



Ashington Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting held on 4th August 2011 at 7.45 p.m. in Ashington School, Foster Lane, Ashington

**Present: Councillors M. Woolley (Chairman), K. Wood, R. Brennan, J. Stillwell, T. Kearney, D. Harbour, B. Norton
Parish Clerk Karen Dare
District Councillor Roger Arthur
County Councillor Frank Wilkinson
2 members of the public**

255/11 APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE

Cllrs N. Clark, R. Lancaster, N. Carver (all holiday), Cllr R. Strudwick (business), Neighbourhood Wardens Peter Newell & Jayne Jeffrey (meeting).

256/11 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

The Chairman reminded Councillors that previous declarations still stand.

257/11 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 7th July 2011 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman. Proposed by Councillor Brennan and seconded by Councillor Norton, and agreed.

258/11 REPORT FROM THE NEIGHBOURHOOD WARDENS

The Clerk read the following report:

Problems with Drugs.

Our work towards tackling drugs in Ashington has continued this month with high visibility patrols in hot spot areas. Along with this we have been talking to the young people trying to get them to attend a drugs awareness workshop to heighten their knowledge of the dangers surrounding drug abuse. Also this month working closely with the Anti-Social Behaviour Team in Horsham a number of individuals have now been signed up to a Voluntary Behaviour Contract. This sets down clear rules surrounding behaviour and conduct specifically tailored to individuals.

Friday Night Club

We have been looking at ways in which we can both engage with local young people and make “better” use of the Village facilities. Having seen the recent success of the “snack wagon” we decided that we would like to continue getting this to Ashington. However sadly the youth service were unable to provide this. So taking the bull by the horns we have secured an initial 6 weeks funding from Saxon Weald to set up a similar project in the Ashington youth club. We are aiming to provide a more informal drop in environment encouraging the youngsters of the village to drop in and talk with us as well as socialise in a safe environment. At the same time it is our aim to open the community centre ball court for “free time” use. If the initial 6 week trial proves to be a success then our aim is to continue this on a weekly basis. Our hope is to get this underway starting Friday 5th August.

Highways Signage

Following recent patrols of the village we have noticed several road signs are broken. We have reported these to Highways and hopefully they will be repaired shortly.

Litter

Owing to the recent disappearance of a litter bin from the skate park we have replaced it with a new one. We have also seen a significant difference since we have placed two bins behind the youth club in the area where young people congregate a lot. We have even seen “proper” use of the recycling bin placed there.

Dog Foul Signage

Whilst on patrols around the village we have noticed that a good percentage of the anti-dog fouling signs have become tatty. We have started the process of changing these and updating them. Should there be any that we miss please don't hesitate to get in touch. We have noticed that signage in general around the village is a little tired and will be looking at ways to improve this.

Carnival

With the carnival soon to be upon us we have been working closely with the carnival committee to prepare for the big day. We have managed to ensure that there will be a strong level of cover from the wardens, 5 wardens working throughout the day. We will be working from 8am until 12pm or later if required.

Behaviour in skate park.

Since last months' complaints from the skate park behaviour and bad language we have been keeping close tabs on the area. Recently one of the particularly difficult individuals has actually moved away from the area which has had a positive impact on the rest of the group who use the skate park. There is still some work to be done but we are making clear inroads with the youngsters who use the park.

Elderly and Vulnerable Visits.

We have visited a number of our elderly and vulnerable residents this month and are always keen to learn of anyone else that we haven't been to see yet. We are trying to collate as accurate records as possible to enable us to keep close contact with those who might need a little extra support.

We have recently made contact with the Residential home in London Road introducing ourselves to the residents and carers. At present there is in fact only one resident there.

We are planning a get together / party at the end of November for all residents aged 60 and over along with any disabled too. The event will comprise an evening of entertainment and light refreshments provided by the junior wardens. Our plan is to offer this event out a wider area however tickets will be limited. Fully details will follow. Arrangements too are being made for transport to and from the event.

Junior Wardens

With our term time sessions now completed we rewarded our young wardens with a trip to Chessington World of Adventures. This was to say a thank you for their commitment and hard work. The day was a success and was enjoyed by all. As for what's next we are busy putting together a structured itinerary for next term and are happy to say we have managed to get sponsorship from Saxon Weald for new uniforms.

The Chairman asked the Clerk to thank the Wardens for their report.

The Chairman asked if Councillors or members of the public had any questions for the Wardens:

1. A member of the public had reported 4 youths standing on the new swings in the Turnpike Way play area to the Wardens on 2nd August. There had been no answer on the Wardens phone, he had left a message but they had not yet responded to him. Clerk to pass to the Wardens. **KD D**

The Chairman thanked the members of the public for their comments.

