

ASH-CUM-RIDLEY PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 16 November 2023 at Hodsoll Street
& Ridley Village Hall, Hodsoll Street, TN15 7LE commencing at 7.45pm

Present: Cllr S Fishenden – Chairman
Cllr M Aspinall
Cllr R Brammer – Vice Chairman
Cllr C Clark
Cllr J Clucas
Cllr F Cottee
Cllr C Gorton
Cllr S Hobbs
Cllr M Howie
Cllr M Manley
Cllr V Ngwenya
Cllr G Pender

In attendance: Alison de Jager – Parish Clerk
Karen Law – Deputy Clerk
Cllr D Brazier – Kent County Council
Cllr Penny Cole – Sevenoaks District Council
Cllr C Price – Chairman, Meopham Parish Council
1 Member of the public

Cllr S Fishenden introduced Cllr Cheryl Price, Chairman of Meopham Parish Council.

8737/23 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr A Jauch and Cllr P Kirtley (holiday) and Cllr I MacLeod (family commitment). The apologies and reasons for absence were accepted. PROPOSED: Cllr R Brammer SECONDED: Cllr M Manley and AGREED.

8738/23 Declarations of Interest

a. Cllr C Gorton declared an interest in item 6.3 as she is a member of NAG Social.

8739/23 Minutes

It was RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 19 October 2023 be approved and signed as a true record. PROPOSED: Cllr M Manley SECONDED: Cllr C Gorton and AGREED.

The meeting was suspended at 7.46pm

- **to receive reports from the County Councillor, District Councillor and Chairman of Meopham Parish Council.**
- **Public Session.**

The reports from the above are attached to these minutes.

The meeting reconvened at 8.05pm.

8740/23 Clerk's Report

- a. The Clerk's Report was RECEIVED. A copy is attached to these minutes.

8741/23 Council Administration

- a. Burial Ground Committee – following discussion, it was AGREED that during the growing season (March to October) the Clerk and/or the Assistant Clerk will visit the Burial Ground weekly on a specified day and time and any interested Councillors are invited to meet at the Burial Ground. For the remaining months, the visits will be arranged on a monthly basis.

8742/23 Finance

- a. Current Financial Position – the Deputy Clerk advised members that the Parish Council surplus was sitting at just over £63,000 which is approximately 8½ times running costs. The wages were not included in these reports. General Reserves are below the 3 month running costs. Notice of the pay increase from NALC has been received. Recent heavy rainfall has highlighted a couple of leaks in the sports centre which will need to be replaced. The holiday scheme run in the half-term was better attended. Some neighbourhoods were leafleted and the primary school sent a notification to parents. A refund was received from KALC in relation to training that was cancelled.
- b. Approval of payments – Cllr C Gorton PROPOSED that the payments made from 22 September up to 10 November 2023 are APPROVED. SECONDED: Cllr M Manley and AGREED.
- c. NAG Social – Cllr M Manley PROPOSED that a grant in the amount of £400.00 is awarded to NAG Social. SECONDED: Cllr S Hobbs and AGREED.
- d. Tree Work – Cllr J Clucas PROPOSED that the quotation from NPC Trees in the amount of £420.00 is accepted. SECONDED: Cllr R Brammer and AGREED.

8743/23 Planning

- a. Applications
No applications at the time of the Agenda.
- b. Planning Applications Working Group - The notes of the Planning Applications Working Group meeting of 01 November 2023 were NOTED.

8744/23 Ash Green Sports Centre

- a. Current Financial Position – The Deputy Clerk advised that the Sports Centre was showing a surplus of £8,610, less the grant from Hartley Parish Council, the surplus is £4,610 and without wages, after taking wages into account the surplus is £610, which is a big shift from a deficit of £9,650 last year. One of the treadmills needs to be replaced. The charge for the hosting of the website should be reversed as it is a community project. In answer to a question the Deputy Clerk confirmed that ⅓ of the budget is administrative costs.
- b. Approval of payments – Cllr M Manley PROPOSED that the payments made from 07 October to 10 November 2023 are APPROVED. SECONDED: Cllr M Aspinall and AGREED
- c. Sports Centre Management Committee Update – A response from Gravesham Leisure Trust is still awaited and will be chased. The software continues to be challenging. Racket use increased in October, classes remain popular, any new classes are introduced on a trial basis and if they do not cover costs, are withdrawn.

8745/23 Northfield Management Committee

- a. It was NOTED that the next meeting of the Northfield Management Committee will be held on 16 January 2023.

