

ASH-CUM-RIDLEY PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 20 June 2024 at Hodsoll Street
Village Hall, Hodsoll Street, TN15 7LE

Present: Cllr S Fishenden
Cllr R Brammer
Cllr C Clark
Cllr C Gorton
Cllr S Hobbs
Cllr M Howie
Cllr P Kirtley
Cllr I MacLeod
Cllr V Ngwenya

In attendance: Alison de Jager – Parish Clerk
Karen Law- Deputy Clerk
Megan Johnson-Hodges – Assistant Clerk
Cllr D Brazier – Kent County Council
Cllr M Lindop – Sevenoaks District Council
Cllr Perry Cole – Sevenoaks District Council
S Brine – New Ash Green Village Association
1 member of the public

8830/24 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr M Aspinall (work), Cllr J Clucas (family commitment), Cllr F Cottee (prior engagement), Cllr A Jauch (work), Cllr M Manley (work), Cllr G Pender (work) and Cllr J Scott (work). Cllr C Gorton PROPOSED that the apologies and reasons for absence are accepted. SECONDED: Cllr S Hobbs and AGREED. District Councillor M Lindop gave his apologies for leaving the meeting after his report.

8831/24 Declarations of Interest

a. Cllr M Howie declared an interest in item 6 Public Rights of Way as these are on her land. Cllrs R Brammer, P Kirtley and I MacLeod declared an interest in item 8.1 Lances Almshouse Charity as trustees of the charity.

8832/24 Minutes

It was resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 16 May 2024 be approved and signed as a true record with two minor typographical errors
PROPOSED: Cllr C Gorton SECONDED: Cllr P Kirtley and AGREED.

The meeting was suspended at 7.46pm

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

The reports from the above are attached to these minutes

The meeting reconvened at 7.51pm

8833/24 Clerk's Report

- a. The Clerk's Report was RECEIVED with an amendment to the date of the next Focus Group meeting being 02 September 2024. A copy is attached to these minutes.

8834/24 Finance and Governance

- a. **Current Financial Position** - The Finance Officer reported the Parish Council has a surplus of £63,193 and general reserves of £99,561 which is just over three times running costs. The miscellaneous receipts amount is the Park and Play grant received in the amount of £4,000. A new laptop was purchased for the Assistant Clerk out of the office equipment budget. The insurance premium paid is less than budget as buildings cover is not included. The remaining income and expenditure is in line with the budget. Members were reminded that the Parish Council is looking at sponsoring a Community Warden in partnership with neighbouring parishes and this will come at a significant cost, which will have to be borne from General Reserves. The payments made on behalf of Northfield are due to be repaid. Highlighted payments were explained.
- b. **Approval of Payments** – Cllr C Gorton PROPOSED that the payments up to 14 June 2024 are APPROVED. SECONDED: Cllr V Ngwenya and AGREED.
- c. **Internal Audit** – the report from the Internal Auditor was RECEIVED and NOTED. Cllr C Clark congratulated the Finance Officer and Clerk on a clean report.
- d. **Information Commissioners Office** – Cllr R Brammer PROPOSED that the payment of the Data Protection fee in the amount of £35.00 by direct debit is approved. SECONDED: Cllr S Fishenden and AGREED.
- e. **Quantified Tree Risk Assessment** – Cllr S Hobbs PROPOSED that the three-year quotation from Lushland is accepted. SECONDED: Cllr I MacLeod and AGREED.
- f. **Grass cutting contract** – Following discussion, Cllr R Brammer PROPOSED that the cutting regime of the Hodsoll Street Play Area is increased to a weekly cut at the revised cost of £100 per cut, to come from the Youth Reserve and that the other areas remain on fortnightly cuts as growth should slow in the warmer weather. The specification will be reviewed before quotes are sought for the next growing season. SECONDED: Cllr V Ngwenya and AGREED.
- g. **Roof and fascia repairs** – Cllr C Clark PROPOSED that the quotation from Meopham Roofing in the amount of £4,500 is accepted to carry out the required work on the roof and fascia boards. SECONDED: Cllr C Gorton and AGREED.

8835/24 Planning

a. Applications:

24/01161: Orchard Cottage, New Street Road, Hodsoll Street – Removal of existing chimneys. Relocation of front door. Alterations to fenestration. Cllr M Howie PROPOSED that the Parish Council does not object to this application as long as it does not conflict with local planning policy. SECONDED: Cllr P Kirtley and AGREED.

24/10141: Greenlands, Rosemary Lane, Hodsoll Street, TN15 7JX – Demolition of existing dwelling, garage and outbuilding and the erection of new detached dwelling with solar panels and garage. Cllr S Fishenden PROPOSED that the Parish Council strongly objects to the proposed replacement of the existing dormer bungalow as inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

The existing building is situated next to a pair of two storey buildings in a rural country lane in Hodsoll Street. The location is high performing Green Belt land on which development is by definition harmful. Two previous applications to replace the bungalow and its two separate outbuildings with a single large building have already been refused. The second application was taken to appeal and again refused as inappropriate development in the Green Belt. The Appeal Inspector noted that in his opinion Policy GB4 of Sevenoaks' ADMP was still valid for judging whether a replacement building was "significantly larger" than the original. He also addressed the question of the unbuilt Permitted Development extension constituting Very Special Circumstances for the application and concluded that this was not relevant.

