

ASH-CUM-RIDLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 19 June 2025 at the Hodsoll Street & Ridley Village Hall, Hodsoll Street, TN15 7LN commencing at 7.45pm.

Present: Cllr S Fishenden
Cllr R Brammer
Cllr C Clark
Cllr J Clucas
Cllr S Glover (Co-opted 8.15pm)
Cllr P Kirtley
Cllr I Macleod
Cllr M Manley
Cllr V Ngwenya

In Attendance: Alison de Jager – Clerk
Karen Law – Deputy Clerk/Finance Officer
Megan Johnson-Hodges – Assistant Clerk.
Cllr M Fothergill – Kent County Council
Cllr L Manston – Sevenoaks District Council
Cllr S Manamperi - Sevenoaks District Council
Jordan Meade – Ukraine Twinning and Friendship
2 Members of the public

8970/25 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr M Aspinall (work), F Cottee (prior commitment), C Gorton (holiday), S Hobbs (family commitment) and G Pender (work). Cllr C Clark PROPOSED that the apologies and reasons for absence were accepted. SECONDED: Cllr S Fishenden and AGREED.
District Councillors Penny and Perry Cole also sent their apologies.

8971/25 Declarations of Members Interests and Dispensations

None.

8972/25 Councillor Co-option

This item was deferred to 8.04pm as the candidate had not arrived.

8973/25 Minutes

It was resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 15 May 2025 be approved and signed. PROPOSED: Cllr S Fishenden SECONDED: Cllr M Manley and AGREED.

The meeting was adjourned at 7.46pm

- **To receive reports from the District Councillors and New Ash Green Village Association**
- **Public Session**
- **To receive a presentation from Mr Jordan Meade – Ukraine Co-operation Agreement.**

The meeting reconvened at 8.26pm

8974/25 Ukraine Co-operation Agreement

Cllr S Fishenden PROPOSED that the Parish Council enters into a Twinning and Friendship Agreement with Kozelets territorial community in the Chernihiv region of Ukraine.

Progression of the agreement is delegated to the Clerk, assisted by the Chairman.
SECONDED: Cllr P Kirtley and AGREED.

**The meeting was adjourned at 8.04pm to allow the candidate to speak.
The meeting reconvened at 8.07pm**

8972/25 Councillor Co-option (deferred item)

- a. In line with the Co-option process, where only one candidate applies for the casual vacancy, the candidate is automatically co-opted. Accordingly, Steven Glover was co-opted to the Hodsoll Street & Ridley Ward and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office before joining the meeting.

8975/25 Clerk's Report

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

8976/25 Council Administration

- a. **Scope for Internal Audit** – the review of the scope for internal audit was carried out. Cllr S Fishenden PROPOSED that the amendments are included in the scope. SECONDED: Cllr V Ngwenya and AGREED.
- b. **Transparency Code** – It was noted that the Parish Council falls within the scope of the Local Government Act Transparency Code 2015 and the publication requirements were NOTED.

8977/25 Finance and Governance

- a. **Current Financial Position:** The Finance Officer advised that there had been problems transferring the accounts to the new system and in future the reports produced will be combined for the Parish Council and Ash Green Sports Centre. Members were taken through the reports noting that General Reserves are sitting at 3.7 times running costs. It was noted that 50% of the invoice for the Speed Indicator Device batteries will be invoiced to Hartley Parish Council. The cost of the additional edition of the Bulletin will exceed the allocated budget. The legal costs paid are in respect of legal advice for the Contract for the Community Warden. Ground maintenance is under budget as we are awaiting an invoice.
- b. **Approval of Payments:** Cllr S Fishenden PROPOSED that the payments made since the last meeting up to 13 June 2025 are APPROVED. SECONDED: Cllr V Ngwenya and AGREED.

