

ASH-CUM-RIDLEY PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 15 May 2025 at the New Ash Green Village Association Meeting Room, Centre Road, New Ash Green, DA3 8JHH

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

In Attendance: Alison de Jager – Clerk
Karen Law – Deputy Clerk/Finance Officer
Cameron Clark – New Ash Green Village Association
2 Members of the public

8955/25 Election of Chairman

Cllr J Clucas PROPOSED that Cllr S Fishenden be elected Chairman of the Parish Council for the 2025/26 municipal year. SECONDED: Cllr C Gorton and UNANIMOUSLY AGREED. His Acceptance of Office was duly signed.

8956/25 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr J Scott (family commitment). Cllr C Clark PROPOSED that the apologies and reasons for absence were accepted. SECONDED: Cllr F Cottee and AGREED.

County Councillor M Fothergill, District Councillors Penny and Perry Cole, M Lindop, S Manamperi and L Manston also sent their apologies.

8957/25 Election of Vice-Chairman

Cllr S Fishenden PROPOSED that Cllrs C Clark and M Aspinall be elected as joint Vice-Chairman. SECONDED: Cllr F Cottee and UNANIMOUSLY AGREED.

8958/25 Declarations of Members Interests and Dispensations

None.

8959/25 Minutes

It was resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 17 April 2025 be approved and signed. PROPOSED: Cllr S Fishenden SECONDED: Cllr J Clucas and AGREED.

8960/25 Annual Parish Meeting

The notes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 09 April 2025 were NOTED.

The meeting was adjourned at 7.51pm

- **To receive reports from the District Councillors and New Ash Green Village Association**

- **Public Session**

The meeting reconvened at 8.02pm

8961/25 Clerk's Report

- a. The Clerk's Report was RECEIVED and NOTED and an updated report is attached to these minutes.

8962/25 Council Administration

- a. **Committees for the year 2025/26** – The Committees and Working Groups for the 2025/26 year were established and their Terms of Reference and delegated powers were agreed without amendment.
PROPOSED en bloc Cllr S Fishenden SECONDED: Cllr A Jauch and AGREED.
- b. **Committee Membership.**
Personnel Committee – Chairman and Vice-Chairmen, Cllrs R Brammer, P Kirtley, M Manley
Sports Centre Management Committee – Chairman and Vice-Chairmen, ex officio, Cllrs R Brammer, A Jauch, M Manley, G Pender, Vacancy and Sports Centre Manager
Northfield Management Committee – Chairman, Cllrs I MacLeod and M Manley.
Neighbourhood Plan Working Group – Chairman, Cllrs M Aspinall, F Cottee (Chairman), C Gorton. A Jauch, G Pender, Mr C Clark, SDC Planning Policy Team.
Planning Applications Working Group – all Councillors.
New Ash Green Focus Group – Cllrs S Fishenden, R Brammer, A Jauch, P Kirtley
PROPOSED en bloc Cllr A Jauch SECONDED: Cllr M Aspinall
- c. **Representatives on Outside Bodies** – Cllr S Fishenden PROPOSED that the appointment of representatives on outside bodies and joint management committees are APPROVED. SECONDED: Cllr M Manley and AGREED,
- d. **Publication Scheme, Freedom of Information and Data Protection** – Cllr S Fishenden PROPOSED that the Council's Publication Scheme and procedures for handling requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 2018 are confirmed. SECONDED: Cllr A Jauch and AGREED.
- e. **Calander of Meetings** – Cllr S Fishenden PROPOSED that the suggested dates, times and locations for the full Parish Council meetings as per **LGA 1972 s12** are APPROVED. SECONDED: Cllr J Clucas and AGREED.
- f. **Annual Parish Meeting** – It was NOTED that the date for the Annual Parish Meeting 2026 has been set for Wednesday 22 April at the New Ash Green Youth Centre. The meeting must be held between 01 March and 01 June, inclusive as per **LGA 1972 schedule 12 section 14(1)**

The meeting was adjourned at 8.05pm to allow a member of the public to speak on the next Agenda item.

The meeting reconvened at 8.07pm

- g. **Additional Edition of the Bulletin** – Cllr S Fishenden PROPOSED that an additional edition of the Bulletin is produced, dedicated to an update from No New Ash Green Solar Group. SECONDED: Cllr J Clucas and UNANIMOUSLY AGREED.

