

ASH-CUM-RIDLEY PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 15 February 2024 at Ash Village Hall,
The Street, Ash, TN15 7HB commencing at 7.45pm

Present: Cllr S Fishenden – Chairman
Cllr M Aspinall
Cllr C Clark
Cllr J Clucas
Cllr F Cottee
Cllr C Gorton
Cllr S Hobbs
Cllr P Kirtley
Cllr I MacLeod
Cllr G Pender
Cllr J Scott

In attendance: Alison de Jager – Parish Clerk
Karen Law – Deputy Clerk

8781/24 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr R Brammer(ill), Cllr A Jauch (work) and Cllr M Manley (prior engagement). The apologies and reasons for absence were accepted. PROPOSED: Cllr S Hobbs SECONDED: Cllr C Gorton and AGREED.

8782/24 Declarations of Interest

a. Cllr Clucas declared an interest in item 5.1 as the family is known to her.

8783/24 Minutes

It was RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 18 January 2024 be approved and signed as a true record. Cllr F Cottee SECONDED: Cllr M Aspinall and AGREED.

The meeting was suspended at 7.46pm

- **to receive reports from the County Councillor and District Councillors.**
- **Public Session.**

The reports from the above are attached to these minutes.

The meeting reconvened at 7.55pm.

8784/24 Clerk's Report

a. The Clerk's Report was RECEIVED. A copy is attached to these minutes.

8785/24 Council Administration

a. Ash Burial Ground – Cllr J Clucas PROPOSED that, after careful consideration, the request to install a plaque without the interment of ashes is denied as it would set a precedence and the Memorial Garden policy stipulates that plaques may only be installed in conjunction with the interment of ashes. SECONDED: Cllr S Fishenden and AGREED.

8786/24 Finance

- a. Current Financial Position – the Deputy Clerk/Finance Officer reported that the Parish Council accounts reflect a £12,705 surplus with reserves of £57,442 covering approximately three times running costs and the Sports Centre redundancy. £9,000 will be added to pension costs once KCC set up the account. The payment to HiKent was delayed as we were waiting for bank details. Members were taken through the income and expenditure against budget, noting any variations.
- b. Approval of payments – Cllr J Clucas PROPOSED that the payments made up to 08 February 2024 are APPROVED. SECONDED: Cllr C Gorton and AGREED.
- c. Sports Centre - Cllr C Gorton PROPOSED that the quote for the repair of standard window, in the Sports Centre roof from DG Roofing in the amount of £1,160 plus VAT is accepted. SECONDED: Cllr P Kirtley and AGREED.
- d. Ridley Well – Cllr S Fishenden PROPOSED that the quotation from Glen Charter Thatching in the amount of £1,400.00 plus VAT is accepted. SECONDED: Cllr S Hobbs and AGREED. The Deputy Clerk will look enquire with Sevenoaks District Council to see if any Community Infrastructure Levy can be used for this repair.
- e. Photocopier Contract Renewal – Cllr C Clark PROPOSED that this item is deferred to the next meeting to allow for comparisons for outright purchase to be included. SECONDED: Cllr M Aspinall and AGREED. The costs and uses of DocuSign will be investigated.

8787/24 Planning

- a. Applications
None at time of Agenda.

8788/24 Ash Green Sports Centre

- a. Current Financial Position – The Deputy Clerk/Finance Officer advised that the Sports Centre has a balance of £3,481 with a small deficit of £19. At February 2023, the Sports Centre Deficit was £12,363, so there has been a significant increase in performance. The Sports Centre Management Committee has taken the decision to retain the management of the Sports Centre while the lease negotiations are concluded with Leigh Academies Trust, with a review after 18 months. Swale Leisure has been advised accordingly. With this decision in place, we are looking at using the circuit training room as additional space for the gym, to encourage and retain membership. As squash is on the decline, the squash court will be used as a shared space for classes and squash/table tennis. Membership income is overbudget, the half price offer for January was a great success. Half term activities have not been as popular and need to be advertised more.
- b. Approval of payments – Cllr F Cottee PROPOSED that the payments made to 08 February 2024 are APPROVED. SECONDED: Cllr S Hobbs and AGREED.
- c. Sports Centre Management Committee Update – included in item a. above.

