

NEW ASH GREEN FOCUS GROUP

Notes of a meeting of the New Ash Green Focus Group held via Teams on Monday 13 October 2025 commencing at 2.00pm.

Present: Cllr S Fishenden – Chairman, Ash-cum-Ridley Parish Council
S Brine – New Ash Green Village Association (VA)
Mr C Clark – Chapel Wood Residents Society
PC T Darling – Kent Police
Sgt J Edwards – Kent Police
PC C Harrison – Kent Police
Cllr M Lindop - Sevenoaks District Council
Cllr L Manston – Sevenoaks District Council
D Patrick – New Ash Green Village Association (VA)
Sgt K Savill – Kent Police
K Webb - Sevenoaks District Council Community Safety Unit (CSU)
J West – KCC Community Warden

In Attendance: Mrs A de Jager – Parish Clerk,

1. **Apologies for Absence and Introductions**

PC Caleb Guest, Kent Police and M Palmer – resident.

2. **Notes of Previous Meeting**

The notes of the meeting of 14 July 2025 were received and noted.

3. **Agency Updates**

3.1 Sevenoaks District Council Community Safety Unit (CSU) – Kelly Webb followed up actions from the previous meeting.

- Three meetings have been held regarding the continued use of catapults. Images of young people involved have not been identified, however some potential names will be forwarded to the Police/CSU.
- regarding young people causing antisocial behaviour (ASB) in the shopping centre, patrols have increased to identify and serve warning letters if necessary. CCTV footage has been looked at.

The public perception is that Police are not attending incidents of ASB. PCs Guest and Collins have been more pro-active in interacting with the public. The first Coffee with a Cop event was successful and another one has been arranged for 27 October 2025.

PC C Harrison and Community Warden Jackie West have visited primary schools in the area.

Trading Standards have visited shops in the Centre looking at counterfeit goods and under-age serving.

A more intensive look into ASB in the Centre was carried out over the summer.

The Strategic Assessment has seven priorities: Mental Health, Prevent (counter-terrorism), Human Trafficking, Modern Slavery, Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), Vulnerable Adults and Protecting Children. ASB such as vehicle crime and substance misuse is always included. The assessment will be sent out to the Parish Council and VA to add any relevant information.

The District Council's Better Together grant fund provides grants of £400 - £500 for community events.

The Community Safety Survey is out from 01 October 2025 and ends on 14 November 2025. A request was made to push this out on social media.

3.2 Kent Police – Sgt Savill advised that information received is co-ordinated and the PCs are aware of the details. Both PCs are interacting with young people and there is more Police visibility. Reports of ASB have dropped since the summer holidays with July 20, August 13, September 5 and very few for October so far. There has been a slight increase in theft from vehicles and no great rise in other crime types.

In response to questions from a resident:

- Will another bike marking event be held over the Christmas period? – there was not a large uptake at the bike marking event in the summer, January would be better.
- Are PCs attending the NAG Fireworks – yes, both PCs will be attending unless they are called to an incident.
- Are PCs attending the Remembrance Service – Sgt Savill will find out and get back to the Clerk.
- Scam Calls received by residents of Hanover Place – Jackie West will speak to the Manager to arrange a visit to talk to residents about scam calls and to give advise. She has delivered dementia awareness talks to Hanover in the past.

3.3 PC C Harrison attended the Family fund day held on The Minnis. 4 or 5 bikes were brought for marking. The CSU had funded the provision of a dartboard and balls which were used to raise awareness of catapult use, damage to property and to animals. This proved popular and was used throughout the event. The Central Team set out a County wide letter to all senior schools to forward to parents to raise awareness of catapult use. With young people attending Meopham, Longfield and Wrotham schools, information was shared with officers in these areas, but no positive identification of the young people involved in the ASB.

A football event will be held on 17 January 2026 at Ash Green Sports Centre; Police vs Young People and partner agencies will be invited to attend. A community event is planned for the summer.

3.4 Community Warden – Jackie West reported a busy summer, the Tuesday initiatives continue to be popular. On 29 July a multi-agency event was held with 20 agency/organisations attending, it was well attended and this event will be repeated next year. Kelly Webb has secured funding for the continued attendance of Compaid at the Community Hub enabling residents to access support with IT, online shopping, using the NHS App, downloading music etc. This service brings a lot to residents. Pop up advice from Citizens Advice has been introduced through iPad access.

Southeast Water visited the hub to help residents to make sure that they are on the right tariffs. Jackie will be attending the next Coffee with a Cop event.

School visits with the Police were made advising children of the age of criminal responsibility. ASB calmed during the summer. Jackie thanked the VA for their support of isolated and vulnerable residents by allowing use of the Village Hall and meeting room. Jackie has delivered food parcels from the Community Cupboard to residents in New Ash Green that cannot travel to West Kingsdown. Jackie has met with Milestone Academy and the Community Cupboard.

4. Action Plan – covered under 3.1

5. Local Issues and Concerns

- 5.1 Youth Provision – the Parish Council arranged a meeting last week with the Trustees of the Youth & Community Centre, Community Warden, Police and Young Lives Foundation to discuss the possibility of providing two centre-based youth groups. The Chairman of the Parish Council and representatives from Young Lives Foundation will attend the next Trustees meeting to take this forward. Cllr S Fishenden thanked those attending from the Police and Community Warden for their support .
- 5.2 Community Engagement Events – a Young People vs Police event will be held on 17 January 2025 at Ash Green Sports Centre and another event will be planned to be held on The Minnis.
- 5.3 Flag Flying – this is a sensitive issue; the VA are not ready to remove the flags. The issue has been discussed at length, and it was decided that the intended gradual removal of flags will be publicised prior to removal sometime after Remembrance Day. A compromise gesture to introduce a single flagpole and flag has been suggested.
- 5.4 Catapult incidents in village – covered under 3.2.
- 5.5 New Ash Green Shopping Centre and Car Parks – in the absence of E Smith, this item was deferred to the next meeting.
- 5.6 Nitrous Oxide Canisters – no new locations were identified. A collection point adjacent to the Orchard near the dog bins has been made.

6. **Other Matters for Discussion**

None

7. **Communications from Local Stakeholders**

Members were requested to publicise the CSU Survey, Coffee with a Cop event and the CCTV registry for Kent Police.

8. **Dates of Next Meetings**

Dates for the next year were set as:

12 January 2026

13 April 2026

13 July 2026

12 October 2026

The meeting closed at 4.41pm