



Ashington Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting held on 2nd August 2012 at 7.45 p.m. in Ashington School, Foster Lane, Ashington

Present: Councillors M. Woolley, K. Wood, R. Brennan, B. Norton, T. Kearney, D. Harbour, N. Carver, R. Strudwick, J. Stillwell,
Parish Clerk Karen Dare
County Councillor Frank Wilkinson
Neighbourhood Wardens Peter Newell & Jayne Jeffrey
8 members of the public
Invited Guests – Simon Brett, Rob van Pelt & 2 other Directors of Arundel Equine Hospital

207/12 APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE

R. Strudwick (business), R. Lancaster & N. Clark (both holiday), T. Kearney (personal) & District Councillor Roger Arthur (business).

208/12 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

The Chairman reminded Councillors that previous declarations still stand. He thanked Councillors for completing their Registers of Interests on time.

209/12 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 5th July 2012 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman. Proposed by Councillor Brennan and seconded by Councillor Harbour, and agreed.

210/12 REPORT FROM THE NEIGHBOURHOOD WARDENS

Anti Social Behaviour

With the end of the school term we have been keen to keep a high level of visibility around the village. Working with the co-op and Sussex police we have interacted with several groups of youths around the village.

Again this month we have had the snack wagon in the village along with both the substance misuse worker and alcohol intervention officer. This is obviously a clear benefit for the village and gives a safe environment for young people to talk about issues / problems.

Anti Social Driving

We have had a couple of reports of anti-social driving at the top end of the village. We continue to patrol the area and have spoken to some of the local residents regarding the problems there. We have been paying particular attention to this issue during our late shift and will continue to monitor the situation reporting any drivers seen to the police. Once again we would urge anyone who sees anti-social driving to do the same by reporting the vehicles to operation crackdown via www.operationcrackdown.org or by calling them on 01243 642222 or the Police non emergency on 101.

Criminal Damage

This month we have come across several instances of graffiti. In the play park at Turnpike Way and on the side of the Scout Hall. Both were successfully removed but we are keen to remove any that is spotted quickly.

We have had a success this month by identifying who has been damaging Cubitt and West's for sale boards. We have challenged the individual about it and they have admitted that they have been causing the damage. The individual concerned has been to Cubitt and West and has apologised.

Skate Park

We have had numerous young people come to us this month talking about the skate park. They are asking when it will be fixed or if there are any improvements going to be made soon? We are very keen to get the skate park back up to scratch and would like to breathe a bit of colour into the area at the very least with some posters against littering and other associated problems. We are keen to get the young people involved and would like their input as to how we can improve the area.

Pot Holes

This month we have noticed a number of large potholes in various locations around the village. We have reported them to highways and will continue to chase them until something is done. We also had cause to call highways out to a rather dangerous missing manhole cover down Rectory lane near Penn Gardens.

Cold Calling

There have been numerous incidents relating to cold calling across the village. We have been patrolling and responding to reports and approaching them where necessary. We are keen to know if and when this is occurring around the village and would like to try and identify any associated people / organisations. We would appeal to residents to help us with this by recording any registration numbers of vehicles used or company details. We are working on getting some relevant information and stickers for doors to warn off cold callers. We are also exploring the idea of making the village a "no cold calling" Zone.

Litter

We are still picking litter up in the hotspot areas of the village and paying particular attention to the play parks. As we have said before we do appreciate that there are still

some areas that aren't being found as quick and ask for your help in reporting this ASAP. As well as hot spot litter picking we also have been trying to educate hoping that people will make better use of the rubbish bins in the village. We have noticed on several occasions that some of the rubbish bins have been full or nearly full and will keep an eye on the situation and where necessary will chase up Horsham to ensure they are emptied promptly.

Elderly and vulnerable visits

This month has seen us spending a large amount of time working closely with a vulnerable family in the village. We have been focusing on them dealing with some long term problems that have needed extra support every step of the way. The last few weeks have been frustrating as we have had to fight quite hard to get other agencies involved with them but are finally getting there.

We have continued to carry out our home visits. This month has seen several bereavements and has seen us carrying out extra visits offering support as and where we can. In addition to bereavements we have a number of residents who are particularly vulnerable due to ill health who we have been keen to support and work with through this particularly tough period.

We have also got a trip planned early next month down to Bognor boathouse for a slap up fish supper as well as visiting a few garden centres etc. We once again feel the need to hire a coach rather than a minibus as it is proving extremely popular. In addition to our planned trip we continue to support the weekly shopping trips agreeing to help out by running the trip occasionally in the next few weeks.