8978/25

- a. **Year End 2024-25** – The accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025 for the Parish Council and Ash Green Sports Centre were APPROVED and SIGNED. PROPOSED: Cllr M Manley SECONDED: Cllr R Brammer and AGREED.
- b. **Internal Audit** – It was NOTED that the internal audit was completed on 6 June 2025 and the Annual Internal Audit Report from the Annual Governance Statement was signed by the Internal Auditor. SECONDED: Cllr C Clark and AGREED.
- c. **Statement of Internal Control** – Cllr M Manley PROPOSED that effectiveness of the Statement of Internal Control for the year ended 31 March 2025 is AGREED and signed by the Chairman and Responsible Finance Officer. SECONDED: Cllr P Kirtley and AGREED.
- d. **Annual Governance Statement** – Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2024/25 for the annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) was completed.

Members answered yes to account statements. Cllr R Brammer PROPOSED that the statement was signed by the Chairman and Clerk. SECONDED: Cllr V Ngwenya and AGREED.

- e. **Accounting Statements** – Cllr M Manley PROPOSED that the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025 for the Parish Council (including Ash Green Sports Centre and Northfield Management Committee) are APPROVED and that Section 2 of the AGAR is signed by the Chairman. SECONDED: Cllr J Clucas and AGREED.
- f. **Exercise of Public Rights** – Cllr V Ngwenya PROPOSED that the dates selected for the period of exercise of public rights is confirmed from Monday 23 June 2025 to Friday 01 August 2025. SECONDED: Cllr M Manley and AGREED.

8979/25 Planning

a. Applications:

25/01088: Woodlands, Oak Farm Lane, Fairseat, TN15 7JU – Erection of 1no residential dwelling. Cllr M Manley PROPOSED that the Parish Council objects to this application as the increase in size and bulk of the proposed dwelling is harmful to the Green Belt and exceeds the 50% rule. SECONDED: Cllr V Ngwenya and AGREED

25/01254: 60 Redhill Wood, New Ash Green, DA3 8QP – Single storey side extension with roof light. Cllr S Fishenden PROPOSED that the Parish Council does not object to this application as long as it does not conflict with local planning policy. SECONDED: Cllr M Manley and AGREED.

25/01497: Ace Contractors, 12 The Row, New Ash Green, DA3 8JB – Removal of existing canopy. Cllr J Clucas PROPOSED that the Parish Council objects to this application and questions the amount of damage caused by the attachment. The internal damage shown is similar to other examples of damage in the shops caused by water ingress from above. Pedestrians value the continuity of shelter in inclement weather when visiting the shopping centre. SECONDED: Cllr S Glover FOR: 5 AGAINST: 1 ABSTENTIONS: 4 The motion is carried.

- 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.

8980/25 Ash Green Sports Centre

- a. **Current Financial Position** – covered under 8977/25
- b. **Approval of Payments** – Cllr S Fishenden PROPOSED that the payments made to 13 June 2025 are APPROVED. SECONDED: Cllr C Clark and AGREED.
- c. **Sport Centre Management Committee** – the minutes of the meeting of the Sports Centre Management Committee held on 03 June 2025 were NOTED.

8981/25 Community and Environment

- a. **Self-defence Classes** – Cllr J Clucas PROPOSED that the provision of a six-week course for women and girls is not progressed. SECONDED: Cllr V Ngwenya and AGREED.

8982/25 Items for Information

- Cllr C Clark reported that she had attended a well attended event organised by Kent Association of Local Councils on the potential re-organisation of Kent under the Government's devolution policy. Proposals discussed included the creation of either 3 or 4 Unitary Authorities. At present KCC do not have a policy on devolution. Any proposal must be agreed between KCC, Medway, and the Borough and District

Councils before submission to the Government for consideration. Suggestions were also made with and without the costs of Adult Social Services.

- Cllr M Manley reminded members of the guided walk and talk to be held on Northfield on 26 June 2025 at 5.30pm regarding findings of plant species and the management of the space.
- Cllr S Fishenden reminded members that the Meet the Reps Event will be held on 04 July 2025 at 3.30pm in the shopping centre.

8983/25 Progress Tracker

a. The Progress Tracker was NOTED.

The meeting closed at 9.00pm

Signed:

Date: Chairman

ASH-CUM-RIDLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Agenda Item: **Full Council (19 June 2025)**

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

COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

Cllr M Fothergill thanked the Parish Council for the invitation to attend meetings. It has been six weeks since her election to the County Council and much of this time has been spent in training sessions.

489 Bus Service – Arriva cancelled this service effective 01 June 2025, and a replacement service has been agreed with GoCoach till August, when it will be reviewed. The message is Use It or Lose It.

Proposed Solar Farm in New Ash Green – a site visit was arranged and attended by the Cabinet Member, and representatives from the No New Ash Green Solar. Kent Fire and Rescue Services have been involved too.

Sevenoaks District Council is selling off green spaces and at a meeting at the District Council, Cllr M Fothergill was denied the opportunity to represent residents. Cllr Fothergill has enjoyed her initial 6 weeks in office and is here to serve.

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

Cllr L Manston reported that local re-organisation in the District Council is on-going. Currently the Council is in minority control. Negotiations with different political parties are being held to move forward.

Shopping Centre maintenance – KMP have submitted an application for CIL funding and the CIL Spending Board will meet in July.

Regarding the upcoming roll-out of various waste bins across the District, Cllr P Kirtley asked if SDC could look at the structure of New Ash Green as bins will not work in the village.

ASH-CUM-RIDLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Agenda Item: **4 – Full Council 19 June 2025**

Report Title: **Clerk's Report**

ASH GREEN SPORTS CENTRE.

We have a Summer offer of 3 months membership for the price of 2 for the month of June. We are holding a raffle for existing members, there will be 5 winners, each receiving a free months membership.

BULLETIN

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

FOCUS GROUP

The next meeting of the FOCUS Group will be held on Monday 14 July 2025 via Teams.

HODSOLL STREET PLAY AREA

The annual inspection of the play area will take place during July 2025.

MEET THE REPRESENTATIVES EVENT

KMP have given permission for the event to be held in the shopping centre on Friday 04 July 2025.

NORTHFIELD

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

The new trees planted on Northfield require some maintenance and the Woodlands Group will be arranging a working group to carry out some of this work and will need additional volunteers.

Sean Manley has kindly offered to arrange a walk around Northfield to show the wildflowers and the management of the wildflower meadow.

SUMMER HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES

The timetable is almost complete and will be ready to be included in the July edition of the Bulletin.

YOUTH CENTRE

We have received a copy of the Constitution and will arrange a further meeting with the Trustees of the Village Trust and the Village Association.

ASH-CUM-RIDLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Agenda Item: 7.2 – Full Council 19 June 2025

Report Title: **Transparency Code**

As a Parish Council with annual income exceeding £200,000 we fall within the scope of the **Local Government Transparency Code 2015**. This means that we are legally required to publish specific information on our website. The aim is to increase transparency to show that we are open and accountable to the public.

Key Requirements:

QUARTERLY: To publish the following information:

- Expenditure exceeding £500
- Government Procurement Card Transactions – *Ash-cum-Ridley Parish Council does not use a Government Procurement Card.*
- Procurement Information

ANNUALLY:

- Organisational Chart
- Local Authority Land.
- Grants to voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations.
- Senior Salaries
- Pay multiple
- Constitution
- Social Housing Assets – *Ash-cum-Ridley Parish Council does not hold any social housing stock.*
- Trade Union Facility Time – *Ash-cum-Ridley Parish Council does not have a Trade Union Representative.*
- Parking Account – *Ash-cum-Ridley Parish Council does not have a parking account.*
- Parking Spaces – *Ash-cum-Ridley Parish Council does not have any controlled parking spaces.*
- Fraud – *Ash-cum-Ridley Parish Council does not have any staff members undertaking fraud investigation work.*

Ash-cum-Ridley Parish Council complies with the requirements of the code by publishing this information on its website. Full details of the Transparency Code can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-government-transparency-code-2015>