



## Ashington Parish Council

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**Minutes of the meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2011 at 7.45 p.m. in Ashington School, Foster Lane, Ashington**

**Present: Councillors M. Woolley (Chairman), K. Wood, R. Brennan, B. Norton, N. Clark, R. Strudwick, J. Stillwell, R. Lancaster, N. Carver**  
**Parish Clerk Karen Dare**  
**District Councillor Roger Arthur**  
**County Councillor Frank Wilkinson**  
**Neighbourhood Wardens Peter Newell & Jayne Jeffrey**  
**2 members of the public**

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### **388/11 APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE**

T. Kearney (holiday) & D. Harbour (personal).

### **389/11 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

The Chairman reminded Councillors that previous declarations still stand. Cllr Woolley declared an interest in the planning application for Mitchbourne Farm as he is a close neighbour. Cllr Clark declared an interest in the Youth Club grant application as he is Chairman of the Youth Club. Cllr Lancaster declared an interest in discussions about the Co-op delivery times as he is a neighbour.

### **390/11 APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2011 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman. Proposed by Councillor Brennan and seconded by Councillor Norton, and agreed.

### **391/11 REPORT FROM THE NEIGHBOURHOOD WARDENS**

#### **Problems with Drugs / Alcohol**

At the beginning of the month following a very successful joint patrol with the police a youth was arrested for possession of a controlled substance and several of a large group were searched. As a result names were taken of the individuals present. Following the stop searches letters have been sent to all home addresses of youths concerned. We have spoken with the anti-social behaviour team and they have referred all of the youths present for one to one substance misuse sessions. Six names have

been put forward for behavioural contracts. We have been attending various meetings to organise these contracts In addition we are also trying to arrange a parents / adults drug awareness session but are still awaiting on a date.

Since stirring this group up about drugs Alcohol has now become a problem with the youths. We have spoken to the Co-op and are working closely with them to ensure that every person they feel is supplying alcohol to youths will be banned. We are visiting the Co-op on a regular basis to keep up to date with who has been banned. We also plan to visit the parents of believed underage drinkers to remind them of the consequences of supplying alcohol to their underage youths.

This month has seen a high profile approach to the drugs and alcohol abuse within the village as part of this, lots of drug paraphernalia has been confiscated and handed to the police. We are making it very difficult for groups to get comfortable by moving them on from various locations in the village. They too are fully aware that we are reporting all intelligence back to police regarding drugs and alcohol. We too have been disgusted with the amount of litter that the one particular group is leaving and have warned them that failure to pick up their litter could mean that they face a £75 fixed penalty. If and when we find the youths in an area that is full of litter we will be making them litter pick that area whether or not they are responsible for that litter.

We are pleased to say that one particular older individual that we believe has been responsible for a lot of the recent problems with the youths in the village, particularly supplying Alcohol has now moved on.

### **Criminal Damage**

Over the last few weeks we have noticed a rise in criminal damage across the village. We are fully aware of the issues and we are asking all persons involved to report any damage to the police. Reporting any incidents of criminal damage with help will high light Ashington as a hot spot area and extra patrols will be added by police. Once again the residents need to remain vigilant and report any details of offenders to us or the police straight away. We believe the recent increase in damage has been as a direct result to our enforcement approach with the youths. We are continuing to monitor the youths and their movements and are keen to catch them in the act if it is indeed them causing the damage.

### **Youth Club**

We are working closely with the parish council and youth club committee to try and search out different sources for funding for the youth club. We would like to continue our Friday night sessions as we feel there is a need to reach “different” groups within the village that currently are not being engaged with through the Wednesday night youth club. Our aims would be to try and follow something similar to the Southwater model with a youth worker of sorts that could achieve more of an outreach approach than just running youth sessions. We would like to get the Friday night sessions running again as

this would provide a safe, controlled environment for the youths to use instead of saying that they are bored with nothing to do whilst hanging around outside the CO-OP. We too see the potential in carrying out other activities in the youth club such as career workshops and a space where homework etc can be done. With the computers there this too could be a useful resource for some of all ages.

In addition to the youth club we want to help breathe some life into the gym too. We see this as a potential source of income for the youth club if run properly. We are looking at sources of funding and grants to get this back in operation.

The Snack wagon will be returning to Ashington in January. Hopefully they will be joined by specialist substance misuse worker and youth worker that can help target some of the youths in village that we know are abusing drugs.

### **Dog foul Signage**

Dog fouling still ongoing issue. We have started to do more dog foul patrols of hot spot areas. We still really need the help of residents of the village to get descriptions of offenders and their dogs and report back to us so we can be in the area at the relevant times. We need to again advertise to all residents of the village the health implications as regards dog foul. In the New Year we will devise a leaflet to be sent to all houses in the village reminding them if they dog owners their responsibilities as regards cleaning up after their dogs. This subject at the moment is one of our biggest issues in the village and in fact the district as a whole. Due to the major problem being on the recreation ground where sports is played by all ages we thought it might be a good idea for us to rally some volunteers to walk the field and pick up the dog foul. Although not a nice job we feel it needs to be done. One other option is perhaps look at getting a dog order and making the recreation ground a no go area for dogs unless kept on a lead. Of course the community centre as owners of the land would need to look into the legalities of this option.

### **Skate Park**

This area very quiet, litter is not so bad apart from a few weekends when clearly the youths had been congregating and drinking in there. We are still working closely with the groups that use this facility although with the dark nights setting in early there isn't as much daily use of the skate park as over the summer. The groups that use the park are still keen to fund raise to upgrade or make changes to this facility. We are trying to get a skate park committee group together made up of the local youths that use this area we will kick start this idea in the Spring when the weather starts to get nicer. We are still waiting to make posters for this area explaining rules for the usage of Skate Park we thought it might be a nice job for the new skate park committee to do. The interaction we have with the users is very valuable as regards intelligence gathering, also helping some with issues they might be having.

### **Elderly and vulnerable visits**

We continue to carry out regular visits to the elderly and vulnerable residents of Ashington. During one of our visits we came across one vulnerable person who needed our help. She had a fall and we were able to help and assist until such times as the ambulance arrived. Thankfully this resident had a community link alarm which proved invaluable at getting an ambulance and key holder to the resident without delay.

Whilst carrying out the visits we have been discussing the community mini bus and that as of January the fact that Ashington will have their own bus to go out on trips etc. At first some were concerned what this meant about the trips they already go on but when explained the Ashington bus was an additional service not a replacement the residents were all keen to learn more.

We have a Christmas shopping trip planned for the 6<sup>th</sup> of December where we are off to a local garden centre to do a spot of festive bargain hunting followed by a Christmas lunch locally. This trip was very quickly fully booked.

### **Festive Tea Day**

Our festivity day went very well; it was lovely to see so many people. Although hard work organising it was very rewarding to us to see so many people having a nice time. The entertainment was fun and the festive spirit was definitely flowing. We owe a big thanks to those that helped us on the day and for those that donated raffle prizes. A very big thank you to the community centre committee whose help on the day was very much appreciated. Cubitt and West kindly donated a £50.00 voucher for Marks and Spencer and a bottle of champagne. Ashington Autos donated two plants and two boxes of chocolates, The Carpet shop donated a lovely door mat; Kate's Cakes were absolutely brilliant they donated two large cakes and 200 small cakes and the CO-OP donated a tin of sweets. We would also like to express our thanks to local residents that also donated various items.

Finally a special thank you needs to be made to the 6 local youngsters who volunteered to help on the day. They worked so hard serving people with teas, coffees and delivering their food to table. Without them we would not have managed. We are already looking forward and want to organise an event like this again next year.

