



# ASHINGTON PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2010/11

## CHAIRMAN'S OVERVIEW

The Financial Year of the Parish Council runs from April 1<sup>st</sup> each year, through to the following March 31<sup>st</sup>, and it is the duty of the Chairman at this time to report to you on the activities and finances of your Parish Council for the year just ended.

Despite the current economic climate, and especially low interest rates, your Council remains financially strong; we will end this year with a small surplus, which will be used to support next year's expenditure, and a full statement of income and expenditure appears on page 4 of this report.

In terms of the structure of your Council, Richard Lancaster joined in April, and Richard Strudwick in August, both filling vacancies that had arisen.

In May I took over as Chairman, with Neville Clark becoming Vice Chairman.

A full list of councillors is at the end of this summary, and their contact details are on the village website.

### **Communications**

To ensure that everyone in the village knows what the Council is up to, we have the village website, the quarterly Newsletters that go to all homes, the notice boards around the village, the weekly Ashington Events email, and of course everyone is very welcome at the monthly meetings. Both the village website and Ashington Events have improved considerably over the year, and for this our thanks go to Karen Dare and Chris Clarke respectively.

### **Community Action Plan**

Last Spring, every home received a copy of the Ashington Community Action Plan, which was prepared after some 18 months of consultation with all village groups and individuals. With Localism very much in the news these days, the Plan is a key document that will guide your Parish Council in its activities over the next four or five years. The ongoing monitoring of the Plan is undertaken by a Steering Group, which is independent of the Council, and which everyone in the village is entitled to join.

### **Wardens**

Given the very clear feedback in the Community Action Plan, last year we committed to Horsham District Council (HDC) for a further 3 year contract for the provision of two wardens.

Two Councillors, Judith Stillwell and Neville Clark, now meet on a regular basis with the wardens to ensure that their work always reflects the needs of the village. During the year we said hello and welcome to Paul Sweeney and Peter Newell who have replaced Paul Conroy and Paul Buckman. With this report you should receive a fridge magnet with the Wardens telephone numbers— please keep and use when necessary.

### **Planning Applications**

Although for the time being the landfill sites proposed for Laybook and Rock Common have gone quiet, during the year there were still three new applications of note.

### **Meiros Farm Development**

Last October HDC gave their final approval to the development at Meiros Farm, Rectory Lane, which will include 13 “affordable” homes, which will meet some of the needs of the village identified in the housing survey conducted in 2007.

### **Broadbridge Farm Compost Site**

Olus Environmental submitted a planning application to West Sussex County Council (WSCC) for what would be one of the County’s biggest compost sites; the impact of which on the village would be enormous.

Many objections were raised to the application, and as a result Olus Environmental decided to review their application. We now await a revised application, at which point everyone will need to review it and comment on it in exactly the same way as when the application first appeared.

### **Penn Retreat Application**

For some years now land at Penn Retreat (at the junction of Rectory Lane and Penn Gardens) has had temporary planning approval for 3 mobile homes for use by Gypsy\Traveller families. Last September, a planning application was submitted to use the site on a permanent basis for 10 mobile homes, which was subsequently revised to 6 units.

Ashington Parish Council met with the owner and his agent to discuss other options for this site and discussions are currently taking place.

### **Flooding in Mill Lane**

Last November the Honey Bridge stream that passes under Mill Lane flooded, causing damage to two homes and two cars. Whilst the Parish Council has no powers or budget for major public works, we are working with those agencies that do have powers, notably the Environment Agency, WSCC and HDC, to try to improve things.

### **Emergency Plan**

During the year the Council completed and filed its Emergency Plan, which provides details of contacts and locations that can be used in the event of an emergency.

### **Winter Weather**

Snow came early this winter, but we seemed to manage well. In addition, now that we are up to full strength with our wardens, we hope that we will be able to ensure that the elderly and vulnerable are supported as best we can, as future needs arise.

### **30mph Limits**

The long awaited 30mph speed limit along Billingshurst Road was introduced at the beginning of 2011, and we hope this will improve safety along this stretch of road.

The next stretch of road that we would like to see restricted to 30mph is Hole Street out towards Wiston, which currently has a mix of 40mph and 60mph limits.

### **A24 Quieter Running Surface**

One of the top priorities that residents expressed in the Community Plan was to work towards reducing the noise from the A24. Last September a quieter running surface was laid along part of the road, but given the current budget restrictions at County Hall, the remaining stretch will only be completed over a number of years as and when the current surface needs replacing.

### **Internet Access For All**

For some time the Parish Council has felt that it would be good if we could provide internet access for all, and last year we were fortunate to receive a grant that allowed us to buy two

laptops and set up an internet hub at the Parish Office in Church Lane. If anyone wants to learn how to use a computer then please contact the Parish Clerk.

### **Young People at the Parish Council**

At the Parish Council's monthly meeting there is now a slot for young people to tell us what's on their minds; we can't promise to do what everyone wants, but it's good to hear from the young people in the village.

### **Hanging Baskets**

Last Summer, once again hanging baskets of flowers brightened up London Road; this year we intend to do this again, but we are currently exploring the possibility of sponsorship to help share the costs.

### **Parish Council Budget**

In December the Parish Council set its budget for the coming year starting April 1<sup>st</sup> 2011. The good news was that we believe that, provided we continue to watch our spending carefully over the coming year, we can continue to deliver the same level of services as currently without having to make any increase in our element of the Council Tax.

### **Finances**

In 2006 you may recall that your Council, along with many others, was a causality of the collapse of the Icelandic banks. Fortunately, on an ongoing basis we are slowly recovering much of this money, and funds received this year took our recovery to 53% of our deposit, and it is hoped that we will eventually recover a total of 70-80%. Your Councillors have again this year declined to draw any allowances, and claim only modest expenses for costs they incur.

