



# Ashington Parish Council

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## Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 11th April 2024 at 7.45pm Ashington School, Foster Lane

### **Present:**

**Councillors:** S. Ball (Vice Chair), N. Carter, P. Howie, T. Kearney, P. Kerrey, G. MacPherson, J. Morris, T. Moss, N. Spiers (Chair), M. Woolley

### **Also present:**

**Clerk:** Lee English

**Horsham District Councillors:** Philip Circus, Alan Manton

**County Councillor:** Paul Marshall

**Members of the Public:** 7

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The Chairman reminded members of the public the requirement that they limit their participation to the Public Adjournment section of the meeting. If Members of the Public have questions for Police/Wardens & District/County Councillors, then the Clerk will pass these on if these individuals have left the meeting.

Members of the Public are reminded that Standing Orders allow for 5 minutes maximum participation.

### **096/24 Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received and approved from:

Councillors: B. Wallace

Neighbourhood Wardens: Christina Arnold and Bryony Sparks

### **097/24 Declaration of Interests and notification of change of interest**

The Chairman reminded Councillors that previous declarations still stand (as defined under the Localism Act 2011).

Cllr MacPherson declared an interest in item 120/24 - planning application DC/24/0009

### **098/24 Minutes of the Parish Council meeting 14th March 2024**

To approve and sign the minutes of the PC meeting dated 14th March 2024.

Proposed by Cllr Woolley seconded by Cllr Kerrey and agreed by all.

### **099/24 Neighbourhood Wardens Report (Appendix 1) and report from Steering Group**

Nothing raised from the report and nothing new to report from the steering group.

### **100/24 Reports from District & County Councillors**

County Councillor Marshall –

1. A **Highways** meeting had been held earlier that day and he would let Cllrs update re this.

2. **Hooklands Farm WSCC/013/24** – He had met with the planning officer to raise concerns about the application including –
  - HGV transport movements of approx. 250,000 miles over 2 years.
  - Mitigation reports indicated there was nothing to mitigate.
  - There is usually the requirement to recycle an element of the waste imported and there is no mention of a recycling station to undertake this.
  - Concern regarding the loss of overhead vegetation, and of trees at the site entrance.
  - Capacity of traffic on a rural lane and potential damage to the road structure.
  - Concern that this is a scheme seeking an income for importing inert waste.
  - Whole application is for the main benefit of one property and disproportionate.
  - Disappointing that Shipley Parish had submitted a neutral consultation response.
  - Recommendation that this application goes to the planning committee.

District Councillor Circus –

1. **Reform of Planning Committee Structure** – the new administration have been looking to reform the structure, but may now not do so. There was concern that members may be denied the chance to vote or have any representation on any issues in their own ward.
2. **HDC Local Plan** – he had met with Martin Boffey (Leader of the Council – HDC) and had fed back that had there been greater respect for local neighbourhood plans, there would have been much less opposition to the review of the Local Plan. Support had been lost from parish councils as a result of this, as local communities views were not being respected.
3. **Swan Walk** – HDC was investigating whether to buy this, but the idea has been dropped.
4. **Drill Hall** – HDC are planning to sell the hall to a religious group, but there is concern they will be able to fund it due to the investment required on the building, and running costs.

District Councillor Manton –

1. **HDC Local Plan** – Updated that there had been 1,600 representations on the plan.
2. **Drill Hall** – he reiterated the substantial costs regarding the hall and was concerned that despite their enthusiasm, whether the group could practically manage the hall.

Questions –

1. **Drill Hall** – it was asked whether purchase of the hall by a religious group would curtail certain uses of the hall for cultural reasons, such as for beer festivals, art exhibitions etc. This is unknown.
2. **Horsham Association of Local Councils (HALC)** – Cllr Moss raised the issue that at a recent HALC meeting, there had been widespread and significant negative comments regarding the HDC Local Plan and also the changing culture of the planning committee in dealing with the parish councils. Cllr Circus responded that with a large intake of relatively new and inexperienced District Councillors (2023), he felt it had been an opportunity for the planning officers to take back some of the power to themselves and to diminish the role of councillors in the planning process.

The Chair thanked Cllrs Marshall, Circus and Manton and they left the meeting.

