



# Ashington Parish Council

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**Minutes of the meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> October 2012 at 7.45 p.m. in Ashington School, Foster Lane, Ashington**

**Present:** Councillors M. Woolley, K. Wood, R. Brennan, J. Gichovi-Elias (nee Stillwell), R. Strudwick, N. Clark, T. Kearney N. Carver  
**Parish Clerk** Karen Dare  
**District Councillor** Roger Arthur  
**County Councillor** Frank Wilkinson  
**5 members of the public**

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## **261/12 APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE**

B. Norton (holiday), D. Harbour & R. Lancaster (both personal), Neighbourhood Wardens Peter Newell & Jayne Jeffrey.

## **262/12 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

The Chairman reminded Councillors that previous declarations still stand.

## **263/12 APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 6<sup>th</sup> September 2012 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman. Proposed by Councillor Wood and seconded by Councillor Clark, and agreed.

## **264/12 REPORT FROM THE NEIGHBOURHOOD WARDENS**

Paper copies were available for the meeting. The Clerk summarised the report.

### **Abandoned / Suspicious Vehicles**

We had several reports of vehicles parked in places for lengthy amounts of times that have aroused suspicions. We have been keen to log the details each time with the Police and have left them to carry out further investigations where needed.

### **Criminal Damage**

We have noticed that the bus stop near to the Indian restaurant has been victim of vandalism this month. It appears that someone has used a lighter or similar to burn holes in the perspex. We need to look into how we go about getting the panel / panels replaced.

### **Skate Park**

Although we are well aware that there are things going on behind the scenes with regards to looking at fixing / replacing the skate park we still feel that there is a significant risk with the damage to the skate park. We are keen to express our concerns as we don't want any of the youngsters using the area to get hurt. At the same time we are keen to work with the youngsters using the area to find the right solution when the time comes.

### **Anti Social Behaviour**

We have identified a number of young people in the village that we feel would benefit from an Acceptable Behaviour Contract to help nip some behaviour issues in the bud before they get out of hand. We will be working with them and our anti-social behaviour team over the weeks to come. That said Anti-social behaviour as a whole across the village has been quiet.

### **Anti Social Driving**

Again this month we have had several complaints about Anti-Social Driving. Particularly focused at the usual hot spot of the Billingshurst Road roundabout. We continue to monitor the area ourselves however there is very little that we can do other than report drivers seen to the Police. So we would urge anyone witnessing anti-social driving to do the same by reporting the vehicles to operation crackdown via [www.operationcrackdown.org](http://www.operationcrackdown.org) or by calling them on 01243 642222 or the Police non emergency on 101. We would like to urge the importance of calling the police on the 101 number as without doing so it fails to highlight a problem and a potential hotspot. If calls are received by the police they can then assign resources to deal with the problem. If they don't receive calls then as far as they are concerned there isn't a problem.

### **Dog Fouling**

Once again this issue has raised its head. We have noticed that there has been a rise in the amount of dog foul that is being left on the Rec and other areas / walk ways. In response we have been talking to the youngsters in the village and have set them a task of designing an anti dog foul poster. From the posters designed we will choose a winner and have it reprinted into a poster / sign that we can use within the community to highlight the issue. We have upped our patrols around the known hotspots and are keen to highlight that if we do catch anyone not clearing up after their dog that we will issue a fixed penalty. We are aware that not all dog walkers are guilty and have been spreading the word amongst the dog walkers in the village to report anyone seen not clearing up after their animal.

### **Dangerous Dogs**

In addition to the problem of dog fouling we have had a couple of concerning reports about dog related attacks. One being a dog on dog attack and another where a dog actually attacked a person. We would urge anyone with a dog to be mindful of any boisterous animals and take the appropriate actions to keep it under control when out and about. Any incidents of dangerous dogs should be reported to the Police immediately.

