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MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF ASHURST PARISH COUNCIL, REMOTELY VIA ZOOM, ON THURSDAY 6th MAY 2021 AT 6.30PM

Attendance.

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

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.

1. Election of Chairman.

The presiding Chairman, Cllr Fischel, asked for nominations for a Chairman for the forthcoming year. Cllr Fischel was nominated by Cllr Russell and seconded by Cllr Hammond and it was unanimously agreed. Cllr Fischel accepted the position and remained in the Chair. It was noted that the Chairman automatically becomes Chairman of the Ashurst Recreation Ground Trust in addition to that of the Council. Cllr Fischel signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office for Chairman. This would be posted to the Clerk.

2. Election of Vice Chairman.

Cllr Russell was nominated by Cllr Nicholson and seconded by Cllr Hedley and it was unanimously agreed. Cllr Russell accepted the position and remained the Vice Chairman. Cllr Russell signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office for Vice Chairman. This would be posted to the Clerk.

To discuss any questions submitted by the public.

There were no questions from the public.

3. Apologies for Absence.

None were received.

4. Declaration of Members' Interests.

None for this meeting.

5. Approve the Minutes of the Meeting of 4th March 2021.

The minutes had been 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.

6. Update on Covid-19.

The Coronavirus Act 2020 which enables remote meetings was put in place until 7th May 2021. The Clerk informed the Council that the Government has not extended legislation to continue these remote meetings, therefore for the next Council meeting, we would need to meet in person.

7. Reports from District & County Councillors.

Cllr Fischel took the opportunity to thank Cllr David Barling for his many years of service as a West Sussex County Councillor. Cllr Fischel would write to Cllr Barling expressing the gratitude of the Council.

Cllr Platt advised that the HDC draft local plan has been delayed until at least June. Councillors have been inundated with emails objecting to the key proposed developments, such as Buck Barn. In this case, the proximity of the development to the Knepp Estate is causing concern. The proposed developments at Adversane and Billingshurst have also raised significant objections from the public.

HDC is striving towards an eco-friendly fleet of vehicles. It has been noted that as staff continue to work from home after the pandemic, this would reduce pollution from commuting.

Cllr Lloyd added to Cllr Platt's report on the Local Plan, stating that this is potentially a very serious situation. If the Plan is voted out there will not be a 5-year land supply agreed, meaning all areas will be open to developers anyway. It is vitally important for the housing development plans that the Local Plan is agreed.

8. 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.
Cllr Fischel to find out more about the VAS and what Planning permission is required.	Note: A new VAS sign has recently and mysteriously appeared! Complete.
Clerk to send councillors some dates to meet at the Recreation Ground.	Wait until Covid restrictions are removed. Perhaps this Autumn!
Cllr Fischel to continue dialogue with Chair of the Governors at Ashurst Primary School re payment for use of Ground.	Payment now received! Complete.
Local Plan - Cllrs Fischel and Knight to liaise on follow up on Ashurst's continuing concerns regarding the suggested reclassification for Ashurst from an unclassified settlement to a secondary.	Reply from HDC, to Cllr Lloyd's enquiry, received but not entirely reassuring. Ongoing.
Clerk to contact Utility Aid to ask them to proceed with search for cheaper water and electricity for the Ground, as a charity.	Electricity resolved. Water charge insignificant so leave for the moment.
Cllrs Russell and Hammond to review Wicksteed results and make repairs as necessary at the playground.	See Item 9 below.
Cllr Russell to recommence legionella testing once lockdown is lifted.	Complete – the sample returned a negative result.
Cllr Fischel to keep an eye on the deer situation at the Recreation Ground	Ongoing - See item 23 below.
Cllrs Knight and Nicolson continuing to work on the Broadband project.	Ongoing – See item 21 below.
Cllr Nicholson to order equipment and the Community Speedwatch Group to continue with their live training as conditions allow. Clerk to chase WSCC for s106 funds to cover cost of equipment.	Done – Equipment ordered and Council reimbursed.
Cllrs Fischel and Russell to keep an eye on issues raised by HDC, when carrying out the weekly play equipment inspections.	Noted.
Cllrs Russell and Hammond to undertake repairs on the rubber matting.	Ongoing – To be done shortly.
Clerk to chase up a response from RWE further to the Council's letter regarding the Rampion Wind Farm Cabling Proposal.	Complete. Meeting held with RWE and Cllr Knight. See item 12.
Clerk to speak to Cllr Barling and re-report to WSCC, the potholes on Golden Lane on the Love West Sussex website.	Complete – Clerk spoke to Cllr Barling and re-reported.
Cllr Russell to speak to the landowner on Peppers Lane about a possible Operation Watershed application.	Ongoing.
Clerk to investigate a possible course of action for Golden Lane 'dip' and whether Operation Watershed funding was still available for 2021/2.	Funding still available. Cllrs Nicholson and Russell to investigate.
Clerk to raise a cheque for the Air Ambulance from this financial year's budget, for £100	Complete.
Clerk to research Mail Chimp as a potential way of mailing members of the community to keep in touch. To add to next meeting's agenda.	Done. See item 28 below.

