



Ashington Parish Council

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

Present:

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

Also present:

Clerk: Lee English

Horsham District Councillors: Philip Circus, Alan Manton

County Councillor: Paul Marshall

Invited guests:

- Chanctonbury Nurseries Neighbourhood Plan site - Mark Penfold (Landacre Developments) and Simon Bull (Elivia Homes).

- Land West of Ashington School Neighbourhood Plan site - Michael Birch (Planning Manager, Bellway Homes, Matt Hoad (Land Director, Bellway Homes) and Robert Steele (Planning Consultant, Savills).

Members of the Public: 48

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.

001/24 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received and approved from:

Councillors: M. Woolley

Neighbourhood Wardens: Christina Arnold and Bryony Sparks

002/24 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 Spiers addressed those present to inform them that very sadly, Cllr Judith Stillwell had passed away in December. "Judith was an extraordinary councillor, who only wanted to do what was best for the village, and that was what was in her heart the whole time. Not only have we lost a councillor, but we have also lost the longest standing parish councillor, as should have joined the council in 1982. She will be missed". The council took a minute's silence to remember Judith.

003/24 Minutes of the Parish Council meeting 7th December 2023

To approve and sign the minutes of the PC meeting dated 7th December 2023.

Proposed by Cllr Kearney, seconded by Cllr Carter, and agreed by all.

004/24 Landacre Developments and Elivia Homes – Chanctonbury Nurseries Site

Mark Penfold of Landacre introduced Simon Bull the Land Director for Elivia Homes. The chair noted the parish council had had a particularly good working relationship with Landacre, which they hoped would continue with Elivia Homes, who had now purchased the site. Landacre thanked the council for their assistance and expedience in dealing with matters throughout the process.

Simon Bull proposed that due to time constraints at that meeting, he would be happy to come back and talk to the council in more detail at another stage. He hoped to carry on the previous good working relationship that existed. He acknowledged the difficulties of living next to a developer but hoped to alleviate any issues by being transparent, giving an understating of how the process is going to work, and the timings involved. The earliest they anticipate machines on site is May 2024, for a “soft strip” of the buildings before they are demolished. Before then there will be a lot of work going on to satisfy pre-commencement conditions for the application.

005/24 Bellway Homes – Land West of Ashington School Site

Representatives from Bellway Homes and Savills introduced themselves. The Chair noted that this was the first time as a council that they had had the opportunity to put to them face to face, some of the questions previously sent to Bellway Homes, on more than one occasion, to which no responses had been received. It was proposed that the Cllrs had a Q&A session, and that the public adjournment would then allow members of the public to raise any additional issues.

Michael Birch requested that he read out a prepared statement first to advise their position and noted that following the initial planning application in March 2023 that they had seen the council’s written comments and they had responded to them via Horsham District Council (HDC) directly. The Chair pointed out that they hadn’t responded directly to the parish council.

They thanked the council for the invitation to attend the meeting and felt that they had previously tried to reach out to the council during the course of the application but that whereas the council wanted the meetings to be held in public, Bellway had hoped to meet us directly. They were there to provide information about the latest revisions to the application. They were aware that concerns have been raised about the application but hoped that the Q&A would address those concerns.

Overview of the statement from Bellway Homes –

- They are aware that the 180 homes is 30 homes above the indicative number outlined in the Ashington Neighbourhood Plan (ANP) allocation.
- They feel it is important for developments to make the most out of sites to boost housing supply and to provide homes for people who need them.
- They acknowledge this has to be done in a sensitive way, which provides good design, appropriate gardens, amenities and parking etc.
- They believe that 180 homes can comfortably fit on the site, and indeed the amount of land for housing in Bellway’s proposal is less than that shown on the neighbourhood plan policy map.
- By proposing 180 homes this would result in an additional 10 “affordable” homes on site and an “uplift” in financial contributions to services and facilities.

