

Minutes of Ashford Annual Parish Meeting held on Thursday, 18 May 2017 in the Church Hall at 7pm.

Chaired by: Councillor G Holder	Clerked by: Sue Squire
Present: Councillors Mrs J Bosley G Holder V Lawson Mrs S Sampson District Councillor Mrs A Davis Police 11 Members of the public	Agenda: - Apologies Minutes Review of the Year Statement of Accounts Electors Questions Business brought forward at the discretion of the Chairman
	Action:
1.	To receive apologies for non attendance. Councillors Bleach and Mrs Sandwell, County Councillor Mrs C Chugg.
2.	To confirm the Minutes of the meeting held on 19 May 2016. Approved and signed as a correct record.
3.	Review of the Year.
3a.	Chairman's Report. This has been my fifth year as chairman; it has certainly been the most demanding yet. We were sorry to lose Councilor Bremner & the subsequent election process put a lot of financial pressures on our budgets. Our able clerk has cleverly managed to see us through a very tricky period and many thanks to Sue for her guidance. The old red telephone box at the top of the graveyard was adopted by Ashford Parish in 2016. It is now a small library for use of members of the village. A nicely organized grand opening in October was well attended, with teas, cakes & a ribbon cutting by Dr Alan Bosley. Many thanks to all who helped with the setting up of this great little asset for the village. A new bench seat has also been erected just adjacent to the box. Last May we had a voluntary village tidy up day. We picked up litter, cleaned signs, cut back hedge growth. The village looked a lot better for it. We are planning to repeat the exercise this year. Saturday May 27 th , start at 10.00am, meet at the Parish Notice Board, any volunteer helpers will be welcomed with open arms. The traffic problems at the junction of Strand Lane and the main A361, relating to the car boot sales, continue. But, we have had an increasing amount of issues relating to large articulated lorries not being able to gain easy access to the garden centre car park. They seem to get stuck in the lane trying to negotiate the small, busy gateway. We have had a meeting with the garden centre manager & there are plans afoot to widen & improve the entrance. County Councilor Caroline Chugg, keeps the flow of information between Exeter and Ashford going and we are grateful to her for all the hard work she puts in for Ashford and other Parishes in her area. Planning issues have take up a lot of our time and it has been quite difficult to deal with some applications when councilors have to declare interests & are unable to take part. But we hope that members of the Parish have always been able to deliver their views and that the council has passed this on to the planning department. Parish Website. Our new website was set up early this year. I believe that it is now running smoothly with regular updates. Many thanks to Geoff Williams for all his hard work in setting this up for Ashford, it is a vast improvement on the old one.

	<p>The Lengths man has been very irregular this year due to budgets being continually squeezed. It has also become clear that we, as a Parish Council, will in future have to undertake more & more small works & repairs to our facilities. We will also have to be financially responsible for some of this work. It is with this in mind that we increased our precept from North Devon Council for 2017/18.</p> <p><u>Police.</u> Crime in the village has been minimal this year. We are glad to welcome back Dale this year although we haven't seen him very often.</p> <p>Our thanks to Councilor Andrea Davis for keeping us in touch with North Devon Council business and of course, all the extras she quietly does for us behind the scenes. Many thanks also to our efficient clerk, Sue Squire. And of course, thanks to all of you here, who like me, are prepared to give up our time for free for the good of this Parish.</p> <p>In addition, I would like to thank County Councillor Mrs Chugg for her donation of £1,000 and District Councillor Mrs Davis for her donation of £250 towards the refurbishment of the telephone box and to Councillor Mrs Davis for a further donation of £300 for the refurbishment of the notice board and bus shelters.</p>	