We are currently working on an action plan relating to both the elderly and vulnerable residents and youth of the village. We are keen to improve community development and cohesion and are looking at ways to do this. We are working closely with the parish council and other agencies where needed.

Theft from Van

This month we have had an instance of vehicle crime where a van was broken into and things were taken from the front seating area. This occurred whilst parked outside someone's house during daylight hours. One of the contributing factors relating to this was the fact that there were a number of tempting things on display. We are keen to remind drivers not to leave anything of value on display for opportunists or would be thieves. We are going to start a campaign "ON DISPLAY EASY PREY" where we will be highlighting vehicles around the village parked with valuables on display. In addition we are going to be getting some stickers for vans and other vehicles stating "no valuables are left in the vehicle".

Office Move

We have now moved our office and are in a much more accessible location on the corner of the community centre. We have already benefited from a more public location with people popping in and reporting problems etc. We would like to say a big thanks to

all involved in the move including some of the young people of the village who helped us move things physically.

Reporting Incidents to the Police

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. They can be emailed via contactcentre@sussex.pnn.police.uk where you can report non emergency problems. If you are a victim of criminal damage for instance this can be emailed through with as much detail and information as possible. You can even send the police a text message on **65999** to alert them of a drunk driver or similar issues.

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.

The Chairman thanked the Wardens for their report.

A meeting took place between the Parish Council Steering Group, Wardens & Neil Worth (HDC) to review the Wardens roles and responsibilities and a report would be presented at the next Parish Council meeting.

Questions for the Wardens from Councillors & Members of the public: None

211/12 YOUNG PERSONS ADJOURNEMENT

None present.

212/12 REPORT FROM DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS

County Councillor Frank Wilkinson reported:

1. Mill Lane flooding – a joint meeting has been arranged for possibly 20th September.
2. WSCC flooding census – the Clerk had been sent a copy of all of the flood locations in West Sussex. She would check this to ensure that all Ashington sites were included. There had been considerable flooding at Castle Kitchens, The Hollow and this should be reported to HDC and taken into consideration when assessing the site for possible re-development. **KD D**
3. Cllr Brennan had met with a Highways Officer to discuss the VAS sign for Billingshurst Road. The sign design should be available in a few weeks, the location of the sign still had to be assessed by WSCC as it needs a minor safety audit.
4. County Councillor Wilkinson had met with the consultant that WSCC has employed to look into the operation of the Highways Dept. He had shown the consultant the Clerk's Highways list and had explained how frustrating it is to report defects to WSCC but none are remedied. The consultant would be issuing his report & recommendations shortly.

The Chairman thanked County Councillor Wilkinson for his report.

Questions:

1. A drain cover was missing from Rectory Lane. It had been reported to WSCC 8 days previously and all they had done was to put cones around the hole. Residents considered this was very dangerous and should be repaired immediately. County Councillor Wilkinson would investigate.

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

213/12 Community Action Plan

Updated list on the PC website.

KD C/F

214/12 Housing Needs Survey

The final report has been circulated to Councillors and a copy will be available on the Council's website www.ashingtonpc.org.uk. An article would be sent to the Ashington Weekly Email advising residents of the results. In summary – 58 people are in need of affordable housing 30 of which are single, 15 are couples with no children; 23 people are in need of small, low cost market homes but only 9 of these can afford to buy on the open market

The Chairman, Clerk and any other Councillors will be meeting with HDC in September to look at the results of the Survey and start to develop a 'Housing Strategy' such that the needs identified can be delivered whilst avoiding inappropriate development in the village. It is expected that more information will be presented to Council in October 2012.

Some people had not been given homes at the Meiros Farm development as they were considered by HDC to be low priority.

C/F

CORRESPONDENCE

215/12 For action:

1. Pride of Place by Age UK
2. WSCC – draft local distinctiveness Guidance – invitation to comment. No response
3. HDC – new Scrutiny & Overview Working Group – Southern Rail's performance in severe weather. Does any Councillor wish to join this group? No response
4. Road closures for Ashington Carnival – any comments? No response

216/12 For information:

1. HALC agenda
2. HDC information from Neighbourhood Planning event on 4th July

217/12 General:

1. AiRS Newsletter
2. Ashington Festival – thank you letter
3. The Clerk magazine

4. Clerks & Councils Direct magazine

218/12 PUBLIC ADJOURNMENT

Members of the public reported:

1. There was a report in the West Sussex County Times about imminent demolition of the old village hall at Ashington. This should have been Ashurst and this has been reported to the County Times.
2. There was a broken bollard at the corner of Rectory Lane/ London Road. The Clerk had already reported this to WSCC.
3. The footpath from Meiros Way to Penn Gardens was in a poor state of disrepair and the path was blocked by overgrowing vegetation. The Clerk had already reported these issues to WSCC and had been told that the path would not be repaired until the Meiros Farm development was completed. County Councillor Wilkinson would ask Janet Knight from WSCC development control to visit the area.