- They appreciate that the proposed development does not now include the additional grass pitch on site.
- They have included a sports pavilion, all weather multi use games area (MUGA), open space, allotments, and play area, and these will be modern and of a high quality.
- The reason they are unable to provide the grass pitch on site is because it is not possible to fit the 2 pitches side by side in the NW part of the site, without resulting in the loss of existing trees and vegetation. This is because the 2nd pitch would displace the allotments, pavilion and the drainage basin to the scrub area along the northern boundary of the site.
- They acknowledge that the parish council did not object to the loss of this scrubland and trees, but it is not something Bellway wish to do given the importance of the environment and biodiversity that is now entwined in the planning process.
- They wish to stress that Bellway Homes proposing 180 homes on the site does not impact the ability to provide 2 pitches side by side, and that as mentioned previously the 180 homes are confined to an area smaller than that identified in the ANP.
- They have considered whether the grass pitch can be provided in a different way. They understand there are drainage problems that make some of the existing pitches unplayable at times, and therefore Bellway Homes are proposing to provide an equivalent payment to help upgrade the existing facilities. They feel that what is proposed would be of high quality and benefit to the residents.
- Sports England have reviewed the latest proposals and have no objections.
- They noted that another particular concern was the flooding issue at Mill Lane. The proposed development is designed so that it will not lead to additional flooding issues elsewhere, this is by way of SuDS (sustainable drainage systems) and the attenuation basin. However West Sussex Flood Authority has recently asked for more information and Bellway Homes are currently working with the authority regarding this.
- In respect to the flood mitigation scheme, they are aware of the flood study and understand there are a variety of options that could help the situation at Mill Lane, but the study was not conclusive, and more work would be needed to confirm that the measures would actually work and not lead to issues elsewhere. Bellway would not control the land where the flood mitigation measures are shown in the ANP, but they propose that the CIL contribution, or if justified by HDC, a financial sum of s106 money could be provided to support additional work on the flood study, to be led by West Sussex Flood Authority. In summary, the proposal by Bellway does not prevent the flood mitigation scheme coming to fruition in the future, but at this stage they understand there is no confirmed mitigation scheme and therefore the benefit of the proposed development would be to fund the advancement of the flood study.

The Chair summarised that in response to the statement it was felt that Bellway Homes are buying significantly less land than was put in the ANP, (approx. 2.5–3 hectares less than the land amount designated) and therefore they are proposing more houses on less land. The chair asked –

- **Are Bellway not purchasing the land, or are the landowners not selling the land no longer in the proposed development?**
The response was that the landowner was no longer selling it.
- **Would Bellway buy that land if it was available?**
Potentially, subject to further discussion.

The Chair noted that if that extra land was bought, they would have the land for the flood mitigation scheme. There is already an existing historic problem, as in the rain that falls on the proposed development site, ends up in the Mill Lane area. The ANP has detailed plans to divert the stream north, rather than allowing it to flow south. The land not being purchased is where the stream would need to be diverted to.

In conclusion if Bellway were to buy the right amount of land and build 150 houses rather than 180 houses, then they would be following the neighbourhood plan as voted for by the majority of residents at referendum. It was noted that many of the benefits Bellway mention were already proposed in the ANP – there is nothing new that was not already proposed. It was also noted that in HDC's recently proposed Local Plan (2023-2040), they are still working to a figure of 150 homes for the Land West of Ashington School site.

The Chair reiterated the point that financial contributions to upgrade the drainage on the existing football pitches (recreation field) were already in the ANP as well as the provision of 2 pitches (grass and MUGA) on site. The 2 additional pitches were what the village voted for.

Councillor questions / comments and response from Bellway –

- **Cllr Wallace – the school is already at capacity for pupil intake, it is essential that land is reserved to allow the school to double in size in the future. It was asked if Bellway would guarantee land for future expansion of the school?**
The policy within the neighbourhood plan refers to 1/2 hectare; that area is outside Bellway's red line for the planning application; however, it can still be controlled through a section 106 agreement. The landowner is still willing to do this, and therefore the land is safeguarded for school expansion.
Cllr Spiers noted that the size of land originally designated for school expansion was based on 150 houses not 180 houses.
- **Cllr Wallace – The school currently uses land for forest school and other outside activities. Would this be safeguarded?**
Yes, and further discussions would be had regarding appropriate access to the land at construction stage.
- **Cllr Wallace – asked whether the previously mentioned additional funding for the ACCT to upgrade existing football pitches was above and beyond the CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) money?**
Yes.
- **Cllr Spiers – asked whether 10 parking spaces could be considered adequate for a sports pavilion given the volume of use it would create?**
They have followed Sports England guidance, who are supportive of the application now.
- **Cllr MacPherson – in response to Bellway saying it is impossible to locate 2 pitches side by side, their plans show a block of 20+ houses which equate to the size of a football pitch. It was noted that the currently proposed MUGA is located a distance from the houses and to add the 2nd pitch would mean it would be immediately adjacent to the houses and you do need to have a degree of separation for amenity reasons, noise etc.**
- **Cllr MacPherson – Transport assessment, concerns over road access. Bellway's conducted their own road safety assessment. The road safety audit made recommendations for improvements, which they have ignored. Can they explain why they have chosen to ignore independent safety advice?**
Bellway felt they hadn't been ignored (although Cllr MacPherson noted Bellway documents say otherwise) and that their transport safety submission had been reviewed by West Sussex

and they have not raised any objection, although it was pointed out that there would of course be conditions and requirements regarding highway safety.

