

Ashington Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 7th December 2023 at 7.45pm Ashington School, Foster Lane

<u> Present:</u>

Councillors: S. Ball (Vice Chair), N. Carter, T. Kearney, P. Kerrey, J. Morris, T. Moss, N. Spiers (Chair),

B. Wallace, M. Woolley

Also present: Clerk: Lee English

Horsham District Councillors: Philip Circus

Members of the Public: 5

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.

338/23 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received and approved from:

Councillors: G. MacPherson, J. Stillwell Horsham District Councillors: Alan Manton

County Councillor: Paul Marshall

Neighbourhood Wardens: Christina Arnold and Bryony Sparks

339/23 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).

340/23 Minutes of the Parish Council meeting 2nd November 2023

To approve and sign the minutes of the PC meeting dated 2nd November 2023. Proposed by Cllr Kerrey, seconded by Cllr Morris, and agreed by all.

341/23 Neighbourhood Wardens Report (Appendix 1) & Report from Steering Group

No update from Steering Group. Quarterly meeting due the following week.

342/23 Ashington Youth Club (AYC) quarterly review - Quarter 4 Year 2

Further to the overview given last month for the Year 3 funding request, the quarter 4 report for Year 2 had been received and passed to ClIrs. Summary -

- Pre-Covid baseline attendance was 30-36 per week average for last quarter was 59.
- Cost per attendee £3.39 compared to £5.58 last year. Target is £2.50 per attendee.
- Restructure of the operating model has reduced the cost of running the service by 30%.
- Work continues with ACCT and others to make the club more sustainable.

Feedback from the report – Cllr Moss had attended the recent AGM and reported that it was a very positive meeting. He was optimistic for the future, with an active committee ensuring they continue to work towards their targets. The youth club are grateful for the parish council's ongoing support.

343/23 Reports from District & County Councillors

District Councillor Circus reported:

- 1. Local Plan Horsham District Council will be discussing and voting on the plan on Monday 11th December 2023. It had been noted that in a number of cases, no notice had been taken of neighbourhood plans and the views of parish councils, and Cllr Circus would be raising this issue at the meeting. He had previously asked the current administration at HDC if they would come up with a plan that would take a "bottom-up" approach, honouring and respecting the neighbourhood plans and views of parish councils, and he largely felt that they had done this.
- 2. **EV chargers** information was passed to the Secretary of the ACCT regarding EV chargers.

344/23 Public Adjournment – Members of the public can ask questions. Questions –

- 1. A member of the public mentioned the yellow barrier down The Sands, had still not been removed. Clerk has previously reported it to Highways and will chase again. Clerk
- 2. A member of the public asked Cllr Circus to what degree the local MP had been involved with the discussion regarding parish councils and neighbourhood plans? The response was that our MP Andrew Griffith (Arundel and South Downs) and Jeremy Quin (Horsham) had both received feedback from Cllr Circus regarding issues raised. Both MPs were very much involved, and further information could be found in a joint statement from them published in the West Sussex County Times 7th December edition.

The Chair thanked Cllr Circus and they left the meeting.

345/23 The Parish Yard update

Nothing to report currently.

346/23 Speedwatch update

In November, 78 vehicles out of 583 were recorded exceeding the speed limit. This equates to approx. 13.5%. The team were helped on one session when a passing Sussex Police dog handler stopped and helped them.

With regards to the speed sign project, it is hoped that the WSCC team will install the poles for the devices in January and then the Vehicle Activated Sign (VAS) can be ordered.

The Chair asked that thanks from the council be passed to the Speedwatch team.

347/23 Green initiatives update

The working party update the following -

1. The Red Lion flower beds – they are looking to put together a working party to put additional beds in next spring. Looking to scarify, sow it and put plants in the beds. Approx. cost £75. Approved by Cllrs.

