

ASH-CUM-RIDLEY PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 17 July 2025 at the Youth & Community Centre, North Square, New Ash Green, DA3 8JY commencing at 7.45pm.

Present: Cllr S Fishenden
Cllr M Aspinall
Cllr F Cottee
Cllr C Gorton
Cllr S Hobbs
Cllr A Jauch
Cllr P Kirtley
Cllr I Macleod
Cllr V Ngwenya

In Attendance: Alison de Jager – Clerk
Karen Law – Deputy Clerk/Finance Officer
Cllr M Fothergill – Kent County Council
Cllr M Lindop – Sevenoaks District Council
Cllr Perry Cole – Sevenoaks District Council
1 Members of the public

8984/25 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs R Brammer (housebound), C Clark (holiday), J Clucas (ill), S Glover (work), M Manley (work), G Pender (holiday) and J Scott (SDC Planning meeting). Cllr V Ngwenya PROPOSED that the apologies and reasons for absence were accepted. SECONDED: Cllr F Cottee and AGREED.
District Councillor Penny Cole also sent her apologies.

8985/25 Declarations of Members Interests and Dispensations

Cllr S Fishenden declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 7.1. application 24/01816 and 24/01817.

8986/25 Minutes

It was resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 19 June 2025 be approved and signed. PROPOSED: Cllr S Fishenden SECONDED: Cllr F Cottee and AGREED.

The meeting was adjourned at 7.47pm

- **To receive reports from the County and District Councillors**

The meeting reconvened at 8.21pm

8987/25 Clerk's Report

a. The Clerk's Report was RECEIVED and NOTED and a copy of the report is attached to these minutes.

8988/25 Council Administration

- a. **Burial Ground Regulations** – the review of the Burial Ground Regulations were carried out. Cllr S Fishenden PROPOSED that the suggested amendments are made. SECONDED: Cllr M Aspinall and AGREED.
- b. **Retention of Documents Policy** - the review of the Retention of Documents Policy was carried out Cllr S Fishenden PROPOSED that the amendments as per the Agenda

are AGREED with the additional amendment to increase the retention of bank statements, paying in books and cheque stubs to 6 years in line with HMRC requirements. SECONDED: Cllr V Ngwenya and AGREED.

- c. **Kent Pension Fund Consultation** – Proposed LGPS Funding Pool for Town and Parish Councils. The email from the Kent Pension Fund was NOTED.

8989/25 Finance and Governance

- a. **Current Financial Position:** The Finance Officer advised that the Parish Council is currently holding £210,923.70 which is a surplus of £64,267. General Reserves are currently £75,197, which is approximately 3.6 times monthly running costs. Members were taken through the reports.
- b. **Approval of Payments:** Cllr A Jauch PROPOSED that the payments made since the last meeting up to 11 July 2025 are APPROVED. SECONDED: Cllr S Hobbs and AGREED.
- c. **Internal Audit Report** – The Internal Audit report for the financial year 2024-25 was NOTED

8990/25 Planning

- a. **Applications:**
 - 25/01744: 24 Westfield, New Ash Green, DA3 8QN** – Double storey rear extension with Juliet balcony. Alteration to fenestration. Relocation of gate. Cllr C Gorton PROPOSED that the Parish Council does not object to this application as long as it does not conflict with local planning policy. SECONDED: Cllr F Cottee and AGREED.
 - 25/01816 and 25/01817: Th Manor House, North Ash Road, New Ash Green, DA3 8AJ** – Conversion of existing Grade II listed building from office to residential use by the creation of 6 no 1 bed dwellings. New entrance porch. Alterations to fenestration. Installation of rooflights. Hard and soft landscaping. Cllr I MacLeod PROPOSED that the Parish Council does not object in principle to this application.

1. Parking Provision

The Design and Access Statement refers to six parking spaces outlined in pink. We request confirmation that these spaces are within the same ownership as the building and will be allocated to the proposed residential units.

2. Heating and Heritage Impact

To enhance the fabric of this Grade II listed building, we would strongly suggest that the air source heat pumps are removed and replaced with ground source heat pumps, which would be more sympathetic to the preservation of this listed building.

3. Public Transport Accessibility

Public transport is very limited and not as suggested by the mention of nearby bus stops.

Boundary Wall Condition

The boundary wall is in a very poor state of repair; we would request that it is repaired as a condition of any approval.

SECONDED: Cllr S Hobbs FOR: 8 AGAINST: 0 ABSTENTIONS: 1

- b. The notes of the Planning Applications Working Group meeting of 02 July 2025 were NOTED.

