

## ASHMANSWORTH PARISH COUNCIL

### Minutes of the Meeting of the Council

|                       |  |                   |                |
|-----------------------|--|-------------------|----------------|
| <b>Date:</b>          | <b>6<sup>th</sup> April 2020</b>               | <b>Time:</b>      | <b>6.00 pm</b> |
| <b>Place:</b>         | Meeting held virtually via Zoom                |                   |                |
| <b>Present:</b>       | Cllr Alan Cox (Chairman)<br>Cllr Angela Harris | Cllr Andrew Bays  |                |
| <b>In Attendance:</b> | Sadie Owen (Clerk)<br>Cllr Graham Falconer     | 5 parishioners    |                |
| <b>Apologies:</b>     | Cllr Sally Burch                               | Cllr Kieron Black |                |

#### 1. Apologies

Apologies received from Cllrs Sally Burch and Kieron Black.  
Cllr Cox thanked Cllr Bays for organising the meeting via Zoom.

#### 2. Minutes of last meeting.

The minutes of the meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2020 were unanimously agreed as a true and accurate record. Cllr Cox agreed to sign them and scan them back to the Clerk.

**Cllr  
Cox**

#### 3. Planning applications

##### a) Applications received

20/00570/HSE Beech Tree & Bramble Cottage. The applicant was present and explained that the current application was an amendment to plans previously submitted and then withdrawn, which would render the proposed structure less obtrusive to neighbours.  
There were no objections.

20/00061/FUL Land at Manor Farm Barns. The applicant was present and explained that the application concerned detailed plans to replace a barn with a farm house and an area of land from agriculture to paddock. It was noted that the main access would remain the same and that the house would sit further back from the road.  
There were no objections.

#### 4. Council business

##### a) Clerk's report

The Clerk informed the council of new regulations that had been passed in light of the current Coronavirus pandemic.

The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 ("the 2020 Regulations") came in to force on 4 April.

The clerk explained that the regulations enabled local councils to hold remote meetings (including by video and telephone conferencing) for a specified period until May 2021 and also removed the need for an Annual meeting. Consequently,

Cllr Cox would remain chairman until an annual meeting of Ashmansworth Parish Council is held.

To allow for the smooth running of the council in the current circumstances, the Clerk had circulated a proposed addition to the council's standing orders (see Appendix B). This was formally agreed and approved.

b) Lengthsman tasks

Cllr Cox had received a report of a stile on FP3 requiring repair and vegetation cut back and agreed to forward details to the Clerk.

**Cllr  
Cox**

It was agreed that Cllr Cox would send an email to the AshyPC email group and request further suggestions for tasks.

**Cllr  
Cox**

c) Blue plaques

Cllr Cox suggested that the parish council formally agree to the homeowners of the Old Vicarage (commemorating Major Seagrim), and Four Ashes (commemorating George Bissill), purchasing and erecting blue plaques at their own expense.

It was suggested that wording and layout should be compatible with the existing one at Church Farm. This was agreed.

d) Potential change to website provider

The Clerk reported that Hugo Fox had been investigated as an alternative website provider. The website had the benefit of a direct link to the planning portal and being free of charge. It was agreed that the Clerk would work to create a new website as and when time permitted.

**Clerk**

e) Agree date for APM

Given recent legislation there would be no APM. It was agreed that the next ordinary meeting of the council would take place virtually on 20<sup>th</sup> May at 6pm.

5. **Grant request**

The council had received a grant request of £400 from the PCC for funds to assist with grounds maintenance. Cllr Cox declared a personal interest as a member of the PCC. A representative of the PCC spoke on its behalf. Councillors unanimously agreed to the grant request. Clerk to process.

**Clerk**

6. **Local Roads**

Road Repairs

Cllr Cox reported that he had complained to HCC at the recent unnecessary verge cutting which had decimated a number of daffodils. No response had been received.

Cllr Falconer commented that he had discussed the matter with the Head of Environmental Services at BDBC who had stated that the parish council could prevent future cutting by registering the parish or areas within the parish with HCC.

**Cllr  
Bays**

It was noted that a tree had fallen on Wayfarer's Way. Cllr Bays agreed to identify the responsible landowner and request removal.

**Cllr  
Harris**

Cllr Harris reported that the road into Crux Easton was badly eroded and getting worse. Cllr Harris to report the fault on the HCC website.

### Speeding vehicles

A parishioner reported that it appeared that the volume of traffic through the village had increased due to the popularity of a local pub. It was felt that some of the traffic was driving inappropriately fast.

The landlord of the pub had been contacted and asked to direct all delivery traffic via Hurstbourne Tarrant.