- 2. **Ashington School** ongoing discussions inc. wildflower zones, growing sunflowers, putting up bird feeders, boxes, and supplying an initial amount of food. Discussion was had regarding local Men's Shed groups may be able to help with bird box kits. Approx. cost £140. Approved by Cllrs.
- Owl box There has been a request by a resident to install an owl nesting box in the trees near the Posthorses play area as owls have been seen there.
 Approx. cost £60. Approved by Cllrs.
- 4. **Tree project with ACCT** the working party are keen to move forward with this. Cllr Carter to liaise with ACCT and bring a proposal back to council.
- 5. **Roundabouts** they are in talks with the landscape contractor to look at planting on the roundabouts, after consultation with Highways. To also speak to Highways with regards with to tidying up paths and land near the roundabouts as they are becoming very overgrown.
- 6. **Hedgehog project** they have advertised in the village newsletter and on FB with regards to seeing if any residents are interested in helping with a hedgehog project. A discussion was had regarding the school children being involved with a future poster project.

348/23 Annual Inspection of Council land

Cllrs Kerrey and Morris, the council's landscape contractor and the clerk carried out the inspection on 24th November 2023. A copy of the report has been circulated to Councillors.

349/23 Meetings calendar 2024-25

The Clerk has circulated a meetings calendar for 2024-25. All to note that parish council meetings have been moved to the 2nd Thursday of the month. Approved by Cllrs. Clerk

350/23 Salt bin locations

Further to a request for a salt bin to be installed at Mousdell Close, and following a review at the annual land inspection, Cllrs proposed a location between Penn Gardens and Mousdell Close – subject to Highways approval. The current 400 litre bins were previously supplied by Glasdon (also used by WSCC) and are now £248.45 +vat (plus £12.50 delivery charge if order under £250 +vat). Other companies were priced between £210-300 +vat. Cllrs approved the location and expenditure.

Salt is supplied free of charge by WSCC and although the bin would not now be filled until next autumn, it was agreed to proceed with the process via Highways regarding the location as this may take some months to get approval. Bin to be purchased if and when this has been granted. **Clerk**

351/23 Correspondence received for action

- 1. **Standards/Code of Conduct training** Parish Cllrs were invited to attend training session remotely, 30th November, 5.30pm (info sent to Cllrs)
- 2. Pedestrian crossing, London Road a resident has enquired with WSCC whether a crossing could be installed outside the Nursery on London Road for safety reasons. They have been informed that they would need the support of the parish council first.

 A discussion was had, and it was agreed that a crossing may be beneficial for the purposes of safety although it was also noted that any accompanying zig zag restrictions may push parking problems further afield. It was felt however that it was for Highways to review and address any concerns. The ClIrs agreed to support the idea in principle.

352/23 Correspondence received for Councillor information

- 1. **EV Chargers** WSCC are not proceeding at this time with the proposed EV charger sites on Rectory Lane. They feel it is not a priority location due to the majority of residents already benefitting from off street parking.
- 2. **Security of councillors and staff** letter from Sussex Police forwarded to Cllrs.

- 3. **WS Youth Justice Service** supports young people aged 10 18 to give back to local communities by completing unpaid work hours or community reparations ordered by courts. They have worked with many parish councils for tasks such as basic fence repairs, staining benches etc. Supervision is on a one-to-one basis. Cllrs to bear in mind for future projects.
- 4. Parish and Neighbourhood Council Training (Planning) Slides from October training session with topics inc. the planning application process / water neutrality / latest planning changes. Forwarded to all Cllrs. Recording of the training session also available.
- 5. **WSALC AGM** minutes and presentation 20th October 2023.
- 6. Sussex North Offsetting Water Scheme (SNOWS) newsletter water neutrality.
- 7. ACCT minutes for 25th October 2023. Forwarded to all Cllrs.
- 8. AirS AGM 14th December 2023.
- 9. **WSCC diversion of public paths** they are now accepting applications from landowners again and have updated the process to do so.
- 10. Op Downsway 2023 End of Season Event minutes Safer roads campaign.
- 11. Trees on Church Lane Highways have confirmed the reasons for removal
 - Oak tree after initial reduction surgery, further internal rot and a cavity at ground level (possible rodent infestation) were identified. Having been monitored since 2008, it was considered the condition of the tree was rapidly declining and was removed for health and safety reasons.
 - Ash tree in fair condition but it had fungal fruiting bodies and extensive bark necrosis.
 Having been monitored since 2013 it was also removed for health and safety reasons.
 Clerk to update residents via newsletter / social media.