The Chairman reported that a Wardens Steering Group meeting had taken place on 2nd August and the Clerk had circulated minutes. The Wardens & HDC had produced an Action Plan for 2011/12 which is a comprehensive document linking their activities to the Parish Plan and their own Development Plans. In addition the Clerk had circulated a document detailing crime in Ashington for the last 3 years. Councillors were asked to study the documents and these will be discussed the next meeting. **C/F**

259/11 YOUNG PERSONS ADJOURNEMENT

None present.

260/11 REPORT FROM DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS

District Councillor Roger Arthur reported that:

1. He was monitoring the planning applications at Lamorna and Penn Retreat. He would await the HDC review of gypsy/traveller sites and would like to join the Parish Council meeting with the HDC consultant when it is arranged.
2. He would be writing to WSCC to ask them to confirm that they will be delivering the grit to villages in the winter, as they did in winter 2010/11. There was some concern that WSCC were planning to cut this service as part of cost saving measures.

The Chairman thanked District Councillor Arthur for his report.

County Councillor Frank Wilkinson reported that:

1. He had asked the CLC to put the speed limit reduction on Water Lane, Wiston to Hole Street, Ashington onto the agenda for the next meeting on 28th September at 7pm. It was important that a member of the Parish Council attend the meeting. The reduction in speed limit would carry more weight as it was now supported by both villages.
2. WSCC Highways department was being re-organised and the new structure would be finalised shortly.

The Chairman thanked County Councillor Wilkinson for his report.

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

261/11 Item 32b Spur road of The Sands & Viney Close – streetlights & laybys

WSCC has now adopted Willard Way, Foster Lane & Covert Mead. Still no progress on the adoption of Viney Close.

KD To list

262/11 Item 85 Community Action Plan

An updated list of the projects has been added to the minutes. The Chairman reminded Councillors to read the list prior to meetings and to raise any questions at the meeting.

KD C/F

263/11 Item 216 Queens Diamond Jubilee (2-5 June 2012)

The Clerk is arranging the first meeting.

KD C/F

264/11 Item 218 East side nature trail

The Clerk has explained the situation to the resident, who will speak to others about fundraising opportunities. Given the 0% precept rise and the lack of funds in this financial year it was proposed to review this item later in the year at budget time.

Agreed by all.

KD To list

265/11 Item 219 Quality Parish Council Status

The Parish Council's Quality Status runs out in December 2011. We have until March 2012 to re-apply (3 months from expiry). SALC will be continuing with the Quality Parish Council award but this has no formal place in the new Localism Bill.

Under the new Localism Bill a Parish Council will have to meet whatever criteria are set out in the Bill by the Government before they will be awarded the 'power of general competence'. Early indications are that the criteria will include a qualified Clerk (which the current Clerk is) but there are no other indications at this stage. The 'power of general competence' will allow Parish Councils to take on services that are currently the function of principal authorities (HDC, WSCC).

Issues:

1. We have seen no tangible benefit to us being a Quality Council in the last 3.5 years that we have held it.
2. The Clerk has done some quick statistics and 51 parishes (out of 234) in East & West Sussex hold Quality Council status = 21.8%
3. The cost to the Council for re-accreditation is £235. The cost of re-accreditation is the same as the cost of a normal application ie there is no cost difference if we let it lapse and apply from scratch.
4. Preparation of the portfolio required to submit to SALC will take at least 20 hours of Clerks time and can't be fitted into the normal working week.
5. The Parish Council has a poor training record and would possibly fail if we re-applied for Quality Status

Councillors need to ask themselves:

1. Does the Council let the QPC lapse and apply for the power of general competence once the Localism Act comes into force?
2. Is the Council interested in taking on services from Principal Authorities - if it is not then it doesn't need to be a QPC or have the power of general competence
3. Do we try to keep our QPC status?

Councillors agreed to let the QPC status lapse and await information from the Localism Act. **D**

CORRESPONDENCE

266/11 For action:

1. HDC - The Scrutiny & Overview Committee at Horsham District Council has recently established a new working group to review traffic in villages. It would like invite the parish and neighbourhood councils to provide any evidence of any *general* problems faced in your village, in order to create an evidence database. Councillors were confused as to why HDC should be interested in traffic issues when this is more relevant to WSCC. Parking on pavements was regarded as a problem, parking at Turnpike Way and Church Lane junctions. Clerk to respond to HDC. **KD D**



2. HDC – review of Polling Stations. It is agreed that the Clerk respond to state that the Parish is happy with the current polling station. **KD D**
3. Woodland Trust – does the Parish want to create a Jubilee Wood? It was agreed that the Parish has no suitable land.
4. HDC – are running planning training sessions for Parish Councillors on 21st Sept (afternoon or evening session). Two Councillors are invited to attend. Cllrs Woolley and either Harbour or Stillwell to attend. **KD D**

267/11 For information:

1. WSCC – cuts to bus services. It is proposed that the Sunday service to Worthing is cut and that the no. 74 service no longer stop in Ashington but this is replaced by the no. 72/73 service.
2. HALC – minutes of meeting. HDC had discussed their project to identify suitable gypsy sites.

