

ASH-CUM-RIDLEY PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 16 July 2026 at Ash Village Hall, The Street,
Ash, TN15 7HB commencing at 7.30pm.**

Present: Cllr S Fishenden
Cllr M Aspinall
Cllr R Brammer (arrived 7.33pm)
Cllr C Clark
Cllr J Clucas
Cllr S Glover (arrived 7.48pm)
Cllr C Gorton
Cllr S Hobbs
Cllr A Jauch
Cllr P Kirtley
Cllr I MacLeod
Cllr M Manley

In Attendance: Alison de Jager – Parish Clerk
Karen Law- Deputy Clerk/Finance Officer
Megan Hodges – Assistant Clerk
Cllr M Fothergill – Kent County Council
Cllr M Lindop – Sevenoaks District Council
Cllr Perry Cole – Sevenoaks District Council
PC J Weatherall
1 member of the public

9130/26 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs F Cottee and J Scott (holiday). Cllr S Fishenden PROPOSED that the apologies and reasons for absence were accepted.

SECONDED: Cllr M Manley and AGREED.

District Councillor Penny Cole sent her apologies.

9131/26 Declarations of Members Interests and Dispensations

None

9132/26 Minutes

It was RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 18 June 2026 be signed and approved with the following correction: 9122/26 a £796,142 corrected to £96,142. PROPOSED: Cllr S Fishenden SECONDED: Cllr C Gorton and AGREED.

9133/26 Public Session and External Reports

County Councillor M Fothergill reported that the Government has announced that option 4b has been selected for the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), which sees Sevenoaks with Tonbridge and Malling, Tunbridge and Maidstone. She raised concerns for East Kent and noted that Dartford and Gravesham have been grouped with Medway which has been in special measures financially on two occasions. (Cllr R Brammer arrived). Solar Farms – there have been four solar farms approved in this area and Cllr Fothergill has presented a report to the July KCC meeting to ensure KCC works with district and borough councils to include the cumulative impact of multiple solar applications and to protect agricultural land. The closure of the post office in New Ash Green and Longfield have been confirmed and

through the journalist from the BBC there will be continued representation in the media. If anyone has any questions that they would like Cllr Fothergill to put to KCC, please email her and she will arrange for them to be submitted.

PC Weatherall reported that as an area, crime numbers are stagnant. However, antisocial behaviour has increased as is usual in the summer. Some of this ASB is associated with e-scooters and bikes in the shopping centre in the evenings with a mix of ages noted. There has been a decrease in the number of Nitrous Oxide cannisters and catapult reports. More visible patrolling is taking place in the Shopping Centre and the woods. Checks on untaxed vehicles in the village have been carried out with warning notices issued. In May he recovered a stolen vehicle in New Ash Green following information reported by local residents. The Community Safety Day held on 6 June 2026 included a Police vs young people football match. The next Coffee with a Cop event will be held outside the primary school on 11 September 2026. Promotion of My Community Voice continues, this helps residents to hear directly from the neighbourhood policing team. Members were invited to join. (Cllr S Glover arrived). Cllr R Brammer reported that motorbikes ride through Nine Horse Wood every summer. Cllr M Aspinall asked if the masked motorbike rider on Ash Road has been identified. No positive identification has been made.

Cllr M Lindop advised that the deadline for the VA to respond to the waste collection deadline has passed and this may cause chaos in October. There are major changes to the planning process that come into effect from October with Parish Councils not being able to call planning applications into Development Management Committee and decisions will be taken by officers. In the Local Government Reorganisation Sevenoaks will form a unitary authority with Tunbridge Wells, Tonbridge and Malling and Maidstone. A motion has been put to full Council from Cllr L Manston calling for the District Council to support the provision of electric vehicle charging points cover the whole district. No NAG Solar are holding a meeting at the Village Hall on 24 July to discuss how to approach the defence of an appeal to SDC's decision to refuse planning permission. Two shops have applied to host the Post Office. The woodlands group will be holding a work day in the Orchard on Saturday at 10am. Cllr J Clucas asked if the new unitary authorities would affect the government's housing allocations.