**101/24 Public Adjournment** – Members of the public can ask questions

1. **Pothole at Green Hedges, Church Lane** – a resident enquired if this was due to be repaired? The clerk updated that this was raised at the meeting with Highways earlier that day; they confirmed it was on their work list and they were reminded that the developers had promised to make good the footpath on completion of the development.
2. **Americas Wood** – a resident raised the issue of the footpath through this wood and the poor state of it, and asked whether there was anything that could be done. It was confirmed

that this is a WSCC Public Right of Way and that residents could report issues. Clerk to forward details to resident.

Clerk

### **102/24 The Parish Yard update**

Surrey Hills Solicitors have confirmed Land Registry have finally completed registration for the cancellation of the previous lease registered against the title (Ashington Autos).

Further to request for legal advice at last meeting, additional quotes have been obtained for the formal drawing up of a licence for the Nursery to park at the yard.

- Quote 1 - £1,100-1,250 +vat approx. (WSALC recommended. Experienced with parish councils)
- Quote 2 - £950 +vat approx. (Experienced with parish councils)
- Quote 3 - £350-500 +vat approx. (Local solicitor)

A discussion was had, and there was majority approval to instruct solicitors for quote 2 (Wellers Law Group). Although there had been a cheaper quote, it was felt it would be prudent to use a solicitor that was experienced in parish councils. Clerk to instruct solicitors.

Clerk

### **103/24 Speedwatch update**

Another month balancing volunteer availability and days where there was a chance of no rain. Three sessions took place in the Billingshurst Road resulting in 68 drivers reported for exceeding the speed limit out of a total of 679 vehicles - precisely 10%, an improvement.

Still awaiting availability for installation of the VAS poles.

### **104/24 Green initiatives update**

1. **Wildflower seed planting** – awaiting better weather to continue sowing seeds.
2. **Ponds** – Sussex Wildlife Trust (SWT) are interested in looking at our 4 ponds in the village.
3. **Swift Bricks** – Information received from SWT and to be passed to Elivia Homes.

Cllr Ball noted the life ring is on the ground near the Posthorses playground pond.

Clerk

### **105/24 Highways update**

The clerk and Cllrs Kerrey and MacPherson had met with Paul Marshall and Adam Bazley (Highways Area Manager) that morning for a comprehensive meeting concerning outstanding Highways issues.

1. **London Road proposed pedestrian crossing** – this was discussed as part of the wider issue of parking and traffic volume on the road but considered to be unlikely to be implemented due to the cost being in the region of £3.2m, and particularly given the fact it is not near a school. Other options were discussed such as a crossing patrol person. It was discussed that as the crossing and parking issues (in part) were connected to the Nursery, as a commercial business that they should perhaps take more ownership of the problem. It was agreed that Cllr Kerrey approach the Nursery to discuss a crossing patrol person. **PK**
2. **London Road traffic and parking** – A further meeting will be arranged for 3 months time to arrange an end-to-end review of the road to look at the issues holistically and to avoid piecemeal solutions. It was confirmed that there is funding for both Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO) and Highways schemes.
3. **Meetings** – It was proposed to schedule a meeting with Highways every 3 months.
4. **Green Hedges** – Highways confirmed that they were aware of the road and footpath issues.
5. **Salt bin** – location confirmed between Penn Gardens and Mousdell Close. Permission to site bin agreed, pending licence agreement.
6. **The Close** – a site visit was undertaken and Highways to progress matter re drainage issues.
7. **A24 slip road flooding** north end of village – noted recent new issues, particularly under the bridge, and asked Highways to investigate. It was noted that debris is washing down onto the carriageway on the north bound slip road.

8. **Billingshurst Road flooding** – issues discussed regarding corner near Spear Hill.
9. **Muttons Lane signage** – lack of signage discussed, and response received that several signs will have been passed at the beginning of the “control zone” to get to that point.
10. **Vehicle Activated Speed sign** – escalated to try and resolve delay in poles being installed.
11. **Roads infrastructure and housing developments** – Cllr Marshall agreed to set up a separate meeting with the Highways planners to discuss the wider infrastructure issues regarding London Road, Rectory Lane, Church Lane associated with proposed developments.

