

## **ASH-CUM-RIDLEY PARISH COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 21 December 2023 New Ash Green Youth & Community Centre, North Square, DA3 8JY commencing at 7.45pm**

Present: Cllr S Fishenden – Chairman  
Cllr M Aspinall  
Cllr C Clark  
Cllr J Clucas  
Cllr S Hobbs  
Cllr M Howie  
Cllr P Kirtley  
Cllr A Jauch (arrived 19.49)  
Cllr P Kirtley  
Cllr M Manley  
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 S Manamperi – Sevenoaks District Council

### **8749/23 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Cllr R Brammer and Cllr G Pender (Family commitments) Cllr F Cottee and C Gorton (Prior commitments) and Cllr V Ngwenya (holiday). The apologies and reasons for absence were accepted. PROPOSED: Cllr S Fishenden SECONDED: Cllr M Manley and AGREED. District Councillors L Manston, Penny Cole, Perry Cole and Miss Brine from the Village Association also sent their apologies.

### **8750/23 Declarations of Interest**

a. Cllr C Clark declared an interest in item 6.4 as Treasure of the Village Hall Committee as part of the contract includes Ash Village Hall. Cllr M Howie declared an interest in item 7.1 23/03375 as the applicant is known to her.

### **8751/23 Minutes**

It was RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 16 November 2023 be approved and signed as a true record. PROPOSED: Cllr J Clucas SECONDED: Cllr M Aspinall 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 7.56pm.**

### **8752/23 Clerk's Report**

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

### **8753/23 Council Administration**

- a. Highways Improvement Plan Working Group – the notes of the meeting of the Working Group held on 28 November 2023 were NOTED.
- b. Cllr P Kirtley PROPOSED that the recommendations of the Highways Improvement Plan Working Group are ACCEPTED and will be discussed at a meeting with the Highways Community Engagement Officer.

### **8754/23 Finance**

- a. Current Financial Position – the Deputy Clerk advised members that the Parish Council surplus was sitting at just over £30,853 with General Reserves of £86,614 which is approximately 6.7 times running costs. General Reserves will fall below 3 months running costs by year end. Quotes are awaited for repair to a window in the Gym. Hartley Parish Council have agreed to contribute £500 from their grant of £4,000 to support the Holiday Scheme. Members were taken through the payments and receipts.
- b. Approval of payments – Cllr M Manley PROPOSED that the payments made up to 15 December 2023 are APPROVED. SECONDED: Cllr A Jauch and AGREED.
- c. Professional Subscriptions – Cllr S Fishenden PROPOSED that the subscriptions to the SLCC for the Clerk in the amount of £416.00, SLCC for the Deputy Clerk in the amount of £220.00 plus £15.00 joining fee and the Kent County Playing Fields Association in the amount of £20.00 are AUTHORISED. SECONDED: Cllr J Clucas and AGREED.
- d. Grass-cutting Contract – Cllr M Manley PROPOSED that the quotation from Kent Grasslands Services in the amount of £11,615.00 for the 2024-25 growing season is accepted. SECONDED: Cllr I MacLeod and AGREED.
- e. Budget 2024-25. Cllr M Manley PROPOSED that the Burial Ground fees are increase as recommended by the Budget Working Group. SECONDED: Cllr M Howie and AGREED.  
The Deputy Clerk/Finance Officer took members through the budget with detailed explanations. Cllr M Manley PROPOSED that the Budget as recommended by the Budget Working Group is APPROVED. SECONDED: Cllr P Kirtley and AGREED.
- f. Precept Demand – Cllr S Fishenden PROPOSED that the recommendation from the Budget Working Group to set the precept at £201,117, being a 47.53% increase which equates to an increase of £26.10 per annum (50p per week) for a Band D property based on the 2022/23 figures is APPROVED. SECONDED: Cllr P Kirtley and AGREED.

### **8755/23 Planning**

- a. Applications  
**23/03375: Bungalow at Cader Idris Poultry Farm, Gravesend Road –** Demolition of an existing garage. New three bay garage. Cllr F Cottee PROPOSED that the Parish Council has no objection in principle to the proposed development provided that it complies with local planning regulations. However, we are concerned that the increased area and height of the proposed garage means that it is no longer clearly subservient to the main dwelling and we would prefer to see a more appropriate two-bay garage with a lower roof pitch. SECONDED: Cllr J Scott and AGREED.  
**23/03606/DETAIL: Merry Lees, Billet Hill, Ash, TN15 7HG –** Details pursuant to condition 8 (landscaping) of 23/01755. This application was NOTED.

**23/03457/DETAIL: Merry Lees, Billet Hill, Ash, TN15 7HG** – Details pursuant to condition 3 (sewage and refuse strategy) of 23/01755. This application was NOTED.

