

ASH-CUM-RIDLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 18 June 2026 at Hodsoll Street & Ridley Village Hall, Hodsoll Street, TN15 7LE commencing at 7.30pm.

Present: Cllr S Fishenden
Cllr M Aspinall
Cllr R Brammer
Cllr C Clark
Cllr C Gorton
Cllr S Hobbs (arrived 7.33pm)
Cllr P Kirtley
Cllr I MacLeod
Cllr V Ngwenya (arrived 7.33pm)

In Attendance: Alison de Jager – Parish Clerk
Megan Hodges – Assistant Clerk
1 member of the public

9116/26 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs F Cottee (holiday), J Clucas (ill), S Glover (family commitment) M Manley (holiday), J Scott (SDC Development Management Committee). Cllr C Clark PROPOSED that the apology and reason for absence were accepted. SECONDED: Cllr C Gorton and AGREED.
District Councillors M Lindop, Penny Cole and Perry Cole sent their apologies.

9117/26 Declarations of Members Interests and Dispensations

None

9118/26 Minutes

It was RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 21 May 2026 be signed and approved. PROPOSED: Cllr S Fishenden SECONDED: Cllr R Brammer and AGREED.

9119/26 Public Session and External Reports

County Councillor M Fothergill advised that the Local Government Reorganisation (GR) continues and that she has concerns regarding democracy as this transitions. Following Sevenoaks District Council's decision to refuse planning permission for the solar farm at Ridley, Cllr Fothergill is working on a motion to put forward at the July cabinet meeting regarding a change in policy at KCC. (Cllrs S Hobbs and V Ngwenya arrived) Cllr Fothergill continues with case work, assisting parents with school transport working together with MP's in this regard. Potholes that had temporary repairs during winter are being repaired by the new contractor that was appointed on 01 May 2026. Cllr Fothergill confirmed that Kent Highways had not submitted an objection to the Solar Farm application.

9120/26 Clerk's Report

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

9121/26 Council Administration

a. **Scope for Internal Audit** – The review of the Scope for Internal Audit was carried out without amendment. PROPOSED: Cllr S Fishenden SECONDED: Cllr P Kirtley and AGREED.

- b. **IT Policy** – Cllr M Aspinall PROPOSED that a decision on adopting the draft policy is deferred to July 2026 to allow for the inclusion of the use of Artificial Intelligence in the policy. SECONDED: Cllr C Gorton and AGREED.
- c. **Local Council Award Scheme** – Cllr S Fishenden PROPOSED that the Parish Council submits an application for a Bronze Award in the amount of £130.00 plus VAT. SECONDED: Cllr M Aspinall and AGREED.

9122/26 Finance and Governance

- a. **Current Financial Position** – The Clerk advised that the current balance is £303,563 with a surplus of £117,147. General reserves after adjustments are £96,142. Payments that were noted were the annual insurance to Zurich and the replacement of the showers in both changing rooms at Ash Green Sports Centre. The survey for the Children's Centre building has been paid in the amount of £1,297. Land registry documents were purchased for the submission to list Ash Green Sports Centre as an Asset of Community Value. Flowers were sent to a member of the Sports Centre following an injury sustained while playing Badminton.
- b. **Approval of Payments:** Cllr M Aspinall PROPOSED that the payments made since the last meeting up to 12 June 2026 are APPROVED. SECONDED: Cllr C Gorton and AGREED.
- c. **Financial Regulations** – the review of the Financial Regulations was carried out. Cllr V Ngwenya PROPOSED the suggested amendments are adopted. SECONDED: Cllr I MacLeod and AGREED.
- d. **Risk Management Review** – The review of the Parish Council's Risk Management was carried out without amendment. PROPOSED: Cllr S Fishenden SECONDED: Cllr M Aspinall and AGREED.

9123/26 2025-26 Financial Year End

- a. **Year End Accounts 2026** – Cllr S Fishenden PROPOSED that the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2026 for the Parish Council, Ash Green Sports Centre and Northfield are APPROVED and SIGNED. SECONDED: Cllr R Brammer and AGREED.
- b. **Internal Audit** – The report of the Internal Auditor which was conducted on 06 June 2026 was RECEIVED and NOTED.
- c. **Annual Internal Audit Report** – It was NOTED that the Annual Internal Audit Report from the Annual Governance Statement was signed by the Internal Auditor on 06 June 2026.
- d. **Statement of Internal Control** – Cllr S Fishenden PROPOSED that effectiveness of the Statement of Internal Control for the year ended 31 March 2026 is AGREED and signed by the Chairman and Responsible Finance Officer. SECONDED: Cllr P Kirtley and AGREED.
- e. **Annual Governance Statement** – Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2025/26 for the annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) was completed. Members answered yes to account statements with the exception of Assertion 10 as the IT Policy was not adopted before 31 March 2026. Cllr C Gorton PROPOSED that the statement was signed by the Chairman and Clerk. SECONDED: Cllr S Hobbs and AGREED.
- f. **Accounting Statements** – Cllr S Fishenden PROPOSED that the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2026 for the Parish Council (including Ash Green Sports Centre and Northfield Management Committee) are APPROVED and that Section 2 of the AGAR is signed by the Chairman. SECONDED: Cllr R Brammer and AGREED.
- g. **Exercise of Public Rights** – Cllr V Ngwenya PROPOSED that the dates selected for the period of exercise of public rights is confirmed from Monday 22 June 2026 to Friday 31 July 2026. SECONDED: Cllr P Kirtley and AGREED.