 Clerk

353/23 Correspondence received for public interest – Appendix 4

354/23 Meetings attended by Councillors

Cllr Kerrey – 14th November 2023 – Playground Inspection training course with HDC

Cllr Moss – 17th November 2023 – Ashington Youth Club AGM

Cllr Kerrey – 23rd November 2023 – with Cllr Hunt (Thakeham) regarding **increased traffic concerns**. They are looking to start an initiative with local councils to look at the increase in traffic in the area as a result of new developments, and how the increased traffic will affect local villages.

Cllr Morris – 29th November 2023 – meeting with school re green initiatives

Cllr Wallace – 29th November 2023 – **ACCT board of trustees meeting.** Cllr Wallace stated that he wished to give notice of a motion for Cllr Carter (parish council observer for ACCT) to become an exofficio member of the ACCT and in return a member of ACCT become an ex-officio member of the council. It was discussed that in theory any Cllr could join the ACCT as a trustee. It was also noted that an ex-officio member of the council (as a whole) may not be permissible given council rules. Further research required ahead of discussion at the next parish council meeting. **Clerk**

Cllr Wallace – 7th December 2023 – meeting with school re green initiatives.

355/23 Matters raised by Councillors

Bin in Posthorses play area – Cllr Ball mentioned there was slat missing on the bin by the gate, which had left a protruding rivet. Clerk noted it is on the playground's inspection list for action.

Incident near America Wood – Cllr Carter mentioned an incident that had occurred recently where 6 deer and a puppy had been electrocuted by a power line hanging down in a field adjacent to a Public Rights of Way footpath. As the cable had not touched the ground, it hadn't shorted and alerted UK Power Network via their system. The Wardens had visited the landowners and UK Power Network were looking into the incident.

356/23 Chairman's Announcements – none

PLANNING

357/23 Minutes of the Planning Committee meetings 16th and 30th November 2023 Meetings cancelled as no new applications.

358/23 Planning Correspondence -

- 1. Mushroom farm, Thakeham (Monaghan Mushrooms) Thakeham Parish Council have informed local parish councils that Bellway Homes are engaging with residents regarding potential redevelopment of the former mushroom farm site. The developers are looking to deliver "around 400 new family homes in a range of sizes". Comments to the proposals can be submitted via their dedicated website, by email, telephone, or freepost. The deadline for the receipt of feedback is 11th December 2023. https://www.storringtonroad-engagement.co.uk It was proposed that as a neighbouring parish we support Thakeham Parish Council; they will keep us informed of any development for the site.
- Local Validation Requirement; Local Requirements consultation This HDC consultation focuses on changes to be made to current local requirements in relation to Biodiversity Net Gain and Flood Risk Assessment requirements. Changes to the document are here https://www.horsham.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/current-planning-consultations
 The consultation will run from 7 December 2023 until 5 January 2024.
 Cllr Morris will have a look at the document.

359/23 HDC Local Plan Review Update -

- 1 December 2023: Local Plan and Agendas become public the draft Regulation 19 Local Plan text will be published as part of the Cabinet and Council agendas.
- 11 December 2023: Cabinet and Council meetings The Local Plan will be considered by the Cabinet, and then, if recommended by Cabinet to Council will be considered by all Members at the Council meeting on the same evening.
- 19 January 2024 to 1 March 2024: Regulation 19 Representation Period If agreed by
 Council on 11 December 2023, the Local Plan will be published for a formal six week period
 of Representation between these dates.
 https://horsham.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?Cld=132&Mld=2535&utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery

360/23 Neighbourhood Plan - Chanctonbury Nurseries ASH10

The introduction of the representative from Elivia Homes has been moved to the January meeting.