- **Cllr MacPherson – Their transport assessment (mainly desk top analysis) is largely incomplete and in particular the swept path analysis. The junction leaving the site is a complex junction due to a left bend leading immediately to a right turn bend. Their analysis only addresses the first part, not the 2 junctions as a whole, and it is felt that results would be quite different if both sections together had been analysed. This raises the issue of significant road safety concerns. Why haven't they addressed this?**

Bellway undertook a pre application/informal advice site visit with West Sussex Highways and further to their assessments and submission, West Sussex Highways had "signed it off" and hadn't asked for any further information.

Cllr MacPherson noted they hadn't signed it off as such, but that Highways stated that on the basis of the information presented, they had no objections - which is a different thing. It was asked that Bellway reconsider this area of concern.

- **Cllr Kerrey – It was queried how Bellway could state that 180 homes was within the agreed number of houses for the neighbourhood plan. How does this work if the total number is 225 and another site already has an agreed application for 75?**

One of the initial areas that Bellway would look at is the area designated for housing on the site, and then feed in the mix of properties as advised from HDC. That is how the numbers were decided. Bellway felt that if 150 houses were built, they would end up as larger properties on the same area of land.

Cllr Spiers pointed out the council had already taken into consideration what size properties the village needed. It was also noted that the village had been allocated 200 new houses as a "fair share" up to 2031, and the council had already increased the numbers to 225 to protect the village from this type of overdevelopment. The current HDC review of the Local Plan is also looking to add an additional 75 houses on a 3rd site, to the existing number of 225, to take us up to 2040.

- **Cllr Morris addressed Bellway to say that every single time the point has been made regarding total housing numbers to Bellway, they have chosen to ignore it.**

Bellway noted they had responded to the issue.

Cllr Morris stated that Bellway had responded to HDC but not to the parish council, and that they had not responded to the objection submitted by the parish council in April 2023 and September 2023, and that their only reply so far was to send out a leaflet several days before the meeting.

Cllr Spiers told Bellway that the communication between them (via the stakeholder engagement company) and the parish council had been appalling, with no direct response to issues raised. Bellway disputed this and responded that they had seen the flow of information between both sides and that the council had always been sent information at the same time it was sent to HDC.

The clerk pointed out that there had been no response from Bellway after the parish council's consultation responses were submitted in April and September 2023.

- **Cllr Carter – At the public consultation in December 2022, Cllr Carter had asked the developers to actually drive round the Church Lane / Foster Lane junction rather than merely undertake a desktop study. The concern is there is only one exit from the development leading onto a "lane" and that it is already busy with traffic and parked cars. It was requested they look again at the junction.**

They said they would.

- **Cllr Wallace – Noted how many other sites owned by Bellway already have planning permission, and therefore is there a timescale as to when they would start?**

It was responded that as a nationwide builder there are 26 operating divisions all working as independent businesses. This particular site would be delivered by the “South London” division and would start quite quickly, hopefully within 6 months – 1 year after planning permission, depending on discharge conditions etc.

- **Cllr MacPherson – further to recently received Sports Pavilion detailed floor plans he was concerned how a club/committee room that is 4 x 6m provides much utility space for the village or indeed the 30 football players previously mentioned, and an office space that is only 2.6m x 2.7m. It was felt that saying this was a quality amenity for the village was disingenuous and that the sizes proposed are inadequate.**

Bellway responded that they had wanted to have these discussions, and that it would help to know what sizes would be appropriate. They pointed out that the proposal had been submitted in line with Sports England guidance. They would be happy to look at the layout and sizes and there is still time to do this.

- **Cllr Spiers reiterated the point that further to checking email correspondence, that after submitting the parish council’s response to the application to HDC in April 2023, there had been no correspondence from the stakeholder engagement company until after Bellway had submitted updated/revised plans in August 2023. The 2nd plans appeared to have minimal changes and still did not address many issues raised.**

Bellway responded that during that time they had undertaken significant consultation such as with Historic England, various experts, conservation officers and the county council. Cllr Spiers noted that even a formal acknowledgement would have been polite. Bellway conceded that communication had been inadequate, they apologised and that moving forward they would have a transparent and consistent relationship and would be happy to attend meetings as appropriate.

Cllr Spiers cited the relationship with the other site developer who had been very open, up front, and transparent, and that it had worked well for both parties.

006/24 Public Adjournment – Members of the public can ask questions

All questions asked were related to Bellway Homes and the neighbourhood plan.

Questions from members of the public and response from Bellway –

- **The landowner agreed to the neighbourhood plan. The landowner agreed that all the benefits within the plan were deliverable. The village voted on the plan, it was agreed, and it is the adopted planning document for Ashington. Bellway have come along and essentially said they can’t deliver the plan. Somewhere along the line, promises have been made and they have been broken, or, information has been given that may not be entirely true. A land allocation has been given on the basis of some promises that are being removed. Is it not the case that the land allocation should fundamentally be reviewed, because if something is promised, and not delivered, some form of investigation has to take place. Should we now be in discussions with HDC regarding suspending the allocation until the situation is reviewed?** The audience responded with a round of applause. Bellway offered no response.
- **How long would the development be likely to take, and would it be built in phases?** They would expect it to be completed within 4 years. They would expect approx. 50-60 units to be built per year plus an amount of time to complete the groundworks.
- **When would the CIL money be paid?** On commencement of development, in instalments.
- **When they come across the Roman villa, Bellway will say that they’ve already had a survey done by the students at UCL; this only scratched the surface and was undertaken in the wrong field. The size of a sarcophagus previously found, indicates the remains of a large**

Roman villa. Will Bellway plough through any found remains or will they pass the information to English heritage?

Surveys have shown some deposits and there will be trial trenches undertaken in the relevant areas.

- **A comment was made with regards to road safety, that there is concern about Church Lane itself, with the already narrow footpaths, it being the route children walk to school, and often single lane use due to parked cars. Also there will be a significant increase in contractor traffic as well as journeys made by residents of the new houses.**
- **Concern was raised regarding access to the site being the single lane next to the Church.** Cllr Spiers responded that the access would be twice that width as an existing residential access road is to be sold to the developers to enable a two-way traffic width route.
- **Concern was raised with regards to the number of parking spaces needed at the Sports Pavilion and suggested that it needs to be at least 30 to avoid disruption to local residents.**
- **Concern was raised about the London Road, as it is currently very busy and dangerous for pedestrian's, particularly near the children's nursery. Increased traffic to the new development would undoubtedly exacerbate current problems.**
- **The question was asked of the parish council – are there any plans to improve the infrastructure within the village? For instance, few shops, no doctor, no dentist and limited bus services. The additional houses proposed would therefore increase the number of car journeys to access services in other towns or villages.**
Cllr Spiers answered that the parish have limited say in additional infrastructure. It was also noted that to have a Dr surgery that there would need to be over 8,000 residents.
- **Regarding the sports facilities and the MUGA, is there any lighting proposed such as flood lights that may affect the area?**
Yes, and particularly in use during the winter months, but they will be subject to HDC planning conditions. They will be required to supply light spillage diagrams, use appropriate light bulbs and also, they will take bats and other wildlife into consideration.

The public adjournment was closed, the Chair thanked the public for attending.
The invited guests and some members of the public left the meeting.

007/24 Neighbourhood Wardens Report (Appendix 1) & Report from Steering Group

Steering Group meeting held 12th December 2023 – no additional comments.

008/24 Reports from District & County Councillors

District Councillor Philip Circus –

- From 12th February there will be an extension of the booking system to all amenity tips in West Sussex. There have been complaints that it is not necessary at some tips such as Billingshurst, but it is presumed that it is easier to standardise the system across all sites.
- The proposed single planning committee arrangements, if approved, look likely to start in May.
- There is frustration that many new District Cllrs are automatically deferring to planning officers as the “experts” when there are times when they need to make a stand.
- They are starting the process of considering the budget.

County Councillor Paul Marshall –

- With half the sites across the district using the amenity tip booking scheme, it has smoothed out usage and allowed residents more time to place items in the proper recycling bins. You can also now book on the day.
- With regards to the pedestrian crossing scheme suggested for the London Road, it would need to go through a community highways scheme which could cost approx. £200k and would be a capital program. If the parish council have s106 money, that could be used. Or look at developers for community contributions. Cllr Marshall is happy to support the idea moving forward. It is suggested a pre meet with Highways to discuss informally before going through the community highways scheme process.
- Timberlea Close is due to be resurfaced end of January.
- County are looking to present a balanced budget to full council in February. Just under £800m, with a council tax increase of 4.99%; 2% of that is dedicated to social care. £27m of the budget is due to inflation, £53m is committed to delivering services to adult social care and children and there is a commitment to extra funding for highways. There is £15m of efficiencies (not cuts). It is acknowledged that subsequent years will be challenging.

