

ASH-CUM-RIDLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 20th November at Hodsoll Street & Ridley Village Hall, Hodsoll Street, TN15 7LE commencing at 7.45pm.

Present: Cllr S Fishenden
Cllr M Aspinall (arrived 7.48pm)
Cllr C Clark
Cllr J Clucas
Cllr F Cottée
Cllr C Gorton
Cllr S Hobbs
Cllr A Jauch
Cllr M Manley

In Attendance: Karen Law – Deputy Clerk/Finance Officer
District Councillor Perry Cole
District Councillor L Manston
District Councillor S Manamperi

9019/25 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs R Brammer (ill), P Kirtley (holiday), I Macleod (family commitment) V Ngwenya (holiday) Cllr S Fishenden PROPOSED that the apologies and reasons for absence were accepted. SECONDED: Cllr J Clucas and AGREED.

District Councillors Penny Cole, Mark Lindop, Kent County Councillor Maxine Fothergill sent their apologies. PC C Guest and PC E Collins sent their apologies.

9020/25 Declarations of Members Interests and Dispensations

None.

9021/25 Minutes

It was resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 16 October 2025 be signed and approved PROPOSED: Cllr F Cottée SECONDED: Cllr A Jauch and AGREED. It was resolved that the minutes of the Extraordinary Parish Council held 30 October be approved and signed with the amendment of 'No objection' to 9022/25 NAG1 PROPOSED: Cllr M Manley SECONDED: Cllr J Clucas and AGREED.

9022/25 Public Session and External Reports

Sevenoaks District Council – Cllr L Manston & Cllr S Manamperi reported that SDC had approved a 3 unitary set up with Sevenoaks combined with Maidstone, Tunbridge Wells, Tonbridge & Malling all to fall under West Kent. The new leader of SDC is Cllr Kevin Maskall. SDC has decided to protect the rights of River Darent. Speedwatch volunteers training is to be arranged. Following on from the Parish's Ukraine twinning success a task group had been set up at SDC and twinning had been agreed. Cllr J Clucas asked what Cllr L Manston's view was on the Local Plan, she stated that she was against the large number of plots/houses that had been put forward as there was no infrastructure to support that many new homes.

Cllr Aspinall enquired as to the nature of the alternative proposal for repurposing the Children's Centre that Cllr Manston was supporting. Cllr Manston confirmed it was a group of local artists looking for an art gallery and studio space. The proposal had not progressed so far due to a lack of funding streams

County Council – Cllr M Fothergill submitted a report to be read. Strategic statement 2025-28 focused on efficiency and resident priorities which includes a £67m highways programme, 5% cut in councillor allowance, pause on some Net Zero projects to save £32m by 2029, support for smart-phone free classroom, school transport review and ending costly leases by bringing 500 staff back to County Hall.

9023/25 Clerk's Report

The Clerk's Report was RECEIVED and NOTED, with additional information regarding the next HIP meeting which will be held on 10th December 2025. The Clerk's Report is attached to these minutes.

9024/25 Council Administration

Memorial Garden Regulations - Cllr M Manley PROPOSED that Burial Ground regulations are amended to include the new point:

Advance purchase of second ashes plot and memorial plaque. A second ashes plot and memorial plaque may be purchased in advance for the spouse/partner of the person interred. This purchase must be made at the same time as the original interment. At the time of the second interment, the applicable fee will be recalculated and the difference between the current published fees and the amount originally paid will become due. The advance purchase fee secures the right to the second interment but does not fix the second interment or memorial plaque costs. SECONDED: Cllr J Clucas and AGREED.

9025/25 Assets of Community Value

Purchase and Refurbishment of the New Ash Green Clinic and Children's Centre It was NOTED that the Parish should receive the Valuation Report on Friday 21 November and that a meeting has been arranged to discuss this matter further on Thursday 27 November. Councillors would be updated via email.

