

NEWS

from Ashington Parish Council



Keeping you informed of the work of the Parish Council and the community of Ashington

From the Chairman New Faces

Last autumn, together with Horsham District Council (HDC), we were in the process of recruiting two new Wardens following the departure of Paul Conroy to Steyning, and Paul Buckman who had resigned. I'm pleased to be able to say that at the turn of the year Paul Sweeney and Peter Newell joined us, so we are once again back up to full strength. I know you will join me in welcoming Paul and Peter to Ashington as they settle into their new posts. Some photos and personal details about them, and how to contact them, are on page 4.

Parish Council Budget – Some good news!

In December the Parish Council (PC) met to set its budget for the coming year (April 2011-12). In setting the budget we were mindful of two things; first, the pressure everyone in the village is feeling on their personal income and spending at the present time; second, the fact that both West Sussex County Council (WSCC) and HDC are working hard to achieve a zero increase on their elements of the Council Tax.

The good news is that the PC believes 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.

So, hopefully when you receive your next Council Tax bill it will look much the same as last year's for once. Looking further ahead than 2012 is of course very difficult at the moment, so unfortunately there can be no promises about changes in the Council Tax in future years, but we feel that this is the right move for this year.

Why Does the Parish Council Need A Budget?

Whilst it is good news that there will be no change to the PC's element of the Council Tax, some of you may ask why the PC needs a budget at all. The reason is because whilst WSCC and HDC take care of our basic village needs, such as education, highways and refuse collection etc, it is the PC that pays for the things that make a local difference in our community, such as our village Wardens, some of the open spaces, some of the equipment in the play areas, the hanging baskets of flowers in the summer etc.

To pay for these things the PC has to have an income.

Some income comes from renting out land that the Parish owns, and some from interest on funds that it holds, but the majority comes from part of the Council Tax that is paid by every household in the village. So whilst the vast majority of your Council Tax goes to WSCC and HDC, some does come to the PC; this year the PC's part of the average Council Tax bill is about 5%, and is equivalent to £1.59 per household per week (for a Band D home). I hope you feel that you get value for this; if not please let the PC know.

Elections

In May you will be electing a new Parish Council. I'm sure many of your current Councillors will offer themselves up for re-election, but if you are interested in being a candidate yourself, Karen Dare will be able to give you all the details. The election will probably be before the next magazine is circulated, so please don't leave it too long before making contact if you are interested.

New Home for PC Meetings

As you will know, the Methodist Hall in London Road, that had been home to PC meetings for many years, is in the process of closing. As a result, as from January, the PC has been meeting in the main hall at the village school. Hopefully as many of you as possible will come along to one or more of the meetings to raise any issues that are of interest to you. Meetings start at 7.45pm on the first Thursday each month, and the agenda is on the village website, usually by the Monday before the meeting.

The Planning Committee meetings continue to be in the Parish Office at the Sports Pavilion in Church Lane.

Faulty streetlights, overgrowing vegetation, potholes, broken signs etc. To reports any of these issues visit www.westsussex.gov.uk or telephone 01243 777100.



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Flooding in Mill Lane

In November the Honey Bridge stream that passes under Mill Lane flooded, causing damage to two homes and two cars, and cutting off a large number of homes from the rest of the village and main roads, disrupting travel to work and school etc. Whilst the PC 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. A couple of small projects have been agreed by WSCC, which we hope will have a beneficial impact, and Neil Smith at WSCC has been very helpful in terms of looking at what WSCC can do. We are also trying to gather facts that we hope will help improve our understanding of why this happens when it does, which in turn should help us in looking at what can be done to improve things further.

Winter Weather

I hope by the time that this magazine arrives the bad winter weather will be behind us.

Snow came early this winter, but we seemed to manage well. WSCC delivered three large supplies of salt for residents to use to help keep roads (not private drives) clear, and these bags were located at the Coop, the Community Centre and Rectory Lane. This seemed to be appreciated by all, so this will repeated should bad weather return next winter.

