**MINUTES OF THE ASHURST RECREATION GROUND TRUST AGM HELD ON**

**THURSDAY 19TH SEPTEMBER 2023 AT 7.00PM AT ASHURST VILLAGE HALL**

**Trustees Present:** Cllr Fischel [Chairman], Cllrs Russell [Vice Chair], Knight, Hammond and Nicholson.

**Also Present:**  David Fischel - Chairman of Ashurst Cricket Club

**In attendance:** Emily Simpson (Secretary) and three members of the public.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. **Apologies for Absence**

No apologies were received.

1. **Declaration of Members’ Interests**

None for this meeting.

1. **To Approve the Minutes of the Meeting of Thursday 21st September 2023**

The minutes were agreed and signed by the Chair as a true record of the meeting.

1. **Update on actions since the last AGM**

* The Chair advised that the new bench for the Recreation Ground would be purchased soon.
* The large oak tree in the Car Park of the Recreation Ground was looking very unhealthy so it was agreed to arrange for a tree surgeon to look at it again.

1. **Accounts**

The Clerk advised that the Annual Return for the Charity Commission for 2022/23had been submitted and that the Return for 2023/24 would be submitted shortly.

The main income received for the financial year 2023/24 was a grant of £4,500 from Ashurst Parish Council. Further income of £1,400 had been received from West Sussex County Council on behalf of Ashurst Primary School and £750 from Ashurst United Football Club.

The principal item of expenditure for the financial year was the grass cutting which amounted to £1,980. Other expenditure included water and electricity charges, and the play equipment inspections (including an annual inspection).

The Chair reported that there had been lengthy exchanges with HSBC as detailed at last year’s AGM and so the decision had been made to open an account with Lloyds. The new account was now in use and there have been no further issues.

1. **Reports**

**Primary School** See Appendix 1 for the report provided by the Primary School at the recent Annual Parish Meeting.

**Cricket Club**

TheChairman of Ashurst Cricket Club, David Fischel, reported that in 2023, 3 games were played; Ashurst had defeated Nuthurst, lost to Preston Park and then won against Bury and West Burton. He said that there were now a good number of players with a number of them living in Ashurst. He thanked the Trustees of the Recreation Ground for letting the Cricket Club play. He said that the cricket square was in good condition overall, other than the odd rabbit hole! Ashurst Cricket Club had now played for over 40 years in Ashurst, with players always loving the Recreation Ground.

**Football Club** No representative of the Football Club was able to attend but Appendix 2 contains the update provided by Luke Pickett at the recent Annual Parish Meeting. The Chair advised that the Club had asked if it could have help with rolling the pitch. David Fischel said he would be willing to help. The Chair said there were occasional issues with requests for additional cuts but she was hopeful these would be resolved for this season. It was felt that the Football Club could mow just the pitch.

**Trees**

The Chair confirmed that the trees on the Recreation Ground were doing well. The 420 saplings donated by the Woodland Trust continued to thrive and David Fischel would be cutting them back this Autumn. To date only a light trim to the blackthorn had been made. The Chair said there was a large ash tree in the churchyard which was due to be cut down this Autumn on the advice of the tree warden.

1. **Update of Ground and Buildings**

**The Ground**

The Chair reported how pleasing it was to see the Recreation Ground being put to such good use. As well as games played by the Cricket and Football Clubs, the school used it during term time on a daily basis. FAPs organised a school marathon for the children in April this year and the annual Dog Show continued to be run on the first Sunday of September. (This year it had raised around £4,000.)

**Buildings**

As far as the replacement sports building was concerned, the Trustees had previously visited some local cricket and sports clubs to get a feel for what was wanted in Ashurst. Having obtained a number of quotes, they had engaged a builder and architect to provide initial plans for a new building. Once these had been produced, they would be discussed with both the Cricket and the Football Clubs, and then made available to the public to comment and provide feedback on. Planning approval would then be sought. Once this had been obtained, the trustees would need to consider the various fundraising options.

**Questions from the floor:** A member of the public asked if the Parish Council would be funding the new building or if the Recreation Ground itself was a charity, as many grants were only available to charities. The Chair confirmed that the Recreation Ground, as a charity, would be the body applying for any grants.

