



# **Minutes of the ASH ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

**Held on Monday 10th April 2017, at 7.30 pm  
In the Ash Village Hall, Queen's Road, Ash**

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Chairman: Mr G Foat – Chairman of Ash Parish Council  
Present: Forty-nine parishioners, nine Ash Parish Councillors, Dover District Councillors Mr T Bartlett, Mrs S Chandler, Mr M Conolly. In attendance: Mrs C Haggart (Minute Taker)  
Apologies: KCC Councillor Mr L Ridings, Mrs D Battersea, Interim Head Teacher, Ash Cartwright & Kelsey CEP School.

## **17.01 Minutes**

It was proposed by Mr R Cooper, seconded by Mr R Palmer and agreed to accept the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of 18<sup>th</sup> April 2016 as a correct record. The Chairman signed the minutes.

## **17.02 To receive reports and take questions:**

### **i) Ash Parish Council Chairman's Report – Mr G Foat**

Mr Foat welcomed the residents and the DDC Councillors to the meeting and reported that the new Parish Clerk, Mrs Christine Haggart had been appointed on the 1<sup>st</sup> May 2016. Two vacancies had occurred on the Parish Council in the last year and Mr Kevin Ellis and Mr Andrew Rowley had joined the Council.

Further to the items in the Chairman's Report which had been distributed to all the households in the Parish, there had been a number of updates.

The long derelict property at 26 New Street was now up for sale.

A number of the lights along the A257 by Ash were not working and it was not known how long it would take for them to be repaired. This was even more important since the removal of the street lights at the junctions with Sandwich Road and Chequer Lane. In January, there had been a fatal accident at the A257 junction with Chequer Lane.

As reported, the Seesaw had been reinstalled and a new aerial slide has been installed at the Recreation Ground. This slide is not as thrilling as the old one but this is the penalty paid for tighter health and safety rules.

A public meeting was held in July to discuss the proposed plans for building houses. About 140 people attended and the questions easily filled 2 hours. The three sites under discussion were the site in Chequer Lane, the Agrii Cowan site and the land north of Sandwich Road opposite Agrii. The first two sites are in the Dover local plan and had been agreed by the Parish Council some time ago as part of the houses demanded to be built by the Government. The third site is outside the village confines. All but one resident at the meeting were against this development. My thanks to DDC Cllr Mrs Chandler for fielding virtually all the questions. Ash Parish Council had opposed the planning applications for Sandwich Road and the White Post Farm application which were recommended for approval by the DDC Planning Officers. The Chairman thanked DDC Cllr Mr Conolly and resident, Mr Burnside, for speaking against the White Post Farm application at the DDC Planning Committee meeting. Both applications were refused.

The two applications for the new masts, opposed by the Parish Council, were refused by DDC.

The amalgamation of Canterbury, Dover, Shepway and Thanet Councils had been considered, however as Shepway Council had voted against the proposal, this was now in limbo. It was unlikely that it could have provided as good a service as is given by our current councillors.

The Footpaths Group run by volunteers regularly walk and report on problems in the Public Rights of Way in Ash. KCC had recently decided that there is no footpath along the old Weddington Lane despite two signs having marked the way for many years.

Boundary changes are also being proposed for Parliamentary elections and this will probably mean that Ash will return to the Dover constituency after about 35 years in South Thanet.

The problem of dog waste on footpaths and on the Recreation Ground continues to be an increasing problem. DDC uses a private company to supply Dog Wardens and it is hoped that they will be able to come out to Ash regularly.

The Traffic Calming project had not been completed due to problems finding consultants to prepare the report required by KCC before the planned work can be started. The Council has now received the quotes.

Illegal parking continues to cause problems to residents and often blocks buses and traffic along The Street. It has been agreed to put in bollards on the corner of Chequer Lane and The Street and in front of The Street Toilets to try and improve the flow of traffic and make it safer for pedestrians. Parking on the pavements also causes problems by forcing pedestrians into the road which is very dangerous.