Question – Cllr Moss asked whether with regards to the road and footpath in Church Lane (Green Hedges) the developers were liable to any financial contributions to repair the damage. Response was that Highways are aware of the situation. The clerk updated that further to a previous visit from James Strachan (then Assistant Area Highway Manager), that the developer had given assurance that they would repair the footpath when the development was complete.

Question – Cllr Carter, raised the point that if the parking agreement goes ahead for the Nursery staff to park at the Parish Yard, that this would temporarily disperse vehicles away from the London Road, and should be considered when the review is done of the whole road.

#### **106/24 Annual Review of ACCT/PC agreement**

ACCT are considering the feasibility of a suitable space for a parish office. It was noted that at the last ACCT meeting their Treasurer had mentioned the possibility of remuneration from the council for the space. No figure has been mentioned yet. It was discussed whether at this point the council wish to hire an office? It was mentioned that the parish council are still paying the Public Works Loan that was taken out to enable completion of the Community Centre and that over £155k will have been paid by the council when the loan payments are complete (4 years time). It was acknowledged that there are varying opinions from Cllrs regarding the matter. Discussions ongoing. **CFWD**

#### **107/23 Emergency Plan**

HDC emergency plan coordinator has been contacted – awaiting update. **CFWD**

#### **108/24 Maintenance works**

1. **Warminghurst playground fence** – requires various sections to be repaired. Broken uprights, palings and previous repairs are failing, and it is considered beyond economic repair and more cost effective to replace in full. Photos sent to Cllrs. Parish council contractor would need to undertake this work outside of his usual allocated hours.  
£1010.74 +vat materials and £1320.00 labour = £2330.74 (+ vat on materials only).  
Works and quote approved by Cllrs. **Clerk**
2. **Fence behind Willard Way, next to pond area** – broken rails and fence posts. It was discussed that the path will be upgraded by Elivia Homes in the next year or 2 and that it was prudent to wait until this is undertaken. It was also unclear as to who had installed the fence originally and it may have been the developers. Cllrs agreed to remove broken sections and monitor the situation. **Clerk**

#### **109/24 Correspondence received for action**

1. **HALC/HDC joint meeting** – 6pm, Monday 29th April, The Capitol Theatre, Horsham. To include updates on the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plans and a discussion regarding outcomes of the recent HALC survey. Clerk will try and attend. **Clerk**

#### **110/24 Correspondence received for Councillor information**

1. **WSCC new Chief Executive** is announced – Leigh Whitehouse

2. **Highways** have paused non-statutory activities for an initial period of 4 weeks, to enable them to deal with the high volumes of enquiries, following unprecedented levels of rain and named storms since October 2023. Info passed to Cllrs.

#### **111/24 Correspondence received for public interest – Appendix 2**

#### **112/24 Meetings attended by Councillors**

Cllrs Kerrey and MacPherson – 11th April – Highways meeting

Cllr Carter – 27th March – ACCT monthly meeting

#### **113/24 Matters raised by Councillors**

**Wardens** – Cllr Carter requested that there be a breakdown of costs from HDC as to what we are paying for regarding the Wardens, and in particular, are we paying for the hire of their office, which we were advised had been removed this last year by ACCT. Clerk updated that this had been requested from HDC and that it would be chased. **Clerk**

**Fly tipping** – Cllr Ball updated they had submitted a report to HDC regarding a tyre left in the bus stop opposite the Pharmacy.

#### **114/24 Chairman’s Announcements**

Cllr Spiers updated that further to both him and Cllr Ball notifying their intention to step down as Cllrs, that nominations for Chair and Vice-Chair be submitted to the clerk by the 3rd May, for voting on at the Annual Parish Council meeting on 9th May.

Cllrs were also reminded to think about the committees and working parties that they are currently on as these will be reviewed also.

Clerk will update HDC regarding the 2 Cllr vacancies and start advertising for new Cllrs. **Clerk**

#### **PLANNING**

#### **115/24 Minutes of the Planning Committee meetings 22nd February and 28th March 2024**

To approve and sign the minutes of the planning meeting dated 22nd February 2024

Proposed by Cllr Spiers, seconded by Cllr Morris and agreed by all.

28th March cancelled as no new applications.

#### **116/24 Planning Correspondence**

1. **Hooklands Farm WSCC/013/24** – The council’s response was passed to County and District Cllrs. Cllr Marshall has spoken to the planning officer as updated earlier in the meeting.

