



# **Minutes of the ASH ANNUAL PARISH MEETING Held on Monday 15th April 2019 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: 37 Parishioners, 6 Ash Parish Councillors, Dover District Councillor, Mr T Bartlett, Kent County Councillor Mrs S Chandler.

In attendance: Mrs C Haggart (Minute Taker).

Apologies: DDC Councillor Mr M Conolly, Cartwright & Kelsey Primary School Headteacher, Mrs F Crascall.

## **19.01 Minutes**

It was proposed by Mr P Chandler, seconded by Mrs N Vallack, and agreed to accept the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of 23rd April 2018 as a correct record. The Chairman signed the minutes.

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

- i) Ash Parish Council Chairman's Report – Mr G Foat  
(The Chairman's report had been distributed to every house in the parish).

Mr Foat welcomed the residents to the meeting and explained that this was their meeting.

Ash Parish Council is responsible for the recreation ground, the allotments and the toilets on the recreation ground (but not the sports pavilion), the War Memorials at Ash and Westmarsh, five bus shelters and several road-side seats and litter bins. Ash Parish Council also pay Dover District Council to enable the toilets in The Street to remain open.

Three new councillors had joined during the year – Mr Chandler, Mr Humphries and Mrs Wilkinson.

Updates from the report in the newsletter.

- Cop Street - Kent County Council has agreed to carry out the work to repair and replace the damaged pipe on Cop Street and to install a protective high concrete kerb. This will finally bring to an end a problem that had been on-going for at least two years.
- Public right of way designation along the old Weddington road from Queen's Road to Burfords Alley has run into great difficulty. Some brambles have been removed at the east end and this shows a ditch where the path was to pass. It is now very unlikely that there is enough room for a path and it may be extremely difficult to prove that the path has been walked regularly for many years.
- Annual inspection of the allotments showed they were being kept in good condition.
- Chequer Lane development for 90 new houses is due to start work this year. This will impact the safety at the junction with A257. There is a further problem at this junction and the one at Sandwich Road where the lights have been removed without consultation with the Ash Parish Council. They have not been removed from the Guilton junction and the parish council is asking for an answer on what is different about this junction.

- New play equipment for the young on the Recreation Ground that will be installed by the parish council should be completed in the coming year, as well as the installation of the two benches made from the tree that had to be felled and left as a monolith.
- A village fete is being held on August Bank Holiday and the parish council is supporting the group of villagers organising this event.
- Unfortunately, there has been a recent burglary in the early hours of the morning at the Welcome Store in the village.

The other items covered in the distributed report.

- The eleventh of November 2018 was the 100th anniversary of the end of World War I and to mark this the Council sponsored the events held in the Ash village hall by the Heritage Group on the weekend of 10th and 11th November.
- The Parish Council provided wreaths to be laid on both Ash and Westmarsh memorials.
- New quotations for work on the recreation ground have been received for the three years from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019. C&W Groundcare have won the contract and will be able to continue their excellent work.
- There was a very successful litter day last July. The village certainly looked smarter after the event. Thank you to all who took part. On the debit side there has been an increase in graffiti and also fly tipping in the village.
- The Parish Council installed a defibrillator at the village hall.
- Dover District Council has been asked to repaint the double yellow lines throughout the village as the present ones have virtually disappeared.

Questions and answers:

Q&A: The litter at The Street Bus Shelter has increased and by Sunday afternoon the bins are overflowing. The parish council was asked to install a larger bin. This will be considered along with the pressure on parking and a request will be made again for the double yellow lines to be repainted. The traffic calming scheme has been delayed as the consultant who had been employed left unexpectedly.

Q&A: The people who had been surveying the Chequer Lane / The Street junction in April 2019 had not been commissioned by KCC but were possibly from Stagecoach about turning the bus stop into a 'Clearway'.

Q&A: The parish council will ask for on-site parking for vehicles associated with the development on Chequer Lane.

Q&A: The parish council will consider putting up signs about not leaving dog waste on the Hills Court Public Right of Way.