361/23 Neighbourhood Plan – Land West of Ashington School ASH11

- Representatives from Bellway Homes wish to attend the meeting on 11th January 2024. It is proposed that Cllrs come up with specific questions to be put to Bellway ahead of the meeting.
 - It was noted that some new plans have been uploaded to the HDC planning portal recently, but no official update as to the amendments have been received yet. The only obvious amendments were on the "Presentation Planning Layout" and "Attenuation Basin Plan" documents regarding the reinstatement of a footpath, updated attenuation basin details and a suspended boardwalk over the northern edge of the basin from the sports pavilion to the MUGA.
- Correspondence had been received from Chris Wood, obo the ACCT, raising concerns that in response to Bellway Homes updated plans, the parish council's response to HDC in September 2023 misrepresented the facts regarding the ACCT's position on various matters. The ACCT had hoped that further to receipt of correspondence from themselves, that the

council would have issued a "correction" to our submission and amended the content of our response.

The Cllrs discussed the matter. In conclusion, there was no proposal to amend previously submitted documents. All were in agreement that we should move on from the matter, improve communications and endeavour to work more closely moving forward.

362/23 Planning Applications - none

363/23 New Enforcement Allegations

EN/23/0499 Alleged: following completion of development permitted under DC/19/1788, removal of temporary access and reinstatement of agricultural land has not been carried out and storage of building materials on land. Lodge Farm, Malthouse Lane.

EN/23/0501 Alleged: stationing of mobile home. The Drunken Boat, London Road, RH20 3AT

364/23 Horsham District Council Decisions

Approvals -

DC/23/1700 Surgery to x1 Ash. Shone, Mill Lane, RH20 3BX.

Refusals – none
Withdrawals – none
Prior Notifications – none
Appeals – none

FINANCE

365/23 Correspondence received

- **1. WSALC and NALC subscriptions** 2024/25 WSALC subscription will increase to 36.09p per elector (total £748.51) and NALC to 7.94p per elector (total £164.68).
- Local Government Association 2023/24 pay scales increase Update from NALC regarding increase for local councils, to be implemented from 1st April 2023.
 Cllrs approved the backdated pay award.
- **3. Neighbourhood Wardens** projected costs for 2024-25 are £72,765.00. This is based on the assumption of a similar pay increase as that received in the previous 2 financial years.
- **4. HDC Council Tax Base Figure** for 2024/25 has been received; the clerk uses this to prepare the budget and precept forecast.
- **5. ICO Data Protection** £40 annual fee or £35 if paid by Direct Debit (already set up). Cllrs approved the payment.

366/23 Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting 23rd November 2023

To approve and sign the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting dated 23rd November 2023. Proposed by Cllr Woolley, seconded by Cllr Moss and agreed by all.

367/23 Review of Finance Procedures and Banking Arrangements

Further to discussions held at the November Finance Committee meeting, approval was sought for the following –

- 1. Financial Regulations, to amend section 4.1 –
- a) To add provision of a financial threshold to allow the clerk to make day to day purchases without the need for prior council approval (recommended by the internal auditor). Limit proposed at £250 per calendar month.
- b) To add provision of a £10,000 limit for the Finance Committee to approve expenditure.

c) To add provision for the Finance Committee only to approve expenditure (up to that limit), in the event that a parish council meeting is cancelled, by at least 3 committee Cllrs emailing approval to the clerk.

Cllrs approved the amendments.

Clerk

2. Finance Committee meeting dates -

a) Finance committee proposed to hold 2 additional finance committee working party meetings per year, most likely to be in July and October, and any additional meetings as required. Current scheduled meetings in April (year-end accounts) and December (budget and precept) will remain public meetings.

Cllrs approved the proposal.