Cllrs M Manley, J Clucas and C Gorton all raised concerns regarding the assisted waste collection offered by SDC with some people being told they are registered, but no collections taking place and other residents have been advised that they cannot register for this service until October.

Cllr P Cole advised that 200 responses have been received from the traffic survey carried out regarding the parking on Ash Road outside the post office. These will be analysed and see if a solution can be added to the Hartley Parish Council HIP. The Hartley Community Speedwatch has now been set up and training of volunteers to take place. SDC will be delivering the new wheelie bins from mid-July to October. Letters will be sent to all households and the start date is scheduled for 12 October 2026. There is information in the InShape magazine, website and social media. SDC will contact those who need to renew their postal vote. Local Plan - the Regulation 19 consultation will start on 23 July 2026 and run till 17 September 2026. Residents are encouraged to respond. From October 2026 planning applications referred to Development Management Committee will be limited and will see a reduction of approximately 80% of current applications. Legal advice states that this revised practice must be adhered to and that applications will fall mainly into either Schedule 1 or Schedule 2. Scheduled 1 applications will be determined by the Officers and Schedule 2 applications by the Chief Planning Officer and the Chairman of the Development Management Committee. The merge with the Local Government

Reorganisation will see SDC's representation reduce from 54 to 18/20 based on ward boundaries and population.

9134/26 Clerk's Report

- a. The Clerk's Report was RECEIVED and NOTED.

9135/26 Council Administration

- a. **IT Policy** – Cllr M Manley PROPOSED that the draft IT Policy is adopted without amendment. SECONDED: Cllr M Aspinall and AGREED.
- b. **Document Retention Policy** – The review of the Document Retention Policy was carried out without amendment. PROPOSED: Cllr S Fishenden SECONDED: Cllr P Kirtley and AGREED.
- c. **Accessibility Statement** – The review of the Accessibility Statement was carried out with out amendment. PROPOSED: Cllr C Gorton SECONDED: Cllr J Clucas and AGREED.
- d. **Ash Burial Ground:**
 - I. **Burial Ground Regulations:** Cllr J Clucas PROPOSED that this review is deferred to the September meeting in order to update the regulations, recognising that the Burial Ground is full. SECONDED: Cllr C Clark and AGREED.
 - II. **Memorial Garden Regulations:** The regulations were reviewed without amendment. PROPOSED: Cllr A Jauch SECONDED: Cllr C Gorton and AGREED.

9136/26 Finance and Governance

- a. **Current Financial Position** – The Deputy Clerk/Finance Officer advised that the current balance is £280,312.14 which is a surplus of £93,896. General Reserves after adjustment are £122,200 which is £3,833 below 3 months running costs. One third of the utilities bill is paid by the Parish Council. The Audit fee to Mulberry has been made in the amount of £214.65. There is an increase in the delivery cost for the Bulletin as we have reverted to delivering to all houses in the Parish.
- b. **Approval of Payments:** Cllr M Aspinall PROPOSED that the payments made since the last meeting up to 09 July 2026 are APPROVED. SECONDED: Cllr C Clark and AGREED.

9137/26 Planning

- a. **Applications:**
 - 26/01355/PIP: The Oaks, Billet Hill, Ash, Kent, TN15 7HG** - Erection of dwellings with a minimum of 1 and maximum of 1 net dwellings and associated ancillary works Cllr M Manley PROPOSED that the Parish Council objects to this application as inappropriate development within the Green Belt with no very special circumstances stated. SECONDED: Cllr C Gorton and AGREED.
 - 26/01399: Holywell Park, Greenfields, Hodsoil Street, TN15 7LE** – Refurbishment, retention and repair of the existing panelling; Removal of the raised floor area within the dining room; Removal of the existing fireplace, which will be reused following the lowering of the raised floor area; Replacement of the modern carpet with LVT tiles over an existing modern floor structure. Cllr S Fishenden PROPOSED that the Parish Council understands the need to adapt the dining room to its existing role in the Care Home. We have no objections to the proposed alterations provided that they comply with current planning policies and conservation guidelines. SECONDED: Cllr S Hobbs and AGREED.