The proposed development would replace the existing bungalow and a pair of associated detached outbuildings by a single large bungalow remote from its existing location next to established houses and place it in a location that used to be open agricultural land.

The change of use of this land from Agricultural to the curtilage of the existing property was never established. Although the change happened over 10 years ago and is therefore now legal the fact remains that the proposed development would place a large new building in a location that is still rural.

The harm to the Green Belt is exacerbated by the large size of the proposed bungalow. The increase in size of the new building is of the order of 75% even based on the size of the existing building. Given the Appeal Inspector's comments and the fact that both aerial photography and local knowledge agree that the existing bungalow has already been extended, this is likely to be a conservative estimate. The increase in size of the proposed building and its transfer to a more sensitive site both combine to cause significant harm to the openness of the Green Belt, and we therefore request that the application is refused.

It should also be noted that foul sewage cannot be disposed of via an existing mains sewer, as claimed on the application form, as mains drainage does not exist in Rosemary Lane. **SECONDED: Cllr R Brammer and AGREED**

Public Rights of Way C439, C440 AND C441 – Cllr C Clark PROPOSED that the following response is sent to KCC Public Rights of Way. It would appear that the applicant has submitted these applications solely on the basis of a desk top exercise without undertaking any surveying on the ground, we have not been supplied with the claimed historic documentary evidence.

1. **PROW/SE/C439 -SD307 & part of SD305**

Starting from the North, the SD305 section crosses a field in regular use for grazing cows. The field gate is currently locked with an adjacent kissing gate for pedestrians, to keep the cows safely confined. From point C, SD307 is a very indistinctly defined footpath, the exact line of which is impassable because of undergrowth and trees. It has been shown on the maps up to 1936 Ordinance survey as a farm track and there are still traces of hedgerows on either side along part of the routes. There is no evidence that it has been used by horsed for many years and this would now be impossible.

2. **PROW/SE/C440 – additional public bridleway to join SD305 & upgrade part of SD205**

At its junction with Hartley Bottom Road, this claimed new bridleway starts through the locked gate at one side of a South East Water pumping station, which it then crosses before encountering a second locked gate at the main

entrance to the site. It would then require a gate in the security fence to access the adjacent field. The claimed route was shown as a track on the 1864-67 Ordinance Survey maps but had disappeared by the 1895 survey. From this point the claimed line of the bridleway crosses the field until it meets SD305 at the edge of a Grub Wood. SD305 then enters the Grub Wood through a kissing gate and after passing through the wood on an uneven line, meets SD307 and re-enters the field.

On the ground, this is not therefore a viable route for horses. Although it apparently existed in part of the 19th Century, it does not appear to have been used for more than 100 years, apart from the parts that are still a footpath.

3. PROW/SE/C441 – upgrade to bridleway of part of SD233

The line of this claimed bridleway is largely suitable, although the north-western exit to Hartley Bottom Road would be challenging due to a steep incline and currently has a locked field gate next to a pedestrian kissing gate. Any gate would need to be self-locking to protect the escape of livestock. SECONDED: Cllr S Fishenden FOR: 8 AGAINST: 0 ABSTENTIONS: 0 NO VOTE: 1

8836/24 Ash Green Sports Centre

- a. **Current Financial Position** – The Finance Officer reported that the Sports Centre reflects a deficit of £3,342 which is a slightly better position than last year. Members were taken through the receipts and payments against budget, noting the repair to the air conditioning unit and the installation of the protection cages. Membership is better than usual for this time of year but a drop is expected during the holidays.
- b. **Approval of Payments** – Cllr V Ngwenya PROPOSED that the payments made from 10 May 2024 to 14 June 2024 are APPROVED. SECONDED: Cllr S Hobbs and AGREED.
- c. **Sports Centre Management Committee** – the minutes of the meeting held on 21 May 2024 were NOTED.

8837/24 Community and Environment

- a. **Lances Almshouse Charity** – the request from the Chairman of the Trustees of Lances Almshouse Charity was discussed. Cllr S Fishenden PROPOSED that as it was determined that the use of precepted funds for the benefit of two residents is not appropriate, that the Parish Council declines the request to become sole trustees of the charity. If needed, the Parish Council would facilitate letters to housing associations. SECONDED: Cllr M Howie and AGREED.

The meeting was suspended at 8.56pm
To receive a report from the District Councillor Perry Cole
The report is attached to these minutes
The meeting reconvened at 8.58pm

8838/24 Items for Information

- a. Cllr R Brammer suggested that at the next election lunch is offered to staff at the Polling Station in the Youth Centre.
- b. The Clerk reported that a letter has been sent to Kent Fire and Rescue Services requesting confirmation that all appliances have maps with the locations of hydrants. Appliances attending the recent fire at Hodsoll Street Village Hall relied on water they had brought to extinguish the fire.