8963/25 Finance and Governance

- a. **Current Financial Position** - .
- b. **Approval of Payments** – Cllr S Fishenden PROPOSED that the payments to 06 May 2025 are APPROVED. SECONDED: Cllr F Cottee and AGREED.
- c. **Standing Orders** - the review was carried out with the following amendments:
PROPOSED Cllr S Fishenden SECONDED: Cllr M Manley and AGREED.
- d. **Financial Regulations** - Cllr S Fishenden PROPOSED that the Financial Regulations are confirmed without amendment. SECONDED: Cllr V Ngwenya and AGREED

- e. **Risk Management Review** – the Risk Management review was carried out without amendment. PROPOSED: Cllr S Fishenden SECONDED: Cllr P Kirtley and AGREED.
- f. **Signatories** – Cllr S Fishenden PROPOSED that the signatories to the Council's bank accounts are confirmed: Cllrs S Fishenden, M Aspinall, C Clark, J Clucas, A Jauch and M Manley. The Clerk and Deputy Clerk/Finance Officer have access to view the Council's bank accounts and make payments by bank transfer. SECONDED: Cllr V Ngwenya and AGREED.
- g. **Complaints Procedure** - the Complaints Procedure review was carried out and confirmed without amendment. PROPOSED: Cllr C Clark SECONDED: Cllr M Aspinall and AGREED.
- h. **Assets** – The list o assets for the Parish Council were CONFIRMED. PROPOSED: Cllr S Fishenden SECONDED: Cllr C Clark and AGREED.
- i. **Chairmans Allowance**.- In accordance with the **Local Government Act 1972 Section 15(5)**, the Chairman's allowance was fixed at £1,000.00. PROPOSED: Cllr J Clucas SECONDED: Cllr M Manley and AGREED.
- j. **Insurance** – It was NOTED that the insurance for the Parish Council and Ash Green Sports Centre is in year three of a three year long term agreement.
- k. **Grants** - Cllr S Fishenden PROPOSED that the grant authorised by the Parish Council in the 2025/26 budget to Ash Green Sports Centre of up to £15,000 as required is authorised for payment: SECONDED: Cllr F Cottee and AGREED
- l. **Direct Debits** – Cllr S Fishenden PROPOSED that payment of the following accounts is made by direct debit for the 2025/26 year. Parish Council: Business Charge Card, Digital Automation, Heliocentrix, Hugo Fox, Information Commissioner's Office, Iris Payroll Software, Peoples Partnership - pension, Scribe Accounts Software, Veolia and Zen Internet. Ash Green Sports Centre: Barclay Card, Clubright, Heliocentrix, Hugo Fox, London-Zurich, PRS/PPL, Stripe, Takepayments. SECONDED: Cllr C Gorton and AGREED.
- m. **Bank Charges** – Cllr S Fishenden PROPOSED that the deduction of monthly charges by Lloyds Bank in the amount of £4.25 each for the Parish Council and Ash Green Sports Centre is AUTHORISED. SECONDED: Cllr C Clark and AGREED.
- n. **Business Charge Card** –
 - Cllr S Fishenden PROPOSED that the use by the Clerk and Deputy clerk of the Parish Council charge cards for the purchase of items on-line for the Parish Council and Ash Green Sports Centre with a limit of £500 each in any one month for 2025/26. SECONDED: Cllr V Ngwenya and AGREED.
 - Cllr A Jauch PROPOSED that payment of the following accounts by charge card is AUTHORISED. Microsoft Office 365 for the Officers and Councillors up to £131.16 per month, Canva - £99.99 per annum and the charge card free of £32.00 per card, per annum. SECONDED: Cllr P Kirtley and AGREED.
- o. **Youth Scheme** - Cllr S Fishenden PROPOSED that a budget of up to £4,000 is AUTHORISED. SECONDED: Cllr S Hobbs and AGREED.

8964/25 Planning

- a. The notes of the Planning Applications Working Group held on 07 May 2025 were NOTED.
- b. It was NOTED that additional information has been submitted as an amendment to the proposed application to develop a photovoltaic solar array farm with associated battery energy storage system. The submission for comments has been set for 5 June 2025 and an extension request will be sent to Sevenoaks District Council.

8965/25 Ash Green Sports Centre

- a. **Current Financial Position** –
- b. **Approval of Payments** – Cllr S Fishenden PROPOSED that the payments made to 06 May 2025 are APPROVED. SECONDED: Cllr A Jauch and AGREED.
- c. **Sport Centre Management Committee** – it was NOTED that the next meeting of the Sports Centre Management Committee will be held on 03 June 2025.

8966/25 Northfield

- a. The minutes of the meeting of the Northfield Management Committee held on 06 May 2025 were NOTED.

8967/25 Community and Environment

- a. **Community Warden** – Cllr S Fishenden PROPOSED that the advice received from Surrey Hills Solicitors is accepted and referred back to Kent County Council for their consideration. SECONDED: Cllr C Gorton and AGREED.
- b. **Focus Group** – the notes of the meeting of 06 May 2025 were NOTED.
- c. **Self-defence Classes** – this item was deferred to the June meeting to obtain further information.
- d. **Meet the Representatives Event** – it was confirmed that this annual event will be held on Friday 4 July 2025 in the shopping centre. KMP Ltd will be contacted for permission.