The written report of the Chairman, also covered the Ash Neighbourhood Development Plan open day held on 30<sup>th</sup> April. 199 people attended with the chance to highlight the issues that concern them through post-it-notes. This day was also used to welcome newcomers to the village with many organisations having a stand to enable them to explain what the village offers.

In June, Ash cleaned for the Queen in celebration of her 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday and also with a 'bring and share' lunch in a crowded village hall. Young people presented a resume of Ash in each decade of the Queen's reign devised by the Heritage Group.

The Tree Preservation Order on the Poplar in the Churchyard was challenged but Dover District Council maintained this Order. Also trees in Cherry Garden Lane had their preservation order renewed.

After a long spell of relatively low vandalism the doors of the toilets in the street were badly damaged before Christmas, the men's door beyond repair. These doors are to be replaced by Dover District Council but at a cost to Ash Parish according to the agreement between the Parish and District Councils. The cost will be over £3000.

In closing, the Chairman thanked the writers of ONLOOKER for the Parish Magazine also the Parish Council's Environment Officer Mr Wilkinson and Clerk Mrs Haggart.

Questions:

Q: Why was the workload onerous?

A: It was explained that there had been a large amount of work due to the NDP, preparing the S106 contribution requests and associated planning work which the Council had not had to do in previous years.

Q: Why is there so much unused space on the Ash Recreation Ground and could more facilities be provided such as a cinema.

A: It was explained that part of the Ash Recreation Ground closest to Queen's Road had been gifted to the parish in 1925<sup>1</sup> for the use of children not exceeding 16 years of age and there were restrictions on what could be built upon it. There were play areas and equipment for young people, an aerial slide, a kick wall, tennis courts and playing pitches for football, cricket and rugby. There is a cinema in Sandwich and many local groups and organisations in Ash have social events for all age groups.

Q: Why is the Council considering buying Saunders Wood and what about S106 contributions?

A: The Council is looking at different ways of protecting green spaces that are used by residents and it may be necessary to consider in consultation with residents, the purchase of Saunders Wood in the future. S106 contributions do not always come directly to the Parish but if they do, they have to be for specific projects and will only part fund them, so the Parish Council is making provision for this.

Q: The new housing will generate a large increase in local traffic and a roundabout is needed as the junction is dangerous.

A: KKC has decided that the junction is not dangerous and that a roundabout would not be needed as in their opinion there will not be a significant increase in local traffic.

Q: Are the new houses going to be built?

A: The planning application for Chequer Lane is progressing and it is expected that the houses will be built.

Q: The new doors on The Street Toilets were very expensive – was this good value?

A: Ash Parish Council agreed that they were very expensive and was in discussions with DDC about the cost.

ii) Parish Council Finance Report – Mrs Christine Haggart, Clerk

Audit reports for the year ended 31 March 2016, the audited statement of accounts, along with the Auditor's Certificate; are on the Ash Parish Council web-site. The 2017-2018 budget and estimated summary of Receipts and Payments for the financial year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017 were delivered along with the notice of the meeting, to every house in the parish.

There was a balance of £96,465 carried over from the previous year, and receipts for the year ended 31 March 2017 were £89,190. This figure includes the grant from the Jack Foat Trust for the aerial slide and Neighbourhood Development Plan grant. There was no increase in the council tax. Payments for the year were £74,240, with new items including £5,213 for the Neighbourhood Development Plan, £12,782 for the aerial slide and £1,200 to repair the see-saw. Other costs were in line with previous year's expenditure and came in under budget.

The current budget includes an 8.5% increase in the Ash Parish Council tax which is an increase of £5.15 per household for the year. The budget was published this year because it is important that residents know why such an increase was agreed. There are some increases in employment costs and a large increase in telephone and broad-band charges of £650 due to a change in provider.

While the pressure from the 5-year land supply has eased, the Local Development Plan is being reviewed this summer and autumn and so the Council has allocated £1,300 for planning advice, as it is likely that possible sites will need to be assessed. The rest of the overhead costs are in line with previous years.

