

**Minutes of the Annual Ashford Parish Council Meeting
Held on Thursday 16th May 2024 at 7pm in the Church Hall,
St Peter's Church, Ashford**

Present: Cllrs P Hughes (Chairman), J Bosley, K Furse, G Holder (from Minute No 2505/13), B Kettle, V Lawson and M Withey

Mrs V Woodhouse, Locum Parish Clerk
Cllr R Knight, North Devon Council

4 Members of the public

- 2405/01 **Election of Chairman for 2024/25**
Cllr Hughes was nominated by Cllr Lawson and second by Cllr Bosley, there were no further nominations, and it was **resolved**, with no votes to the contrary and one abstention, to appoint Cllr Hughes as Chairman.
- 2405/02 **Declaration of Office – Chairman**
The Chairman read and sign the prescribed 'Declaration of Acceptance of Office'.
- 2405/03 **Election of Vice Chairman for 2024/25**
Cllr Lawson was nominated by Cllr Furse and seconded by Cllr Bosley, there were no further nominations, and it was **resolved**, with one vote to the contrary and one abstention. Cllr Kettle felt that officers should change regularly to give everyone a chance.
- 2405/04 **Apologies**
None.
- 2405/05 **Declarations of Interest**
Cllr Hughes declared an Interest in Item 2405/19 Planning Application 78378.
- 2405/06 **Public Participation**
A member of the public stated that they understood the Parish Council's insurance premium had increased significantly due to a legal claim against the Council and asked if the matter is still outstanding.

A member of the public expressed that the red telephone box library is looking a little tired and asked if the Parish Council would consider tidying the box.
- 2405/07 **Minutes**
It was **resolved**, with no votes to the contrary, to approve and sign the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Thursday 18th April 2024 as a correct record.
- 2405/08 **Review of Standing Orders**
Members reviewed the Standing Orders, and no amendments were made.

- 2405/09 **Review of Financial Regulations**
Members reviewed the Financial Regulations, and no amendments were made.
- 2405/10 **Members' Code of Conduct**
Members reviewed the Code of Conduct, and no amendments were made.
- 2405/11 **Assets Register**
The Asset Register was circulated prior to the meeting and noted.
- 2405/12 **Calendar of Meetings**
The Chairman proposed that the Calendar of Meetings is set for the Council year and meetings are scheduled for the third Thursday of every other month, it was noted that there is the ability to call Extraordinary meetings if required. It was **resolved**, with two votes to the contrary, to schedule the meetings for the Council year on the third Thursday of every other month.
- Cllr Holder entered the meeting at 7.12pm.
- 2405/13 **County Councillor Report**
None received.
- 2405/14 **District Councillor Report**
Cllr Knight articulated his apologies for not being able to attend the village litter pick.
- 2405/15 **Highway Priorities**
The Chairman reported that he had met with the County Cllr to look at the damage in Ashfield Lane, the flooding on the top road and the missing sign and markings at Springfield Cross. The signs have still not been replaced, the mud on the top road is now a problem and will be washed into the drains when it next rains, the Chairman asked if quotations should be sought to clear the mud with a contractor. Members felt it was a highway issue and pressure should continue to be applied through the County Cllr.
- The Chairman asked if members would like to purchase some pedestrian signs to erect in Strand Lane, it was agreed to purchase 4 x pedestrian signs to place on the bends to warn drivers, it was noted that the hedge could do with a mid-summer safety cut and to consider in due course.
- 2405/16 **Renewal of Insurance**
The renewal invitation and quotation was circulated prior to the meeting. It was noted that the Parish Council had found it difficult last year to find insurance cover due to an ongoing legal situation. Members discussed the cost of the insurance premium which had more than doubled it was noted that a lot of time and money had been spent on the issue at a cost to the parish.

2405/17

Payment and Receipts

The following payment and receipts were received and approved:

Payments

7.	Clerk's Expenses (mileage)	£21.15
8.	Clerk's Invoice for hours to end of May 24	£200
9.	Ashford Church Council, Hall Hire	£20
10.	M J Baker, Grass Cutting, May	£120
11.	Fremington Parish Council, Postage	£3.36
12.	Gallagher, Insurance	£735.72
13.	Julie Snooks, Internal Audit	£110

Payments	£1,210.23
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Receipts

1.	North Devon Council, Precept	£2,500
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Receipts	£2,500
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2405/18

Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023/2024

a) To receive the Internal Auditor's Report and agree the Annual Governance Statement 2023/2024

the Internal Auditor's Report and Annual Governance Statement 2023/2024 was circulated prior to the meeting, and it was **resolved**, with no votes to the contrary, to approve the Annual Governance Statement for 2023/2024.

b) To agree the Accounting Statements for 2023/2024

Accounting Statements 2023/2024 was circulated prior to the meeting, and it was **resolved**, with no votes to the contrary, to approve the Accounting Statements for 2023/2024.

c) To agree to Certify that Ashford Parish Council is Exempt from a limited Assurance Review as gross income and expenditure is under £25,000.

It was **resolved**, with no votes to the contrary, to agree that Ashford Parish Council is Exempt from a Limited Assurance Review for 2023/2024 as gross income and expenditure is under £25,000.

Cllr Hughes declared an Interest in the following item and left the meeting.

Cllr Lawson took the Chair.

2405/19

Planning

78378 Erection of an Implement/garden shed & additional garage at 6 Corn Park Close Ashford Barnstaple

Applicant: Mr and Mrs Sampson

It was **resolved**, with no votes to the contrary, to recommend APPROVAL.

Cllr Hughes returned to the meeting and resumed the Chair.

2405/20

Defibrillator

Cllr Hughes confirmed that National Grid had been paid and the signed consent forms returned for an unmetered electricity supply. It was hoped that confirmation of a date for the works would be received from National Grid soon and hopefully the second defibrillator would be in place by July.

Cllr Lawson confirmed that the current defibrillator is on the circuit which is a national database, and monthly inspections are carried out and a report submitted each month. The second defibrillator would also be on the national network and the Parish Council would need to nominate someone to undertake the monthly checks and submit the reports. Cllr Lawson reminded everyone that if a medical situation is experienced you should dial **999** in the first instance and will be directed to the nearest defibrillator.

2405/21

It was **resolved** that under Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 that the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item as it involves the likely disclosure of confidential information.

Members of the public left the meeting.

PART B

2405/22

Recruitment

Members were informed that the interview had taken place, and it was **resolved**, with no votes to the contrary, to ratify the appointment of Mrs Jane Mills as Parish Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer, it was noted that Mrs Mills will take up appointment mid-June and a handover process will be arranged.

Members thanked Mrs Woodhouse for the service she had provided to the Parish Council.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.50pm.

Signed

Dated