<p>3b.</p>	<p>Footpath Warden's Report. Generally the Ashford footpaths are in reasonable condition, the paths last walked in March were all in a fair state with no real obstructions or overgrowth.</p> <p>Footpath number 7 is quite passable, though where it continues to become FP 5, there is likely to be some overgrowth from the hedges requiring some cutting back.</p> <p>Footpath 5 has a new gate where it passes through the rear gardens of the houses at the top of Ashfield Close. Improvements to the way marking would make it easier to negotiate around the derelict buildings below Ashfield House, though it is not difficult to work it out. The path will require some overgrowth cutting in the not too distant future and there should be some way marking improvements to clarify the route to the West Ashford paths, though again, it is not difficult to work it out.</p> <p>Returning to the Ashford parish paths, Footpath number 9 changes part way to become Footpath 6. We took a pragmatic view and walked along the perimeter of the field to avoid walking through the newly planted corn which; whilst not strictly conforming to the true path line just extended what would be a quite short route. The stile next to Ashfield House at the start of FP no. 6 has recently been repaired.</p> <p>Footpath 8 (Watery Lane) is a little tricky to negotiate with running surface water over quite a slippery rocky path surface at the start of the path at Higher New Close lane end to where it forms a small stream about halfway along the length of the path; shortly beyond where the new gate and access has been installed.</p> <p>There has been some work done by the owners of the Tarka campsite and a new bridge to provide users of the holiday park access to field behind Ashford Inn Farm.</p> <p>To continue what is about the closest to a circular walk you can have in Ashford, we returned to the main part of the village through the fields along footpath number 3. The path is clear, the stile at the dual carriageway fairly easily accessible from the visibility splay of the Caravan Park, without having to risk life and limb by walking on the road.</p> <p>I would like to express thanks to Ros Davies, the Devon County Council Rights of Way officer for the informative talk she gave to the Parish Council at the December Meeting.</p> <p>Works carried out last year involved the installation of dog friendly styles at Footpath 5 and a new style on Footpath 8 at a total cost of £405.00. We are extremely grateful to DCC Public Rights of Way Department for reimbursing the whole amount of this.</p>	
<p>3c.</p>	<p>Tree Warden's Report. Not a lot to report for this last twelve months.</p>	

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tarka Holiday Park. Having cut down a large amount of trees and established shrubs during 2015/16. It is good to see that new trees and indigenous whips have now been planted. The Councils planning department have agreed the planting scheme with the new owners of the park. It will take 10 to 15 years to establish, but the job has been done. 2. Trees on the junction of Strand Lane & Long Lane. The trees that were cut back without gaining permission from North Devon Council, are now growing back with new vigor. 	
<p>3d.</p>	<p>Devon County Councillor's Report. Mrs C Chugg. I would firstly like to say how pleased I am to have been re-elected as the County Councillor for a further 4 years. With the many Reports I have given, it has been difficult to reduce them down to a few words. With extra funding from central government Highways have managed to continue to improve and fill the potholes. At last the 1st stage of the drainage upgrade and pump works are finished in Braunton and Caen Street is open again. I worked with Stuart Hughes to secure over £540K worth of funding. The pump will be put in during September. There will not be another road closure then but the entrance to the car park will be shut and I have pressed for them to take the pavements back and open out the entrance so it keeps the traffic flowing. The plan is being worked on at this time and should be incorporated as an Air Quality plan improvement. A number of roads are due to be surfaced dressed in the area and unfortunately road closures are more the norm now to get these works done.</p> <p>At the present time with the reduced grant funding for schools we are lobbying all the local MP's to fight for fairer funding for Devon as we get £290 less on average per pupil from the other areas. I have sent my Parish Clerks and the Head Teachers at the schools a link to an online petition that we have set up at County to lobby for fairer funding. I have had numerous letters about this from worried parents as well. We must make sure we have at least an even playing field.</p> <p>As I have reported at many meetings we are also fighting hard and making recommendations through the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to the Clinical Commissioning Group and the Success Regime to stop closing the Cottage Hospitals until they are sure that they have the Care in the Community set up and running properly. We have also let the Secretary of State know how vital the North Devon Hospital is to the community and how we need quality services locally due to our rurality and distance from any other major unit.</p> <p>The main services that have not only been sustained but improved are the Library and the Youth Group which are up and running and thanks to the many volunteers, who we could not do without, are continuing to go from strength to strength. The Library at Braunton offers a range of activities for adults and children. Book clubs, Biosphere talks with a look into the miniature world through the microscope, Wi-Fi use of the internet, cheap printing, film nights and many other events which serve the whole of the community. The Youth Club is still running and although based in Braunton, children from around the area use the facilities. We are looking to upgrading the Skate Bowl this year.</p> <p>Another matter of interest while on the Board of the Devon & Somerset Fire & rescue Authority I can inform you that we are one of the best in the country and are very highly thought of within the organization. We are innovative and have designed the New Light Rescue Pumps which have saved funds as they replace the larger machines and allow access through the narrow lanes. These Light Rescue Pumps are ideal for an area with narrow streets. Also we were praised how we dealt with the major fire incident at Exeter, when we used the new mist sprayer to dampen down the fire and save the centre of Exeter from going up.</p>	
<p>3e.</p>	<p>North Devon District Councillor's Report. Councillor Mrs Davis advised it had been a busy year with numerous Planning Applications. It had also been a difficult year due to budget cuts.</p> <p>Parkwood Leisure are taking on, temporarily, the running of the Queens Theatre and Landmark Theatre, which were open again, on a long term contract.</p> <p>Trial areas for waste and recycling are starting on 5 June. The recycling rate for North Devon is currently low.</p>	

3f.	<p>Police Report. Inspector Roger Bartlett had retired. In his place is Acting Inspector Andy Peel and Inspector Paul Searle will be in post at the end of June. In Braunton and Ilfracombe, there is Acting Sergeant Chris Manall. The number of PCSO's are being cut but no further details were known.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="210 331 1321 853"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="210 331 624 421">Offence</th> <th data-bbox="630 331 1007 421">Recorded crime 30/04/2016 to 30/04/2017</th> <th data-bbox="1013 331 1321 421">Recorded crime 30/04/2015 to 30/04/2016</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td data-bbox="210 443 624 472">Violence with injury</td><td data-bbox="630 443 1007 472">0</td><td data-bbox="1013 443 1321 472">3</td></tr> <tr><td data-bbox="210 474 624 504">Violence without injury</td><td data-bbox="630 474 1007 504">1</td><td data-bbox="1013 474 1321 504">6</td></tr> <tr><td data-bbox="210 506 624 535">Rape</td><td data-bbox="630 506 1007 535">0</td><td data-bbox="1013 506 1321 535">1</td></tr> <tr><td data-bbox="210 537 624 566">Other sexual offences</td><td data-bbox="630 537 1007 566">1</td><td data-bbox="1013 537 1321 566">2</td></tr> <tr><td data-bbox="210 568 624 598">Burglary Dwelling</td><td data-bbox="630 568 1007 598">1</td><td data-bbox="1013 568 1321 598">0</td></tr> <tr><td data-bbox="210 600 624 629">Burglary Non – Dwelling</td><td data-bbox="630 600 1007 629">1</td><td data-bbox="1013 600 1321 629">1</td></tr> <tr><td data-bbox="210 631 624 660">Vehicle Offences</td><td data-bbox="630 631 1007 660">1</td><td data-bbox="1013 631 1321 660">1</td></tr> <tr><td data-bbox="210 663 624 692">Shoplifting</td><td data-bbox="630 663 1007 692">1</td><td data-bbox="1013 663 1321 692">0</td></tr> <tr><td data-bbox="210 694 624 723">Other theft</td><td data-bbox="630 694 1007 723">1</td><td data-bbox="1013 694 1321 723">1</td></tr> <tr><td data-bbox="210 725 624 754">Criminal damage</td><td data-bbox="630 725 1007 754">3</td><td data-bbox="1013 725 1321 754">2</td></tr> <tr><td data-bbox="210 757 624 786">Public Order Offences</td><td data-bbox="630 757 1007 786">3</td><td data-bbox="1013 757 1321 786">1</td></tr> <tr><td data-bbox="210 788 624 817">Possession of drugs</td><td data-bbox="630 788 1007 817">1</td><td data-bbox="1013 788 1321 817">0</td></tr> <tr><td data-bbox="210 819 624 848">Other Offences</td><td data-bbox="630 819 1007 848">0</td><td data-bbox="1013 819 1321 848">6</td></tr> <tr><td data-bbox="210 851 624 875">Total</td><td data-bbox="630 851 1007 875">14</td><td data-bbox="1013 851 1321 875">24</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Offence	Recorded crime 30/04/2016 to 30/04/2017	Recorded crime 30/04/2015 to 30/04/2016	Violence with injury	0	3	Violence without injury	1	6	Rape	0	1	Other sexual offences	1	2	Burglary Dwelling	1	0	Burglary Non – Dwelling	1	1	Vehicle Offences	1	1	Shoplifting	1	0	Other theft	1	1	Criminal damage	3	2	Public Order Offences	3	1	Possession of drugs	1	0	Other Offences	0	6	Total	14	24
