



Ashington Parish Council

Minutes of the remote meeting held on Thursday 4th March 2021 at 8.00p.m.

Present: Councillors: N. Spiers, P. Kerrey, T. Kearney, T. Moss, M. Woolley, J. Morris, S. Ball, T. Watson, P. Linehan, G. MacPherson, J. Stillwell

Also present:

Clerk: Karen Dare

County Councillor: Paul Marshall

3 Members of the Public

057/21 **Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received and approved from:

District Councillor: John Blackall & Philip Circus

No apologies from District Councillor J Saheid

Neighbourhood Wardens: Bryony Sparks & Christina Arnold

058/21 **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 Woolley reiterated his ongoing declaration of interest in the Neighbourhood Plan and HDC's Local Plan (items 069/21 & 070/21) and an interest in item 068/21 Hedge planting as it is proposed along part of his southern boundary.

059/21 **Public Adjournment** - Members of the public can ask questions.

1. Could the Ashington Rangers clean some of the street signs in the village as they are getting very dirty?
The Chairman will look into this.

060/21 **Reports from District & County Councillors**

County Councillor Paul Marshall reported:

1. Apologies for missing the Annual Parish Meeting
2. WSCC were faced with a budget shortfall of £44million, mainly due to increased costs in children's services and adult social care, but they have plugged the gap and approved a balanced budget. Their Government financial settlement was as requested and the shortfall balance is met through a 3% Precept increase + 2% increase for adult social care.
3. They will be introducing a booking system for the Horsham Tip and other tips where traffic congestion has proved dangerous. Billingshurst will not need to be booked. This is a pilot scheme for 6 months and slots can be booked via an App but also by phone. The trial will start at the end of March. Hampshire County Council introduced bookings and it proved highly successful.

Questions:

1. Cllr Moss asked whether WSCC/HDC have a strategy for dealing with recycling and amenity tips looking at their management, different options, relative costs etc?
Paul Marshall explained that WSCC need to increase food waste recycling but food waste collections would need to be done by HDC. They have a target of 65% recycled by 2030. Their landfill usage has dropped by 12% already and Horsham District is one of the best at recycling in the County. He would pick this issue up with Tony Moss outside of the meeting.

2. Cllr Ball asked how WSCC would ensure safety at Billingshurst tip, especially if we have a spell of good weather leading to increased visits because Horsham tip needs to be pre-booked? Cllr Kearney & Stillwell suggested that problems occur at Horsham and Billingshurst as they are closed for 2 days per week.

Paul Marshall stated that Horsham tip has peaks & troughs of usage during the day and booking will even out traffic. All tips are operating at reduced capacity due to Covid as social distancing reduces the number of vehicles that can be on site at any one time. People are working from home more so may be clearing out leading to high demand during a time where capacity is low.

The Chair thanked County Councillor Marshall for his attendance and report. He left the meeting.

DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN:

061/21 Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 4th February 2021

The minutes of the meeting dated 4th February 2021 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman. Proposed by Cllr Watson, seconded by Cllr Linehan and agreed by all.

062/21 The Parish Yard - update

1. The Clerk has arranged for Utilities mapping & 2D survey to be done in March. Once these maps are available then a CCTV survey of the drains will be done. An architect will then produce concepts and plans prior to planning application.
2. Blush & Bramble, Chanctonbury Organic Meats, Chef's Farms, Flanco Pizza and ThaiAngle all have regular bookings for 2021. A new booking from a BBQ truck has been secured and a potential booking from an Ice Cream van is being pursued.
3. The Clerk applied for Small Business Rates Relief and it has been granted. No Business Rates are currently payable.

