



# Ashington Parish Council

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**Minutes of the meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2011 at 7.45 p.m. in Ashington School, Foster Lane, Ashington**

**Present: Councillors M. Woolley (Chairman), K. Wood, R. Brennan, J. Stillwell, R. Strudwick, T. Kearney, D. Harbour & B. Norton**  
**Parish Clerk Karen Dare**  
**County Councillor Frank Wilkinson**  
**Neighbourhood Warden Paul Sweeney**  
**No members of the public**

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## **034/11 APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE**

N. Clark & N. Carver (personal commitments), R. Lancaster (business) & District Councillor Roger Arthur (holiday)

## **035/11 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

Cllr Harbour declared a personal prejudicial interest in the application for a grant from ACCT (minute 064/11) as she is a Trustee of ACCT. The Chairman reminded Councillors that previous declarations still stand.

## **036/11 APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 6<sup>th</sup> January 2011 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman. Proposed by Councillor Brennan and seconded by Councillor Stillwell, and agreed.

## **037/11 REPORT FROM THE NEIGHBOURHOOD WARDENS**

Report:

Now we are both in Ashington we have been trying to meet as many people in the area as possible, hopefully you will have seen the new posters going up around the village. HDC had issued a Press Release in the local newspapers.

During January Peter has completed his core warden training and is doing his accreditation training this week.

We have resumed litter picks and will continue these across the village particularly the 'hot spot' areas such as London Road and the on off slips from the bypass. During January we have cleared two small amounts of fly tipping from London Road (the old section) and have HDC coming in the next day or two to clear some in Park Lane.

We have begun to meet some of the young people of the village on our patrols. We have had a meeting with Mrs James at the school and look forward to visiting the school council to discuss some ideas to work with the school on a variety of projects including junior wardens.

Anti-social behaviour has been low during January, we have had one major incident which we had to call the police to. This was a drug related incident caught on the CCTV system, police searched the individuals but found nothing but we will be following it up with the individuals' parents through HDC's antisocial behaviour unit.

We have been in touch with Saxon Weald and they have agreed in principle for the garage area at the bottom of The Sands. The area looks shabby and attracts trouble. The Wardens would try to get the Junior Wardens, School or the Probation Service to volunteer to make the area look more attractive.

We are continuing our regular patrols and are awaiting our training for play park inspection, which we do not have a date for yet.

The next Junior Wardens event is 5<sup>th</sup> February on the sports court at ACCT, followed by an 'animal show' on 19<sup>th</sup> February.

Please remind everyone we are here and to contact us with any problems or queries, or if you need posters to put up anywhere.

The Chairman thanked the Warden for his report.

Cllr Stillwell reported on the recent meeting with the Wardens, HDC, PC, PCSO, Parish Clerk, Cllr Clark & Cllr Stillwell: there had been basic introductions and a review of basic wardens activities. Peter Newell was currently undertaking accreditation and training. HDC were pursuing Warden Quality Status and Warden Charter, accreditation with Sussex Police and would eventually be qualified to NVQ Level 2. New shift patterns had been introduced and would be reviewed in 6 months. The Wardens were aiming to visit all of the elderly & vulnerable in the village and would be updating their contact list to include telephone numbers. The next meeting would be 1<sup>st</sup> March at 12pm in the Wardens office.

Cllr Stillwell asked the Wardens if they had been able to visit the Co-op at closing time recently. The Wardens had visited on a small number of occasions but training and shift patterns had meant that regular attendance was not possible.

Cllr Clark has drafted a Service Level Agreement between the Wardens (HDC) and the PC detailing what the Parish Council expects the Wardens to do on its behalf and how it will measure their success. It was proposed that the draft be operated immediately and reviewed in April. Cllr Norton stated that any Service Level Agreement between the Parish Council and the Wardens could not be enforced as the Wardens are employed by HDC and all listed activities could be superseded by HDC. The document was a list of matters that the Parish Council would like the Wardens to undertake and not a formal agreement. The following amendments were suggested:

1. Re-name it Service Level Expectations
2. Ashington has no byways
3. Wardens should walk the main village roads, footpaths and known trouble hotspots each week and drive to outlying areas weekly
4. Winter Weather Group doesn't exist and this paragraph needs amending.
5. Increase the number of Junior Wardens in the village?
6. Re-instate the Spring & Summer Village clean-up events?