However, there is an amount of £54,949 that is included in the current budget which will be coming out of reserves. This is the reason for the increase, as without it the reserves will fall below what is

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<sup>1</sup> Mr Albert Hamilton Godfrey had gifted the land in memory of his son, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant William John Godfrey, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion the Royal Highlanders Black Watch, killed in action 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1916. The other half of the Recreation Ground had been purchased in 1951 by public subscription from the residents in Ash.

sensible with the possible future changes in local government structures and the continuing pressure on local authorities to move costs down to parish councils.

The Neighbourhood Development Plan will be grant funded as much as possible, however there is £12,450 allocated for this year's budget as it is hoped that the Plan will be ready for a referendum before April 2018. New housing developments continue to be a possibility. If they materialise, S106 projects will need some contribution from the Parish Council, plus the projects will need plans and legal advice and so £2,000 has been allocated for this possibility.

The Traffic Calming project is now underway with consultants' quoting and it is expected that their report will be in the region of £3,000. The cost of installation is likely to be around another £15,000 and this will come out of reserves.

The item for Saunders Wood, Green Spaces and PROW – £2,000 will come out of income and £10,000 will be allocated from reserves. While the Saunders Wood and Green Spaces projects will be consulted upon, the Council considered that pressure on housing may result in public green spaces in the village, particularly those owned by Kent County Council, being put up for sale. The Public Rights of Way item refers to the unused part of Weddington Lane having to be made into a Public Right of Way. The Parish Council will have to pay the cost of doing this work. Contingencies, elections and S137 provision need to be made and these if required will come out of the reserves.

There is a further £16,000 held in ear-marked reserves for possible expenditure in the future, which includes a S106 contribution, future safety surface provision, and an amount for the NDP should it need additional work in 2018-2019.

This will leave a general reserve of £40,467 which is now about 55% of the precept. There continues to be discussions about local government re-structuring and possible capping of parish and town council precepts. There is much financial uncertainty in local government. The combination of all of the above, was the reason that the precept was increased. The Council is very mindful of the pressures on household incomes and will continue to ensure that residents' money is spent carefully, while continuing to make provision for the future needs of the parish.

There were no questions or further contributions on the Finance Report.

iii) Ash Neighbourhood Development Plan – Mr Jeffrey Loffman, Chair of the NDP Standing Committee

Mr Loffman opened by thanking all the people who had helped with the work, the support from the local schools and to all those Patchworkers who had delivering the household survey. 350 households had returned the survey which represented around 31% of the parish. This information plus that gathered at the workshops will come together in the draft plan.

DDC will be reviewing their Local Plan and this is expected to be completed for 2018. DDC will be making a 'Call for Sites' and it would be helpful if those who wish to respond, could also let the Parish Clerk know, so the information can be considered in the drafting of the Ash Plan.

While about 85% of the replies from the household survey said they did not want additional sites other than those already allocated by DDC, and even though DDC has a current 5-year land supply, the future is not certain. It is possible that DDC will be forced to find additional sites to meet national targets. A Neighbourhood Development Plan can look at growth, what kind, where and how.

The key to drafting the Ash NDP is to include a rigorous set of design criteria and, similarly, to look at what need there may be for gradual, small-scale development rather than large individual sites. The Plan can frame future possible development so that the well-being and identity of the parish and village is not left only in the hands of DDC.

Mr Loffman asked the meeting to make sure the candidates for local elections provide assurances to represent the parish in making sure that future development is appropriate and reasonable.

Questions:

Q: In the new DDC Local Plan, what will be the numbers of new houses needed and how many will come to Ash?

A: DDC Cllr Chandler explained that the numbers have not been set but it is likely that there will be an increase for the District. Not all the sites in the current plan have been delivered and so there may need to be replacement sites. The Ash NDP is important and will be a formal, planning policy document that has to be taken into account by DDC.

Q: The Housing Minister has said that all councils must produce a survey of brown-field sites – has this been done?

A: DDC has carried out their information gathering to compile the register and this will be part of the revised Local Plan and will be published once the criteria is finalised.