### **Conclusion**

In concluding, I would like to thank all your Councillors for their hard work during the year, and for representing Ashington on numerous clubs, bodies and agencies both within the village and outside.

In addition, many of the issues that the Council has faced this year, have required extensive research and liaising with external councils and agencies, as well as keeping abreast of Government legislation, and our Parish Clerk, Karen Dare, has done an extremely good job in ensuring that we your Councillors are well prepared for the decisions we take on behalf of the village.

Malcolm Woolley  
Ashington PC Chairman

### **Parish Councillors**

Malcolm Woolley (Chairman, 892041, [malcolm.woolley@googlemail.com](mailto:malcolm.woolley@googlemail.com)), Neville Clark (Vice Chairman 893336, [nev@hisite.co.uk](mailto:nev@hisite.co.uk)), Judith Stillwell (891383, [judithstillwell@hotmail.com](mailto:judithstillwell@hotmail.com)), Nick Carver (892694, [nick@ccsstoragellp.co.uk](mailto:nick@ccsstoragellp.co.uk)), Ken Wood (892428, [kenwood.chef@care4free.net](mailto:kenwood.chef@care4free.net)), Terry Kearney (892591, [terry@trk1.co.uk](mailto:terry@trk1.co.uk)), Roy Brennan (893958), Doreen Harbour (891336, [doreen@dmharbour.plus.com](mailto:doreen@dmharbour.plus.com)), Brian Norton (892316, [brian.norton1@tesco.net](mailto:brian.norton1@tesco.net)) and Richard Lancaster (891408, [apc.lancaster@googlemail.com](mailto:apc.lancaster@googlemail.com)), Richard Strudwick (892616, [Richard@lolipops.wanadoo.co.uk](mailto:Richard@lolipops.wanadoo.co.uk)).

Councillors can also be contacted via the Parish Clerk - Karen Dare, Honeysuckle House, London Road, Ashington, RH20 3JR. Tel 01903 892991 (Mon-Fri 9am-3pm), [clerk@ashingtonpc.org.uk](mailto:clerk@ashingtonpc.org.uk) Council website: [www.ashingtonpc.org.uk](http://www.ashingtonpc.org.uk)

**SUMMARY OF ACCOUNTS YEAR ENDING 31<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2011.**

	<b>2010/11</b>	<b>2009/10</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>RECEIPTS</b>		
Environmental Cleansing Grants	3,587.44 <sup>*1</sup>	2,342.06
Grants & capital receipts:		
RASP Grant	3000.00	
QPC Award	925.00	
Training refund	72.00	
	-----	
	3,997.00	139.00
Sponsorship of roundabouts	1,110.00	1,110.00
Kite & Thomas rent	7,000.00	7,000.00
Precept	91,800.00	90,000.00
Interest on general accounts	375.99	346.72
VAT Recovered	7,891.56	0.00 <sup>*2</sup>
Donations to Ashington First Responders	1,088.00	1,036.15 <sup>*3</sup>
Donations to Junior Wardens	0.00	100.00 <sup>*4</sup>
<b>TOTAL RECEIPTS</b>	<b>116,849.99</b>	<b>102,073.93</b>
<b>PAYMENTS</b>		
Environmental Cleansing	608.51	915.98
Play areas & open spaces	12,331.26 <sup>*5</sup>	3,770.26
Staff Costs:		
Clerk salary, tax, NI & expenses	9,078.28	9,444.92
Members expenses	152.60	0.00
Administration:		
Parish Office	997.00	
Payroll charges	64.08	
Subscriptions	782.37	
Auditing	750.00	
Insurance	2,170.48	
Conference fees & training	48.33	
Postage & stationery	350.35	
Photocopier	156.78	
Hall hire	240.00	
Parish Plan	687.33	
Planning consultant	1,496.37	
Others	624.53	
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	8,367.62	7,392.89
Interest on Public Works Loan	3,602.72	3,723.98
Capital payments:		
Public Works Loan	2,617.52	2,496.26
RASP grant	2,175.64	
Others	0.00	
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	4,793.16	34,773.56 <sup>*6</sup>
Neighbourhood Wardens	52,398.00	51,247.00
Landscaping & Highways	7,597.34	7,162.29
Section 137 Grants (& other grants)	1,788.38 <sup>*7</sup>	1,002.00
VAT paid	2,649.91	5,250.64
Payment to Ashington First Responders	1,360.70	821.31 <sup>*3</sup>
Payment to Junior Wardens	30.00	0.00 <sup>*4</sup>
<b>TOTAL PAYMENTS</b>	<b>104,758.48</b>	<b>128,001.09</b>
<b>SURPLUS/DEFICIT</b>	<b>9,450.70</b>	<b>4,152.53</b>
<b>(less new Play Area cost and monies held on behalf of First Responders &amp; Jnr Wardens)</b>		

Notes:

<sup>\*1</sup> Includes Q4 payment from 09/10

<sup>\*2</sup> Repayment of £5,250.64 not received from HMRC before 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010

<sup>\*3</sup> Responder funds: Total donations £8,980.53, total expenditure £6,409.72, funds remaining £2,570.81

<sup>\*4</sup> Junior Wardens funds: Total donations £100, total expenditure £30, funds remaining £70

<sup>\*5</sup> Includes pond dredging and other one-off maintenance costs

<sup>\*6</sup> Includes new play area for which a grant was received

<sup>\*7</sup> new hanging baskets & brackets purchased using Calor Gas Village of the Year funds