**23/03346/LDCEX: New Street Farm, New Street Road, Hodsoil Street** – Use of existing buildings and land as a B8 storage facility in relation to the business of decommissioning the Petrol Filling Stations, and in parallel with this activity, the distribution of fuel and pallets as an ancillary operation. Additionally, the use of a building as a workshop for the maintenance of owner's vehicles and equipment associated with the primary use of storage or distribution. Cllr M Howie PROPOSED that the Parish Council responds, stating that we have no evidence to contradict the statements in this application. SECONDED: Cllr M Aspinall and AGREED.

**23/03283: Lazzat, Gravesend Road, Wrotham, TN15 7JS** – Change of use from a restaurant to a dwelling house. Alterations to the existing building including the demolition of the single storey rear extension and both lateral extensions. Erection of a new rear extension and loft conversion. Cllr M Manley PROPOSED that the Parish Council does not object to this application as long as it does not conflict with local planning policy. SECONDED: Cllr J Clucas and AGREED.

**23/03284: Lazzat, Gravesend Road, Wrotham, TN15 7JS** – Demolition of existing restaurant and outbuildings and erection of 2 semi detached dwellings. Cllr M Manley PROPOSED that the Parish Council objects to this application as the design and bulk is not in keeping with the street scene in this rural setting. SECONDED: Cllr P Kirtley and AGREED.

**Public Footpath SD245(Part)** – Proposed diversion of public footpath SD245 (Part). Cllr C Clark PROPOSED that the Parish Council does not object to this diversion.

- b. Planning Applications Working Group - The notes of the Planning Applications Working Group meeting of 29 November 2023 were NOTED.
- c. Sevenoaks District Council Local Plan – Following discussion, it was AGREED that Ash-cum-Ridley's Parish Council's submission to Sevenoaks District Council's Regulation 18 (Part 2) Consultation of the Local Plan is as follows:  
**Option 2 – Pedham Place:** Pedham Place is well-located near Swanley, and the additional facilities proposed are seen as beneficial for the area. Recognising the necessity to meet housing needs, the development's scale is considered essential, especially given that some proposed edge-of-settlement developments may be undeliverable.

**Policy ST2 Housing and Mixed Use Site Allocations:**

HO21 – The Forge, Ash. Questioning the relocation plans for existing uses and potential impact on local businesses.

MX12 – New Ash Green Shopping Centre. The policy is conditionally supported, contingent on redevelopment plans aligning with the Sevenoaks Town Centre Study and safeguarding parking. Any loss of parking will exacerbate existing parking problems in the village.

HO22 – Grosvenor, Church Road, Hartley. Issues around access are a concern. Church Road is unsuitable for access and access from Caling Croft would require approval of the Caling Croft Residents Society and New Ash Green Village Association.

The lack of public transport and overcapacity in the local doctors' surgery are noted, emphasising the need for comprehensive planning in New Ash Green developments.

**Policy EMP2 – Delivering New Employment Land:**

Support is provided for the allocation of sites to meet employment needs, with specific attention to MX12 New Ash Green Village Centre and a call for confirmation of the proposed floorspace.

**Policy NAG1:**

Agreement with the focus points is expressed, emphasising the importance of retaining adequate parking provisions. Development on the edges of the Centre and internal enhancements, aligning with the considerations of the unique history and built character of the Shopping Centre are welcomed.

**Policy TLC2 – Town Centres – Hot Food Takeaways and Evening**

**Economy:** Acknowledgement is made of the policy.

**Policy GT2 – Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation:**

While supporting the policy, it is highlighted that the existing large site in Ash precludes significant increase in pitches in the Parish.

**8756/23 Ash Green Sports Centre**

- a. Current Financial Position – The Deputy Clerk/Finance Officer advised that the Sports Centre has received the remainder of the £15,000 grant. At this time last year the Sports Centre was showing a £8,000 deficit and we are now showing a £6,000 surplus. Membership income has reached the budget and January, February and March are busier months, so the budget will be exceeded. Classes remain popular. Reception shifts are now being covered by Sports Centre staff and none by Parish Council staff. A treadmill has been replaced as it was not repairable. A meeting of the Sports Centre Management Committee meeting will be held in January 2024.
- b. Approval of payments – Cllr M Manley PROPOSED that the payments made to 15 December 2023 are APPROVED. SECONDED: Cllr A Jauch and AGREED
- c. Sports Centre Management Committee Update – Cllr M Manley advised that there has been an increase in racket use. An offer for the month of January 2024, will give half price membership. The Sports Centre is a community based resource and members raised £250.00 for the Kent Air Ambulance and gave a significant donation to the Community Cupboard this month.

**8757/23 Community and Environment**

- a. **Jubilee Medical Practice Patient Participation Group** – The Clerk advised that Cllr C Gorton has applied for a Committee Vacancy. Interviews will be held mid-February 2024.

**8758/23 Items for Information Only**

- a. Cllr J Clucas reported that the Thursday Lunch Provision had had a traditional Christmas meal. Donations were collected for gifts for the Cook and volunteers.
- b. Cllr P Kirtley requested a standing Agenda item for the Almshouse Charity.
- c. Cllr I MacLeod is still experiencing problems with the Council emails.
- d. Cllr M Howie advised that Santa's sleigh crash-landed in Ridley Churchyard and children can visit him.
- e. The Clerk advised that the Village Association Amenity Committee have agreed to move a bench to the Meadow and install the commemorative bench on the Minnis. The location has to be agreed with the Village Association.
- f. Cllr S Fishenden thanked all Councillors for their support and contributions and thanked the staff.

**8769/23 Progress Tracker**

- a. The Progress Tracker was NOTED.

The meeting closed at 9.24pm

Signed: .....  
Chairman

Date: .....

## **ASH-CUM-RIDLEY PARISH COUNCIL**

Agenda Item: **3 – Full Council (21 December 2023)**

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

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### **COUNTY COUNCILLOR**

Cllr Brazier advised that the draft timetable for the C1 bus service from NAG to Bluewater should be ready on 22 December 2023.

Cllr Brazier had received complaints of speeding on Ash Road between the cross roads and Orpins. A speed check was arranged which showed a weekly amount of 10,000 vehicles travelling north and 11,000 travelling south with an average speed of 31mph.

There have been many conversations and complaints regarding the parking on North Ash Road making crossing from Punch Croft to Over Minnis dangerous. Kent Highways have agreed to install double yellow lines 10m either side of the crossing. Following the consultation and consideration of the outcome have seen that the New Ash Green Childrens Centre will be retained for the foreseeable future.

### **DISTRICT COUNCILLOR**

Cllr Lindop advised that the District Council's Local Plan, Plan 2040 is out for consultation until 11 January 2024 and page 56 advises that 70 dwellings are allocated for New Ash Green Shopping Centre. The Police are reviewing ANPR (automatic number plate recognition) camera locations and may install one in New Ash Green. The District Councillors are looking into assisting with a youth provision in New Ash Green. London Golf Club plans to host the Ryder Cup in 2031 or 2035 and will be giving a presentation to the District Council.

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## ASH-CUM-RIDLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Agenda Item: 4 – Full Council 21 December 2023

Report Title: **Clerk's Report**

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### CHRISTMAS HOURS

The Parish Office will be closed between Christmas and New Year (27<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> December 2023). The Sports Centre will be closed on 24<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup>, 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023 and 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024.

### INTERNAL AUDIT

The internal audit will take place on 09 January 2024.

### KENT HIGHWAYS SEMINAR

**Highway Improvement Plans (HIPs) Overview:** The presentation emphasised the purpose of HIPs in providing communication and collaboration between parish/town councils and Kent County Council (KCC) to identify highway improvements. The Community and Engagement Team will work with parish councils and conduct annual reviews.

HIPs Implementation - In East Kent, 149 out of 180 Parish/Town Councils have implemented HIPs, In West Kent, 139 out of 139 Parish/Town Councils have HIPs,

**Planning applications consultee:** Key points highlighted include the importance of an evidence-based approach, focusing on sustainability and safety in assessing planning applications. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) guides decisions.

**Vision Zero Strategy:** Kent's Vision Zero strategy aims to reduce or remove fatalities and serious injuries on the road network. The Safe System approach aims to remove potential hazards.

**Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure:** The presentation addressed barriers to electric vehicle adoption. A forecast showed the difference between current and required charging points, and KCC's initiatives include the Kent 600 project, Parish schemes, E-Taxi support, LEVI Pilot, and Ultra Rapid Hubs.

**Highway Tree Planting and Asset Management:** This presentation outlined KCC's highway tree planting and management strategy, including inspection frequencies, safety considerations, and a commitment to plant at least 850 trees.

**Public Transport Network & Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) Update:** An overview of the National Bus Strategy and BSIP was provided. The challenges facing the bus network, such as increased costs, driver shortages, and reduced usage, were discussed.

**LUNCH CLUB** – Jacquie and her helpers provided a delicious three course Christmas lunch on 07 December 2023, which the Clerks, volunteer driver and other volunteers attended.

### MARTYN'S LAW

The draft Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill, known as Martyn's Law, will go out for consultation ahead of introduction to Parliament. The bill will raise the security

standard for public safety following the Manchester Arena terrorist attack in 2017. Premises and events that have a capacity of 100 or more individuals will be in scope and there will be a tiered model to balance the requirements and ensure that smaller premises will be able to deliver what is required of them.

## **NORTHFIELD**

**Tree planting** – the first corporate planting day took place on Monday 04 December 2023 additional dates have been set for 14 and 21 December 2023 and if necessary 3 and 4 January 2024.

