

Ash-cum-Ridley Parish Council

Serving the local communities of Ash, Hodsoll Street, New Ash Green & Ridley

Parish Precept

The Parish Council has recently approved a 47.65% increase in the precept which equates to an additional 50p per week for a Band D property. The annual cost for a Band D property will be £81.06 which is still below the £106.09 average in the Sevenoaks District. Out of the 31 parish/town councils in Sevenoaks District we have 4th highest electorate.

With growing pressures on the Parish Council and their staff the decision was made to have a comprehensive time and motion study conducted by Local Government Resource Centre for Councils. The report highlighted how understaffed the Parish office was compared to other councils of equivalent size concluding that an additional part time member of staff should be recruited for the Parish to become more proactive and not reactive to the needs of its Parishioner's. Based on these recommendations, a new member of staff has been employed, part time, bringing the Parish staffing level to the equivalent of 2 full time staff. This, along with the additional pension costs relates to 42% of the increase. The remaining 5% is due to the increases in the general running costs.

The precept enables the Parish Council to continue to provide the following services:

- ◆ Ash Green Sports Centre
- ◆ Thursday Lunch Club for the over 60s
- ◆ Youth Club Provision
- ◆ Youth Sports Activities
- ◆ School Holiday Activity Schemes
- ◆ Hodsoll Street Recreation Ground & Play Area
- ◆ Ash Burial Ground and Memorial Garden – Management and maintenance
- ◆ Maintain Ash Memorial and Bowdler's Well Ridley
- ◆ Ground maintenance at Ash and Hodsoll Street Village Halls
- ◆ Maintain Northfield Green Space/horse riding route jointly with Hartley Parish Council

We acknowledge that the current financial climate is difficult and if any of our Parishioners are struggling and would like information on help available, please contact our office. All contact will be confidential. In addition, if anyone requires further information on the precept or would like to make an appointment to visit the Parish Office and inspect the accounts, please contact us on 01474 702760 or email enquiries@ashcumridley-pc.gov.uk

Replacement C3 Bus Service

Kent County Councillor David Brazier has been working behind the scenes to arrange a replacement bus service for New Ash Green and Hartley. The C3 bus service to Darenth Valley Hospital and Bluewater is due to begin on the **2nd April** and will be operated by Go Coach. There will be **five** services a day and we are waiting for confirmation of the timetable. As soon as the timetable has been finalised, details will be published on the Parish notice board, website and Facebook.



Register for Email Bulletin

In our effort to make information more accessible and eco-friendlier, we invite you to consider receiving the bulletin digitally. Simply scan the QR code below with your smartphone's camera or visit <https://forms.gle/kzBLYapfUm9bnDda9> to sign up and receive the bulletin directly to your email inbox.



Annual Parish Meeting

Ash-cum-Ridley Parish Council is holding its next Annual Parish Meeting on **Thursday 25th of April 2024 at 8pm.**

This is an opportunity to hear about the work of the Parish Council and what we do. The meeting will also have guest speakers.

All parish residents are warmly welcomed to attend the meeting which will be held at Ash Village Hall, The Street, Ash, TN15 7HB.

PARISH COUNCIL WEBSITE: www.ashcumridley-pc.gov.uk

PARISH CLERK: 01474 702760

EMAIL: enquiries@ashcumridley-pc.gov.uk

BURIAL GROUND MAINTENANCE

The Parish Council makes routine visits to the Burial Ground. Items that are not permitted in the regulations, such as glass vases, lantern or loose ornaments, which could pose hazards to health and safety will be removed and temporarily stored at the Parish Office for two months before being disposed of. Any memorial requires prior approval and must adhere to the Regulations. A memorial can be any item or ornament that focuses on memorializing an individual. This is necessary to ensure that the Burial Ground remains a tranquil place for all to visit.



JOIN US AT THE LOCAL LUNCH CLUB

 **Join Us at the Local Lunch Club!**

Are you over 60 and looking for a delightful lunch experience? Join our local lunch club every Thursday at 12 pm at the Youth and Community Centre! Our professional cook prepares a two-course meal, including tea and coffee, all for just £7.

Opportunity: We're on the lookout for an additional cook to cover holiday leave (approximately 5 Thursdays a year). If you have culinary skills and a passion for creating delicious meals, we'd love to hear from you! For more details on either joining the lunch club or for our additional holiday chef position then please contact the Parish Clerk on 01474 702760.

Highway Improvement and Yellow Line Installation

Please take a few moments to fill out the form and let us know your opinions on the passing points on rural roads and the proposed double yellow line installation on North Ash Road.

We want to collate the feedback from residents to determine the worst pinch/passing points on our rural roads for our Highways Improvement Plan.

Also, on the form we are doing a Pre-consultation prior to formal consultation for the installation of double yellow lines on North Ash Road at the crossing point between Punch Croft and Over Minnis. Please see the below image and use the form to have your say, alternatively you can email the Parish Office at enquiries@ashcumridley-pc.gov.uk.

You can scan the below QR code to access the form or use <https://forms.gle/hLdKnC9MpAE1qnxr8>



LANCES ALMSHOUSES CHARITY

These almshouses are located at the crossroads by North Ash Road, opposite Punch Croft and are where two elderly residents live. The charity itself is run by six trustees, three from St Peter and St Paul, Ash and three nominated by Ash cum Ridley Parish Council.

The trustees meet together only a few times each year, at a mutually convenient time, and manage any problems that may arise from time to time. It is not an arduous task, but the majority of the current trustees, themselves not very young, would welcome involvement from younger residents, who could perhaps work alongside them to ensure the continued smooth running of the charity for the future.

To explain more fully about the charity, it was set up in 1811 (during the reign of George III). There were originally four residents, but this was officially reduced to two in 1955. Summarising the Charity Commission documents very briefly, the residents should be widows of good character who have resided in Ash cum Ridley for at least two years, and they pay a contribution towards the cost of maintaining the properties. If a vacancy occurs it has to be advertised locally. Each of the two cottages has a separate entrance and access to outside space, which gives the residents both privacy and independence.

For more information please contact Alison, our Parish Clerk at enquiries@ashcumridley-pc.gov.uk

Wassail 2024

On Saturday January 6th the New Ash Green Woodlands Group hosted its 15th annual Wassail and was rewarded with a heart-warming display of community spirit. Having not held the full-scale event since before the pandemic, it was clear from the turnout that people had missed this family-friendly version of a lively ancient tradition. The word 'wassail' is derived from an Anglo-Saxon greeting meaning 'good health', and wassailing is basically the custom of wishing good health to the crops and orchards during their dormant winter months, in the hopes of a good harvest to come. Held between New Year and the old Twelfth Night, our local Wassail follows this ancient custom by celebrating New Ash Green's century-old community orchard with music, dance, mulled cider, and a flaming torch-lit procession. The apple trees are adorned with fairy-lights, edible bunting is hung as a gift to the birds, and a few small children are invited to act as 'robins' while the gathered families raise a toast with cider and apple juice. A few moments of silence to take in the magical sight is followed by a raucous noise to symbolize the scaring away of any pests and parasites before the crowd melts away to leave the orchard in peace once more. The Woodlands Group would like to thank both West Hill and Invicta Morris, St Clements Clogs, the many volunteer helpers, and all the wonderful folk who came along and made this such a memorable event. The group meets once or twice a month throughout the year to carry out a variety of conservation activities in the orchard, woodlands, and meadows. They welcome new volunteers of all ages and abilities, and you can easily find them by googling New Ash Green Woodlands Group.



ASH GREEN SPORTS CENTRE



Let's Start
BARRE-FITNESS
MONDAYS
6-7pm
ADULT BALLET
THURSDAYS
10-11am

FIRST CLASS FREE

- Improves posture ✓
- Strengthens glutes ✓
- Tones & tightens core ✓
- Reduce stress & better mental focus ✓
- Increase overall strength ✓
- Build muscular endurance ✓

Phone Number : 01474 707 164 E-mail Address : info@ashgreensportscentre.co.uk
Located on the Milestone Academy Site. Ash Road, New Ash Green, DA3 8JZ

HEDGEHOG HIGHWAY PROJECT

A Hedgehog Highway is a 5-inch gap in a fence or wall allowing access for Hedgehogs.

These gaps are essential in the battle to prevent the extinction of our endangered spiky friends. The Hedgehog Highway allows hedgehogs to forage for food, meet mates to breed and access nesting sites. A Hedgehog Highway Surround raises awareness to hedgehogs' struggle for survival, they create a talking point, encouraging others to create a highway of their own and take part in the project. Money from the sale of every Hedgehog Sign is donated to help the rescue of sick and injured hedgehogs.

For more information on this project and how to purchase your own hedgehog highway, please visit

www.hedgehogsrus.co.uk/hedgehog-highway-project



NEW ASH GREEN SOUTH EAST WARD: Councillors Roxana Brammer (Vice Chair), Jill Clucas, Chris Gorton, Anna Jauch, Mark Manley, Isabel MacLeod

NEW ASH GREEN NORTH WEST WARD: Councillors Matt Aspinall, Carol Clark, Sarah Hobbs, Shaun Fishenden (Chairman), Pat Kirtley, Vusi Ngwenya

ASH WARD: Councillors Jake Scott, George Pender

HODSOLL STREET & RIDLEY WARD: Councillors Frank Cottee, Margaret Howie

PARISH COUNCIL WEBSITE: www.ashcumridley-pc.gov.uk

PARISH CLERK: 01474 702760 EMAIL: enquiries@ashcumridley-pc.gov.uk

NORTHFIELD TREE PLANTING

Joint efforts from the Northfield Management Committee, Kent County Council and the North West Kent Countryside Partnership has resulted in a total of 2,500 trees finding their roots in Northfield. This project not only contributes to the aesthetic appeal of Northfield but also plays a crucial role in combating climate change and fostering biodiversity.

The success of this tree-planting endeavor is owed in part to the incredible support from our community members. Volunteering days were organised, bringing together enthusiastic individuals who dedicated their time and energy to make this initiative a reality. We extend our gratitude to the New Ash Green Woodland Group for their significant contribution during these volunteering days, resulting in the project being completed in a shorter timeframe than anticipated.



ASH ROAD SPEED CHECK

In a recent speed check on Ash Road, arranged by Cllr D Brazier, we are pleased to share positive findings. The data reveals an average speed of 31 mph. With approximately 10,000 vehicles traveling northbound and 11,000 southbound weekly, our community's commitment to responsible driving is evident. The survey indicates that average speeds are good being around the posted speed limit of 30mph and within the official leeway given to motorists exceeding the speed limit of 10% +2mph over the posted limit (35mph in this case) We appreciate everyone's dedication to ensuring a secure environment for all.



War Memorial



The Parish Council would like to say a big thank you to Frankie Cox from Franks Window Cleaning who kindly cleaned the War Memorial ahead of our Remembrance Service

ADVICE, MEDIATION & USEFUL NUMBERS

Kent County Council.....	03000 418181
Sevenoaks District Council	01732 227000
Kent Police - Emergency Calls	999
Kent Police - Non Emergency Calls	101
KCC Community Warden	07811 271259
New Ash Green Village Association	01474 872691
New Ash Green Library	03000 413131
Doctors Surgery	01474 873828
Village Pharmacy.....	01474 873811
Citizens Advice	03003 309001
Arriva Northfleet.....	01474 535138
West Kent Mediation	01732 469696
Samaritans	116 123 (free)
Childline	0800 1111
Community Cupboard.....	07526 823122