

ASH-CUM-RIDLEY PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 21 March 2024 at Hodsoll Street & Ridley Village Hall, Hodsoll Street, TN15 7LE commencing at 7.45pm

Present: Cllr S Fishenden – Chairman
Cllr M Aspinall
Cllr R Brammer
Cllr C Clark
Cllr C Gorton
Cllr M Howie (arrived 7.58)
Cllr A Jauch
Cllr P Kirtley
Cllr V Ngwenya
Cllr J Scott (arrived 7.49pm)

In attendance: Alison de Jager – Parish Clerk
Karen Law – Deputy Clerk
Megan Johnson-Hodges – Assistant Clerk
Cllr D Brazier – Kent County Council
Cllr L Manston – Sevenoaks District Council (left at 7.50pm)
Cllr Penny Cole – Sevenoaks District Council
Cllr Perry Cole – Sevenoaks District Council
1 Member of the Public

8793/24 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr J Clucas (family commitment), F Cottee (prior commitment), Cllr S Hobbs (work), Cllr I MacLeod (family commitment) and Cllr M Manley (family commitment). The apologies and reasons for absence were accepted. PROPOSED: Cllr A Jauch SECONDED: Cllr R Brammer and AGREED.

8794/24 Declarations of Interest

a. Cllr C Clark declared an interest in item 6.2 as a payment has been made to Ash Village Hall as she is the treasurer of the Committee.

8795/24 Minutes

It was RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 15 February 2024 be approved and signed as a true record. Cllr C Gorton SECONDED: Cllr C Clark 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 7.48pm.

8796/24 Clerk's Report

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

8797/24 Council Administration

- a. Meeting Dates 2024/2025 – the dates of meetings for the 2024/2025 municipal year were RECEIVED and NOTED.

8798/24 Finance

- a. Current Financial Position – the Deputy Clerk/Finance Officer reported that the Parish Council accounts reflect a £375.00 and by year end the surplus should be £128,770. Expenditure to be made before year end will result in general reserves falling by £14,000 to around £56,620 as discussed and agreed in December 2023. Payments will be made to Kent Pension Fund. Utilities have not been paid as a copy of the rates charged by the utility company are received. Income of approximately £1,500 from the Burial Ground will be deposited next week. Between £4,000 - £5,000 will be paid to the Sports Centre to cover agreed staff costs.
- b. Approval of payments – Cllr R Brammer PROPOSED that the payments made up to 15 March 2024 are APPROVED. SECONDED: Cllr A Jauch and AGREED.
- c. Internal Audit – the Interim Internal Audit Report for 2023-2024 was RECEIVED and NOTED.
- d. Retirement of Contractor – It was approved, in principle that Hartley and Ash-cum-Ridley Parish Councils hold an afternoon tea for the Contractor.
- e. Photocopier Contract Renewal – Cllr S Fishenden PROPOSED that the quotation for a 5 year contract renewal from Digital Automation in the amount of £7,892.60 is accepted. SECONDED: Cllr V Ngwenya and AGREED.
- f. New Ash Green Village Association – Cllr S Fishenden PROPOSED that the latest audited accounts are requested from the Village Association together with information regarding the minimum match funding that is required to access a grant from ACRE. The Parish Council will provide a letter of support for grant applications. SECONDED: Cllr V Ngwenya and AGREED.
- g. West Kent Mediation – Cllr R Brammer PROPOSED that £275.00 is awarded to West Kent Mediation under **Section 137 of the LGA 1972**. SECONDED: Cllr J Scott and AGREED.
- h. CPRE – Cllr R Brammer PROPOSED that the annual membership to CPRE – The Countryside Charity is renewed in the amount of £36.00 SECONDED: Cllr P Kirtley and AGREED.

8799/24 Planning

- a. Applications
None at time of Agenda.
- b. Local Plan 2040 – Cllr C Clark PROPOSED that the Parish Council supports the concept of co-housing for older people as proposed SECONDED: Cllr V Ngwenya and AGREED.

