

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF ASHURST AND COLBURY PARISH COUNCIL.
HELD AT COLBURY CHURCH ROOMS ON 20th MARCH 2018.**

Present; Cllr Emma Lacey (Chair), Cllr Mike Thomas (Vice Chair), Cllr Caroline Hubbard, Cllr John Morris, Cllr Heather Richards, Cllr Clive White.

Clerk; Helen Klaassen

HCC; Cllr Keith Mans

NFDC; Cllr Derek Tipp

ACCG; Alister Hutchin

Neighbourhood Watch; Mrs Karen Oliver

Police; PCSO Richard Williams

The Chair Welcomed everyone and opened the meeting.

1. Apologies for Absence.
Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Ian Hobbs, and the absence of Cllr Ann Sturges was noted.
2. Confirmation of the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on the 21.03.17.
It was noted that the minutes had been signed off at the April 2017 Parish Council Meeting.
3. To receive a report from the Chairman of Ashurst & Colbury Parish Council, Cllr Emma Lacey.
Councillor Lacey gave her report (Annexe A).
4. To receive reports from the Chairs of the various Committees;
 - i. Open Spaces Committee - Cllr C Hubbard
Cllr Hubbard gave her report (Annexe B).
 - ii. Community Engagement Committee – Cllr H Richards
Cllr Richards gave her report (Annexe C).
 - iii. Highways and Transport Committee – Cllr I Hobbs
Cllr Lacey read out a report on behalf of Cllr Hobbs (Annexe D).
 - iv. Planning Committee – Cllr C Hubbard
Cllr Hubbard gave her report (Annexe E).
 - v. Finance and Resources Committee – Cllr E Lacey.
Cllr Lacey gave her report (Annexe F).
5. To receive reports from County Councillor Keith Mans and the District Councillors for the Parish, relating to the activities of the Hampshire County Council and New Forest District Council on matters affecting the Parish.
Cllr Keith Mans and Cllr Derek Tipp gave their reports (Annexes G & H).
6. To receive the following reports;
 - i. From PC Steven Norris / PCSO Richard Williams
PCSO Richard Williams gave a report (Annexe I)
 - ii. from the Neighbourhood Watch Group Co-ordinator, Mrs Karen Oliver
Mrs Oliver gave her report (Annexe J).
 - iii. from the Chairman of the Ashurst & Colbury Community Group
Mr Alister Hutchin gave his report (Annexe K).
7. To consider any matters raised by electors of the Parish of Ashurst and Colbury, affecting the Parish.
None.

There being no further business the Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 8.27pm.

Annexe A.

Chairman's Report – Cllr Lacey.

Whilst we started the PC year on somewhat of a low with the sad news of the passing of Cllr Sally Arnold and a spate of burglaries, the 12 months which followed really was a year of achievements, from small to large. To name but a few:

- We had our first bus shelter cleaned – more to follow
- Provided a defibrillator and training for residents
- Held a very successful VIP day
- Attended anniversary celebrations for the station
- Set up 5 news committees – much better placed to address and serve the needs of the community
- Employed a Lengthsman
- Started a Parish Plan and sought the views of the village
- Viewed and commented on countless planning applications
- Welcomed Cllr John Morris to the team, plus a new Chair and Vice Chair
- Continued to develop and improve the magazine – with more resident contributions than ever
- Held a public meeting to raise awareness about the final draft of the Local Plan and showed the concern and opinion of the village in key planning matters
- Welcomed speakers on Wild Play, Protecting the Forest Fringes
- Heard about the Ashurst Hospital site and complexities of ownership v planning
- Responded to concerns over changes to rail network timetabling
- Supported the Campaign for Rural England's campaign to protect green belt around the village by writing to our MP and Ministers

None of this would be possible without the tireless work of many – of course the Clerk and Councillors - but also our beloved residents and other important members of the community – the organised, the passionate, the challenged, the frustrated and the downright angry. I would like to thank everyone for their contribution.

Annexe B.

Open Spaces Committee Report – Cllr Caroline Hubbard.

This Committee has held its Meetings, come rain or shine, at the Recreation Ground or Allotments since April last year. Our terms of reference have been agreed and we have clearly identified priorities for 2017-2018.

Residents views were requested at the Village in the Park event and we are awaiting feedback from the Parish Plan Questionnaire.