8746/23 Community and Environment

- a. **KALC Community Award** – Cllr J Clucas PROPOSED that the Parish Council adopts the KALC Community Award Scheme for the year 2024. SECONDED: Cllr R Brammer and AGREED.
- b. **KALC Nominations** – Cllr R Brammer PROPOSED that Michael Brown and Terry Vivian are nominated to receive the 2024 Award. SECONDED: Cllr J Clucas and AGREED.
- c. **UK Shared Prosperity Fund** – Cllr S Fishenden PROPOSED that any ideas for an application to this fund should be emailed to the Clerk and any relevant decisions delegated to the Clerk. This will include consulting with the Village Association. SECONDED: Cllr F Cottee and AGREED.
- d. **Hedgehog Highways Project** – Cllr R Brammer PROPOSED that an article is placed in the next Bulletin. AGREED.

8747/23 Items for Information Only

- a. Cllr C Clark advised that the next film to be held at Ash Village Hall is Barbie.
- b. Cllr C Gorton advised that NAG Social Christmas events commence on 1 December with the Santa parade and switching on of the Christmas lights at the shopping centre.
- c. Cllr J Clucas advised that she is still experiencing problems with the Parish Council email address. Cllr J Clucas, Cllr S Fishenden and Sharon Brine discussed producing a list of local organisations contact details to be included on the websites of the Parish Council and Village Association, any Councillors involved in such organisations were asked to forward contact details to the Clerk.
- d. Cllr G Pender advised that Christmas events were being held at Ash Church during December.
- e. Cllr M Howie advised that Carols at Ridley will be held on 10 December 2023.
- f. Cllr V Ngwenya asked if the flooding of the link car park at the shopping centre could be reported to the management company.
- g. Cllr M Aspinall reported that a significant amount of damage had been done by a motor vehicle being driven on the sports field at the Pavilion.
- h. Cllr F Cottee advised that the Big Breakfast is held on the first Saturday of the month. Christmas Carols will be held on the Hodsoll Street Green on 22 December 2023. A Christmas tree competition will be held on 8 December 2023. The wind quartet will be playing at this event starting at 6.00pm.
- i. Cllr R Brammer congratulated Cllr G Pender and his wife on the birth of their child. Cllr R Brammer noted that the use of nitrous oxide is now illegal.
- j. Cllr S Hobbs advised that the Co-op had done an amazing job, keeping open for residents while the refurbishment of the shop was undertaken. A letter of appreciation will be sent from the Parish Council.
- k. Cllr S Fishenden thanked members who had attended and helped with the Service of Remembrance at Ash War Memorial and the road closure for the two minutes silence.

8748/23 Progress Tracker

- a. The Progress Tracker was NOTED.

CLOSED SESSION

Pursuant to Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, that due to the confidential nature of the next item, the public and press were asked to leave the meeting. The Clerk and Deputy Clerk also left the meeting.

8748/23 Personnel Committee

- a. **Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)** – Cllr M Aspinall PROPOSED that the recommendation from the Personnel Committee to enrol the Clerk and Deputy Clerk on the LGPS open primary rate of 25.9% is APPROVED. SECONDED: Cllr J Clucas and UNANIMOUSLY AGREED.
- b. **Assistant Clerk** – Cllr R Brammer PROPOSED that the temporary contract for the Assistant Clerk is made a permanent role and offered to the current Assistant Clerk. SECONDED: Cllr M Manley and UNANIMOUSLY AGREED.

The meeting closed at 9.08pm

Signed:
Chairman

Date:

ASH-CUM-RIDLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Agenda Item: **3 – Full Council (16 November 2023)**

Report Title: **County and District Councillors Reports**

COUNTY COUNCILLOR

Cllr Brazier advised that closing of some of the household waste and recycling centres due to savings cuts has been postponed. About half a dozen reports of concerns regarding Foxtail barley seeds that are left after the verges have been cut have been received. The spear like seeds can attach to animals paws, ears and skin. Unfortunately, the cut grass cannot be collected due the cost involved. Cllr Brazier has been trying for some time to get some service to emulate the 423 bus service to Dartford. Dartford Borough Council has created a circuit that reuses much of the 423 route for the villages in Dartford. A senior public officer and the owner of the GoCoach have discussed an amendment to the timetable to include New Ash Green once or twice daily. Cllr Brazier will report on the outcome at the next meeting.

DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORT

Cllr Penny Cole reported that the Local Plan consultation is out at the moment with a requirement to build 10,500 houses by 2040, equating to 712 a year up from the current 300. The consultation will give some choices, for example, the proposed Garden Village at Pedham Place would provide the full housing allocation and be home to WASPS Rugby Club. Events have been arranged for members of the public to meet with Officers and ask any questions. The New Ash Green Shopping Centre and the Orpins site have been included along with the first property on Church Road that is in Hartley, Grosvenor.

MEOPHAM PARISH COUNCIL CHAIRMAN

The Chairman of Meopham Parish Council, Cheryl Price thanked the Chairman for inviting her to attend the meeting. She advised that Meopham Parish Council have the youngest Parish Council Officer Team, consisting of the Parish Clerk and two assistants. The Clerk to Ash-cum-Ridley Parish Council has been mentoring one of the assistants and Mrs Price presented her with a gift.

