



**Minutes of the  
ASH ANNUAL PARISH MEETING  
Held on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> April 2013, at 7.30pm  
In the Ash Village Hall, Queen's Road, Ash**

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Chairman: Mr G Foat – Chairman of Ash Parish Council  
Present: 50 parishioners, plus six Ash Parish Councillors, Kent County Councillor Ridings, Dover District Councillors Bartlett, Chandler & Conolly, Sgt Lidgley, PCSO Painter, KCC Warden Priestly, Mr Crick (Headteacher Cartwright & Kelsey School), Mrs Haggart (Minute Taker)  
Apologies: None

**13.01 Minutes**

The minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting held 16<sup>th</sup> April 2012 were available before the meeting. The minutes were proposed by Mr Whitburn, seconded by Mrs Bilham, agreed as a true record and were signed by the Chairman.

**13.02 To receive reports and take questions:**

1) Ash Parish Council Chairman Mr Graham Foat

Mr Foat opened his report noting that the usual problem of dog fouling around the village was getting worse, although on the Recreation Ground it had improved. There continued to be obstruction caused by parked vehicles in the village and a number of new double yellow lines were being proposed for New Street, by 11 The Street, The Street to Moat Lane, and by Lay Lane on Queens Road. The Richborough Action Group after much hard work had succeeded in keeping the waste site open. Kent County Council was proposing to turn off some lights between midnight and 5am, including some on the A257 near Ash.

The Local Development Framework had identified sites for up to 200 new homes in Ash over the next 20 years, although this did not mean that they will have to be built. The main sites being proposed in the Land Allocation Document were top of Chequer Lane near the by-pass entrance, Mill Field (only 8) and a large area on Sandwich Road.

Dover District Council Enforcement Officer was now in place and enforcement action was being taken at Westmarsh and at the banks of the River Stour below Richborough Castle.

Ash Parish Council had gone ahead with a Neighbourhood Development Plan headed by Mr Chris Turner supported by a parish council and parishioners' committee. Volunteers from Ash were welcome to take part.

The Jubilee Tree had been planted in December and the Kent Men of Trees had donated a Jubilee Oak and a £20 voucher towards another tree.

Mrs Linda Martin had resigned from the council and three applications were received and a new councillor, Mr Neil Aplin, was co-opted. Thank you to the other applicants. Thank you to Mrs Haggart, the Clerk, and to Mr Wilkinson, the Environment Assistant, whose hard work keeps all the parish council property well maintained.

Q: How can the village get enforcement of the existing double yellow lines? A: Dover District Council Parking Services Team is responsible for this and they are asked to come out to Ash when possible.

Q: Glebelands only received notice of the annual parish meeting the day before the meeting took place. A: The council will look into this.

2) Finance Report on the Parish Council Accounts, Mrs Haggart

The audited statement of the accounts for 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012 had been displayed along with the Auditor's Certificate. The un-audited summary of the accounts for the current financial year end were in the annual newsletter distributed to every household in the parish.

The receipts to 31 March 2013 were £76,625 including a grant from Kent County Council of £2,000 for Saunders Wood.

Payments to 31 March 2013 of £62,855 were lower than anticipated due to the ending of the PCSO contract in August 2012. They included the contribution to Dover District Council for The Street Public Conveniences. Donations were higher as in addition to grants to the Ash and Westmarsh Village Halls, the Heritage Centre and the Parochial Church Council for the Church Burial Ground, there was a grant of £700 to the Ash Jubilee Bash and £1,000 to the youth project run by PACE. The Welcome Pack / Directory had been well received.

The closing balances were £25,000 for the ring fenced expenditure on Security, Youth, the slide for toddlers, Road Safety measures, Saunders Wood and there was £35,000 in general reserves, part of which will be used for the contingency fund.

Due to changes in the council tax benefit, while the number of properties in the district had not changed, the tax base had. To balance this, there has been a transitional grant from central government which DDC has passed on in full to parish and town councils. While there has been no change in the amount levied per property, the total amount collected is likely to be less than last year. In Ash, for example, raising £71,777 instead of £72,065.