9124/26 Planning

a. Applications:

26/01379/PIP: Land South West of West Yoke Depot, Michaels Lane - Erection of dwellings with a minimum of 1 and maximum of 9 net dwellings and associated ancillary works. Cllr S Fishenden PROPOSED that the Parish Council objects to this application. The site lies within the Green Belt, where strict policies of restraint apply. The proposed development, involving the introduction of dwellings together with tarmac access, parking areas and associated works, constitutes inappropriate development that would harm the openness of the Green Belt and erode the character of the area. As such, it conflicts with Policy L08 of the Core Strategy and national guidance set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. The proposed dwellings and associated hardstanding would introduce an urbanised form of development that is wholly out of keeping with the existing rural character of the site and its surroundings. The area currently comprises open countryside, and the scale and nature of the proposal would significantly alter its appearance. The development is therefore contrary to Policies L01, L08 and SP1 of the Core Strategy, as well as EN1 and EMP5 of the Sevenoaks Allocations and Development Management Plan.

It is also important to consider the cumulative impact of development in the immediate area. An outline application for 300 dwellings (26/00670/OUT) has been submitted approximately 250 metres to the north as part of the emerging Sevenoaks Local Plan. In addition, planning permission has recently been granted for 18 dwellings at High View (26/00366) and 18 dwellings at Church End (26/00992), both within 400 metres of the site, while a further 18 dwellings at the Oast House, Ash Road have just been completed within the same vicinity. The Planning Statement suggests that the proposal represents an appropriate use of land in light of the Council's five-year housing land supply position; however, there has already been a significant increase in development in this area over the past two years, far exceeding historic levels. These developments should not be viewed in isolation, but as part of a cumulative pattern that ought to be properly planned through the Local Plan process.

New Ash Green and Ash have been identified to accommodate approximately 1,250 homes within the Sevenoaks Local Plan, equating to around 12% of the district's housing growth within only 1.5% of its land area. The addition of further substantial Green Belt development would fundamentally and irreversibly alter the rural character of the area.

Furthermore, access to the site is via two very narrow lanes, which are little more than historic cart tracks and already unsuitable for the volume and type of traffic they currently carry. The proposal would inevitably increase traffic movements along these routes, raising serious concerns regarding highway safety and suitability of access. The Parish Council questions whether sufficient weight has been given to these constraints in the assessment of the application. **SECONDED: Cllr C Clark and AGREED.**

26/01049: 9 Butlers Place, West Yoke, Ash, TN15 7HR – Demolition of conservatory to be replaced with two storey side extension. Cllr S Fishenden PROPOSED that the Parish Council does not object to this application, but requests that Green Belt Policy GB1 is complied with. **SECONDED: Cllr P Kirtley and AGREED.**

- d. The notes of the Planning Applications Working Group meeting of 02 June 2026 were NOTED.

9125/26 Ash Green Sports Centre

- a. **Current Financial Position** – The Clerk advised that the current balance is £17,758.99 with a surplus of £1965.60 which is approximately 1.7 times running costs. Most income codes are on budget. A new table tennis table has been purchased.

- b. **Approval of Payments** – Cllr S Hobbs PROPOSED that the payments made since the last meeting to 12 June 2026 are APPROVED. SECONDED: Cllr M Aspinall and AGREED.
- c. **Sports Centre Working Group** – The notes of the meeting of 13 April 2026 were NOTED.

9126/26 Northfield Management Committee

- a. The minutes of the meeting of the Northfield Management Committee meeting held on 22 May 2026 were NOTED.

9127/26 Community and Environment

- a. **Anti-Social Behaviour and CCTV Provision** – the report on the possible provision of CCTV was NOTED. Cllr M Aspinall PROPOSED that the officers investigate the possibility of providing CCTV in New Ash Green, first liaising with the SDC Community Safety Unit and Kent Police with regard to legislation and GDPR, and if this project can move forward, to arrange a meeting with the New Ash Green Village Association to seek permission as land owners and to use their infrastructure and request that a lighting inspection in all car parks is carried out. SECONDED: Cllr S Fishenden and AGREED.

