

ASH-CUM-RIDLEY PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 19 October 2023 at New Ash Green
Village Association meeting room, Centre Road, New Ash Green, DA3 8HH
commencing at 7.45pm

Present: Cllr S Fishenden – Chairman
Cllr M Aspinall
Cllr R Brammer – Vice Chairman
Cllr J Clucas
Cllr F Cottee
Cllr C Gorton
Cllr S Hobbs
Cllr M Howie (arrived 7.56pm)
Cllr A Jauch
Cllr P Kirtley
Cllr I MacLeod
Cllr M Manley
Cllr G Pender
Cllr J Scott

In attendance: Alison de Jager – Parish Clerk
Cllr D Brazier – Kent County Council
Cllr L Manston – Sevenoaks District Council
Cllr Penny Cole – Sevenoaks District Council
Cllr Perry Cole – Sevenoaks District Council
PC G Mahoney – Kent Police (arrived 8.13pm)
1 Member of the public

8725/23 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr C Clark (Governors Meeting) and Cllr V Ngwenya, (ill). The apologies and reasons for absence were accepted.
PROPOSED: Cllr M Manley SECONDED: Cllr C Gorton and AGREED.

8726/23 Declarations of Interest

a. None.

8727/23 Minutes

It was RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 28 September 2023 be approved and signed as a true record. PROPOSED: Cllr J Scott
SECONDED: Cllr M Aspinall and AGREED.

The meeting was suspended at 7.46pm

- **to receive reports from the County Councillor and New Ash Green Village Association Representative**
- **Public Session.**

The reports from the above are attached to these minutes.
(Cllr M Howie arrived 7.56pm)

The meeting reconvened at 8.11pm.

8728/23 Clerk's Report

- a. The Clerk's Report was RECEIVED. Cllr Mrs Clucas expressed disappointment that the Parish Council's request to call planning application 23/01755 in to the Development Management Committee was not actioned by the District Councillors. A copy is attached to these minutes.

8729/23 Council Administration

- a. Budget Review Working Group – The following members agreed to join the Budget Review Working Group. Cllrs S Fishenden, R Brammer, A Jauch, M Manley, G Pender and V Ngwenya .

The meeting was suspended at 8.14pm to allow PC Gareth Mahoney to speak. Details included in the reports from County and District Councillors.

The meeting was reconvened at 8.20pm

- b. Quantitative Tree Risk Assessment – the reports for the Burial Ground and Ash War Memorial were RECEIVED and NOTED. Quotes will be sought for the required work.
- c. Burial Ground Regulations – the review was carried out with the removal of the final sentence in point 21 referring to the introduction of the Memorial Garden. PROPOSED: Cllr J Clucas SECONDED: Cllr M Howie and AGREED.
- d. Burial Ground Fees – Cllr S Fishenden PROPOSED that the review of the Burial Ground Fees and Charges is deferred to the Burial Ground Working Group for consideration. SECONDED: Cllr J Clucas and AGREED.
- e. Grass cutting specification – the review of the grass cutting specification was carried out and AGREED. PROPOSED: Cllr C Gorton SECONDED: Cllr J Clucas.

8730/23 Finance

- a. Current Financial Position – The Clerk reported that as of 6 October we were holding £215,074, showing a surplus of £67,779 which we would expect as we have received the remaining 50% of the precept. General Reserves of £114,229 (including VAT) is just under 9 times monthly running costs (£12,787) however, after additional spending and running costs to 31 March 2024, it is estimated to be a little over 3 months running costs plus Sports Centre redundancy by year end. Junior Basketball has stopped as numbers have dropped, teen gym continues to attract a good number of attendees.
- b. Approval of payments – Cllr M Manley PROPOSED that the payments made from 13 July up to 22 September 2023 are APPROVED. SECONDED: Cllr A Jauch and AGREED.
- c. Commemorative Bench: Cllr S Fishenden PROPOSED that the selected bench with the inscription 'Michael Brown – 49 Years of Service In grateful Recognition of Your Dedication and Commitment to the Parish of Ash-cum-Ridley. We Honour Your Long Service 01 May 2023' is purchased at a cost of £914.81 plus VAT. SECONDED: Cllr R Brammer and AGREED.