Ash Parish Council decided that despite the projected reduction in income, it would not increase the precept this year due to the pressure on many households' finances and the level of its reserves.

The projected expenditure for the financial year which started this April, will be just over £72,000 allowing for £7,380 to go towards possible security costs, although at this stage it is unclear if that would go towards another PCSO contract or some other type of contract; £10,497 to pay DDC for The Street Public Conveniences; grants at £4,100 and an amount of £6,800 for the Neighbourhood Development Plan.

Salaries, administration and over-all maintenance costs had been held at the same levels as last year. The contingency item in the budget was just over £9,000 and had been taken from general reserves leaving them at around £23,000. Ring fenced reserves for the current year are at £26,000 with the allocation for Saunders Wood reduced to £10,000 and an allocation of £3,000 in case a local referendum was required.

Q: Why has the cost for the PCSO decreased. A: It only covered from April to August 2012 when the contract ended.

### 13.03 Police & Community Safety Reports

#### 1) Deal Neighbourhood Police Team Sgt Lidgley

There had been 106 crimes reported in the parish of Ash over the last year. Over the last twelve months, reported crime had gone down by 5% with 16 fewer reports. There had been 12 burglaries in Ash during the year, 6 around the village and 6 in the area around Westmarsh. There had been 14 thefts, 9 in the village and 5 in the outlying rural areas mainly from sheds or cable from substation poles. Cable thefts continued to be a problem and cable sold for £20 could cost the companies £600 to replace. There had been 23 criminal damage reports of which 9 had been between June and December 2012 and 3 between January and March 2013. Two were graffiti at the Recreation Ground and 1 was domestic related.

There also had been 588 calls from Ash for a variety of reasons; 51 had been for nuisance; 9 for anti-social behaviour at The Street Bus Shelter. However when CCTV was in place, there were no calls for this area but 12 for anti-social behaviour by the Ash Village Hall. Anti-social behaviour included complaints for door to door canvassing, animals loose on the road and noise from the pub. Three had been on the 20th January for snowballs being thrown and 5 for noise. PCSOs have been visiting the area on a nightly basis, moving persons on, taking details of any anti-social behaviour and sending police letters to parents of some of the youths involved. The police have asked groups to move on where they have received reports of anti-social behaviour at The Street Bus Stop. However they also have had residents coming up to officers telling them to leave the young people alone. Over the last forty-seven nights, officers had attended the village thirty-one times in the evening on foot and vehicle patrol. The PCSO is now asked to cover six parishes in the area and part of his work is to check all reports that come in from those parishes.

Q: What is the success rate for solving burglaries. A: Sgt Lidgley will check on the statistics.

Q: What telephone number should be used to contact the police. A: 999 for emergencies, 101 (charged at local rates) to report an incident that has taken place or to speak to the PCSO.

Q: What is the official view on the effect of the cuts to Kent Police Resources. A: The £53 million reduction in the budget has meant cuts to the response teams and the neighbourhood policing teams although it has aimed not to reduce the front-line services.

Q: Has there been any progress on the recent thefts from farms. A: The matter is under investigation; in the meantime farmers are being encouraged to use CCTV and general advice on security has been given.

#### 2) Kent County Council Warden, Mr Priestly

Mr Priestly reported on new security measures using smart water especially to help prevent metal theft and the security marker pens especially for smaller items of property. He has been explaining how these can be useful to local residents. Generally, he had been continuing with visits to the village on a regular basis, often daily and improving the contacts with local people.

The Chairman thanked Sgt Lidgley, PCSO Painter and KCC Warden Priestly for their reports and they left the meeting.

### 13.04 Report from local charities and trusts:

#### 1) Ash United Charities – Mr Allpress

Mr Allpress gave his report starting with the Resthaven Charity founded in June 1973 which provides four bungalows for married couples, 60 years and over who were residents of Ash. The properties had been fully occupied during the year and were well maintained. Three new

boilers had been installed and of the £8,000 surplus, half had been added to the funds set aside for repairs and maintenance.