The next meeting of the Northfield Management Committee will be held on 16 January 2024.

## **UK PROSPERITY FUND UPDATE**

No further suggestions came forward to apply for this funding. The Amenity Committee of the Village Association will consider the placing of the Commemorative Bench on the Minnis and a replacement bench for the meadow applied for through this fund.

**YOUTH** – The Chairman and I met with Cllrs S Manamperi and L Manston to discuss the provision of youth work in the Parish, the history and the current situation. Cllrs Manamperi and Manston will continue to look for options for youth provision.



## **ASH-CUM-RIDLEY PARISH COUNCIL**

Agenda Item: **5 – Full Council (21 December 2023)**

Report Title: **Highways Improvement Plan (HIP)**

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Background :

At a meeting of the Highways Improvement Plan Working Group various options were discussed as per the notes of the meeting held on 28 November 2023.

Recommendations :

The Working Group recommends the following items for consideration:

- Request that the white-line markings on North Ash Road are re-instated.
- To formalise the pedestrian crossing on Ash Road at the Olivers Mill Bus Stop.
- Rural roads – to request Kent Highways adopts and maintains the passing points on rural roads due to the increase in traffic.

A meeting will be arranged with the relevant Community Engagement Officer at Kent Highways to progress the HIP.

Alison de Jager  
Parish Clerk

## ASH-CUM-RIDLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Agenda Item: **6.3 – Full Council (21 December 2023)**

Report Title: **Council Subscriptions**

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### Recommendations:

1. To give consideration to approving the subscriptions as set out below.
2. To note that the renewal of the DPO service (previously approved) from Satswana has been renewed at a cost of £180.00.

### Information:

Council is asked to give consideration to approving the following professional subscriptions:

Organisation	Annual Cost	Clerk's Recommendation
Society of Local Council Clerks membership for the Parish Clerk	£416.00	Renew membership for 2024/25
Society of Local Council Clerks membership for Deputy Clerk	£220.00 + one-off £15.00 joining fee	Commence membership for 2024/25
Kent County Playing Fields Association	£20.00	Renew membership for 2024/25
<b>TOTAL COST:</b>	<b>£671.00</b>	

The **Society of Local Council Clerks** membership offers the following benefits to the council officers:

- Access to a team of experienced, expert advisors by telephone or email for answers to professional queries
- A bi-weekly news bulletin containing the latest sector news and information
- An online professional forum to participate in open discussions with your colleagues and benefit from their experience
- Access to over 700 best practice advice documents on a range of topics
- A bi-monthly magazine called 'The Clerk' packed with advice, information and case studies
- Keep updated with the latest sector legislation and regulation at our events for a reduced rate
- Advertising councils' jobs on the SLCC website for a reduced rate
- Maintaining good practice by studying for a sector qualification or attending a training course for a reduced rate
- Networking with fellow clerks and discuss current issues at regular county based branch meetings

It is suggested that the Deputy Clerk is enrolled into membership this year, as the memberships provided by SLCC are assigned on an individual basis and so in the absence of the Clerk; the Deputy Clerk would be unable to access the useful advisory service.

Legal Reference - The Local Government Act 1972 s 143 (1) (b) states that, *'a local Authority may pay reasonable subscriptions, whether annually or otherwise, to the funds of any association of officers or members of local authorities which was so formed'*

The **Kent County Playing Fields Association** membership offers the following benefits to the council:

- Grant aid is available to parish councils and voluntary organisations towards the cost of providing children's recreational facilities only.
- Loans are available to assist with the purchase, layout and extension of playing fields and the provision, modernisation and adaptation of children's playgrounds, pavilions, clubhouses, sports halls and other recreation facilities.

**Agenda Item: 7.3 – Full Council (21 December 2023)**

Background :

The consultation period runs from 23 November 2023 to 11 January 2024. The Local Plan says what can be built and where and what should be protected up to 2040. The new Local Plan, called 'Plan 2040', proposes more business space for jobs, much needed new homes for all, retail, leisure and community facilities, while continuing to protect the rural nature of the District and the local environment.

This Local Plan consultation, called 'Regulation 18 (Part 2)' continues to focus on development opportunities in built up areas but also considers Green Belt land in the most suitable and sustainable locations, on the edge of existing settlements including land that may already have been built on.

Members are requested to read the Plan 2040 Regulation 18 Consultation document emailed to members on 27 November 2023. A hard copy is available to read at the office (it may not be removed from the office).

- Policy ST2 Page 56
- Policy EMP2 Page 102
- Vision 5 New Ash Green Page 137 & 138
- Policy TLC2 Page 141
- Policy GT2 Page 91
- Playing Pitch Strategy – rugby Page 247
- Policy SL1 Page 249