Our main focus for this year is as follows.

Recreation Ground.

Reviewing play equipment provision.

Establishing a general maintenance contract for flower beds, shrubs, trees and weed control.

Using the Lengthsman effectively.

Refurbishing noticeboards and signage.

Installation of the new fence in Wharton's Lane.

Allotments.

Continuing to work collaboratively with Ian Oliver and the Allotmenters in establishing priorities and concerns.

Regular inspections with the Clerk to ensure all plots are well maintained.

Review of unoccupied plots and their allocation.

Pest control provision and reports.

Use of the Lengthsman as with the Recreation Ground.

Annexe C.

Community Engagement Committee Report - Cllr Heather Richards.

Community engagement Committee aims to:

Develop communication, identify needs of the village, and create an active and informed community.

In order to do this we have:

C.E Meetings every 3 months, started June 2017 and working groups have been set up to complete pieces of work in between these meetings.

Committee has devised Terms of Reference.

Budget for the committee which is now reviewed and is incorporated into the annual Precept. Any decisions involving funds are taken to full PC meeting for discussion and final decision.

Co-ordinated and supported events to bring village together, building relationships, to help get community on board, to encourage input in decision making and encourage an active involved community. Combat isolation and loneliness.

Successful Village in the park event last September where supporting local businesses, clubs and organisations was the main theme. Thank you to all those behind the scenes helping and for everyone who enjoyed the afternoon.

Other events, Christmas Carols and 'thank you' Christmas PC meeting.

Clive has worked hard to keep the excellent Monthly Parish Magazine running. This is one way that helps P.C to communicate with our residents about matters of public information, and of interest to the village.

This year we have seen an increase in the variety of the contributions from various sources and must thank all those who have sent us material, also the 28 volunteers who go out in all weathers to distribute the magazine.

Parish Plan

Village working party formed who have worked enthusiastically and put in time and effort to:

- Research on plan contents done
- Strategy written
- Community questionnaire devised, printed, distributed and responses collected.
- Business questionnaire written- plan to focus on this in April.

Review of communications channels, which include, Parish Magazine, website and Facebook.

Supporting existing groups such as ACCG, Tiddlywinks and the OUTREACH group.

Story writing competition for village children.

Requests for bids from village charities for fund raising monies that are accrued by Parish council over the year.

Priorities for next year:

We hope to continue production of the Magazine in the coming year and are always grateful for contributions to the magazine and about how we might make improvements to it.

Review whether **current PC website** is up to date and relevant to villagers. Possibly redesign and managing the website so that it can be more focused on Parish needs.

For Parish Plan:

- A few events and activities to capture final input for parish plan including groups and societies.
- Action plan to be drawn up.
- Delegation to committees.
- Annual review of finances for precept. Review of budget at regular CE meetings.

Building a database of villager's emails and contacts with those who wish to be communicated with. To be undertaken to ensure compliance with new legislation from the Data Protection Act.

Support volunteers from villagers to co-ordinate a fete in park for 1st September. Meeting to be coordinated soon by Parish Clerk.

Attract more villagers to PC meetings.

Finally, like to say big 'Thank You' to; Helen Klaassen, Councillors Ann Sturgess, Mike Thomas, Clive White and Emma Lacey for working together, sharing ideas and working hard with streams of work, bringing a good mix of ideas.

Please email or contact any of us if you wish to have your say or comment on community engagement.

Annexe D.

Highways and Transport Committee Report – Cllr Ian Hobbs.

The committee has, on behalf of the Parish Council, supported:

Traffic Management matters.

- Traffic challenges including parking
- Road damage/issues

Even with the efforts, it has been disappointing the HCC contractor deliverables, in terms of timely corrections, some still 8 months later, not rectified but we will continue to chase.

- Supporting the Speed watch initiative

Would like to thank PC Richard Williams in being able to get Speed detection equipment made available for the Parish.

- School new footpath/cycleway proposal support

Highways in the village.

- Verges and ditch/drainage challenges
- Dog litter problems and this will hopefully be closed in the coming weeks

Areas additionally

- Footpaths
- Bus shelters and their cleaning/improvements
- Railway franchise changes

And last but no least the pleasure to have the newly appointed Lengthsman, Alf Baker and looking forward to working closely in the coming months.