### **17.03 Reports from and Questions for the local charities and trusts:**

i) Ash United Charities - Benevolent Fund, Resthaven Almshouses and the Frank Kingsland Trust – Mrs Mary Smith

There are six small charities that make up the Benevolent Fund and its aims are to aid those in the parish who may need help. The Trustees are able to consider requests and if you know someone who may need help, please ask them to contact the Fund.

There are two other charities that make up the Ash United Charities. They are the Resthaven Almshouses which own four properties and the Frank Kingsland Trust which own two properties. These provide long-term residential accommodation for retired, elderly residents of Ash, some of whom have been in residence for over twenty years. There is an on-going programme of maintenance of the properties and the finances are sound.

Question & Answer: It was confirmed that there is a waiting list.

ii) Jack Foat Trust – Mrs Nina Vallack

The accounts for the Trust are on display are for the year ended 5<sup>th</sup> April 2016. At this point in 2016, the total value of the Trust Fund was £1,999,679. This was a large increase from the previous year's figure of £1,408,249, and was entirely due, as we reported last year to the sale of part our land at Mill Field. In the last year's report, I said it was our intention, if possible, to purchase a 'Buy to Let' property. This we have done, as you are probably aware of from the Parish Magazine. The property is a bungalow in Woods Ley and we have been advertising for a suitable tenant. This is dealt with by our Agents – Finns and not the by the Trustees personally. This now brings the value of our land and property portfolio to approximately £1 million and our investments to just over £700,000.

Last year, I reported £12,000 had been paid to the Ash Parish Council for the replacement of the Aerial slide in the Recreation Ground. In fact, due to various delays, this was not paid until the 2016-2017 financial year and so does not appear in the accounts on display.

Over the coming months, we will be carrying out repairs and maintenance to our properties in The Street, following routine inspections and we are awaiting quotations.

Questions:

Q: The fields at the end of Pudding Lane are a great amenity for local residents but would the Trust consider marking off a picnic area and carrying out some work on the area and the trees, in particular the magnolia.

A: The management of this area is in part done through grazing and in the past the area along the bank had picnic benches and seats which unfortunately had been stolen. The Trust will take on board the requests and look at the matters raised at their annual inspection. They will also consider signage as it was raised that not all residents were aware of the site.

Q&A: It was explained that the money from the sale of some of the land at Mill Field was being held in reserve while the Trust considered the possible purchase of other properties. The existing properties on The Street also need external and internal refurbishment and some of the money will be used for those works.

iii) Ash Educational Charities – (Cartwright, Kelsey & Godfrey Charities) - Mr Peter Chandler  
The charities own and rent out the Old School buildings in The Street. The total funds of the Trust are around £190,000. These charities make grants for educational purposes and each year donations are made to the Cartwright & Kelsey Primary School, with individual grants for books to those young people going onto further education and other requests that are for educational benefit.

Questions:

Q&A: It was explained that the lease on the Old School with the current occupiers, ends in 2019 and the Trustees will review the situation and take a decision on what to do going forward. It is understood that the current occupiers have made provision for alternative premises at Stourmouth although there were no definite arrangements at this time.

Q&A: The accounts would be available and the reports are made annually to the Charity Commission. There had been a total of £902 spent on grants, with donations to the Parochial Church Council for display boards, bibles and memory sticks for the children in their final year at the Cartwright & Kelsey Primary School, and some individual grants.

#### **17.04 Village Hall Reports and Questions**

i) Ash Village Hall – Mr Tony Jones, Chairman

The Hall hiring remains steady. All but one of the groups using the Hall regularly are represented on the Management Committee.

We managed to complete the installation of the stage lighting, for which the Jack Foat Trust donated the finance. All the new equipment was used in this year's Panto production.

We continue to be proactive in our maintenance and renewal of equipment. There have been a number of purchases. These are new tables and curtains in the main hall, a replacement fire door in the library, a new fridge in the kitchen. The main hall has been decorated and screens fitted at both ends of the hall.

This means that we made a loss this year, compared to a profit last year but have kept our hiring charges the same for two years running.

It remains for me to thank, on behalf of the Committee, the Parish Council for their continued financial support of the Hall.