### **Elderly and vulnerable visits**

This month has been a busy one working with a number of vulnerable residents. We have had to work with residents on issues ranging from housing problems and homelessness to bereavement and mental health issues. This has taken a wide spectrum of time and attention from us but we continue to support those residents where necessary signposting them to appropriate agencies where needed. To better support some of our residents and to ensure that they receive the appropriate level of help we have had to make several safeguarding referrals.

This month we took a trip with some of our residents to Christ's Hospital Boarding School just outside Horsham where we experienced a tour of the school and enjoyed some afternoon tea. These trips prove extremely popular and even when organised at very short notice are totally full to a point where we needed another vehicle not just our minibus.

We have again this month arranged for another community link alarm to be installed in one of our residents homes. These alarms prove popular as they enable the resident to live independently with an extra safety net should any problems occur.

We have finalised our Christmas party date which has changed from the 25<sup>th</sup> of November to the 17<sup>th</sup> of November. This was partly due to double booking of our entertainment. But thanks to the Community Centre we have quickly been able to organise a new date and firmly book it along with our entertainment. We are now working on getting invites together as well as making the final plans.

In addition to the Christmas party we are pleased to announce that we have a new lunch club starting on the first Wednesday of each month from February 2013. This will be an excellent opportunity for residents to meet together for an informal lunch and chat as well as to enjoy some entertainment etc. Once again a big thank you to the community centre for their continued support in new activities we wish to pursue.

We are also hoping with the support of some of our residents to start a bingo night each month on a Friday night.

### **Youth Club / Provision**

As you will be aware we have been tasked by the steering group to explore the issue of youth provision in Ashington. This arose in partly response to the presentation by the Chanctonbury group offering the services of a shared youth worker within the area. We were keen to explore the possibility of Ashington being able to work locally and on its own to provide the same support. We too think that the Southwater model for youth work is an extremely successful one and wanted to try and mirror that where possible. Our ideas are very similar to the Chanctonbury group with regards to provision and delivery, with a desire to end up with a youth project that was positive and holistic within the village. After several meetings we have been able gain a better understanding of

what is available in regards to youth leaders / workers and how much they would cost etc. Thanks to some helpful support from the Southwater Youth Project we have identified another option which would result in Ashington being able to have a full time youth worker in the village. The idea would be to look at getting a newly qualified youth leader which would cost approximately £15,000 per year. They would be based in Ashington but tied with the Southwater project with Angie their leader being a mentor. There would be finer details that would need to be worked out but to get a better understanding of this option we have arranged for a presentation from the Southwater youth project for next months' parish council meeting.

### **Dark Nights / Halloween**

Yes already the nights are getting darker earlier and we are keen to remind everyone about personal safety in the darker seasons. With Halloween and then bonfire night fast approaching we are going to be offering residents no trick or treat notices that they can put in their doors to warn off would be tricksters.

### **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](mailto: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.

End of report.

A meeting took place between the Parish Council Steering Group, Wardens & Neil Worth (HDC) to review the Wardens roles and responsibilities and the Clerk had circulated the draft job description. There was some disagreement about changing the name Neighbourhood Wardens to Neighbourhood Managers - Cllr Clark explained that the Wardens roles had changed considerably since they were first employed over 10 years ago when their role was to deal with issues needing enforcement eg ASB, drugs, criminal damage etc. Their role is now to bring the community together and keep the peace in a preventative way rather than reacting to problems as they arise eg youth work, visiting schools, elderly/vulnerable work, although still maintaining enforcement capability. Residents currently view the Wardens as Police but they are not a substitute Police force, their role is multi-agency community aid. The name Warden implies security/enforcement (eg traffic warden).

Cllr Clark explained that the name Neighbourhood Manager was consistent with Govt. accredited schemes and was nationally recognised. However, councillors felt that the name Manager implies management of people and this was not part of their role, however, they do manage projects.

Councillors agreed the new job description but wanted to find a name other than Manager. To be discussed by the Steering Group.

Proposals for Youth Services in Ashington will be presented at the November meeting.