- b. The notes of the Planning Applications Working Group meeting of 07 July 2026 were NOTED.
- c. **Sevenoaks District Council Local Plan Regulation 19** - It was NOTED that the Regulation 19 Consultation will run from 23 July 2026 to 17 September 2026. Cllr S Fishenden PROPOSED:
- I. No changes are required to the Parish Council's previous Regulation 18 consultation response.
 - II. Agree that, as no amendments are required, to delegate the preparation and submission of the Parish Council's response to the Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman, Vice-chairmen and Laura Horner.
 - III. Agree that the response should be based on the Parish Council's previous Regulation 18 submission together with any relevant changes identified in the published Regulation 19 documents.
 - IV. To authorise Laura Horner to represent the Parish Council during the independent examination including speaking at the Examination in Public if required.
- SECONDED: Cllr M Manley and AGREED.

9138/26 Ash Green Sports Centre

- a. **Current Financial Position** – The Deputy Clerk/Finance Officer advised that the current balance is £17,647.10 with a surplus of £1,854.10 which is approximately 1.7 times running costs. Most income codes are on budget. The utilities invoice to 7 July in the amount of £924.84 has been paid. It was noted that this cost code has been renamed to Utilities & Site Costs. The 6 month service and a repair to the Air conditioner has been carried out.
- b. **Approval of Payments** – Cllr S Fishenden PROPOSED that the payments made since the last meeting to 09 July 2026 are APPROVED. SECONDED: Cllr M Aspinall and AGREED.

9139/26 Community and Environment

- a. **Highways Improvement Plan (HIP) Working Group** – The notes of the meeting of the Working Group held on 17 June 2026 were NOTED.
- b. **Children's Centre** - Cllr S Fishenden PROPOSED that the following recommendations are approved en bloc. SECONDED: Cllr M Aspinall and AGREED.
- I. Authorise the Clerk to obtain a quote from a local architect to review the proposed layout, advise on Building Regulations, accessibility, toilet design and assist with preparation of a tender specification.
 - II. Approves the commencement of the tender process for the refurbishment works, in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations, Standing Orders and the Procurement Regulations 2024. All quotes to be presented to the Parish Council.
 - III. Delegates to the Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairmen, authority to progress preparatory work required for the tender process, including preparation of the specification and identification of suitable contractors.

9140/26 Items for Information

- Cllr M Aspinall advised that Pets Pantry is now accepting parcel collection and delivery.
- Cllr C Gorton advised that the Junior Youth Group has received very positive feedback.

- Cllr R Brammer asked for an update on the twinning with the village in Ukraine. Cllr S Fishenden will follow up and report back.

9141/26 Progress Tracker

The Progress Tracker was NOTED.

The meeting closed at 8.49pm

Signed:
Chairman

Date:

ASH-CUM-RIDLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Agenda Item: **5 – Full Council 16 July 2026**

Report Title: **Clerk's Report**

ASH GREEN SPORTS CENTRE

The Sports Centre welcomes a new instructor, making the Sports Centre fully staffed.

BULLETIN

The 2nd edition for 2026 has been printed and is currently out for delivery.

BURIAL GROUND

A Burial Ground site visit on 6 July 2026 was undertaken and identified maintenance requirements:

- Removal of graffiti on path and Memorial Garden wall
- Removal of tree saplings from graves
- Substantial facing of hedge on the northern boundary of the Burial Ground.

CCTV PROVISION

Confirmation has been received from SDC Community Safety Unit that we would require permission from the owner of the lamp posts (NAG VA) and agreement on who will be responsible for the movement of mobile cameras. Sharing of images is permissible through their system and to the CSU, but this is not a legal requirement. Relevant signage near the cameras that meets legislation must be in place.

