

NEW ASH GREEN FOCUS GROUP

Notes of a meeting of the New Ash Green Focus Group held virtually via Teams on Monday 14 July 2025 commencing at 2.00pm.

Present: Cllr S Fishenden – Chairman, Ash-cum-Ridley Parish Council
Cllr M Lindop - Sevenoaks District Council
Cllr L Manston – Sevenoaks District Council
Sgt K Savill – Kent Police
K Webb - Sevenoaks District Council Community Safety Unit
J West – KCC Community Warden

In Attendance: Mrs A de Jager – Parish Clerk,

1. Apologies for Absence and Introductions

S Brine – New Ash Green Village Association, C Clark –Chapel Wood Residents Society, I, L Moylan – Over Minnis Residents Society, PC Ellie Collins and PC Caleb Guest, Kent Police

2. Notes/Actions from of the Meeting of 06 May 2025

The notes were received and noted.

3. Police Update

In the absence of PC Guest and PC Collins Sgt Savill responded to queries sent in advance of the meeting.

- Kent Police Website – the data for reported crimes has not been updated for the entire County and this will be done as soon as possible.
- Events – The 'Coffee with a Cop' event will be held on 21 August 2025 at the VA meeting room. PC C Guest will also attend the September Parish Council meeting.
- Free bike marking will be included in all the Family Fun Day events organised by Sevenoaks District Council. A Fun Day will be held on The Minnis on Tuesday 19 August 2025.

Young people riding recklessly on bikes and on the Minnis and sports fields at the Pavilion have not been identified. More images have been received.

Reports continue to be received in relation to youths with catapults who have been shooting pigeons. Sgt Saville advised that unfortunately, it has become a TikTok trend to film the shooting of birds with catapults, and this is happening in other areas too. The youths involved in this activity have not been identified either. It is difficult to prosecute youth with regard to the use of e-bikes and catapults as they cannot fine or take the young people to court due to their age. The bikes and catapults can be confiscated, but they are easily replaced by on-line vendors.

Reports in general from this area have dropped, including the use of nitrous oxide, the resulting littering of cannisters has dropped as well as reports of shoplifting and vehicle crime. Speed checks on Ash Road will be carried out during August. There was no update on any action taken on cars parked over night on Redhill Road.

It was also mentioned that there had been damage to vehicles as well as birds and that, when challenged, people are met with foul language from the youths. While acknowledging that the Police are stretched, residents would like to see more

visibility as it is rare to see officers in the village and there is no evident of response times and locations visited.

4. **Community Warden & Sevenoaks District Council Update and Local Concerns & Issues**

Community Safety Unit (CSU)

The Community Safety Unit has received reports of young people and catapults. An enquiry was made to see if a public spaces protection order could be issued in this regard. Miss Webb advised that this is a slow process and would be of no benefit to this issue as no action can be taken to those under 16 years of age. Six warning letters have been sent to parents/guardians and young people regarding behaviour issues.

It was suggested that a separate group meeting to look at actions to be taken and any identification of people from CCTV images.

There is a local task force in place to support officers in New Ash Green – pigeons and bikes, Enysford – horses and Chipstead Lakes – youths in the private sailing club. It was noted that officers are often called away to attend urgent matters. The 'Safer Streets' does not get funding the CSU has asked the Police and Crime Commissioner for a plan for safer towns including New Ash Green. A significant proportion of police funding goes to Maidstone and Sevenoaks is overlooked as it is seen not to have significant issues, which is not the case. Sevenoaks CSU likes to carry out preventative work.

Family Fun days have been arranged throughout the district with one being held on The Minnis in New Ash Green on Tuesday, 19 August with the Police and Fire Services attending. An article has been sent to the Parish Council and Village Association explaining where and how to make reports, relating to anti-social behaviour, specifically, the use of catapults against wildlife and nuisance bikes, for publication in their next newsletters

Community Warden – Jackie continues to be active and focused upon supporting and enabling those who may often meet with challenges that need guidance to navigate their personal situations. Letters have been sent out to parents/guardians of some young people. This does make a difference to behaviour as some parents/guardians are not aware of the behaviour. Jackie has been busy in Hartley and New Ash Green supporting residents who have been victims of scams – giving advice and with health and well-being. Approximately 20 agencies attended a recent event organised by Jackie and supported by volunteers. This was well attended and refreshments were served. Jackie has been doing deliveries for the Community Cupboard. There has been a rise in reports received regarding nuisance bikes, fire lighting and attacks on wildlife.

A new service is being set up with Citizens Advice Bureau being accessed via a laptop at the Tuesday hub. The appointments in person will continue at the Youth Centre on a Thursday morning.

5. **Agency & Resident Society Updates**

No reports

6. **Local Concerns & Issues**

- ASB locations and issues – no reports.
- Graffiti – no reports

- Parking - included above
- Youth Provision – no report.
- Neighbourhood Watch – no report.
- Other Issues –

7. **Other Matters for Discussion**

None

8. **Date of Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting is 13 October 2025 at 2pm, via Teams.

The meeting closed at 4.33pm