8731/23 Planning

- a. Applications
No applications at the time of the Agenda.
- b. Planning Applications Working Group - The notes of the Planning Applications Working Group meeting of 20 September 2023 were NOTED.

8732/23 Ash Green Sports Centre

- a. Current Financial Position – The Clerk advised that the Sports Centre was showing a surplus of £5,082, less the grant from Hartley Parish Council, the surplus is £1,082. Current reserves are just under 2 months running costs (£6,475). We continue to keep expenditure to a minimum and will continue to do so until a decision is made regarding the Sports Centre.
- b. Approval of payments – Cllr M Manley PROPOSED that the payments made from 14 July up to 06 October 2023 are APPROVED. SECONDED: Cllr M Aspinall and AGREED
- c. Sports Centre Management Committee Update – Cllr M Manley reported that the gentle exercise classes continue to grow in popularity, but classes that are not performing will be revisited.

8733/23 Northfield Management Committee

- a. The minutes of the meeting of 09 October 2023 were NOTED.

8734/23 Community and Environment

- a. **Hodsoll Street Recreation Ground** – Cllr F Cottee confirmed the play area has been leased by the Parish Council since the early 1990's on a peppercorn rent. There is a play area and a goal and basketball hoop. In addition to the Parish Council's use of the area, it is used as an overflow carpark for village events such as the Village Fete. Ivor promised the land to the Village. Upon the death of both Ivor Stoneham and his brother, Colin Stoneham, Mark Stoneham is in ownership of the land and the arrangement with the Parish Council no longer exists. Cllr S Fishenden PROPOSED that a meeting is arranged with the Stoneham Family Trust to establish the status of the land and initiate negotiations to renew the lease. SECONDED: Cllr M Manley and AGREED.
- b. **D-Day 2024** – Cllr J Scott will speak to the Church Warden regarding the lighting of a beacon on the church tower.

8735/23 Items for Information Only

- a. Cllr F Cottee advised that the Hodsoll Street Big Breakfast will be held on the first Saturday of the month. On 27 October a Quiz night will be held, starting at 7pm. Cllr F Cottee suggested that an Agenda item is made to flag items for the next Agenda. The Neighbourhood Plan will need to be revised.
- b. Cllr C Gorton advised that the Fireworks would be held on the Meadow on 5 November at 6pm. NAG Social is organising events from 1 – 3 December including a Santa Parade and table top market in the Village Centre.
- c. Cllr J Clucas noted that the District Council had organised events for the Silver Sunday and was disappointed that there was nothing from the village or the Sports Centre. Cllr J Clucas advised that the post boxes in the village will be collected at 9am and the only one with a later collection is the one in the shopping centre. Royal Mail advised that at the Lambardes post box received less than 50 items a day and is within half a mile of another post box retaining its later collection, so the collection time would not be revised. Cllr J Clucas reminded members that there will be tea and coffee served following the service on 11 November and any contributions of cakes would be welcomed.
- d. Cllr R Brammer advised that the film to be held at Ash Village hall had been cancelled due to weather conditions.
- e. Cllr M Howie advised that a branch from the tree above the thatched roof of Ridley Well has rubbed the peak of the thatch and it needs to be inspected. The branch has been removed.

- f. Cllr S Fishenden reported that he and the Clerk attended a meeting with the new management company of the Shopping Centre which was arranged by the Village Association, and also attended by the District Councillors. They were not given much information from the previous management company. All the flats have been leased and will start work on gutters and the roof, providing flower boxes and to replace the canopies.

8736/23 Progress Tracker

- a. The Progress Tracker was NOTED.

