



Ashington Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting held on 6th December 2012 at 7.45 p.m. in Ashington School, Foster Lane, Ashington

Present: Councillors M. Woolley, K. Wood, R. Brennan, T. Kearney, N. Carver, B. Norton, D. Harbour, R. Lancaster, N. Clark & R. Strudwick
Parish Clerk Karen Dare
District Councillor Roger Arthur
Neighbourhood Wardens Peter Newell & Jayne Jeffrey.
3 members of the public

The Chairman reminded members of the public the requirement that they limit their participation to the Public Adjournment sections of the meeting.

316/12 APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE

Cllr J. Gichovi-Elias (holiday) & County Councillor Frank Wilkinson (illness).

317/12 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

The Chairman reminded Councillors that previous declarations still stand.

318/12 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 1st November 2012 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman. Proposed by Councillor Brennan and seconded by Councillor Norton, and agreed.

319/12 REPORT FROM THE NEIGHBOURHOOD WARDENS

Wardens report:

The Wardens thanked the Parish Council, ACCT, Co-op and Cubitt & West for their support and help at the recent Xmas party.

Anti Social Behaviour

November has been a very quiet month with regards to Anti Social behaviour. We keep coming across the youth taking shelter outside the co-op and community centre and are keen to move them on.

Friday Night Youth Club

We have continued to open the youth club on a Friday night, now directly after the younger session also on a Friday night. The youth club have secured a new youth worker to run their sessions for them. We are keen to take advantage of this worker and have applied to the parish council to try and secure a grant to enable us to use the youth worker in our “older” sessions too.

Youth Shelter

We have visited a couple of youth shelters across the district and came to the conclusion that the one we liked the most was the one based at Sullington (Storrington). This was for several reasons, its vandal resistant open plan design for one. Also the fact that it blended in well with the surroundings and is made of recycled environmentally friendly materials. We are currently looking at costings involved and also at possible sources for funding should we go ahead. If we do go ahead one of the key issues will be its location which is something to be decided. We are keen to push this idea forward as we feel there is a need for somewhere for the youth to call their own where we can direct them to instead of constantly badgering them to move on from areas where they shouldn't be.

Youth Provision

At present we are currently working on a short term solution within the youth club environment, hopefully enabling at least one club session a week split into two different age group sessions. Looking more long term we are still also working on this but are gathering more information at this time. We expect to begin planning in the New Year with a Community Consultation event.

Anti Social Driving

This still continues to be an issue especially at the northern end of the village. We continue to monitor the area and continue to educate any drivers that we come into contact with. We cannot stress the importance for your support in reporting such drivers through to the police on the operation crackdown website or by calling 101.

Dog Fouling

Jayne attended an ACCT meeting where she discussed the issues around dog fouling in the village especially on the rec. Options explored were putting up more signage, new rules to keep dogs on leads or the possibility of banning dogs entirely from the rec. The last two are being investigated further with regards to the feasibility of their implication. New signs have already been placed at the entrances to the rec designed by one the young residents in the village.

Fly Posting

With many events and Christmas approaching we have seen a big increase in the number of fly posting instances throughout the village. Particularly focused on the London road / co-op areas. If anyone sees posters or signs that should not be there please do get in touch with us so we can remove them. It is an offence to attach any signs, poster etc to street furniture without permission.

Card cloning Co-op cash point.

We have had several reports that residents have been defrauded of money and have had their credit / debit cards cloned when using the cash point at the co-op. We advise anyone who uses that cash point regularly to check their statements and if they have any concerns to contact their bank ASAP. Any instances of fraud or theft should be reported to Sussex police also using the non emergency number 101.

Elderly and vulnerable visits

On the 17th we had our Christmas Party which was a real fun afternoon and very much a success. We had almost 100 guests who joined us for an afternoon of festive food and sing song. The raffle was very popular and we wanted to express again our thanks to the very generous donors of prizes. It was lovely to see everyone there including a couple of parish council representatives, Joe the manager of the co-op, Adrian from Cubitt and West and Jan from Age uk who was there to show her support. It was lovely to have their support for the event and showed that local organisations and businesses do take an interest in their community. A special thanks needs also to be given to the youngsters that we had helping us at the party. Without them we couldn't have managed. They all volunteered willingly to help us and enjoyed mixing with everyone. Finally we need to say thank you to the ACCT for their help and support towards and on the day.