- c. A letter was sent to Sevenoaks District Council requesting better notices for the New Ash Green South East Ward polling station for the upcoming elections.

8839/24 Progress Tracker

- a. The Progress Tracker was NOTED

The meeting closed at 9.08pm

Signed: Date:
Chairman

ASH-CUM-RIDLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Agenda Item: **Full Council (20 June 2024)**

Report Title: **County and District Councillors Reports**

COUNTY COUNCILLOR

Cllr D Brazier – no report.

DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORT

Cllr M Lindop advised that Sevenoaks District Council has free business training courses available on line as part of SDC's work to support local businesses and the local economy. Cooking workshop for people with learning difficulties and their carers are available in Swanley.

The majority of New Ash Green neighbourhoods will not be moved over to the revised recycling collection and will remain using the current plastic bags. Letters will be sent to residents mid-July.

VILLAGE ASSOCIATION

Ms S Brine – no report. Cllr S Hobbs reported that the swing on the Olivers Mill Play Area has been damaged and is dangerous. Ms Brine will take this back to the VA.

Cllr Perry Cole advised that the Boundary Commission is holding a review and as part of that process, the numbers of Councillors required across the District will be assessed and ward boundaries may change.

ASH-CUM-RIDLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Agenda Item: **4 – Full Council 20 June 2024**

Report Title: **Clerk's Report**

BULLETIN – The deadline for the next edition is 01 July 2024, please have any articles submitted by this date.

BURIAL GROUND – A working party has been suggested, date to be confirmed, for a couple of hours to remove weeds and reduce shrubs on graves in the Burial Ground where we have been unable to contact the Grant of Right owners. If any Councillors are available, help would be much appreciated.

D-Day - Ash Church hosted the beacon lighting event attended by around 60 people, with the Scouts running the BBQ and refreshments available. Orpins kindly provided the gas at cost. The beacon was lit by ex-Royal Marine Ben Ford, and the evening featured musical entertainment and a tribute read by Cllr Carol Clark.

FOCUS GROUP – The Focus Group meeting date is 13 May 2024.

MARIE CURIE – A thank you letter has been received from Marie Curie for the donation of £250.00, noting that every £23 donated provides an hour of nursing care.

NORTHFIELD – The minutes of the Northfield Management Committee meeting of 17 June 2024 will be distributed with the July 2024 Agenda.

SPORTS CENTRE – Staff - Martin is moving out of the area and has given his resignation. Elaine will be re-joining the reception team. A significant loss is Val, who is going to work for a charity. Val will continue to teach Pilates and will be bank staff covering classes and shifts when she can. Both Martin and Val will leave at the end of June.

Karen and Megan have spent hours setting up the new software for the Sports Centre and Val has been involved where her skills are needed.

SUMMER SCHEME – the draft timetable is almost complete and we are awaiting confirmation from the last provider. Thank you to Val and Megan for getting this together.

WINTER SUPPORT GRANT – In addition to the donation of food to the Community Cupboard, twelve families in the Parish were helped through the UK Winter Support Fund, receiving gifts such as air fryers, duvets, and a bicycle.

ASH-CUM-RIDLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Agenda Item: **5.6 Full Council 20 June 2024**

Report Title: **Grass Cutting Contract**

Residents have raised concerns regarding the grass cutting in Hodsoll Street, specifically the village green and the area at the rear of the village hall. The main issue is that the grass is cut and the clippings are left, whereas the previous contractor collected and disposed of all clippings.

Our current grass cutting specification requires the grass to be cut fortnightly and does not include the collection and disposal of clippings. Incorporating this service would significantly increase the maintenance cost. Additionally, we are experiencing a wet spring, which accelerates grass growth.

The contractor has provided a quote to collect and dispose of the grass clippings at both Hodsoll Street Green and the village hall, with the disposal in an agreed location at the village hall. He has also quoted for the removal and disposal of grass clippings at Ash Village Hall. Furthermore, he has proposed increasing the cutting frequency to weekly cuts, which he believes would address the issue more effectively. The quotes for these services are detailed below.

Another concern has been raised regarding the grass cutting at the Play Area in Hodsoll Street. A meeting has been arranged with the contractor to discuss potential improvements in this area and respective costs. An update will be made at the meeting.

The total grass cutting contract for the year is £11,765.00 which includes the maintenance of Ash Burial Ground, the above areas at Hodsoll Street and both Ash Village Hall and the area around the war memorial.

	Number of Cuts	Current	Annual Total	Current with Collection	Annual Total	Revised weekly cut (no collection)	Annual Total
Hodsoll Street Village Green	15	45.00	675.00	85.00	1,275.00	40.00	1,200.00
Hodsoll Street Village Hall	14	45.00	630.00	85.00	1,190.00	40.00	1,120.00
Ash Village Hall	15	35.00	525.00	110.00	1,650.00	30.00	450.00
TOTAL			1,830.00		4,115.00		2,770.00
Additional Quote					£2,285.00		£940.00