

**Minutes of a meeting of Ashdon Parish Council, held on
Monday 17 March 2025, 7.30pm at Ashdon Village Hall.**

Present: Cllrs: Goodwin, Gray, Horrigan, Moran, Olley & Pardue.
In the Chair: Cllr Moran.
Clerk: Angela Balcombe.
Also present: 7 members of the public.

25/42. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

There were no apologies.

25/43. CASUAL VACANCY.

As 10 electors have called for an election and two candidates have been nominated, there will be a poll to elect one parish councillor on Wednesday 26 March 2025.

25/44. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING.

The minutes of 17 February 2025 were approved as a correct record of events. Cllr Pardue questioned the accuracy of minute 25/29 under no. 7 (compost bins) that the decision was not unanimous. It was agreed to remove the number 7 from the last sentence to read: Items 5, 6 and 8 were unanimously agreed.

Proposed: Cllr Moran. Seconded: Cllr Gray. Agreed.

25/45. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS.

To receive any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, Other Registerable Interests or Non-Registerable Interests relating to items on the agenda.

Please note: all Councillors are Sole Trustees of the Village Hall.

Cllr Moran is a District Councillor for Uttlesford District Council (UDC).

No other interests were declared.

25/46. MATTERS ARISING.

A brief update on any actions from the previous meeting.

(For information only, Councillors are reminded that no decisions can be made under this agenda item; Longfield Parish Council v Wright (1918) 88 LJ Ch 119).

Proposed removal of the payphone at Crown Hill - a letter objecting to this proposal has been sent to the local authority (UDC), it was chased up last week. The phone box has been used 6 times in the last 12 months. As consultee, UDC have to respond to BT by 15 June 2025. BT say they will take account of representations made by UDC when they are making their final decision and will write to them with their decisions as well as publish the reasons at: www.bt.com/payphones/service Responses need to be in to UDC by 30 April 2025. The Clerk will write to UDC again and add that if the phone must be removed then the Parish Council would like to keep the phone box.

Defibrillator - the Chairman reported an issue with the defibrillator at the Village Hall which was needed recently, however the Ambulance Service stated that they couldn't give a code number as they had no record of there being a defibrillator registered here. The one registered on the Circuit website shows it as being

restricted. It has now been registered. This has caused considerable concern and will be followed up and checked again to ensure accuracy.

25/47. COUNTY & DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORTS.

Essex County Council (Cllr Foley). Apologies were received from Cllr Foley. **Uttlesford District Council** Cllr Moran). The main topic for the District Council at the moment is the Local Government Reform. UDC want to have a seat at the table when this is discussed, a submission to Government will be made at the end of March and more should be known at the end of September.

25/48. PUBLIC FORUM.

No matters raised.

25/49. CEMETERY PROGRESS.

To approve the adoption of the new cemetery regulations and agree to review them annually. Cllr Pardue said the regulations were rather draconian stipulating what people can or cannot plant/put on graves and said they should be guidelines rather than regulations. It was noted that the adoption of regulations is now fairly standard for cemeteries and helps to provide consistent levels of service and standards for the bereaved and wider community.

Cllr Olley proposed that the Regulations be adopted and reviewed annually, seconded by Cllr Horrigan. A vote was taken with 6 for 1 against, carried. It was agreed that the Cemetery was looking very smart.

25/50. FINANCE.

Payments:

103036 £30.00 Ashdon Village Hall (Hall Hire)

103037 £15.00 A Olley (Plants for War Memorial)

103038 £3,703.57 Worknest Ltd. (Combined Core Year 2, E-learning, inc. Insurance)

103039 £651.90 A Balcombe (Locum Clerk Salary & Expenses)

D/D £76.20 npower Business Solutions (Streetlighting February)

Cllr Pardue asked what the Council receives for the Worknest contract. It was explained that it was a three-year fixed fee contract and this year it includes a cost for training courses which were free in the first year. It includes unlimited advice which has been invaluable and it also covers the Village Hall. The contract will be reviewed when it is due for renewal after three years. Cllr Gray reminded Councillors that 3 quotes had been obtained, that Worknest had been the cheapest and that the 3-year contract had been unanimously agreed in the February 2024 Council meeting. The 3-year contract has enabled the Council to budget for the fixed fee amount. Councillors were encouraged to continue to take advantage of the portfolio of courses available to them.

Income

HMRC £2,052.70 (VAT reclaim for the Village Hall)

I Herd £110.00 (Burial)

H J Paintin £55.00 (Burial)

25/51. FIXED ASSET REGISTER.

Review and creation of a new fixed asset register for the purpose of AGAR reporting and insurance cover. Cllr Horrigan explained the reasons for the updated fixed asset register. A pictorial version is also being created. Many of the

outdated asset costs have been taken down to £1 and new assets going forward will be added at purchase cost. Play equipment to be looked at during the next meeting.