**117/24 HDC Local Plan Review Update** - No update.

**118/24 Neighbourhood Plan – Chanctonbury Nurseries ASH10** - No update.

**119/24 Neighbourhood Plan – Land West of Ashington School ASH11** - No update.

#### **120/24 Planning Applications –**

**DC/24/0009** Surgery to 1 x oak. Ashington Rectory, Mill Lane, RH20 3BX

No objection (Cllr MacPherson not involved in discussion).

**DC/24/0343** Erection of a single storey, single vehicle extension to existing garage. Woods Cottage, Muttons Lane, RH20 3AL

No objection.

#### **121/24 New Enforcement Allegations**

**EN/24/0117** Alleged: construction of single storey extension with balcony above to south elevation, and enlargement of existing balcony on west elevation. The Lawns, London Road, RH20 3JR

## 122/24 Horsham District Council Decisions

**Approvals** – none

**Prior Notifications** – none

**Refusals** – none

**Withdrawals** – none

**Appeals** – none

### FINANCE

#### 123/24 Correspondence received

1. **Mileage rate** – to be increased from 40p mile to 45p mile. HMRC approved rate. Approved.
2. **Quarterly bank reconciliation** for 31st March 2024 has been prepared and approved by Cllr Woolley.
3. **Quarterly budget report** for 31st March 2024 shows several areas of overspend –  
Salaries – Overspend of £2,565.06 with the majority due to an invoice (£2,373.24) from previous financial year carried forward due to late invoicing from WSCC. Remainder due to clerk overtime.  
Home Working Allowance – overspend of £72 due to increase from £20 to £26 month.
4. **Quote for hanging baskets** is £1564.26 +vat, includes feed, putting up and taking down (£60 higher than last year). Lamppost testing recently undertaken - certificate valid until 2026. Third Party Attachment consent applied for. Cllrs approved the quote and agreed “bright and bold” colours. It was requested that flowers be pollinating plants if possible. **Clerk**
5. **Environmental Cleansing Grant** – £4665.49 for 2024-25. Up 4.5% from last year’s £4,464.58.
6. **Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance (JPAG)** – NALC has published the 2024 edition. Main change relevant to us is to publish the internal audit on our website. **Clerk**
7. **NALC Procurement Thresholds** (Legal Topic Note 87) have been updated from £25,000 to £30,000. Clerk to update Standing Orders. **Clerk**

#### 124/24 Income

£206.22 Bank interest

£277.50 Roundabout Sponsorship

#### 125/24 Expenditure (Appendix 3)

Cllrs to approve the schedule of invoices for payment totalling **£72,292.87**

#### 126/24 Date of next meetings

Planning Committee: **7:30pm on Thursday 25th April 2024, Ashington School**

Finance Committee: **8:00pm on Thursday 25th April 2024, Ashington School**

Annual Parish Council Meeting: **7:45pm on Thursday 9th May 2024, Ashington School**

Cllr Moss spoke on behalf of Cllrs to thank both Cllr Spiers (Chair) and Cllr Ball (Vice Chair) for their effort, work and guidance that they had given to the council and the community over the years.

Members of the public were then asked to leave the meeting as Councillors needed to discuss confidential matters: One matter discussed – Cllrs approved the increase in holiday entitlement for the clerk in line with the NALC model contract (Dec 2023).

**Meeting closed at 8:50 pm**

**Signed:** ..... **Dated:** .....

## Appendix 1 – Warden Report - March 2024

<b>Patrol hours TOTAL:</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>ASB incidents reported to us TOTAL:</b>	<b>6</b>
Foot (high visibility)	39	Noise	0
Vehicle	35	Neighbours	2
<b>Notices/warnings TOTAL:</b>	<b>5</b>	Driving/vehicles	4
Verbal warning	3	Bicycles	0
Parking alert	2	Alcohol	0
Yellow card warning (ASB)	0		
Community Protection Warning/Notice	0		
Fixed Penalty Notice	0	<b>Clear up/disposal reports TOTAL:</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Reports into Police TOTAL:</b>	<b>3</b>	Fly tipping / flyposting	0
Phone (including 101 and 999)	0	Graffiti	0
Online	0	Dog fouling	0
Intelligence report	0	Litter	0
Verbal	3	Drug litter	0
E-CINS cases (multi-agency reporting)	0	Hazards	0
<b>Media Reports TOTAL:</b>	<b>2</b>		
Press release/Community magazines	0		
Social media posts	2	<b>Community events attended</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Admin hours</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>School contact</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Vulnerable people welfare checks</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>Youth engagement</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Signposting</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Reports to DVLA</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Safeguarding referral</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>Reports to Operation Crackdown</b>	<b>0</b>