### **Anti Social Driving**

Operation Crackdown reports have been made regarding anti social driving. Stern words have also been given to moped drivers in village who have been driving anti socially. Hopefully these issues have now been dealt with. We are still waiting for a response from WSCC re driving safety awareness courses. We have had a group identified for a good while now and so will chase them up to arrange this. We already have eight names to put forward for this course.

### **ASB Known offender**

We have been working hard doing directed patrols of the area affected. We have been keen to raise our profile and create a reassuring high visibility presence in the streets particularly targeted by this offender. This has been taking a lot of our time whilst we are on duty and has resulted in us working quite a large number of lates recently. We are still working very closely with the police and victims involved to try and minimise the impact of this offender in the village.

### **Litter picking**

We have been busy identifying hot spot areas for litter within the village. We are still helping to litter pick and are monitoring the play areas for litter especially. We also plan in the new year to get in touch with the “community payback” scheme to see if we can have some help to blitz the village of litter.

### **Community Resilience Workshop**

We attended this workshop on behalf of the parish and are pleased to report back that thanks to having already got a comprehensive emergency plan in place that there wasn't much learnt that needed to be actioned. We have passed all the information that we received over to the Parish clerk and are arranging for the emergency planning office from Horsham District to come and review what we have in place in Ashington in case there is anything that we have missed.

### **Fly Posting / Fly Tipping**

Fly Posting hasn't been too bad recently, we are hoping that perhaps that message is finally getting through to the offenders. Sadly however Fly Tipping is on the up with several cases being reported to us recently.

### **Christmas Working Hours**

We will be taking time off for the festive period but we have rostered shifts and will be back between Christmas and New Year.

The Chairman thanked the Wardens for their report.

The Clerk explained that she, Youth Club, Wardens & Parish Church were all discussing the future of Youth provision in the village including providing the current Wednesday night session, possible new Friday night session, gym, freetime football etc. It was hoped that a multi-agency approach, with grant applications could secure the future of the Club.

There was some discussion about the use of drugs in the village and there was a general feeling that residents are reluctant to report issues, including minor criminal damage, to the Police for various reasons. It was agreed that the Clerk write an article for the weekly email/newsletter telling residents the new Police non-emergency phone number, email address to report issues, contact details for the PCSO etc. **KD D**

Cllr Stillwell reported that she, Cllr Harbour & the Clerk had attended the wardens Festive Tea event and everyone present had enjoyed themselves and she had heard many positive comments about the Wardens. The Chairman thanked the Wardens for all their hard work planning & staging the event.

Questions for the Wardens from Councillors & Members of the public:

A member of the public thanked the Wardens for organising the excellent Festive Tea.

### **392/11 YOUNG PERSONS ADJOURNEMENT**

None present.

### **393/11 REPORT FROM DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS**

District Councillor Roger Arthur reported that:

1. He meets with Police Inspector Mark trimmer regularly and can raise any concerns that the Parish Council has.
2. HDC were reducing expenditure but the Snack Wagon, Purple Bus and £5k contribution to the Wardens Scheme would be unaffected.
3. Street Scene Wardens had been merged with Civil Enforcement Officers resulting in more Enforcement Officers on the street.
4. HDC were working with WSCC on Youth issues. In particular they are looking at whether s106/CIL monies can be used for revenue costs. This is not allowed at present but they were speaking to Nick Herbert MP.
5. He had visited the Community Link alarm centre and was very impressed with the setup and confirmed that the alarms will work even during power cuts.
6. He is interested in the impact that the bus cuts are having on residents and the cost/usage of alternatives to public buses eg Dial-a-Ride.

The Chairman thanked District Councillor Arthur for his report.

Cllr Brennan asked about HDC's recent Cabinet decision to close Broadbridge Heath Leisure Centre and to turn the area into a retail park. He expressed concern that a 25 year old leisure centre should be closed because HDC had not budgeted for its ongoing maintenance needs.