Questions –

Cllr Ball mentioned that there was previously a **pedestrian crossing on the London Road** at the afore mentioned section. It is believed that it may have been removed when the bypass was built.

Cllr Wallace asked about the possibility of **electronic signs displaying bus information for Ashington**.

Cllr Marshall responded that the county had been given £17.5m as part of a bus service improvement partnership. They are looking at areas such as subsidising fares for young people, introducing on demand public transport and putting in real time information notices particularly in rural areas. Cllr Marshall will look at the situation with respect to Ashington.

District Councillor Alan Manton –

- With reference to DC/23/0406 (Land West of Ashington School), he had received an email that the consultation period had expired? Normally District Cllrs would have 14 days to respond from 1st January 2024. It may be that it will be discussed at the planning south committee in 2 week's time. Therefore, Bellway Homes may not have time to review some of the issues discussed in the meeting.

Cllr Circus noted it would be unlikely to come before the next meeting as there are a lot of issues still to be addressed. Due to the high number of objectors, it is likely to go to committee for a decision.

The Chairman thanked Cllrs Marshall, Circus and Manton for attending and they left the meeting.

009/24 The Parish Yard update

Previous discussions regarding short term use of the site are ongoing.

The water neutrality issues need to be reviewed again with HDC.

010/24 Speedwatch update

Unfortunately, inclement weather and the Christmas break resulted in limited Speedwatch activity in December. Only one session was held with 30 speed violations reported out of 195 vehicles, a 15% average.

It is hoped that the poles for the Vehicle Activated Speed (VAS) sign will be erected this month, although recent weather issues may delay this.

011/24 Green initiatives update

Previous works ongoing, no new updates.

012/24 Annual Inspection of Council land

Further to inspection on 24th November 2023 and circulation of report to Cllrs –

1. General maintenance works will be carried out by the PC contractor.
Additional works required for following areas as raised in inspection report –
2. Grass triangle area by stream behind Church Close
3. Balancing Pond behind Church Close
4. Dry balancing pond behind Chanctonbury
5. Trees behind 15 and 16 Chanctonbury
6. Nature Trail

Clerk to obtain quotes for 2-5 from the PC contractor and previously used contractor for item 6, the nature trail works. **Clerk**

7. Parish Yard site – boundary discrepancy between site and neighbouring property whereby fence belonging to Beulah Cottage has been realigned onto PY land at the SE corner.

Cllrs approved for the clerk to contact homeowners and arrange a meeting with PY working party to try and resolve amicably. **Clerk**

8. Noticeboard at Curry House – needs replacing. Due to the location, it was proposed that it be replaced with an A1 sized black noticeboard (no heading) to be complimentary to the building's exterior. To use existing noticeboards company, cost is £576 +vat plus £10 delivery (expenditure to come from relevant earmarked reserve). Cllrs approved the replacement.

Clerk will contact business owners with proposal. **Clerk**

Cllr Kerrey raised that a resident had mentioned there was a dead tree adjacent to their land at the Posthorses play area. Information to be passed to contractor. **Clerk**

013/24 ACCT / Ashington Parish Council engagement

Cllr Wallace proposed a motion for a trustee of the ACCT to become an ex-officio member of the parish council and as a reciprocal gesture for a Cllr to be an ex-officio member of the ACCT.

It was discussed that you can have an ex-officio member of a council committee (except finance) or of a working party but not of "the council" as a whole. It was proposed therefore that a working party be set up with several people each from the ACCT and the PC. Any issues, concerns or suggestions arising from the working party can then be put to full council. Majority approval from the Cllrs. Clerk to contact ACCT. **Clerk**

014/24 Correspondence received for action

1. **West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service "Safe and Well Visits"** – the local Rural Engagement Officer has offered to attend a meeting to promote this service to residents.