HCC had also been contacted and suggested the installation of village gates with suggested speed limits. Such an option would require village funding.

It was agreed that a working party would be established with a view to attending a future council meeting to outline potential options and costings. Annabelle Blossel-Lynch was invited to lead the working party.

## **7. Footpaths**

Cllr Cox commented that the council's priority cutting list had been reported to HCC.

## **8. Coronavirus response and local needs**

Cllr Cox had established a google group email distribution list (AshyPC) for parish residents to keep in touch during the coronavirus pandemic.

Further, East Woodhay and Highclere Neighbourcare had established a community of volunteers to assist during the crisis, and anyone wishing to assist or to request assistance was encouraged to get in touch.

The Clerk had also updated the council website with useful information and updates.

### Cllr Falconer update

Cllr Falconer commented that BDBC was circulating daily Coronavirus updates to all councils.

He noted that the pandemic was having a huge impact on how the council worked, with the majority of staff now adapting to working from home.

Recent government directives devolving extra responsibilities to councils were leading to a number of additional challenges. Of particular urgency was the need to ensure accommodation for all homeless. Cllr Falconer also suggested that there may be significant financial impacts for the council, in terms of large administrative costs accrued by the additional responsibilities and in relation to BDBC's large property portfolio which was likely to suffer from reduced income due to the rent holiday initiated by the government.

Cllr Cox proposed a vote of thanks to Cllr Falconer and all those at BDBC for the work that they were doing.

## **9. Financial Matters**

- a) Payments Approval – the Clerk presented the financial statement (Appendix A). The payments were unanimously approved.

**Clerk**

**10. Date of next meeting**

The meeting closed at 7.15 pm. Next meeting Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> May at 6.00 pm.

## Appendix A

**Financial Statement:** Ashmansworth Parish Council

**Meeting date:** 30/03/2020

**Balances:**

|                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Statement No: 30/03/20 Balance</b> | <b>Balance after reconciliation - 30/03/20</b> |
| £5,682.47                             | £5,327.01                                      |

**Payments since last meeting date:**

| Cheque No    | Payee | Details | TOTAL COST  |
|--------------|-------|---------|-------------|
|              |       |         |             |
| <b>TOTAL</b> |       |         | <b>0.00</b> |

**New items for payment**

| Date         | Payee                     | Details            | TOTAL COST     |
|--------------|---------------------------|--------------------|----------------|
|              | Mrs S Owen                | Clerk salary Feb   | 115.48         |
|              | HMRC                      | Month 11 Tax/NIC   | 29.00          |
|              | Mrs S Owen                | Clerk salary March | 115.68         |
|              | HMRC                      | Month 12 Tax/NIC   | 28.80          |
|              | Ashmansworth Village Hall | Meeting bookings   | 66.50          |
| <b>TOTAL</b> |                           |                    | <b>£355.46</b> |

**Receipts since last meeting date:**

| Receipt Date | Payer | Details | TOTAL AMOUNT |
|--------------|-------|---------|--------------|
|              |       |         |              |
| <b>TOTAL</b> |       |         | <b>0.00</b>  |

**Payments not yet presented**

| Cheque No    | Payee | Details | TOTAL COST  |
|--------------|-------|---------|-------------|
|              |       |         |             |
| <b>TOTAL</b> |       |         | <b>0.00</b> |

## Appendix B

For agreement at Ashmansworth Parish Council meeting on 6<sup>th</sup>  
April 2020

### Exceptional Circumstances April 2020:

In response to the Covid-19 outbreak in the UK and in the event that it is not possible to convene a meeting of the Council in a reasonable time, the Clerk shall have delegated authority to make decisions on behalf of the Council, only where such a decision cannot reasonably be deferred and must be made in order to comply with a commercial or statutory deadline.

Any decision to be made in consultation with members by telephone or email. The clerk will further consult with the Chairman for guidance as necessary. The delegation does not extend to matters expressly reserved to the Council in legislation or in its Standing Orders or Financial Regulations. Any decisions made under this delegation must be recorded in writing and must be published in accordance with the relevant regulations.

This delegated authority ceases upon the first face to face meeting of the Council after the Council meeting at which the delegation was put in place. Where matters usually require a vote at Full Council, the Clerk shall ask for email votes and shall keep all communication. During these exceptional circumstances, an Agenda will be published three days in advance of the usual meeting date, and the Minutes will be published in the usual manner to reflect decisions made.

In response to the Covid-19 outbreak in the UK and in the event that it is not possible to convene a meeting of the Council in a reasonable time, the Clerk and Chairman/vice-Chairman shall have delegated authority to make online payments on behalf of the Council, with emailed approval of payments received from the Chairman and vice-Chairman, copying in the full Council