A meeting has been requested with the VA to discuss this provision as well as requesting an audit of lighting in the parking areas in the village. Further information has been sought from SDC CSU regarding the make and model of cameras used and information regarding the relocation of devices.

FOCUS GROUP MEETING

The notes of the Focus Group meeting held on 13 July 2026 will be circulated with the September 2026 Agenda.

LINK ATM NETWORK

An application has been submitted to LINK for a Cash Access Request. Acknowledgement of receipt has been received and the request is progressing.

SPEEDWATCH

To note that additional training for volunteers will be held on Friday 17 July 2026 at 12.30pm at Ash Green Sports Centre.

YOUTH PROVISION

The first week saw 5 junior members and 1 senior members attending and the launch was successful with positive feedback received.

ASH-CUM-RIDLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Agenda Item: 8.3 – Full Council 16 July 2026

Report Title: **Sevenoaks District Council Local Plan Regulation 19 Consultation.**

Sevenoaks District Council's Regulation 19 consultation on the Local Plan is expected to run from 23 July to 17 September 2026.

Members are asked to consider whether any changes are required to the Parish Council's previous Regulation 18 consultation response. If no significant amendments are required, members are asked to delegate authority to the Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman, Vice-Chairmen and Laura Horner, to submit the Parish Council's response before the consultation deadline.

The Parish Council previously submitted comments in response to the Regulation 18 consultation on the Sevenoaks District Local Plan.

The Regulation 19 version is the final consultation stage before the Plan is submitted for examination.

Local Changes Identified

There have been some changes to the local sites following the Regulation 18 consultation. These include:

- **Orpins** – retained as a site for 14 dwellings.
- **Land west of Chapel Wood Road** – retained as a site for 280 dwellings.
- **New Ash Green Shopping Centre** – retained as a mixed-use development site.
- **Grosvenor, Church Road** – retained as a site for 17 dwellings.
- **Melsetta, Church Road** – retained as a site for 5 dwellings.
- **Beechcroft Farm Industries** – retained as an extended employment site.
- **Hartley Breakers** – retained as an employment site.
- **Land south of Redhill Road** – partly retained as a site for 530 dwellings, reduced from 580, with amendments to retain the gap between New Ash Green and Ash and to protect the setting of Ash Church.
- **Royal Oak car park** – unsuitable due to availability concerns and the loss of a community asset.
- **Heaver Trading Estate** – discounted as the site is not adjacent to the settlement boundary
- **Slides Farm** – unsuitable due to priority habitat, orchard and ancient woodland.

The revised new housing allocations around New Ash Green have reduced from 1,189 to 846 dwellings, which remains a significant level of proposed development for the local area.

Members are asked to consider whether the changes identified in the Regulation 19 version alter the Parish Council's previous position.

As the Regulation 19 Plan has not yet been published, it will be necessary to compare the final consultation documents against the Parish Council's Regulation 18 submission and consider whether any amendments are needed.

Recommendation

It is recommended that members:

1. Note that the Sevenoaks District Council Local Plan Regulation 19 consultation is expected to run from 23 July to 17 September 2026.
2. Consider whether any changes are required to the Parish Council's previous Regulation 18 consultation response.
3. Agree that, if no significant amendments are required, authority is delegated to the Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman, Vice-Chairmen and Laura Horner, to prepare and submit the Parish Council's Regulation 19 consultation response on behalf of the Parish Council.
4. Agree that the response should be based on the Parish Council's previous Regulation 18 submission, together with any comments made by Members and any relevant changes identified in the published Regulation 19 documents.
5. Should the Parish Council be invited to attend the Sevenoaks District Council's Examination in Public, to authorised Laura Horner to attend and if required speak on behalf of the Parish Council

ASH-CUM-RIDLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Agenda Item: **10.3 – Full Council 16 July 2026**

Report Title: **Children's Centre – Pre-acquisition Survey, Refurbishment and Tender Process.**

1. Background

The Council instructed Metcalfe Briggs Surveyors to carry out a pre-acquisition survey of the New Ash Green Children's Centre. The survey was undertaken on 23 April 2026.