Q&A: The Ash United Charities are in negotiations to build two new almshouses at Resthaven.

ii) Parish Council Finance Report – Mrs C Haggart (Clerk)  
(The complete report is on the Ash Parish Council website).

The audited statement of accounts, along with the Annual Governance Audit Return and the Auditor's Certificate for the year ended 31 March 2018, are on the Ash Parish Council web-site. The budget for 2019-2020 and the estimated summary of Receipts and Payments for this financial year (ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019) were delivered along to every house in the parish.

Receipts and Payment

- £137,466 was carried over from the previous year
- Receipts for the year ended 31 March 2019 were £85,635
- Payments for the year ended 31 March 2019 were £69,327

#### Main Differences from March 2018 to March 2019 Receipts

- Precept - there was a 3% increase in the Ash Parish Council tax (the “precept”) which was an increase of £1.94 per household for the year. The annual amount paid last year, by each household was £67.70 for the year (based on a Band D property).
- The grant received of £5,825 was for the Neighbourhood Development Plan.

#### Main Differences from March 2018 to March 2019 Payments

- Employment costs were £4,076 higher.
- NDP costs were lower at £3,100 and except for £378 were grant funded.
- General repairs and renewals at £1,177 were £900 higher. This is because the five bus shelters in the parish have been repainted and repaired.
- New equipment of £580, includes the purchase of the Defibrillator Cabinet installed at the Ash Village Hall. The defibrillator was donated by the Kent Fire & Rescue Service.

Other running costs were generally in line with the previous year’s payments.

#### Budget 2019-2020

The Parish Council tax (precept) for this year 2019-2020 is £80,378 and was increased by 2.98% which is an increase of £2.02 per household for the year. The annual amount for each household is £69.72 (per Band D property).

Main points of the budget:

- Employment costs have increased – although part of this is due to HMRC PAYE returns.
- The increase in newsletters to £2,200 is for the printing of the Ash directory.
- Room hire will increase as there will be a full year of Planning and NDP Ctte meetings.
- Training was increased for the expected new councillors and for updating some of the training for staff.
- Election costs of £3,000 may be needed for the 2<sup>nd</sup> of May elections.
- NDP at £9,100 includes part of the unspent grant received from last year and the balance from reserves that had been accumulated for this purpose.
- Planning advice at £3,000 is from reserves.
- Maintenance, Repairs / renewals - £3,130 includes new litter bins and the Weddington Lane Track improvements.
- The project for the new playground equipment, safety surfaces and improvements to the entrance and car parking area totals £28,600 with a further amount in reserves.
- Recreation Ground toilets at £2,750 is for the general re-painting and repairs needed and the increased cost of electricity and water.

#### Reserves

- 2019 Reserves of £9,000 are for items such as contingencies or for work which may need additional funds by April 2020.
- Ring fences reserves are kept for possible future expenditure such as potential S106 projects, the NDP should it not be completed by March 2019 and Green Spaces which is for Saunders Wood and any open spaces that would be of benefit to residents.
- General reserves are held as a safety net. Last year the general reserves were £50,090 and by March 2019 they were at £78,166 as some of the projects in last year’s budget had not been started or for others completed. This year, if all the planned projects are completed, the general reserve will be around £56,445 at year end.

Much of the work of the Parish Council goes on in the background of the lives of the residents – only really obvious when it does not happen. It is hoped that this year some of the larger projects will be completed and will noticeably improve the quality of life in the parish for all residents. The budget reflects this aim.

There were no questions.

- iii) Report on the Ash Neighbourhood Development Plan – Mr C Turner (Chairman of the Ash Parish Council NDP Committee)  
(The full report was distributed to every house in the parish).

The Plan provides the local community with a powerful tool to guide the long-term future of the Parish from 2020 to 2037. The Plan will contain guidance and clear planning policies on how the Parish will develop to meet the employment, leisure, bio-diversity, health and housing needs of the community.

The Ash Parish Neighbourhood Plan is continuing. There have been some delays outside our control due to changes in national guidelines. We are now making good progress and are confident we will meet our timetable of completing the draft Ash NDP by Spring 2020.