CFWD

063/21 Annual Review of ACCT/PC agreement – the Working Party met on 10th February and agreed that Cllrs McPherson & Linehan would lead the discussions with ACCT and these have led to an agreement being reached. The financial impact on the Parish Council is:

1. strimming of the Recreation Ground ditch and edges and trimming hedges along Church Lane to be removed from the PC Contractor agreement
2. ACCT to transfer ownership of skatepark equipment to PC (by simple letter) and lease the skatepark to the PC, terms of the lease to be the same as that for the Over 12s play area. The PC added the skatepark equipment to its insurance policy in February 2019.
3. PC have NO responsibility for the ACCT play area, multisports court or CCTV cameras.

Cllr Kearney asked whether free public use of the multisports court was included in the new agreement and it was confirmed that this remains, outside of any paid bookings. An updated agreement dated March 2021 had been circulated. Councillors approved (1 abstention).

KD CFWD

064/21 Youth Services Review – scheduled for 17th March. Cllrs Spiers & Ball to attend. Some areas of the agreement need clarifications, some parts are not being met (financial reporting).

Cllr Kearney asked whether the Youth Worker had been paid as normal throughout Lockdown. The Chairman reported that he had and was not furloughed at all, which was a surprise. Cllr Linehan expressed concern about where training costs were being spent and the Chairman reported that the Youth Club Chairman and Church were discussing training as it is important to be secular for village needs. The Chairman explained that the Parish Council pays a fixed cost for Youth Services to be delivered by the Church, but it is important that the funds are spent according to the Parish Council's agreement with the Church.

065/21 Correspondence received for Action –

1. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission are hosting a 'War Graves Week' from 21 - 28 May to promote their work and remember those who died. As part of the programme, they are encouraging community groups to create a 'wildflower memorial' and are offering free packs of wildflower seeds. Several Councillors have ordered these. It was agreed that they are scattered in the area surrounding the memorial bench and silhouette.

2. eForests - Free trees for planting projects. Does the Council have any projects that need new trees? Minimum order is @200 trees but 30% can be hedging. No projects requiring such large numbers of trees.

066/21 Meetings attended by Councillors –

The Chair & Vice Chair have attended various Zoom meetings with those involved in Youth Provision.

Cllrs Morris attended an ACCT meeting on 24th February 2021.

The Chair, Cllr Linehan & Cllr MacPherson attended a meeting on 10th February and subsequently to discuss the ACCT agreement.

The Clerk attended the WSALC AGM on 25th February (Cllr Moss was not admitted to the meeting, lots of registration/admittance problems) and Cllr Moss attended a WSALC meeting on 18th February. A recording of the meeting on 25th is available to watch.

067/21 Matters raised by Councillors

Speedwatch update from Cllr Kerrey – remains suspended until we receive instructions from the Police that we may operate normally. Storrington Speedwatch had been operating under Covid restrictions but Ashington volunteers were not keen.

Cllr Ball – hanging baskets vs planters & noticeboards. On hold as permission to erect the hanging baskets as normal in 2021 has been granted.

Cllr Morris reported that ACCT have set up a group to look at dog fouling. Neville Clarke is leading it and more information in due course. The Wardens are highlighting the problem by spraying deposits, but this does not solve the issue.

Cllr Stillwell reported that on the NextDoor Facebook page a resident had complained about the poor state of the dry balancing pond and the Posthorses pond, both of which belong to the Parish Council. The Clerk reported that she had received emails about this and had explained to two residents that the ponds have both been subject to some vegetation disposal, probably by nearby residents - a Parish Council tree was cut down without permission by a resident and the debris put in the dry pond and tree cuttings were piled up beside the Posthorses pond leading to both the areas looking messy and unkempt. The Posthorses pond is also suffering from algae due to reduced water flow (and oxygen levels) during a very dry period. It will be monitored in the Spring. Little action can be taken on vegetation dumping unless the perpetrators are caught in the act.

Cllr Stillwell asked if Friends of Ashington was still in existence? Cllr Ball reported that it does still exist but is currently inactive due to Covid restrictions. Clubs are not running and committee members are shielding.