In addition to the Christmas Party we also took a small group to see Fiddler on the Roof performed by the seniors at Christ's Hospital School theatre. This proved to be very popular and everyone was impressed at the performance. Some even built up an appetite and had to stop at Macdonalds on the way home.

We have applied for grants from the Festival Grants to go towards equipment for both our new lunch club and bingo club starting next year.

We continue to build strong links with Age Uk. We are working together to try and increase the services available to our residents. Age UK are keen to invest time within Ashington to increase what is on offer to its 50+ residents. We hope this will provide some new services in the new year. One new activity already set up is that of Arm Chair exercises which will be on offer at Storrington leisure centre each week followed by a light bite. We are also looking at the idea of setting up a quarterly Tea Dance in the village.

To help aid our Elderly vulnerable residents Jayne has been training on how to install, use and advise on the community link alarms offered by Horsham district council. This service is extremely valuable to many residents already and with the extra knowledge we will be able to offer the same to all residents. The link alarms are particularly good for residents living on their own and we are keen to know about anyone who feels they might need one, or if they know of anyone who lives alone that might benefit from having one installed.

We are still finding new people in Ashington to add to our elderly and vulnerable list. Still finding people living on their own that we didn't know anything about. Because of this we are keen to again ask people that if they know of someone who might benefit from regular contact from us to get in touch. Even if it is to simply say that you think someone is living alone we don't mind just knocking on their door and seeing if they are all ok. We rely on information from neighbours, relatives and other residents all the time and are keen not to miss anyone. We can offer support in many different ways, some like the fact that we simply pop round once every so often, others take advantage of our advice experience and ability to sign post them to relevant agencies that can help them out.

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 Wardens thanked the Parish Council & Steering Group for their support in 2012. The Chairman thanked the Wardens for their report.

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

1. Cllr Harbour thanked the Wardens, on behalf of the Independent Women of Ashington, for organising the recent Xmas party.
2. Card cloning – how/when? The Warden explained that this happened a few weeks ago. A 'device' is inserted into the card reader to copy card details. The PIN number is either electronically recorded or seen by one of the perpetrators. Residents are advised to look out for anything 'sticking out' from the cashpoint, people 'lurking' behind or in a nearby vehicle. Residents can get cash from the Post Office or cashback at the tills and this is safer.
3. Margaret Alford informed the Council that ACCT has agreed to install 2 dog bag dispensers on the Recreation Ground in order to help tackle dog fouling issues.

320/12 YOUNG PERSONS ADJOURNMENT

None present.

321/12 REPORT FROM DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS

District Councillor Roger Arthur reported:

1. Precepts – HDC still do not know if Parish Precepts will be capped at 2% rise. HDC is capped at 2%. In addition, the Govt. used to give principal councils 100%

of any Council Tax benefit payments but this year they are only awarding 90%. HDC is trying to find ways to fund the shortfall but there are concerns that they may not be able to fund any Parish deficits for legal reasons. More will be known in the next few weeks. The Clerk will attend a meeting at HDC on 18th December to learn more about this issue.

The Chairman thanked District Councillor Roger Arthur for his report.

Questions:

1. What services at HDC will be affected by cuts? HDC is seeking to neither increase Council Tax nor reduce services. HDC is being innovative in finding income by asking users to pay for certain services. If the Govt. carries on cutting funds then HDC will struggle to maintain services and hold down Council Tax.

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

322/12 Community Action Plan

Updated list on the PC website.

KD C/F

323/12 Housing Needs Survey

The Clerk is in discussion with AiRS and is gradually getting to the bottom of the results and what they mean for the village. It is expected that final results will be available in January.

C/F

324/12 Freedom of Information document

Councillors are asked to review the Freedom of Information document. The Clerk reports that no amendments are necessary. Agreed without amendment.