## ASB

Whilst out on Patrol we received several reports of youths defacing vehicles with Ketchup. Due to the details of these reports we were able to catch up with the young people, using the information they gave us as well as local knowledge we were able to pass on their details to the police.

We received a report of vehicle that had been damaged along London Road, a report was put into the police but we have increased our patrols at certain times of the day when there seems to be greater concerns around parking.

## Parking/vehicles

We have received a number of complaints this month around inconsiderate parking. There seems to have been an increase in vehicles being parked in a way that is obstructing the pavements, this is making it unsafe for pedestrians and other road users. Please ensure when you park that you have done so in safe and considerate manner.

A report has been passed onto Horsham planning about mud being transferred onto the road from a local building site.

We spoke with a resident regarding concerns about an E-scooter and the speed it was going around the village.

A report was made to us about a track bike being ridden unsafely around the village, we have passed the details onto the police.

## Fly tipping/littering/graffiti

Nothing to report.

## Community engagement/events/meetings

We attended the Parish Annual Meeting with PCSO Beasley.

At Cuppa and Chat this month we again had a great turn out, Age Uk continue to work with us in running this group at The Red Lion. This month we were pleased to welcome 2 of the local community first responders who were on duty in the area.

We have visited youth group this month to engage with the young people and the staff.

## Patrols (foot/visible and car)

We have been on foot and vehicle patrols covering the whole of the parish, we specifically included areas that have been brought to our attention for various reasons. We are focusing a lot of our late patrols on providing a hi visibility presence.

## Older, vulnerable people and youth

We were able to give a referral to West Sussex Fire and Rescue for a Safe and Well Visit, we are also hoping to have Ben Applin from WSFR attend Cuppa and Chat soon.

We ran our Journey support group at the Church for parents and carers of Autistic and SEN children, it is a welcoming space where parents can openly talk about some of challenges they face, where they can advise and support each other.

This month we have been addressing an ongoing neighbour dispute, we are hoping to move forward with mediation to find a solution.

Following a conversation with a vulnerable resident around their concerns the impact of a proposed building development will have. We are concerned about the physical and mental impact this may have on the individual so are signposting and advising where appropriate.

## Dog related issues

Nothing to Report.

## Cycling

Nothing to Report.

## Parish specific/other

We are beginning discussions around our summer activities, we have had a meeting with Storrington Wardens regarding a joint Summer event for the SEN families we are supporting.

## Social media/press

Nothing to Report.



## **Appendix 2 – Correspondence received for public interest**

- 1. Flooding along Malthouse Lane** - Work is due to start 2nd April 2024. Most of the work will be carried out at night, due to the level of activity along Malthouse Lane. Works are programmed to last 8 weeks.

## **Appendix 3 – Expenditure**

Lee English	Home office (Mar 2024)	£26.00
Lee English	Giff Gaff (mobile phone topup)	£6.00
Mark Adsett	Landscape gardening (Mar 2024)	£715.00
WSCC	Salaries and oncosts (Mar 2024)	£1,676.01
Karen Dare	Locum clerk costs (Nov 2023 - Mar 2024)	£240.00
Eon	Electricity - Parish Yard (direct debit)	£40.00
Intratest	Lampposts structural inspection	£900.00
HDC	Neighbourhood Wardens 2023/24	£67,435.86
West Sussex ALC Ltd	WSALC & NALC subscription 2024/25	£913.19
WSCC	Payroll administration charges (Oct 23 - Mar 24)	£53.42
Rialtas Business Solutions	Finance software (Apr 24 - Mar 25) (235/23)	£230.40
John Morris	Wildflower seeds (347/23 2.)	£56.99
<b>Total</b>		<b>£72,292.87</b>

All to be paid by bank transfer (except Eon)