- Housing Needs. Following the Local Housing Needs survey in 2017, we have undertaken a detail analysis using national and local data to identify the number, type, tenure and affordability of the housing required over the plan period.
- Character Assessment has been completed. Thank you to Ann Foat and the Heritage Group for all their hard work.
- Design Guide is due to completed in June by the team. It will provide guidance for the design of new developments and changes to existing properties especially in the Conservation Areas.
- Green Spaces Assessment has been completed and is now being incorporated into the DDC new Dover Green Infrastructure Strategy.
- Environment & Bio-diversity. This document is almost completed. It has identified a number of rare and endangered species within the parish.
- Employment. The survey of local employers has been completed. It has led the team to review a number of issues including IT infrastructure and in particular broadband coverage. Working with Kent County Council and providers, we have identified areas of poor connectivity within the parish and are aiming to develop a strategy to improve connectivity.
- Health & Leisure & Infrastructure. We are actively working with the Ash GP surgery to identify where the plan can support them. Additionally, we have completed a survey of all the sports and leisure clubs within the parish to identify their needs.
- Next Steps. The second draft of the plan has been given a ‘health check’ and the recommended changes have been made. The third draft will be reviewed by Dover District Council in the autumn and there will be a further public consultation, followed by the examination and then to a referendum in the summer of 2020.

During the next twelve months, there will be a number of exhibitions and public meetings on the key issues on the numbers and types of houses needed by the parish. Please come along, bring the whole street as your input is crucial. There will also be leaflets delivered to every household for you to comment on. This will be your chance to have a say in what happens in the parish over the next 17 years.

Questions and answers.

Q&A: The referendum is where the residents can say yes or no to the plan. If the majority vote Yes, it will be a formal planning document for the parish. If No, it will not be able to influence planning but much of the plan can be used by the parish council to help identify future needs of the parish.

Q&A: Many of the planning policies cover the village as all of the proposed developments are in the village and not the rural area of the parish. However there are policies that specifically

cover rural conversions. The general policies cover all types of development and the policies on business, climate change and biodiversity apply to all the parish.

Q&A: Once the Ash NDP passes a referendum it is a legally binding planning document and it must be taken into account by Dover District Council as long as it does not over-ride DDC or national policies. It provides detailed local evidence for types of housing, design, parking requirements, and local detail on specific sites.

Q&A: The plan cannot stop the Chequer Lane development as that development has already received planning permission and the Ash NDP has not been adopted yet.

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

#### **i) Ash United Charities**

- Benevolent Fund, Resthaven Almshouses, Frank Kingsland Trust – Mrs M Smith

There are three separate charities.

- The Benevolent Fund is six bequests some of which are from hundreds of years ago. For example, Richard Camden in 1642, left 5 shillings to upkeep a monument in St Nicholas Church and others provide a small income to help those in need. However, the Charity welcome approaches as the trustees may be able to help.
- Resthaven Almshouses were built in 1903 by the Gardner family and provide four homes. During the past year, the gas supply for the houses were upgraded. Planning permission for two new homes to be added to the terrace has been approved and negotiations are underway for the building work. This Charity is committed to providing homes that can be rented to local residents.
- Frank Kingsland Trust (for the elderly) has two bungalows that can only be let to parish residents. Discussions are taking place with the Charity Commission to merge the two Frank Kingsland Trusts.

Thank you to the other trustees, Mr Holden, Mr Ellis and Mrs Palmer for all their help over this very busy year.

There were no questions.

#### **ii) Frank Kingsland Trust – Mr G Foat**

There are two Frank Kingsland Trusts and Mr Griffiths, Mr Chandler and Mr Foat are the trustees of the second trust. The trustees are pleased to have been approached to become involved in the Resthaven project for the two new almshouses and hope to be able to provide assistance.

Questions and answers:

Q&A: The trust is taking a decision on contributing £147,000 to the project.

