



Ashington Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting held on 1st March 2012 at 8.00 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, T. Kearney, N. Carver.

Parish Clerk Karen Dare

County Councillor Frank Wilkinson

3 members of the public

053/12 APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE

Cllr D. Harbour (personal), Neighbourhood Wardens Peter Newell & Jayne Jeffrey (attending an incident), District Councillor Roger Arthur (holiday).

054/12 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

The Chairman reminded Councillors that previous declarations still stand.

055/12 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 2nd February 2012 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman. Proposed by Councillor Norton and seconded by Councillor Brennan, and agreed.

056/12 REPORT FROM THE NEIGHBOURHOOD WARDENS

Problems with Drugs / Alcohol

We have been busy with various meetings concerning particular individuals and the issues of alcohol / drugs. This targeted approach has come from our recent work at identifying the worst abusers within our young persons age group. This work has partly been down to the recent drugs worker that we have had in the village.

With the snack wagon proving to be a success within Ashington we are working with the youth service and hope to secure this for a further 6 weeks. It is proving a popular haunt for the youth of Ashington and an important source of informal educational information. It is certainly helping to promote drugs awareness as well as sexual health amongst different age groups within the village.

On the 11th of April the Residents Association have their AGM within which we are helping to arrange a “drugs awareness” session. This will hopefully provide the

residents with an appropriate amount of information about the different drugs out there and the potential signs associated with their use etc.

We continue to work with Sussex Police toward identifying those using and more importantly those dealing drugs in the area. We have recently received some intelligence that we continue to gather and pass on. Can we appeal to anyone that does have any information regarding drugs in Ashington that they can report this to us, the police or to crime stoppers anonymously.

Criminal Damage

Unfortunately this month has seen a number of incidents of criminal damage. One such instance has proven extremely distressing to the over 95 year old who was the victim. We are extremely interested to find out if anyone knows any information regarding the recent damage that has occurred in the village and would ask that if anyone does that they either report this to us or the police.

Graffiti

We have had a recent incident of graffiti on the scout hut wall. Although only in chalk it covered the whole wall and some of it requires more than a simply wash off. We have reported this to Horsham who will send someone to pressure wash this off.

Litter

We have been carrying out a number of hot spot litter picks that are off the beaten track. Such as at the balancing ponds and areas behind houses. In addition to carrying out these litter picks we have been keen to educate those responsible for dropping the litter. Whenever we can link a group of people to a particular area / amount of litter we have been asking them to pick up after themselves and hope that slowly we are influencing them to take pride in their own village.

In addition to these areas we have also noted that the CO-OP / Shops area has a large amount of litter regularly. We are going to be working closely with the Co-op and other businesses to help take more responsibility in keeping this area tidy.

Youth Club

Our project with the overall aim of getting the youth club open more is still ongoing and still very much a priority. On a positive note we have had a number of volunteers approach us with an interest in the gym and we are hoping to explore the possibility of raising funds to pay for them to get the necessary qualification to run this.

Dog fouling

This is still an emotive issue within Ashington and we are getting a number of calls each week regarding this. We are gathering intelligence and identifying particular offenders. Ultimately these people will be spoken to and where necessary targeted patrols will be instigated to catch them in the act. We are very much aware of the areas within Ashington where this is a big problem and are out there observing them when we can.

In addition to dog foul, dog noise is also an issue and we are working together with residents where this is an issue. Again we appeal to dog owners to be mindful of their neighbours and their local area.

CO – OP

Having had a somewhat eventful half term week surrounding the co-op area we have been making an extra effort to patrol / target harden this area. The CO-OP has always been the area where a lot of the youth of Ashington have chosen to meet / gather. We are working with this co-op to ensure that they are strongly enforcing their “think 25” campaign when it comes to alcohol and cigarettes. In addition we are making them aware that there are certain individuals that could be purchasing alcohol and supplying those underage.

As well as dealing with what goes on in the area we also have been keen to tidy up the physical area too, we have spoken to the co-op regarding the dangerous broken / damaged paving slabs outside, the dim lighting and will continue to work with them to improve the area. We too are going to arrange for a meeting with the manager, as soon as he is back from holiday.

Underage Drinking

We have noticed a considerable increase in the consumption of alcohol by those underage. As such we have been taking a zero tolerance policy and have been confiscating any alcohol seen and will be taking those found under the influence home to their parents.

We have also made it clear to those that are over 18 that if they are found in possession of alcohol whilst in the company of those under age that they will have their alcohol seized. This is to reflect the possibility that they could be supplying those underage.