9128/26 Items for Information

- Cllr S Hobbs advised that she had spoken to a resident who has recently joined Ash Green Sports Centre and she praised the classes provision which she is thoroughly enjoying.
- Cllr P Kirtley advised that Cllr M Fothergill was arranging press coverage of the closing of the Post Office and the impact that this will have on our residents. Cllr M Fothergill will write again to Tom Tugendhat MP in this regard.
- Cllr C Gorton informed everyone that Village Day will be held on Saturday 20 June 2026.
- Cllr C Clark suggest that as the purchase of the Children's Centre progresses, that consideration is given to the installation of solar panels.
- Cllr S Fishenden advised that the next Police Independent Advisory Group meeting would be held on 7 July at Sevenoaks Primary School and invited any interested members to accompany him.
- The Clerk advised that food caddy liners were being supplied by SDC for sale to the public and are available from the Reception at Ash Green Sports Centre at 50p per roll.
- HIP Update – going forward, site visits will be included in the annual HIP meeting with Kent Highways Community Engagement Officer and Kent County Councillor M Fothergill.

9129/26 Progress Tracker

The Progress Tracker was NOTED.

The meeting closed at 8.12pm

Signed:
Chairman

Date:

ASH-CUM-RIDLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Agenda Item: **5 – Full Council 18 June 2026**

Report Title: **Clerk's Report**

ASH GREEN SPORTS CENTRE LEASE

The meeting scheduled with Leigh Academies Trust on 5 June 2025 was postponed by Leigh Academies Trust (LAT).

A draft Heads of Terms document has now been received from LAT. Due to the legal and financial implications of this document, it will be necessary for the Parish Council to seek legal advice before any further discussions take place with LAT.

BULLETIN

The deadline for articles for the Bulletin is 19 June 2026.

BURIAL GROUND

A Burial Ground site visit has been arranged for 6 July 2026 at 10am.

CHILDREN'S CENTRE

The Parish Council's solicitor has indicated that completion of the purchase of the New Ash Green Children's Centre could potentially take place during the week commencing 6 July 2026, subject to the remaining legal processes being concluded satisfactorily. Further updates will be provided matters progress.

HIGHWAYS IMPROVEMENT PLAN (HIP)

The notes of the HIP Working Group held on 17 June 2026 will be distributed with the July 2026 Agenda.

INSURANCE

To note that the Fidelity Guarantee for the Parish Council has been increased from £250,000 to £500,00 at no additional cost.

SPEED INDICATOR DEVICE (SID)

The New Ash Green Village Association has advised that their insurance does not cover their employees working outside the Village.

SPEEDWATCH

To note that additional training for volunteers will be held on Thursday 18 June 2026 at 4.30pm at Ash Green Sports Centre.

YOUTH PROVISION – The start date has been pushed back to 11 June 2026 and we will be reviewing the Service Level Agreement as the start date should have been 01 April 2026.

ASH-CUM-RIDLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Agenda Item: **6 – Full Council 18 June 2026**

Report Title: **Local Council Award Scheme**

Local Council Award Scheme (LCAS)

The Local Council Award Scheme, managed by NALC, recognises councils that demonstrate good governance, community engagement and effective council administration. Councils can apply for one of three levels of award:

- **Bronze Award** – demonstrates that the Council operates lawfully and follows standard practice.
- **Silver Award** – demonstrates good practice in governance, community engagement and council improvement.
- **Gold Award** – demonstrates excellence and best practice across all aspects of council activity.

The proposed application is for the Bronze Award, which requires the Council to demonstrate that key governance documents, policies and procedures are in place and published on the Council's website, including:

- Standing Orders;
- Financial Regulations;
- Code of Conduct;
- Complaints Procedure;
- Privacy Notice;
- Risk Management Policy;
- Asset Register;
- Insurance arrangements;
- publication of agendas, minutes and financial information;
- evidence of community engagement and planning participation.

The accreditation lasts for four years. The fee for councils with an annual income over £25,000 is:

- Registration fee: £50
 - Bronze accreditation fee: £80
- Total: £130 plus VAT.

ASH-CUM-RIDLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Agenda Item: **12.1 – Full Council 18 June 2026**

Report Title: **Anti Social Behaviour and Possible CCTV Provision**

There have been recent reports of a number of incidents of criminal damage to vehicle windscreens and windows in the village, causing concern and considerable costs to affected residents. This level of low level anti-social behaviour occurs periodically in the village.

A request to consider possible installation of CCTV in the village has been received.

The Parish Council can install CCTV under **Section 137 of the LGA 1972**.

Before moving forward with any quotations for either fixed or mobile CCTV cameras, the following would need to be addressed:

- As the Village Association owns all the land in New Ash Green, any installation of CCTV would require their agreement.
- Liaising with both Kent Police and Sevenoaks District Council to consider options of management, selection of locations and GDPR compliance.

There is currently no budget for CCTV and any expenditure would be drawn from General Reserves.

Recommendation:

To consider requesting the officers to investigate the possibility of providing CCTV in the village, liaising with the organisations above and if they are in agreement to source quotations for the recommended equipment.