



Ashington Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting held on 3rd March 2011 at 7.45 p.m. in Ashington School, Foster Lane, Ashington

Present: Councillors M. Woolley (Chairman), B. Norton, K. Wood, R. Brennan, J. Stillwell, R. Strudwick, T. Kearney, R. Lancaster, N. Clark & N. Carver
Parish Clerk Karen Dare
County Councillor Frank Wilkinson
Neighbourhood Warden Peter Newell
11 members of the public

072/11 APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE

Cllr D. Harbour & District Councillor Roger Arthur (all holiday)

073/11 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Cllr Clark declared that he is now an Observer on ACCT and a member of an ACCT sub-committee. Cllr Stillwell declared a prejudicial interest in the grant application from Ashington Festival as she is on the Festival Committee. The Chairman reminded Councillors that previous declarations still stand.

074/11 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 3rd February 2011 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman. Proposed by Councillor Brennan and seconded by Councillor Strudwick, and agreed.

075/11 REPORT FROM THE NEIGHBOURHOOD WARDENS

Report:

Anti Social Behaviour

Reports of ASB have been low this month. However there does seem to be some concern that young people are gathering outside the CO-OP and particularly around the cash point area. This has proven concerning for residents using the shops and the actual cash point itself. On several occasions we have actively encouraged the group to move on. They are congregating there because it is sheltered lit and keeps them out of the cold / weather. They have asked about the possibility of a youth shelter, something we agreed to look at the idea of.

Crime Related

In partnership with the police we have been helping to raise the awareness of bogus callers and rogue traders. A resident in the village was the victim of such a caller but thanks to her quick wits she was able to send them on their way and also did the right thing by contacting the police right away. We have created a bogus caller information pack that is available to anyone who might want a copy of relevant facts and information. We too have used the local media forms (village newsletter / press etc) to spread the word further. There have been reports of recent activity in Steyning of a similar nature where the victims were tricked out of over £12,000.

Junior Wardens.

We have been working further with Ashington School to create an additional junior warden scheme with applications being filled out to see how many pupils want to get involved. We will be starting up an after school session on Tuesday in the near future.

We also took our current Junior Wardens on an exciting educational trip to Steyning to see a show called "Animazing". This was in conjunction with other local Junior Wardens. They learnt about some really exotic animals with the opportunity to hold and touch many of them too.

Litter

Thanks to a recent purge we have been getting back on top of the litter in village. However we have not got it all by a long way. If anyone notices any particular areas that are in desperate need please pass this our way. We have adopted the same litter pick programme as was operating before to ensure that all areas get attended to. However as you will appreciate we cannot be everywhere always. We are still having problems with sporadic fly tipping down Park Lane and Muttons Lane, when reported Horsham are clearing this fairly quickly at the moment.

Other incidents etc

During this Month Peter has been away completing some core training which should have resulted in him now being able to apply for accreditation by Sussex Police. This will in turn make the warden team stronger without the added distractions this initial training has caused.

On the 8th of February the Wardens assisted Sussex Police in dealing with an accident just outside the Monza garage to the south end of the village. This involved closing the road and controlling traffic for the most part. Thankfully no-one was seriously injured and the disruption was kept to a minimum.

We have had a report regarding a vehicle parked in London Road. A flatbed van that is parked opposite the CO-OP has reportedly not moved for several days. We are keeping

an eye on the vehicle however it is taxed and not parked illegally so will only be monitored at this time.

Census

Census is coming. On the 27th of March a snapshot of society in England and Wales will be taken. From the 7th of March questionnaires will start arriving through the post asking about information on those living in that household. The questionnaire will ask a lot of questions including personal information. There will be representatives from Census around following up these forms especially those that have not been returned. These representatives will all have appropriate photographic ID. We are urging anyone concerned with the validity of such a representative to contact the wardens and or the Police immediately. For those wanting more info / help there is a dedicated website www.census.gov.uk along with a phone line 0300 0201 101 (which goes live on 4th March).

Warden Charter

Finally on the 2nd February 2011 Horsham Neighbourhood Wardens were awarded the Warden Charter. This was awarded to demonstrate the quality of the warden schemes. To find out more about the warden charter you can visit www.wardencharter.org.uk

The Chairman thanked the Warden for his report and invited questions from members of the public. One resident informed the Warden that the last Youth Shelter in the village had been set alight by the youngsters. The Warden responded that the project was in the very initial stages and much work was yet to be done before any decisions could be taken.

Neil Worth at HDC reports that “It is my distinct pleasure to announce that both of the Neighbourhood Warden teams (Ashington and Steyning, Bramber & Upper Beeding) have been recently assessed by the London Training and Resource Centre and have today received The Warden Charter Award. The wardens were assessed against a number of criteria including management, working with residents and businesses, the use of accredited powers, staff training and development as well as various environmental indicators such as reporting abandoned vehicles.

The award is confirmation that the Neighbourhood Wardens, as a professional team, meet the Charter Standard and are actively engaged with all members of their respective communities, understanding their needs and responding to them. The Award is valid until February 2012.”

Cllr Clark reported on the recent meeting with the Wardens & HDC on 1st March at 12pm in the Wardens office: the Wardens would be looking at the options for a Youth Shelter plus other projects for the young people, Wardens were getting to know the young people by riding on the school buses from time to time. Training for Play Area

inspections was set a target of September and until training has taken place Paul Conroy would continue to inspect the play areas.

Cllr Clark has re-drafted the Service Level Agreement between the Wardens (HDC) and the PC as per the comments made at the last Parish Council meeting. Councillors had been provided with a copy and all agreed to accept the document with a review in a few months' time.

076/11 YOUNG PERSONS ADJOURNEMENT

None present

077/11 REPORT FROM DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS

County Councillor Frank Wilkinson had nothing further to add after his report at the Annual Assembly.

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

078/11 Item 1 Mill Lane flooding

Still waiting for WSCC 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.

The Environment Agency confirm that there were flooding issues at Mill Lane prior to them issuing a permit to pump water into the stream from Rock Common Quarry and that water from the quarry would not make the flooding situation any better. The Clerk has written back asking why they issued a permit when they knew that the stream flooded at Mill Lane, whether the permit can be revoked or amended and who at the EA is responsible for assessing the capacity of a stream prior to the issuing of permits.

The Clerk has arranged for 'Early Warning email alerts' to be issued by the Ashington resident with a weather station when rainfall reaches 20mm in a 6 hour period. The Clerk had analysed rainfall data from as far back as 2006 and compared it to flooding incidents at Mill Lane and concluded that rainfall over 22mm in a day usually resulted in flooding. By setting the 'early warning' at 20mm this should give a small amount of time to make preparations for flooding. Data provided by the Ashington resident 'should not be relied upon for safety based decisions' and is provided without acceptance of any responsibility or liability – it is a local volunteer with a hobby that could be of some use to residents affected by flood waters. It is proposed to 'test' this system for a period of time and refine it as necessary – only time will tell if the system is set at the correct rainfall levels.

The Clerk has asked WSCC 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. No response yet.

The Clerk has made some investigations as to the surface water drains in the area around The Willows and Tudor Rose cottage. She can find no surface water drains that could have contributed to the flood. Discussions with other residents in the area concluded that the flood waters probably did not come up through drains but across gardens and through other gardens. The fire brigade did not pump flood waters into drains – they lifted manhole covers to divert water into sewage pipes and pumped water from the road into the stream on the other side of the culvert.

Investigations indicate that the old Millrace (used to run from the old Mill pond to the stream) no longer exists – was removed by Developers or blocked by garden walls/fences.

The Clerk had prepared a letter updating all those residents affected by flooding and would hand deliver it shortly. In it, she asked for volunteers to come forward to help out when flooding occurs.

KD C/F

079/11 Item 2 Ashington Community Minibus

Cllr Clark & the Clerk are gathering information.

KD C/F

080/11 Item 85 Community Action Plan

The Community Action Plan process document had been slightly amended after comments received from the Steering Group. Councillors approved the amendment and the document.