The Frank Kingsland Trust owns two bungalows for the elderly or physically disabled and who have been resident in Ash and particularly the ecclesiastical parish of Westmarsh. The properties had been fully occupied during the year and were in a good state of repair. Over the last four years the residents' contribution had increased to re-build the repair and maintenance reserves. The overall reserves are at £58,000.

The Ash United Charities Benevolent Fund had been set up in the 19th century and was made up of small charities that had been amalgamated into one fund which now stood at £12,000. There are specific endowments – the upkeep of a family memorial, the maintenance of the stained glass window in the north transept St Nicholas Church; and in more recent times the provision of Christmas hampers.

A summary of the accounts of all the above charities were available at the meeting.

2) Jack Foat Trust – Mrs Vallack

Mrs Vallack reported that this year had been relatively uneventful. The two new trustees Mr Gary Laslett and Mr Andrew Wilkinson were welcome additions to the Board. The accounts were available to April 2012. The total value of the Trust the majority of which is the land was valued at £1,275,288. There was cash available for suitable local projects and a printer / copier had been purchased for St Nicholas Church but it would also be available for other organisations or individuals in the parish to use. The objects of the Trust were 'such charitable purposes for the benefit of the Parish of Ash as the Trustees in their absolute discretion thin fit'. Sadly there had been some vandalised on the trees behind the pond on the Trust's land. The police were informed and warnings had been given. Recently a small motor scooter was found burning in the field behind New Street and three small trees in the shelter belt had been felled. Again the police were informed. Thank you to the dog walkers who alerted the Trust to these problems and also to those who do a litter picking job. Finally, the two areas of Jack Foat Trust land in the village are there for the benefit and pleasure of all residents and the Trust wants everyone to enjoy them.

Q: Who is the best person to contact about the Trust. A: Any of the trustees can be contacted. They are Mrs Nina Vallack, Mr Ian Chandler, Mr Gary Laslett and Mr Andrew Wilkinson.

Q: There has been a problem with cars driving onto the land by the pond. A: The Trustees will look into this.

3) Ash Educational Charities – Mr Pratt

Mr Pratt reported that the charity was safe and secure with assets of £144,472, with The Old School being the source of the principal income as at the current time there was little return on investments.

Grants had been made in 2012 of £8,778 including to the outdoor learning facility at Ash Junior School, the SNICs Projector as well as for individual book grants. To date in 2013, grants totalling £3,500 had been made including the Educational Outing for Ash Junior School. Further applications are encouraged for this year.

### **13.05. Ash and Westmarsh Village Halls' Reports**

1) Ash Village Hall – Mrs Sales

There had been a loss on paper of £4,884 of which half was depreciation; wages and the costs of utilities had risen with gas and electricity almost doubling. There was £5,041 in the

Charity Reserve Account and £4,085 in the Current Account. The premium for the insurance had increased by £800 as the building had been undervalued. The annual panto of 'Mother Goose' put on by the New Ash Players was enjoyed by all ages. Chalkfoot Theatre Arts on their last tour, staged 'The Prisoner of Zenda'. The Coalfields Regeneration Trust funded the installation of a staircase and loft area renovations and a new fire exit door had been installed.

The notable event of 2012 was the Hall's 100th Birthday on Monday 7th May when there was an open house all day. There were very successful events – the Heritage Exhibition, a children's Fancy Dress & Tea Party, thanks to the Jack Foat Trust, and in the evening a candle lit Edwardian costumed soiree with period catering.

After fourteen years as Chairman, Mrs Jean Ryan, had stepped down, with Mrs Debbie Sales taking on the position. On behalf of the Management Committee thanks were extended to the Parish Council for its continuing financial support.

A parishioner from the floor moved a vote of thanks to Mrs Ryan for all her work and for keeping the hall immaculate. The meeting agreed.

## 2) Westmarsh Village Hall

Mrs Haggart read out the report on behalf of the committee of the Westmarsh Village Hall. Due to the hard work of all the volunteers on the Management Committee, the rental receipts were £2,498. The total payments came to £1,429 and covered insurance, utilities and maintenance. Cleaning and administration were done by volunteers. The total funds held were £17,288. The AGM would be held on 24th April 2013 and more volunteers for the committee would be most welcome.

