

NEW ASH GREEN FOCUS GROUP

Minutes of a meeting of the New Ash Green Focus Group held virtually via Zoom on Monday 16 January 2023 commencing at 4.00pm.

Present: Mr C Clark – New Ash Green Village Association and Chapel Wood Residents Society
Mrs L Bolton – Penenden Residents Society
Cllr Mrs Brammer – Ash-cum-Ridley Parish Council
Miss L Manston – Neighbourhood Watch
Mr R Morgan – Westfield Residents Society
Ms L Moylan – Over Minnis Residents Society
PCSO A Ostridge – Kent Police
Sgt K Savill – Kent Police
Miss K Webb – Sevenoaks District Council Community Safety Unit

In Attendance: Mrs A de Jager – Parish Clerk,

In the absence of the Chairman of the Parish Council, Mr C Clark chaired the meeting

1. **Apologies for Absence and Introductions**

Cllr M Brown – Chairman, Ash-cum-Ridley Parish Council, Miss S Brine, New Ash Green Village Association, Mrs P Connell, Manor Forstal Residents Society, Mr D Joel, Capelands Residents Society, Mrs J West, Community Warden.

2. **Minutes/Actions from of the Meeting of 10 October 2022**

The minutes were received and noted.

3. **Police Update**

PCSO A Ostridge advised that anti-social behaviour in The Row has reduced. A couple of reports have been received of gas cannisters in the car parks. Police were advised of reports of a vehicle waiting in carparks for school buses returning to the village and selling gas cannisters to students. An incident had occurred an hour before this meeting on Over Minnis. It was also NOTED that a number of cannisters had been collected in litter picks in the parking area in front of Ash Croft Court and in Ayelands. On 23 December 2022, at Longfield Station, a queue of about 30 young people were waiting to purchase cannisters. Sgt K Savill confirmed that the CCTV has been viewed in connection with the vehicle fire in Lambardes some time ago. There have been 116 investigations since the last meeting which is approximately one per day with vehicle crime being the highest, specifically theft from vehicles.

4. **Community & Sevenoaks District Council Update and Local Concerns & Issues**

Kelly Webb advised that the Community Safety Unit (CSU) is running well and following a review by Kent Police and Kent Association of Local Councils, it was found that it is good practice to have the Police and CSU located in the same building. Daily tasking sessions continue to be held every morning, while some other CSUs liaise with Police on a weekly basis. The strategic assessment has identified seven priorities being; Violence against girls, domestic violence, stalking and harassment, substance misuse, safeguarding, antisocial behaviour and vehicle crime. This document will be a more focused approach and the draft will go to committee towards the end of February, after which the documents will be made public.

A task and finish group for New Ash Green took place in the summer with more resources being put into New Ash Green. We have seen a decrease in reports of anti-social behaviour specifically involving young people. Millwall football club have a 12 week community engagement for young people and will start after the February half-term. These will be held in Hartley and New Ash Green, although agreement from the Village Association for a venue is awaited. There will be two one hour sessions, 7 – 11 year olds and 12 – 18 year olds.

Detached youth workers continue to talk to young people about the consequences of their actions and of substance misuse. The Community Mobilisation Officer is setting up a Better Together, online hub which will give opportunities for volunteering with a community focus. Health walks continue with training sessions for Walk Leaders being provided. A camera has been installed in Lambardes based on reports to the CSU. Installation of camera in New Ash Green have to go through the District Councillors before installation.

Kelly Webb advised residents that they can access the Community Payback Service to assist with graffiti removal, litter picking, painting and church yard gardening.

Mrs J West, Community Warden sent in the following report:

Whilst the role of Community Warden has evolved over time, reflecting operational priorities and the changing nature of the communities we work within, my purpose essentially remains the same *i.e.*, to provide a proactive and visible presence... to improve residents' quality of life and promote stronger and safer communities.

