in as head of the Conservatives and it is looking likely he will be voted in shortly as Leader of the Council. (Post meeting note: Duly elected.)

Without an agreed Local Plan, there is a shortage of the 5-year land supply in the Horsham District, which makes Horsham vulnerable to speculative applications.

6. Outstanding Actions.

Action	Outcome
Cllr Fischel to speak to the Landlord of the Fountain Inn regarding registration as an Asset of Community Value.	Can now be actioned!
Rampion consultation. Cllr Knight agreed to keep the Council informed on dates for the public consultation as these become available.	Done – See Item below.
Clerk to re-invite a representative of ENSO to a council meeting.	Ongoing - See 10 below

Cllrs Knight and Nicolson continuing to work on the Broadband project.	Ongoing - See Item 12 below.
Cllr Russell to chase up WSCC /Ms Furlong for a response to a grant possibility and update on Operation Watershed.	It was decided that this specific item should not be pursued - See 15 below.
Councillors to read the Local Government Association Model Councillor Code of Conduct in advance of the next meeting.	Complete - See 19 below.
Clerk to contact the Football Club to find out if it intends to use the John Eaton Hut this winter. Cllr Russell would wait to switch the water off at the mains until we had heard back.	Complete - See Item 7 below Note: Water Switched off.
Cllr Fischel to ask the Tree Warden if she would mind writing an annual report for the Recreation Ground Trust.	Done. Warden written a comprehensive report.
Cllr Fischel to check the dates on the labels for PAT testing.	Done - See item 7 below.
Cllr Fischel to send out dates to councillors to meet up at the Ground.	Complete - Councillors met on 27 th November.
Cllr Knight to contact Cllr Lineham for a copy of the WSCC report on the Rampion Windfarm.	Done.
Cllr Fischel to follow up with Andrew Griffith MP about his response to the Rampion Consultation which he had promised to circulate to all those attending his zoom meeting.	Done - See Ashurst Parish Website.
Cllr Fischel will arrange to meet with Norman Kwan of HDC to talk about the merits of an Ashurst Neighbourhood Plan. She would raise again the issue of Ashurst's proposed reclassification as a secondary settlement.	Arranged a zoom meeting the next day.

7. Recreation Ground Matters.

- **To receive the report on the Recreation Ground Trust's income and to approve future expenditure.**

The bank balance at HSBC as at **20th November 2021 was £10,996.27**

Income received 1st October to 2nd December 2021		
None for this period		
Expenditure authorised 1st October to 2nd December 2021		
EDF	Electricity - October & November 2021	£8
Sussex Land Services Ltd.	Grass cutting Aug, Sept & Oct	£691.20
Wicksteed Leisure Ltd.	Playground inspection 2021	£72
Horsham District Council	Play inspections (April-Sept 2021)	£86.40

- **To review Horsham District Council and the Annual Wicksteed Playground Inspection results and update on any remedial work.**

It was AGREED that a new bench would be purchased to replace the damaged bench, as reported by Wicksteed.

Action: Cllr Fischel to investigate and report back.

- **Update on deer fencing.**

A short span of approximately 45 metres is to be put up in the far corner to deter the deer. Other areas have effectively been stopped by temporary construction fencing.

Action: Cllr Fischel would arrange for this to be erected during the holidays, if possible.

- **Current usage of the Ground.**

The Ground continues to be well used by residents and dog walkers etc. While Ashurst children are back enjoying using the Ground at break-times and after school throughout the term, as far as our football and cricket teams are concerned, they have yet to return post Covid.

- **Update on AGM held immediately prior to this meeting.**

The minutes from the AGM are available via this [link](#).

The Council had met up last week-end on the Recreation Ground and had inspected the Ground and buildings.

The planted trees were doing very well but would need some attention next summer such as clearing round their roots, weeding and watering. It was to be hoped that the Residents and school children may be called upon to assist in a Spring Recreation Ground Clean-up.

It was agreed that some time would be needed for the Cricket and Football Clubs to assess what their future usage might be. For the moment we are expecting limited income if any from these two sources.

It was AGREED that the Football Club would be charged £25 per game for the first 6 games as they are struggling, but we would hope that they are able to come along and help with the Spring clear-up.