Cllr Stillwell reported that under the Highways Act 1980 any road used by the public continuously for more than 10 years without hindrance can be added to the Highways Register and form part of the adopted highways network. The Parish Council should inform the Highways Authority of its desire to have the road adopted and ask them to add it to the Register. This could be appropriate for Mill Lane (unmade section).

There was much discussion about whether the road is a private road (no sign in place) and whether the Highway Authority would adopt it in its current condition as the Parish Council had always been informed that it would need to be brought up to a certain standard before it would be adopted. The question was always around who would foot the bill for the works. Cllr Stillwell reported that this was not the case and that WSCC are required to bring the road up to standard and they cannot refuse to adopt it. She had been told this by a friend (a Planning Consultant specialising in Highways) and they could talk to the Parish Council about this.

The Chairman reported that previous highways investigations had considered if the Old London Road could be un-adopted and turned into private road with a gate put across and that this would stop

the problems with fly-tipping, lorry parking etc. However, the Parish Council had been told by WSCC that this was not possible as it must remain a public highway.

Cllr Watson reported that the First Responder had updated the Defibrillator map for Ashington and put it on Facebook. The defibrillator at Ashington Autos needs new batteries and the Responder will speak to the Clerk about this. There is one spare cabinet and defibrillator. Defibrillators are currently installed at The Red Lion, ACCT, Ashington Autos and Blakiston Close, the aim being that no resident is >2minutes from a defibrillator. It was suggested that the spare could be installed at the shopping centre as this would serve the centre of the village. Cllr Watson to investigate and send a map of locations to the Clerk.

TW D

Cllr MacPherson thanked Councillors for ordering wildflower seeds (065/21(1)) He also reported very positive discussions with ACCT (063/21) and that it sets a good way forward for collaborative working in the future, building on Cllr Woolley's previous good work. The new arrangement is more balanced, equitable and clear. ACCT will continue to provide meeting rooms to the PC free of charge and it was a very useful exercise in finding out all of the things that ACCT deliver to the village. He reiterated that litter is always the legal responsibility of the landowner and that our Wardens are able to enforce litter legislation. Managing litter in the village is done through the Wardens agreement and Steering Group, rather than being part of the ACCT agreement.

068/21 **Chairman's Announcements -**

Future meetings – clarification of the lifting of restrictions on meetings is awaited.

Cllr Woolley was put in the Waiting Room (ie outside the meeting).

Proposed that the Council purchase hedging plants eg hornbeam to go along the fence line beside Church Farm/House drive to provide some screening. Cost @£350 for @150 bare root hornbeam saplings 90cm-1m high, planting time March/April, volunteers to plant. Alongside the wildflower seeds this will make the area around the memorial garden pretty & more secluded. Funds from the Street Trees donation. Agreed.

Cllr Woolley was readmitted to the meeting.

AGM Business – it was not possible to hold an AGM in 2020 due to Covid restrictions. It was proposed that the AGM business can go ahead in May 2021, either at a Zoom meeting or in person. Therefore, if anyone is considering stepping down from positions of responsibility and if anyone wishes to be considered for positions then please speak to the Clerk or Chairman by 14th April. Positions available are: Chair, Vice Chair, Finance Committee, Planning Committee, Staffing Committee, Representatives – ACCT, Youth Club, Wardens, WSALC/SSALC, HALC. Agreed.

PLANNING

Cllr Woolley was put in the Waiting Room (ie outside the meeting).

069/21 **Neighbourhood Planning Update**

Independent Examiners Statement of Fact has been presented for checking of factual errors. It was agreed that the Clerk & Consultant respond directly to HDC on this. There are a few suggested Plan modifications in terms of specific wording, none of which alter the substance of the ANP. The overall conclusion of the report is very complimentary of the ANP and the work that the Parish Council has put into it. The Examiner is recommending that, subject to the modifications, the ANP proceeds to referendum.

All Examination information is available to read on the HDC website and an update has been put on the PC website.

The Chairman & Councillors thanked the Clerk for all her hard work keeping the project moving forward, despite many challenges. Examination is a major milestone in the project.

070/21 **HDC Local Plan Review Update** – no updates

Cllr Woolley was readmitted to the meeting.

071/21 Minutes of the Planning Meeting held on February 17th, 2020.

The meeting was cancelled as there were no applications.

072/21 Planning Applications –

DC/21/0228 Erection of a single storey pitched roof side extension and internal alterations to form a pair of semi-detached 2No. bedroom dwellings - 11 Hillcrest Drive

Councillors were aware of the previous planning applications and the Appeal history and noted that PC previous objections on the grounds of inadequate parking & driveway access, overdevelopment and appearance in the street scene had been dismissed by the Planning Inspector at Appeal. The Council did not consider there were sufficient grounds for an Objection to the current application, but it did express some concerns about the lack of privacy/amenity for future occupiers of 'Plot 1' (northern property). The rear garden is very small and whilst the front garden is much larger, it is not private.

In addition, the Location Plan drawings show different lines of subdivision within the rear gardens of the property. This should be clarified.

DC/21/0383 Surgery to 2 x Oak - Eastlands Farm, Billingshurst Road

The Council has no Objections subject to inspection & recommendation from HDC's Tree Officer.

DC/21/0387 Surgery to 1 x Oak - Ashington Rectory, Mill Lane

The Council has no Objections subject to inspection & recommendation from HDC's Tree Officer.

Clerk to confirm that this tree is different to the one that was cut back significantly @12 months ago.

FINANCE

073/21 Correspondence –

1. The Internal Auditor has agreed to audit the Council's accounts again this year. Fees remain the same. Agreed.
2. Approval in principle is sought for a new laptop for the Clerk. The existing laptop is 2 years old and experienced some problems recently, although it is currently working fine but slow. Laptop prices are currently high, and supplies are low so the Clerk will monitor prices and buy when necessary. Cllr Linehan suggested a decent quality MacBook Pro that, whilst expensive, will last much longer. Agreed.
3. The Council's accounts software is very old, and the supplier will cease all customer support at the end of 2021. The software is loaded onto the laptop, therefore cannot be used if the laptop ceases to work. The Clerk is looking for a simple accounts package, Cloud based with Cloud storage. More details in due course. Noted.
4. Consider a quote for £1,322.85 (exc VAT) for hanging baskets from Ferring Nurseries. This cost includes £365 for putting up and taking down the baskets. The Council has normally done this in-house using Mark Adsett & the Clerk, neither of whom are getting any younger. The budget set (£2500) would be used £1,322.85 for baskets and 18 weeks (maximum) x £65pw watering. Agreed.

074/21 Expenditure (Appendix 3)

It was resolved that the schedule of invoices for payment totalling £5,461.64 March 2021 be approved. Agreed by all.

FOR INFORMATION ONLY:

075/21 Neighbourhood Wardens Report (Appendix 1)

No further information.

076/21 Youth Worker Report (Appendix 2)

No further information.

077/21 Correspondence received for Information –

1. Rampion 2 Project Liaison Group – the Clerk attended a PLG meeting on 4th February and the presentation is available. The proposed cable route will run through Sullington, across

Washington Recreation Ground, through the Wiston Estate and towards Ashurst. It will impact on the A283 & A24 although cabling under techniques may be used rather than trenching. Landowners attending the meeting were not keen. More details in due course.

2. Paul Kornicky – drawing all Parish Council’s attention to HDC removing the rights of community to make statements at Council/Cabinet meetings. PC’s and residents can ask questions but not make statements. District Councillor Circus commented – “The purpose of this change was to make sure that people don’t use the opportunity to grand stand and also to ensure that questions before meetings are related to the subject matter of the meeting. I cannot recall any example offhand of a PC wanting to make a full statement to full Council or to Cabinet. Quite recently we extended the time that PC’s had to make statements at planning to five minutes and, frankly, there are numerous other ways in which PC’s can, and do, let HDC know their position on current issues.”

