

ASH-CUM-RIDLEY PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 28 September 2023 at Ash Village
Hall, The Street, Ash, TN15 7HB commencing at 7.45pm

- Present:
- Cllr S Fishenden – Chairman
 - Cllr M Aspinall
 - Cllr R Brammer – Vice Chairman
 - Cllr C Clark
 - Cllr J Clucas
 - Cllr C Gorton
 - Cllr S Hobbs (arrived 7.50pm)
 - Cllr M Howie (arrived 8.00pm)
 - Cllr I MacLeod
 - Cllr M Manley
 - Cllr G Pender
 - Cllr J Scott
- In attendance:
- Alison de Jager – Parish Clerk
 - Karen Law – Deputy Clerk
 - Megan Johnson-Hodges – Assistant Clerk
 - Cllr D Brazier – Kent County Council
 - Cllr M Lindop – Sevenoaks District Council
 - Cllr Penny Cole – Sevenoaks District Council
 - Cllr Perry Cole – Sevenoaks District Council
 - 1 Member of the public

8714/23 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr F Cottee, family commitment, Cllr A Jauch, holiday, Cllr P Kirtley, holiday and Cllr V Ngwenya, holiday. The apologies and reasons for absence were accepted. PROPOSED: Cllr M Manley SECONDED: Cllr C Gorton and AGREED.

8715/23 Declarations of Interest

- a. Cllrs R Brammer and M Manley declared an interest in item 7. Planning, application: 23/02626: 55 Capelands as the resident is known to them. Cllr M Aspinall declared an interest in item 8719/23€ as the Manager of the Under 9's team.

8716/23 Minutes

It was RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 20 July 2023 be approved and signed with the amendment of two typographical errors. PROPOSED: Cllr R Brammer, SECONDED: Cllr C Clark and AGREED.

The meeting was suspended at 7.47pm

- **to receive reports from the County Councillor and New Ash Green Village Association Representative**
- **Public Session.**

The reports from the above are attached to these minutes.

The meeting reconvened at 7.52 pm.

8717/23 Clerk's Report

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

8718/23 Council Administration (Cllr M Howie arrived 8pm)

- a. Cllr R Brammer PROPOSED that the following packages are set up with Hugo Fox. Ash Green Sports Centre – Bronze Package at £9.99 per month and the Silver Package for the Parish Council at a cost of £19.99 per month paid by direct debit. SECONDED: M Manley and AGREED.

8719/23 Finance

- a. Current Financial Position – The Deputy Clerk/Finance Officer took members through the reports noting that current surplus of £15,937 is slightly higher than expected but this will drop as the £7,500 grant to the Sports Centre has been paid. The 50% of the precept will be received on 29 September 2023. Members were taken through the income and expenditure reports and variances explained. With the approved expenditure for HR and the grant to Millwall, the general reserves have reduced by £5,500. The Summer Scheme was not as successful as last year. The scheme will be reduced for the October half-term and bookings will be made by email. A leaflet drop will be arranged too.
- b. Approval of payments – Cllr J Scott PROPOSED that the payments made since the last meeting, up to 22 September 2023 are APPROVED. SECONDED: Cllr M Aspinall and AGREED.
- c. Business Charge Card – Cllr M Manley PROPOSED that the limit on the Business Charge Card is increased from £500 to £1,000 for online transactions for the Parish Council and Ash Green Sports Centre in any one month. SECONDED: Cllr C Gorton and AGREED.
- d. External Audit – The external auditor's Report and Certificate for the year ended 2022-23, Section 3 of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) for the Parish Council and Ash Green Sports Centre was RECEIVED and NOTED. The notice of conclusion of audit will remain on display for 14 days in compliance with the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015.
- e. New Ash Green Junior Football Club – Cllr M Aspinall explained that the Village Association has advised that training cannot continue on the pitches throughout winter and therefore a 4G pitch at Corinthians is used.