8789/24 Northfield Management Committee

- a. The minutes of the meeting of the Northfield Management Committee held on 16 January 2024 were RECEIVED and NOTED.

8790/24 Community and Environment

- a. **Martyn's Law** – Cllr S Fishenden PROPOSED that the consultation response is delegated to the Clerk in consultation with the Chairman. SECONDED: Cllr C Clark and AGREED.

- b. **Children’s Centre** – Cllrs J Clucas and C Gorton PROPOSED that the Parish Council write to Kent County Council to lobby for the retention of the services provided by the Children’s Centre in alternative venues in the Village, as per the attached. SECONDED: Cllr P Kirtley, Cllr G Pender PROPOSED and addition to the proposed submission SECONDED: Cllr S Hobbs and AGREED, final submission attached.
- c. **Parish Council Winter Support Grant** – Cllr G Pender PROPOSED that upto £500 is allocated to needs identified by the Community Warden and the balance awarded to the Community Cupboard and any needs identified by the primary school.
- d. **Lances Almshouse Charity** - Cllr I MacLeod reported that a meeting of the Trustees had been held in February 2024.

8791/24 Items for Information Only

- a. Cllr G Pender – Ash Church Parochial Church Council (PCC) is looking at applying for solar panels. An item will be placed on the next agenda regarding support for the bid to Sevenoaks District Council, on receipt of a letter from the PCC.
- b. Cllr M Aspinall advised that the Vault continue to store beer kegs outside the agreed storage area. Compliance will be checked and reported to Planning Enforcement at Sevenoaks District Council if necessary,
- c. Cllr F Cottee advised that the Big Breakfast will be held on 03 March 2024 and a plaque to Ivor Stoneham will be installed.
- d. Cllr P Kirtley requested that the Village Association is approached again to install a traffic mirror at the junction of North Ash Road, Ash Road and West Yoke.
- e. Cllr C Clark advised that this month’s film at Ash Village hall is The Great Escaper.
- f. Cllr S Fishenden advised that Meopham Parish Council will pilot the proposal for parish councils to sponsor Community Wardens with the service being reduced to 37 wardens for the County.
- g. Cllr S Hobbs asked if a final decision has been taken on the design of the proposed recycle bags. Cllr Perry Cole advised that 130 Councils in the UK now use these bags for recycling and details will be available soon.

8792/24 Progress Tracker

- a. The Progress Tracker was NOTED.

The meeting closed at 8.57pm

Signed:
Chairman

Date:

ASH-CUM-RIDLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Agenda Item: 4 – Full Council (15 February 2024)

Report Title: **County and District Councillors Reports**

COUNTY COUNCILLOR

Cllr D Brazier advised that draft 2024/25 budget has produced a balanced budget and if passed will avoid having to issue a Section 114 notice. Setting the timetable for the new C3 bus service from New Ash Green to Darent Valley Hospital and Bluewater has not been straightforward as the buses allocated for this route also take pupils to Dartford Grammar School. The service will leave New Ash Green at 9.17am and the last bus back will arrive in New Ash Green at 2.45pm. The route will include Wellfield Sheltered Accommodation in Hartley. Rumours have been circulating stating that KCC is to close Libraries. This is untrue; Libraries will not be closed in the next financial year and neither will the Waste Collection Centres. The Cabinet Member for Community Services has been contacted to see if some of the services of the Childrens Centre can be relocated to the Youth & Community Centre.

DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORT

Cllr M Lindop advised that the Oast House Nursery planning application will be called into the Development Management Committee. Cllr L Manston will be leaving the Committee and will therefore be able to speak on this application.