The Chairman & Clerk had provided a summary of projects that have been allocated to the Parish Council. Councillors were asked to study the document ready for discussion of the projects at the April Council meeting.

All C/F

081/11 Item 215 Hanging baskets

The Clerk had prepared a summary:

30 lampposts on London Road have been tested for corrosion and all passed. They do not need re-testing for 5 years.

The Parish Council owns sufficient baskets for 25 lampposts (50 baskets) but agreed in July 2010 to purchase baskets for 5 more lampposts (10 baskets) = £397 exc VAT (may be slightly higher as quote was done in 2010) from Calor Village of the Year Funds.

The PC also need to purchase new fixing brackets and neoprene strips to protect the lamppost (as per the contract the PC signed allowing us to put the baskets on the lampposts) = £246.38 exc VAT. The brackets could also be funded from the Calor money.

These are one-off costs.

Ongoing costs:

Councillors had previously agreed that the Ferring Country Centre would be asked to prepare 10 baskets (5 lampposts) at £8 per basket and the remaining 40 or 50 baskets would be prepared by Ferring Nurseries at £11.88 per basket. Therefore next years basket costs are either £555.20 or £674

Watering will be £60x16 weeks = £960 or £65x16 weeks = £1040 depending on whether new baskets are bought.

Summary: If new baskets are not bought = £1515.20 or if new baskets are bought = £1714. The PC would need to add £50-100 to both costs for Mark Adsett to put up/take down the baskets. The 2011/12 Budget for Hanging Baskets is £1900 therefore even with the additional baskets the PC would remain within budget.

The Chairman proposed that the PC go ahead with the purchase of the new baskets & brackets from Calor Village of the Year funds, and have them planted, installed and maintained as previously discussed and detailed above, and that the PC makes an ongoing provision in the accounts of £150 pa for the inspection and maintenance of the lampposts that is envisaged every 5 years. Agreed by all. **KD D**

CORRESPONDENCE

082/11 For action:

1. HDCP Annual Conference 4th April 5-8pm – need a volunteer to attend.
Councillors to inform the Clerk if they wish to attend.
2. Ashington resident – ditch behind no. 17 Covert Mead needs clearing (dead trees, blocked ditch etc). The matter is complicated by the fact that there are a number of different landowners responsible for different parts of the ditch. One member of the public informed the Council that he had sought advice from the Environment Agency about a similar problem elsewhere in the village and he had been advised to pipe the ditch using a 12” pipe and back-fill with soil. Councillors were not happy with this approach as the ditches not only served to pipe water but acted as ‘wildlife corridors’ and to obliterate this was unacceptable.
The Clerk confirmed that no-one in the area had moved their garden fences onto land that they did not own as has happened in other areas of the village.
It was agreed that Mark Adsett provide a quote for clearing the whole ditch, the Clerk speak to all parties involved and ask for a financial contribution from them and their permission for Mark to undertake the work. **KD C/F**
3. Invitation to Senior Persons Council 14th March 10.15-12.30pm, Washington Village Hall – needs a volunteer to attend. Councillors to inform the Clerk if they wish to attend.

4. NHS – consultation document on Service Redesign for Quality in West Sussex. Cllr Carver took the information to read.

083/11 For information:

1. WSCC Rights of Way service – WSCC are maintaining their 9 monthly cycle of maintenance.
2. Wheels to Work and Learn seminar
3. HDC – new District Plan 2011-15
4. HALC – minutes of last meeting
5. WSCC Education – it is unlikely that WSCC will consider building a new classroom at Ashington School as projected numbers show no significant problems with a lack of school places. The Clerk is arranging a meeting with WSCC, School, Frank Wilkinson & PC to discuss how best the s106 education monies can be spent.

084/11 General: None

085/11 PUBLIC ADJOURNMENT

The Chairman informed those present that he would be allowing a second public adjournment during the planning section of the meeting to allow members of the public to make comments on any planning applications.