Questions:

Q & A: It was explained that there are community mornings on the first Saturday of the month, hosted by different local groups, with refreshments and a variety of produce, crafts and goods on sale as well as information about local events and groups.

ii) Westmarsh Village Hall – Mr Andrew Rowley, Chairman

Last year was a year of change for Westmarsh Village Hall. In August a new Committee took over the operation of the Village Hall made up of Westmarsh residents: myself, Andrew Rowley as Chair; Treasurer: Rob Milton; Secretary: Derek Richford; Bookings: Alison Stone; and Nikki Larkin who has supported events.

The Committee undertook a thorough review of the general operation of the hall and implemented a number of much needed improvements. This included updated financials and audited accounts; a new website and online booking form.

The Committee worked with the local Fire Brigade to bring the hall up to the correct fire safety standard and upgraded signage, security lighting and locks. All the hall electrics were checked and up-graded and various plumbing and other issues were fixed. Weekly cleaning takes place.

There are regular bookings for Pilates and Fencing and we have put together a plan for regular keynote events. Last year there were events for the Queen's Birthday and a very successful Halloween event aimed mainly at kiddies. This year, plans are being made for a Quiz Night, Halloween and Caledh, with other ideas in the pipeline.

Finances are stable, and at 3<sup>rd</sup> March we have £2,618 in the current account and £15,276 in the reserve account. Our total income in the last year was £2,125, and expenditure £2,372 - although this included £682 capital expenditure on the various improvements.

Our next step will be to work more closely with the Ash Village Hall and to advertise to try to increase the volume of usage.

The Westmarsh Village Hall is a wonderful resource with a good kitchen, ample parking and outdoor space that can be used for many functions and is open and available for bookings by the hour or day. We hope to see everyone using it in the coming year.

There were no questions.

### **17.05 Cartwright & Kelsey School Report and Questions**

In the absence of the interim Head Teacher, Mrs D Battersea, her written report was read out to the meeting. Mrs Battersea had taken up the position in January 2017 and will continue until the new substantive Head teacher, starts in September 2017.

The children at Cartwright & Kelsey School are conscientious in their studies and have a good attitude to their learning. They enjoy a broad and balanced curriculum which encourages perseverance and develops their resilience. Forest School, a Science and Technology Day with Pfizer staff, and building self-confidence and team spirit with Challenger Troop are to name but a few of the activities introduced this year.

History has been a focus this term, with Year 5 studying the Victorians. They experienced a day dressed as Victorian children in a Victorian classroom, a strict experience they will not forget! Year 1 took part in a Medieval day which was a very historic and colourful occasion. Even our parents joined in with the learning as they took part in Talk for Writing workshops in the classrooms with their children. New 'Come and Play' sessions for parents of our reception children will take place from term 5, as well as transition events for our new September starters.

In terms 5 and 6, the children will have the opportunity to take part in various sporting activities with and against children from our collaboration schools locally. Already our football team have shown their skills by reaching the final of the local cup competition, only losing 1-0 in the last 10 seconds of extra-time! In May, the Year 6 children will be off on a residential trip to Swattenden, Cranbrook where they will be able to take part in climbing, raft building, a high ropes course and many other action-packed activities. It is a character building time when the children get to develop their physical and team building skills in an environment set to challenge them in fun and exciting ways.

The children's school experience is supported by our industrious PTFA who have been busy organising fundraising discos, fairs and a secret present day. They have been able to contribute funds towards school trips, extra classroom resources and in the near future, a new adventure area.

Our active parent council expressed an interest in how parents can take more of a role in engaging with the school and it is they who introduced us to Forest School. The children in Years 5 and 6 enjoyed it so much that we hope to arrange more Forest School days for the children in Years 1 to

4 in the summer term. Following up on other ideas for parental engagement, we invited our mums in for a Mother's Day dinner with their children which all enjoyed.

