



Ashington Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting held on 2nd February 2012 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, T. Kearney, D. Harbour.
Parish Clerk Karen Dare
District Councillor Roger Arthur
7 members of the public

0027/12 APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE

N. Carver (holiday), County Councillor Frank Wilkinson (business) & Neighbourhood Wardens Peter Newell & Jayne Jeffrey (on early shift to take elderly/vulnerable on minibus trip).

028/12 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

The Chairman reminded Councillors that previous declarations still stand. Cllr Woolley would not participate in the Mitchbourne Farm discussion as he is a near neighbour. This item is information gathering and it was not anticipated that any decisions would be made.

029/12 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

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

030/12 REPORT FROM THE NEIGHBOURHOOD WARDENS

Problems with Drugs / Alcohol

We have kick started the year by attending various meetings and trying to establish a joint up approach to tackling the issue of drugs in Ashington. The meetings we have attended have been to follow up with particular individuals with the aim of trying to get other agencies to help support those concerned. This has included meetings at Steyning Grammar and in Ashington too. We have noticed a considerable deterioration in some of the youngster's health and as such have advised them to see their GP.

In addition to this we have been able to get an experienced drug worker, an ex user himself, to agree to do a few sessions in Ashington. His first session has already proven

successful with some encouraging links forged with a couple of our known users in the village. We are planning to give a hard hitting session in the youth club with the drug worker.

Alongside our attempts to try and educate and perhaps steer young people away from drugs we too are passing intelligence onto Sussex Police to show that ultimately drug abuse will not be accepted and is also illegal.

Criminal Damage

Since last month we have noticed a significant reduction in Criminal Damage with only a few reports having come our way. This could be down to the weather or perhaps we hope down to our direct intervention and educational advice with the young persons of Ashington.

We must still emphasise however the need to report all instances of criminal damage no matter how small to Sussex police.

Youth Club

This now has become our number one goal and priority this year. We really need to get some momentum behind getting a better use of the resources in the village and one such resource that is under used is the youth club and Willard gym. It is our aim to establish an action group to push ahead with the issue of youth provision for the village. This group hopefully will consist of representatives from different agencies such as HDC, Ashington Parish Council, The Church, Ashington youth club and ourselves. We too are looking into the possibility of obtaining funding from grants etc. One such opportunity is currently being pursued with Sussex Police who have a potential sum of money for community based projects.

The youths of Ashington are constantly telling us that they don't have anywhere to "hang out" and spend time together. We have often moved them on from play parks and outside the co-op because they are making too much noise. They often just want somewhere to sit and chat and spend time with their friends. It is our goal to establish a safe environment where they can come and relax, out of the weather and spend time with their friends without the fear or worry of being constantly moved on etc.

Dog foul Signage

Residents in certain areas of the village may have noticed and increase in the dog foul signage. This is temporary signage that has been put in place in hot spot areas and will be removed in the next few weeks. The signs have been placed to highlight some of the worst areas and as a reminder to dog owners that it is their responsibility to pick up after their animals. We cannot put a stop to this alone we need the help of all residents to report any dog owners for not cleaning up after their animal. We are still trying to establish a pool of volunteers who would be willing to give up some time to help clear the recreation field of dog foul before the sports on a weekend. Obviously this isn't a nice job but neither is having to clean dog poo from clothing and of course there are

some extremely severe health implications related with dog foul too. If you think you can help please get in touch with us.

This month in particular we have seen a rise in complaints about Dog Noise, i.e. dogs barking early in the morning and late at night. We have dealt with this by spending some time in the affected areas along with posting a letter through resident's doors. We asked people to be mindful of their fellow residents and keep their animals under control especially early and late in the day.

Elderly and vulnerable visits

We have seen an increase in our vulnerable visits with certain individuals taking quite a lot of our time. We have been working closely to sign post them to relevant agencies to help deal with their individual needs. Having recently received some fuel poverty training and been made aware of exactly what is out there for those feeling the pinch we have been keen to pass this information on. We have been ensuring that our elderly and vulnerable residents are all keeping warm and that they are not afraid of turning on the heating etc. We too have been carrying out informal assessments of their properties to make sure that they are as warm and insulated as much as possible. Having spent a good deal of time with certain individuals we have noticed, sadly, a number of them have been deteriorating. We have increased our number of visits to these particular residents and have been making sure to sign post them to relevant agencies when the needs arise.