The Village Centre landlords have given tenants notice of an increase in rent. Tenants have advised that the increase is significant and the tenants are holding a meeting to try and collaborate and take group action to the landlord as they feel this is an unfair increase. The Ash and New Ash Green Councillors are going to hold a surgery for residents on the first Monday of the month from 11am – 12pm and will start on 4 March 2024.

Cllr Perry Cole reported that the District Council's budget will be set next week and the proposed council tax increase is 2.97% which is a £7 per year increase, approximately 55p per month on a Band D property.

ASH-CUM-RIDLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Agenda Item: **4 – Full Council 15 February 2024**

Report Title: **Clerk's Report**

BULLETIN

The first edition of 2024 has been completed, it will be printed and delivered by the end of February.

BURIAL GROUND.

The site visit on 15 January 2024 was attended by Cllrs J Clucas and I MacLeod. Letters have been sent to Grant of Right owners where maintenance is required or memorials need attention. The next site visit will be held on Monday 12 February 2024 at 10.30am. Any interested Councillors are welcome to attend.

FOCUS GROUP

The Focus Group meeting will be held on 12 February 2024.

HIGHWAYS IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Following a meeting with Nigel Rowe of Kent Highways on 23 January 2024, the following priorities have been agreed:

- Installation of a pedestrian crossing on Ash Road at the Olivers Mill Bus Stop.
- Improvement or to formalise passing points on rural roads.
- Improve the sight lines at the staggered junction of Ash Road, North Ash Road and West Yoke

The Highways Improvement Plan will be submitted to KCC once we are in receipt of consultation comments identifying passing points that will improve the flow and safety of traffic on rural roads.

In addition, an informal consultation on the installation of double yellow lines on Ash Road to improve the sight lines and safety crossing has been requested by Kent Highways and is included in the Bulletin.

HODSOLL STREET PLAY AREA

The first quarterly inspection of the Hodsoll Street playing area has been carried out by the Clerk and Assistant Clerk. Quotes will be sought for repairs to some of the rails of the fence that have decayed.

YOUTH WORK

As a result of further cuts to the Youth Service, funding for detached youth work in the District has been withdrawn. Sevenoaks Town Council and Swanley Town Council have employed the services of West Kent Housing, for a year, to do detached youth work and have contributed £18,000 and £15,000 respectively.

ASH-CUM-RIDLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Agenda Item: **5.1 – Full Council 15 February 2024**

Report Title: **Ash Burial Ground**

Memorial Garden

The family of the late [REDACTED] have asked the Parish Council to consider granting permission for a plaque to be installed in the Memorial Garden without the interment of ashes.

[REDACTED], a former member of the Merchant Navy, who resided in New Ash Green for 52 years, asked his family to have his ashes scattered at sea, as is a common tradition for this profession.

While the family understands that this does not meet with the current regulations, they have asked that the above circumstances are taken into account when making a determination.

ASH-CUM-RIDLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Agenda Item: 6 – Full Council 15 February 2024

Report Title: Finance & Governance

1. **Sports Centre** – Replacement of one Velux window in the Gym. All prices exclude VAT.

Company	New Velux Window	Standard Window
DG Roofing Ltd	£1480	£1160
Meopham Roofers**	£2,400	
Glaze View	£2,100	

** provided and additional quote to repoint all loose sand and cement to ridge tile and to refit cladding board to rear of the roof - £350.

2. Ridley Well – one quote has been obtained from the Thatcher that we have used in the past. As it is such a small job, thatcher's do not want the work. The quotation received is to strip the old ridge and netting from the roof, fix new top course of thatch and ridge roof, with a patterned, wrap-over flush ridge secured with hazel spars and liggers, clan down roof and dress coat-work repairing as required. Fit galvanized wire mesh to whole of roof. Fit new lead cap to ridge.
£1,400.00 plus VAT

3. Photocopier – The photocopier contract is due for renewal this year. Three quotes were sought and two were received:

	CURRENT	KCS RENEWAL	DIGITAL AUTOMATION
Quarterly rental	115.90	138.35	
Cost per page: mono	0.0022	0.0022	0.0025
Cost per page: colour	0.022	0.021	0.025
Average copies per quarter			
Mono: 10,880	23.94	23.94	Allocated print volume for 2.5 years.* Mono: 110,000 Colour: 105,000
Colour: 14,908	327.98	313.07	