Cllr Arthur explained that income from the centre did not cover the cost to run it. Govt. grants were reducing and council taxpayers were having to subsidise the facility. HDC could generate £1.5million pa from selling/renting the land and could use this new income to support other leisure facilities. HDC are scrutinising all areas that receive subsidies. Cllr Arthur admitted that HDC had not described to members of the public how the loss of facilities would be mitigated and where current users would go in the future. HDC would help users to find alternative venues. He did not know whether the land would be used for a retail park. He confirmed that a final decision had not been made – the matter would be decided at a full Council meeting.

Cllr Brennan was concerned that the centre would close during Olympic year, there is no other running track or indoor Tube nearby and that the football club had no other ground on which to play.

Cllr Arthur confirmed that he would send the Clerk details of Members voting at the Cabinet meeting.

A member of the public asked District Councillor Roger Arthur about the future of the Hop Oast Park & Ride facility. He explained that users would be allowed to park for no charge but would have to pay the bus fare into town. HDC would need to think about how this would work in order to prevent abuse of the free parking. HDC need to get the arrangements right to encourage town workers and shoppers to use the facility.

County Councillor Frank Wilkinson reported that:

1. He was monitoring Youth issues.
2. No speed report was available for Billingshurst Road yet.
3. WSCC had installed speed monitoring equipment on Hole Street/Water Lane
4. WSCC has agreed to spend £10million on superfast broadband in the County (with matched funding from Govt.). Members of the public will be consulted shortly about broadband speeds in their area.
5. Improvements to the A27 had not been included within the Govt.'s list for infrastructure projects because WSCC did not have a Scheme in place. WSCC had not produced a Scheme as this would cost £2-4million. WSCC had wasted £1million on a Scheme for improvements to the A24 between Ashington & Southwater but this Scheme had been dropped.
6. He would be chasing highways repairs as none had been made in the village for quite some time.

The Chairman thanked County Councillor Wilkinson for his report.

Cllr Brennan asked how much the trial speed cameras on the A24 (Southwater section) has cost WSCC as this area of road had not experienced any accidents. **FW D**

Cllr Lancaster reported that litter along the sides of the A24 was evident now that leaves had fallen off trees/hedges. Cllr Arthur to report to HDC.

#### **ACTIONS OUTSTANDING:**

**D** = Minuted but deleted from next agenda.

**C/F** = Minuted and carried forward to 'Actions Outstanding' on the next agenda.

**To list** = moved to the list at the end of the minutes until some progress is made

#### **394/11 Item 85 Community Action Plan**

The Clerk has produced a summary sheet of projects. She will prioritise and report next month. **KD C/F**

#### **Item 180 Freedom of Information**

Councillors were asked to review the Council's FOI publication to make sure it is up to date. Agreed by all.

### **395/11 Item 216 Queens Diamond Jubilee (2-5 June 2012)**

The Clerk has prepared a summary and circulated to Councillors. A copy would be placed on the Council's website. Councillors had previously agreed that 'no response' would be counted as a 'No' vote and the target for positive responses was 250. In essence:

Big Picnic – response rate = 17.3%

Yes = 14.76%

No = 85.24%

In light of the response rate and the results it was decided not to pursue this option.

Village Sign – response rate = 16.45%

Yes = 12.85%

No = 87.15%

In light of the response rate and the results it was decided not to pursue this option. If Cllr Brennan could secure a sign for very minimal cost then he could bring this back to the Council at a later date.