#### **iii) Jack Foat Trust – Mrs N Vallack**

The Trust Accounts to 5<sup>th</sup> April 2018 are available for inspection. The value of the Trust at that date was £2,151,150. Approximately half of this is represented by the land and properties which are owned by the Trust and the remainder by investments and cash.

Since the Trust was initiated in 1990, the trustees have disbursed very nearly £440,000. This includes the maintenance of our open spaces, such as mowing, tree and hedge works and the repair and replacement of gates and fences.

In the financial year just finished, the Trust has made one donation to the Cartwright & Kelsey School for the purchase of a ‘class worth’ of iPads, so all pupils in one class can be taught simultaneously.

The Trust does have a commitment to fund additional play equipment at the Ash Recreation Ground once the parish council has established its requirements.

There were no questions.

iv) Ash Educational Charities – Mr C Pratt

The Ash Educational Charities is the Cartwright, Godfrey & Kelsey Educational Charities. It is specifically for educational purposes for the residents of Ash. It holds £204,467 in safe investments and is able to use the income for charitable purposes. There is also a rental income from the Old School.

- In the past year, it has given £1,800 towards the school trips organised by the Cartwright & Kelsey School.
- There were £1,300 of book grants to young people in secondary education. This is done annually and the details for applications are published in the parish magazine.
- There were other grants of £750 covering trips and equipment and the bibles given each year to the final year pupils at the Cartwright & Kelsey School. All grants for the past year came to a total of £4,135.
- There were other costs related to the Old School.

Thank you to the fellow trustees for their involvement and commitment.

There were no questions.

**19.04 Ash and Westmarsh Village Halls: Reports and Questions**

i) Ash Village Hall – Mr T Jones (Chairman)

The AVH Management Committee includes a representative from each of the groups that use the Hall, bar one. The Companions have chosen not to be represented. The elected members have volunteered to stand for another year, so there is a consistent team. The Hall is still very well used.

- There is now a youth group run by Pie Music Factory, and an art class is beginning again.
- The Quality Standard Scheme for Village Halls, Hallmark 1 and 2 have been achieved. The Committee is applying for Hallmark 3 that concentrates on community aspects for Village Halls and the inspection will take place in May.
- During the year, the Committee received a grant from the parish council and a legacy from Sylvia Profit's estate. We have decided to use the legacy for a specific project to remove the old floor carpet tiles in the hallway and library and replace them with a commercial linoleum.
- The monthly community coffee morning continues to be a success and it is only in August that this does not take place.
- Expenditure in 2018 to improve and maintain the Hall for its users included new blinds, repainting of the library, replacing the ridge tiles on the roof of the main hall to extend the life of the roof for about 5 years and updating the emergency lights to exceed safety requirements.
- The Committee has had a further survey to confirm that there is no asbestos danger and a risk assessment for Legionella will take place in April.
- The redecoration of the Hall continues with a different section each year and the Committee is looking at ways to improve the heating facilities of the main hall.

On behalf of the Committee, I would like to thank the Ash Parish Council for their continued financial support.

There were no questions.

ii) Westmarsh Village Hall – Mr Harris-Rowley (Chairman)

The Westmarsh Village Hall Committee welcomed new members and elected a new treasurer and chairman. This year it aims to build on the changes and to continue to make the village hall a centre for the community.

- A grant was received from DDC Community Grants scheme for a new water heater.
- There are new regular bookings for pilates, fencing, ballet and dog training. A monthly coffee morning has started and there are regular social events, the next being a Beetle Drive.
- Income is now steady and enough to make sure the hall can continue.
- The committee is now looking at taking the first steps on the Quality Standard Scheme for Village Halls road.

Thank you to all the committee for their hard work.

There were no questions.

### **19.05 Cartwright and Kelsey School: Report and Questions**

Mrs Crascall sent her apologies. The report was read out to the meeting.

The school has had a very successful 19 months. It has worked very hard to improve the previous Requires Improvement grades from Ofsted in 2015 and 2017 and the Requires Improvement grade from SIAMS in 2016.