Due to the increased amount of time that we are spending working with the elderly and vulnerable we have started to look at the possibility of starting a group of volunteers who could help us by visiting some of these residents. We appreciate that there is more to it than just getting people, things like CRB checks but we are hoping that with a little thought we could get a group to take some of the pressure. With some of the elderly and vulnerable residents just having someone pop round for an hour to have a cup of tea really makes a considerable difference to their quality of life. In addition to this we are keen to establish a group of handy people who could help with certain odd jobs, gardening etc.

NEW MINIBUS

The new minibus is here and as part of the bus arriving we have been pleased to already have at least 12 people signed up to use it. The first trip, almost fully booked, leaves on the 2nd feb and will hopefully be a start to a new successful service in the village. We are still keen to find new driver volunteers and people to act as escorts for the trips. In addition to the planned trips on Thursdays we are keen to make use of the bus for other trips. Not only for the elderly and vulnerable residents but we too want to get the youths out of the village on trips. We have many of them interested and they can see the advantage of being able to get out and about at a relatively low cost. They have already come to us with ideas for trips which is great.

Anti Social Driving

We have had a number of complaints about speeding within the village. Not just down the main roads but also within the housing estates too. We would like to ask people to

think about their speed when driving in some of the small built up areas as you never know what is around the corner.

We have been passing intelligence on to Sussex Police regarding certain drivers and riders. In particular our concern is regarding young persons riding under the influence of substances unknown.

We are working with Sussex Police to get some pro active speed monitoring within the village. Hannah our PCSO is now trained to use a speed gun and hopefully if we can get an approved site or sites in the village we will be able to get her to come and work with us to raise the profile of speeding in the village.

Adverse Weather / Emergency Planning

Over the next couple of months we are going to be attending several training sessions with regards to emergency planning and especially adverse weather. We will be attending a multi agency event in Kent in March as well as some in house familiarisation training too. In addition to training we soon will be receiving an emergency radio for our vehicle so that we can be easily contacted and deployed where needed no matter what.

The Chairman asked the Clerk to pass on thanks to the Wardens for their report.

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

031/12 YOUNG PERSONS ADJOURNEMENT

None present.

032/12 REPORT FROM DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS

District Councillor Roger Arthur reported:

1. He was pleased that the Wardens were working closely with Ashington Youth Club and that solutions were being sought to the withdrawal of WSCC funding for the Club. Cllr Clark had attended a recent Youth Services workshop and all were trying to find new ways to fund the Club.
2. The Government Grant to HDC had reduced again resulting in HDC having to reassess their costs and look for ways to raise income. A further review of staffing levels would be conducted shortly.

The Chairman thanked District Councillor Roger Arthur for his report.

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

033/12 Item 85 Community Action Plan

Councillors have been provided with an updated summary. The Council would focus future activities on the achievable projects on the list.

KD C/F

CORRESPONDENCE

034/12 For action:

1. Letter from Steyning PC – does this PC consider it reasonable that WSCC CLC Community Initiative funding is not available to Parish Councils as WSCC consider that PC's could fund initiatives from its precept. Councillors did not wish to get involved in this. Clerk to respond. **KD D**
2. WSCC Consultation on 'mobile waste services' – WSCC is proposing to stop the green waste & white goods service from the fortnightly rural car parks waste service. Green waste is dealt with by brown top bins and HDC offer a 'Bulky Waste' service so negating the need for WSCC to provide the additional rural service. The Council had no issues with the cessation of this service. **KD D**
3. Does the PC wish to sign a Government e-petition against onshore wind turbines on the grounds that they are expensive, inefficient, destroy the countryside. Agreed by all. **KD D**
4. Ashington Childrens Nursery (Methodist Church) – want to meet with Councillor(s) to discuss their plans and find out more about the needs of children & families in Ashington and to explore the possibility of working together. The Clerk has already sent information about advertising possibilities in the village. It was agreed that the Clerk & Cllr Woolley make contact. **KD D**
5. WSCC Infrastructure Works Programme 2012/12 and Forward Programme 2013/14 (basically Highways capital projects) – no projects for Ashington are included. The Clerk has asked for an update on the A24 resurfacing and stressed that this is our no. 1 priority and that noise will only get worse if some recent planning applications are granted (Castle kitchens, petrol station/distribution yard). Minor highways repairs will be done on a reactive basis.
6. Billingshurst Road speed data – Clerk to present summary. Deferred to next meeting as WSCC had not provided a response. **C/F**

035/12 For information: None

036/12 General:

1. The Clerk magazine
2. Clerks & Councils Direct magazine

037/12 PUBLIC ADJOURNMENT

John Gibert from Mitchbourne Farm made a brief presentation:

His recent planning application for a second barn at Mitchbourne Farm had been refused by HDC. He was of the opinion that there had been confusion about the amount of land that he farmed and clarified:

1. We have 28 acres of farmland in Ashington (23 acres) and West Chiltonton (5 acres)
2. We produce 1000-1200 bales of hay and 4-6 tons of grapes (to Bookers at Bolney) and provide grazing for ~40 sheep each year
3. We have an existing barn which is 100sqm and proposed a second barn of 60sqm

4. We have 3 tractors, 2 toppers, 3 crop sprayers, a fertilizer spreader and various other agricultural equipment - the larger pieces now outside as there is no space in the existing barn which we have used to store hay
5. We made an application for Prior Approval for our second barn - that was refused by HDC without clear explanation as to the reason
6. We then made a full planning application for our second barn - which was refused by HDC because the barn was too small?
7. We understand that we are allowed to have barns of up to 480sqm if we have over 12 acres (5 hectares)
8. We do not understand what legal reason there is to stop us from meeting our agricultural need which we still believe should have been granted on our original Prior Notification.
9. The new barn would be oak framed, tiled roof, would share current access tracks and would be unobtrusive.

Mr. Gibert asked if the Parish Council could write to HDC or the Planning Inspector to support his need for a second barn

At this point Cllr Woolley left the meeting as it became clear that a decision needed to be made. Cllr Clark assumed the Chair.

It was agreed that Mr. Gibert send documents showing land ownership to the Parish Council and they could be discussed at the next Planning Committee meeting.

Cllr Woolley returned to the meeting and resumed the Chair.

A member of the public reported:

1. The pavement in Fairfield Way is in need of repair. The Clerk had reported this to WSCC in November 2011. They had made repairs in January 2012 but the resident felt that this was not satisfactory. Clerk to ask WSCC to re-inspect. **KD D**
2. A property in Mill Lane had left clinical waste bags & needles boxes outside in November. The Clerk had reported it to HDC at the time who had sorted out the problem quickly.
3. He offered his services as a litter picking volunteer.
4. He suggested that the dog bins should be emptied twice weekly rather than once weekly. The Clerk responded that rarely were any of the bins overflowing these days.

Other members of the public reported:

1. The dog bin at the northern end of London Road had been vandalised again – HDC are aware of this issue.
2. Was there any information about when WSCC would be repairing the Rectory Lane speed bumps? The Clerk responded that they were on the Ashington priorities list which had been sent to WSCC.

The Chairman thanked members of the public for their comments.

038/12 PLANNING.

The Planning Committee met on 18th January and Councillors have been provided with a copy of the minutes. Agreed by all.

039/12 Correspondence

ERHA will be holding an informal 'drop-in' session to gather any final applicants for the new homes on 28th February in Committee Room 2 at the Community Centre 3-7pm.

040/12 New Enforcement Allegations/Information

None

041/12 Amendments

None

042/12 Applications

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

The Chairman summarised the position to date: an application for 10 pitches had originally been submitted to HDC in June 2010, this had subsequently been reduced to 6 pitches. The Parish Council discussed the application in August 2010 and had employed a Planning Consultant who had prepared a letter of objection on the Council's behalf. Since then the applicant had met with the Parish Council and various other options for the site had been discussed including development of the site for much needed affordable/small market homes. In 2011 two different sketch housing plans had been brought to the Parish Council for discussion. In late 2011 HDC received a report from its consultants which identified potential Gypsy & Traveller sites in the District. Penn Retreat was not assessed for this report as a housing option was being pursued. In January 2012 the agent for the applicant had conversations with HDC's Planning Officers which indicated that they will only allow 100% affordable homes on the site and his client is unwilling to take this route.

The Chairman invited comments from members of the public:

1. Was the gypsy site to be determined because HDC won't allow housing?
Residents of Penn Gardens & Ashington would prefer houses over a gypsy site. The Chairman reminded those present that the Parish Council was aware that a housing option would be difficult to obtain as the site is in the countryside, outside the BUAB.
2. Houses would help to bring Penn Gardens more into the village – it is too isolated at present.
3. There was some concern about land ownership but the Chairman reminded everyone that this is not a planning consideration.
4. The owner of the site doesn't need the gypsy pitches – they were willing to sell the site for houses so they don't need the land. The owner is just trying to make as much money as possible for himself.
5. If the application is approved then the owner will simply sell the site to another gypsy family.
6. Ashington has a large population but little business – is there an opportunity to bring business to the area.

The Chairman thanked members of the public for their comments.

Councillors commented:

The consultant who had prepared the Baker G&T site assessment document had told a HALC meeting that gypsy sites next to housing would not be considered if it would have a clear detrimental effect on the settled community.