### **13.06. Cartwright & Kelsey School Report – Mr Mathew Crick, Headmaster**

The school has continued to provide a range of opportunities and services for the families of children aged 0-12. While a good education for children aged 5 to 11 represents the majority of what we offer, the school also provides excellent nursery and childcare provision for children aged 2-4. Our successful breakfast and after-school childcare offers places to children aged 2-12. This has been taken up by parents who wish to be able to work more hours, while knowing their children will be in a safe, stimulating and caring environment. Working in partnership with Aylesham Community Project we offer weekly sessions for children aged 0-2 and their parents. The health visitor now holds two sessions a week at the school.

OFSTED, the body responsible for inspecting schools, has developed a new way to present performance data. This is called the school data dashboard. It shows that at age 11 the number of children achieving at least level 4 in English and in Maths is above the national average. The scores in reading were especially pleasing as we were ranked in the top group nationally. The progress children make is also reported on in the dashboard. In both English and Maths the progress between 7 and 11 is in the top group nationally. Our nursery continues to provide excellent provision and its popularity is such that we are having to review how places are allocated through the year. For the second time in 3 years the school is over sub-scribed for admission into the reception class. We have also seen our numbers grow in other year groups. Such has been the increase in numbers that we will be creating a new class in September. This means all classes will be made up of just one year group.

But there is more to a school than tests and inspections. I am pleased to say that the school is often in the press for the right reasons. These items give the public and wider community an

insight into some of the things happening in school that enrich the learning experience enjoyed by the children.

Last year we held a successful prayer day in St Nicholas Church. We will be holding a similar event in May and once again this will be open to all members of the community to share with us. The children have made visits to Canterbury, Deal, North Kent and Margate as part of their work on science, history, geography, Religious Education, citizenship and music. These visits have been supported by the Trustees and the PTFA.

Schools continue to face profound changes.. This year the government published a new primary curriculum. With the other local schools, Ash Cartwright & Kelsey will continue to work closely to maintain the independent characteristics that have served children in the Sandwich area so well. I am convinced that a school must play a pivotal part in the life of the community it serves. By working even more closely, the primary schools in the area have demonstrated how the needs of the children with whom we are privileged to work can be best met to the benefit of all.

Q: If more houses are built in Ash will the school have the capacity to develop. A: Not sure as depends upon many unknowables. The most recent housing developments took three years before there was any impact from numbers of children from Collarmakers Green and Gardners Close.

Q: Is there room for expansion. A: It is not possible to physically expand the number of classrooms and it is not anticipated to build upwards.

Q: Is the school oversubscribed. A: The School was first preference for 31 applications, and for one of the other preferences for 11 applications. The admission limit is 30. Admissions and the level of submission is up and ahead of the expected curve for the district.

Q: What happens then? A: The local authority allocates 1st preferences and then parents are offered their next preference and are also offered their nearest available school. If this is over three miles from the child's home, there is help with the travel costs. Other than reception class, schools can take back responsibility for admissions.

Q: Are there selection criteria for C&K. A: The criteria are on the school's web-site – and is based on special needs, church association; siblings; distance; and other reasons.

Q: Is there any leeway on admission numbers. A: There is a legal restriction on the admission numbers related to the size of a school. To increase admissions an extra teacher would be needed.

### **13.07. Resolutions submitted for consideration of the meeting:**

- 1) Resolution: That this Annual Parish Meeting asks the Parish Council to support the formation of a Footpath Group of volunteers to monitor and occasionally walk Ash footpaths. Mover: Mrs Ann Foat, seconder: Mrs Janet Searle. Passed.
- 2) Resolution: That this Annual Parish Meeting supports a public litter pick 'Keep Ash Tidy Day' this summer, when all residents would be asked to tidy outside their property, with local organisations and the school asked to be involved in clearing public areas, to be organised by a committee of volunteers with the support of the Parish Council. Mover: Mrs Ann Foat, seconder: Mrs Debbie Sales. Passed.