Ofsted and SIAMS inspections are now both imminent and the school has had very successful monitoring visits for both. The KS2 results for 2018 were above the national and county level for the first time since the new curriculum was introduced in 2014.

The community has been very strong and supportive. Ash Cartwright and Kelsey is a fantastic school - blessed with amazing children, talented staff and a wonderful learning environment with spacious grounds. Our deputy headteacher, Ms Graham has led a lot of the RE improvements and is currently undertaking her C of EPQH (Headship qualification). It is definitely a school that is going places. We are rapidly improving - led on our journey by our vision statement and values. The values that we live by at our school are:

**joy, perseverance, creation, friendship, forgiveness and community.**

Our strapline is: **Through God's love and strength all flourish**

One of the school's key strengths is our curriculum (overhauled in September 2017). Children are very enthusiastic about their topics and have thoroughly enjoyed learning about Pirates, Harry Potter, space, Mayans, Tudors, the Stone Age and Katie Morag - to name a few. Trips for the children have included visiting the science museum in London, Harry Potter Studios, Voice in a Million at Wembley and various trips to Dover Museum.

The school continues to benefit enormously with generous donations from local charities. Jack Foat recently donated funds to ensure that we could buy a class set of iPads – these will be very well used! Cartwright, Godfrey and Kelsey contributed towards our year 6 residential trip. We have a hard working and committed PTFA that have also contributed to school improvements and a governing body that are dedicated to the school. The next part of our journey is to raise funds to buy a minibus to ensure that children access a range of wider curriculum activities. The school is part of a strong HUB that offers the children opportunities to take part in events such as chess, poetry reading, gifted and talented events, music collaborations and school council events at the Dover Chamber of Commerce. The children are missing out because we are unable to attend these events – a minibus would solve this problem. The pressure on school budgets is huge with more cuts being proposed. A minibus would ensure that the children are not affected by budget cuts and could also be used by the community for events, the Chequers pub, the WI etc. As a school we have raised £1420 although we will need in the region of £20,000. We have also received 2 cheques from parishioners following an article in the Parish Magazine – this kind of generosity is humbling. The school is also one of the good causes at the Co-op in Sandwich – so please donate to our school if you visit to help our minibus campaign.

Ann Foat ensured that funds raised by the SAWWES Group were used to buy plants for our spiritual garden. Bishop Trevor visited the school in February 2019 to bless this. A representative from the WI made our values banners that were designed by the children and now hang proudly in our corridors. We are blessed to be part of such a strong community – together we can achieve great things.

We know that we are now a good school – we want recognition of this and we strive for our Church school to be a centre of excellence in the community. I feel strongly that all children from the village should attend their village school and receive the very best education possible.

There were no questions.

**19.06 The Chairman agreed to add to the agenda a report from the Ash Village Fete Committee from Ms Anne-Marie Hulgen**

The work is going very well for the Village Fete on August Bank Holiday. All local societies have been offered free pitches and there will be a wide range of food and drink available. The Ash Princess and Prince will be decided for age groups between 7-12 years old.

The licence, health & safety assessments, car parking arrangements including the use of the second rugby field are in place. The arrangements with the Cricket Club have been agreed and the Chequers Pub will run the pop-up bar. Thank you to the organisers of 2012 Jubilee Fete for offering to donate the money they raised from that event.

The committee are hoping to make the Village Fete into an annual event and look forward to seeing you all on the day.

There were no questions.

**19.07 Any resolutions for which written notice has been given**

There were no resolutions.

**19.08 Kent County Councillor, Mrs S Chandler: Report and Questions**

There has been much publicity during the past year of the difficult financial situation in which many councils, county and District find themselves. Despite the challenges, Kent County Council is financially stable.

There has had to be an additional 2% increase in Council Tax for adult social care bringing the total increase to 4.7%. **Social care** is still the biggest challenge facing the Council, the total budget for this in the coming year is around £433 million. We are continuing to make improvements to the quality of care people receive, partnership with our NHS colleagues, the training and pay of those employed by care providers and enabling residents to remain independent. Just over 12 months ago, the headlines were about delays in the elderly being discharged from hospital because care was not available. Really excellent work has resulted in the targets for this being met by KCC for over 12 months now. The enabling service which people coming out of hospital receive for 6 weeks is also showing good success rates, with around 80% of people receiving the service being totally independent at the end of that time.