	CURRENT	KCS RENEWAL	DIGITAL AUTOMATION
TOTAL QUARTERLY EXPENDITURE	467.82	475.36	394.63
5 year contract total	9,356.40	9,507.20	7,892.60

* Draw down from allocation and unused prints carried over to second half of contract

MACHINE SPECIFICATION

KCS KONICA MINOLTA C300i	DIGITAL AUTOMATION TOSHIBA ESTUDIO3005AC
30 pages per minute	30 pages per minute
2 x 500 sheet paper trays	2 x 550 sheet paper trays
Booklet finisher	Booklet finisher
Stapler	Stapler

ASH-CUM-RIDLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Agenda Item: – Full Council 15 February 2024

Report Title: **MARTYN'S LAW**

The Society of Local Council Clerks is conducting a consultation on the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill, also known as Martyn's Law. The closing date is Monday 18 March 2024.

The Government reaffirmed its commitment to introducing this important piece of legislation in the King's Speech in November 2023. However, recognising the feedback provided during pre-legislative scrutiny and through our engagement with stakeholders, the Government committed to a further public consultation, specifically on the Standard Tier. This is to ensure the public and those impacted by the proposals have the opportunity to offer in-depth views on the Standard Tier, prior to the legislation's introduction to Parliament.

The proposals for requirements for premises in the Standard Tier have been revised to address feedback from the Home Affairs Select Committee and stakeholders, which primarily related to the need for requirements to be proportionate. To apply proportionate duties whilst considering any impacts to business and other organisations in scope, the requirements for Standard Tier premises have been amended, from a prescriptive requirement to complete a standardised template to having "reasonably practicable" procedures in place, were an attack to occur.

In summary, those responsible for Standard Tier premises must:

- **Notify the Regulator that they are, or have become, responsible for premises within scope of the Bill (and so subject to the relevant requirements).** This remains broadly in line with previous requirements.
- **Have in place procedural measures that could be expected to reduce, so far as reasonably practicable, the risk of physical harm to individuals at the premises in the event of an attack.** These relate only to the procedures to be followed by people working at the premises in the event of an attack occurring or being suspected as about to occur. As the procedural measures are about procedures for responding to an attack or suspected attack, it is not expected or required that physical alterations be undertaken or additional equipment purchased for Standard Tier premises.
- In contrast to the published draft Bill, there is **no requirement to complete a specified form (the 'Standard Terrorism Evaluation') for Standard Tier premises or ensure that people working at the premises are given any specific training.** However, as part of putting in place the procedural measures, workers will need to be sufficiently instructed or trained to carry them out effectively.

We would urge you to share our consultation with your networks to ensure we receive a broad and wide-reaching range of responses across all our key stakeholders and sectors.

Link to access the consultation document:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/martyns-law-standard-tier-consultation>

ASH-CUM-RIDLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Agenda Item: – **10.3 Full Council 15 February 2024**

Report Title: **PARISH COUNCIL WINTER SUPPORT SCHEME**

Kent County Council (KCC) has received emergency grant funding from central government for Parish Councils to use for a project that provides support to Kent residents in the Parish that are experiencing financial hardship as a result of the cost-of-living crisis.

The grant aims to address financial hardship and support community initiatives withing specific criteria. Ash-cum-Ridley Parish Council would be eligible to request funding up to £1,500.00. The closing date for applications is 01 March 2024 with a processing time of 10 days.

Successful applicants must provide evidence of expenditure and record

As the Parish Council would be able to donate funds to other organisations that already support parish residents, suggestions include:

- The Community Cupboard - with a stipulation that it must support residents that live in the Parish.
- Liaise with the school and for them to provide assistance for families that would benefit.
- Liaise with the Community Warden to identify residents in need.