8800/24 Ash Green Sports Centre

- a. Current Financial Position – The Deputy Clerk/Finance Officer advised that the Sports Centre has a surplus of £3,432 including the £3,500 grant from Hartley Parish Council. Removing the grant, there is a deficit of £68.00. At the same time last year, the Sports Centre reflected a £12,000 deficit. Salary costs have come in at £7,000 more than budgeted. Utilities have not been paid for the Sports Centre as discussed under item 6.1. The expected year end is to end on a £4,000 surplus, but once the utilities are paid we expect to end with a balanced budget.
- b. Approval of payments – Cllr A Jauch PROPOSED that the payments made to 15 March 2024 are APPROVED. SECONDED: Cllr M Aspinall and AGREED.

- c. Sports Centre Management Committee - the minutes of the meeting of the Sports Centre Management Committee held on 12 March 2024 will be circulated by email.
- d. Sports Centre Budget 2024-25 – Cllr M Aspinall PROPOSED that the Sports Centre Budget 2024-25 is ratified SECONDED: Cllr P Kirtley and AGREED.
- e. Sports Centre Lease – Cllr S Fishenden PROPOSED an initial budget of £3,000 from Legal Reserves is set and to delegate to the Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman of the Council and the Chairman of the Sports Centre Management Committee, to instruct a solicitor to commence lease negotiations with Leigh Academies Trust, on the basis of maintaining the current usage terms. SECONDED: Cllr R Brammer and AGREED.

8801/24 Community and Environment

- a. **Community Warden** – Cllr C Gorton PROPOSED that the recommendations from the report are taken forward:
 - Arrange a meeting with representatives from the three parish councils and Mark Rolfe, KCC to establish the correct sponsorship details.
 - Arrange a Teams meeting with the Clerk and Community Liaison Officer of Headcorn Parish Council to discuss the option of direct employment.
 - Establish a framework for ongoing collaboration and communication between the parties.
- b. **New Ash Green Focus Group** – The minutes of the meeting held on 12 February 2024 were RECEIVED and NOTED.
- c. **Lances Almshouse Charity** - Cllr S Fishenden PROPOSED that up to £500 is authorised to seek legal advice on the Parish Council becoming the sole trustee of the Lances Almshouse Charity and for Cllrs Fishenden and Jauch to meet with the Trustees to discuss the future management. SECONDED: Cllr M Aspinall and AGREED.

8802/24 Items for Information Only

- a. Cllr M Howie reported that a huge sign had appeared on Malthouse Road advising of road restrictions. Cllr D Brazier will contact the District Highways Manager and report back his findings
- b. Cllr M Aspinall referred to an article in the lasted SDC InShape regarding the revised recycle bags to be introduced and how elderly residents will cope with moving weighted bags to collection points and then collecting them. 130 councils use these bags and the Service Manager had researched this provision. The bags will have house names or numbers printed on them.
- c. Cllr J Scott reported that motorbikes have been using the bridleway from Church Road to Hartley Bottom Road, which is not permitted. Registration numbers have been collected and reported to the Police. Cllr J Scott requested that anyone seeing the bikes on this byway take a picture of the registration or the bikes and report them to the Police and Community Safety Unit.

8803/24 Progress Tracker

- a. The Progress Tracker was NOTED.

The meeting closed at 8.40pm

Signed:
Chairman

Date:

ASH-CUM-RIDLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Agenda Item: 4 – Full Council (21 March 2024)

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

COUNTY COUNCILLOR

Cllr D Brazier advised that the timetables for the C3 service have been printed and distributed to Parish Councils and Libraries.

DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORT

Cllr L Manston reported the following:

- Lorries on Ash Lane – people with concerns have been asked to email the Parish Council direct. One email has been received by the Parish Council.
- North Ash Road – KCC have advised that they have funding to install 'slow' road markings and the installation of children crossing signs on North Ash Road, but are waiting for the Parish Council to confirm its support for this. A HIP Working Group meeting will be arranged.
- Little Leaves Nursery School – some damage was caused to the Playhouse by the Young Adventurers Club. The Parish Council is aware of this and the repair is in hand.
- Violence against Women and Girls – PC Beck, Kent Police arranged a Violence against Women and Girls walk and talk event and was attended by Cllr L Manston.
- Village Association Coppicing – the Village Association requested that all queries received by the District Councillors in this regard are referred directly to them.
- Village Centre – rents of shops in the village centre have increased which has resulted in some shops closing. The management company have confirmed that they have no plans to get rid of the shops and will continue with improvements to the centre.
- Climate Change Working Group – Cllr Manston offered the support of the District Councillors.

Cllr Perry Cole advised that the Boundary Commission is holding a review and as part of that process, the numbers of Councillors required across the District will be assessed and ward boundaries may change.

ASH-CUM-RIDLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Agenda Item: **5 – Full Council 21 March 2024**

Report Title: **Clerk's Report**

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING (APM) – Guest speakers confirmed for the APM are Mr Sean Manley – New Ash Green Woodlands Group
Cllr Perry Cole – Deputy Leader, Sevenoaks District Council
Sgt K Saville - Kent Police

Apologies have been received from Laura Trott MP, Gareth Johnson MP and Tom Tougendhat MP. A representative from Mr Tougendhat's office will attend.

BOWDLERS WELL – The thatch repair at Bowdler's Well in Ridley has been completed.



BULLETIN – The delivery of the Bulletin has been completed. We have received 45 requests for electronic delivery of Bulletins.

BURIAL GROUND – no Councillors attended the last site visit on 11 March 2024, and I would like to suggest that site visits are held fortnightly and reviewed as necessary.

HIGHWAYS IMPROVEMENT PLAN (HIP) – the results of the survey for the proposed double yellow lines on North Ash Road have been forwarded to Kent Highways.

Responses also identified locations as problem pinch points. A Highways Improvement Plan Working Group meeting will be arranged with KCC Highways. Another request for a traffic mirror to be installed at the intersection of Ash Road, North Ash Road and West Yoke has been sent to the Village Association.

HODSOLL STREET PLAY AREA - The play equipment, basketball hoop and goal post will be repainted when the weather improves.

PLANNING – 23/03139: OAST HOUSE NURSERY – This application was presented to the Development Management Committee and the decision was taken to refuse planning permission on the following grounds:

- The application site lies within the Green Belt where strict policies of restraint apply. The proposal would be inappropriate development harmful to the maintenance of the character of the Green Belt and will result in a development that is materially larger in scale, massing than the existing development that causes substantial harm by significantly eroding its openness. The development would be contrary to paragraph 149(g) of the National Planning Policy Framework and Policy LO8 of the Sevenoaks Core Strategy
- The proposal fails to make provision for affordable housing and is therefore contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework, policy SP3 of the Sevenoaks Core Strategy and the Sevenoaks Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document
- The proposal fails to make appropriate provision for education, contrary to Policy SP9 of the Sevenoaks Core Strategy

SOCIAL MEDIA – The Assistant Clerk is posting more information on Social Media and we are engaging more with the community. In the last 28 days our facebook page has had 7,474 post reaches (people seeing the post), 2,552 post engagements (people commenting, liking or sharing a post) and 11 new followers bringing the total followers to 226.

WINTER SUPPORT GRANT – We were successful in our application for £1,500.00 from the Parish Winter Support Scheme, a collaborative initiative between the Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC) and Kent County Council (KCC) to administer the Household Support Fund allocated by the Department for Work and Pensions. £500 to the Community Cupboard and the balance of £1,000 for the purchase of cooking equipment for families identified by the primary school.