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

1. A member of the public asked if the Ashington Wardens support the Steyning Wardens and vice versa as the Steyning Wardens had not been available to help out at Ashington Festival this year. The Clerk responded that there is a reciprocal agreement and the Ashington Wardens do ensure that the agreement works.
2. Cllr Strudwick reported being stopped by a gentleman on the A24 slip road offering to exchange his 'gold' for cash. He had telephoned the Wardens and left a message, he had also called the Police non-emergency number but had been kept on hold for 15 minutes before they informed him that they would send a patrol car to the area. Residents are advised that this is a scam and should report any incidents of this nature to the Police.
3. Cllr Carver reported 2 suspicious 4x4 vehicles along Park Lane. The Clerk advised that Park Lane was on the Wardens patrol route and that suspicious behaviour should be reported to the Police.
4. Cllr Lancaster advised that the Co-op Manager had hoped to attend this meeting and sent his apologies. He advised that from October the store was now open until 11pm. Any comments on this should be directed to the Manager.
5. Peter Newell to report at the next meeting on his dealings with Fairfield Road residents regarding the private section of road.

## **265/12 YOUNG PERSONS ADJOURNMENT**

None present.

## **266/12 REPORT FROM DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS**

District Councillor Roger Arthur reported:

1. He had arranged a meeting with County Councillor Wilkinson and Highways to discuss the safety of the Rock Road/Newhouse Lane road junction. The Chairman to circulate the date for this meeting.

The Chairman thanked District Councillor Roger Arthur for his report.

County Councillor Frank Wilkinson reported:

1. Mill Lane – WSCC has approved a £50k grant to employ a consultant to look at the Honeybridge stream upstream of Ashington and to advise on some courses of action to alleviate flooding at the Mill Lane culvert. The Clerk had previously circulated notes from this meeting.
2. WSCC Highways are looking in detail at the planning application for the equine hospital at Westlands Farm, Billingshurst Road. They have some safety concerns regarding access/egress and have asked the Developer to conduct speed monitoring and a safety audit. The Developer could be asked to contribute financially to road safety improvements. More details would follow.
3. WSCC are on target to save £25 million this financial year.

The Chairman thanked County Councillor Wilkinson for his report.

Questions:

1. Vegetation needs cutting back at the East Wolves roundabout as visibility at the roundabout is reduced. Clerk to email WSCC. **KD D**
2. A member of the public had reported a tree issue to the Parish Clerk, she had passed the report to WSCC Highways on 2<sup>nd</sup> August, on 5<sup>th</sup> September it had been inspected by WSCC and its removal approved, however, on 3<sup>rd</sup> October it had fallen down over the footpath, before WSCC removed it. This was an unsatisfactory WSCC response to the original report and had put pedestrians in danger from an unsafe tree. County Councillor Wilkinson apologised for the delay and advised that complaints should be sent to the senior manager of the relevant department at WSCC.
3. Does the grant of £50k towards the Mill Lane flooding study mean that other Ashington flooding issues won't receive funds? County Councillor Wilkinson responded that this was not the case but that WSCC viewed Mill Lane as a very high priority and had allocated the funds as a matter of urgency. Other Ashington issues would be discussed by WSCC prior to other funding being allocated.
4. A member of the public reported that despite Church Lane being closed on Ashington Festival day WSCC contractors had driven up and down the road putting up resurfacing signs, road closure signs and writing 'no parking' on the road – in preparation for resurfacing work which was due to take place 2 days later. This had caused some disruption and confusion to Festival traffic. It was questioned why contractors ignored the road closed signs, why the work was scheduled so close to Festival day and whether Highways dept. talked to the road closure team. County Councillor Wilkinson explained that the Highways dept. was under-staffed and had some problems at present. The Leader of WSCC had authorised a consultant to analyse the workings of the dept. and come up with suggestions for improvement. The Balfour Beatty contract is working well but the link between identifying issues and raising them with the contractor needed to be improved.

**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

**267/12 Community Action Plan**

Updated list on the PC website.

