

NEW ASH GREEN FOCUS GROUP

Minutes of a meeting of the New Ash Green Focus Group held virtually via Zoom on Monday 10 July 2023 commencing at 4.00pm.

Present:

- Cllr S Fishenden – Ash-cum-Ridley Parish
- Miss S Brine – New Ash Green Village Association
- Mr C Clark – Chapel Wood Residents Society
- Mr M Lindop – Sevenoaks District Council
- Cllr L Manston – Sevenoaks District Council
- Ms L Moylan – Over Minnis Residents Society
- Sgt K Savill – Kent Police
- R Smith – Foxbury Residents Society
- Miss K Webb – Sevenoaks District Council Community Safety Unit
- Mrs J West – Community Warden

In Attendance: Mrs A de Jager – Parish Clerk,

1. **Apologies for Absence and Introductions**

Cllr Mrs Brammer – Ash-cum-Ridley Parish Council and Mrs L Bolton – Penenden Residents Society

2. **Minutes/Actions from of the Meeting of 17 April 2023**

The minutes were received and noted.

3. **Update from meeting with Police, CSU and Residents Societies**

The meeting was useful, although representation from the Residents Societies was low with nine out of twenty-four attending. The issues raised were fairly predictable, with anti-social behaviour (ASB) being the main focus. Attendees were reminded to keep reporting incidents to the Police and Sevenoaks District Council Community Safety Unit. Most of the locations of ASB were known to the CSU. PC Gareth Mahoney was introduced and 3 to 4 actions were taken around reporting. It was suggested that a 'tree' is produced reflecting where to report different issues. Ms K Webb will produce an article for the VA newsletter. The Police found the meeting helpful and have a better understanding of the village and the village structure and the location of the VA office.

4. **Police Update**

Sgt Savill advised that the meeting with the Residents Societies highlighted the blights of car parking and the use of nitrous oxide, with some new locations identified, however, actions are limited by legislation, and discussions are taking place to establish what action can be taken. The resulting litter of nitrous oxide cannisters has become a problem with 16 used cannisters collected in one day from Foxbury. Millfield and Capelands also have the same problems with the cannisters being left lying around. Theft from outbuildings appears to be the most persistent crime in the area. Cllr L Manston asked if the car thefts reported on social media had been reported to the Police. Cllr L Manston asked about an assault on a Co-op staff member. This was confirmed and that there were some beat officers in the vicinity who were able to respond immediately, the vehicle used was indexed and a prosecution is expected. With regard to the theft of vehicles, the increase has been in keyless vehicles, which are easy targets for thieves using transmitters. A resident

had reported use of nitrous oxide at the Pavilion on Friday evening and that staff were aware but advised that they could not do anything. This location has not been reported before and more information will be sought and passed on to the CSU.

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

Mrs West advised that she had also attended the Residents Society meeting. Mrs West continues to support local people with a visible presence, making home visits or meeting in a neutral place. Partnership working continues with social services, trading standards, Imago and Age UK. The second Social Meeting Place at the Pavilion has been held from 12.30 – 2.30pm, this is to tackle social isolation and pool and board games are available.

Mrs West arranged a dementia event with Crossroads on 30 May 2023 with 14 different agencies attending in a marketplace type of event. A virtual tour bus was also in attendance, simulating the disease.

Mrs West continues to feed intel to the CSU and work together with all agencies to provide stronger, safer communities.

Mrs West encouraged all residents to respond to a public consultation to shape the Warden Service in light of significant budget cuts.

Ms Webb reported that Sevenoaks District Council has hosted west Kent councils, Tonbridge & Malling and Tunbridge Wells in looking at an action plan for safety of women and girls in public spaces. This includes education for men and younger males. Warm Spaces was launched last year due to the cost of living increase and will continue this year, with the name changed to Safe Space. Ash Church has continued to hold their provision at the Youth Centre and have changed the name to The Space. Cllr L Manston advised that the primary school had provided Warm Space for parents and carers of pupils.

Ms Webb advised that the Family Fun Days would be provided in summer and that dates have been selected for New Ash Green and Hartley. Details have been sent to all primary schools in the district.

We Are With You – is a mental health counselling provision, from the NHS for young people who self-harm or have other mental health difficulties. This is a self referral service, with the condition that you are registered with a GP.

6. **Agency & Resident Society Updates**

Chapel Wood – inconsiderate parking continues on Chapel Wood neighbourhood which blocks entry to any large vehicles including emergency vehicles. The Highways Act needs to be enforced and some action taken. (R Smith left the meeting)

The Minnis – it was reported that the same behaviour that was experience last summer has started again. Miss Brine advised that the VA are looking at deployable CCTV that is solar powered to see if this would be cost effective. Miss Webb will ask a colleague to look for funding streams that may be able to assist with this. The Police and Crime Commissioner has a tactile fund of £11k for the County which will be available in October/November and would require match funding.

7. **Other Matters for Discussion**

Youth Provision – due to restructuring and staff shortages, KCC Youth Workers have not been able to carry out any detached work in the district. West Kent Extra is doing some detached work.

8. **Other Matters for Discussion**

No matters raised.

9. **Date of Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting was set for 16 October at 4pm, via Zoom. Agendas will be posted in all Residents Societies mailboxes at the VA office.

The meeting closed at 4.39pm

Signed:

Date: