



Annual Meeting of Ashington Parish Council

**Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 9th May 2024 at 7.45pm
Ashington School, Foster Lane**

Present:

Councillors: N. Carter, P. Howie, T. Kearney, P. Kerrey, J. Morris, T. Moss, M. Woolley

Also present:

Clerk: Lee English

Horsham District Councillor: Alan Manton

Members of the Public: 6

As the previous Chairman and Vice-Chairman had formally resigned as councillors since the last meeting, the clerk chaired the meeting until a new Chairman and Vice-Chairman were voted in to post.

The clerk 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.

127/24 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received and approved from:

Councillors: G. MacPherson, B. Wallace

Horsham District Councillor: Philip Circus

County Councillor: Paul Marshall

Neighbourhood Wardens: Christina Arnold and Bryony Sparks

128/24 Election of Chairman and signing of Declaration of Acceptance of Office

Cllr MacPherson had been nominated by Cllr Kerrey and seconded by Cllr Kearney.

There being no other nominations, Cllr MacPherson was unanimously elected as Chairman.

Due to their absence from the meeting, councillors approved that the Chairman sign the Declaration of Acceptance of Office at the earliest available opportunity.

129/24 Election of Vice-Chairman and signing of Declaration of Acceptance of Office

Cllr Kerrey had been nominated by Cllr Carter and seconded by Cllr Moss.

There being no other nominations, Cllr Kerrey was unanimously elected as Vice-Chairman and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

In accordance with Standing Orders, as the Chairman was absent, the Vice-Chairman presided over the remainder of the meeting.

130/24 Allocation of committees and formation of any new committees

Committees –

Following discussion, the committees were agreed as follows –

Finance – Cllrs MacPherson, Morris, Moss, Woolley

Planning – Cllrs Carter, Kearney, MacPherson, Woolley

Staffing – Cllrs Carter, MacPherson, Moss

Working Groups –

It was proposed that the allocation to the working groups be CFWD to the June meeting, to allow for a review of the scope of the current working groups. This was agreed, and all existing councillors working group allocations to remain the same until then.

131/24 Adoption of Terms of Reference for Planning and Finance Committees

The draft Terms of Reference had been sent to all councillors for review. Once adopted, to be reviewed annually. These were unanimously approved for adoption.

132/24 Appointment of representatives to outside bodies

Ashington Community Centre Trust (observer) – Cllr Carter

Horsham District Association of Local Councils – Kearney, Moss

Ashington Youth Club – Cllr Kerrey

WSALC – Cllr Moss

133/24 Confirmation of the schedule of meetings for 2024-25

The schedule of meetings was distributed to all councillors prior to the meeting. Approved.

134/24 Annual Review of the Code of Conduct

The clerk confirmed there were no amendments to the Code of Conduct previously adopted by the Council. All councillors to sign the acceptance sheet and approve the Code of Conduct. Approved.

135/24 Annual Review and Approval of Standing Orders

The clerk confirmed there were no amendments to the standing orders previously adopted by the Council. The council to approve the Standing Orders. Approved.

136/24 Annual Review of the Register of Members Interests

All councillors were reminded to ensure their Register of Members Interests forms were up to date. New ones are only required if there is an amendment to be made, or a change in circumstances.

137/24 Annual Review of the Council's Financial Regulations, Financial Risk Assessment documents and Asset Register

The clerk confirmed there were no amendments to the Financial Regulations at the time of the meeting, although NALC had just released their latest version of the regulations, and the Finance Committee are also looking to propose some amendments. It was proposed therefore to approve the current version, and any amendments will be put before councillors at the June meeting (or later, if required). Approved.

There were some minor factual amendments made to the Financial Risk Assessment document (ie number of notice boards/SSALC amended to WSALC). It was noted that there are some areas on the document that require a fuller review, therefore it was proposed to approve the current version (with the minor factual amendments) and the Finance Committee to undertake a review at their next committee meeting. Approved.

The Asset Register is updated regularly as and when assets are purchased or disposed of.

138/24 Annual Review of Councillors' and Chairman's allowances

Councillors were reminded that the council does have a scheme of members' allowances. The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) Regulations 2003 allow a parish council to pay a "basic parish allowance" to its chairman only, or to each of its elected members (co-opted members do not qualify). The council may also pay a chairman's allowance to enable expenses to be met relating specifically to the role (£50 has been budgeted for this year).

Current "basic parish allowance" is £430pa. All councillors present declined to take the allowance. Councillors were reminded that they can claim all modest travelling and subsistence expenses incurred while undertaking parish council business, such as attending meetings or training courses.

Monthly Parish Council business

139/24 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).

140/24 Minutes of the Parish Council meeting 11th April 2024

To approve and sign the minutes of the PC meeting dated 11th April 2024.

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

141/24 Neighbourhood Wardens Report (Appendix 1) and report from Steering Group

The steering group noted that they will meet with the Wardens on a more regular basis as the Steering Group meetings are only once a quarter.

Questions –

1. **Vehicle break-ins** – Cllr Woolley asked whether the wardens had any update regarding the spate of vehicle (mainly commercial) break ins recently as there was no mention of it in their report. Clerk to follow up. **Clerk**

142/24 Ashington Youth Club (AYC) Quarterly Review

CFWD

143/24 Reports from District & County Councillors

District Councillor Manton reported –

1. **Annual meeting of HDC** – Nigel Emery was elected as the new Chairman of the Council (previously David Skipp), with Tony Bevis as Vice-Chairman.
2. An **Electric Vehicle event** (Discover Electric) is scheduled for 24th May, where there will be the opportunity to test drive an EV car.
3. The **HDC Local Plan** has now moved to the next stage with submission to the Government Inspector, along with approx. 1,600 comments.

Questions –

1. **Police and Crime Commissioner elections** – A member of the public who had helped with the recent elections noted that HDC had been marvellous with the organisation of the elections but that there had been very little information from the candidates themselves, and they could have been more proactive. Polling turnout was low, and several people attended thinking they were voting for councillors. Cllr Manton responded that it is for the candidates to promote themselves but noted that similar feedback had been received.

144/24 Public Adjournment – Members of the public can ask questions

1. **Bellway development** – A resident asked if there was any update regarding the development. The clerk updated that there was no recent update, but that as agreed,

several councillors had met with Bellway representatives following their attendance at the January PC meeting, to discuss some early responses to issues raised. It was believed that Bellway have been asked by WSCC Highways to reconsider the junction leaving the site, in conjunction with the Church Lane/Foster Lane junction. The resident asked if Bellway had been asked to submit a Traffic Management Plan; the clerk responded that they were unable to clarify the exact nature of the correspondence between them and that it was likely that there would be a large number of updates released by the developers all at once.

- 2. Wardens report** – A resident noted that they believed those listed on the wardens vulnerable list where those that were registered with HDC as having a red button (personal alarm) and that actually there are a lot of people with the buttons that were not on the list. The clerk responded that the list supplied from HDC was a starting point and that other people could be added to the list, and that it was up to the person themselves (or a representative on their behalf) to contact the wardens. It was not appropriate for any assumption to be made about a resident being added to the list unless the person themselves agreed to it. It was requested that the council or the wardens advertise this in the village newsletter.

Clerk

The Chairman thanked Cllr Manton for attending and he left the meeting.

145/24 The Parish Yard update

The solicitors have been instructed to proceed with drawing up the licence agreement for staff at the Nursery on the London Road to park on the site. Awaiting draft agreement.

146/24 Speedwatch update

Update from Cllr Kerrey obo Speedwatch group –

“In April we managed 6 sessions along the Billingshurst Road resulting in 169 vehicles reported for exceeding the speed limit out of a total of 1288. This equates to 13% of drivers ignoring the very obvious speed limit signs, which seems to be the current average.

Could I take this opportunity to express my gratitude to Pat Rickett and Barbara Laker for their unstinting support since we set up Speedwatch. I could only wish I could find more people with even a fraction of their enthusiasm.” The process for the installation of the VAS poles is ongoing.

It was noted by Cllr Howie that vehicle speeds are increasing along the London Road in the evenings. (Speedwatch are unable to run sessions in the evenings). It was discussed that although there are issues with parking during the day, the parked vehicles do slow the traffic down. Cllr Moss noted that there needs to be a comprehensive review of roads throughout the village. The clerk updated that there is a review of the London Road due in the next month or so with Highways.

147/24 Green initiatives update

- 1. Ponds and Sussex Wildlife Trust** – a visit was carried out on the 26th April by the trust, along with Cllr Morris and Mark Adsett the maintenance contractor, to look at the 4 village ponds. They were pleased with what they saw and felt the management of the ponds was very good. They were particularly pleased with the pond behind Church Close and said to leave it as it is currently. They made several recommendations for ongoing management, which the contractor will take on board.
- 2. Hedgehog posters** – the posters have been put up in the noticeboards and will remain there for several more weeks.
- 3. Swift bricks** – literature was passed to Elivia Homes (Chanctonbury Nurseries site) regarding the possibility of including them in the new development.
- 4. The Red Lion planting** – more sowing of wildflowers and plants was made, but unfortunately their contractors cut them down the following day!

It was proposed that Mark Adsett be formally thanked for the work that he undertakes on behalf of the council around the village. **Clerk**

148/24 Highways update – no update

149/24 Annual Review of ACCT/PC agreement

Ongoing due to outstanding queries regarding potential costs for the use of the upstairs office. It was noted that of the 4 items on the agreement one was regarding free use of the ACCT facilities. As the Scout Hall is not now available for PC meetings, it was discussed whether instead there could be free use of an office space. Discussions ongoing. **CFWD**

150/24 Emergency Plan

HDC have provided their current version, and it is noted that the council's version aligns to this. It was proposed and agreed to carry this forward to the June meeting due to the imminent change in councillors and updating of the Chairman / Vice-Chairman roles. **CFWD**

151/24 Parish councillor vacancy

HDC have provided the "Notice of Vacancy" for Cllr Ball which has been placed in the noticeboards and on the FB pages. If no by-election is requested by the 20th May, the vacancy can be filled by co-option. A similar notice will be provided for Cllr Spiers after his final day as a councillor on 8th May.

Clerk proposes that if no elections are requested, interested parties contact the clerk for an application form, to be returned by Friday 7th June. Applicant/s to introduce themselves at PC meeting on 13th June and councillors can vote on suitable candidate/s for co-option. Agreed.

152/24 Correspondence received for action

1. **WSALC Social Media training** – for councillors and clerks, Zoom 16th May 10am-12pm.
2. **HDC draft Greenspace Strategy** – they are looking for feedback (by 7th June) obo councils if any councillors wish to view the document and respond. **JM & Clerk**

153/24 Correspondence received for Councillor information

1. **Met Police councillor safety video** – passed to Cllrs
2. **ACCT minutes** 28th Feb and 27th March 2024 – passed to Cllrs

154/24 Correspondence received for public interest – none

155/24 Meetings attended by Councillors

Cllrs Morris and Moss – 26th April – Sussex Wildlife Trust re village ponds
Cllrs Howie, Morris and Moss – re green initiatives

156/24 Matters raised by Councillors

Hillcrest Drive sign – Cllr Carter noted the sign is still missing from the corner of Hillcrest Drive (it was attached to a wall that has recently been removed). Could a new one be requested, and to be free standing rather than on the wall this time. **Clerk**

"Days Gone By in Ashington" – Cllr Woolley noted that Margaret Alford and her helpers put on an excellent exhibition of Ashington through the ages and to send thanks to her and the team.