**For children, young people and their families**, work continues to secure the best outcomes. Our schools, especially Cartwright & Kelsey, continue to do well and in the last year KCC launched The Education People (a Local Authority Trading Company) to deliver education support services to all schools in Kent.

There is an increasing demand in Kent for support for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability. While this is a national issue, it seems particularly high in East Kent where the incidence of Autistic Spectrum Disorder is rising. A more integrated approach to the early help provision and children's social work should mean better outcomes. A mix of direct services and commissioned services provide out of school support and activities for young people.



In Dover and some villages including Ash, Pie Factory Music offer some great opportunities. This group is commissioned by KCC to provide youth group activities for all school age children. I continue to Chair the Dover District Local Children's Partnership Group. By bringing together many of those who deliver services for children and young people in our District, including schools, we can look at some of the very local issues, help provide better services with better linking and fund some very targeted project work which this year is focusing on family resilience and healthy eating

The **Highways** maintenance the budget for the current year and the next year will see the biggest investment in Highways ever made. This has risen from £70m in 17/18 to £89m in the current year and will rise next year to £95.7m. There is also an additional £28m from the Department for Transport for highways improvements materially affected by Brexit preparedness. The Pothole blitz continues, as always if you report potholes and they do not seem to be getting fixed let me know. Highways have also at long last recruited 5 additional drainage engineers. Like many County Councillors with rural divisions, I have lobbied hard that improved maintenance of drains and ditches would not only reduce flooding but would also reduce the deterioration of the roads, particularly small rural ones. A new initiative of Highways Improvement Plans for Parishes should see a more organised and effective approach. It should do exactly what it says – bring improvements to highways in the Parish. I recently met with your Parish Councillors and Highways Officers to progress the plan for Ash.

The **Kent Resilience Forum** and each KCC Department have also been working on their plans in the event of significant road congestion following Brexit. They are on the whole the plans that are in place anyway for severe weather or other extraordinary events and focus on protecting the vulnerable and maintaining services. As I have reported, I have consistently voiced my concerns for our villages in the event that the former Manston Airfield is used for lorry parking (Phase 3 of Operation Brock).

As well as more than maintaining **frontline services**, KCC is able to deliver some £40m worth of non-statutory services including community wardens, country parks, Young Persons Travel Pass, housing related support for the most vulnerable and Member Grants. I have been able to support a huge range of local activities, initiatives and events through my Member's Grants and look forward to doing more in the future.

During the year, I have been happy to support your Parish Council, when and where possible, and also to take up issues and problems for individual residents.

Questions and answers:

Q&A: The ill advisability of using Manston in the preparations for Brexit has been raised many times both by myself and other councillors. The equipment that is still on the site is funded by Highways England, as has been the re-surfacing and traffic installations on the roads between Manston and Dover. Highways England will continue to fund the maintenance and equipment at Manston.

Q&A: I attended the most recent meeting in March at which the Scouts District Commissioner was present, about the actions taken about the lease on the Scout Hut at Ash and the possibility of a new premises. There is an alternative project being discussed with Dover District Council that is hoped will help the Ash Scouts take this project forward, as well as a lease agreement.

Q: In the past, representatives of the police have attended the annual parish meeting, however there is no report or attendance by the police this year. The Kent County Council Warden comes to coffee mornings in Ash regularly and did not know about this meeting.

A: Mrs Chandler will make enquiries about the co-ordination between the police, the Police Community Support Officer and the KCC Warden. There has been a recent move of the police and PCSOs to Dover Police Station and this may have in the short-term effected co-ordination. There is going to be an upgrade of the district CCTV provision and one of the aims is to provide more facilities for the rural areas.

Q&A: While in the first stage there will only be one moveable camera for the rural areas, this could be increased. There will be Wi-Fi linkage from the cameras to a control centre at DDC.

