

**Minutes of a meeting of Ashdon Parish Council, held on
Monday 20 January 2025, 7.30pm at Ashdon Village Hall.**

Present: Cllrs: Goodwin, Gray, Moran, Olley & Pardue.
In the Chair: Cllr Moran.
Clerk: Angela Balcombe.
Also present: 10 members of the public.

The Chairman informed those present that this meeting was not being recorded by the Parish Council. A member of the public informed the Council that they are recording the meeting.

A minutes silence was held in memory of Gemma Mary Rhodes whose funeral was held this morning.

25/08. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Horrigan.

A letter of resignation has been received from Cllr Lee. The Clerk to inform Uttlesford District Council; the notices advertising the vacancy will be displayed once they have been received.

The Chairman had spoken to Cllr Lee and thanked her for her contribution to the Parish Council.

25/09. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING.

The minutes of 16 December 2024 were approved as a correct record of events.
Proposed: Cllr Olley. Seconded: Cllr Gray. All agreed.

25/10. 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).

25/11. 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).

- Appointment of Parish Clerk/RFO - this has been delayed due to current circumstances. One of the applicants has turned down the position, the remaining two applicants have been notified and asked if they would still like to be considered in a few months time. Cllr Pardue said one of the applicants had received an email saying the post had been withdrawn. The Clerk explained that this was not true, she will forward a copy of the email sent to the remaining two applicants to the Chairman.
- Roles and Responsibilities - Cllr Pardue said despite asking this hasn't been included on the agenda or discussed, however it was on the last agenda and agreed to be reviewed in February.

25/12. COUNTY & DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORTS.

Essex County Council - apologies were received from Cllr Foley.

Uttlesford District Council - Cllr Moran mentioned the Devolution White Paper whereby County and District councils would be replaced by Unitary councils; probably 3-5 in Essex with an elected Mayor. It's possible that the County elections due in May could be postponed, more should be known by the end of March.

25/13. PUBLIC FORUM

- A member of the public read a long list of complaints and allegations against the Council and Councillors. Having spoken for over three minutes the member of the public was asked to stop but refused to do so. He was asked on a number of occasions to stop and leave the meeting but still refused. The Chairman explained that as far as the Parish Council was concerned all matters raised have been addressed and as far as the Council were concerned that was the end of the matter.
- A member of the public asked the Council to explain the Locum Clerks costs, the Chairman will reply in writing but not during a public meeting.
- Ownership of the War Memorial - Cllr Gray will write to the resident with details of ownership.
- 'The Ashdon Fox' - anonymous posts on Facebook regarding the Parish Council were brought to attention of the Council to keep an eye on.

25/14. EMERGENCY PLAN.

Cllr Gray updated the Council on the draft Emergency Plan, comments are invited. Cllr Gray was thanked for her work in producing the draft plan.

25/15. DISTRICT COUNCILLORS LOCALITY BUDGET.

Funds are still available but applications must be in by March 2025. The funding is available for projects within the parish.

25/16. SOLICITORS.

- To consider appointing a new solicitor - it was suggested contacting the EALC for recommendations. It was agreed that Cllr Gray can action this.
- Retrieval of documents - it is not known what documents are currently held. Once a new solicitor has been appointed the documents can be transferred.

25/17. FINANCE.

Payments:

103019 £5.00 UALC (Annual Subscription)
103020 £49.92 C Pardue (Cable for Christmas Tree)
103021 £100.00 Ashdon Cricket Club (Donation towards cost of presents)
103022 £120.00 Nulec Ltd (Pat test Christmas Lights)
103023 £48.00 Ashdon Village Hall (Hall Hire)
103024 £21.00 Clacton Business Services (Payroll)
103025 £690.00 M D Landscapes Ltd (Cemetery Hedges/Strim Churchyard)
103026 £119.00 Outdoor Jack (Christmas Tree Delivery)
103027 £761.40 A Balcombe (Locum Clerk Salary/Expenses)
103028 £10.90 J Gray (Paper/Watering Can)
103029 £30.00 Grasshopper Lawncare (War Memorial)
D/D £82.58 npower Business Solutions (Streetlighting October)

Cllr Pardue asked for a breakdown of the Locum Clerks costs - the Chairman will respond to Cllr Pardue separately as it was not appropriate to do so in a public meeting.

The meeting was interrupted by a member of the public.

25/18. CEMETERY.

An update was received from Cllr Gray. All of the records have been cross referenced to make it easier to see the details of burials. The fees were last updated in 2022; a draft set of fees have been produced along with various forms (none existed previously). Copies of all documents to be sent to all Councillors to be agreed at the February meeting. Comments are required by 7 February. It was suggested joining the Institute of Cemetery & Crematorium Management, cost around £100.00. Next agenda. Cllr Gray would like to attend the next EALC Burial Course.

25/19. CORRESPONDENCE TO NOTE.

Passenger Transport - launch of 'Love Your Bus' grant fund. Grants of up to £50,000 for projects aimed at increasing bus patronage and enhancing local services. Closing date: 14 February 2025 (now extended to the 21 February).

Emails - a number of emails received from the same person regarding various complaints.

Community Policing - Ashdon (Bartlow Road) Speed Check 20/12/24. The highest recorded speed was 45mph in a 30mph zone. Three drivers were reported for speeding offences. Average speed over 80 vehicles within an hour was 27.9mph.

Uttlesford Community Policing Team - Essex Police is reaching out to seek expressions of interest from Parish Councils interested in jointly funding a Police Community Support Officer (PCSO). Responses required by 14 February 2025. Agreed to investigate the expected costs. Next agenda.

25/20. ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA.

- Roles & Responsibilities
- Locality Budget
- Cemetery
- Solicitor
- PCSO Request

A member of the public interrupted the meeting regarding a list of items he wanted adding to the agenda.

25/21. MEETING DATES 2025.

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

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

Close of meeting 20:44

Signed (Chairman):

Date: