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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 14th NOVEMBER 2024 AT 7.30PM**

**Attendance:**

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

1. **Attendance and Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Councillor Nicholson which Councillors **RESOLVED** to accept.

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.

1. **Approval of the Minutes from the Council meeting held on 19th September 2024**

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 how the Inspector had put forward matters, issues and questions for response. The hearing sessions would start on 10th December.

The plans for the Capitol could no longer proceed due to the greatly increased costs of the contractor. Instead, plans for a reduced re-vamp would be put forward.

The increase in employer NI contributions was discussed and Councillor Finnegan said it would significantly affect HDC, as well as the contractors HDC uses.

In order to increase revenue for HDC, it had been agreed to introduce parking charges on Sundays and to increase the cost of garden waste bins by approximately £4.

The contract with Wilder Horsham District had been extended for a further 3 years, which Councillors agreed was very positive.

There were plans at HDC to reduce its carbon footprint plan and this included both direct and indirect emissions. A target had been set to reach net zero by 2030 and 2050 respectively.

The Environment Agency had been working at Bramber Brooks and a drop-in session at Bramber Village Hall would take place on 27th November between 4pm and 7pm.

District Councillor Nicholas Marks mentioned an informal initiative called the Members’ Fund, which would provide a limited budget to disperse in small amounts, around £100, with the intention of low budget community groups being the main beneficiaries. It would help with community development and strengthen the link between District Councillors and their parishes. He asked if there were any appropriate groups in Ashurst which might benefit from such a grant, to which Councillors said they would do some research and report back.

1. **Conservation and Biodiversity Initiatives**

Councillor Knight said he had been in touch again with Sussex Wildlife Trust and the Sussex Biological Records Centre. He said by getting hold of the data for Ashurst, it would help to map the wildlife presence in the area and from there, initiatives could be looked at where there were weaknesses. After discussion, Councillors **RESOLVED** to approve expenditure in the region of £125+VAT for the data from Sussex Biological Records Centre. It was also agreed to invite Sussex Wildlife Trust to a future meeting, and perhaps to do a guided walk round the village.

It was agreed that more data on trees and fauna would be beneficial so the tree warden would be approached for comment, as well as more research into Parish Online with regards to mapping trees in the Parish. The Chair said that a new Arboricultural Officer had been appointed, Andy Bush, who was apparently very experienced in his field and would be an asset to the area and to our parish.

A written plan will be required but this will be further down the line. Once individual projects had been identified, the Council could then look for volunteers to assist.

1. **HALC update**

The Chair said HALC had had its AGM recently for the election of officers and representatives on various outside bodies.

There had also been another Climate Action Group meeting. The intention behind the group was to get everyone involved and working collaboratively, engaging residents and councillors.

One Planet Council was discussed. Councillor Knight said it was an impressive reporting mechanism for parish and district councillors and the SDNP to communicate. It was an online platform where information relating to all things environmental could be stored and accessed in one place, acting as an interactive mind map.

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

**DC/24/1751**

Campions Bines Green Partridge Green Horsham

Demolition of existing conservatory and erection of a single storey side extension.

After consideration, Councillors **AGREED** to remain neutral.

**DC/24/1513**

Wellens Farm Steyning Road Ashurst West Sussex

Demolition of existing redundant farm buildings and erection of two new detached residential dwellings with associated landscaping including boundary wall, two garage barns, cycle stores and a refuse store.

After consideration, Councillors **AGREED** to remain neutral.

1. **Planning Decisions from HDC**

Application Number: DC/24/1407

Site: Jessups Farm Honeybridge Lane Ashurst West Sussex BN44 3AW

Description: Prior Notification for the Change of Use of Agricultural Buildings to B8 Storage use. Decision: Prior Approval Required and PERMITTED

Date of Decision: 06/11/2024

1. **Planning Appeals**

There were none.

1. **Payments and bank reconciliation**
2. Councillors **APPROVED** the schedule of payments and bank reconciliation since the last meeting (19th September 2024). See Appendix 1.
3. After consideration, Councillors re-confirmed that the Council would grant £100 towards the village newsletter and **RESOLVED** to increase the amount from £50 to £100 to the local mini bus service. After consideration, Councillors **RESOLVED** not to make any further grants to Steyning swimming pool but instead **RESOLVED** to grant a further £50 to the Sussex Kent Air Ambulance Charity.
4. Councillor Russell had previously informed the Clerk that one of the grit bins had been stolen, with the existing grit left in a pile by the road. The Clerk had obtained quotes for grit bins of 200L and 400L capacity, and after consideration, Councillors **RESOLVED** to purchase a new 200L grit bin for approximately £70.
5. **Recreation Ground**
6. The Clerk had previously circulated a report on the Recreation Ground Trust’s income and expenditure, which Councillors **RESOLVED** to approve. See Appendix 1.
7. The annual inspection of the playground had recently taken place and Councillors had received the full written report. There was nothing urgent which required immediate attention. However, it was agreed that the rubber tiles should be cleaned. Councillor Russell said he would do this.
8. The Chair reported that the initial plans for the proposed new sports building had recently been received from the architect but these did not follow the specified brief, so she had gone back to him to and asked for revised, simplified plans which would be shared with Councillors. A public consultation would follow.
9. The tree warden said the Oak tree could be in shock since being cut back, so it was recommended not to do anything further at present but to monitor it and see if it recovered.
10. Ashurst Football Club had asked if one or two additional cuts could be included in the contract, but the Council felt that, as it had not increased the hire price for this season, it could not accommodate this request.