Q&A: The cost of the cameras is being funded by Dover District Council and DDC will be able to provide details about the costs.

Resident comment: There is a concern that there will not be the resources needed to make the CCTV monitoring response effective as the police do not have enough resources to respond to all 999 calls.

### **19.09 Dover District Councillors, Mr T Bartlett, Mrs S Chandler and Mr M Conolly. Reports and Questions**

The report was given by Councillor Bartlett on behalf of all three councillors.

With district council elections due on May 2<sup>nd</sup> district councillors and candidates are under the rules of 'purdah', which means that while we can communicate facts at meetings such as annual parish meetings, we cannot offer opinions that could be construed as electioneering.

- Financially the year 2018/19 was satisfactory, with a small surplus against budget and reserves of over £2.5 million at year end. Council tax for 2019/20 will rise by 2.95%, maintaining DDC's position as the lowest council tax in East Kent. (Increases from KCC and the Police were higher, the latter reflecting the Commissioner's target of recruiting 180 more officers.) Despite the final removal of the Revenue Support Grant, the 2019/20 budget is balanced but in the medium term concerns remain about the nature of business rates reform and the future of the New Homes Bonus.
- Services and staff: all front line services were maintained, with no redundancies. The apprenticeship scheme was expanded to include legal and accountancy apprenticeships, and we have recruited a dedicated tourism manager to oversee greater activity in this area. Park and Grounds maintenance has been brought in-house. Recycling rates are nearing 50%. We are currently renegotiating our waste collection and street cleaning contract as the existing one expires in 2021.
- Regeneration: this remains a top priority for DDC.
  - The St James retail and leisure development close to the waterfront is now fully open.
  - Dover District Leisure Centre opened on time and on budget (of £26 million) on February 25<sup>th</sup>.
  - A scheme was launched offering match funded grants of up to £10,000 to businesses in our three High Streets for them to upgrade their facilities or to open for the first time.
  - Following the closure of the Co-op in Dover Town Centre, the space has been converted to a 'Meanwhile' commercial facility which allows potential entrepreneurs to try out their ideas in a low cost, low risk environment. If this does well, the businesses will be able to move into the town.
  - The Lottery-funded regeneration of Kearsney Abbey and Russell Gardens is now under way.
  - We spent £700K on restoration work on Deal Pier which covered essential maintenance, new seating and the relaunch of the café as the Deal Pier Kitchen.
  - Plans for the redevelopment of the Sandwich Guildhall forecourt are in hand but financing of this remains an issue.
  - We have employed consultants to help develop a proposal for the future of Dover Town Hall, Maison Dieu.
- Homelessness: We are working hard to bring down the numbers in temporary accommodation such as B&Bs and the time spent there. We have bought back a number of former council houses for use as interim accommodation and are developing a plan for modular housing on three sites across the district which, if all come to fruition, should deliver 60 interim use homes.

- Work continues on the new Local Plan. We are approaching the end of the ‘intelligence gathering’ stage and a first draft of the Plan should go to Cabinet and Council in the summer before going out to public consultation.
- The Dover District Lotto was launched in January. This offers the opportunity for a wide range of local organisations to benefit with 60p of every pound invested going to those who have signed up.
- District Council elections take place on May 2<sup>nd</sup> and from then on, following the recommendations of the Local Government Boundary Commission, there will be only two councillors for our ward.

Questions and answers:

Q&A: Tides Centre at Deal has had to have work done on a new boiler room, tiling relaced in the pool and two new play units installed. Before any future decisions are taken, the impact of the leisure centre at Whitfield will be considered.

Q&A: Money is spent on the urban areas and also on the rural areas. The DDC Community Grants Scheme awarded grants to the Westmarsh Village Hall and the Ash Heritage Group. There is a housing scheme being delivered at Staple with help from the District Council. Two new houses were built at Woodnesborough from the Social Fund. The spend on the urban areas is proportionate. However, it is noted that more detail on rural matters has been asked for in future reports.