In addition, now that we are up to full strength with our Wardens, who may have access to HDC's 4x4 on occasions, we hope that we will be able to ensure that the elderly and vulnerable are supported as best we can, as needs arise.

30mph Speed Limit



The long awaited 30mph speed limit is now in place along Billingshurst Road as far as Spear Hill, and we hope this will improve safety along a stretch of road that has had more than its fair share of accidents over the years. We are grateful for the work of Frank

Meiros Farm Development

Work should be starting soon on the development at Meiros Farm in Rectory Lane.

The scheme includes some 13 "affordable" homes, and just a reminder that if you, or anyone you know, wants to be considered for one of these, then you must register as soon as possible (full details of how to register can be secured from Karen Dare, our Parish Clerk). As soon as building does start, we will have a representative of English Rural Housing (who will manage the affordable units) along to a PC meeting to talk about how it will operate and answer any questions anyone may have.

Wilkinson, our County Councillor, for his work in pushing this change through at County Hall. The next stretch of road that we would like to see restricted to 30mph is Hole Street out towards Wiston, which currently has a combination of 40 and 60mph stretches. This road is much used by cyclists and horse riders, and has no walking space, so for safety it would really benefit from a 30ph limit.

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Internet Access for All

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. The laptops are available for use by any resident who is over 18, by contacting Karen Dare, and agreeing a time to use them in the Parish Office. To date uptake has been very limited, so if you know of anyone who needs internet access, and doesn't have their own equipment, do mention this option to them. We understand that a local resident is currently considering running some courses for people who want to learn how to use a pc; we will let you know if this happens, and what the charges for tuition may be.

Hanging Baskets

For some years now hanging baskets of flowers have brightened up London Road throughout the summer. This year we intend to do this again, but we are currently exploring the possibility of sponsorship to help share the costs. This could involve either a business sponsoring all or a section of baskets, or even individuals sponsoring single baskets. So, if you or your employer would like to help keep Ashington bright this summer, please let Karen Dare know, and we can see what we can do together.

Ashington Festival Update

In the last magazine Ashington Festival reported that the Festival overall in the year had made a loss. Since then they have had their accounts audited and have actually made £527 profit overall this year. Unfortunately they did not make enough profit to hand out grants this year. Apologies for the error from Ashington Festival.

Blocked Sewers

On behalf of Southern Water can we please remind residents NOT to put nappies and sanitary towels down toilets. This seems so obvious but a few months ago the Church Lane sewer became blocked with these items and resulted in the Scout Hall area being flooded with raw sewage.

Planning Matters

Last autumn, following strong objections from residents of Ashington, the PC and HDC, Olus Environmental withdrew their planning application for what would have been the County's biggest composting site, at Broadbridge Farm, by the side of the A24 at the southern end of the village. But it is most unlikely that this is the end of the matter; we expect a new application to be lodged shortly. Hopefully Olus will hold a local meeting to share their ideas, but we cannot be certain that will happen, so, once available, we will publicise the application, and we will all then have a short time to make our comments to WSCC.

The other planning matter mentioned in the last Newsletter was the application that HDC had received for mobile Gypsy/Traveller homes at Penn Retreat, by Penn Gardens and Rectory Lane. HDC have made some comments about this application to the applicant, and HDC are currently waiting for a response back from the applicant.

As with the compost site, as soon as there is anything to report to residents we will do so.

Malcolm Woolley – Parish Council Chairman

What's On

Events can now be seen at www.ashingtonvillage.co.uk
For those of you without computers why not make arrangements with the Parish Clerk (01903 892991) to view events on one of the new computers in the parish office?

Come on Ashington don't let your Carnival die

We need more Carnival Floats on the 20th August. Why don't you enter a float for your road, estate, club or even your family? We could help if you need a lorry or pick-up truck. If you can't decorate a float why not have a walking group or a decorated car with occupants, or decorate buggies, bikes and horses with you in fancy dress.