Councillors **AGREED**, however, to see if the contractor could omit one of the summer cuts when a cut may not be needed and add it this to the end of the season, when the Football Club would benefit.

The Chair said she would liaise with the Football Club and request that the first instalment is now paid and the contract now signed – as these were both outstanding. Councillors expressed concern that the contract was unsigned whilst the Club was using the Recreation Ground and were keen to have it signed ahead of the match on Saturday.

1. **Speeding in Ashurst**

(a) This item was deferred to the next meeting as Councillor Nicholson was not at the meeting.

(b) This item was deferred to the next meeting as Councillor Nicholson was not at the meeting.

1. **Draft Budget 2025/26**

Councillors considered the draft budget and made some small amendments but decided to defer approving it until the next Council meeting in January 2025 when all Councillors would hopefully be present. See Appendix 2.

1. **Meeting dates**

The Clerk proposed the following third Thursday of every other month throughout the year for Council meetings in 2025 which Councillors provisionally **AGREED:**

16th January

20th March

15th May

17th July

18th September

20th November

Appendix 1

**Ashurst Parish Council Account**

Bank Reconciliation to 8th November 2024

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Balance per bank statement  |  |
|  |  |
| **Closing balance 8th November 2024** | 21,075.95 |
|  |  |
| **Add: outstanding receipts** |  0.00 |
| **Less: outstanding payments** |  |
|  |  |
| **Net balances**  | £21,075.95 |
|  |  |
| **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) |  7,714.37  |
| **Net balance** | **£21,075.95** |

Schedule of payments since the last meeting (19th September)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 14.10.24 | E Simpson  | Salary September 2024 | 254.70 |
| 14.10.24 | E Simpson | Office Allowance Sep 2024 | 13.33 |
| 14.10.24 | Steyning First Responders | Grant | 150.00 |
| 24.10.24 | HMRC  | PAYE (July-Sep 2024) | 191.20 |
| 4.11.24 | E Simpson | Salary October 2024 | 254.70 |
| 4.11.24 | E Simpson | Office Allowance Oct 204 | 13.33 |
|  |  |  | **£877.26** |

Income received since the last meeting (19th September)

HDC half precept (£7,050) received on 30th September 2024.

Grants to be considered

£50.00 to the mini bus

£100.00 to Steyning swimming pool

£100.00 contribution towards the Newsletter

**Recreation Ground Account**

Recreation Ground Income to 8th November 2024

Income received since the last meeting on 19th September is £75 from David Fischel on behalf of the Cricket Club for three games played over the Summer.

Income received since the start of the financial year totals £1,900. This is comprised of:

Ashurst United Football Club first instalment £375

WSCC hire of the Rec Ground for the school £1450

Cricket Club x3 games £75.

Expenditure since the last meeting totals £466.97 and comprises:

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| --- | --- | --- |
| EDF |  Electricity  |  £ 60.00  |
| E Simpson |  Reimbursement for Business Stream  |  £ 64.12  |
| Sussex Land Services |  Grass cutting - August 2024  |  £ 282.85  |
| EDF |  Electricity  |  £ 60.00  |

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, leaving a further £2,840 to be transferred before the end of the financial year.

**Appendix 2**

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| --- | --- |
| **BUDGET** | **2025/26** |
|   |   |
| **Income** |   |
| Precept | 14637 |
| VAT |   |
| **TOTAL** | 14637 |
|   |   |
|  **BUDGET 2025-26**  |   |
| PWLB (Village Hall) | 2724.38 |
| Insurance (including rec) | 478.57 |
| Village Hall Hire | 0 |
| Donation for dog show (nominal) | 0 |
| WSALC subscription | 97.95 |
| HALC subscription | 20 |
| Parish Online subscription  | 0 |
| Grants (rec ground) | 5000 |
| Grant mini bus | 50 |
| Grant to Air Ambulance | 100 |
| Other grants  | 400 |
| Audit (internal) | 195 |
| Office 365 | 136.22 |
| Internet hosting | 154.19 |
| Admin expenses | 80 |
| Clerks salary | 4186 |
| Courses & training | 250 |
| Travel allowance & expenses | 50 |
| Chairmans allowance | 50 |
| Office allowance | 180 |
| Green Initiatives | 350 |
| Newsletter contribution | 100 |
| Data protection (ICO) | 35 |
|   |   |
|   | **14637** |