### **13.08 Kent County Councillor Mr Leyland Ridings – report and question time**

Mr Ridings reported that for the third year running Kent County Council had frozen the county council tax, although the district council and police showed small increases. These increases are not subject to the control of KCC.

KCC has championed 3,500 new apprenticeships and there are now more than ten thousand in Kent, the most successful county in the country.

A regional growth fund worth £35 million has been established to support new and growing businesses in East Kent, on the Discovery Park.

Following the Pfizer closure, the site was designated an enterprise zone, now named the Discovery Park with new owners. Negotiations with Pfizer led to the retention of seven hundred jobs on site and three hundred further jobs have now been generated.

New flood defences to secure the Discovery Park and Sandwich Town have been funded together with the environment agency at a cost of more than £20 million and work began in 2013.

Following my lobbying assisted by Cllr John Kirby and Richborough Action Group (RAG), the leader of KCC, Paul Carter has agreed that the Richborough HWRC will remain open. It was a good example of joint working and will mean that KCC will look at how it handles projects in the future. The existing highways and transport depot in Ash Road will be sold and the operation moved to the Richborough HWRC site. A new and more efficient HWRC will be constructed; both facilities will share the Richborough site, which will open early in 2014.

Highways Matters: –

- Upgrading the Ash roundabout, including skid resistant surfaces on the approaches
- Completion of 50mph (max) speed limit from Canterbury to Wingham on the A257
- Interactive speed signs outside Sandwich Technology School and in the centre of Sandwich will be erected by the end of April 2013
- More roads in the district to be re-surfaced and potholes repaired as soon as the weather improves.

Q: What is the budget for re-surfacing repairs. A: There is a budget of £6 million for road repairs for the county and there may be additional money from central government.

Q: Is fracking going to be taking place in the county. A: There have been requests for sample bores but they are not proceeding. When developers want to proceed, the applications would come back for public consultation.

### **13.09 Dover District Councillors Mr Trevor Bartlett, Mrs Sue Chandler and Mr Mike Conolly – report and question time**

Mrs Chandler's report centered on two themes: finance and regeneration. There had been increasing pressure on the main DDC General Fund budget. By careful management of resources, a Budget had been delivered with only a small increase in Council Tax while maintaining front line services. There is reasonable confidence that the same will be achieved in 2013/14 without letting reserves fall below £2 million even though business rate income will fall with the demolition of the older buildings on the Discovery Park. Changes in welfare reform have made the financial picture particularly volatile.

Town & Parish Councils have been affected by the change from Council Tax benefits which came into effect on April 1st. This required a saving of 10% on total funding and resulted in the reduction of the Council Tax base for town and parish councils. All councils benefited from a transition award from central Government. As there is a possibility of capping of

town and parish council precepts from 2014 onwards, a number of councils have put through significant increases in their precepts.

A change in the financing arrangement for the ring-fenced Housing Revenue Accounts has had a very beneficial effect on HRA balances, allowing the Council to put aside £2.5 million to help fund small scale residential development on land currently owned by DDC and no longer needed.

Progress on the main regeneration agenda has at times been frustratingly slow. This is particularly true of the Dover Town Investment Zone fronting onto the A20. There has been encouraging progress on the Western Heights and Betteshanger Colliery site. Local Development Orders are now in place at the Discovery Park which will make it much simpler for new tenants to take space. DDC is supporting Ash as the parish works on its own Neighbourhood Development Plan.

The Government grant of £35 million to East Kent in the Regional Growth Fund has started paying dividends. Eight companies within the DDC area have already received grants or loans, two of them in the Discovery Park, and two more are at an advanced stage of application, one of them a major project. Funds supplied so far total £1.9 million, creating an estimated 227 full time jobs plus some part time.

Following the changes in the waste collection implemented in the autumn of 2011, percentage recycling rates in DDC are now consistently in the high 40s(%) and have occasionally topped 50%. Green waste collection, for those who want it, was extended to all households in the District in 2012.