**KD C/F**

**268/12 Housing Needs Survey**

The Chairman & Clerk met with HDC September to look at the results of the Survey and notes from the meeting have been circulated. There is still a lot of work to be done with the results of the Survey before we know the exact type of housing that Ashington needs – it may not be affordable but discounted market purchase/rent. The Chairman & Clerk are analysing the results. **C/F**

## **CORRESPONDENCE**

### **269/12 For action:**

1. HDC – Community Engagement. The PC is asked to identify its priorities – issues in 2010 were support for local business, protection of green belt/countryside, inappropriate parking on verges/footpaths, affordable homes. It was agreed that the Chairman & Clerk identify issues from the Community Action Plan. **MW/KD D**
2. Neighbourhood Planning event 1<sup>st</sup> Nov. Cllrs Clark & Carver volunteered but a third is needed. Clerk to ring around Councillors. **KD D**

### **270/12 For information:**

1. West Sussex Life 2012 report
2. Closure of Public Way G39 Ashington-Thakeham
3. WSCC – update on superfast broadband
4. WSCC – introduction of volunteers in libraries
5. HDC – Annual Report
6. SALC – Re-launch of QPC scheme. Views will be sought from Parishes and a new scheme launched in 2013.
7. SALC annual report & accounts

### **271/12 General:**

1. Local Council Review magazine
2. The Clerk magazine
3. Clerks & Councils Direct magazine
4. AiRS Newsletter September 2012

## **272/12 PUBLIC ADJOURNMENT**

Members of the public reported:

1. Cars parking on the grass verges adjacent to the car park at The Sands. The land is owned by HDC. Clerk to email District Councillor Roger Arthur with details. The Wardens do have polite notices that they can put on vehicles parked on verges/inconsiderately. **KD D**
2. Members of the public asked if more could be done to tackle dog fouling on the Recreation Ground. It was explained that there is a lot of fox activity at the Recreation Ground at present and this could not be prevented but residents should be encouraged to report 'offenders' dog fouling to the Wardens.

The Chairman thanked members of the public for their comments.

## **273/12 PLANNING.**

The Planning Committee met on 19<sup>th</sup> September and Councillors have been provided with a copy of the Minutes. Agreed by all.

## **274/12 Correspondence**

1. Horsham Town Plan Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and Sustainability Appraisal have been formally adopted by HDC on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2012.

## **275/12 New Enforcement Allegations/Information**

None

## **276/12 Amendments**

None

## **277/12 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 applicant has submitted preliminary plans to WSCC to remove the large oak tree in the centre of the existing access as this would have the effect of improving visibility. Discussions are taking place between the applicant and WSCC and the Clerk has copies of some correspondence. **C/F**

## **Horsham District Council**

### **278/12 Approvals**

DC/11/2648 Change of use to sui generis and construction of a petrol filling station including canopy (roadside facilities), with a retail store, ATM and ancillary offices, distribution yard, underground fuel storage tanks, secure fencing plus hard and soft landscaping - Land South East of Martins Farm London Road

### **279/12 Refusals**

None

### **280/12 Withdrawals**

None

### **281/12 Appeals made/ decisions**

None

The next Planning Committee meeting is scheduled for 17<sup>th</sup> October 2012 at 7.00pm and will discuss proposed change of use for some of the buildings at Castle Kitchens, The Hollow.

## **FINANCE**

### **282/12 Correspondence**

1. Consider quotes for essential repairs to the skatepark. ACCT has closed the park on safety grounds. The Clerk has met with 5 contractors and has circulated a summary of quotes to Councillors. The Clerk is recommending accepting the Radium Ramps quote for £4250 as this will get essential repairs done plus includes work that will prolong the life of the halfpipe. Work would be carried out before the October half term. Funds would be paid from the Skatepark maintenance budget (£1265 in hand), contingency funds, Capital replacement reserves. Agreed by all.