Having declared an interest in this item Cllr M Aspinall left the room and took no further part in the discussion or decision of this item.

Cllr J Scott PROPOSED that the amount of £1,000 is granted to the New Ash Green Junior Football Club under **Section 137 of the LGA 1972**. SECONDED: Cllr M Manley and AGREED.

- f. Victim Support – Cllr R Brammer PROPOSED that £300 is granted to Victim Support under **Section 137 of the LGA 1972**. SECONDED: Cllr J Clucas FOR: 9 AGAINST: 0 ABSTENTIONS: 3

8720/23 Planning

- a. Applications
23/02626: 55 Capelands, New Ash Green, DA3 8LQ – Demolition of existing conservatory to be replaced by a single storey side extension with new rooflight. Cllr I MacLeod PROPOSED that the Parish Council does not object to this application as long as it does not conflict with local planning policy SECONDED: Cllr M Manley and AGREED.

- b. Planning Applications Working Group - The notes of the Planning Applications Working Group meetings of 02 August 2023, 16 August 2023 and 30 August 2020 were NOTED.
- c. Public Footpath SD245 – Claimed deletion and addition of part of public footpath SD245. Cllr C Clark PROPOSED that the Parish Council advises that a site inspection confirms that neither the route to be added nor the route to be deleted are usable since both are obstructed by buildings and/or fencing with no stile. The building on the route to be added is sufficiently weathered to suggest it has been in situ for many years.
There is a very clearly discernible line of an almost straight line from where SD245 enters the field across to where it leaves it. To regularise the route to follow this line seems the best solution.
The stile at the Hodsoll Street Green end of the field would be considerably improved by the addition of a second step. SECONDED: Cllr J Scott and AGREED.

8721/23 Ash Green Sports Centre

- a. Current Financial Position – the Deputy Clerk took members through the financial reports noting that the £1,113 surplus includes the £4,000 grant from Hartley Parish Council. Payment of the Parish Council grant of £7,500 will take the surplus to £8,613. The Sports Centre has had its best month, almost reaching pre-COVID numbers. Members were taken through the Income and Expenditure account, noting that an additional receptionist will be recruited to cover the remainder of the shifts currently covered by the Parish Council.
- b. Cllr M Manley reported that there had been an increase in all activities in the Centre, but that retention was a challenge. July saw the highest class attendance we have had and August the second highest and he commended the staff. The new software that has been installed is proving to be difficult to work with and is disappointing, alternative software is being considered. Swale Leisure Trust and Gravesham Community Leisure Trust have both indicated an interest in taking over the management of the Sports Centre and both have been sent a list of questions to confirm their intentions with the Centre.

8722/23 Northfield Management Committee

- a. The minutes of the meeting of 02 August 2023 were NOTED.

8723/23 Community and Environment

- a. **Act of Remembrance** – Cllr J Clucas PROPOSED that a service is held on Saturday 11 November 2023 at 10.45am at Ash War Memorial and as before, with New Ash Green Primary and Milestone Academy invited to attend.
SECONDED: Cllr S Hobbs and AGREED. Cllr R Brammer PROPOSED that a Wreath is purchased and the cost of the wreath and donation is increased to £100.00 SECONDED: Cllr J Scott and AGREED.
- b. **Hodsoll Street Recreation Ground** – This item was deferred to the October 2023 meeting to allow the member for Hodsoll Street to be present.
- c. **Hodsoll Street Play Area** – the RoSPA safety inspection report was RECEIVED and the necessary repairs will be carried out.
- d. **D-Day 80** – This item was deferred to the October meeting to allow members to give consideration to the email from the Pageantmaster (sent under separate cover).
- e. **Highways** – Following discussion, Cllr R Brammer PROPOSED the request from Sevenoaks District Councillor L Manston to set up a Lorry Watch on South Ash Road/Ash Lane is not progressed. SECONDED: Cllr C Gorton and AGREED.