Clerk

3. Banking arrangements -

- a) To update council that £70,000 has been transferred from the Lloyds current account to the Lloyds savings account.
- b) To propose to keep the current account and a savings account with the existing provider, Lloyds, but reduce total funds held to under £85,000 as soon as is expedient to do so. Cllrs approved.
- c) To propose that initially 3 additional investment accounts are to be identified by the Finance Committee, on staggered maturity dates, and within the FSCS limit, and the investment detail to be put to the council for approval at that meeting or the following meeting. Cllrs approved.
- d) To propose that once suitable new accounts have been identified, to proceed with the closure of the NS&I investment account.
 Cllrs approved.
- e) To propose that the finance committee can proceed with the process of opening 3 new investments to a maximum of £255,000 (£85,000 maximum with each provider). Cllrs approved.

4. Funds held by the Parish Council on behalf of others -

It was proposed that monies held for other organisations should be moved from general reserves to earmarked reserves (EMRs), with the proviso that any expenditure of those funds be in line with the aims of the originating organisation –

- a) To propose that funds currently held on behalf of Ashington First Responders (£1152.91) are transferred to the existing parish council "Defibrillators" earmarked reserve.
 Cllrs approved.
- b) To propose that funds held on behalf of organisations that no longer exist, be transferred to existing earmarked reserves that serve a similar purpose, or new ones be created with a designated purpose in line with that organisation's aims.
 - Ashington Rangers £724.01 transfer to existing EMR "Open Spaces"
 - Ashington Residents Association £615.85 transfer to new EMR "Community Funding"
 - Friends of Ashington Village £3066.42 transfer to new EMR "Community Funding"
 Cllrs approved.

368/23 Income

£97.53 Bank interest

369/23 Expenditure (Appendix 2)

Cllrs approved the schedule of invoices for payment totalling £6655.28.

370/23 Funds held by the Parish Council on behalf of others (Appendix 3)

371/23 Date of Next meetings

It was proposed to move the scheduled Finance Committee meeting of the 21st December to Thursday 4th January. All agreed.

The Finance Committee agreed to a working party meeting on Monday 18th December.

Planning Committee: 7:30pm on Thursday 21st December 2023, Ashington School
Planning Committee: 7:30pm on Thursday 28th December 2023, Ashington School
Finance Committee: 7:30pm on Thursday 28th December 2023, Ashington School
Parish Council: 7:45pm on Thursday 11th January 2023, Ashington School

Members of the public were then asked to leave the meeting as Councillors needed to discuss confidential matters: one matter discussed.

Meeting closed at 9:25pm

Signed:	Dated:	

Members of the public should be aware that being present at a meeting of the Council or one of its committees will be deemed as the person having given consent to being recorded (photograph, film or audio recording) at the meeting, by any person present.

Appendix 1 - Warden Report

November 2023 Ashington

Patrol hours TOTAL:	76	ASB incidents reported to us TOTAL:	4
Foot (high visibility)	44	Noise	1
Vehicle	32	Neighbours	0
Notices/warnings TOTAL:	6	Driving/vehicles	3
Verbal warning	6	Bicycles	0
Parking alert	0	Alcohol	0
Yellow card warning (ASB)	0		
Community Protection Warning/Notice	0		
Fixed Penalty Notice	0	Clear up/disposal reports TOTAL:	3
Reports into Police TOTAL:	8	Fly tipping / flyposting	2
Phone (including 101 and 999)	3	Graffiti	0
Online	0	Dog fouling	0
Intelligence report	0	Litter	0
Verbal	5	Drug litter	1
E-CINS cases (multi-agency reporting)	0	Hazards	0
Media Reports TOTAL:	6		
Press release/Community magazines	1		
Social media posts	5	Community events attended	4
Admin hours	46	School contact	3
Vulnerable people welfare checks	8	Youth engagement	56
Signposting	4	Reports to DVLA	1
Safeguarding referral	0	Reports to Operation Crackdown	3

ASB

We received reports of Fireworks being let off late in the evening on Recreation ground. We have reviewed CCTV of the area and been able to identify those involved. We issued words of advice.