2. Consider requests for grants to the newly established Ashington Monthly Lunch Club and Ashington Bingo. Both Clubs (initiated by the Wardens) will be run for the benefit of the elderly/vulnerable of Ashington and need some initial funds to cover the hire costs of the Community Centre but both expect to become self-funding in the long term. It is suggested that a maximum of £150 be donated to the Lunch Club and £90 to the Bingo Club from Calor Village of the Year funds or 3 months rental costs. This would leave a Calor balance of £94.59.
3. Consider a request for a grant to Disability Awareness UK. Not agreed.
4. Consider a request for a grant to West Downs Search Team. Not agreed.
5. Consider a request for a grant to Outset Youth Action who have helped 8 Ashington youngsters to find voluntary work. Not agreed.

### **283/12 External Audit**

The external auditor has signed off the Annual Return. They have included a comment - "The Council had £109,026 invested with Kaupthing Singer & Friedlander when it went into administration in October 2008. At 31 March 2012, the Council had received £68,759, leaving a balance outstanding of £40,267 which is included within the total cash and investments balance in Box 8 of the Annual Return. Since the year-end, a further £10,914 has been received (bringing the amount received to 73% of the total balance). The administrators have indicated that the Council can expect to be repaid 75%-84% of the total balance, but the position could change. We understand that the Council is continuing to take a proactive approach to pursuing the return of the outstanding balance and that members of the public are being kept informed of any further developments."

The Auditor has also advised that the Council should not be depreciating its assets for reporting purposes. The Clerk will make a note of this for future years.

### **283/12 Income**

HDC Precept £46,396.90

HDC Environmental Cleansing Grant £3,294.67

### **284/12 Expenditure**

		<b>Cheque no.</b>	
Mark Adsett	Gardeners contract payment	£483.33	
	Hanging basket watering (4 weeks)	£260.00	1340
Mrs K. Dare	Clerks expenses (home & telephone)	£17	
	Gift	£30	
	Postage	£13.20	
	travel expenses (equine hospital)	£12.80	
	Total	£73.00	1341
WSSC	Salary and on costs (August)	£844.93	1342
	Payroll charges	£41.04	1346
Plusnet	Broadband	£17.99	DD

M. Woolley	travel expenses	£10.50	1343
D. Harbour	travel expenses (equine hospital)	£12.80	1344
Mazars	external auditor	£660	1345
BT	office phone	£63.85	DD

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

### **285/12 MEETINGS**

Cllr Clark & the Clerk had attended the Wardens Steering Group meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> September.

The Chairman & Clerk attended a 'Mill Lane flooding' meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> September and minutes of the meeting have been circulated. In summary, WSCC are going to investigate employing a consultant to look at the stream and suggest solutions to the flooding.

The Chairman & Clerk attended a Housing meeting at HDC (minute 268/12).

Cllr Carver & the Clerk had visited the Arundel Equine Hospital and had a better understanding of their likely impact on Ashington should DC/12/1276 be approved.

Cllr Brennan had attended an HDC Scrutiny meeting to discuss rural businesses. It was likely that there would be one more meeting and he would provide a summary of all of the meetings in due course.

### **286/12 MINOR MATTERS RAISED BY COUNCILLORS**

1. The dead vegetation had not yet been removed from in front of Posthorses. The Clerk confirmed that she had written to the owner of the house but he had not responded.
2. Water is flowing across the southern slip road again. Clerk to inform WSCC.  
**KD D**
3. Who would be monitoring the Meiros Farm development to ensure that the outstanding items are completed? The Clerk confirmed that this was the responsibility of both HDC and WSCC. It was confirmed that the affordable homes had been given to Ashington residents but there remain two homes available for shared ownership.
4. The pavement is uneven outside nos. 7 and 54 Hillcrest Drive. The Clerk had reported these to WSCC some time ago but would report them again.  
**KD D**
5. There have been incidences of inconsiderate parking along London Road. There is little that can be done about this but the Clerk would speak to the Wardens.  
**KD D**

The next meeting will be held at **7.45pm on Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> November 2012** at **Ashington School, Foster Lane.**

The meeting finished at 9.05pm

Signed.....

Date.....