The meeting closed at 9.01pm

Signed:
Chairman

Date:

COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS REPORTS.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR

Cllr Brazier advised that residents had raised concerns regarding the speed of traffic on North Ash Road. Telematic evidence suggests that speed is not a concern, and Cllr D Brazier has organised a traffic count and speed survey, the results of which will be available in 4 – 6 weeks.

Residents have a perceived danger of crossing North Ash Road at the informal pedestrian crossing. The parked cars shield the view of the road. It has been assessed and the result was that it is not dangerous and therefore does not meet the requirements for a formal crossing. The installation of 'dog bones' was offered, however they are not enforceable and it was agreed not to proceed. Various solutions have been investigated, but found to be ineffective. The old system required a KSI (killed, serious injury) score before any intervention. The new Vision Zero Policy allows for applications to be made as a preventative measure, however, it is unlikely that this application will succeed. The community would have to support the costs as £21,000 would cover the minimum lighting and signage.

Cllr D Brazier will be invited to the first Highways Improvement Plan Working Group meeting.

Cllr D Brazier had hoped that the Leader of Dartford Borough Council would allow the route for the C1 circular bus service from Longfield to come up to Hartley and New Ash Green, however the new timetable does not include Harley and New Ash Green. (Cllr M Howie arrived).

The Warden Scheme public consultation has concluded, while the findings have not yet been published, the general feeling of the public is adverse to the reduction of Wardens or to increase the area they cover.

ULEZ – KCC remains opposed to the expansion of ULEZ and have forbidden the installation of any signage on Kent property.

DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORT

Cllr L Manston advised that she has sent the Clerk a couple of suggestions for the Highways Improvement Plan, including the crossing on North Ash Road, the need for a dropped kerb at the Milestone roundabout and the provision of a 20mph zone in the village and would be carrying out a consultation in December.

The Patient Participation Group event in Longfield was well attended and a meeting has been arranged with Dr Gandhi and the Patient Participation Group to discuss how to enable the community to work with the new processes at the practice.

There is no particular progress on the re-opening of the public toilets.

During the recent water mains repairs, Southeast Water had provided bottled water to residents on the priority list.

Cllr Perry Cole that the Regulation 18 consultation of the Local Plan on suburban areas has concluded and analysed. A call for sites in rural areas, including the Green Belt has gone out.

New Ash Green Village Association

Miss Brine advised that the Village Association AGM will be held on 21 November 2023. A successful forum meeting on Garage forecourts, guttering and drainage was held. Future dates will be set for January, March and July 2024.

The summer clean up of Redhill Wood and the Emco triangle has been completed. The remains will be entombed and grassed over. Cameras will be installed to capture and prosecute and fly tipping. The clean up of Bazes Shaw Wood will be carried out using the Community Payback team.

REPORT FROM PC GARETH MAHONEY

PC Gareth Mahoney introduced himself and apologised for his late arrival, but was dealing with an incident at North Square. In addition to Ash, New Ash Green and Hodsoll Street, PC Mahoney covers Crockenhill and Well Hill, Farningham, Horton Kirby and South Darenth and Hartley. The majority of his time is spent in New Ash Green and Hartley.

Primary concerns continue to be the use of nitrous oxide and the associated anti-social behaviour. With effect from 7 November, nitrous oxide gas will be registered as a C Class drug and it will be a criminal offence to possess it. It was suggested that the Schools Team should visit schools and give talks on the dangers of using nitrous oxide.

Use of motorbikes in summer in Nine Horse Wood and in local farmers fields

**ASH-CUM-RIDLEY PARISH COUNCIL
REPORT TO PARISH COUNCIL MEETING OF
19 OCTOBER 2023**

BURIAL GROUND - The hedges have been cut and some saplings removed.

BULLETIN – The next edition of the Bulletin will be printed on 18 October, please forward any articles to me as soon as possible.

COMMUNITY WARDEN CONSULTATION - In an acknowledgment of the Parish Council's submission, Kent have advised that they welcomed the suggestion for an alternative funding source in sponsoring a warden. We have asked for the total costs, including salary and associated costs, uniform and training of a Warden and once received will arrange a meeting with the Chairmen and Clerks of Hartley Parish Council, West Kingsdown Parish Council and KCC to discuss this further.