It was agreed that this would be beneficial to residents, and therefore to invite the WSFRS officer to attend the parish meeting in March. Clerk will liaise with Wardens and see if they are willing to attend also. **Clerk**

015/24 Correspondence received for Councillor information

1. **WSCC County Councillor elections 2025** – Information is available regarding standing as a County Councillor in 2025 and drop-in sessions to be held in 2024 (passed to Cllrs). <http://www.local.gov.uk/be-councillor/councils/west-sussex-county-council/>
2. **Council Tax referendum principles 2024/25** – The government have listened to NALCs call not to extend the existing principles to parish (and town) council levels. This means that parish councils retain the freedom to set their precept without holding a referendum.
3. **Definitive Map and Statement for Chanctonbury** – updated by a Legal Event Order in June 2022, copy received from WSCC. Relates to PRow amendments.

4. **HDC Shared Premises Scheme** – Offering support to small businesses to use community kitchen facilities when not in use, to provide an additional revenue scheme. Details passed to ACCT.

Resident’s correspondence -

5. **Spear Hill Corner** – ongoing flooding issues with road and local properties. Concern that drainage ditches have been filled in. Clerk to contact Highways to ascertain ownership. **Clerk**

016/24 Correspondence received for public interest – Appendix 2

017/24 Meetings attended by Councillors – none this month

018/24 Matters raised by Councillors

Church Lane additional vehicle movements – Cllr MacPherson noted that he had spoken to Cllr Marshall regarding several issues and they would be raised with Highways on our behalf. In particular, that in response to the earlier conversations regarding the proposed Bellway development, that a full assessment of Church Lane and other areas was now needed as this falls outside the scope of the developer’s submission requirements, but the development will of course impact the wider road network. This is a main access route for the church, school, community buildings and residential access and is already inadequate with respect to current volume of traffic and pavement widths etc. The matter should now be raised formally. **Clerk**

Ashington CE School – Cllr Wallace passed on the information that the headteacher is retiring.

019/24 Chairman’s Announcements – none

PLANNING

020/24 Minutes of the Planning Committee meetings 21st and 28th December 2023

To approve and sign the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting dated 21st December 2023. Proposed by Cllr Kearney, seconded by Cllr Spiers and agreed by all. Meeting on 28th December 2023 cancelled as no new applications.

021/24 Planning Correspondence

1. **Rampion** – Invitation to the preliminary meeting for the project application (‘Rule 6’ letter). 6th February 2024, 10am, Brighton Metropole or via Teams.

022/24 HDC Local Plan Review Update

At a HDC full council meeting on 11th December 2023, the Horsham District Local Plan Regulation 19 document was approved for a formal period of representation between 19th January and the 1st March 2024. More detail about the period of representation will be made available in the new year.

Of relevance to Ashington –

What has been allocated –

“Land east of Mousdell Close” has been allocated for at least 75 homes (in addition to the existing 225 allocated in ANP). It is unknown at this time whether numbers would be reduced if the Land West of Ashington School site has an extra 30 homes.

HDC documents state that this site plus the homes allocated in the Ashington Neighbourhood Plan (ANP) are an ‘appropriate’ quantum of development for Ashington. The ANP period is to 2031 so the additional site is considered sufficient to the Local Plan date of 2041. This new site fits with the Spatial Strategy set out in the ANP.

Further information - Local Plan review evidence base / Site Assessment Report – December 2023 / Sites with potential for allocation ... pages 116-119
https://www.horsham.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/131736/HDC-Reg-19-Site-Assessment-Report-Part-III-Preferred-Smaller-Sites-Dec-2023.pdf

What's not been allocated at this time –

“Ashington Glebe Land (Ashington Northern Cluster)”. Approx. 450 homes.

A consortium of Devine Homes, Taylor Wimpey and the Diocese of Chichester who own 5 sites between them, with land that runs from opposite Mousdell Close, behind Rectory Lane and Rectory Close and would come out on the Billingshurst Road.

The collective impact of implementing the sites would be considered “unsustainable in terms of the cumulative impact on local services and infrastructure”. However, it should be noted that should the consortium “break up” each site would be considered on its own merit and may therefore be considered more favourably.

“Land West of the White House” (Mill Lane). Approx. 14-16 dwellings

“Very negative impacts” raised under environmental considerations.

Further information - Local Plan review evidence base / Site Assessment Report – December 2023 / Sites not identified for potential allocation ... pages 221-225
https://www.horsham.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/131737/HDC-Reg-19-Site-Assessment-Report-Part-IV-Rejected-Smaller-Sites-Dec-2023.pdf

It was noted that the February meeting is the only full council meeting before the 1st March deadline for representation responses. The clerk is currently analysing the documents ahead of the next meeting.