DDC has planned to tighten up enforcement of penalties for littering and dog fouling, though the use of a private contracting firm had to be abandoned. More resources are being made available through the use of DDC staff and it is hoped that parish councils can become involved in the monitoring and reporting of offences. With the recruitment of a new senior enforcement officer, a higher number of S215 notices are being issued to owners of run down or derelict properties.

There has also been a significant movement on enforcement on a number of sites. The former Lagaan restaurant is now being converted into two dwellings, a revised S215 notice has been served on the owner of 26 New Street, an enforcement notice has been served on one of the moorings at Richborough. This took effect on April 11th with six months for compliance. At Clampitts Farm, Westmarsh, all the caravans have been removed but the toilet / shower block is still in situ and the owner had been reminded that this too must be removed.

There have been two examples of 'People Power' in the District this year. Following a campaign led by our MP, district councillors, parish councillors and residents, the application from Salvatori for additional vehicle licences has been withdrawn. Secondly, the Richborough waste site has been saved thanks to the efforts of the Action Group and a lot of behind the scenes lobbying by county and district councillors.

Finally, with the changes in the NHS now underway, there has been the introduction of the District Health and Well-Being Board, with the local Clinical Commissioning Group renting space at the DDC offices. DDC has taken a leading role in piloting these changes and a number of other councils have benefitted from our experiences in setting up these organisations.



Q: Is the recycled collection being shipped overseas. A: DDC aims to recycle as close to home as possible with plastics being reduced to granular form and then being sold on.

Q: Enforcement of double yellow line parking restrictions. A: Dover District Council Parking Services have been asked to make visits and for reports to be sent to the ward councillors.

Q: If someone is parked illegally, can you telephone DDC Parking Services and ask them to come out. A: There is not an on demand number but the process will be checked and a report given to the next Parish Council meeting.

Q: Concerns were expressed about the future of the Chequers (Pub) as it was understood that Punch Taverns may be trying to close the pub, as often it has no beer. A: Cllr Chandler will speak to the DDC Licencing Officer who has visited the pub and spoken to Punch Taverns, when an assurance was given that they intended to maintain it as a public house. It would be worth noting that there is now a 'Community Right to Buy' where buildings in a parish can be listed by notifying DDC. Should an owner then want to sell that property the community is given 6 months to raise the market value to purchase the property for use by the community. This can be used to protect public houses but only if it is the sole pub in a village.

Q: Is it worth the community approaching Punch Taverns. A: It could be as Punch Taverns may want to sell the pub.

Q: if the current owners want a change of use is it open to the planners to reject this application. A: There are regulations governing planning applications within which planners must operate.

### **13.10 Any Other Business Concerned with Parish Affairs**

- 1) Mr Blaxmore appealed for more volunteers to help maintain the St Nicholas Church Yard – especially younger people were needed. It is one Saturday a month during the summer.
- 2) Mr Loffman wanted to canvass the village to see if there was support for a Library Guild to support the future continuation of the Library Service in Ash. He had started by carrying out a survey to assess the level of support as well as submitting an article for the parish magazine. Anyone interested in supporting this idea could contact him. The Chairman informed the meeting that there would be a meeting in June on what support the village could give to safeguard the library service to Ash.
- 3) Mrs Bilham reported on the success of the Ash Bash and expressed her thanks to all those who had worked so hard and all who had attended. The next Ash Bash was planned for July 2014. There will an article in the parish magazine calling for volunteers to help.
- 4) Mr Ridings reported that there were a number of events planned to commemorate the start of World War One during August 2014.
- 5) A parishioner asked if there would be a Beating of the Bounds in 2014. The Chairman explained that the civil parish council organises this every five years and the next one would be in 2015. There would be a Benefice Beating of the Bounds in September 2013.
- 6) Mr Whitburn spoke about arrangements for next year's annual meeting when it was planned to issue the regular reports in a booklet form to allow more time for presentations.

There being no other business, the Chairman, thanked all those attending the meeting and remarked how it was especially encouraging that there were so many youthful faces.

The meeting closed at 9.20pm.