- f. **Northfield** – Cllr S Fishenden PROPOSED that the request received from the New Ash Green Football Club is deferred to the Northfield Management Committee for decision. **SECONDED:** Cllr M Manley and **AGREED**.

8724/23 Items for Information Only

- a. Cllr S Hobbs reported that the traffic mirror at the Olivers Mill bus stop has dropped and needs to be re-fixed.
- b. Cllr C Clark advised that the next film will be held on 18 October 2023 at Ash Village Hall.
- c. Cllr C Gorton requested that the Parish Council looks into providing a waste bin at the bench outside the Doctors Surgery on Meadow Lane.
- d. Cllr J Clucas reported that 3 large canisters of nitrous oxide littered Over Minnis. Difficulties with the Dart-charge online system continue.
The planning application for Ash House has been withdrawn.
- e. The draft submission of the Community Warden Consultation has been circulated to members by email and if there are any comments or suggested amendments, please email the clerk by 4pm on 02 October 2023.
- f. Councillor email addresses – all members were asked to send email confirmation that their Councillor email addresses are set up and working without problems to the Clerk. It was also NOTED that the deputyclerk@ashcumridley-pc.gov.uk will not be used, and all mail for the Deputy Clerk can be sent to the enquiries mailbox.

8725/23 Progress Tracker

- a. The Progress Tracker was NOTED.

The meeting closed at 9.15pm

Signed:
Chairman

Date:

**ASH-CUM-RIDLEY PARISH COUNCIL
REPORT TO PARISH COUNCIL MEETING OF
28 September 2023**

Bulletin – Two volunteer helpers for the Thursday Lunch Club and a volunteer driver have been recruited through the adverts in the Bulletin. I have received one request for an organisation to be added to the Community Directory. The next edition of the Bulletin will be published and delivered by the end of October. Please forward any articles to me.

Highways – A date will be set for a meeting of the Highways Working Group to start work on the Highways Improvement Plan (HIP).

Planning – Following an enquiry, Sevenoaks District Council have confirmed that neighbour consultations are sent out for all applications, but having reviewed their GDPR policies, they no longer publish the addresses of the consultees.

Neighbourhood Plan – A date will be set for a meeting of the Working Group.

Thursday Lunch Provision – To note that the Cook has been on annual leave and no lunch was held on 21 September 2023.

Training – Sevenoaks District Council Code of Conduct Training – for those who were unable to attend the training on Thursday 21 September 2023, I have link to the recording, please email me.

Recognition of Former Chairman – The Village Association has given permission for a bench to be installed on the Meadow. Quotes for the bench and plaque will be sought.

Agenda Item: September 2023

Websites

Background:

The Parish Council and Ash Green Sports Centre websites are currently hosted free of charge by Hugo Fox as part of their Community Engagement Program.

After many years, due to increasing costs they have transitioned to a paid subscription model, restructuring their pricing plans to align with services and features that they offer, effective 04 October 2023.

The three options are listed below:

	BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD
	£9.99 +VAT per month	£19.99 +VAT Per Month	£29.99 +VAT Per Month
Website Toolkit	✓	✓	✓
Web Accessibility Compliance	✓	✓	✓
Hosting	✓	✓	✓
SSL Certificate	✓	✓	✓
Marketing Toolkit (post jobs, events, offers & news)	✓	✓	✓
Email Alerts	✓	✓	✓
Google Toolkit Support (search box, analytics)	✓	✓	✓
Social Media Integration	✓	✓	✓
Use of Own Domain Name	✓	✓	✓
HugoFox Directory Entry	✓	✓	✓
Email Support	✓	✓	✓
Basic SEO	✓	✓	✓
Telephone Support		✓	✓
Membership Area		✓	✓
Planning Tracker (for councils)		✓	✓
Full SEO			✓
One On One Training			✓
Full Support			✓
Complete Website Build (Optional £399+VAT Setup)			✓

General enquires have been made with a view to having a new website produced with companies that meet Parish Council requirements for accessibility. This would

be in the region of £2,500 including the first year's hosting. Second year hosting would be £225.00 plus £82.50 domain registration and annual fee.