We have much to look forward to in the summer term including a visit by Bishop Trevor on 18<sup>th</sup> May who will formally launch our new Values: Friendship, Forgiveness, Happiness, Creativity, Community and Perseverance (leading to excellence). These Values are distinctive to our school and are part of our everyday teaching and learning, contributing to the well-being and involvement of all. We have invited Ronni Lamont from the Diocese to visit our school in June to talk to the staff, Governors and members of our local church about understanding, identifying, and developing spirituality in our children.

To end, I have to say that I am enjoying my time at Ash Cartwright and Kelsey School; the Governors, parents, staff and children have made me feel most welcome.

Contributions – the children had also visited the Ash Heritage Centre and had enjoyed their visits.

### **17.06 No written resolutions had been received.**

### **17.07 Report from Kent County Councillor Mr L Ridings and Questions**

The Chairman explained that after many years of representing the local area, KCC Cllr Ridings would not be standing in the forthcoming elections. In his absence, the Chairman thanked Mr Ridings for his work and the twenty years of service he had given to the Parish and the County. The written report from KCC Cllr Ridings was noted. The main points were:

Kent County Council continued to face unprecedented financial challenges

- A reduction of grants from central government meant that KCC had to make £76m of savings despite rising costs and responsibilities.
- The greatest pressures for 17/18 were in Adult Social Care, Children's Services and rising costs for SEN Transport.
- In line with the previous year, KCC members approved a 3.99% increase in council tax (1.99% for general services and 2% for the National Social Care Levy). This will raise an additional £24m of funding.
- The total rise for a Band D property will be £45.27 a year to a total of £1,178.82. KCC accounts for the largest share of council tax (about 70%) and provides around 300 services
- A significant proportion of savings will come from efficiencies. This includes savings through better procurement from both the private and voluntary sector and by making more services available online. There will be around 300 jobs cut (2,300 have already been taken out over the last five years). The continuing programme of changing to LED streetlights which is nearly complete, will reduce energy and maintenance bills.

Other Items: -

- The Young Persons Travel Pass (successor to the Freedom Pass). Apart from London, Kent is the only area in England with a bus pass for children 11 – 16 years old. Each pass (depending on usage) costs KCC around £600 and is sold to parents for £270 and is reviewed annually. Around 25,000 children in Kent hold a Young Persons Travel Pass.
- Broadband - KCC has completed an extended programme to bring access to broadband to 95% of households in Kent.
- Local member grant - it was agreed at the County Council meeting on 9 February that the Combined Members' Grant fund will be increased from £20,000 to £22,000 per councillor in 2017/18.
- Education - The quality of education in Kent schools has improved year on year since 2011, Overall, the latest Ofsted data (as at December 2016) for Kent shows that 90% of schools are



rated good or outstanding, up from 84% in the previous year. We expect this positive trend to continue towards our targets of at least 95% of Primary and 93% of Secondary schools judged to be good or outstanding by 2018.

Questions:

Q&A: At the previous Annual Parish meeting, the poor conditions of white lines on junctions and at zebra crossings were raised. In many areas these still had not been repainted. This will be referred to KCC Highways.

**17.08 Report from the Dover District Councillors and Questions – DDC Cllrs Mr T Bartlett, Mrs S Chandler and Mr M Conolly**

DDC Cllr M Conolly presented the report on behalf of all the DDC ward councillors for Ash. Due to the Kent County Council Elections taking place in May, councillors' statements were required to be confined to factual reporting.