18-19

In the coming weeks and throughout the next accounting period, above doing similar tasks, there will be focus on:

- New benches for less able people to go back and forth to the shops without needing to use their vehicle.
- Replacement or refurbishment of the Metal/plastic bus shelters
- Improved Christmas lighting for the precinct area
- Replacement of the Dragons teeth in Foxhills
- Working with Alf on the notice board refurbishments

Thanks to Helen, Emma & John for their support in what can be sometimes emotive subjects for some people.

Annexe E.

Planning and Development Committee – Cllr Caroline Hubbard.

This Committee has met at 6.30pm before the main Parish Council Meeting.

It has proved to be an effective change as we have welcomed a greater number of residents with planning applications or concerns about applications than in previous years.

We have welcomed Councillor John Morris to the Committee to join Councillor Ian Hobbs, Councillor Clive White and Councillor Mike Thomas.

Councillors have developed their expertise in considering the merits, or not, of Applications according to NFNPA planning guidelines and the VDS. Site visits are often undertaken by Councillors before an Application is considered, particularly if it is a contentious one or one that residents are concerned about.

A number of the Committee have also attended training sessions in Lyndhurst.

We have also made site visits, accompanied by the Clerk and planning officers from the NFNPA to consider Applications that have been contentious.

Cllrs on the Planning Committee have been actively involved in the two main issues which have concerned Ashurst and Colbury this year and have made their recommendations to the Full Council. They have also taken a lead role in the Public Meetings held to consider the PC response. These issues, which are ongoing, relate to: potential development at the Ashurst Hospital Site (a brownfield site) and the revised Local Plan SPF22 proposed development at Wharton's Lane, (a greenfield site.)

Annexe F.

Finance and Resources Committee – Cllr Emma Lacey.

Purpose: to oversee Parish Council Finances (incl. assets) and Audit processes
To oversee staffing and employment (Clerk and Lengthsman)

Primary focus in 17-18 has been:

1. The Clerk:
 - i. Procedures and contract –
 - ii. Pay and hours – incl. time management and delegation
 - iii. Performance
 - iv. Training and development
 - v. H&S incl. lone working
2. The council office and contract – ensuring it continues to offer VFM
3. Employing the Lengthsman – incl. job description, interviews and contract
4. Reviewing and setting the annual budget for the Parish – the Precept – with all budget heads from committees

Key outcomes

1. New lone working procedure
2. Hours and contract review
3. Review of time management and prioritising practices – in light of new committees
4. Appointment of short term assistance for 3 committees – until September
5. Proposed new appraisal process
6. New office contract secured
7. Lengthsman employed
8. Annual budget applied for – no change

More to be done, incl. delegated budgets to committees, further work on Clerk development and appraisal.

Annexe G.

Cllr Keith Mans – Hampshire County Councillor.

This has been a difficult year financially for the County Council. However, through very effective long-term planning and good use of capital we were able to confirm at our budget setting meeting in February that buses would not suffer further cuts and all Waste Recycling Centres would remain open. We were also able to announce extra funding for additional social workers to support needy families and introduce new high-tech methods of looking after the elderly.

HCC are working with Southampton University Hospital to build a 'step-down' unit with grounds to ensure that elderly people leave hospital when they are ready and will receive nursing rather than clinical care and re-enablement to help them make the transition back to home.

Hampshire 2050 Commission to look at the issues and strategy for the future, on which Parish Councils will be asked to consult.

Over the past year my devolved budget, which has been held at £8000, has been spent right across the Division. It includes improvements to village halls, children's' playgrounds, and new village signage. It has also been used to support our local Brilliance in Business Awards.

Annexe H.

District Council Report - Cllr Derek Tipp

Over the last few years the Council has had to live within ever tighter budgets. The savings have come from reducing the number of senior officers and cutting out some non-essential services, such as tourist information centres, which are now largely done using the internet. Thanks to these prudent savings NFDC is still in a good position with strong reserves and a balanced budget. We are now looking closely at one of our biggest costs - the five leisure centres. A comprehensive review is being carried out and by September we will see what is possible in terms of new ways of delivery while still maintaining the service which both residents and schools rely on.

As well as saving money the Council is looking at new ways of generating income. One new way is by investing in both residential and business property. This should give us better returns than the current low rates available in the bond market. Investing in bonds is also a greater risk to the Council as its capital is no longer protected in the event of a future banking collapse.