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Wardens messages

We have put together some 'cold/bogus caller' packs for any residents that would like them. The packs have info from Trading standards, the council etc all with info on how to deal with cold callers and some general info on home security and a leaflet from the Fire Service offering home checks and free smoke

alarms. Dubious or unexpected callers should be turned away immediately.

Card cloning – take care when withdrawing cash at ANY cash machine. Look out for a 'fake front' over the card insert section with a loop of metal tape measure or similar which catches the card and a small bar or similar housing the camera from a mobile phone positioned over the keypad to record the

pin number. If one of these is in place the machine cannot return the card, the scammers come back and pull the fake front off and the tape measure loop pulls the card out so they have your card AND pin number. If the machine retains your card then call your bank IMMEDIATELY and they will either confirm that they have retained your card or cancel your card if it has been stolen by scammers.

Working in partnership with Ashington Parish Council

YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD WARDENS

The Parish have two full time Neighbourhood Wardens who will assist the community by:

- Providing a reassuring uniformed patrolling presence
- Helping to reduce crime and the fear of crime
- Responding to minor incidents and anti-social behaviour
- Supporting the community by offering assistance to elderly, vulnerable and isolated members
- Supporting the community by encouraging the establishment of diversionary activities for young people
- Helping to preserve the environment and local amenities including litter picking, playground inspections and cleaning bus shelters
- Acting as professional witnesses
- Junior Warden management
- Offering advice on crime prevention and fire safety in the home
- Ensuring that Ashington is benefiting from the full range of services and provisions from both local and national government agendas.

If you wish to speak to the Wardens on any matter in confidence please call them direct or leave a message on the office phone.

IN EMERGENCY ALWAYS DIAL 999.

Please keep this leaflet with other useful numbers.

Paul Sweeney
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Peter Newell
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Fly posting

Please can we ask residents not to put up posters on telegraph poles as it makes the village look a mess, creates extra litter and work as inevitably they need taking down after the event. Please give your posters to the Parish Clerk and she will place them in the village noticeboards. Please allow plenty of time before your event as space is often limited. There are six boards around the village, A4 or A5 posters/leaflets are perfect. If you feel that you must put posters on telegraph poles then please make sure you take them down immediately after the event.

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Sunday 12th June 2-4.30pm, Ashington Community Centre. £2 in advance, £2.50 on the day. Judging of the Carnival Princess, Attendants and Pageboys. Why not come along and join in the fun, dancing, games, prizes, lucky dip and tuck shop. Also adult refreshments and a raffle. A photographer will be available should you want a photograph of your child/children. For details phone Margaret 892633.

Housewatch

Tell the Wardens when you are going away and when you expect to return and they will include your property on their 'patrols' and do a security walk around daytime and/or evening when they are on duty. All information is treated confidentially. In case of problems let the Wardens know of keyholders/contact details by calling the Warden Office (01903) 891543. How many other villages offer this type of service?

Parish Council Noticeboards

The PC has six noticeboards dotted around the village. There is no charge to advertise your Ashington event. Posters (A4 or smaller) should be delivered to Honeysuckle House, London Road at least four weeks before your event. We cannot guarantee to display all posters forever but will do our best to be fair to everyone.

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How to contact the Parish Council

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Tel: 01903 892991

Email: clerk@ashingtonpc.org.uk

Council website: www.ashingtonpc.org.uk

Members of the public are welcome to attend all Council meetings, dates are published on noticeboards and the Council's website.

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Dates for your Diary

- Ashington Parish Council publishes a weekly email listing all events and news happening in the village. To date we have over 300 email addresses of residents wishing to receive this service.
- It is one email per week, unless there is urgent news that we need to distribute quickly. You will NOT be bombarded with loads of messages and we always use the "bcc" field for your email address. If you wish to receive the weekly email then please send an email to ashingtonevents@googlemail.com and you will be added to the circulation list. There is no charge and you can unsubscribe at any time. If you don't have email access and want a copy of the communication then contact the Parish Clerk.

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