### **038/11 YOUNG PERSONS ADJOURNEMENT**

None present

### **039/11 REPORT FROM DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS**

County Councillor Frank Wilkinson reported:

1. He was still awaiting information about cuts at WSCC. Re-assessment of management posts was taking place and some would be lost. More information would be forthcoming in the next few weeks. WSCC had saved £60m in the last 4 years and were looking to save a further £75m in the next 3 years (£37m Yr1, £20m Years 2 & 3). WSCC was having to make cuts but still deliver front-line services and it is likely that there would be fewer staff to deal with issues. WSCC had suffered a 14.3% reduction in the Government Grant whilst the average across the County is 12.1% reduction. They had received the lowest Government Settlement for the 9<sup>th</sup> year in a row. Local MP's are lobbying Parliament to find out the formula that is used to calculate the grants.
2. WSCC had agreed a 0% rise in Council Tax this year. Much work was being done to cut budgets appropriately.
3. WSCC were looking at making cuts to the subsidies given to bus companies and are proposing to save £2m over 3 years (£0.5m Year1, £1m Year 2, £0.5m Year 3) from a total budget of £10m. A Task Force had been established to consult on how the cuts can be made and it was expected that a report be available in Autumn 2011. Parish Councils would be consulted. It had been suggested that concessionary fares do not start until after 9.30am.
4. He had been in discussions with the Clerk and Education Officers at WSCC about school admissions and s106 funds. In September 2010 one or two Ashington children had not gained places at the school and it is likely that the same will happen in September 2011. Forecasts for future years show that this trend for oversubscription may not continue. WSCC are holding s106 funds (@£100k) for education in Ashington but this would not be enough to build a new classroom and employ a teacher & teaching assistant to enable an additional class to exist at the school. Questions were being asked about what these funds could be used for.

The Chairman thanked County Councillor Wilkinson for his update.

#### **ACTIONS OUTSTANDING:**

**D** = Minuted but deleted from next agenda.

**C/F** = Minuted and carried forward to 'Actions Outstanding' on the next agenda.

**To list** = moved to the list at the end of the minutes until some progress is made

### **040/11 Item 1 Mill Lane flooding**

WSSC has removed the trash screen as it was creating a dam effect upstream of the culvert. We are still waiting for WSSC to build up the height of the culvert wall and to install a vented/grilled manhole cover on the grass verge. Drawings were currently being prepared.

WSSC has confirmed that:

1. the trash screen is inspected regularly, particularly if severe weather is forecast whereas the culvert pipes are not inspected except if water levels indicate that there may be a pipe blockage. The Clerk will monitor the stream during heavy rain and report any problems to WSSC.
2. Surface water from the A24 discharges into the stream via petrol interceptors

The Clerk has sent the Environment Agency dates of flooding so that they can investigate whether there is a link between flooding and pumping of water into the stream from Rock Common Quarry.

The Clerk had made contact with an Ashington resident who has a weather station to see if data from this could be of any use to this issue.

A resident of Malthouse Lane has suggested that part of his land could be used to create a balancing pond. This would be hugely costly and it is not known who would pay for this and it would involve a considerable amount of work. Councillors felt it a little premature at this stage and wanted to: wait for information from the EA; consider the long term future of the sand quarry at Rock Common (which discharges into the stream but long term may be turned into a leisure lake) before pursuing this option.

The Clerk has asked WSSC how long the sand quarry at Rock Common is expected to be in operation. It has planning permission until 2020 but may not extract sand for this long.