Members of the public had nothing to ask at this stage.

086/11 PLANNING.

The Planning Committee met on 16th February and Councillors have been provided with a copy of the Minutes of the meeting. Agreed by all.

087/11 Proposed Open Composting Facility at Broadbridge Farm

The Clerk had written to Olus suggesting a pre-application meeting. Olus have confirmed that they will arrange a meeting with the PC when the time is right.

D

Cllr Carver moved to the public gallery.

088/11 Proposed Gypsy/traveller site at Penn Retreat – DC/10/1288 Proposed stationing of 6 traveller/gypsy pitches plus outbuildings and storage area. Formation of new access and hardstanding.

An amended application has been submitted to HDC. The Clerk had provided Councillors & members of the public with a summary of previous concerns (raised at Parish Council meetings), the new planning amendments and issues that the amendments do/do not address. The Chairman explained that the Clerk had been asked to arrange a meeting at HDC when Parish Councillors could discuss the application with Planning Officers. The application would be determined by HDC's Development Control South Committee in either March or April and any resident could attend. Residents who had sent letters to HDC would receive an invitation to the HDC

Committee meeting and could speak for 2 minutes if they notified HDC in advance (although speaking slots are limited to 3 people for and 3 people against the application).

The Chairman explained that he would open a public adjournment, allow members of the public time to speak. Once the adjournment was closed members of the public would have to sit quietly and listen to Councillors debate the application. There would be no opportunity for further comment from members of the public once the adjournment was closed.

Members of the public made the following comments:

1. We do not want this development, I will sell my house and move out of Ashington. The value of my property will drop. Will HDC reduce my Council Tax as the value of my property will drop?
2. A member of the public had his house valued by a local Estate Agent and was advised that the price would drop £30-40k if the application was permitted. He has sent the Estate Agents letter to HDC
3. House prices in the nearby area will drop 25% and the value of all houses in Ashington will be affected.
4. What is the touring caravan storage area – will they have people turning up at the site and staying for periods of time? There will be a lot of caravan movements.
5. What is the necessity for the utility blocks when the proposed mobile homes have their own bathrooms?
6. The applicant has a site in Washington with 8 caravans that are not all used. The applicant has shown he cannot manage this site well and there have been lots of problems at this site. These problems will simply move to Ashington if this application is approved.
7. Penn Gardens access road is not wide enough for large vehicles.
8. Members of the applicant's family have threatened residents of Penn Gardens. Some residents have been brave enough to write to HDC but most are too scared to voice their concerns. Why can't residents write to HDC anonymously or at least not have their name & address revealed online for all to see?
9. Ashington will see crime and problems with bogus callers escalate and the Wardens will be too scared to visit the site to deal with any issues. Even the Police are too scared to visit gypsy sites.
10. Will the families on site pay Council Tax and rates like other residents of Ashington?
11. A member of the public produced an article from a Brighton Newsletter which stated that Brighton & Hove City Council were paying £85,000 to provide security guards to prevent anti-social behaviour at a traveller site – would HDC be prepared to spend this amount of money on crime prevention in Ashington.
12. Ashington is an award winning village – this application will drag the village down.