Every time a confiscation occurs details are taken and passed onto Sussex police.

Elderly and vulnerable visits

We continue to carry out our weekly visits. As ever these are taking quite a large proportion of our time. We are still on the lookout for some volunteers to help us with these visits. Our visits often just form a monthly, weekly or sometimes daily check on some of the most vulnerable members of the community. This can be an important link with the outside world for some and actually we are finding it a valuable service to those residents. If you feel that there is someone in the community that we are not currently aware of please do let us know. Remember vulnerable doesn't just mean old too. They could simply be someone living on their own or someone with a disability too.

New Minibus

As with many CHANGE is a scary word. The minibus has caused a little confusion amongst the elderly / vulnerable community of Ashington. Some already use different minibus services and with another one to get their head round they have found it slightly confusing. We are working out which day best suits our residents and have currently

changed this to a Tuesday (from 6th March). We too are trying to get our residents settled with the routine of our bus by deciding to be the driver / escort for the first few Tuesdays. We believe once they have gotten used to when the bus goes and the process to book that this will be a simple addition to their other trips out etc.

Anti Social Driving

We have seen an increase of anti-social driving at the Billingshurst Road end of the village. Particular attention has been given to the roundabouts where drivers have been seen driving extremely dangerous. We would urge anyone seeing such driving to report it to the police either via 101 or operation crackdown.

With the recent accidents down Billingshurst Road we are keen to help draw attention to / enforce the speed limit in this area, however the Police are currently reviewing all the SID (speed indicator device) sites and until such time as these have been carried out we won't be able to deploy the device.

Reporting Incidents to the Police

We have noticed recently that there are a large number of incidents occurring within Ashington that are not being called through to the Police. We feel that residents are calling us to report incidents and when we are not on duty or do not answer are simply then waiting for us to come back on duty before they do. We would like to remind everyone and urge everyone to report things through to the Police as well as ourselves. The Police are on duty 24 / 7 whereas we aren't. The Police can be contacted in a number of ways from the 999 call in an emergency to 101 in a non-emergency situation. There too are other ways to get in touch via their website and even text message. Without your support in contacting the Police to report instances of crime we can't build up a picture of what is going on in the village and in addition we can't get the support from the Police that we too need.

Adverse Weather / Emergency Planning

We attended a multi agency event in Maresfield regarding emergency planning. We found the event very informative and were able to gain a detailed knowledge of what services and equipment is out there in case of an emergency. This ranged from specialist equipment for animal rescue to full decontamination tents.

Farm Watch

At the moment there is a network of rural businesses particularly farms that are linked through Sussex police called "Farm Watch". This network is regularly updated via email and text message regarding instances of suspicious activity and crime associated with these businesses. In a move to step up the reaction time and increase the strength of this network we are exploring the addition of a radios to key members of the scheme. The idea would be that rather than wait for information to be processed and then sent out a more "live" real time information network could be setup. This in addition has an excellent emergency response / planning implication as we would end up with a radio within our vehicle.

Wardens Office

We have been exploring ways to make us more accessible to the public as well as tidy up a few health and safety concerns regarding our office and we are very close to finalising a move within the community centre building that will tick all these boxes (Committee Room 1). It will make the office much more accessible as it will be on the ground floor and will be a much easier and visible location for all to find.

The Chairman asked the Clerk to thank the Wardens for their report – it is very detailed and informative.

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

1. Cllr Stillwell had acted as an ‘escort’ on a recent minibus trip and passengers were full of praise for the Wardens.
2. Cllr Lancaster reported that the Wardens had been very effective in dealing with problems outside the Co-op during the half term holiday and were effective in reassuring local residents who had been very disturbed by the activities.
3. The Clerk reported that at the recent Wardens Steering group meeting it had been agreed that the Wardens would produce some simple guidelines for residents on when they should call the Police or the Wardens

057/12 YOUNG PERSONS ADJOURNEMENT

None present.