A security fence around the site would be ugly and out of keeping with a rural environment.

District Councillor Roger Arthur made the following comments:

1. Lamorna (previously an unauthorised gypsy site) had set a precedent for countryside, outside the BUAB development as it had been given planning permission for market homes. He would be asking Officers why this was justified.
2. What the benefit to Ashington would be from this proposed development.
3. The family has no current links to Ashington, they are adequately housed in various built properties and the children do not attend school in Ashington
4. The site is adjacent to residences – the impact on local property values will be high as will the effect on residents Human Rights.

Parish Councillors agreed to re-engage the Planning Consultant and ask her to prepare a Strong Objection to the application and to arrange a meeting with HDC Officers and Members to discuss the matter.

KD C/F

Horsham District Council

043/12 Approvals

DC/11/2602 Non material amendment to DC/10/0864 (Erection of 29 dwellings) to include repositioning of plot 7 one metre further south, removal of quoin detail from brick and to raising of cycle/refuse store roof at apartment plots 20 to 28 - Meiros Farm Rectory Lane

044/12 Refusals

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

045/12 Withdrawals

None

046/12 Appeals made/ decisions

None

The next Planning Committee meeting is scheduled for 15th February 2012 at 7.00pm.

FINANCE

047/12 Correspondence

The Clerk reports that the quarterly bank reconciliation has been checked & signed by the Chairman.

Q3 budget report – the Clerk reports the following items of overspend:

1. Litter bin emptying & equipment £391 (budget was £0). This money is recouped from the HDC Environmental Cleansing Grant
2. Stationery £277.73 (budget was £250)
3. Subscriptions £824.87 (budget was £800)
4. Hanging baskets £2132.04 (budget was £1900)

Other items are underspent currently.

Clearance of Covert Mead/Meiros Way ditch – the Council had previously approved expenditure of £250 (Minute 380/11, November 2011) to clear the Council's part of the ditch. Whilst undertaking the work the Clerk asked Mark Adsett to clear more than previously agreed as this would make the ditch easier to maintain in the future. The total cost of the work to the Council was an additional £110. Agreed by all.

The Sands path – Mark took out 17 dead elm trees and needed additional help to do this at a cost of £45. Agreed by all.

Consider a request from Metrobus to install 'real-time' bus information boards at the bus stops in the village. Cost to the Parish Council @£7000-8000 per sign. Not agreed – the Council does not have access to this level of funding. Clerk to respond. **KD D**

048/12 Income

HDC Environmental Cleansing Grant £1084

049/12 Expenditure

		Cheque no.	
Mark Adsett	Gardeners contract payment	£475.00	
	Ditch clearance work	£360.00	
	Remove dead trees	£45	1265
Mrs K. Dare	Clerks expenses (home & telephone)	£17	
	Postage	£2.21	
	Total	£19.21	1266
WSSC	Salary and on costs (January)	£820.05	1267
Plusnet	Broadband	£17.99	DD
Ashington School	Meeting cost	£20	1268
Ashington Youth Club	grant (as agreed at last meeting)	£600	1269
SP Services	Responder Equipment	£181.06	1270

SOS Systems	photocopier	£47.92	1271
J. Jeffrey	Junior Wardens trip to cinema (The Council is holding £70 in Junior Wardens Funds)	£70.09	1272

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

050/12 MEETINGS

Youth Service Review at HDC – Cllr Clark

Wardens Steering Group – Cllrs Clark, Stillwell & the Parish Clerk. Minutes will be circulated separately.

HALC – Cllr Clark reported that the recent meeting had included a presentation on the Localism Bill which essentially gives powers to local Councils to take over services from principal authorities. There was also a presentation on faster broadband and he encouraged everyone to complete the online survey (the Clerk has put an article in the village Newsletter).

051/12 MINOR MATTERS RAISED BY COUNCILLORS

1. Cllr Harbour asked the Clerk if she still needed help with the Community Minibus from her friend. The Clerk would respond directly. **KD D**
2. Cllr Kearney had been asked by a resident why the outside lights were on all day. Bill Whittaker from ACCT responded – this was how the building was designed, they were emergency lights but ACCT was looking at various ways to reduce energy consumption in the building.
3. Cllr Lancaster reported that a slurry? lorry had spilled some brown liquid on London Road at the junction with Church Lane. It had also lost a piece of equipment and this was currently lying on the pavement nearby. Clerk to deal with. **KD D**

The next meeting will be held at **7.45pm on Thursday 1st March 2012 at Ashington School, Foster Lane.**

The meeting finished at 9.00pm

Signed.....

Date.....

052/12 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.	