13. There is one person living on site at present in a caravan although the planning permission states mobile homes only – HDC Enforcement have been informed but they have taken no action.
14. Sewage – they will throw it into the hedges. What happens when the Klargestor overflows – it will go straight into the ditch and pollute the Lancing Brook. The Klargestor would need to be managed and maintained – will they actually do this?
15. An Estate Agent has informed one resident that no houses in Ashington will sell if this application is approved.
16. Residents in Penn Gardens will be overlooked by the gypsy site.
17. This shouldn't be allowed in the countryside.
18. Resident of Penn Gardens had been visited (and threatened) three times by members of the applicant's family.
19. Police will not visit the site as they are too scared.
20. Ashington residents won't be able to leave commercial vehicles parked outside their houses overnight for fear that they or their contents might be stolen.
21. Some Penn Gardens residents have already paid out to have cctv installed to stop the threatening visits from the applicant's family members.
22. The Police have been informed about the threatening visits.
23. Penn Gardens is much improved of late – it is quiet residential area. It would become a no-go area if this application is permitted.
24. Where is the demonstrated need for the site?
25. Why does the applicant need this site when they have a perfectly good home in Storrington.
26. The applicant has not used the current planning permission on the site, Lamorna is not fully utilised so why do they need a site here at all.
27. Gypsy site should be put somewhere more suitable – somewhere away from residential homes and a place where they can find work.
28. They may not have primary school age children yet but long term there may be issues of children wanting places at the over-subscribed Ashington School.
29. Why have the Developers not started building the affordable homes at Meiros Farm yet – is it because they won't build them if this application gets approved? They won't be able to sell the market value homes at Meiros Farm if there is a gypsy site a few hundred metres away. The village will lose its much needed affordable homes and gain a gypsy site which is of no benefit to the village at all.
30. This application is prejudicing the development of affordable homes at Meiros Farm.
31. Will this application generate any s106 funds for Ashington – unlikely. There is no community benefit associated with this application.
32. Why are the applicants not applying for planning permission for a permanent gypsy site at Lamorna? They're just trying to make money by selling the site for market homes.

33. They will move their problems to Ashington, make life hell for residents for a few years and then apply to build market homes on the site. It is Development by the back door and shouldn't be allowed.
34. Why has District Councillor David Jenkins not declared an interest – he is a close family friend of the applicant.
35. A resident of Penn Gardens had been told by a member of the applicant's family that "we're going to make your life hell"

The Chairman thanked the members of the public for attending the meeting and giving their comments and closed the public debate.

The Chairman informed those present that the new amendments did address some of the concerns raised. However, there were a number that remain:

1. No details supplied to support the need for the number of pitches proposed. No details of which family members will be having the pitches, how many children, number of vehicles etc. The site has had planning permission for 3 mobile homes for a number of years but has not been used. How have the needs of the family risen from 3 pitches to 6 pitches in just a few years and where did the need for 10 come from. Is the applicant simply trying to secure as many pitches as will fit on the site and then work out who has the pitches at a later date?
2. No information about proposed management of the site. Given the reported problems at the applicant's Washington site it is difficult to establish how these issues will be managed any better at Penn Retreat. Aggressive & threatening behaviour has been shown to the residents of Penn Gardens. Members of the family seem prepared to use threats and abusive behaviour to nearby residents in order to help secure planning permission. If the applicant is happy to have an unauthorised site at Washington, manage it badly, have all sorts of problems then where is the evidence that they will make a better job of a site in Ashington? The applicant is already flouting planning rules by operating a site without planning permission how then are we to expect him to adhere to any planning conditions that HDC may impose.
3. Parking areas are only 4.8m wide x 6m long – may not be enough for the types of vehicles that the family own. HDC to check
4. Vehicular access to the mobile van storage area is unclear/possibly too narrow. Pitch 4 fence & grassed area could be affected by vehicles trying to access the mobile van storage area.
5. No space on site for parking of any commercial vehicles – do family members own any vehicles which can't be accommodated on site?
6. Pitches 1,2,3 have not been moved further away from the rear fences of the houses in Penn Gardens, although additional planting has been proposed.
7. Site design appears to follow a generic model (Housing Corporation document 'Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites Good Practice Guide May 2008) and is, therefore not specifically designed to accommodate the family's needs.
8. No details supplied of the proposed planting scheme – this is important as it will provide screening for the site.

9. Application implies that there are no children of primary school age in the applicant's immediate family and therefore there will be no impact on Ashington Primary School. This would need to be checked by HDC and appropriate conditions imposed to ensure only the applicant and his immediate family were to occupy the site. What happens when other families move onto the site or members of the family start to have their own children?
10. No details of where the sewage system will be installed – under which plot, means of access etc. HDC to verify. No details of how the sewage system will be managed/maintained.
11. No details supplied about surface water drainage. If the occupiers of the site have commercial vehicles where are these to be washed? Commercial vehicles are likely to be covered in oil and other residues and this must not be allowed to flow into the ditch that runs adjacent to the site as it will pollute the Lancing Brook (and flow on to the River Adur). A sump or petrol interceptor should be installed to trap contaminants or a balancing pond should be created on site.
12. Number of pitches is still too many compared to the size of the Penn Gardens community (6 pitches vs 24 houses in Penn Gardens). This would result in the gypsy/traveller population being almost 20% of the population in the immediate locality.
13. Perimeter 1.8m security fencing, 'heavy duty barrier' to restrict unauthorised entry onto the site, lighting, lockable bin/recycling areas (recommended by Sussex Police ref. PE/EW/HOR/10/31/A) have not been added to the amended plans.
14. Rectory Lane is well used by walkers, runners, cyclists as it is a quiet rural road. This application would result in an increase in the volume of large vehicles passing along the road. In addition, it is less likely that residents will want to pass the site. This will result in a loss of amenity for Ashington residents.
15. The access road to Penn Gardens is too narrow for mobile homes & commercial vehicles.

Councillors were very concerned about the information supplied about the effect on house prices in the village. It was agreed that the Clerk contact a local Estate Agent to make further enquiries.

Councillors were very concerned that the Human Rights of residents were being adversely affected.

Councillors were concerned that this application may be having an adverse effect on the development at Meiros Farm. The much-needed affordable homes at Meiros Farm should not be put in jeopardy. It was agreed that the Clerk make some enquiries to find out the reasons for the delay in the Developers starting building at Meiros Farm.

Cllr Carver left the meeting as he had a personal matter to attend.

The Chairman called for a signed vote by Councillors (Support, No Objection or Objection). The Clerk counted the voting slips and reported a unanimous objection.

It was proposed that the Clerk summarise all of the points made and seek advice from the Council's Planning Consultant given the concerns surrounding this application. The Clerk should enquire of the consultant's experience in these matters. Agreed by all.

KD C/F

089/11 Correspondence

1. HDC – consultation document on Managing Development in Horsham District. HDC are planning the number of houses needed in the District for the next 5 years (1200 new homes are needed). They are consulting on 3 options:
 - a. Unplanned growth – HDC would respond to ad hoc developments across the District
 - b. Limited Planned Growth – proposes 500 homes at both Southwater & Billingshurst plus other ad hoc developments
 - c. Notably Planned Growth – 1000 homes split between Billingshurst & Southwater with associated infrastructure + community benefits plus small number of additional sites elsewhere in the District

HDC has identified a number of smaller sites that could be suitable for development. This does not include any Ashington sites but does include 146 homes on the Abingworth Nurseries site in Thakeham (DC/10/1314). Councillors could not agree which option was best as all had positive and negative impacts. Councillors valued Ashington's Category 2 status as it prevented unwanted development but also stifled developments that could be of benefit to the village. It was noted that much of the land surrounding Ashington is owned by Developers or Landbanks and would be open to development if Category 2 status was lifted or if HDC adopted an ad-hoc development policy. The Clerk informed Councillors that part of the new Localism Bill could result in the Parish Council having to prepare a 'Neighbourhood (Development) Plan' where sites that the village would like to see developed could be identified. It was agreed that Councillors inform the Clerk within 1 week of their various comments and she send them to HDC.

All D

2. HDC – variation in planning conditions to allow use of one unit at Wiston Business Park for business other than 'engineering business or a local firm'

090/11 New Enforcement Allegations/Information

EN/11/0066 Construction of Garage in front garden - Oakwood House, Billingshurst Road

EN/11/0073 Extension of residential curtilage - The Springs, Malthouse Lane

091/11 Amendments

None

092/11 Applications

DC/11/0295 Removal of 6 No. existing car park lighting sticks and replacement with 3 No. lantern lights – Indian Cottage, London Road

Horsham District Council

093/11 Approvals

DC/11/0040 Surgery to 1 x Horse Chestnut (T1) Tree – 20 Turnpike Way

DC/10/2653 Retain existing storage container to service yard – Co-op, London Road