The Clerk & Chairman met with the owners of Tudor Rose Cottage (which flooded in November 2010) and the Clerk will make some investigations as to the surface water drains in the area as the flood waters came up from the drains rather than from the stream levels. Cllr Wood told the Council that some houses in Brookside had been built on flood plain and that the old Millrace (used to run from the old Mill pond to the stream) still had water flowing through it. Clerk to investigate the current state of the Millrace.

The Chairman had attended a Preparing for Flooding Exhibition and made contact with a local EA representative, spoke to WSSC Officers and several companies selling flood protection equipment. **KD C/F**

### **041/11 Item 2 Ashington Community Minibus**

Cllr Clark was approached about whether Ashington would want to take part in a Community Minibus Scheme (sponsored by Southern Water). He had made some enquiries about the Scheme and quite simply a minibus would be provided

free of charge, based in the village, drivers would undertake a short driving test, there would be a small annual 'membership charge' per person if they wished to use the minibus and individuals or groups could book the minibus and the only cost would be that of fuel. A brief survey of village groups had highlighted interest from a number of village organisations including the School, Youth Club, Wardens, Church etc as well as some individuals.

Councillors were asked to consider whether they would agree with the principle of having a Community Minibus for the village, would allow the Clerk to provide some administrative time to complete the necessary paperwork and administer the Scheme. Cllr Clark has volunteered to 'manage' the scheme and become a Divisional Organiser. Agreed by all to investigate. **KD C/F**

#### **042/11 Item 85 Community Action Plan**

The Chairman has circulated a document detailing how the Parish Council & Parish Plan Steering Group should co-ordinate progress on the Community Action Plan 2010. If Councillors are happy with this document then it was proposed that the Council consider the projects highlighted in the Plan for which it has been allocated responsibility at the March Council meeting when Cllr Lancaster (Chairman of the Parish Plan Steering Group) is present.

Cllr Norton asked how the Council/Steering Group would deal with any new projects during the 5 year lifetime of the Parish Plan. He suggested a 'rolling list' whereby new projects could be brought into the Plan once other projects had been completed. The Chairman felt that this was not possible as the new project would not have gone through the rigorous public consultation that other projects on the Plan had been subjected to. For new projects the choices were as follows:

1. See if they fit within a category of the existing Parish Plan
2. If not, then bring them forward to the Parish Council for consideration outside of the Parish Plan process
3. Communicate to the Steering Group any possible new projects when the Parish Plan is updated. The Parish Plan may need updating earlier than 5 years, depending on how much progress is made. **C/F**

#### **043/11 Item 202 Parish Office**

ACCT had provided an amended lease. Cllr Norton had checked its contents and advised Councillors that it can be signed. It was resolved that Cllrs Woolley & Norton sign the lease. Clerk to pass back to ACCT. **KD D**

#### **044/11 Item 215 Hanging baskets**

The 30 lampposts were tested on 25<sup>th</sup> January. The Clerk had received a second quote of £1095 compared to the first quote of £450, therefore the Clerk had accepted the lower quote. This is a specialist service and the Clerk could not source another quote in time. A budget of £450 was approved at the December 2010 meeting. The results will be sent to SEC who will then give permission for the baskets to be installed in 2011. Depending on the results of the tests the Clerk will be told how often the lampposts need testing.

The Council would need to sign a contract prior to erection of the baskets. Cllr Norton had checked the wording and advised the Council that the contract could be signed. It was resolved that Cllr Woolley sign the contract.

The Clerk was sourcing new fixing brackets and neoprene strips (to protect the lampposts) that were required in order to comply with the contract. Price would be available at the next meeting. Mark Adsett would take down all of the brackets, service them and re-install with the new fixings when available. It was agreed to wait until the results of the lamppost testing are available (which would show the frequency of re-testing) before committing to purchasing the new baskets (that had been agreed in July 2010 before the Council was aware that lamppost testing was required)