Action: Clerk to advise the Football Club of the Council's decision.

Meanwhile the Trustees had inspected the John Eaton Hut and the Cricket Pavilion and had AGREED that the best option seemed to be to replace these two buildings with just one and that this should be situated on the footprint of the John Eaton Hut. Ideally, the existing building should be refurbished but, if it cannot be adapted to suit requirements, a simple Sports Building will be commissioned to replace it. The new set up will need to be easy and inexpensive to maintain (eg no showers). We are anxious to promote as environmentally friendly a replacement as possible.

It was further AGREED to have a Spring clear-up in March/April and to paint the Cricket Pavilion in Summer 2022, just before the Annual Dog Show.

Cllr Fischel had checked that the last PAT testing was carried out in July 2018. This should be undertaken every 24 months, although this is not required by law.

Action: Cllrs Fischel and Russell to investigate possibilities for a refurbished or replacement building.

Action: Cllr Fischel to come up with some dates for a Spring Clear up.

Action: Cllr Russell agreed to speak to an electrician about carrying out the necessary PAT tests.

8. Planning Matters.

DC/21/2599 and 2600: Change of use of agricultural buildings to an events venue with a WC block (Listed Building Consent). Eatons Farm, The Village Ashurst Steyning.

The Clerk was asked to submit the following:

Stance: Support

Comments: The Council likes to support local enterprise.

9. Planning Decisions from HDC.

Application Number: **DC/21/1778**

Site: Wellens Farm Steyning Road Ashurst West Sussex

Description: Application to confirm the lawful commencement of application DC/14/1030 (Conversion of redundant farm buildings to form residential dwelling, including internal and external alterations, retaining 2 further farm buildings for use as annexe and garden store.

Decision: **Application Refused**

Date of Decision: 16/11/2021

Application Number: **DC/21/2142**

Site: New Wharf Farm Horsebridge Common Ashurst Steyning West Sussex BN44 3AL Description:

Retrospective application for the Change of Use of agricultural land for the storage of No.14 shipping containers (Class Sui Generis).

Decision: **Application Permitted** (with conditions as per Appendix 1.)

Date of Decision: 12/11/2021

Proposed solar farm at Huddleston Farm, Steyning

Both the Clerk and Cllr Fischel had attempted to make contact with ENSO to invite a representative to this meeting, but unfortunately neither had received a response.

Action: Clerk to re-invite a representative of ENSO to a council meeting early next year.

10. Rampion 2 Windfarm Update

The Clerk has added up-to-date information to the Parish Council website as requested, including the consultation response from Andrew Griffith MP.

Cllr Knight has not heard anything about Rampion 2 since the public consultation.

11. Financial Matters.

The bank balance at Lloyds TSB as at **12th November 2021 was £13,236.68**

Income received 1st October to 2nd December 2021		
None for this period		
Expenditure authorised 1st October to 2nd December 2021		
Horsham Association of Local Councils	Membership of HALC 2021-22	£15
West Sussex Association of Local Councils (WSALC Ltd)	Parish Online subscription 2021-22	£60
E Leggo	Office Allowance October to December 2021	£40
E Leggo	Salary October to December 2021	£713.92
HMRC	E Leggo Tax October to December 2021	£178.40

The Council discussed the draft precept as sent by the Clerk. The Council will reconsider this item at the January 2022 meeting, and agree a final figure at that time.

12. Broadband in Ashurst

Cllrs Knight and Nicholson advised the Council that they had no updates to give since the last meeting. This standing item from the agenda will now be removed and they will provide future meetings with any updates.

13. Community Speedwatch

Cllr Nicholson informed the Council that this has been very active, with nine members. So far 95 vehicles have been recorded as speeding through the village. Most speeding is northbound. Therefore, the Group is going to try to get a different site to work from, in order to record speeds as vehicles come round the bend.

A wider implication, from a meeting with Sussex Police, is that three people recorded by Ashurst have been recorded elsewhere and some are involved in other crimes. Of the 95 vehicles recorded, six were prosecuted for reasons other than speeding - two had no MOT, three no tax and one vehicle had a SORN against it.