DC/10/2595 & 2596 Proposed single-storey side extension to form rear lobby, study area, cloakroom and enlarged kitchen (Listed Building Consent) – 22 Church Lane

094/11 Refusals

None

095/11 Withdrawals

None

096/11 Appeals made/ decisions

DC/10/1374 Removal of existing horse sand school and erection of 3 bed bungalow/chalet dwelling & garage – Woods Cottage, Park Lane

DC/10/1102 Retention of existing car park stick lights – Indian Cottage. It was agreed that the Clerk write in support of this. **KD D**

DC/10/1648 Variation of Condition 1 of planning permission AS/26/97 (21 seasonal caravans stationed on the site shall only be occupied from 1st March to 31st October inclusive) to allow for unrestricted occupancy of the holiday caravans with no restrictions on length of stay or letting period - Luckista Caravan Site Billingshurst Road.

The next Planning Committee meeting is scheduled for 16th March 2011 at 7.00pm in the Parish Office.

FINANCE

097/11 Correspondence

1. Letter from WSCC Pension Fund asking if the Parish Council wishes to take out 'Ill Health' Insurance cover - Briefly, each employers Pension contribution rate includes an element relating to ill health (the 'ill health budget'). When this is exceeded the Authority will invoice the employer for the additional strain cost. The ill health insurance can either be taken out as total or top up cover:

- Total Cover: All ill health retirements (subject to the conditions of the policy) will be funded by the insurance cover. An employer could then offset the cost of the insurance premium against the certified contribution rate.
- Top Up Cover: An alternative is to pay a premium for 'top up' cover. This would cover employers in the event that their 'ill health budget' was exceeded.

Further information can be supplied by WSCC if Councillors consider this to be worthwhile. It was agreed that the Clerk obtain quotes and check whether the Clerk was covered in the event that any of her children became unwell and she couldn't work.

KD C/F

2. The weedkilling contractor has reported that the annual cost of weedkilling will be £320 + VAT. This is a very small increase (£5) on 2010/11. Councillors were asked to approve. Agreed by all.

KD D

Cllr Stillwell moved to the Public Gallery and took no part in discussions.

3. Consider a request for a donation towards the cost of the Ashington Festival Day. The Parish Council has previously awarded £500 to this organization (£300 from Grants budget + £200 from Calor Village of the Year funds). It was agreed by all that the same amount and financial arrangements be awarded this year to Ashington Festival.

KD D

Cllr Stillwell resumed her place at the Council table.

098/11 Appointment of Internal Auditor

The Council needs to agree on the appointment of this years' Internal Auditor. Councillors are given a choice of two Auditors:

1. The current Auditor is happy to undertake the task again – "Qualifications: Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Bankers. The full list of Fellows is at http://www.ifslearning.ac.uk/membership/pdf/fellows_directory.pdf Experience: Worked for HSBC Bank for 35 years. Various appointments including Branch Manager, Corporate Banking Manager, Lecturer at Group Staff Training College and finally 6 years as a Lead Auditor (leading a team of 25+ internal bank auditors). My reports were used by the Bank's external auditors as part of the formal audit process. I have been Parish Clerk at Middleton-on-Sea since 2002 and also carry out internal audits for some (two) other Parish Councils.
Checks & Tests: I use a recognised sampling technique which I review each year before I commence the audit.
Cost £200 flat fee including all time & travel, collect the books and return them fully audited (including signed Annual Return) the next day.
2. A new Auditor – "I currently audit 40 Town & Parish Councils in Sussex and Surrey. I was a corporate bank manager, taking early retirement a few years ago. My experience was looking after companies with turnovers over £1m - £10m. This also provided me with an insight into the foibles of directors, accountants and solicitors! I

also consider it important to provide suggestions on best practice etc, which comes from dealing with a multitude of various councils. From the information that you have kindly provided, I would assess that the costs would be:

- one visit to you for the annual return and a review of the council's operation, procedures, controls and checks, with a follow-up report sent by post, 4 hours @ £44 per hour. The time involved would reduce for subsequent internal audits.
- travelling (to you and return to my house) would only be once for each audit , 40 miles @ 50p per mile. No other charge for travelling time.
- no VAT involved.