8968/25 Items for Information

- Cllr C Gorton confirmed that Village Day will be held on 28 June 2025.
- Cllr F Cottee advised that the Hodsoll Street Fete will be held on 22 June 2025.
- It was generally felt that the continued negative publicity in local newspapers, frequently reported by a District Councillor is unnecessarily sensationalised. Members expressed concern that the issues relating to anti-social behaviour and the use of nitrous oxide are not occurring on the scale being published. It was noted that this is having a detrimental effect on residents and property values.

8969/25 Progress Tracker

- a. The Progress Tracker was NOTED.

The meeting closed at 8.42pm

Signed:

Date: Chairman

ASH-CUM-RIDLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Agenda Item: **Full Council (15 May 2025)**

Report Title: **District Councillor's and Village Association Reports**

In the absence of the District Councillors, Cllr M Lindop requested the following was presented to the Council.

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

Please read out this update that we received from Pav Ramewal the Chief Executive of Sevenoaks District Council with regard to our queries on progress re the toilets near The Vault in the centre. I quote from the email we received.....

"Refurbishment: works are to be completed by 31 May 2025 and include stripping roof and installing new Aqua-Pan roofing sheets, plumbing installation, new boilers, cables/power, new soffits and fascia boards, interior works (new accessories, amenities and décor), locksmith and masonry work and EICR inspection. Cost of works: £33k.

Lease: We have agreed with the Landlord that the property will be handed back upon refurbishment completion, rather than wait until the termination of the lease in September 2025.

Disputed £71.5k dilapidation charge: The "dispute" was the difference between SDC's and the Landlord's costings for carrying out the repairs. Our figure is achievable (see below) as SDC's costings include own labour rather than all contractors – SDC is undertaking the refurbishment works, so we will meet our figure of £33k.

- o SDC costings for the works: £33,000 (net £26,240)
- o Landlord costing for the works: £72,000 (net £40,390)"

So, unless I am assuming wrong sometime after the end of this month the toilets may hopefully come back into use subject to KMP finding a way to maintain them.

NEW ASH GREEN VILLAGE ASSOCIATION

Mr Cameron Clark reported that Darryl Patrick is now in post as the new Village Association Office and Estate Manager, but ongoing issues with staff absences (planned and unplanned) mean that the VA office has been struggling to keep up with the workload, so response times have been affected.

Aside from this, the VA surveyor has been heavily involved in monitoring the ongoing gas pipe replacement works in Ayelands and Millfield with the aim of ensuring that all the extensive excavations are completely restored to their previous condition. We understand that no further work is planned for the immediate future.

Work is continuing, albeit not as quickly as we would like, on the VA's strategic priorities of:

- Improvements to the playing fields (with funding from the Football Association).
- Negotiations for public EV charging points in the Pavilion car park.
- Creating a 3G sports pitch to improve the versatility of the sports facilities.
- Attracting external grant finance for redeveloping the outdoor gym area and the Olivers Mill playground (where the equipment is life expired).
- Opening the tennis courts for public use.

I understand that as a result of pressure from the outgoing County Councillors, KCC has agreed to support the continuation of the 489 bus to Gravesend until the end of August and that discussions are continuing about the longer term provision of bus services from New Ash Green.

The VA broadly supports the proposals by KMP Solutions and LTP (New Ash Ltd.) for the regeneration of NAG village centre. We have noted the press reports about the submission of a request to Sevenoaks DC for CIL funding. However, we understand that these reports were premature in that the bid has not yet been assessed as valid for submission to the CIL Spending Board. We will continue to encourage regeneration proposals that will improve the village centre and the facilities available for residents and work with KMP Solutions as much as possible to achieve that outcome.

ASH-CUM-RIDLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Agenda Item: **4 – Full Council 15 May 2025**

Report Title: **Clerk's Report**

ASH GREEN SPORTS CENTRE.

The next meeting of the Sports Centre Management Committee will be held on 03 June 2025.

BULLETIN

The deadline for articles for the Bulletin is 01 July 2025.

BURIAL GROUND

Kent Youth Justice Service have been unable to identify any young people to refer to assist with the maintenance in the Burial Ground, specifically clearing grass cuttings from memorials.

DISABLED PARKING SPACES – NORTH SQUARE CAR PARK

KMP Ltd have advised that they will be looking at providing an additional disabled parking bay at the Youth Centre end of North Square Car Park in July/August 2025.

REFUSE AND RECYCLING SACKS

Following the withdrawal by Sevenoaks District Council, of black refuse and clear recycling sacks, alternative sacks have been sourced and will be sold on a trail basis. Each roll has 50 sacks (Sevenoaks provided 30 clear and 20 black sacks) the black sacks will be sold for £4.20 a roll and the clear sacks for £4.50.

SPEED INDICATOR DEVICE (SID)

New batteries have been received for the Speed Indicator Device and a Councillor from Hartley Parish Council will move the device between the two locations. The SID has been put up in Hartley and most vehicles reduce speed as they approach it.