9. Recreation Ground Matters.

The bank balance at HSBC as at 20th April 2021 was **£8,779.62**

Income received 4 th March – 6 th May 2021		
West Sussex County Council	Hire of Recreation Ground on behalf of Primary School for 2020/21	£1,200
Expenditure authorised 4 th March – 6 th May 2021		
Horsham District Council	Non-domestic rates	£0 (waived due to Coronavirus relief)
The F A Bartlett Tree Expert Company	Structural integrity report of oak tree at Recreation Ground	£780
Ashurst Arborists	Deadwood removal at Recreation Ground	£200
Business Stream	Water supply/waste (Dec 2020-April 2021)	£43.65
EDF	Electricity - March & April 2021	£56

It was noted that HDC has cancelled the non-domestic rates for the Recreation Ground, with 'Retail Relief (Coronavirus)' appearing on the latest statement with a charge of £0.

To approve the Accounts for 2020/21.

To approve the Income and Expenditure for 2020/21. Income - £4,560 Expenditure - £3,359.96.

The Bank Reconciliation and Income and Expenditure for 2020/1 were approved and the Annual Return was signed by the Chairman.

Actions: Cllr Russell to take water reading and submit to the Clerk.

The Clerk was asked to submit the Trust's Annual Return to the Charity Commission.

10. Planning Matters.

None for this meeting.

11. Planning Decisions from HDC.

Application Number: DC/20/1834

Site: Peppers Farm Peppers Lane Ashurst Steyning West Sussex BN44 3AX

Description: Erection of boathouse / fishing lodge building with ground level change

Decision: Application Permitted

Date of Decision: 12/03/2021

12. Rampion 2 Windfarm Update

The Clerk and Cllr Knight had attended a meeting with Jenn Bryden, Consultation Manager for Rampion 2. This had been arranged by Ms Bryden as a result of the recent letter sent by Ashurst Parish Council raising concerns over the lack of community consultation. Ms Bryden had confirmed that agents from RWE would be out to meet residents on site. RWE acknowledges that communication could have been better, and that there will be a public consultation in the summer.

Actions:

- Cllr Knight agreed to keep the Council informed on dates for the public consultation as these become available.*
- Clerk to put the email address for Jenn Bryden on the Rampion 2 page of the Council's website.*

13. Financial Matters.

Mulberry and Co were confirmed as the Internal Auditors for the Council and Moore UK as the External Auditor.

The balance of the Public Works Loan was noted as £43,000. A copy of the latest statement had been circulated to all councillors in advance of the meeting.