HIGHWAYS – We have not received a response from Even Group Ltd to our request to review the parking conditions at Manor Gardens. On doing a search it was found that the company is dormant.

NORTHFIELD –

- **Parking for Allotment Holders** – the provision of 16 parking spaces on Northfield for use by allotment holders is being progressed and the New Ash Green Horticultural Association will submit a planning application in this regard to Sevenoaks District Council.
- **Football Pitches** – the request for the installation of two full size football pitches on Northfield was considered and it was decided not to progress this request as the cost implications of getting the land to the required standard. the reduction in the size of the hay field and the knock on reduction in grants received from the Rural Payments Agency. It was also noted that there are no changing/toilet facilities and an application for a variation to the planning conditions would be required.
- **Trees** – following the KCC initiative to plant more trees in the County, Northfield Management Committee have been successful in their application to plant an additional 2,500 trees on Northfield, along the Ash Road boundary and boundary with Milestone Academy and in the south east area. Planting days are being arranged by the North West Kent Countryside Partnership. The New Ash Green Woodlands Group, the primary school and Milestone Academy have been invited to assist with the planting of the trees. If anyone would like to help with the planting, please let me know.

PLANNING – 23/01755: Merry Lees, Billet Hill, Ash, TN15 7HG – Change of use of land to use as residential Gypsy/Traveller site comprising 1 pitch (1 Mobile Home, 1 Touring Caravan) with a fence and gate and proposed hardstanding. The Parish Council requested the District Councillors call this application to the Development Management Committee for determination, however the District Councillors felt that this application should be granted, and therefore, it was not called in and has been granted with a number of conditions.

PUBLIC FOOTPATH SD245 - The landowner has applied to have the path diverted to across the field, which is the route across the field mentioned in the Parish Council response. However, before KCC can consult on that proposed diversion, it was noticed that the legal line recorded on the Definitive Map appears to have changed across various historic maps and there is a possible alignment anomaly. As such, KCC were asking if the Parish Council have any evidence for us to consider prior to an application to divert the footpath.

TRAINING –

KALC Training

Finance for Councillors – 2 November 2023 – 11.40 – online

Introduction to Planning - 2 November 2023 – 18.30 – online

Finance for Councillors – 7 November 2023 – 10.00 – online

Please let me know if you would like to attend any of the sessions listed.

YOUTH – Activities have been arranged for the October half-term at the Sports Centre. Some providers are not able to attend and we have removed activities that were not well attended. Bookings can be made by phone or email and payment made on the day.

Agenda Item: October 2023

Commemorative Bench

Background:

The Parish Council would like to provide a commemorative bench for the previous Chairman Michael Brown, acknowledging his contribution and dedication to the Parish.

The Village Association's Amenity Committee have suggested that the bench could be sited at the top of the Meadow.

Recommendation:

As this location has had previous vandalism, I have made enquiries for benches that are vandal resistant, with a traditional appearance.

The Lowther bench from Glasdon, can be manufactured in Vandalex, which is a material that is an aluminium alloy engineered to produce a high modulus of elasticity, which offers increased impact absorption properties. Its anodised finish will not rust, it is easy to clean and never needs painting. The seat ends are made of Armortec coated aluminium.



The cost would be as follows:

Lowther bench	£631.77
Vandalex	£140.39
Plaque	£101.39
Underground anchor	£ 41.26
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	£914.81
VAT	£182.97
TOTAL	1,097.78



A plaque with the Parish Council name and logo can be added to the bench for an additional cost dependent on artwork.

Suggested wording for the plaque:

Michael Brown – 49 Years of Service
In Grateful Recognition of Your Dedication and Commitment
To the Parish of Ash-cum-Ridley.
We Honour Your Long Service 04 May 2023

Alison de Jager
Parish Clerk