8991/25 Ash Green Sports Centre

- a. **Current Financial Position** – The Finance Officer advised that the bank balance is £13,800.48 with General Reserves at £10,300, which is approximately 1.4 times monthly running costs. This time last year, the bank balance was £6,505.00. Income from hire of the sports hall and increase in Badminton use.

- b. **Approval of Payments** - Cllr S Fishenden PROPOSED that the payments made since the last meeting to 11 July 2025 are APPROVED. SECONDED: Cllr V Ngwenya and AGREED.
- c. **Approval of Payments** – Cllr S Fishenden PROPOSED that the payments made to 13 June 2025 are APPROVED. SECONDED: Cllr C Clark and AGREED.
- d. **Sport Centre Management Committee** – the minutes of the meeting of the Sports Centre Management Committee held on 03 June 2025 were NOTED.

8992/25 Community and Environment

- a. **Community Warden** – Cllr S Fishenden PROPOSED that upon receipt of the final draft agreement for the Community Warden, that it is sent to Surrey Hills Solicitors for review and NOTED that Hartley Parish Council will contribute 50% of these costs. SECONDED: Cllr V Ngwenya and AGREED.

8993/25 Items for Information

- Cllr S Fishenden reminded members of the Coffee with a Cop event to be held in the Village Association meeting room on 21 August 2025.
- Cllr F Cottee advised that a quiz will be held this weekend and a vintage car rally at Holywell Care Home on 16 August 2025.
- Bookings open on 18 July for the Summer Scheme.

8994/25 Progress Tracker

- a. The Progress Tracker was NOTED.

The meeting closed at 8.38pm

Signed:

Date: Chairman

ASH-CUM-RIDLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Agenda Item: **Full Council (17 July 2025)**

Report Title: **County and District Councillor's Reports**

COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

Cllr M Fothergill reported that the Leader of KCC announced that member allowances have been cut from approximately £30,000 to £2,600 for members to use as they see fit. In addition, the Leader has proposed a 5% cut across all allowances. The cost of education transport is one of the biggest expense. KCC have a statutory duty to provide transport for pupils that meet the relevant criteria. The tenders or taxi firms providing transport for Special Educational Needs children is being looked at and a trial is underway in Thanet, replacing taxis with KCC buses that are used for transporting older adults out of school hours. All budget lines are being looked at and the Net Zero action plan is to be scrapped, giving a saving of £32 million. The previous administration intended to sell County Hall for £6.1 million. This is a Grade II listed building which requires substantial refurbishment. The previous Council intended spending around £18 million on the provision of new offices in a new location. It has been decided not to sell County Hall and to refurbish it at a cost of approximately £4 million.

KCC has objected to the proposed Solar Farm in Hodsoll Street as they are against solar farms being built on Greenbelt when there are alternative, better suited sites available.

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

Cllr Perry Cole reported that the application for the Solar Farm was invalidated pending amendment. The amendments have now been received and the application is now valid. The most notable amendment is the removal of the BESS (battery storage system) from the site, although this will probably be located elsewhere in the parish.

ASH-CUM-RIDLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Agenda Item: **4 – Full Council 17 July 2025**

Report Title: **Clerk's Report**

ASH GREEN SPORTS CENTRE.

The free raffle has proved popular with five members winning a one month membership.

BULLETIN

The Bulletin delivery has been completed.

FOCUS GROUP

The notes of the meeting held on 14 July 2025 will be distributed with the September 2025 Agenda and the next meeting of the Focus Group will be held on Monday 13 October 2025 via Teams.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION SURVEY

A survey produced by KALC has been completed to gather feedback from Town and Parish Councils across Kent. Responses will be shared with principle authorities.

MEET THE REPRESENTATIVES EVENT

The event held in the shopping centre on Friday 04 July 2025 was a success with positive feedback from the Police, CSU and Community Warden.

NORTHFIELD

The next meeting of the Northfield Management Committee will be held on Tuesday 30 September 2025 at Ash Green Sports Centre.

SPORTS CENTRE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The next meeting of the Sports Centre will be held on 23 September 2025. A meeting with Swale Leisure Trust will be held on 22 July 2025.

SUMMER HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES

Some craft activities have been added to the timetable.

UKRAINE CO-OPERATION AGREEMENT

The draft agreement has been received and Mr Meade will update accordingly.

VOLUNTEERS

Requests for volunteers to assist with maintenance in Ash Burial Ground and Northfield have been published in the Bulletin and will be posted on social media. A request for volunteers to join Ash Village Hall Committee and to serve as a Trustee for the Alshouses was also published in the Bulletin.