The bank balance at Lloyds TSB as at 23rd March 2021 was **£7,829.65**

Income received 4 th March – 6 th May 2021	
None for this period	

Expenditure authorised 4 th March – 6 th May 2021		
E Leggo (reimbursement)	Microsoft Office 365 subscription	£113.76
E Leggo (reimbursement)	Yola domain renewal	£18.85
E Leggo (reimbursement)	Yola information privacy	£7.95
E Leggo (reimbursement)	Yola Silver hosting annual renewal	£101.45
WSALC Limited	WSALC & NALC subscription	£86.71
Ashurst Public Recreation Ground Trust	Annual Grant 2020/21	£4,000
Grant to Kent, Surrey & Sussex Air Ambulance	Grant	£100
Places Leisure	Grant – Steyning Swimming Pool	£100
E Leggo	Office Allowance (April-June 2021)	£40
E Leggo	Salary (April-June 2021)	£713.92
E Leggo	Expenses	£9.12
HMRC	Tax E Leggo (April-June 2021)	£178.40

14. Certificate of Exemption.

The Certificate of Exemption from external audit for the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2020/21 was approved. The Chairman agreed to sign the Certificate and return this to the Clerk.

15. Annual Governance Statement.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Annual Governance Statement for 2020/21 is a correct record of a sound system of internal control and accounting. The Annual Governance Statement was approved and signed by the Chairman who would send this on to the Clerk/RFO for her signature.

16. Accounting Statements.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Accounting Statements for 2020/21 are a true record of the Council's income and expenditure. The Accounting Statements were signed by the Chairman who would send these on to the Clerk/RFO for her signature.

Action: Clerk to meet with the Internal Auditor who would audit the accounts.

17. To decide whether to have a Limited Assurance Review for the year 2020/21.

Not applicable as the Certificate of Exemption was approved (See Item 14 above).

18. Grants.

The Council **RESOLVED** to make a grant of £100 to St Barnabas Hospice.

Action: Clerk to raise a cheque.

19. Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

Cllr Fischel reminded the Council that it had not been necessary to review the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations last year.

The documents had been circulated to all councillors and were taken as read. It was proposed by Cllr Russell and seconded by Cllr Hammond that all documents be Adopted. This was **RESOLVED** by the Council.

Action: Cllr Fischel and the Clerk agreed to meet over the coming year with a view to reviewing and suggesting amendments to the documents to better reflect the requirements of Ashurst Parish Council.

20. Update on insurance

The Clerk informed the Council that she has approached three companies for quotes as the current insurance expires at the end of May 2021.

Action: The Clerk was to chase up the three quotes.

21. Broadband in Ashurst

Cllr Knight advised the Council that the deadline for the Gigabit vouchers was incorrectly posted. There is now a quote for Ashurst, which would need to be split into two exchanges – Steyning and Partridge Green.

For the Partridge Green end of the village, the scheme could be quite affordable provided that residents apply for the Gigabit vouchers.

Cllr Nicholson informed the Council that for the 01903 (Steyning) exchange, 14 properties needed to sign up to the Scheme and then this would be installed for free rather than in the region of £6,000. Cllr Nicholson is working with a neighbour to identify the relevant houses to see if they would like to make a joint application.

Cllr Fischel thanked both Cllrs Knight and Nicholson for their hard work and progress on this.

22. Community Speedwatch

Cllr Nicholson advised the Council that all of the Speedwatch volunteers have had their final training. All that is now needed is the co-ordinator to inform him which of the three previously identified sites in the village was to be used. All the kit is ready, so we can start as soon as the approved sites are announced.

Cllr Fischel thanked Cllr Nicholson for his efforts on this.

23. Trees and footpaths

Large oak tree: Cllr Fischel advised that quotes have been received from Bartletts for the two pieces of work recommended in the report. The quote to inject chemicals to stabilize the tree is £160 plus VAT. The other piece of work is an extensive cutting back of the tree, with a quote of £1,350 plus VAT. Cllr Fischel would speak to Bartletts to see if, in the first instance, they would be prepared to carry out just the chemical injection.

It was RESOLVED to go ahead with the quote for the chemical injections.

It was AGREED that Cllrs Fischel and Hammond would ask for further quotes, for comparative purposes, from 2 other companies for the cutting back of the tree.

Oak tree opposite the Recreation Ground: This oak tree was also in die back. It had recently been severely cut back, thus reducing any possible health and safety issues with users of School Lane.