KD D

325/12 Speed bumps in London Road

Update next meeting

KD C/F

CORRESPONDENCE

326/12 For action:

1. Shipley Parish Design Statement – draft for consultation
2. Pulborough Parish Design statement – draft for consultation
3. HDC – draft Housing Strategies and Policies consultation. The Clerk had provided a summary and explained that a new Category C on the Housing Register at HDC will enable local people to register for any local affordable homes that may be built. This will help to justify or resist new developments. It was agreed that the Clerk write to HDC to support this.

KD D

327/12 For information:

1. Letter from resident informing us that she has spotted rats near the Recreation Ground. Passed to ACCT for investigation.

2. HDC – Report from Scrutiny Committee Supporting Local Businesses Working Group.
3. Agenda & minutes for Annual HDC/HALC meeting
4. HDC Community Governance Review Proposals – HDC is recommending that there should be no reductions in the number of Parish Councillors across Parishes. No other proposals affect Ashington.
5. HDC – report on recent Henfield Planning application (appeal for non-determination)

328/12 General:

1. The Clerk magazine
2. Clerks & Councils Direct magazine
3. ERHA Annual Report 2012

329/12 PUBLIC ADJOURNMENT

Members of the public reported:

1. Why does the new Petrol Station at Martins Farm have restricted opening hours when the Co-op is allowed to open until 11pm? Clerk to investigate the opening hours and report back to the next meeting. **KD C/F**
2. Any news on the recent planning application for houses at Penn Retreat? No decisions yet, this will only go to HDC Development Control South Committee if there is disagreement between the Officers recommendation and District Councillors/Parish Council opinions.
3. Footpath to Penn Gardens is still in need of repair. The Clerk had recently spoken to WSCC Highways (again) about this issue.
4. Is Penn Gardens a private road or public highway. Clerk to check. **KD D**
5. Are there any plans for streetlights along Rectory Lane to Penn Gardens? No, but if the Penn Retreat development is approved it may be possible to ask for lights to be installed.

The Chairman thanked members of the public for their comments.

330/12 PLANNING.

The Planning Committee met on 14th & 28th November and Councillors have been provided with a copy of the Minutes. Agreed by all.

331/12 Correspondence

1. WSCC Publication of the Proposed Submission (Reg.19) Draft West Sussex Waste Local Plan. The Council had responded to the draft document some time ago and there appears to be little change in this proposed submission.
2. Post Horses, London Road – Councillors opinions on what should be done with this property. Planning permission to convert to a house was recently refused.
3. Hoots House – the owner’s agent wishes to discuss housing options for this site. It is proposed that the Clerk arrange an informal meeting (19th December after the planning committee meeting).

Post Horses & Hoots House discussions:

- consider developing the site together as a cohesive entity (may be difficult because of the driveway to the 'new house')
- retain a retail unit somewhere in the development as once it is gone it is lost forever, possibly one large retail unit, café?
- Post Horses has some historic significance (although it is not a listed building), try to retain the façade?
- to comply with HDC's policy, any development for houses will need have an element that meets the local needs as identified in the 2012 housing survey

332/12 New Enforcement Allegations/Information

None

333/12 Amendments

None

334/12 Applications

None

Horsham District Council

335/12 Approvals

DC/12/1675 Proposed first floor extension above existing structure - Prospect Cottage Rectory Lane

DC/12/1889 Proposed new entrance, fire escape and internal alterations - Spheric Trafalgar Limited Bentley House Wiston Business Park

DC/12/1525 Proposed conversion of existing garage into habitable room - 2 Gardner Cottages Rectory Lane

336/12 Refusals

None

337/12 Withdrawals

None

338/12 Appeals made/ decisions

None

The next Planning Committee meeting is scheduled for 19th December 2012 at 7.00pm.

FINANCE

339/12 Annual Review of Financial Controls and Internal Audit

Councillors are asked to review the Council's Financial Regulations and Risk Management procedures. The Clerk had provided Councillors with a copy of the Council's current Financial Regulations and confirmed that the procedures are followed as written. The Clerk had previously provided Councillors with a summary of the

experience and competence of the appointed Internal Auditor (minutes reference 501/07, December 2007).