268/11 General:

1. ERHA newsletter
2. The Clerk magazine

269/11 PUBLIC ADJOURNMENT

Members of the public asked the following questions or made the following comments:

1. Overgrowing vegetation adjacent to the Meiros Farm development – the Clerk has already reported this to the Developer.
2. At the Public Exhibition held by Barratt David Wilson the representative didn't seem to know about the restriction on the affordable homes being made available to locals only. It was explained that BDW will build the affordable homes but ERHA will organise occupiers of the homes and that a s106 legal agreement had been signed to ensure that the affordable homes were for people with strong local connections only. The Clerk was asked to get a copy of the s106 agreement. **KD D**
3. Why did WSCC organise grass verge cutting when it was bin day. The bins were not moved and the verges look a mess when the bins are put away. **FW C/F**
4. Why had the PC not arranged the first meeting of the Diamond Jubilee Committee? The Clerk responded that she had not had time to chase Councillors for dates.
5. Traffic issues for villages (Correspondence for Action Item 1) should include – parking on pavements eg outside McKinnons Garage, speed bumps causing noise nuisance for neighbours, not slowing traffic down because they are too low or being too high that they damage vehicles, speed bumps always falling apart and needing repairing. Pinch points may be a better solution. County Councillor Frank Wilkinson responded that the speed bumps had won an award when they were first installed and to replace them would be very costly and the Parish would need to use s106 funds if it was to ask for them to be replaced. Many residents living near speed bumps had reported noise and vibration concerns to WSCC Highways.

6. Flooding had occurred at the speed bumps in The Sands. Clerk to report to WSCC Highways. KD D

270/11 PLANNING.

The Planning Committee met on 20th July and Councillors have been provided with a copy of the minutes. Agreed by all.

271/11 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.

After a period of silence, this week the Chairman received communications from John Longhorn (agent for the landowner). It looks like:

- Survey work so far at Penn Retreat, and Southern Water reports, appear to show no problems for development.
- Barratt David Wilson remain keen to acquire the site and, subject to planning permission, would develop it with a mix of affordable and market homes alongside their development at Meiros Farm, where work has just started (however, as we have always acknowledged, planning permission cannot be taken for granted given the site is outside of the built up area).
- The site owner is considering his options, including:
 - developing the site himself; or with another developer
 - continuing with the existing planning application for 6 traveller\gypsy units
- A hold-up in the process seems to be that:
 - whilst the owner has recently secured approval for market homes at Lamorna, the s106 conditions are seen by the owner as being onerous, and he is seeking a relaxation with HDC
 - until Lamorna is resolved, the owner does not have the funds to progress any housing development at Penn Retreat

The Parish Council will continue to keep in touch with both the site owner and HDC to monitor the situation, and we continue to seek the development we have discussed and agreed in principle at previous PCs. However, the possibility continues to exist, as it always has, that the planning application currently with HDC (DC/10/1288) for 6 traveller\gypsy units will be reactivated. If it is, the Parish Council will need to act in line with what we have previously agreed at PC meetings.

A member of the public reported that she had been informed by Barratt David Wilson Homes that they had made an offer to purchase Penn Retreat but that they had not heard back from the owner. Their offer had a deadline as after this time it would no longer be financially viable for them to develop the site (because progress on their Meiros Farm site would be too advanced).

Cllr Stillwell reported that at the recent HALC meeting HDC's Gypsy & Traveller site Consultant had reported that potential gypsy sites would not be considered as suitable if they were located adjacent to existing dwellings. Sites considered to be suitable for gypsy/travellers should be located away from residential areas. Some existing sites were not considered to be suitable as gypsy/traveller sites and would no longer be taken forward by HDC as potential sites.

Councillors were reminded that the land owner probably did not need the gypsy site for his family as evidenced by the recent discussions about putting market homes on the site. Therefore, there is a clear lack of need established.

HDC had discussed with the landowner the need for named individuals from his family to occupy the proposed traveller pitches on the site and this would be reinforced by an appropriate s106 agreement.

The Council was informed that the need for market homes at Washington was never established. HDC's restrictions on the homes at Lamorna being offered to local residents only was imposed because none of the houses on the development was 'affordable' and the proposed development needed to give some benefit to the local community. Any proposed changes to the s106 agreement on development at Lamorna would be required to be discussed by HDC's Development Control Committee.