Our aim to improve residents' quality of life has been evident in me supporting the elderly and vulnerable within communities to foster cohesion and wellbeing. I achieve various outcomes through working with a wide variety of partners and organisations including, I have worked to liaise with Care Navigators Imago, GP Surgery, Sevenoaks District Council, Kent Police, Alzheimer's and Dementia Support Services, Crossroads, Community Cupboard, Adult Social Care and the Community Safety Unit at Sevenoaks District Council.

Residents with specific concerns have been referred with support to the above agencies to secure support including Carer in crisis support, applying for Attendance Allowance and Blue Badge Applications, House adaptations and home supports to allow those most vulnerable to remain living independently within their own homes for as long as is possible. I have made numerous referrals and supported the local Community Cupboard to ensure those dealing with financial deprivation have the support needed to manage challenging times.

I have also supported residents reporting crime and offering reassurance and safety advice where appropriate.

The Tuesday Hub meetings in the Village Hall have involved me inviting numerous agencies to support those in attendance. Agencies attending have included Crossroads, Jubilee Medical Practise, Hi Kent Hearing, Live Well Kent, Digital Kent, Involve Kent, Community Cupboard. Recently we had a visit from Citizens Advice to deliver energy advice and we had 58 residents in attendance which was the highest number Citizens Advice had delivered to in one meeting place.

These Tuesday morning groups are a meeting place people can attend free of charge to gain support, information and encourage social interaction to avoid isolation and loneliness.

In May I am hosting a Carers/Memory Multi Agency event in the Village Hall with the support of Crossroads including a visit from the Virtual Dementia Tour Bus to offer sessions to those with a healthy brain to experience what dementia might be like. This event adds to my efforts to make the communities I support more Dementia Friendly.

It was NOTED that the community sessions run by Jackie West are well attended and provide good value for residents giving the opportunity to interact and gain advice. Cllr Mrs Brammer PROPOSED that a VOTE OF THANKS is given to Mrs West in appreciation of the work she does. SECONDED: Mr C Clark and AGREED.

5. **Agency & Resident Society Updates**

Over Minnis – it was reported that two windows on Over Minnis had been broken and that windows in the village hall were damaged at the same time. An empty property on Over Minnis had been broken into and the Housing Team from SDC and the Police have been involved, and the front door has been boarded up.

Mr Clark advised that there had been no further vandalism to street and bollard lights since the last meeting.

Westfield – before Christmas, there had been reports of car windows being broken. Residents were reminded

6. **Other Matters for Discussion**

- ASB – discussed above
A person shoplifting from the Co-op was confronted and damaged a window.
2 windows in the Village Hall were shot out with a catapult. CCTV in the shopping centre and the Co-op will be viewed.
- Graffiti – discussed above
- Parking – on-going issues with cars parked on North Ash Road. The Village Association are in discussion with Kent County Council regarding this issue which is getting worse. Road markings and double yellow lines have been requested, but these would need to be enforced by the parking enforcement team and they would need to visit early evenings. Concerns that the introduction of double yellow lines would push the parking problem onto adjacent neighbourhoods. Due to the parking on a neighbourhood, a delivery truck was unable to gain access and had to walk the delivery to the relevant property. It was confirmed that the Parish Council had submitted an application for a pedestrian crossing and had been advised that the site does not meet the requirements for a crossing.
- Youth Provision – the Parish Council will meet with the Trustees of the Youth Centre to discuss the re-introduction of the Senior Youth Club.
- Neighbourhood Watch – neighbourhood watch window stickers are available.

7. **Other Matters for Discussion**

An internet safety event will be held on 7 February 2023 at the Stag Theatre. Schools have been invited to come and see the play.

On 19 February an Access All Areas event will be held in Swanley from 11am – 3pm with 17 – 18 stalls showcasing different services for people with disabilities and carers,

8. **Date of Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting was set for 17 April 2023 at 4pm, via Zoom

The meeting closed at 5.02pm