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

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

In simple terms Councillors should ask themselves:

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

340/12 Annual Review of Assets and Insurance Cover

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

341/12 Budget & Precept 13/14

The Clerk has prepared a preliminary budget & precept forecast for 13/14 and a Finance Committee meeting took place on 14th November 2012. Councillors have been provided with a copy of the minutes and the supporting documentation. The Council has tight control over its costs and will seek a 0% increase in precept but until HDC reveal the Tax Base figure it is impossible to make decisions. Councillors were asked to approve the Finance Committee's proposals, agree the budget in principle and defer precept setting to the January Council meeting. Agreed by all. **C/F**

342/12 Review of Kite & Thomas Rent

Every 3 years the Council is allowed to review the rent charged to Kite & Thomas for using the Council's land on London Road. The current charge is £7000pa and this has remained unchanged since December 2006 (a review in 2009 agreed not to increase the rent). If the Council were to seek a District Valuers report the cost would wipe out any increase in income. The Council does need to get value for money from public property. It was proposed that the Clerk speak to Kite & Thomas and propose a modest rent increase of £200pa (<3%). Agreed by all. **KD C/F**

343/12 Correspondence

1. ACCT – are proposing that the Council move into the Wardens old office asap for the same rental charge as currently. The lease on the existing office is due for review in February 2013. Consideration needs to be given to the cost & practicality of moving the phone/broadband and the Clerk would like to 'clear out' the filing cabinets to see how much space the Council really needs. Cllr Norton

still has a 4 drawer filing cabinet full of Council paperwork. It is not possible to share an office with the Wardens as there is insufficient space and there are security considerations. It was agreed that the Clerk & Chairman talk to ACCT.

KD C/F

2. Consider a request for a grant towards providing facilities for the Friday night 15+ youth club sessions. The Youth Club funds the 10-14 youth club sessions but there is currently no provision for the 15+ age group. The cost would be maximum £30 per session. There is £345 left in the 2012/13 grants budget. It was agreed that £300 be awarded specifically for the 15+ age group sessions.

344/12 Income

None

345/12 Expenditure

		Cheque no.	
Mark Adsett	Gardeners contract payment	£483.33	1355
	Removal of hanging baskets	£25	1363
Mrs K. Dare	Clerks expenses (home & telephone)	£17	
	Travel	£7.68	
	Materials for fence repairs/mesh area	£146.45	
	Total	£171.13	1356
WSSC	Salary and on costs (November)	£844.93	1357
Plusnet	Broadband	£17.99	DD
Broker Network Ltd	Annual insurance	£2057.89	1358
Information Commissioner	data protection	£35	1359
SLCC	Clerks General Power of Competence Submission for marking	£20	1360
S. Fenn	Responder expenses	£31.20	1361
HDC	litter & dog bin emptying	£286.00	1362

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

346/12 MEETINGS

Cllr Gichovi-Elias & the Clerk had attended the Wardens Steering Group meeting on 4th December.

347/12 MINOR MATTERS RAISED BY COUNCILLORS

1. Is it possible to have the Wardens report as an Appendix to the Minutes? Agreed by all, Clerk to arrange starting 2013.
2. Potholes at 9 Hillcrest Drive, also at the junction of Hillcrest Close/Hillcrest Drive. Clerk to report to WSCC Highways. **KD D**
3. Councillors expressed concern that Highways matters were being reported to WSCC but no action was being taken. Every Council meeting Highways matters are raised and little or no progress has been made. For example, the poor state of the Rectory Lane footpath was reported to WSCC over 12 months ago, there had been 3 accidents and still the repairs had not been made. It was agreed that the Clerk write to WSCC to express dissatisfaction at the service from Highways. **KD D**

The next meeting will be held at **7.45pm on Thursday 3rd January 2013 at Ashington School, Foster Lane.**

The Clerk has prepared a list of meeting dates for 2013 and circulated by email. Councillors were asked to approve. Agreed by all.

The Chairman thanked those present for their support over the past 12 months.

The meeting finished at 8.55pm

Signed.....

Date.....