058/12 REPORT FROM DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS

County Councillor Frank Wilkinson reported:

1. WSCC has frozen Council Tax again this year despite having to make savings of £35m this year, £25m next year and £20m the following year. WSCC were still trying to work out how the Govt. calculate the annual grant and had employed a consultant accountant to look at this issue.
2. The Clerk was monitoring Highways repairs and the list was very slowly getting shorter. The contractors had inherited a long backlog of jobs but had put steps in place to try to catch up with repairs.
3. There have been a number of nasty accidents on Billingshurst Road in recent months. WSCC will be installing ‘anti-slip’ surfacing at the Spear Hill bend in the road. They would also like to install a Vehicle Activated Sign (VAS, electronic sign that shows what speed you are doing, same as those on the way to Amberley) but this will require Ashington s106 Transport funds. The sign will cost £5-6,000 and there is @£41k in funds available. Councillors agreed that this was good use of s106 funds but would like to look at the different VAS options as a sign showing actual speed was considered better than a simple 30mph flashing sign. Clerk to write to Frank Wilkinson. **KD C/F**
4. Hole Street speed data – the speed monitoring data clearly shows that average speeds at various points along Hole Street vary from 30.8-40.6mph. Very few vehicles are travelling at higher speeds than 45mph along the route. The fastest section of road is outside Triggles House (60mph limit) but 85% of drivers travel at 45mph or less and only 0.25% of drivers are travelling at speeds of 61-66mph.

No-one was driving >66mph outside Triggles House. It was agreed that no action was appropriate.

The Chairman thanked County Councillor Wilkinson for his report.

Questions:

1. Cllr Brennan asked if County Councillor Wilkinson could meet him on Billingshurst Road between 7-9am on a weekday as he is sure that speeding is worse at this time of the day. Clerk to arrange. **KD C/F**
2. Cllr Brennan reminded County Councillor Wilkinson that he had not yet received an answer to his question about the cost of the new speed camera along the A24 Southwater section. **KD D**
3. What % of turnover are the proposed savings? £35m on £1billion turnover.
4. Water across the slip road outside Bridge Garage – what has been done about this issue? The Clerk responded – the drain gullies had been cleared out by Conways and Cllrs Wood/Kearney. Salt bags had been positioned in the path of the spring water from the verge and this would prevent any water from freezing and creating a slip hazard on the slip road. Councillors were asked to report any water issues to the Clerk so that the frequency of gully cleansing could be ascertained.

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

059/12 Item 85 Community Action Plan

Presented to Councillors as an updated list, copy on the PC website. **KD C/F**

060/12 Item 215 Hanging baskets

It was proposed that this years' colour scheme is red/white/blue in celebration of the Queens Diamond Jubilee and 2012 Olympics. Both of last years' suppliers can achieve this colour scheme.

Basket costs:

Ferring Nurseries £12.24 per basket + £25 delivery charge

Ferring Country Centre £10 per basket

Councillors agreed a 40 (FN)/20 (FCC) split and the Clerk, Cllr Stillwell and Mark Adsett to choose flower types. **KD D**

CORRESPONDENCE

061/12 For action:

1. Billingshurst Road speed data – The Clerk presented a summary of recent speed data. Average speeds had reduced by 2-3mph to @38mph, still above the new 30mph limit. However:

- a. In 2008 74.3% of drivers coming into Ashington were exceeding 40mph whereas in 2011 this figure has dropped to 17.8-22.9%
- b. In 2008 3.2% of drivers coming into Ashington were exceeding 50mph whereas in 2011 this figure has dropped to 0.6-1.8%
- c. In 2008 39.7% of drivers driving out of Ashington were exceeding 40mph whereas in 2011 this figure has dropped to 20.7-24.9%
- d. In 2008 4.2% of drivers driving out of Ashington were exceeding 50mph whereas in 2011 this figure has dropped to 1.3-2.3%

More drivers are travelling slower in 2011 compared to 2008. The VAS sign (discussed above) should help further reduce the speeding in the area.

2. HDC – Settlement Sustainability Data Review. It was proposed that the Clerk complete this. Agreed by all. **KD D**
3. List of Parliamentary consultations. The Parish Council does not normally respond to these. No response.
4. Southern Water – drought planning draft for consultation. No response.
5. HDC Senior Persons Council asking what the PC is doing for older people in the village. The Clerk has responded and invited representatives to attend a PC meeting.

062/12 For information:

1. HDC are intending to undertake a Community Governance Review in 2011. More details will follow. **C/F**
2. WSCC – Fire services will not merge.
3. WSCC – Streetlights will be replaced in some areas of Ashington in Oct 2012-March 2013
4. WSCC Planning School Places – no capital works are planned for Ashington School as intake numbers for the coming years are predicted to be below 30 pupils.
5. HDC – budget and medium term financial strategy
6. HALC – minutes
7. HDC – Health & Wellbeing stakeholder event notes
8. CPRE – guide to Neighbourhood Planning

063/12 General:

1. AiRS Newsletter
2. Approved Traders Directory
3. Sussex Flag
4. Clerks & Councils Direct magazine

064/12 PUBLIC ADJOURNMENT

Members of the public reported:

1. The Sands path & Recreation Ground need litter clearing – Clerk to arrange. **KD D**
2. Is the weekly village email a Parish Council publication. No, it is published by a resident and the Parish Council simply passes information to the resident in the same way that any other organisation/individual would do.