**KD C/F**

## **CORRESPONDENCE**

### **045/11 For action:**

1. WSCC Highways & Transport Forward Works Programme for 2011/12 and 2012/13. Resurfacing of the A24 Ashington bypass has been removed from the plan in 2012/13 (no new date given) because a recent survey of the road surface showed the condition to be 'good' and in no need of replacement. WSCC will only replace the road surface on the grounds of safety and road condition and cannot justify replacement of a good road surface on the grounds of noise alone. The road surface is surveyed annually. The Clerk was asked to contact WSCC for estimated timescales for the resurfacing. Councillors were disappointed that the works were delayed but accepted that in times of severe financial cut-backs it was difficult to justify replacing a good road surface on the grounds of noise alone.
2. Letter from resident asking to be considered for one of the affordable homes on the Meiros Farm development. Clerk to send copies to HDC and ERHA. ERHA would attend a future Council meeting.
3. Royal British Legion – does the Council wish to organise a Great Poppy Party Weekend on 10/11 June 2011? Not agreed – Councillors felt that the local branch of the British Legion should be arranging this type of event.

**KD D**

**KD D**

**KD D**

### **046/11 For information:**

1. Communities and Local Government – a plain English guide to the Localism Bill. The Bill has not yet been passed by Parliament and is subject to change but could see the following granted (short summary):
  - a. A general power of competence for Councils to do anything which is not banned by other laws
  - b. The Standards Board will be abolished but it could become a criminal offence if Councillors deliberately withhold or misrepresent a personal interest
  - c. Councillors will be able to take an active part in planning discussions without being accused of pre-determination.
  - d. Local groups can express an interest in running local services
  - e. Assets of community value will be identified and if they come up for sale then the community will have an opportunity to buy the asset
  - f. Referendums on local spending will be available
  - g. Communities can draw up a Neighbourhood Development Plan which is where new houses, businesses and shops should go and

what they should look like and local communities will be able to grant planning permission for these (as long as it is in line with local and national planning policy)

- h. New requirement for developers to consult communities before submitting planning applications for large developments
- i. Strengthen planning enforcement powers
- j. S106 money to stay in the community in which it was generated
- k. More flexibility in the tenancy of social housing meaning that people do not stay in the house for their lifetime if their circumstances improve

2. Various correspondence re: Mill Lane flooding (Item 1)

**047/11 General:**

- 1. Rural Community Buildings Loan Fund – passed to ACCT, Youth Club & Scouts
- 2. Letter from individual offering his services for metal detecting
- 3. Keep Britain Tidy litter survey – passed to Wardens & School
- 4. Economic Impact of the Third Sector – sent to Ashington Events to distribute on weekly village email (it is aimed at voluntary & charity organisations not Parish Councils)
- 5. Horsham Microbiz 2011
- 6. WSCC Connections magazine
- 7. Clerks & Councils Direct magazine
- 8. The Clerk magazine

**048/11 PUBLIC ADJOURNMENT**

Cllr Harbour moved to the Public Gallery

She spoke about the grant application from ACCT. She explained that it was difficult for ACCT to report expenditure in as much detail as the Council had requested. A new Treasurer and Marketing manager were starting shortly and ACCT Committee felt that they could help understand and improve the financial situation. ACCT had made a small loss (@£1000) in the previous financial year and had made small losses in other years. The main hall was busy most evenings and weekends but more business during the daytimes is necessary.

Cllr Harbour re-joined the meeting.

**049/11 PLANNING.**

The Planning Committee met on 19<sup>th</sup> January and Councillors have been provided with a copy of the Minutes of the meeting. Agreed by all.

**050/11 Proposed Open Composting Facility at Broadbridge Farm**

The Clerk has written to Olus suggesting a pre-application meeting. No response. Until a new application is received there is nothing that the Parish Council can do.

**KD D**

**051/11 Proposed Gypsy/traveller site at Penn Retreat**

HDC has received letters from residents who have allegedly been subjected to intimidation by member(s) of the applicants family and are dealing with the matter

appropriately. Until the application is progressed there is nothing that the Parish Council can do.