9026/25 Finance and Governance

- a. **Current Financial Position:** The Finance Officer reported that the current balance after receiving the second half of the precept is £259,549 and General Reserves of £76,885 which is approximately 3.6 times monthly running costs. Members were taken through the reports.
- b. **Approval of Payments:** Cllr S Fishenden PROPOSED that the payments made since the last meeting up to 13 November 2025 are APPROVED. SECONDED: Cllr M Manley and AGREED.
- c. **Highways Improvement Plan Working Group:** Cllr L Manston's request to allow members of the public to attend HIP Working Group meetings was considered and refused on the advice received from Nigel Rowe from KCC and the fact that no Kent Council allow the public to attend their HIP meetings. PROPOSED: Cllr S Fishenden SECONDED: Cllr J Clucas and AGREED. It was also noted HIP meeting minutes would continue to be published on the Council website
- d. **Memorial Garden – Exception to Policy** Due to the fact that the claimants could have purchased ½ plot in the burial ground for the deceased at the time and due to there being no more burial plots and only limited space in the memorial garden Cllr J Clucas PROPOSED that the appeal should be refused SECONDED: Cllr M Manley and AGREED. However, it was recognised that the claimant had been heavily involved in the community and that the Parish would try to facilitate with the VA the possibility of maybe there being a tree planted.

9027/25 Planning

- a. **Applications:**

25/02473 Holywell Park, Greenfields, Hodsoll Street, TN15 7LE

Refurbishment of dining room. Redecoration and new flooring. Removal of existing fireplace to be replaced with false fireplace. Cllr F Cottee PROPOSED that the Parish Council should have no objection subject to planning regulation but would like the existing fireplace to be retained but would go with the proposal by Sevenoaks Heritage Officer SECONDED: Cllr M Manley and AGREED.

b. **Planning Applications Working Group** – The notes of the meeting held on 04 November 2025 were NOTED.

9028/25 Sevenoaks District Council Regulation 18 Local Plan Consultation

Extension of Delegate Authority Cllr S Fishenden PROPOSED that as it had not been possible to complete the draft for the November meeting that the delegated authority be extended to allow the Clerk, in consultation with Laura Horner to finalise the draft to be approved by the Chairman and Vice-chairmen for submission by the deadline of 11 December 2025. This would be emailed to all Councillors SECONDED: Cllr J Clucas and AGREED.

9029/25 Ash Green Sports Centre

a. **Current Financial Position** – the current balance of the Sports Centre stands at £16,601. General reserves are equivalent to 2.1 times running costs. This is a surplus of £6,243 noting that none of the Parish Council subsidy has been drawn on. It was noted that the new gym in the shopping centre is due to open early December which will have an impact on income but a meeting is being organised with the owner to see how we can work together. The Councillors congratulated Jo White on the success of her Macmillan Coffee morning where she managed to raise £141.00

b. **Approval of Payments** - Cllr S Fishenden PROPOSED that the payments made since the last meeting to 13 November 2025 are APPROVED. SECONDED: Cllr A Jauch and AGREED.

9030/25 Community and Environment

a. **Focus Group** – The notes of the meeting held on 13 October 2025 were NOTED.

b. **Speedwatch** - Cllr S Fishenden PROPOSED that the Parish Council should adopt the Community Speedwatch initiative for Ash & New Ash Green. SECONDED: Cllr J Clucas and AGREED.

9031/25 Items for Information

- Cllr F Cottee reminded everyone of the Big Breakfast held on the first Saturday of the month in Hodsoll Street & Ridley Village Hall.
- Cllr J Clucas reported that the car transporter had been removed from North Ash Road but parking still remained a concern.
- Cllr M Aspinall raised a question around shopping centre improvements.
- Cllr C Gorton advised that meet Father Christmas would be held on 28 November 2025 and that the Christmas Panto would be on 7 December.

9032/25 Progress Tracker

The Progress Tracker was NOTED.

The meeting closed at 8.32pm

Signed:

Date: Chairman

ASH-CUM-RIDLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Agenda Item: 5 – Full Council 20 November 2025

Report Title: Clerk's Report

COFFEE WITH A COP

PC Caleb Guest, PC Ellie Collins, Jackie West, Community Warden and Kelly Webb, SDC Community Safety Unit hosted a successful event on 27 October 2025.