- In some respects, 2016/17 was a fairly ordinary year for DDC and it delivered all its responsibilities and services on budget, with a small surplus. The 2017/18 Budget is virtually balanced and shows only a very small deficit, with a satisfactory level of reserves, although there is much concern about the volatility of business rates and a significant contingency figure has been included to cover valuation appeals.
- The DTIZ, or St James development in Dover Town Centre was now at the construction stage, with the hotel and cinema likely to be the first to open. 80% of the retail units were let.
- The new Leisure Centre, to be sited at Whitfield where it can serve the District as a whole, was at planning stage. The main construction company was in place and the choice of operating company would be made in May and it is expected to open early in 2019.
- A Lottery grant for the refurbishment of Dover Town Hall, or Maison Dieu, had been applied for, and the programme to rejuvenate Kearsney Abbey and Russell Gardens was well advanced.
- The regeneration of the Western Heights had stalled because of legal action.
- Dover Harbour Board were going ahead with the redevelopment of the Western Docks and DDC was working with them on the master plan for the waterfront area.
- Much work has been done in Sandwich to ease the traffic problems there and this project had seen excellent co-operation between DDC, KCC, Sandwich Town Council and the local MP.
- There will be a review of the DDC Local Plan.
- The R&A announced the Open Golf Championship will return to Sandwich in 2020.
- There is likely to be a major deficit in 2018/19, and the following years. One part of the plan to address this was the decision to invest in residential and commercial property. A course of action that a number of councils have embarked upon recently in order to increase income. If successful this will help, but not solve the problem entirely.
- A proposal had been developed for a merger of Dover, Canterbury, Shepway and Thanet into a combined authority so that significant savings could be made. On March 22<sup>nd</sup> all four councils voted. However, Shepway voted against and new proposals will need to be considered. These include further shared services and, possibly, as our MPs are encouraging us to pursue, to see whether the unitary option can be put back on the table. This will be influenced by imminent DCLG decisions on structural changes in Dorset and Buckinghamshire

In the meantime, your councillors will continue with the day job; advising and speaking on planning issues (with some favourable results recently); chasing up missed collections and defective lights and generally acting as a bridge and two-way communications vehicle between the council and individual communities.

Questions & Answers:

- i) It was explained that there was a £25,000 reserve for the legal challenge on the planning application at Farthingloe in relation to the regeneration of the Western Heights. DDC felt that they had a strong case. Western Heights was an under-used resource and the development at Farthingloe would help to fund the regeneration.
- ii) The decision to invest in commercial and residential property had been taken in December 2016 and as opportunities arose would be funded by loans from the Public Works Loan Board. The current rate of interest was 1.25%.
- iii) Councillors were asked if they would always be 'on the side' of the residents in opposing future planning applications. It was explained that councillors must take a view on each planning application as it comes forward.
- iv) KCC Highways would be asked to clarify why a pothole had to be deeper than 10 mm before they would do a temporary repair.
- v) It was explained that the erection of pylons from Richborough to Canterbury (NEMO Project) had been referred to the Secretary of State. There was no information to date on whether the planning applications for the masts would go to appeal. It was noted that the sites for both the masts were in the parish of Ash.
- vi) A resident raised the problem of illegal parking on double yellow lines in the village, especially around 3.30 pm on a week-day. DDC Cllr Bartlett would ask for DDC Parking Services to visit Ash more regularly.

**17.09 Any Other Business Concerned with Parish Affairs**

- i) Twinning of Ash with Templemars – it was reported that the twinning agreement would be signed at an event to be held in Ash on the 29<sup>th</sup> April 2017 when residents from Templemars would be visiting. More information can be obtained from Mrs Penny Bernard.
- ii) Query on whether a site in Westmarsh owned by Mr Lane had been sold. DDC Cllr Connolly would follow up this item.
- iii) It was explained that the fence around the tree on the Ash Recreation Ground which crossed over the adjacent seat, had been put up to protect the tree.
- iv) It was explained that the report on ways to improve traffic safety in the village would look at the signage around the village.
- v) The use of the turning area in the DDC The Street Car Park for parking would be followed up by DDC Cllr Bartlett.
- vi) It was suggested that the bollards to help prevent illegal parking could be extended along The Street as far as the Chemist. This would be considered by the Ash Parish Council and KCC Highways.
- vii) It was suggested that the spotlight on the DDC The Street Toilet Block could be used for improving the safety of the area. DDC Cllr Bartlett would follow up this suggestion.
- viii) Update on Chequer Inn was given. The Campaign Group had been working on raising the money to purchase and open the pub. The share offer was still open and over 800 shares had been issued.

The Chairman thanked DDC Cllrs Mr Bartlett, Mrs Chandler and Mr Conolly and all the residents present for attended the meeting.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.10pm.

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