Q&A: It is incorrect that there will be Dover District Council representatives on the Dover Harbour Board. The concerns raised by KALC over the impact on the border force and local employment have been noted.

Resident Comment: For information, it will cost £600,000 to bring the Tides Leisure Centre at Deal ‘up to speed’ and there are no plans to close it.

Q&A: The Gypsy and Traveller strategy is part of the review of the DDC Local Plan. This has not been completed yet and will be included in the draft plan which will go out to public consultation.

Q: Should there be a county plan for provision for travellers?

A: The government has been debating changes to the definition of travellers that only ended last autumn. This has delayed the assessments by all local authorities but the assessment for Dover District is now underway.

Q&A: The responsibility for street-lights is divided between the county and the district depending upon the light, due to historic responsibilities. However problems for lights can be reported to Kent County Council and they will allocate the responsibility for repairs depending upon ownership.

Q&A: Details of the light on the footpath between The Street and Glebelands that is not working should be reported to Kent County Council. Dover District Council is in the process of replacing its street-lights with energy efficient LED bulbs.

Q: People should not obstruct bus stops by parking on them. Could double yellow lines be put in from Bickers to the gate?

A: To be able to enforce parking by a bus stop there needs to be a marked ‘Clearway’. This would have to be done by Kent County Council and Stagecoach. The parish council has been in discussions with them about this possibility.

Q&A: People and local authorities have complained about the recent removal of bus routes especially in the local area, including the loss of the route along New Street. However neither Kent County Council nor Dover District Council have the power to insist on routes. There has been a successful local pilot scheme for three services from Staple to feed into the main bus services at Sandwich. Unfortunately, this does not help with New Street.

Q&A: Section 106 developer contributions from the Chequer Lane site go towards a range of services including education and health. There are also specific amounts for the Ash library, the Ash Recreation Ground and the Ash Sports Pavilion.

**19.09 Any other business concerned with parish affairs**

- Q: There are proposals for a new housing development at Eastry and Ham. Would the parish council consider objecting to them?
- A: The parish council is a statutory consultee on planning applications for the parish of Ash. The parish council does consider making comments on developments near to the parish if there are impacts from the development on the residents of the parish.
- Q: Driving into the village along New Street, it is impossible to see on-coming traffic due to the parked construction vehicles near the Cherry Garden Lane junction. It is also unsafe coming out of Cherry Garden Lane onto New Street as it is not possible to see traffic coming from the village. Can the parish council raise this with the developer?
- A: The parish council will refer this to Dover District Council and the developer.
- Q: Will Saunders Wood be purchased by the parish council from KCC. It is not currently being maintained or cared for and is often used as a dumping ground?
- A: This will be considered by the parish council.
- Q: There have been rumours that there is going to be a lorry park on land adjacent to at rear of Molland House. There are currently two HGVs parked on that land. Is there going to be a lorry park there?
- A: The parish council will make enquiries.

The Chairman thanked Mr Lawson for operating the sound system for the meeting.

Thank you to our County Councillor, Mrs Chandler and to our District Councillors, Mr Bartlett, Mrs Chandler and Mr Conolly. They regularly attend the parish council meetings and the annual parish meeting.

Thanks are due the parish councillors for all their work during their term of office which will end this May and to the writers of Onlooker for the Parish magazine.

Thank you to our Environment Officer, Andrew Wilkinson, who carries out a very varied workload and our Clerk, Christine Haggart, for the amount of work done on the Neighbourhood Development Plan.

Mr Foat concluded with some personal observations. Over the 43 years I have been a parish councillor, there have been many excellent councillors, chairmen and chairwomen and clerks. They all deserve a round of applause for their hard work. Since 1976 when I joined the council, to the present, there had been three Chairmen and one Chairwoman of the Ash Parish Council and all are still alive, so this must help towards leading a long life. There have been ten Vice Chairmen and Chairwomen and six of those are present tonight. There have been 63 councillors; 49 men and 14 women. Thank you to all of them.

Finally, thank you to all the residents who have attended this evening.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.30pm.