**D**

### **052/11 Correspondence**

None

### **053/11 New Enforcement Allegations/Information**

Indian Cottage, London Road - HDC are prosecuting the owners for non-compliance with the existing enforcement notice, although HDC advise that the owner is going to change the existing lighting and signs shortly and will be submitting a new planning application sometime after this (although there is no guarantee that the application will be approved).

1 & 2 Windmill Cottages, Rectory Lane – Comment from HDC - The extensions and loft conversion fall under Permitted Development and therefore do not require planning permission. As the majority of the hardstanding areas are to the side of the dwelling and are not situated on land between a wall forming the principal elevation of the dwelling house and a highway (as per Class F of the General Permitted Development Order 1995 (amended 2008)), we are unable to request a planning application and therefore will have to close both files.

### **057/11 Amendments**

None

### **058/11 Applications**

None

## **Horsham District Council**

### **059/11 Approvals**

DC/10/2291 & 2292 Conversion and extension of existing three-bay barn to form residential annexe accommodation to be used in association with Warminghurst House – Warminghurst House, Park Lane

### **060/11 Refusals**

None

### **061/11 Withdrawals**

DC/10/2385 & 2386 Installation of 2 roof windows on dwelling and erection of garden shed – Mitchbourne House, Malthouse Lane.

### **062/11 Appeal decision**

None

The next Planning Committee meeting is scheduled for 16<sup>th</sup> February 2011 at 7.00pm in the Parish Office.

## **FINANCE**

### **063/11 Budget Report:**

The Clerk reports the following areas of budget overspend:



Open Spaces Maintenance (inc. pond dredging) - it was previously agreed that these costs be met from capital funds held by the Council.

Members travelling expenses - £133.20 overspent due to visits to compost site, meetings etc

Dog bin emptying - £33.12 overspend due to HDC increasing the cost

Stationery - £17 overspend (mainly due to the cost of print cartridges)

The Clerk reports the following areas of underspend:

Insurance - £842 underspend (new Insurer found)

Training - £300 underspend

Wardens - @£7000 underspend (partly due to invoicing being 6 months in arrears and partly due to shortage of Wardens for part 2010).

Other areas are currently underspent but costs are likely to be incurred before the end of the financial year.

The Clerk reported that Cllr Norton has inspected and signed the quarterly bank reconciliation.

### **064/11 Correspondence**

Cllr Harbour left the room.

Request from ACCT asking the Parish Council to help fund Recreation Ground Maintenance in the future. The Clerk has received copies of ACCT accounts and Grounds maintenance costs.

The Clerk had provided a summary of current Parish Council expenditure on ACCT items, summarised ACCT's expenditure on grounds maintenance and ACCT's current financial situation.

Councillors agreed that the Parish Council already contributes significantly to ACCT in one way or another, ACCT finances are currently healthy (£50k in the bank), wear and tear of the Recreation Ground by members of the public is far less than that done by the sports teams, ACCT's accounts could be better presented and marketing of the facilities could be improved, the Parish Council had paid out large sums to fund drainage works on the Recreation Ground some years ago. The Council did not agree to award a grant, however, it was suggested that if ACCT worked closely on its accounts and marketing then it could better present its case in the future. Councillors did agree that the current arrangements with regard to the Parish Council paying for insurance and maintenance of the skatepark and maintaining some parts of ACCT land (but not others) could benefit from being tidied up in future years. Clerk to draft a letter, Chairman to check before sending to ACCT. **KD D**

Cllr Harbour returned to the meeting.