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**ASH-CUM-RIDLEY PARISH COUNCIL
REPORT TO PARISH COUNCIL MEETING OF
16 November 2023**

COMMUNITY WARDEN CONSULTATION - KCC have advised that the analysis of the responses is yet to be determined, and a decision taken. To assist with the budget setting of the Parish Council, we have been advised that the salary and on costs for the position of Community Warden would be estimated at £35,000. Any sponsorship arrangement would have to be defined and is not being offered at this time, however, KCC welcome continuing the discussion.

NORTHFIELD –

- **Tree planting** – tree planting dates have been set for 14 and 21 December 2023 and if necessary 3 and 4 January 2024.
- **Ancient Woodland Coppice** – the coppicing of New House Shaw has been agreed and an article placed in the Bulletin to make residents aware of the process.

SEVENOAKS DISTRICT COUNCIL LOCAL PLAN 2040 UPDATE – Sevenoaks District is 143 square miles and comprises of 93% Greenbelt, 60% Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, a population of 120,000, 1,700 listed buildings, 41 conservation areas, 56 settlements and 8 neighbouring authorities. The emerging Local Plan has identified the following development needs:

- Housing – 712 units per year
- Employment 5.7ha
- Gypsy & Traveller – 43 pitches
- Retain retail

Key themes are

- Health and well-being
- Climate change
- Positive design

The settlement first approach has been carried out promoting the efficient use of land/mixed use, optimising density and reuse of brownfield land. The new consultation has focused on the rest of the District with Green Belt release only in exceptional circumstances.

Ongoing discussions continue with neighbouring authorities under the Duty to Co-operate.

The Local Development Scheme timetable is:

Regulation 18 consultation – this autumn (November 2023 – 11 January 2024)

Regulation 19 publication – spring 2024

Submission – summer 2024

Examination – 2024/25

Ash-cum-Ridley Parish Council's Neighbourhood Plan, once adopted, becomes part of Local Planning Authority's development plan, which is a statutory plan against which planning applications will be judged.

ASSET OF COMMUNITY VALUE – THE WHITE SWAN

On 23 October 2023 Sevenoaks District Council advised that the owner of the White Swan had advised of their intention to dispose of the property. In line with the Community Right to Bid, a 6 week moratorium on the sale commenced and was due to end on 01 December 2023.

On 30 October 2023, Sevenoaks District Council advised that there was no longer a moratorium on the sale of the White Swan as it was exempted from the regulations as 'the sale of land on which a business is carried on, together with sale of that business as a going concern.' The owner has advised that this is the case and therefore the White Swan will go for sale on the open market.

OLIVERS MILL MIRROR – Cllr G Pender kindly fixed the traffic safety mirror at the Olivers Mill bus stop.

WAR MEMORIAL CLEANING – When looking for quotes to clean the war memorial, a local businessman, offered to clean it free of charge and treat it with an algae repellent.

MEETING WITH LAT – Mr Phil Whittall, Estates Director of Leigh Academies Trust requested a meeting to discuss the Dual Use Agreement between the school and Ash Green Sports Centre. A meeting was held on 01 November 2023, with Cllr S Fishenden, Cllr M Manley and the Clerk to establish the existing shared use of the site, communications and financial arrangements.

YOUTH CENTRE CLEARED – The Trustees of the Village Trust requested that all youth equipment stored in the building is removed. Equipment was donated where possible and some was donated to the Oxfam Charity shop. A skip was hired for the removal of the remainder.

LUNCH CLUB – A recent food hygiene inspection of the Thursday lunch provision awarded a 5 – very good, which is the highest rating, reflecting the high standards of the Cook.

BULLETIN – The third edition has been produced and delivered. There were a few problems regarding the delivery and these have been addressed.

Ash-cum-Ridley Parish Council

Agenda Item: November 2023

UK Shared Prosperity Funding

Background :

The aims of this fund are to build pride in places, increase life chances and levelling up:

- Boost productivity
- Spread opportunities
- Restore a sense of community
- Empower local leaders and communities
- Based on local needs and opportunities.

Funding:

Sevenoaks District has invited Parish Councils to bid up to £4,000 for capital projects for Town Centre improvements such as:

- Small public realm charges
- Benches/tables/flowers or planters
- Outside seating areas
- Paint work to lamp-posts or barriers
- Paved areas
- Improving green spaces/parklets
- Signage or wayfinding
- Trees
- Sculptures
- Lighting

Any ideas must be submitted by Thursday 30 November 2023 – time to organise projects and obtain quotes can be done at a later date and funds will be available in the 2024/25 financial year.

Alison de Jager
Parish Clerk