Councillors were concerned that District Councillors had not raised this matter at any Parish Council meetings. It was potentially anti-democratic. Cllr Linehan reported that this matter has been raised at the Arundel & South Downs Conservative Association who will be taking it up with the Leader of HDC. Councillors wish to discuss this with District Councillors at the next Parish Council meeting.

CFWD

3. Relate North and South West Sussex continue to provide counselling for all relationships
4. WSCC - New booking system trial proposed for five Household Waste Recycling Sites
5. Sussex Heritage Trust - Public Realm Campaign.
6. Gatwick Airport – charging at drop-off forecourt.
7. WSCC - Highways, Transport & Planning Members Update – February
8. CenSus Newsletters.
9. SSALC - recording of the Chairman’s Forum that took place on 9th February 2021.
10. WSCC – Soft Sand Review, Inspector’s report.
11. HDC – Economic Development year-end report.

PLANNING

078/21 **Planning Correspondence** – none

079/21 **New Enforcement Allegations** – none

080/21 **Horsham District Council Decisions**

Approvals –

DC/20/2409 Surgery to 1 x Oak - 20 Covert Mead

DC/20/2410 Surgery to 1 x Oak - 19 Covert Mead

Refusals - none

Withdrawals – none

Prior Notifications – none

Appeals –

DC/19/1752 Erection of a detached two storey dwelling - Malthouse Farm, Malthouse Lane
Appeal against refusal of planning permission.

FINANCE

081/21 **Income** –

Parish Yard (January) £299.33

082/21 **ITEMS SUSPENDED AND CARRIED FORWARD:**

None

083/21 **Date of Next meetings**

Planning Committee meeting: **7:30pm on Wednesday 17th March 2021**

Parish Council: **7:45pm on Thursday 1st April 2021**

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

Meeting closed at 9.30pm

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.

Warden Monthly Report

February 2021 Ashington

Patrol hours TOTAL:	67	ASB incidents TOTAL:	3
Foot (high visibility)	35	Noise	0
Vehicle	32	Neighbours	0
Notices/warnings TOTAL:	0	Driving/vehicles	3
Fixed Penalty Notice	0	Bikes	0
Yellow card warning	0	Alcohol/drugs	0
Community Protection Warning/Notice	0	Public order	2
Parking alert	0	Clear up/disposal reports TOTAL:	3
Police reports TOTAL:	4	Fly tipping / flyposting	0
Phone (including 101 and 999)	0	Graffiti	0
Email	2	Dog fouling	3
Intelligence report	0	Litter	0
E-CINS (multi-agency reporting)	0	Drug litter	0
Verbal	1	Hazards	0
Media reports TOTAL:	0	Community events attended	0
Press release / Community magazines	0	Reports to Operation Crackdown	0
Social Media	0	Safeguarding referral	0
Admin	34	School contact	0
Visits to vulnerable people (all ages)	49	Youth engagement	6
Signposting	1	Reports to DVLA	0

ASB/crime/criminal damage

We have received reports of individuals using the skate park, we have been able to speak with the young people involved and explained to them again that due to lockdown all skate parks are currently closed which is why the barriers are across. They quickly moved on.

If anyone sees or hears anything suspicious then please report it on 101 or 999 if something is happening in that instance.

Parking/vehicles

We had complaint around a number of cars using the scout hut car park late at night, thankfully we were able to look into this and resolve the matter.

Residents have reported an increase in inconsiderate parking around the village. Parking near to junctions, on double yellow lines and blocking pavements. We are watching out for this on our patrols and will be giving out Parking alerts and words of advice to any drivers caught parking inconsiderately.

Fly tipping/littering/graffiti

There has been no reports of fly tipping this month.

We have reported in a number of potholes in the local roads, and road signs/posts that have fallen over or broken.

Community engagement/events/meetings

We are really starting to focus on what we can do in the community after lockdown. We are starting to think about how we can work with the youth club to put on joint events and projects. We are looking at how we can safely engage the community in activities such as litter picking and property marking. There has also been discussions with older residents around what activities they would like to see return.

Patrols (foot/visible and car)

We have patrolled the whole village on foot and vehicle at various times of the day throughout the month.

Elderly and youth

We continue to write and deliver our newsletters, where we have been able to we have stopped to check in with the residents that we deliver to. The newsletters are gratefully received by all and we know they enjoy the quizzes and various challenges that are included. We also made phone calls this month to welfare check the elderly residents as well.

Following a referral from a partner agency we were able to do a welfare visit on a particularly vulnerable resident who has been suffering with health concerns, we continue to work with this individual and have been able to signpost them to other services that may help improve their living conditions.

We have been keeping in contact with a group of young adults in village who we have been supporting through their time on furlough focusing on their mental and emotional wellbeing.

Licensing

Nothing to report

Dog related issues

Having received reports around the increase of dog fouling we have been out with the fluorescent spray to highlight to people where it is, this is to act as a deterrent to those who are not cleaning up after their dog but also to stop members of the public from walking in it.

Cycling

Nothing to report

Parish specific/other

There have been a few reports this month around doorstep traders. We received a couple of reports about a group offering to pressure wash & 'seal' residents patio, driveways & decking. Also from a van approaching a property sell garden furniture. We passed this information onto the police.

If you ever have doorstep traders come around and you feel intimidated and pressured then please report it to Sussex Police.

Appendix 2 – Youth Worker Report

Youth Worker's Report - Feb 2021

February was much the same as January - with Zoom calls twice a week for years 6-9 on Mondays and years 10+ on Thursdays. Attendance stayed the same as in January, with 6 on a Monday and 2-3 on Thursdays.

We have focussed on having fun and staying connected which I feel the young people have needed the most. What's been good to see is the progression of involvement and ownership from the young people - they have started to plan and deliver parts of the evening sessions based on what we have modelled to them.

I have split my staff into two groups; Samuel and I will work on planning Monday nights and Jack and Gemma will focus on the Thursday nights.

We have had no issues to speak of regarding safeguarding on Zoom. All parents have returned signed online agreements and the young people are behaving as we have asked and expect them to.

Emma McDonald has joined the AYC committee and is bringing experience and advice to help me and Jack support the young people's mental well-being. Jack and I have also completed two training courses each designed to offer low-level insight and support to any young person feeling vulnerable or anxious, especially useful when we reopen our doors (as things stand hopefully this might be on Monday 19th April).

Sadly the youth committee I tried to start didn't take off. However, instead we asked the young people on one of the calls what they'd like to see going forward and I have made notes of their suggestions for when we reopen.

I'm excited to be planning for the summer, reopening the club but also ways to be active in the community and to link up and host things with other bodies in the village, such as the church, the wardens and Ashington Cougars.

Appendix 3 – Expenditure

Karen Dare (Clerk)	Home office (February)	£20.00
Mark Adsett	Landscape Gardening (February)	£587.50
Ashington PCC	Invoice YW-2021-01 (February)	£1,083.33
WSSC	Salaries and Costs (February 2021)*	£3,002.21
EON	Monthly Direct Debit Parish Yard - electricity	£20.00
Business Stream	Monthly Direct Debit Parish Yard - water	£20.00
The Sign Shop	Parish Yard sign perspex	£60.00
PS & AB Mitchell	Electrical testing Parish Yard - post installation	£72.00
N. Spiers	Parish Yard sundries	£139.42
Horsham District Council	Litter & Dog bin emptying	£427.18
Horsham Business Systems	Repair of Clerk's laptop	£30.00

*includes all overtime & holiday pay

All to be paid by Bank Transfer

Appendix 4

Funds held by the Parish Council on behalf of others (as at 31st December 2020):

Ashington Rangers £724.01

Ashington Residents Association £615.85

Ashington First Responders £1,509.48