We have had reports of vehicles driving anti-socially in the village, we have logged these incidents with operation crackdown and have passed on the information to the police. If you see a vehicle driving anti-socially please report to ourselves or operation crackdown.

We have a group of young people who are hanging around at the moment smoking cannabis. We are working with them and monitoring this and dealing where appropriate.

Parking/vehicles

We conducted traffic control on the Billingshurst Road following a broken down bus whilst it was being recovered on the bend by the Equine Centre.

We have reported an abandoned vehicle in the village. The vehicle has been sat for a number of months with no tax, so this has been reported to Operation Crackdown.

Fly tipping/littering/graffiti

We have reported two lots of fly tipping, one along Park Lane and the other along Spear Hill. We are also still working on trying to get the old caravan and its contents removed.

Community engagement/events/meetings

We have attended Rock Road again to see the young people there and engage with them.

We attended the school fireworks event which was a real success and had a really good turn out. It was a chance to engage with members of the community.

We attended the Church's tea morning and met with lots of residents that attend.

We delivered a session to the Beavers focusing on safety and stranger danger. This was a fun filled session and hopefully the children took away some valuable information.

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 keeping an eye on anti social driving and showing a high visibility presence across the village prioritising late night patrols following spates of break ins to vehicles and out buildings.

Older, vulnerable people and youth

We have been working with a few vulnerable residents in the village who are struggling at the moment. This has consisted of signposting and referrals as well as regular welfare checks. We have liaised with the store house and secured food parcels where required and continue to work with residents as they need the support.

We held our third support group for parents and carers of children with SEN, this was at The Hub in Storrington. We have been able to secure a venue in Ashington to start this support group after Christmas.

Dog related issues

We are looking at dates for after Christmas for a dog workshop to be held. We have received some good feedback from local dog walkers who may be interested in attending. Given the recent increase in dog vs dog attacks it's really important we give owners a chance to gain a better control of their dogs, manage their behaviours and help them to feel more confident whilst handling their dogs.

Cycling

Nothing to Report

Parish specific/other

We have had two new wardens shadow us this month, Oscar who will cover Horsham town and John who will cover Storrington. This gave them an opportunity to see our area and to see what we do here based on the needs of the parish.

We have recently had an increase in vehicle breaks in the village as well as breaks to out buildings. We are prioritising late night patrols around the village to try and deter.

Social media/press

Nothing to report.

<u>Appendix 2 – Expenditure</u>

Lee English	Home Office (Nov 2023)	£26.00
Lee English	Giff Gaff (mobile phone top-up)	£6.00
Mark Adsett	Landscape gardening (Nov 2023)	£715.00
Eon	Electricity - Parish Yard (Direct debit)	£40.00
WSCC	Salaries and oncosts (Nov 2023)	£2,354.75
HDC	Litter and dog bin emptying	£470.34
Ashington CE First School	Hall hire for council meetings (Nov + Dec)	£100.00
Microsoft	365 subscription	£79.99
Ashington Youth Club	Q1 2023-24 youth worker funding (310/23)	£2,125.00
ICO	Data protection fee	£35.00
Karen Dare	Locum clerk costs (July-Nov 2023)	£240.00
HDC	Playground inspection training/exams (2 attendees)	£463.20
Total		£6,655.28

All to be paid by Bank Transfer

Appendix 3

Funds held by the Parish Council on behalf of others (as at 31st October 2023):

Ashington Rangers £724.01
Ashington Residents Association £615.85
Ashington First Responders £1,152.91
Friends of Ashington Village £3,066.42

Appendix 4 - Correspondence received for public interest

- 1. WSCC budget consultation survey open until Sunday 10 December and they would like to hear:
- what you think are the most vital services
- where you'd spend or reduce money
- which options you feel we should focus on to achieve a balanced budget https://yourvoice.westsussex.gov.uk/budget-consultation-2024-25