Agreed to accept the Fixed Asset Register.

25/52. RISK MANAGEMENT & RISK ASSESSMENT REGISTER.

To adopt a risk Management and Assessment Register covering financial/internal control procedures, to be reviewed annually.

It was agreed to accept the Register.

25/53. REVIEW OF INSURANCE COVER.

Period of Insurance: 1 June 2024 to 31 May 2025. The Council has the necessary mandatory cover which includes; Public Liability £10,000,000, Employers Liability £5 million and Fidelity Guarantee £250,000. The mandatory cover also includes Officials Indemnity £500,000, Libel and Slander £250,000 and Legal Expenses £250,000.

Details of other cover such as the War Memorial, street furniture, play equipment was discussed and the insurance was considered adequate.

- **Play Area** - weekly visual inspections must be logged. Cllr Pardue will check the All Saints and Multi gym play area, Cllr Moran checks the Rectory lane area and logbooks to be kept up to date as needed for insurance purposes.
- **Defibrillator** - checked and logged in a book kept with the defibrillator every two weeks.

25/54. RESERVES POLICY.

To adopt a Reserves Policy as recommended by the Internal Auditor, to be reviewed in line with Financial Regulations June 2027. Cllr Horrigan explained the different type of reserves, general and earmarked.

Proposed: Cllr Moran. Seconded: Cllr Gray. All agreed.

25/55. INTERNAL AUDITOR RECOMMENDATIONS.

An update on progress so far. Good progress has been made and the recommended policies and procedures have been implemented. Cllr Horrigan was thanked for all her work on this.

25/56. 'A COUNCIL YEAR'.

Calendar of Council Meetings, procedures and recurring items. There were some additions to the calendar and it was agreed that this was a very useful document.

25/57. PLANNING.

Application Nos: UTT/24/3066/HHF & UTT/24/3067/LB. Internal and external alterations, addition of a catslide dormer window, removal of cementitious render and replacement with lime plaster, side extension to form log store, upgrade existing glazing.

Location: Turpins Cottage, Radwinter Road, Ashdon CB10 2ET.

Approved with conditions.

Application No: UTT/25/0074/TCA. Works to 2 no. Plum Ash trees to include uplift of bottom branches and crown reduction of 25% to allow for maintenance of grounds and reduce root interference with burial plots.

Location: All Saints Church, Church Lane, Ashdon CB10 2HG.

Tree no objections. Estimates to be obtained.

Estimates to be obtained, expect the PC will pay, check for Ash die back?

Application No: UTT/24/2836/FUL. Erection of single-storey, self-build dwelling and detached single-storey office, access and associated landscaping.

Location: Land East of Fairfields, Water End Road, Ashdon. **Refused.**

25/58. LITTER PICK.

The 27 April was agreed as the date for the next Litter Pick. A Risk Assessment to be done; the volunteer forms are not used for this purpose. High vis jackets and suitable clothing must be worn.

A 'Church Tidy' is being carried out at the cemetery on Saturday 22 March at 10am.

25/59. VICTORY IN EUROPE DAY - THURSDAY 8 MAY 2025.

To consider an event in the Village for VE Day. Agreed to approach the Churches to see if a ceremony is appropriate on the Sunday. It was suggested that the windmill or church could be lit up on the night of the 8th and the flags could be raised.

25/60. CORRESPONDENCE TO NOTE.

Highways - maintenance work to Ashdon Bridge (Br No: 464) to be carried out on the 17 March 2025.

Worknest - Annual Health and Safety visit 9 April 2025 at 10am.

Highways - temporary closure of Overhall Lane 26 March 2025 for one day while Openreach undertakes overhead line work.

Highways - temporary closure of Fallowden Lane on 17 March 2025 for three days while Affinity Water undertakes stop tab and boundary box works.

UDC Zero Carbon Communities Grant Application - funding for automated flood warning signs for Steventon End was unsuccessful.

Freedom of Information Request - letter dated 13 March 2025.

Playsafety Ltd - RoSPA Play Area Inspections to take place during May.

Essex Police - email regarding a report about vandalism to graves at All Saints Church. Response Officers have visited the site and no offences have been committed. The person who made the report has been advised that there is no criminal offence and if they wish to take it further it is a civil matter. The Church has had no notification from the police about any offence/s.

25/61. ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA.

- Maintenance for Play Areas.
- VE Day

25/62. MEETING DATES 2025.

Meetings are held on the third Monday of the month (except August).

17 March, 28 April, 19 May (Annual Meeting), 16 June, 21 July, 15 September, 20 October, 17 November (Budget Meeting), 15 December.

- To agree a date for the Parish Meeting - it was agreed to hold it on the same evening as the Annual Council Meeting with the Council Meeting at 7pm followed by the Parish Meeting at 7.45pm.

Close of meeting 20:59

Signed (Chairman):

Date: