



ASHINGTON PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2009-10

Chairman's Overview

Having completed my second year as Chairman of Ashington Parish Council I would like to take the opportunity to reflect on the last 12 months and share with you the activities the Parish Council has been supporting. We have been working to ensure the empty retail/residential units in the village are filled. We were pleased to see the new Ashington Pharmacy open in 2009 and wish Michelle and her team well. The Red Lion reopened in June and Arun Veterinary Practice is hoping to open later this year at the "old Flowerpots" premises. The Parish Council continues to review Posthorses and Hoots House with Horsham District Council.

After 10 years, the land transfer of Wimpey Homes Land (balancing pond area and part of western tree boundary) completed at the beginning of the 2009 and the "developers lump sum" was transferred to the Parish Council. I would like to formally recognise the enormous amount of time that Cllr Norton has spent chasing this issue and thank him for his perseverance. We have spent much of 2009 consulting with residents on their needs and aspirations for Ashington through the Village Survey, Older Peoples Housing Needs Survey and Low Cost Affordable Housing Survey. All the feedback we received has informed the new Ashington Community Plan 2010. We funded the relocation of the Red Lion mini roundabout in October after many reports from residents of near miss accidents due to drivers not using the old roundabout correctly. The Parish Council has worked closely with the Co-Operative to improve site access to the London Road shops, parking and delivery lorry issues for local residents. Finally we have spent much time this year lobbying W.S.C.C. against the Laybrook Landfill planning application, which was submitted twice during the year and was finally withdrawn by the applicants earlier this year. However, a further application of some sort is still expected.

Our priorities for 2010-11 will focus on the pending residential development at Merios Farm for 34 units, the forthcoming planning application for the Open Composting site at Broadbridge Farm, continuing to lobby for a reduced speed limit along Billingshurst Road and Hole Street to 30mph, maintaining our contact with Persimmon Homes regarding the un-adopted roads that still exist in the village from previous development and supporting the delivery of the new Ashington Community Action Plan 2010.

Turning to people, unfortunately Joan Norris resigned from the Parish Council during the year for personal reasons. I would like to thank her for the commitment and support she gave the village during her time as Parish Councillor. Frances Wood who had been the village litter warden for 8 years "retired" from her duties in April 2009 – litter collection responsibility passed to the Wardens at this time. Also, Malcolm Woolley took over from Brian Norton as Vice Chairman on the Parish Council in 2009. Malcolm has provided me with much support this year for which I am very grateful. I also moved from Ashington at the end of April and have sadly had to resign as Parish Councillor and Chairman. I have thoroughly enjoyed my 6 years living in Ashington, and the 4 ½ years I served the village as a Parish Councillor and wish the village well for the future.

Finally, the Parish Council could not operate without the valuable input from our Parish Clerk, Karen Dare. Karen has developed the Parish Council website into an information hub for the village, re-started the Ashington Parish Council quarterly newsletter and revised our Emergency Plan which was used extensively during the snow earlier this year – this is in addition to her normal duties in running the Parish Council. All Councillors provide their time on a voluntary basis and I am grateful to them all for the work they do in keeping Ashington such a lovely place to live and work.

Neighbourhood Wardens

The Neighbourhood Wardens continue to provide a valuable service to the village. During 2009-10 they have organised many events including a Spring Fayre to raise money for the Ashington Festival, 2nd Ashington Fun Run which raised money for the British Heart Foundation, the very well attended (despite the rain) Christmas Lantern Procession and Carol Concert and also Spice of Life a special evening for older residents in the village. They also co-ordinate the Junior Warden scheme for the village, which has grown in size during the year. In addition they run the village Housewatch Scheme when residents are away for any length of time from their homes and a vulnerable people programme to support those residents in need. Youth projects this year focused on fund raising and establishing the new Willard Youth Gym which opened in November 2009 and has been a great success. The Wardens also run Freetime sports events and organised special Street Dance sessions. They also support the older persons lunch club, school walking bus and smoke alarm checks. Additional duties have been added to their roles in 2009 including Litter duties, play area safety checks and notice board and bus shelter maintenance.

Precept & Finances

The Parish Council was able to keep the increase in Parish Precept (proportion of your council tax specifically for Ashington) to less than 2% for 2010/11. The Council works very hard at securing value for money and competitive costs for all of its activities. It is also able to apply for grant funding for specific projects and was successful at gaining £30,000 to build the new Foster Lane play area.

New Parish Council Office

The Parish Council has been able to secure a permanent office for the first time. It is leasing a small room in the Sports Pavilion, Church Lane providing a hub for residents to come to with any queries or issues, view planning applications and speak to the Parish Clerk. The office will be open on a Monday and Thursday from 1.30-3pm – please call the Parish Clerk on (01903) 893740 to book an appointment. The Council has secured a grant of £3000 to create a ‘public access internet’ facility which will enable members of the public to have free computer access. Details have not yet been finalised and we will keep you informed.

A24 resurfacing

Issues regarding the noise from the A24 were again identified as of key importance to residents in the recent Village Survey. The Parish Council has been lobbying W.S.C.C. since 1998 about the excessive noise from the A24 and we are pleased to advise that the first sections of resurfacing of the A24 with noise reducing tarmac will be from Hole Street to Kate’s Cakes (southbound carriageway) and from Malthouse Lane to the southern flyover (northbound carriageway). Both will take place in the period 2010/11 and their selection is based on WSCC priorities for repair of worn out surfacing. Other sections will be done in 2012/13 and 2015/16.

New Play Area for Over 12s

The Parish Council was awarded a grant of £30,000 from the Big Lottery Fund in 2009 specifically for a play area for young people over 12 years of age. The play area opened in March 2009 and has been a great success with the over 12s. New CCTV was also installed to ensure young people remain safe whilst playing in the area.

Ashington Community Plan Steering Group

The last Ashington Parish Plan was issued to all households in 2006 and most of the actions had been achieved by early 2009. During 2009, the Ashington Parish Plan Steering Group consulted widely on a new Community Action Plan for the village including a village wide survey. The results were shared with residents at several sessions towards the end of 2009. A new Community Action Plan has now been printed and will be delivered to all households by the end of May 2010. If you'd like to join the Steering Group to oversee implementation of the new plan please contact Karen Hayler by emailing ashingtonevents@googlemail.com

Parish Councillors

Malcolm Woolley (Chairman, 892041, malcolmwoolley@lycos.co.uk), Neville Clark (Vice Chairman 893336, nev@hisite.co.uk), Judith Stillwell (891383, judithstillwell@hotmail.com), Nick Carver (892694), Ken Wood (892428, kenwood.chef@care4free.net), Terry Kearney (892591, tkhome@ndirect.co.uk), Roy Brennan (893958), Doreen Harbour (891336, doreen@dmharbour.plus.com), Brian Norton (892316, brian.norton1@tesco.net) and Richard Lancaster (891408, apc.lancaster@googlemail.com) plus one vacancy.

Councillors can also be contacted via the Parish Clerk - Karen Dare, Honeysuckle House, London Road, Ashington, RH20 3JR. Tel 01903 893740 (Mon-Fri 9am-3pm), karendare@tiscali.co.uk Council website: www.ashingtonpc.org.uk Planning bulletins are issued monthly and are posted on noticeboards and the website.

Council Structure to be completed after May meeting

Committees and Representatives on Outside Bodies as agreed at the Parish Council Meeting on 1st May 2010:

Committees:

- a. Finance – Cllrs Norton, Carver, Brennan, Clark & Lancaster
- b. Planning – Cllrs Norton, Carver, Wood, Kearney, Woolley & Harbour

Representatives on outside bodies:

- a. Ashington Community Centre Observer – Cllrs Clark & Stillwell
- b. Horsham District Association of Local Councils – Cllr Clark
- c. Ashington Youth Centre – Cllr Clark
- d. Ashington Residents Association – Cllr Norton
- e. Community Action Plan Steering Group – Cllrs Clark, Stillwell, Harbour, Woolley & Lancaster

Meetings

Ashington Parish Council normally meets on the first Thursday of the month at 7.30pm in the Methodist Church, London Road. The Planning Committee normally meets two weeks after the main Council meeting on a Wednesday at 7pm in the Parish Office, Church Lane. For a full list of Council meetings or any other information visit www.ashingtonpc.org.uk or contact the Parish Clerk.

SUMMARY OF ACCOUNTS YEAR ENDING 31ST MARCH 2010.

	2009/10	2008/09
	£	£
RECEIPTS		
Environmental Cleansing Grants	2,342.06	2,356.77
Grants & capital receipts:		
Fun Run donation	4.00	
Cctv camera repair	60.00	
Inland Revenue	75.00	

	139.00	40,068.00 ^{*1}
Sponsorship of roundabouts	1,110.00	1,110.00
Kite & Thomas rent	7,000.00	7,000.00
Precept	90,000.00	67,700.00
Interest on general accounts	346.72	2,068.81
Interest on Developers Lump sums	0.00	2,958.54 ^{*2}
Developers Lump sum (for maintenance of open spaces)	0.00	51,131.56
From Developer - Legal Costs for land transfer	0.00	3,047.86
VAT Recovered	0.00 ^{*3}	1,952.32
Donations to Ashington First Responders	1,036.15 ^{*4}	1,666.70
Donations to Junior Wardens	100.00	0.00
TOTAL RECEIPTS	102,073.93	181,060.56
 PAYMENTS		
Environmental Cleansing	915.98	4,313.59 ^{*5}
Play areas & open spaces	3,770.26	5,117.69 ^{*6}
Staff Costs:		
Clerk salary, tax, NI & expenses	9,444.92	10,761.91 ^{*7}
Members expenses	0.00	0.00 ^{*8}
Administration:		
Parish Office	489.00	
Payroll charges	78.40	
Subscriptions	664.50	
Auditing	700.00	
Insurance	3,656.52	
Conference fees & training	150.00	
Postage & stationery	416.29	
Photocopier	143.25	
Hall hire	334.00	
Parish Plan	206.11	
Others	554.82	

	7,392.89	7,160.62
Interest on Public Works Loan	3,723.98	3,839.63
Capital payments:		
Public Works Loan	2,496.26	2,380.62
Cctv camera	1,289.00	4,168.00
New play area	30,394.53 ^{*9}	0.00
Others	3,090.03	0.00

	37,269.82	
Neighbourhood Wardens	51,247.00	50,419.00
Landscaping & Highways	7,162.29	6,809.96
Section 137 Grants (& other grants)	1,002.00	6,400.00 ^{*10}
VAT paid	5,250.64	1,952.32
Payment to Ashington First Responders	821.31	1,229.07 ^{*4}
TOTAL PAYMENTS	128,001.09	104,552.41
 SURPLUS/DEFICIT	 4,152.53	 (5,061.04)

(less Developers Lump sums, new Play Area cost and monies held on behalf of Ashington First Responders & Jnr Wardens)

Notes: ^{*1} Grants for new play area, layby, picnic bench, cctv camera, ^{*2} Funds are held in Kaupthing Singer & Friedlander bank which is currently in Administration and funds may not be fully recovered

^{*3} Repayment of £5,250.64 not received from HMRC before 31st March 2010, ^{*4} Responder funds:

Total donations £7,944.38, total expenditure £5,588.41, funds remaining £2,355.97, ^{*5} Cost saving

measures introduced 2008, ^{*6} Includes new picnic bench in Posthorses play area for which a grant

was received, ^{*7} Clerks working hours decreased, ^{*8} All Councillors elected not to receive the

Councillors Basic Allowance, ^{*9} Grant from Big Lottery Fund, ^{*10} Includes £5000 contribution received from Co-op and paid to WSCC for layby