The trees which have been planted on the Recreation Ground have been watered regularly by the Tree Warden and Cllr Fischel. They are concerned about the deer attacking the trees, and also the possible risk of those using the Ground contracting Lyme's disease. Cllr Fischel asked the Council whether it felt that fencing along the vulnerable side of the Ground would be a good investment, at an estimated length of 60m.

It was RESOLVED that Cllr Fischel would get a firm quote for this.

24. Operation Watershed

At the last meeting of the Council, Cllr Nicholson had raised his concerns over the flooding at the junction of the B2135 and Golden Lane. The Clerk has checked on the WSCC website and it appears that Operation Watershed is open for applications again this financial year.

Cllr Nicholson agreed that he would get further details on the site and liaise with Cllr Russell, who has experience in putting together Operation Watershed applications. Cllr Russell agreed that he would take on this application if it was agreed that it would qualify.

Action: Cllr Nicholson to send details of the site to Cllr Russell, who would approach the Operation Watershed team to see if the area is suitable for an application.

25. WSALC Update

The Clerk informed the Council that Mulberry & Co are now looking after the West Sussex Association of Local Councils. Trevor Leggo is still in post for both East and West Sussex, covering each county for two days per week. A new training schedule was shared with the Council.

26. HALC Update

Cllr Fischel informed the Council that, at a meeting of the majority of parishes in the District, Cllr Malcolm Eastwood (Chairman of Henfield Parish Council) had been elected as a new Chairman for HALC. Cllr Fischel has agreed to stay on as treasurer until July and Trevor Leggo will act as secretary for the time being.

Cllr Fischel was pleased to report that, as well as reviewing the constitution, HALC have a number of topics that it plans to address which will be of relevance and interest to Ashurst.

27. Appointment of Two Representatives for HALC & Voting Representatives for WSALC.

It was **AGREED** that Cllrs Fischel and Knight would remain as the representatives for the Horsham Association of Local Councils and as voting representatives for the West Sussex Association of Local Councils.

28. Mail Chimp

The Clerk had been asked to research the use of Mail Chimp to set up mailing lists to keep in touch with interested members of the community. She informed the Council that the basic package costs £8 per month. It was felt that this was too much to pay for the few communications that the Council would want to issue. (Cllr Knight pointed out that there was a free version of Mail Chimp which could be used.)

Options for improved communications between Ashurst Council and its residents, to be considered further.

Action: Clerk to add to the next agenda.

29. GDPR: Reminder to delete all emails over 6 months old.

30. Correspondence.

A letter has been received from Andrew Griffith MP for Arundel & South Downs. In his letter, Mr Griffith informs the Council that he is actively learning as much as possible about the Rampion 2 Project in order to submit a full response to the public consultation, and encourages the Council to do so. In addition, Mr Griffith asks that the Council publicises a survey to capture residents' opinions.

Actions: Clerk to publicise this questionnaire on the website.

Cllr Fischel would ensure this was circulated to Ashurst residents.

31. Reports from Outside Bodies.

Flix in the Stix is restarting on 22nd May at 7pm at the Village Hall. Organisers are keeping a keen eye on any relaxation of Covid restrictions and assessing how this might affect the viewings.

Cllr Russell advised that the Village Hall is planning to be up and running from 17th May.

32. Information Items. To receive information and items for the agenda at future meetings. None this meeting.

33. To confirm if a Councillor is available to represent Ashurst at the online consultations about policing and community safety, held by the Police and Crime Commissioner's Office.

Action: Cllr Nicholson volunteered to represent Ashurst at these.

34. Future meetings.

Provided there is no change in Government legislation relating to meeting in person, the following schedule was agreed. It was **AGREED** to change the time to 7.30PM at the Village Hall.

Thursday 1st July 2021

Thursday 2nd September 2021

Thursday 4th November 2021

Actions:

- Clerk to upload these dates onto the website and to email a list to all councillors.*
- Clerk to book dates on the Village Hall website*

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.00PM

Signed Chairman Dated