Recommendation:

To subscribe to the Silver Package for the Parish Council at a cost of £19.99 plus VAT per month. Annual cost £239.88 plus VAT

To subscribe to the Bronze package for Ash Green Sports Centre at a cost of £9.99 plus VAT per month. Annual cost £119.88 plus VAT.

Alison de Jager
Parish Clerk

Agenda Item: September 2023

Lorry Watch

Background:

Lorry Watch is a scheme run by local parish or town councils. Community volunteers record details of lorries that have been identified using unsuitable roads or not sticking to the limits and restrictions.

Once the information is collected, KCC will contact the company to ask them the purpose of their journey and why they are using restricted roads. KCC will remind the company they have to adhere to traffic restrictions and to remain on the strategic network where possible. A record of the incident will be recorded so any specific trends can be identified.

Setting up a Lorry Watch

Any parish or town council can set up a Lorry Watch.

1. Identify a location where there is a known concern with regular lorry usage on unsuitable roads.
2. You need at least 2 volunteers for your Lorry Watch team. They must be aged 18 or over.
3. Discuss the proposal as an entire local council to ensure support from all. The council will be the responsible party for the scheme and the main point of contact.
4. Email freight@kent.gov.uk or use [our online reporting tool](#) and select "Lorry Watch - request a Lorry Watch" to discuss the idea. If we agree a Lorry Watch could be beneficial, we will confirm the requirements of the scheme and provide the necessary equipment, safety information and instructions about how the scheme works.
5. Reports should be sent to our freight team, who will contact the relevant companies. Company names must be recorded to enable us to do this.

It is important to remember that vehicles may be accessing an area in line with the traffic regulation order for valid reasons such as delivering to properties or carrying out necessary maintenance works.

Current status:

The Parish Council has not received any complaints or concerns regarding lorries on Ash Road, Ash Lane or South Ash Road.

Alison de Jager
Parish Clerk

Agenda Item: September 2023

Community Warden Consultation – Draft Response

Ash-cum-Ridley Parish Council appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback on the role of Community Warden and to share our experience of the contributions made in fulfilling this essential role in our community.

In our experience, the responsibilities of the Community Warden have evolved to meet the needs of our communities as other services have been reduced or removed.

The core purpose of the role, maintaining a proactive and visible presence, working with the Police has been expanded to include working to enhance residents' quality of life, providing support in the form of community groups focusing on various needs.

In addition to the usual duties, our Warden strives to improve the quality of life for residents, particularly focusing on supporting the elderly and vulnerable members of our community, referring residents to appropriate agencies.

The most beneficial initiatives set up by our Warden are the community groups set up, meeting monthly, New Ash Green Community Hub, Carers/Memory Café, Little Legs Community Hub, Simply Singing and the Social Meeting Place. All groups are well attended and provide a platform for residents to access various agencies and services at no cost, such as Crossroads, Jubilee Medical Practice, Hi Kent Hearing, Live Well Kent, Digital Kent, and Involve Kent. These activities provide essential support, social interaction to combat isolation and loneliness.

It is difficult to see how the proposal not to change the service's remit and objectives will be achieved with the proposed reduction in staffing. Local knowledge and support will be lost should the model move to reactive service.

Should the Warden Service be withdrawn from our area, it would be impossible for other agencies to such as GP, Adult Social Services and Police/Community Safety Units to pick up this work as they are over-stretched and have difficulty dealing with their current workloads.

A possible solution that we would like to put forward, would be for local Parish Councils in an area to group together, to sponsor a Warden. It would be appreciated if this could be explored and the costs of the provision of a Warden (including all HR related costs, uniform and travel costs) could be made available.

In closing, the Parish Council recognises that the Warden servicing our area goes above and beyond the requirements of the position.

Alison de Jager
Parish Clerk