14. Trees and footpaths

The oak tree will have work done on it, hopefully, over Christmas. Please see also the minutes of the Annual Recreation Ground meeting for further updates.

Cllr Fischel wished to thank Pernille Harari for all the work she continues to do in her role as Tree Warden.

15. Operation Watershed

Cllr Russell did not have any updates for this meeting. It was AGREED not to pursue this application.

16. WSALC Update

The Clerk has circulated all of the current training courses to councillors. The Clerk agreed to re-send these.

17. HALC Update

The Annual Meeting of HALC and HDC took place on Tuesday. Cllr Fischel advised that there had been a very interesting talk on Wilder Horsham's Initiatives. Two people, a Landowner Advisor & a Community Support Officer, are being paid by HDC to work with the Sussex Wildlife Trust for the next 5 years. The aim is to work with landowners, farmers, communities, Parish Councils and other organisations to encourage the promotion

of nature recovery and to improve landscape connectivity by the development of a wildlife corridor between the rivers in the District. The nature recovery Network Report 2021 has now been produced.

The HDC's ambition to become carbon neutral was also discussed.

18. Local Plan

The HDC Local Plan is currently on hold. The Plan had been delayed in July, due to a central government requirement for a 30 year vision be included, with no prior notice given! More recently, as reported by Councillor Platt above, Natural England, the national statutory body that oversees the management of wildlife and habitats across the UK, issued a Position Statement in September 2021 which effectively has put an embargo on all new buildings, unless the Council is able to show that water consumption will be the same or less than it was before construction – ie it is water neutral. This is due to concerns about what is happening to the Arun valley wildlife (including the very rare Lesser whirlpool ramshorn snail) but also to ensure that there is sufficient water availability. This halt is expected to last for at least 6/8 months.

Cllr Fischel is to speak to Norman Kwan about the possibility of Ashurst preparing a Neighbourhood Plan.

19. Local Government Association Model Councillor Code of Conduct:

The Code of Conduct had been resent to all councillors.

It was AGREED to adopt the Code of Conduct.

20. Grants

None for this meeting.

21. GDPR

The Council was reminded to delete all emails over 6 months old.

22. Correspondence

None for this meeting.

23. Reports from Outside Bodies

On Saturday 4th December the next Flix in the Stix film would be screened.

24. Future meetings

The following meeting dates at 7.30pm were provisionally agreed for 2022:

- 13th January
- 19th May
- 29th September - Council/Rec Ground meeting
- 24th November
- 24th March
- 21st July

25. Information Items.

Cllr Nicholson had attended a meeting with Sussex Police, which had been useful and interesting. Most of the issues discussed, however, related to the larger villages and towns and do not particularly affect Ashurst.

The Police had asked for feedback on increasing the council tax on a band D property by £10 per annum to sustain services such as the Rural Crime Team, Business Crime Team and Strengthening of Neighbourhood Policing. Most of the councillors did not support this initiative and Cllr Nicholson would feed this back.

Date of next meeting: Thursday 13th January 2022

The Chairman closed the meeting at 20:50

Signed Chairman Dated

Appendix 1

Application Number: **DC/21/2142**

Site: New Wharf Farm Horsebridge Common Ashurst Steyning West Sussex BN44 3AL Description: Retrospective application for the Change of Use of agricultural land for the storage of No.14 shipping containers (Class Sui Generis).

Decision: **Application Permitted** (Including conditions as below.)

Date of Decision: 12/11/2021

This decision included the following conditions:

Standard Time Condition: The use of the storage containers hereby permitted shall be discontinued and the containers removed on or before 12 November 2026 and the land shall be restored on or before the 28 November 2026 to its former condition.

Reason: The proposed development is not considered satisfactory as a permanent measure in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

Regulatory Condition: The storage containers hereby permitted shall be used for agricultural purposes, as defined in Section 336(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and for the storage of incidental items in association with the established campsite operating from New Wharf Farm only.

Reason: The site lies in a countryside location where only development types specified in Policy 26 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) would normally be permitted.

Regulatory Condition: No external storage of any materials or waste shall take place at any time.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of the locality in accordance with Policies 32 and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

Regulatory Condition: No external lighting or floodlighting shall be installed other than with the permission of the Local Planning Authority by way of formal application.