It was agreed that the Clerk would summarise the results for the weekly email/newsletter and encourage people to organise their own street parties. **KD D**

### **CORRESPONDENCE**

#### **396/11 For action:**

1. Consultation - review by the Antisocial Behaviour Working Group, a sub group of the Scrutiny & Overview Committee at Horsham District Council. The Clerk had circulated a draft response. Agreed by all. **KD D**
2. HDC - consultation questionnaire for the provision and servicing of litter and dog bins. The Clerk had circulated a draft response. Agreed by all. **KD D**
3. WSCC – consultation on possible further cuts to bus services (no.23 which serves Ashington may be affected). Clerk to respond stating that the PC would not wish for services to be cut further (considering we have lost the 72/73 Compass service). **KD D**
4. Co-op – is requesting that they be allowed to be more flexible with delivery times. It had been discovered that the only restrictions on delivery times were a 'gentleman's agreement' between the Co-op and the PC following complaints from residents some years ago about disturbance from early morning deliveries. There were no planning restrictions in place. PC concerns centred around noise, lights etc from early morning/late evening deliveries. It was felt that if the Co-op wished to relax the times then they should consult with nearby residents. This would be fed back to the Residents Association.

#### **397/11 For information:**

1. Minutes of HDC/HALC meeting
2. Agenda & Minutes for Chanctonbury CLC – minutes confirm that WSCC Highways will be reviewing the speed limit along Hole Street and do suggest

that a TRO could be achieved quicker if the Parish is willing to pay the costs. It was suggested that we await the results of the WSCC survey before discussing options. Agreed by all.

3. Senior Persons Council – next meeting 9<sup>th</sup> December at Beeding & Bramber Village Hall 10.15am-12.30pm

#### **398/11 General:**

1. Town Planning consultants offering a 'no obligation' meeting to talk through benefits & pitfalls of producing a Neighbourhood Plan. Not agreed.
2. The Clerk magazine

#### **399/11 PUBLIC ADJOURNMENT**

Nothing.

#### **400/11 PLANNING.**

The Planning Committee met on 16<sup>th</sup> November and Councillors have been provided with a copy of the minutes. Agreed by all.

#### **401/11 Correspondence**

Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Site Study by Baker Associates (for HDC). Brief summary: Penn Retreat was subjected to 'broad suitability' assessment by Baker Associates and there were no immediate factors that caused it to be rejected. At the next stage of assessment it was rejected on the grounds that it is unavailable as the owner is looking at potential use for affordable housing. Therefore, Penn Retreat was not subjected to the more detailed assessment stage. The report states (para 5.15) that if a site becomes re-available then it should be re-assessed for suitability. The report states that an additional 39 pitches are needed in the district and shortlists suitable sites that could provide up to 62 pitches. The Clerk was trying to clarify with HDC what would happen if a site became available – would it be assessed according to the consultant's report?

**KD D**

#### **402/11 New Enforcement Allegations/Information**

EN/11/0575 Breach of Conditions 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 of DC/10/2265 - Luckista Caravan Site, Billingshurst Road

#### **403/11 Amendments**

None

#### **404/11 Applications**

DC/11/2373 Erection of oak framed agricultural barn to house hay and agricultural products and small farm office - Mitchbourne Farm

The Parish Council object to the application on the grounds that additional barns are not necessary for such a small area of land. A second barn would amount to excessive development on a small site.

DC/11/2457 Surgery to 1 oak tree – plot 8 Blakiston Close (Meiros Farm)

The Parish Council object to the application on the grounds that the proposed works would leave the tree ‘lopsided’ and it would be at risk of falling or dying. Crown lifting of 2.5m all of the way round the tree would be more acceptable.

### **Horsham District Council**

#### **405/11 Approvals**

None

#### **406/11 Refusals**

DC/11/1520 Proposed single dwelling (2-bed house) - Land Rear of Charmarie Cottage Mill Lane (reasons – Category 2 settlement, unsympathetic, cramped overdevelopment of the site, no s106 contributions proposed).

#### **407/11 Withdrawals**

None

#### **408/11 Appeals made/ decisions**

DC/11/1296 Appeal against refusal – two storey side extension, 21 Penn Gardens.

The next Planning Committee meeting is scheduled for 15<sup>th</sup> December 2011 at 7.00pm.