Posthorses – Cllr Kerrey noted that the pathway next to Posthorses was strewn with brambles. **Clerk**

157/24 Chairman's Announcements – none

PLANNING

158/24 Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting 25th April 2024

Cancelled due no new applications.

159/24 Planning Correspondence

1. **Parish & Neighbourhood Council Planning Training** session on 20th March, slides sent to Cllrs and recording available on request. Cllr Carter requested a copy of the recording. **Clerk**

160/24 HDC Local Plan Review Update - No update

161/24 Neighbourhood Plan – Chanctonbury Nurseries ASH10 - No update

162/24 Neighbourhood Plan – Land West of Ashington School ASH11 - No update

163/24 Planning Applications

DC/23/2134 Refurbishment of garages after collapse of buildings (Listed Building Consent). Westlands Old Farm House, Billingshurst Road, RH20 3AY
No objection.

DC/24/0539 Erection of a single storey side and rear extension. 29 Meiros Way, RH20 3QB
No objection.

164/24 New Enforcement Allegations

EN/24/0124 Alleged: construction of large outbuilding at front and operation of vehicle valeting business from residential property. 3 Meiros Way, RH29 3QB

165/24 Horsham District Council Decisions

Approvals –

DC/24/0243 Removal of existing conservatory and erection of a two-storey rear extension. 23 Rectory Close, RH20 3LP.

DC/24/0156 Erection of a single storey side extension and installation of porch and sliding doors to rear elevation. Stoneleigh, Mill Lane, RH20 3BX

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

Refusals –

DC/23/1918 Demolition of existing barn and outbuildings and erection of replacement 4-bed dwelling. Woolvens Farm, Billingshurst Road, RH20 3BB.

Prior Notifications – none

Withdrawals – none

Appeals – none

FINANCE

166/24 Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting 25th April 2024

Minutes had been circulated to councillors. Agreement was sought for the following proposal –

1. To move £40,000 into a Lloyds 95-day notice account at 4%.
Agreement to be sought also, that should the rate change between approval and applying for the account, that an investment for the same amount for a comparable account be

- opened instead, subject to approval by the finance committee. **Clerk**
2. An application to Nationwide for a 1-year bond with a £80,000 investment had been ongoing since January, but the clerk updated that Nationwide had that day confirmed the application had been cancelled due to the high demand from businesses for their savings accounts. The clerk confirmed that a formal complaint had been started as the council had essentially lost 3 ½ months interest (over £700), when they could have looked elsewhere. The clerk had originally requested that when approved, this amount can be moved from Lloyds savings to the current account for the investment, but will now investigate other investment opportunities. It was suggested that this issue be raised with NALC. **Clerk**

Councillors approved the investment and funds movement proposals.

Approval of the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting dated 25th April 2024 were proposed by Cllr Woolley seconded by Cllr Morris and agreed by all.

The Clerk will meet with the internal auditor on 10th May. The council will undertake the annual review of Financial Controls, accounts, and the Annual Return at the June meeting so the Chairman can sign everything prior to sending to the external auditor by the deadline of 30th June 2024.

167/24 Correspondence received

1. **RoSPA / Play Safety** notification of play area inspections in June. £78+vat x 4 areas, plus £4 x 3 for extra items (above average of 5 per site) = £ 324+vat (last year £310.50+vat) Approved.
2. **Public Works Loan** balance outstanding at 31st March 2024 is £24,907.69 (4 years remaining).

168/24 Income

£193.13 Bank interest
 £54,066.50 HDC Precept

169/24 Expenditure (Appendix 3)

Councillors approved the schedule of invoices for payment totalling **£5096.94**

170/24 Date of next meetings

Planning Committee: **7:30pm on Thursday 23rd May 2024, Ashington School**
 Planning Committee: **7:30pm on Thursday 6th June 2024, Ashington School**
 Parish Council: **7:45pm on Thursday 13th June 2024, 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 8:45 pm