The new local district plan is nearly ready for examination in public by the inspectorate. If it is approved the District will allow about 500 homes to be built each year for the next 20 years. The numbers could even be increased if the council's figures are not accepted. In any case it will mean a general increase in traffic and more pressure on local services. Councillors are powerless to set lower numbers as they must be set using statistics independent of the Council. The government is determined to increase house building rates and it is understandable in light of the massive immigration numbers (in excess of 250,000 net per year) which show no sign of abating.

The future of local government itself is still very much under review. While plans in Hampshire are not as advanced as those in Dorset, it is still likely that some changes will occur in the next decade. This is being driven by the pressure to keep costs down in the face of increases in budget requirements. I hope that the necessary savings can be made by a greater sharing of back office functions and that the local districts and boroughs can remain in place. I know that there are discussions between councils to try and bring this about.

Annexe I

PCSO Richard Williams.

The burglar responsible for the spate of burglaries in Ashurst last year had been arrested, he had admitted to some of the Ashurst burglaries, but they were all at the same time and of the same modus operandii. There have been no more burglaries since his arrest.

The Policing team are pleased with the amount of CCTV in Ashurst now, it is a great deterrent and very helpful to the police. Non-dwelling burglaries are continuing.

Residents are advised to make themselves and their properties as safe as possible.

Thefts from motor vehicles in the village area had increased and decreased in forest car parks.

Commendation for Neighbourhood Watch, which goes from strength to strength and there are co-ordinators in most roads.

Speedwatch starts in April, new equipment had been purchased for this.

Annexe J.

Neighbourhood Watch – Mrs Karen Oliver.

Neighbourhood watch is working well, and Mrs Oliver thanked all the volunteers for their input.

NW is a stakeholder in the Outreach Group.

Tribute was paid to the Neighbourhood policing team of PCSO Richard Williams and PC Steven Norris for their support.



<https://ashurstaccg.wordpress.com/>

Report for the Annual Parish Meeting 2018

The Ashurst and Colbury Community Group continues to take an active part in the village.

The village **litter pick** we organised last March collected 30 bags of rubbish which when added to the interim litter pick we did in the previous autumn means we collected over 50 bags in the year. We are due to hold this year's litter pick on April 7th and helpers are welcome. See our website for details.

We also arranged a very successful **Apple Day** in October. The event was a great social occasion. Not only were all three apples presses hard at it all day, but we also served delicious lunches and teas, were entertained by a performance from the Romsey Ukulele Band and a delightful visit from two of our neighbours: an owl and a hedgehog from the NF Wildlife Park. All in all, a very entertaining day.

Due to the driving force of Arthur Jeffery we also set up the **celebrations for the 170th anniversary of the opening of Ashurst New Forest railway station** on May 1st. People were dressed in Victorian Costume and Arthur Jeffery gave a brief history of the station and railway. The ribbon was cut by local author Anne-Marie Edwards. After the ceremony the celebrations continued at the New Forest Hotel who allowed us to use their garden and kindly supported the occasion. The event included a jazz band, Ocean Harmony and a display tent with artefacts, photos and memorabilia and mini steam engines. We organised games, artwork and face painting for the children. We also held an art competition on a railway theme for children at Foxhills School. We are grateful for the generous sponsorship given by the Co-op Welcome Store and by South West Trains.

We continue to be involved with **ACOG** providing social occasions and support for isolated and disabled elderly people in the village. We run tea parties with entertainments for around 60 people each time and provide transport for those unable to come on their own or with friends.

Ashurst Walks continues to be very well attended. It is now in its 12th year. We run 23 walks a year with an average of 12 people on weekdays and 23 on our Saturday walks. It is a great way to explore the surrounding area. Details are always published in the Parish Council Magazine and on our website.

Cycle Ashurst. In 2017 David White organised 7 cycle rides. Unfortunately, they were poorly attended. No rides have been organised for 2018 as yet.

On September 9th last year we took part in the **Village in the Park Day** where we had a stand to display our activities. In December we helped at the Parish Council Christmas Carol Evening.

Finally, we are actively involved in helping to set up a **speed watch group** to try and reduce the speeding through the village.

We have other projects which are at the planning stage.

Our AGM will take place on May 1st. Details will be in the Magazine and on our website. All are welcome.