Clerk

023/24 Neighbourhood Plan – Chanctonbury Nurseries ASH10 (dealt with earlier in meeting)

024/24 Neighbourhood Plan – Land West of Ashington School ASH11 (dealt with earlier in meeting)

025/24 Planning Applications

DC/23/2191 Erection of a single storey side extension. Stone Barn, London Road, RH20 3JR.

The council raised no objections.

DC/23/2222 Construction of a two bay shed. Petrol Filling Station, Showroom 2 and Service Centre, London Road, RH20 3AT

The council raised no objections.

DC/23/2264 Proposed camp site to accommodate no more than 10 tents. Trickle Barn, Hole Street, Wiston, RH20 3DE.

Notification of intent to Local Planning Authority. No formal consultation – for info only, although it is believed this may require planning for site access at a later date.

DC/23/24/0007 Erection of front porch and associated material changes. 8 Rectory Close, RH20 3LP. The council raised no objections (the clerk noted they are a neighbour to the applicant but are not involved in the decision making).

026/24 New Enforcement Allegations – none

027/24 Horsham District Council Decisions

Approvals – none

Refusals – none

Withdrawals – none

Prior Notifications – none

Appeals – none

FINANCE

028/24 Minutes of the Finance Meeting held on 4th January 2024

Minutes have been circulated to Councillors. Agreement is sought for all proposals, namely –

Budget and precept request to HDC

1. Budget as presented, with a proposed 5% increase to precept request - £108,133 (works out at approx. 6p per week for a Band D house)
2. To increase the clerk's hours from 18 to 22 hours per week from April 1st 2024. (Discussion to be had at next meeting as to whether increase via O/T or change to contract)
3. The Parish Yard utilities – to allocate general reserves budget of £600 pa.
4. Landscape Contractor – to allocate all expenditure from general reserves budget, therefore increase of budget from £5,000 to £9,000.
5. Play Areas & Skatepark Maintenance EMR – to reduce transfer to EMR to £5,000 (previously £7,000).
6. Software / IT EMR – to reduce transfer to EMR to £1,000 (previously £1,500).
7. Administration EMR – to move £250 annually to EMR (use for Locum costs).
8. Girls Only Budget – to close EMR and reallocate to the Grants EMR.
9. Closed Hanging baskets/lamppost testing EMR – to “transfer” -£30 balance from closed EMR to current “Bus shelters, seats etc” EMR.

Parish Yard

10. HDC to be contacted regarding water neutrality situation.
11. Working party to investigate viable uses of the site to increase revenue and protect funds in Parish Yard EMR.

Review of banking arrangements and Investments

12. Closure of NS&I as previously agreed (ref 367/23 3. d))
13. To open 6 new savings/investment accounts as detailed below.

Financial Institution	Term of investment	Amount	Interest rate
Redwood Bank	95 day notice	£20,000 *	4.3% var.
Lloyds Bank	6 months fixed term dep.	£55,000 **	3.5% fixed
Redwood Bank	1 year bond	£60,000 *	4.8% fixed
The Cambridge Building Society	1 year bond	£80,000 ***	5.0% fixed
Cambridge and Counties Bank	5 year bond	£67,000 ****	4.7% fixed
Unity Trust Bank	Instant access	TBC *****	2.75% var.

The minutes of the finance meeting dated 4th January 2024 were circulated to Cllrs. They were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.
Councillors approved all the recommended proposals.

Clerk to submit precept request to HDC.

Clerk

029/24 Correspondence received

1. Quarterly bank reconciliation for 31st December 2023.
2. Quarterly budget report for 31st December 2023.

CFWD

CFWD

030/24 Annual review of Assets and Insurance Cover

No change to assets held last year. Copy of asset register sent to Cllrs.
Clerk will identify where the kissing gate is and if no longer an "asset" propose removal. The sandbag container is currently unused, and clerk will also see if this should be removed from register. **Clerk**

The Council's Insurance Policy is due for renewal on 15th January 2024. The renewal cost is £1279.34 (last year was £1259.30 - £20 increase in admin fee) – Aviva Local Council's policy through NALC specialist Councils broker Clear Councils (previously BHIB), as set up in 2022 within a 3-year Long Term Undertaking (LTU) which offers a discount on the premium.

It was approved by Cllrs that the Council accepts the policy as currently in a 3-year LTU.