2. Main Survey Findings

The survey did not identify significant structural concerns.

The report also raised a number of internal and external maintenance and decoration works be completed before the building can be occupied. Importantly, the existing kitchen and toilet facilities are not suitable for the intended use.

Security is also mentioned and recommends that both external and internal security is reviewed.

3. Work Requirement

- Repair to loose ridge pointing
- Fix leaking gutters and damaged downpipes
- Investigate front planter waterproof membrane
- Investigate drainage routes for downpipes and kitchen and toilet waste
- CCTV drainage survey – investigation of sinking paving near boiler room
- Replacement of emergency exit doors.
- Repairs to ramp, steps, railings and access including lighting.
- Certificates for:
 - Boiler
 - Gas
 - Electric
 - Fire Alarm
 - Intruder Alarm
 - Emergency Lighting
- Legionella testing upon reconnection of water
- Fire risk assessment
- Asbestos certificate (confirmation from NHS)
- Tree and shrub maintenance

Refurbishment

- Toilet refurbishment/reconfiguration and extractor fans
- Kitchen – serving hatch and cosmetic improvements.
- Replacement of failed double-glazed windows.
- Replacement of floors.
- Removal of redundant shelving, trunking and cables
- Window and door repairs – mastic replacement.

4. Additional Work Not Covered by the Survey

Additional work is necessary and includes:

- construction of additional internal walls/partitions.
- making good ceilings, walls and floors following alterations.
- additional electrical sockets and lighting.
- furniture fixtures and fittings
- storage for records.
- new signage.
- blinds
- security improvements – CCTV.
- Installation of air source heat pumps/air conditioners.
- Installation of solar panels

5. Architect / Professional Advice

It is recommended that the Council seeks a quote from a local architect to review the proposed layout before the tender process begins to check if the suggested layout is practical, structurally sound, meets building regulations, confirm toilet layout meets requirements, minimises environmental impact and to assist with the preparation of a specification for tendering to ensure that all contractors are pricing the same scope of work. Annexe 1 of the Financial Regulations states that *'the Clerk shall obtain the necessary technical assistance to prepare a specification in appropriate cases.'*

6. Financial Regulations and Procurement

The costs of refurbishment is expected to exceed £30,000 including VAT and will therefore exceed the thresholds set by Parliament, and the full requirements of The Procurement Act 2023 and The Procurement Regulations 2024 must be followed in respect of the tendering, award and notification of that contract.

The Financial Regulations also state that contracts must not be split into smaller lots to avoid compliance with the procurement rules.

7. Budget Position

The pre-acquisition survey identifies repair works of approximately £44,070 excluding VAT and professional fees. However, this does not fully cover the wider refurbishment required to make the building suitable and the Parish Council have set a total refurbishment budget of £104,000.

8. Recommended Tender Scope

It is recommended that the tender specification includes:

1. Pre-acquisition survey repair works.
2. Damp/moisture protection works.
3. Emergency exit door replacement.
4. External access repairs.
5. Toilet refurbishment and reconfiguration.
6. Kitchen improvements and serving hatch.
7. Construction of new internal walls/partitions.
8. Making good following alterations.
9. Flooring throughout
10. Internal decoration.
11. Electrical, lighting and IT infrastructure.
12. Plumbing and ventilation works.
13. Fire safety works arising from the Fire Risk Assessment.
14. Security improvements.

15. Office furnishings.
16. Hall storage and general storage provision.
17. Final testing, certification and handover documentation.

9. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Parish Council:

1. Authorises the Clerk to obtain a quote from a local architect to review the proposed layout, advise on Building Regulations, accessibility, toilet design, and assist with preparation of a tender specification.
2. Approves the commencement of the tender process for the refurbishment works, in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations, Standing Orders and the Procurement Regulations 2024. All quotes to be presented to the Parish Council.
3. Delegates to the Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairmen, authority to progress preparatory work required for the tender process, including preparation of the specification and identification of suitable contractors.