It was agreed that because of the lack of progress on this issue the item would be deleted from forthcoming agendas until progress has been made. **D**

272/11 Correspondence

From Nick Hughes (English Rural Housing Association) - BDW confirmed they have acquired the site and are currently revising the draft development agreement for circulation to our solicitors. I will drop a line, next week with a copy to yourself, to those who have registered giving the basic information. Construction of the affordable dwellings is not scheduled to start until January 2012 with completion in June 2012, which I expect is towards the end of their programme. Nick Hughes will attend a Parish Council meeting sometime in the autumn.

273/11 New Enforcement Allegations/Information

EN/11/0357 Use of property to run a builders business – Dignity, 2 Timberlea Close

There was no news from the EA on the works on land to the west of Penn Retreat.

274/11 Amendments

None

275/11 Applications

DC/11/0701 Retrospective permission sought for replacement stable building – Triggles House, Hole Street

The Council object to the application on the grounds that:

1. The new stable building is larger than the one it replaced
2. The size of the new building is excessive compared to the size of the plot and Triggles House itself
3. The planning application does not clearly show the size of the new building compared to that which it has replaced.
4. The new building is lit up at night and this contributes to light pollution in the area.

Horsham District Council

276/11 Approvals

DC/11/1095 Proposed first floor extension – Spindleberry, Cottage Mill Lane

DC/11/1067 Repositioning of dwelling on plot 12, 500mm to the east along with a reduction in the adjacent footpath's width from 2m to 1.8m and replacement of single garage with garage / store to plot No. 34 – Meiros Farm, Rectory Lane

277/11 Refusals

None

278/11 Withdrawals

None

279/11 Appeals made/ decisions

None

The next Planning Committee meeting is scheduled for 17th August 2011 at 7.00pm. It is proposed to move this to 24th as the Clerk is unable to attend on 17th. Agreed by all.

FINANCE

280/11 Correspondence

Play area repairs (required following the RoSPA report):

1. Safety surface repair kit £84 + VAT. Agreed by all.
2. Safety surface cleaner (moss & algae remover) £9.49 (will need to do a patch test first to make sure it doesn't damage the rubber safety surface). Agreed by all.
3. The Clerk has asked for a quote for other repairs **C/F**

Quarterly bank reconciliation – the Clerk reports that the Chairman has reviewed and signed the quarterly bank reconciliation. Agreed by all.

Quarterly budget report – the Clerk reports the following areas of budgetary overspend:

1. Clerks travelling expenses – budget set £0, actual expenditure £22.88

2. Planning consultants – budget set £0, actual expenditure £817.69
Both can be met from the contingency budget (£2000). Agreed by all.

281/11 Income

None

282/11 Expenditure

		Cheque no.	
Mark Adsett	Gardeners contract payment	£475.00	
	Hanging basket watering (£65 x 4)	£260	1216
Mrs K. Dare	Clerks expenses (home & telephone)	£17	
	Print cartridges	£19.90	
	Total	£36.90	1217
WSSC	Salary and on costs (July)	£820.05	1218
Plusnet	Broadband	£17.99	DD
Ashington School	Meeting cost	£20	1219
ACCT	Skatepark insurance	£253.13	1220
SOS Systems	Photocopier	£47.92	1221
HDC	Election Cost (admin fee)	£210	1222

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

283/11 MEETINGS

Cllr Stillwell had attended a HALC meeting (see Minute 271/11)

Cllr Stillwell had attended the Wardens Steering Group meeting:

1. Could the Parish Council write to the Co-op Regional Manager to complain about the stock blocking the aisles, litter blowing from the store into nearby residential areas, the very young workforce (they are felt to be vulnerable to robbery as the manager is rarely present at opening/closing times), the Manager is rude and unresponsive, the chiller cabinet handles are broken and are dangerous. Many residents have complained about the store and it was felt that a letter from the Clerk is necessary. Agreed by all. **KD D**
2. The Parish Council should review the Wardens role in litter picking around the village – it was undermining their position and taking up too much of their time. The Clerk would make some enquiries and present at the next meeting. **C/F**

284/11 MINOR MATTERS RAISED BY COUNCILLORS

None

285/11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held at **7.45pm on Thursday 1st September 2011** at **Ashington School, Foster Lane.**

The meeting finished at 8.55pm

Signed.....

Date.....

286/11 Items awaiting action:

Item No	Description	Last Action & Date
1	Mill Lane flooding	EA to organise meeting with WSCC/HDC/PC July 2011
	Village seats/noticeboards need repainting	Clerk to organise 2011
	No information has been received from WSCC Pension Fund about the likely cost of Ill Health retirement.	

287/11 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	WSCC will undertake a review of the speed limit on Hole Street prior to it being placed on Chanctonbury CLC Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO) List. The review will investigate the current traffic speeds and compare the location against West Sussex County Council Speed Limit Policy (2010).	March 2011