FAMILY CHRISTMAS EVENT –

Playplace will be running two sessions of crafts and inflatables including a visit from Father Christmas on Saturday 13 December 2025. Each session has a capacity of 75 children. Advance booking is required. One session is full and there are a few spaces on the second session. This event is supported by a grant from Kent County Cllr. M Fothergill.

HIGHWAYS IMPROVEMENT PLAN (HIP)

A date for the next meeting of the Working Group will be arranged on receipt of the pedestrian survey completed at the Olivers Mill crossing which is expected in December.

THURSDAY LUNCH CLUB

The Parish staff prepared the lunch on 06 November and the lunch has been cancelled for 20 November. The Cook should be back for the following week, but if not, fish and chips will be on offer.

The Christmas Lunch will be held on Thursday 4 December 2025.

TREES

The Quantitative Tree Risk Assessments for Ash War Memorial, Ash Burial Ground and Northfield will be carried out on 26 November 2025.

YOUTH

The Trustees of the Youth & Community Centre have agreed that two youth sessions, 8 – 12's and a senior club can be run from the Centre and Young Lives Foundation will start in January 2026.

Cllr S Fishenden and local police officers have arranged a football match Police vs Young People to be held on 17 January 2026 from 1.00pm – 3.00pm at Ash Green Sports Centre.

ASH-CUM-RIDLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Agenda Item: **6.1 Full Council (20 November 2025)**

Report Title: **Memorial Garden Regulations**

Under the current Memorial Garden arrangements, families may purchase in advance a second ashes grave space, and a memorial wall plaque for the spouse/partner of a person being interred.

This advance purchase must be made at the same time as the original interment. No further fees are charged with the exception of the ground preparation and additional inscription costs to carry out the inscription insitu as these are beyond the control of the Parish Council.

This practice means that the Parish Council may be providing services many years later at significantly higher cost than the original fee charged for the Exclusive Right of Burial and interment fees. As fees are reviewed annually and maintenance costs increase, this is not financially sustainable.

It is proposed that the Memorial Garden Regulations are amended to include a new point:

- Advance purchase of second ashes plot and memorial plaque. A second ashes plot and memorial plaque may be purchased in advance for the spouse/partner of the person interred. This purchase must be made at the same time as the original interment. At the time of the second interment, the applicable fee will be recalculated and the difference between the current published fees and the amount originally paid will become due. The advance purchase fee secures the right to the second interment, but does not fix the second interment or memorial plaque costs

ASH-CUM-RIDLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Agenda Item: **12.2 Full Council (20 November 2025)**

Report Title: **Community Speedwatch**

Community Speedwatch is a Kent Police supported scheme that enables trained volunteers to monitor vehicle speeds in areas of concern. Data collected from sessions is shared with Kent Police, who use it to issue warning letters and direct enforcement activity.

Historically, requests for volunteers for Speedwatch within Ash-cum-Ridley has attracted a single volunteer and therefore this initiative has not progressed. Recent interest from the 'Coffee with a Cop' events has indicated this may now be viable.

The Parish Council will publish a call for volunteers on the Parish Council's website and social media. There is a minimum requirement of 2 trained volunteers.

Additional volunteers would be preferable to allow for rota flexibility.

Kent Police will provide:

- the third-party insurance cover,
- hi-visibility jackets and access to their website to report speeding offences.
- Training for all volunteers (online)
- Speedwatch can be used on roads with 20, 30 or 40 speed limits.
- Locations must be pre-approved by Kent Police

The Parish Council will need to borrow speed indication devices (the Community Safety Unit at Sevenoaks District Council may have equipment we can use.) .

Drivers caught speeding are sent warning letters. Where drivers have been seen on four occasions in a 12-month period, police officers will visit the driver at their address.

All speeding vehicles are checked for tax and MOT. Any vehicles without these, may have action taken against them. Letters sent to owners will also check for that their insurance is valid.