3. There is damage to the pavement outside Meiros Farm. The Clerk responded that WSCC Development Control would inspect the highway/footpaths in the area once the development was complete and the Developer would be asked to make the necessary repairs.
4. It was reported that potential buyers were known to be pulling out of purchasing a property at Meiros Farm because of the potential for a gypsy/traveller site at Penn Retreat.
5. It was reported that a resident of Pen Gardens had his house valued and was told it would de-value by £55k if the gypsy/traveller application was granted. The Chairman responded that the value of houses was a non-material planning consideration.
6. Concern was expressed that if permission was granted for 6 pitches this did not mean that only 6 homes/caravans would be on the Penn Retreat site and HDC enforcement would be powerless to stop any additional homes/caravans.
7. Residents were afraid to send letters of objection to HDC as their name & address would be published on HDC's website. Several residents had written directly to HDC Councillors.

The Chairman thanked members of the public for their comments.

065/12 PLANNING.

The Planning Committee met on 15th February and Councillors have been provided with a copy of the minutes. Agreed by all.

066/12 Correspondence

HDC – Planning Framework: How much Housing does Horsham Need?

The District will need an average of 256 new homes per year just to house the existing population. The Govt.'s projections indicate an average of 694 homes per year are needed from 2011-2031 (total 13,880 in the District). Longer term population trends indicate that 590 homes per year are needed (total 11,800). Further analysis shows that between 12,700 and 16,220 homes are needed. HDC present 4 options to achieve this:

Option A – 11,800 homes (590pa) Lower than recommended by various studies.

Development of 2 strategic sites, plus smaller sites

Option B – 12,700 homes (635pa) Lowest level recommended by various studies.

Development of 3 strategic sites, plus smaller sites

Option C – 13,400 homes (670pa) Matches second recommendation from studies.

Development of 3 or 4 strategic sites, plus smaller sites

Option D – 14,600 homes (730pa) High growth, most impact on communities, development of 4 strategic sites plus other smaller developments.

HDC are working on the infrastructure requirements for each of the options, looking to CIL funds to pay for new infrastructure, looking at sustainability of the options etc

Geographical areas identified for new homes are: west of Ifield, north Horsham, west of Southwater, east of Billingshurst. Other possibilities are Faygate, south of Horsham, Adversane/North Heath, Pulborough.

Deadline for comments is 10th April.

It was agreed by a majority that Option C was the PC's response. Clerk to inform HDC.

KD D

067/12 New Enforcement Allegations/Information

None

068/12 Amendments

None

069/12 Applications

DC/10/1288 Proposed stationing of 6 traveller/gypsy pitches plus outbuildings and storage area. Formation of new access and hardstanding.

The Chairman and Clerk attended a meeting at HDC to understand their position on uses for the Penn Retreat site –

1. The site owner has asked HDC to determine the planning application for a gypsy/traveller site without delay
2. if HDC are to even consider houses on the site then they would need to see clear evidence of a local need for the homes – the Clerk has supplied HDC with copies of the CAP 2010, Housing needs surveys of 2007 & 2009. HDC advised that the Housing Needs Survey of 2007 may need updating and the Clerk is looking into this. The Clerk has also spoken to the local Estate Agent about housing needs in the village. The Clerk has asked HDC to explain what evidence of need Washington PC produced for the Lamorna site so that similar information can be gathered in Ashington. She also contacted West Chilton & Washington PC's for advice. The Chairman has written to HDC to clarify what more evidence of need could be necessary.
3. HDC are still analysing information from an appeal decision from Kingfisher Farm as this may inform future decisions about planning applications for gypsy sites. The Council's Planning Consultant was briefed and has produced a draft letter of objection to the current planning application.
4. The Clerk has spoken to AiRS and they have confirmed that housing surveys should be refreshed every 5 years. They have spoken to Andrew Smith at HDC and he has agreed to fund a 2012 Housing Needs Survey for Ashington.
5. It was agreed that a meeting between HDC/PC and John Longhorn would be appropriate and that it would be better if all parties could work together to find a mutually agreeable solution to this issue.