**There will be no Planning Committee meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> December due to the Xmas holidays.**

## **FINANCE**

### **409/11 Annual Review of Financial Controls and Internal Audit**

Councillors were asked to review the Council’s Financial Regulations and Risk Management procedures. The Clerk had provided Councillors with a copy of the Council’s current Financial Regulations and confirmed that the procedures are followed as written. The Clerk had previously provided Councillors with a summary of the experience and competence of the appointed Internal Auditor (minutes reference 501/07, December 2007).

By approving the Annual Return each year the Council is agreeing that these 2 statements are correct.

1. ‘We have maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of Internal audit of the Council’s accounting records and control systems **and carried out a review of its effectiveness**’
2. ‘We have arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether these meet the needs of the council and **reviewed the impact of this work**’

In simple terms Councillors should ask themselves:

Are you 100% happy that the risk of financial impropriety is negligible – are the procedures for control and review effective? Have we taken action on any suggestions made by the Internal Auditor? Agreed by all.

**410/11 Annual Review of Assets and Insurance Cover**

The Clerk has provided Councillors with an up to date Asset Register for approval. The Clerk has reviewed the Council’s insurance cover and no changes are required. Agreed by all.

**411/11 Budget & Precept 11/12**

The Clerk has prepared a preliminary budget & precept forecast for 12/13 and a Finance Committee meeting took place on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2011. Councillors have been provided with a copy of the minutes and the supporting documentation. Councillors were asked to approve the Finance Committee’s recommendation of a 0% rise in precept. Agreed by all. The Clerk to inform HDC. **KD D**

**412/11 Correspondence**

Consider a request for a grant of £600 from Ashington Youth Club. This is to cover Youth Leader costs for a period of time. The Youth Club has had its funding from WSCC removed and is having to find alternate sources of funding. The Club is seeking advice from other youth clubs, HDC, WSCC on how to keep the club going. The Parish Council has only £305 left in its grants budget for 2010/11 and any additional funds could be met from Calor Village of the Year funds (£800 remaining) or the QPC grant (£925 remaining). Deferred until the next meeting as copies of accounts have not been received. **C/F**

**413/11 Income**

Recovered from Singer & Friedlander in October £5457.08 = 63% recovered to date.

**414/11 Expenditure**

		<b>Cheque no.</b>	
Mark Adsett	Gardeners contract payment	£475.00	1248
Mrs K. Dare	Clerks expenses (home & telephone)	£17	
	Stationery	£73.86	
	Wire netting	£50.58	
	Total	£141.44	1249
WSCC	Salary and on costs (November)	£820.05	1250
Plusnet	Broadband	£17.99	DD
Ashington School	Meeting cost	£20	1251



SP Services	responder equipment	£150.50	1252
ICO	Data Protection renewal	£35	1253
E. Greenfield	Responder expenses (Dec 10-Nov11)	£222.40	1254
SP Services	responder equipment	£286.44	1255

It was resolved that the schedule of payments shown above be approved for payment. Agreed by all.

**415/11 MEETINGS**

The Parish Clerk had attended a Wardens meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> November. Minutes would be circulated separately.

**416/11 MINOR MATTERS RAISED BY COUNCILLORS**

Councillors reported:

- 1. Surface water drains in Church Lane need clearing KD D
- 2. There appears to be no wheelwashing facility at Meiros Farm KD D

**417/11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held at **7.45pm on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> January 2012 at Ashington School, Foster Lane.**

The Clerk has prepared a list of meeting dates for 2012 and circulated by email. Councillors were asked to approve. Agreed by all.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their efforts during the year and wished all a Merry Xmas and Happy New Year.

The meeting finished at 9.30pm

Signed.....

Date.....

**418/11** Items awaiting action:

Item No	Description	Last Action & Date
1	Mill Lane flooding	EA to organise meeting with WSCC/HDC/PC July 2011
32b	Spur road of The Sands & Viney Close – streetlights & laybys	No progress August 2011
218	East Side nature trail handrail	Re-assess in December 2011 when budget setting
	No information has been received from WSCC Pension Fund about the likely cost of Ill Health retirement.	