Total of @£196, would need to be accommodated in the Parish Office during the length of the audit with the Clerk on 'standby' to answer any questions.

The Chairman stated that SALC advise changing Auditors on occasions and have a list of Auditors known to be working for Parish & Town Councils in Sussex & Surrey.

Some Councillors felt that change would be good, others felt that stability was important. The Chairman called for a show of hands – 6 votes to keep the same Auditor, 2 votes to change. It was therefore agreed that the Clerk appoint the same Internal Auditor as previous years.

KD D

099/11 Income

Annual Interest on National Savings Account £353.98

100/11 Expenditure

		Cheque no.	
Mark Adsett	Gardeners contract payment	£446.25	1162
Mrs K. Dare	Clerks expenses (home & telephone)	£17	
	Postage	£1.15	
	Total	£18.15	1163
WSCC	Salary and on costs (February)	£738.51	1164
Plusnet	Broadband	£17.99	DD
Ashington School	Meeting cost	£20	1165
AiRS	West Sussex Rural Forum	£10	1166
Amberol Ltd	Hanging baskets (if agreed)	£476.40	1167
Signpost Solutions	Hanging basket fixings (if agreed)	£295.66	1168
SALC	Local Council Review magazine	£15.50	1169

ACCT	Parish Plan meeting room hire	£13.60	1170
D. Harbour	Travel costs to Senior Citizens Council	£8.80	1171
S. Fenn	First Responder expenses	£32.40	1172
Justfone Ltd	Electronic Info Board	£246.00	1173

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

101/11 MEETINGS

Cllr Clark had attended a SALC Chairmanship training course and had circulated comments by email.

102/11 MINOR MATTERS RAISED BY COUNCILLORS

Cllr Stillwell would send the Clerk a list of potholes in the Hillcrest Drive area of the village.

JS/KD D

Cllr Strudwick reported the constant flow of water across the slip road outside Bridge Garage. The Clerk would report to WSCC Highways again.

KD D

Cllr Norton reported that the drainage works outside Meadow House had been completed.

103/11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held at **7.45pm on Thursday 7th April 2011 at Ashington School, Foster Lane.**

May meeting - The PC elections on May 5th means that we need to look at our meeting schedule for May. After Election day the new Council does not take office until 9th May and the law requires that the newly formed PC hold its Annual General Meeting (the one where the Chairman is elected) within 14 days of an election ie between May 9th and 23rd.

The Clerk has looked at all the options, and has discussed them with the Chairman. There are complications to do with the 3 working day notice periods required for meetings etc, which means that basically there are only 2 options that seem to make sense:

1. we meet as usual on May 5th for our regular monthly meeting (as whatever the outcome of the election we are legally in office until May 9th), and then the newly

elected council has a very brief meeting on May 19th to elect the chairman and complete the AGM legal formalities

2. we delay our May meeting until May 19th and combine the monthly meeting with the AGM formalities

The downside of option 1 is that we potentially have 2 meetings in May (for those re-elected).

The downside of option 2 is that there will be a 6 week gap between the April meeting and the May meeting (and there could be business that needs attending to), followed by just 2 weeks before the June meeting

The Chairman proposed that Councillors approve option 1. Agreed by a majority vote.
Clerk to book a meeting venue. **KD D**

The meeting finished at 10.10pm

Signed.....

Date.....

104/11 Items awaiting action:

Item No	Description	Last Action & Date
32b	Spur road of The Sands & Viney Close – streetlights & laybys	WSCC & HDC dealing with. Persimmon are not co-operating and HDC/WSCC continue to pursue the matter (Nov 09)
	Village seats/noticeboards need repainting	Clerk to organise 2011
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

105/11 WSCC Highways Issues

Fault	Date reported	Reference no	Comments
Trees on north side of recreation ground need cutting back	24 th 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 rd 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