A member of the public said there was a misconception that the Ashurst Dog Show proceeds shouldn’t have to go to the Village Hall as the loan has been paid in full now, but this was not the case and that money was still required to run the building.

She suggested that some proceeds from the Dog Show could go towards the new building, to which the Chair said that was very kind but appreciated that the Village Hall should be its priority, though confirmed that any donations would be gratefully received.

A member of the public suggested that the Trustees should look to apply for grants as soon as they could. For instance, there is one body (CLC) which has a deadline of January 2025.

Another member of the public said that the water pressure supply to the John Eaton Hut was quite inadequate. The Chair agreed. The Trustees were aware of this issue which would have to be addressed at the time of the new build. District Councillor Finnegan mentioned rainwater harvesting as a potential solution.

A member of the public asked whether, once the plans had been drawn up, members of the public would be able to see the plans and make comments. It was noted that many grants or loans would ask to see the results of such a public consultation.

The Chair reiterated that the building would be a simple sports building with changing rooms and showers, but with adequate space to provide refreshments and storage. She concluded the conversation by saying that the draft plans would be put on the website, and an open meeting and maybe a survey for residents would be arranged in due course.

1. **Any other business**

No other matters were raised.

1. **Date of the next Recreation Ground AGM**: TBC.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Dated: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix 1**

We are, as always, grateful for the opportunity afforded to us by the Parish Council and the residents of Ashurst to use the recreation ground. We continue to use it for PE sessions and after school sports provision as well as at play and lunch times.  It is a wonderful space; the children have a strong connection with it and are always very excited after the winter months to be able to use it again.

We were especially pleased to have the use of the field and Pavilion for our ‘Ashurst Marathon’ which took place on Sunday 21st April, we ran an amazing 86 miles between us doing laps of a marked out track. Last Friday we were inordinately lucky with the weather and were able to have our annual Sports Day and Awards Ceremony. We are also very much looking forward to being able to use the facilities again towards the end of term for The Y6 Rounders Match/ Tea party (18.7.24).

During the past year, we have continued to strengthen our links with the church, the parish and the locality and have joined with local people and families at St. James' Church to celebrate services including 'New Beginnings', 'Harvest', 'Advent’, Easter and are looking forward to our upcoming Leavers Service, (Wednesday 18thJuly 2.45).  We also celebrated a first for us by having a Rogation Service, in school time, in Burnetts garden.

Many members of the local community were able to join us back in November when we began our yearlong celebrations to mark our sesquicentennial (150th) anniversary. We had a wonderful Victorian Day on November 3rd and were joined by members of the local clergy, Bishop Ruth, MP Andrew Griffith, and members of the Local Education Authority for a service of thanksgiving and a blessing of Kings Grove- our new woodland area adjacent to the playground. On Saturday 4th we opened up our school to many local people, past staff, pupils and their families. It was a lovely occasion; many memories were shared and friendships rekindled.

It is always lovely to welcome the 'Open the Book' team into school and the children enthusiastically participate in the drama and readings. I am delighted to report that further dates are planned for next year.

We have been further developing our 'Growing Partnerships' agreement with the local Parishes and this has been the subject of several discussions as to how the school and the community can support and work together for the common good. Our YAGs proposed that our Harvest donations be given to 'The Wholesome Warehouse' and a team of children visited them to help pack the produce into boxes for local families in need. The YAGs also proposed donating Christmas crackers and party food too. As part of our 150 Year celebrations, we set about collecting 150 Jars and jams to donate to The Wholesome Warehouse, and due to some very generous donations, were able to give nearly 200. These were gratefully received by Mrs Croft when she came to talk with our Squirrel Class about the work of The Wholesome Warehouse.

We have continued to support local care homes with Christmas and Easter cards made and signed by our children and currently send out just over 200 of these on each occasion. These are welcomed by the residents in the care homes and we often receive cards and letters in return.

We understand that there are plans for a new building on the recreation ground and would value the opportunity to be involved with any consultations. We would like to thank you once again for your support and we look forward to continuing the good partnership between Ashurst CE Aided Primary School and the Parish Council long into the future.

**Appendix 2**

Football Club

Luke reported that Ashurst United Football Club had won their league last year and so moved up to Division 2 which was fantastic. They continued to achieve good results and ended up finishing second for this season which resulted in another divisional promotion. They were in the process of recruiting new players as well as looking for sponsorship.