Consider a request for a donation to Disability Awareness UK – not agreed. Council policy is to only award grants to village organisations and not those generally serving the wider geographical area. **KD D**

### **065/11 Income**



Administrators of S&F account £8731.32 (total recovered is 53%)  
HDC – Environmental Cleansing Grant £740.80

**066/11 Expenditure**

			<b>Cheque no.</b>
Mark Adsett	Gardeners contract payment	£446.25	1149
	Open spaces maintenance (as agreed 7/10/10, minute 306/10)	£1025	1150
	Hanging baskets (putting up/taking down)	£50	1161
Mrs K. Dare	Clerks expenses (home & telephone)	£17	
	Total	£17	1151
WSCC	Salary and on costs (January)	£738.51	1152
Plusnet	Broadband	£17.99	DD
Ashington School	Meeting cost	£20	1153
M. Woolley	Travel expenses (Flood exhibition)	£10	1154
Cortest Ltd	Corrosion testing of lampposts	£540	1155
SOS Systems Ltd	Photocopier	£47.92	1156
Ashington PC	Transfer to National Savings	£8731.32	1157
Akermans	Parish Office lease preparation	£420.00	1158
SLCC	Chairmanship training	£48.00	1159
E.Leaney	repairs to noticeboards	£48.22	1160

It was resolved that the schedule of payments shown above be approved for payment. Agreed by all.

**067/11 MEETINGS**

Cllr Harbour had attended a Senior Persons Council meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> January. Notes of the meeting had been circulated to Councillors by email and leaflets had been distributed around the village.

Cllr Wood had attended a WSCC Tree Wardens course on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2011.

Cllrs Stillwell, Clark & the Parish Clerk had attended the monthly Wardens meeting (Minute 037/11).

The Clerk had organised the WSCC Low Weald Ranger and his team of volunteers to undertake some coppicing and vegetation clearance works at the Church Close pond in January. Cllr Wood had attended and helped with the

work. The pond is looking very shallow and it has been suggested that it may need dredging. Clerk to ask Land & Water for their advice. **KD C/F**

**068/11 MINOR MATTERS RAISED BY COUNCILLORS**

Cllr Carver previously asked if WSCC could provide additional bags of salt during icy conditions. The Clerk has passed the request to HDC's Emergency Planning Officer. WSCC were reviewing their winter strategy and would advise whether additional salt would be made available.

Cllr Harbour asked if there was any spare litter picking equipment in the village. Cllr Wood stated that this was borrowed from HDC in the past and did not belong to the Parish Council. If any resident wanted to assist with litter picking in the village on a voluntary basis then they should contact the Clerk.

Cllr Kearney asked what the Parish Council should do with the small amount of spare salt left after the bad weather. Cllrs to decide after the March meeting once the worst of the bad weather is over.

Cllr Kearney reported that vehicles appeared to be adhering to the new 30mph limit on Billingshurst Road.

**069/11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held at **7.45pm on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2011 at Ashington School, Foster Lane.**

The meeting finished at 9.30pm

Signed.....

Date.....

**070/11** Items awaiting action:

Item No	Description	Last Action & Date
32b	Spur road of The Sands & Viney Close – streetlights & laybys	WSSC & HDC dealing with. Persimmon are not co-operating and HDC/WSSC continue to pursue the matter (Nov 09)
	Village seats/noticeboards need repainting	Clerk to organise 2011
215	New hanging baskets	Clerk to buy 10 more baskets. Agreed July 2010
216	Decorative signs for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee	Cllr Wood will provide some examples of signs with a Coach and Horses design once the Museum re-opens in April 2011
	New skatepark equipment?	Waiting for a quote

## 071/11 WSCC Highways Issues

Fault	Date reported	Reference no	Comments
Trees on north side of recreation ground need cutting back	24 <sup>th</sup> July 2007	Email to Highway Rangers	County Councillor to ask WSCC to cut as ownership unclear
tree on London Road opposite the Methodist Church is dead	3 <sup>rd</sup> August 2007	WSEK-75QDJG	Has been felled, April 08. Awaiting replacement
Sign beside A24 at Mill Lane junction discouraging crossing at that point	WSCC are designing a sign and will pass to the PC for approval	July 08	
large white concrete blocks on the highway verge opposite the entrance to Holmbush House, Old London Road	Reported to Highways Sept 08  Reported again Dec 08		
Reduce speed limit on Hole Street to 40mph	WSCC to add to TRO priority list	Clerk to write to WSCC  Written to WSCC	August 2009  Sept 09