The Chairman thanked members of the public for their comments.

219/12 PLANNING.

The Planning Committee did not meet on 18th July as there were no applications to discuss.

220/12 Correspondence

HDC Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Site Allocations Preferred Options Consultation Document – the Clerk has circulated a summary document. It was proposed that the Clerk respond to HDC. Agreed. The Chairman would be meeting with Sally Stallan at HDC to discuss this issue. **KD D**

Cllr Woolley had attended a meeting at HDC on July 19th with Gary Peck, Kathryn Sadler, Andrew Smith, John Longhorn and Tom Warder, when the possibility of using land at Penn Retreat for housing was discussed.

Tom Warder gave a summary of the results of the 2012 Ashington Housing Needs Survey, which councillors have now received.

In the light of the need for housing identified in the Survey, the meeting discussed a plan from the site agent for Penn Retreat for a mixed development of affordable and small market homes. There would always be a trade-off between market & affordable homes as a Developer would make no money on 100% affordable homes.

The HDC team referred to various policies that were relevant to this idea, and felt that more work was needed on the proposal before, as Officers, they would be able to support it. HDC were less sure about the need for small market homes coming from the Housing Needs Survey.

The site agent agreed to discuss the matter further with his client, but advised that time was now of the essence as the HDC consultation on future gypsy sites would close in August. In order to accommodate more affordable units the density of homes on the site would need to increase. It is likely that a planning application for homes would be submitted in early August and the planning application for gypsy pitches would be re-submitted at the same time.

221/12 New Enforcement Allegations/Information

None

222/12 Amendments

None

223/12 Applications

DC/12/1276 Demolition of existing buildings, provision of second access and formation of an equine hospital and associated facilities - Westlands Farm, Billingshurst Road
The Chairman proposed that firstly the Agent & applicant would like to explain the application, Cllr Norton had asked the Chairman if he could summarise the application from the Parish point of view, the Chairman would then open a public adjournment to take questions/comments from residents and Councillors. He proposed that a decision was deferred until the Planning Committee meeting on 15th August to allow time for further public consultation and thought. Agreed by all.

Summary of discussions:

Simon Brett (planning agent) explained the reasons for needing a new site and how they had settled upon Westlands Farm. Preliminary discussions with HDC had indicated that the development was acceptable in principle in terms of Planning Policy but before submitting plans they had considered the impact of the development in terms of countryside, neighbours, activities, sustainable transport and highways safety and the resulting plans kept the building sizes to a minimum, agricultural in appearance, dug into the ground on the road frontage, screened from neighbours etc.

The County Surveyor has objected on highway safety grounds and a lack of information about transport in the application but this would be addressed by the agent. It is possible that the Developer could make a TAD contribution (finance) to be used to fund highways improvements in the area. He would be discussing the issues with WSCC Highways to see if they could be overcome.

Cllr Norton explained that the existing use of the site is negligible. The new buildings need to be large to accommodate all of the aspects of the hospital. The front of the building is dug into the ground and this reduces its height, other smaller buildings were further into the site and exercise areas at the rear of the site. The trees on site were substantial and provided screening. The pond on the site drains into a ditch/stream running towards the west. The stream at the edge of the site runs into the Lancing Brook and needs to be protected from any contamination. The application did not show the full extent of the land in the area owned by the applicant and he was under the impression that the applicant owned other areas of land adjacent to the application site. The highways entrances suffered from much reduced visibility due to bends in the road and trees. The site sits on the national speed limit section of Billingshurst Road which is a very busy road and often has large builders vehicles travelling at very high speeds. The main properties affected would be Priors Barn (adjacent) and Bennets Farm (opposite). Stream Farm entrance was directly opposite the proposed new entrance to the development site. Thistledown may have its outlook affected by the development.

Rob van Pelt (owner & applicant) explained that he had bought 32 acres of Westlands Farm. The proposal was for a Hospital and this did not include any incineration facilities. There is a Tier 3 establishment (Tier 1 = basic vet surgery, Tier 4 = university/teaching establishment) that has been established for many, many years and they had been looking for new premises for a very long time. He explained the need for the building size (roof height to accommodate hanging horses upside down, need for MRI/CT facilities, exercise areas for recovering horses etc).

Cllr Stillwell left the meeting as she was feeling unwell.

Questions/Comments from Councillors & Members of the public:

1. The majority of people expressed concerns about highway safety in the area. Billingshurst Road (at this location) has a poor accident history (including fatalities) and visibility at both of the entrances at the site is poor. Slow moving horse boxes exiting the site onto a very fast road would be sure to cause accidents. Local residents have had the Sussex Air Ambulance land in their front gardens, others have dealt with the aftermath of accidents and they had no desire to see this continue in the future. One resident has had two accidents simply pulling out of their own driveway onto the road.
2. No speed survey had been conducted at the site entrance and no data on vehicle movements is available. 43 parking spaces are to be available and these would generate many vehicle movements per day. The applicant explained that all of the spaces were not needed but provided additional turning space for vehicles.
3. Large vehicles cannot pass each other along Billingshurst Road in the area from the roundabout to the Spear Hill bend. They mount pavements and verges in order to pass and this is a hazard for walkers, cyclists & horse riders.
4. Access to the site should be via the A24 Billingshurst Road junction and not through the village.
5. County Councillor Wilkinson agreed to talk to WSCC Highway Engineers. It was possible that a TAD contribution could be requested to fund highways safety improvements. Several suggestions were put forward – traffic lights, removal of trees etc. WSCC would need to discuss with the applicant.
6. Drainage – the area is clay soil with a high water table, development could upset the water table and local properties may be flooded. Contaminated water should be filtered before it is allowed to enter any streams. HDC Environmental Health, the EA and Southern Water should advise on this.
7. It was confirmed that clinical waste is dealt with following appropriate procedures.
8. External lighting will be kept to an absolute minimum to avoid light pollution. There is no street lighting along Billingshurst Road.
9. The intention is to create a purpose-built facility and future expansion will not be necessary.
10. Trees on the site should be retained.

It was agreed that the Clerk would arrange a visit to the existing hospital site for those Councillors who wished. Members of the public were also invited to visit the site.

KD C/F

A decision would be taken at the Planning Committee meeting on 15th August.

Horsham District Council

224/12 Approvals

DC/12/1072 Fell 1 x Scots Pine (Tree B) and surgery to 1 x Lime tree (Tree A) - 15 Linfield Lane

DC/12/0827 Surgery to 1 x Oak tree on land to rear of 34 Rectory Close - Oakwood Copse Ivy Lane

DC/12/0959 Surgery to 1 x Holm Oak – Meiros Farm

225/12 Refusals

None

226/12 Withdrawals

None

227/12 Appeals made/ decisions

None

The next Planning Committee meetings are scheduled for 15th & 29th August 2012 at 7.00pm. An architect representing the new owners of Thistledown, Billingshurst Road will be attending on 15th August.

FINANCE

228/12 Correspondence

Letter from Puckamuck offering snow clearance services for £35 per hour. The Council currently has a contractor on 'standby' who charges £30 per hour. Clerk to respond.

Quarterly bank reconciliation – the Clerk reports that the Chairman has reviewed and signed the quarterly bank reconciliation.

Quarterly budget report – the Clerk reports that there is one area of budgetary overspend at present :

1. Planning consultants – budget set £0, actual expenditure £818.60

This can be met from the contingency budget (£2000).

229/12 Income

None

230/12 Expenditure

		Cheque no.	
Mark Adsett	Gardeners contract payment	£483.33	1323
	Hanging basket watering (4 weeks)	£260.00	
Mrs K. Dare	Clerks expenses (home & telephone)	£17	
	Total	£17	1324

WSCC	Salary and on costs (July)	£844.93	1325
Plusnet	Broadband	£17.99	DD
M. Woolley	travel expenses	£12.20	1326
R. Brennan	travel expenses	£26.00	1327
ACCT	leaflet delivery	£25.00	1328
Playsafety Ltd.	Safety inspections	£226.80	1329
SOS Systems	photocopier	£52.22	1330
AiRS	subscription	£50.00	1331

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

231/12 MEETINGS

Cllrs Woolley had attended a meeting at HDC to discuss the Housing Needs Survey & Penn Retreat.

Cllrs Stillwell & the Clerk had attended the Wardens Steering Group meeting on 31st July.

Cllr Brennan met with a Highways Officer on 17th July to discuss the VAS sign for Billingshurst Road.

232/12 MINOR MATTERS RAISED BY COUNCILLORS

1. Grass verges were not being cut frequently enough. This is a WSCC activity and schedules had been affected by the bad weather.

The next meeting will be held at **7.45pm on Thursday 6th September 2012 at Ashington School, Foster Lane.**

The meeting finished at 9.35pm

Signed.....

Date.....