031/24 Income

£146.91 Bank interest

032/24 Expenditure (Appendix 3)

Cllrs approved the schedule of invoices for payment totalling **£7,753.10**

033/24 Date of next meetings

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

Parish Council: **7:45pm on Thursday 8th February 2024, Ashington School**

Members of the public were then asked to leave the meeting as Councillors needed to discuss confidential matters: none

Meeting closed at 10:00 pm

Signed: **Dated:**

Appendix 1 – Warden Report

December 2023 Ashington

Patrol hours TOTAL:	67	ASB incidents reported to us TOTAL:	2
Foot (high visibility)	38	Noise	0
Vehicle	29	Neighbours	0
Notices/warnings TOTAL:	3	Driving/vehicles	2
Verbal warning	2	Bicycles	0
Parking alert	1	Alcohol	0
Yellow card warning (ASB)	0		
Community Protection Warning/Notice	0		
Fixed Penalty Notice	0	Clear up/disposal reports TOTAL:	1
Reports into Police TOTAL:	5	Fly tipping / flyposting	1
Phone (including 101 and 999)	2	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
Media Reports TOTAL:	4		
Press release/Community magazines	0		
Social media posts	4	Community events attended	4
Admin hours	48	School contact	4
Vulnerable people welfare checks	24	Youth engagement	52
Signposting	5	Reports to DVLA	1
Safeguarding referral	0	Reports to Operation Crackdown	0

ASB

We have been working with the Police regarding a repeat anti-social driver. We collated all the evidence we have gathered from different reports and we are working with the Police to try and educate and deter repeat behaviour, as well as enforcement where necessary.

Parking/vehicles

We have been increasing our patrols around the vehicle break in's we have been having in the village. We have spoken with residents whom have had their vehicles broken into and given crime prevention advice. We have focussed these patrols mainly around when it gets dark to fit in with the time frames they have been occurring, noting down registrations of vehicles seen suspiciously and liaising with our Police colleagues.

Fly tipping/littering/graffiti

We reported fly tipping along park lane, which was collected very promptly.

Community engagement/events/meetings

We have attended Rock Road again to see the young people there and engage with them which is positive every time we go. We have the kids that go there now talking to us here more when they're out and about.

We ran another SEN parents support session at The Hub in Storrington which was a success, with parents seeking to support and advise each other. Following the positive uptake of this group we have our first one in Ashington starting in January at the Church.

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 vehicle breaks.

Older, vulnerable people and youth

We held our Christmas Community Jingle and Mingle this month, we really loved hosting this event, we had parents come along, children from Ashington school choir and members of the community all together enjoying the songs and festive food. The children sang and behaved beautifully and the whole event was really well received. We asked youth club to do a raffle there to raise money for the youth club which was a real success. A special thanks to the ACCT and Parish Council for their support in running this successful community event, also to Truffles and M&S for donating food to the event.

We have been working our way through our elderly and vulnerable list, visiting as many of our residents as we can before Christmas. We wanted to make sure people were warm, whether they would be on their own at Christmas and generally seeing how they were doing. Christmas is a time for a family for many people, but for some of our residents it is a difficult time of year and they can feel incredibly lonely.

The Christmas cuppa and chat at the Red Lion was a success, the Red Lion kindly offered no charge to any of the attendees and gave them all mince pies too.

Dog related issues

Nothing to report.

Cycling

Nothing to Report

Parish specific/other

We are working with a resident regarding ownership of a tree. We are helping them to ascertain who the tree belongs too so they can work out maintaining it. We are liaising with the parish, district and county councils on this.

We are still trying to get the abandoned caravan removed, we are hoping to push on with getting this finished and done as soon as possible.

Social media/press

Nothing to report.

Appendix 2 – Correspondence received for public interest

1. Ash dieback works – scheduled to take place between 8th January – 29th February 2024 on the A24 between Washington Roundabout and Buck Barn Crossroads. Single lane closures between 09:30-15:30 weekdays only

Appendix 3 – Expenditure

Lee English	Home Office (Dec 2023)	£26.00
Lee English	Giff Gaff (mobile phone topup)	£6.00
Lee English	Land Registry purchase	£3.00
Lee English	Staples - Printer cartridges / paper / diary	£118.44
Mark Adsett	Landscape gardening (Dec 2023)	£715.00
Eon	Electricity - Parish Yard (direct debit)	£40.00
WSSC	Salaries and oncosts (Nov 2023)	£2,455.24
Clear Councils	Annual insurance policy	£1,279.30
Public Works Loan Board	Public works loan (direct debit)	£3,110.12
Total		£7,753.10

All to be paid by Bank Transfer