



Ashington Parish Council

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 2nd March 2017 at 7.45 p.m. in the School Hall at Ashington First School, Foster Lane, Ashington.

Present: Councillors J Stillwell (Chairman), S. Ball, T. Currell, L. di Castiglione, T. Kearney, R. Strudwick, K. Wood.
Parish Clerk: Celia Price

County Councillor: Philip Circus
District Councillors: David Jenkins, John Blackall

6 members of the public

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

S Cox, G MacPherson, N Spiers, M Woolley (Councillors), J Jeffrey (Neighbourhood Warden)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Minutes of the Annual Assembly held on the 3rd March 2016 were approved at the Parish Council meeting held on 7th April 2016 as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF ASHINGTON PARISH COUNCIL ON THE YEAR 2016/17

The Financial Year of the Parish Council runs from April 1st each year, through to the following March 31st, and it is the duty of the Chairman at this time to report to you on the activities and finances of your Parish Council (PC) for the year just ended.

Whilst there have been no major building schemes or drastic challenges this year for the Parish Council, it has nonetheless been a busy year for us.

I guess the most disappointing news is that for the first time in seven years, we have had to make a slight increase to the Precept. This has been due to Central Government cutting funds to local councils, thereby causing a reduction of funds to Ashington Parish Council. On the plus side, Councillors have again voted unanimously, not to draw any allowances and have claimed only very modest expenses for costs incurred on Council business. The Wardens and Youth Worker account for around half our annual spend; maintaining public open spaces, hanging baskets and play areas around a quarter; Public

Works Loan for the Community Centre around 8% and the remaining on administration, grants and other necessary costs. We have received further payments from S&F Bank in Iceland. All capital money has been returned, we are now just receiving outstanding interest as and when it becomes available. The Budget is of course, available from the Clerk on request.

We have at last received the long awaited speed control sign for Billingshurst Road, and Grit Bins and Bollards have now been installed in strategic places.

The hanging baskets were particularly lovely this year and we received many positive comments about them.

A new Defibrillator has been installed at the Community Centre and we had a very well supported Annual Litter Pick Day.

We continue to work with WSCC and Opus to find a solution for the flooding at Mill Lane Culvert.

The Parish website, Facebook page and notice boards are regularly updated in order to keep Parishioners informed of Parish Council Activities.

We have just about completed a review of the Youth Partnership with the Parish Church and have voted to keep this in place for the foreseeable future.

Following a review of Wardens, we recruited a new Warden, Bryony, who started last week, having relinquished her post as a PCSO. Although both Wardens work on a part-time basis, the shift patterns have been worked to give us cover over six days on some weeks. From next month, Bryony will be available at Council meetings to give their monthly report and answer questions. The Wardens will continue to support Clubs for elderly and vulnerable members of our community, working with Youth, the minibus and general day to day care of our community.

Monthly reports from both the Youth Worker and Wardens are available on our website.

We have seen the removal of two eyesores this year with the redevelopment of Hoots House and Four Acres sites, although there was some upheaval during construction, peace has now pretty much been restored.

The Neighbourhood Plan is now well underway thanks to the extremely hard work of Councillor Currell and the Neighbourhood Plan Clerk. They have attended training and seminars, and have now prepared and distributed the Young People's Survey. The full Neighbourhood Plan Survey has also been delivered to all homes in Ashington. Completed surveys should be returned by 20th March.

The Neighbourhood Plan Clerk attended the Appeal for the building plan on land south of Ashington House on behalf of the Parish council, this plan was withdrawn at the appeal stage. The Neighbourhood Plan Clerk is also due to attend and speak for the Parish Council at the Chanctonbury Nurseries Inquiry starting later this month.

The Emergency Plan was reviewed and updated this year by Councillor Spiers and Councillor Ball in conjunction with Tony Skelding, The Emergency Planning Officer for HDC and our Warden Jayne Jeffries.

Our Parish Clerk has been on several training courses and has recently passed all five modules of her ILCA exam. She has been vigilant in seeking answers to local problems and queries and I would like to thank her for her diligent work throughout the year.

Several Councillors have attended training courses throughout the year, Councillor Ball attended a Counter-Terrorism Workshop, Councillor Spiers and myself attended Chairmanship training and almost the entire Council attended training on Code of Conduct. My apologies if I have missed out any other training undertaken by Councillors during the year.

Although I have been a Parish Councillor here in Ashington for over thirty years, this has been my first year as Chair. To my greatest surprise, I have enjoyed it immensely; and hope I have not made too many glaring errors!

Finally and most importantly, I would like to thank all Parish Councillors for the time they have devoted on a voluntary basis to ensure that our village remains a lovely place to live.

REPORT FROM DISTRICT & COUNTY COUNCILLORS

Councillor Circus and Councillor Blackall joined the meeting and had nothing new to report.

PUBLIC ADJOURNEMENT

There were no comments or questions from members of the Public.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 7:58pm

Signed Dated