

ASH-CUM-RIDLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Notes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Thursday 25 April 2024 at
Ash Village Hall, The Street, Ash TN15 7HB, commencing at 8.00pm

PRESENT:

Cllr s Fishenden (Chairman of Ash-cum-Ridley Parish Council), Parish Councillors M Aspinall, R Brammer, C Clark, A Jauch, P Kirtley, I MacLeod, M Manley, V Ngwenya, J Scott.

Kent County Councillor D Brazier, Sevenoaks District Councillor Perry Cole.
Sgt Kevin Savill, Kent Police, Mr S Manley and Mr J Ash, New Ash Green Woodlands Group. Mrs J West – Kent Community Warden.

30 members of the public.

IN ATTENDANCE: Alison de Jager, Parish Clerk
Megan Johnson Hodges, Assistant Clerk.

Chairman's Welcome.

The Chairman, Cllr S Fishenden welcomed all attending to the 125th Annual Parish Meeting.

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Ash-cum-Ridley Parish Councillors J Clucas, F Cottee, C Gorton, S Hobbs and M Howie. Laura Trott MP, Gareth Johnson MP, Tom Tugendhat MP, Cllr M Lindop and Cllr Penny Cole, Sevenoaks District Council also sent their apologies.

2. Guest Speakers.

Sgt Kevin Savill, Kent Police

Sgt Kevin Savill advised that the roll out of the revised policing model was launched in June 2023, policing in neighbourhood territories. Our wards should have 2 Police Constables, however, the initial PC left after three months and another officer has been covering on a temporary basis. Kent Police has received a Good rating out of four categories and is above the national average for solving crime. Fraud and cybercrime result in approximately £200 billion a year, of which the majority is business fraud with about £8 million in personal fraud. My Community Voice is a tool that works both ways between residents and the police and Sgt Savill encouraged residents to sign up and receive relevant information. There is also a provision for giving information, but does not replace crime reports. These should be made on-line or by calling 101. 33 Police Forces in the United Kingdom have adopted this scheme.

The statistics indicate that anti-social behaviour has reduced slightly and other crime levels are much the same, with burglary being low. The Police are aware of the gatherings of people using Nitrous Oxide gas in car parks in New Ash Green.

Sean Manley and Jerry Ash – New Ash Green Woodlands Group

Sean Manley gave a talk on connecting people and wildlife – restoring nature. The presentation is available on the Parish website and includes information on creation of wildflower meadows and encouraging native plants. The Woodlands Group has rescued the village orchard, masterminded the village wildflower verger projects, created the village Wassail, Apple Day and Blossom Day.

Cllr Perry Cole, Deputy Leader, Sevenoaks District Council

Sevenoaks District Council celebrated its 50th anniversary on 01 April 2024. They were the first Council to introduce a unique 10 year budget cycles and achieved self-sufficiency in 2016. Sevenoaks District Council is one of the best councils in England, achieving numerous awards including the 2017 Council of the Year. 65% of the district is classified Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and 93% lies within the Green Belt.

Direct Services are responsible for the Waste Teams and the volume of waste has increased substantially with more people working from home and the increase in home deliveries. The new Bag for Life for recycled materials will be introduced during the autumn and will have plastic weights in the corners, Velcro closure and a provision for including house numbers. 130 other local authorities use similar bags for recycled waste.

Boundary reviews are carried out periodically. Currently there are 54 Councillors representing the wards of the District. The number of councillors will be reduced, currently there are three Councillors for the Ash and New Ash Green ward and three Councillors for the Hartley and Hodsoll Street ward. The draft recommendation will be ready in April 2025 and will be followed by a consultation around October 2025 with changes being effective for the elections on 6 May 2027.

Cllr P Cole gave a brief update on the consultation responses for the housing options for Plan 2040, being 37% in favour of Pedham Place, 2 % in favour of mixed housing development and 29% not supporting either of the previous options.

3. Minutes

The minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting held on 05 April 2023 were received and any actions arising from the minutes were considered at the Parish Council meeting held in May 2024.

4. Kent Association of Local Councils Community Award.

The Chairman presented the KALC Community Award to Mr Terry Vivian. Terry received the reward in recognition of a valued member of the New Ash Green community. He joined the Village Association many years ago becoming a member of the Amenity Committee and then Chairman of Hardland. He is also a valued member of the Youth & Community Centre first being co-opted to the Village Trust in 2011, a Trustee in 2012 and Chairman of the Trust in 2013. Mr Vivian thanked the Parish Council for the recognition and said that he was not expecting the award. He wanted recognition given to Dani Elisak and John Kelly for running the Youth & Community Centre with him.

The second recipient of the KALC Community Award was Mr Michael Brown, who, due to ill health was not able to attend. Cllr Fishenden noted that Mike came to the village in 1968 with his wife, Pat and started his involvement in the community joining the school PTA and became Chairman of the Governors in the early 1980s until 2020. In this time Mike contributed to many pivotal changes within the school. Mike

also sat on the Governing bodies of Longfield Comprehensive School and Milestone Academy. Mike was elected to the Parish Council in 1975, becoming Chairman in 1977 until 2023. Some of his many achievements include the collaboration with multi-agencies and residents in the establishment of Barnfield Park. Securing Northfield with Hartley Parish Council and supporting the addition of a gym at Ash Green Sports Centre. Mike's profound knowledge of the parish has always provided invaluable guidance. The Parish Council thanks Mike for his time, expertise and dedication to the community.

5. Financial Statement

The Parish Council's financial statement for the year ended 31 March 2023 was available at the meeting.

6. Charity Accounts

The Charity Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2022 were available from the Clerk.

7. Chairman's Report

A copy of the Chairman's Report is attached to these notes.

8. General Question Time

No questions

Cllr S Fishenden closed the meeting at 9.15pm and thanked all those who had attended.

Tea and coffee was served after the meeting