Signed: **Dated:**

Appendix 1 – Warden Report - April 2024

Patrol hours TOTAL:	68	ASB incidents reported to us TOTAL:	13
Foot (high visibility)	37	Noise	0
Vehicle	31	Neighbours	1
Notices/warnings TOTAL:	5	Driving/vehicles	12
Verbal warning	2	Bicycles	0
Parking alert	4	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:	4	Fly tipping / flyposting	2
Phone (including 101 and 999)	0	Graffiti	0
Online	0	Dog fouling	0
Intelligence report	0	Litter	0
Verbal	4	Drug litter	1
E-CINS cases (multi-agency reporting)	0	Hazards	0
Media Reports TOTAL:	0		
Press release/Community magazines	0		
Social media posts	0	Community events attended	0
Admin hours	25	School contact	2
Vulnerable people welfare checks	15	Youth engagement	29
Signposting	6	Reports to DVLA	0
Safeguarding referral	0	Reports to Operation Crackdown	0

ASB

We have been made aware this month in an increase of knock and run incidents on residents doors, some being vulnerable which some have found unsettling. We have spoken to the group we believed responsible, we have been increasing our patrols around the area to try and deter it from happening.

Parking/vehicles

We have been dealing this month with parking complaints around the village particularly along London Road. We have put parking alerts on some vehicles where it has been appropriate. We are continuing to work with residents along the road and businesses. Tensions have been rising so we will continue to work with all parties involved and continue to provide a hi visibility patrol along there.

We have also been dealing with parking issues around the co-op, we spoke with drivers who were parked dangerously. We will continue to monitor, educate and work with residents and businesses alike.

Fly tipping/littering/graffiti

We have reported fly tipping this month along Old London Road, this has now been collected.

Community engagement/events/meetings

We have attended youth club to work jointly with the youth leaders and engage with the young people. We are building good rapports and hopefully this forges good relationships for our work in the community.

We have attended Rock Road, this is in conjunction with one of the Storrington Wardens, it gives an opportunity to engage with the young people we meet across the village, breaks down barriers and opens up communication for when they are at school and here in Ashington.

We have been in discussions with Neighbourhood Watch about parking issues around Warminghurst Close, we are continuing to monitor the situation. We have also been in conversations about a resident they feel we could support in the community.

Patrols (foot/visible and car)

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

Older, vulnerable people and youth

We had another successful cuppa and chat at the Red Lion. Numbers are good and it is thoroughly enjoyed by those that attend.

We have a new updated elderly and vulnerable list sent to us by community link alarm service at Horsham District Council, we have now collated it with our own list of residents that don't have a community link alarm and will be making our way through the list over the next month, to make sure everyone is ok, have all the support they need and checking on their welfare.

Dog related issues

Nothing to report.

Cycling

We have spoken to one cyclist about cycling on the footpath that runs from the Church. They dismounted their bike and pushed it until they got to the track at the other end.

Parish specific/other

We are making plans for the rest of the year, if there are any suggestions residents feel they would like to make then we would be more than welcome to hear them. We are guided by residents wants and needs and are looking at what we put on this year that is inclusive and targets the needs of the village.

We are finalising the date for the first dog behaviour session, once confirmed we will advertise, but it will be open to anyone that wants to attend, there will be no need to book.

We have had a recent meeting with the local PCSO about any incidents that we all need to work on collaboratively going forward. We continue to be in constant communication with the Police regardless, but it's always beneficial to make sure we are all working together.

Appendix 2 – Correspondence received for public interest - none

Appendix 3 – Expenditure

Lee English	Home office (Apr 2024)	£26.00
Lee English	Giff Gaff (mobile phone topup)	£6.00
Mark Adsett	Landscape gardening (Apr 2024)	£715.00
WSCC	Salaries and oncosts (Apr 2024)	£2,055.34
Radikls	Website & email hosting	£129.60
Eon	Electricity - Parish Yard (direct debit)	£40.00
Ashington Youth Club	Q3 2023-24 youth worker funding (310/23)	£2,125.00
Total		£5,096.94

All to be paid by bank transfer (except Eon)