The Chairman has spoken to John Longhorn and his client is still willing to pursue a housing option for the site but this is reliant upon the gathering of evidence of need within a short time frame.

KD C/F

DC/12/0310 Permanent extension of hours after the temporary permission DC/09/2281 (Extend factory working hours from 0600 hours to 2300 hours Monday to Saturday) - New Highfield Works Spring Gardens Washington. Passed to Washington PC as nearby residents are resident in Washington Parish.

DC/12/0346 Single storey rear extension and extension of garage – 31 Hillcrest Drive. No objections.

Horsham District Council

070/12 Approvals

DC/11/2345 Surgery to oak tree – The Wickets, London Road.

071/12 Refusals

None

072/12 Withdrawals

DC/11/2457 Treeworks – Plot 8 Blakiston Close. HDC's Tree Officer advises - the works are exempt from the requirement to make a formal application, as they are pursuant to the outstanding planning permission for the development of the Meiros Farm site (*ref: DC/10/0864*). I also consider the works to be acceptable in principle, as they are unlikely to result in harm or imbalance to the tree in question'.

073/12 Appeals made/ decisions

DC/11/2373 Erection of oak framed agricultural barn to house hay and agricultural products and small farm office – Mitchbourne Farm, Malthouse Lane.

The Clerk has written to the Planning Inspector as per the Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting 15th February 2012

The next Planning Committee meetings are scheduled for 14th & 28th March 2012 at 7.00pm.

FINANCE

074/12 Correspondence

1. The weedkilling contractor has reported that the annual cost of weedkilling will be £320 + VAT. This is the same as last year. Councillors were asked to approve. Agreed by all. **KD D**
2. NS&I – the Council's bank account will become a postal account from 21st May 2012. We will no longer be able to use the Post Office.
3. The Clerk is unable to attend the Parish Council meeting of 5th April. She has found someone to take the minutes and it is proposed to offer £50 for their services. Agreed by all. **KD D**
4. More money recovered from S&F would be in the Council's bank account shortly.

075/12 Appointment of Internal Auditor

The Council needs to agree on the appointment of this years' Internal Auditor. It was agreed that last year's auditor be used again. **KD D**

076/12 Income

National Savings account annual interest £417.70

Donation to Ashington First Responders £150.50

077/12 Expenditure

		Cheque no.	
Mark Adsett	Gardeners contract payment	£475.00	1273
Mrs K. Dare	Clerks expenses (home & telephone)	£17	
	Postage	£1.23	
	Total	£18.23	1274
WSSC	Salary and on costs (February)	£820.05	1275
Plusnet	Broadband	£17.99	DD
Ashington School	Meeting cost	£20	1276
M. Woolley	Meeting at HDC	£10	1277
SALC	Local Council Review magazine	£15.50	1278
T. Kearney (as agreed at 6 th October 2011 meeting)	Removal of wooden post tops	£120	1279

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

078/12 MEETINGS

The Clerk & Cllr Woolley had attended 2 meetings at HDC about gypsy/traveller issues.

The Clerk, Cllrs Stillwell & Clark had attended a Wardens Steering Group meeting (minutes to be circulated separately).

079/12 MINOR MATTERS RAISED BY COUNCILLORS

1. The new Nursery had filled in the drainage ditch behind their property. The Clerk & Chairman have a meeting at the Nursery on 2nd March and the Clerk would check if the ditch had been piped. **KD D**
2. The Community Governance review was proposing to reduce the number of Parish Councillors. This issue would be on the agenda for the April PC meeting.
3. Potholes on the A24 Southwater section. This section is due for re-surfacing shortly.
4. Uneven pavement in Hillcrest Drive. Clerk to investigate & report to WSSC.

KD D

5. Parking on pavements outside the hairdressers – only the PCSO could take action if the pavement is blocked.
6. Post Office vehicles are regularly parking on grass verges – Clerk to write to the Post Office. **KD D**
7. The new Nursery has turned the car park into a garden, leaving no parking spaces. The Clerk confirmed that no planning permission was required for any of the works.
8. Shortly ERHA will be contacting the PC to help with verification of applicant's 'local connections'. It was agreed that the Clerk ring around Parish Councillors to validate local connection claims.

The next meeting will be held at **7.45pm on Thursday 5th April 2012 at Ashington School, Foster Lane.**

The meeting finished at 10.20pm

Signed.....

Date.....

080/12 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.	