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3g.	<p>Village Organisations' Reports.</p>																																													
3g i	<p>Garden Club. We are a local group that started in June 2016 with only 3 members. Very quickly as people found out about us, our list of members grew.</p> <p>As of today we have over 35 people signed up to receive information about our activities.</p> <p>There are no membership fees and no obligation to come to everything! You do not have to be an expert to join this group, it's all about sharing ideas, swapping plants, visiting gardens, including each other's, expert talks and to learn new skills. We usually meet informally in a variety of locations, at different times and on different days.</p> <p>Sometimes we have dates set up in advance when we need to book something in. There is a group contact list which gets updated periodically as new people join.</p> <p>Information about the group is on the Ashford website and on the village notice boards and events are sent out privately to those on the mailing list by email, telephone or through a closed group on Facebook called Ashford Gardening group (North Devon).</p> <p>Activities we have enjoyed over the last 11 months We started off with a mini tour of a few gardens, which was then quickly followed by visits to view each other's gardens where tea, cake, and other goodies were enjoyed!</p> <p>Visits to Open Gardens in Fremington and Morthoe.</p> <p>Hosting the Red Box library opening.</p> <p>A demonstration of hard and softwood cuttings.</p> <p>Cotehele House, National Trust Property to see the huge dried flower garland in November.</p> <p>Christmas Wreath making in the village Hall.</p> <p>Quiz night in the village Hall.</p> <p>Seed and catalogue sharing,</p> <p>Since March we have started visiting each other's gardens again with invites flooding in from members.</p>																																													

3g ii	<p>Bike Club.</p> <p>The wheels of the ABC have been turning since last September, for social and scenic rides, with some members riding regularly and others occasionally. Orthodox and electric bikes are welcome and the club is an ideal way to return to riding or to extend one's range and explore new areas. Everyone helps with any problems and no one is left behind – and there are regular (frequent!) refreshment stops.</p> <p>Most rides as classed as Easy (flat and up to 15 miles) or Leisure (flattish and up to 25 miles), using the Tarka Trail and the lanes leading off; but there are also moderate rides (20-50 miles with hills).</p> <p>Shorter rides include trips to Bideford, Bishops Tawton's Chichester Arms, Crow Point, Croyde, Fremington, Georgham and Instow. Longer rides have included an Awayday to the Camel Trail from Bodmin to Padstow (an even more popular route than the Tarka Trail) and a two-day Ilfracombe-to-Plymouth coast-to-coast.</p> <p>Recently, Dale joined the energetic Holy Trinity Church Easter Saturday 'Pilgrimage Ride' when the group visited Ashford Church. Members also did a 'Big Breakfast' ride to Saunton Golf Club to support the North Devon Hospice.</p> <p>Most rides start at the Ashford Notice Board on Sundays at 10.00, but there are weekday rides, too. In bad weather, cancellations are made by email and Facebook by 8.00am on the day.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">For more information, see the Ashford Bike Club on Facebook at https://www.facebook.com/groups/1669979376649139/</p>	
3g iii	<p>Ashford Arts and Literature Club.</p> <p>The Literature and Arts Society spun-out of the successful Ashford Quiz Night in February. The intention is to share interests through a wide range of sociable meetings and visits – covering fiction and poetry, films and theatre, art and photography, music and dancing, and local history and events. The group is also a network for sharing information and it has a Facebook page to publicise events in the area.</p> <p>The inaugural and varied "Something to Share" meeting in the Village Hall in March was a great success: Karen Lawson showed a crafted patchwork quilt; Martin Knight talked about the crime writings of Fred Vargas; Dale Hall introduced John Donne's love poem, "The Good Morrow"; and Mary Szymankiewicz brought programmes of local events and the Art Society.</p> <p>Forthcoming meetings include:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Wine tasting (by Majestic Wines) in the Village Hall on Friday, June 23</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Barnstaple History Walk on Wednesday, July 5 (with tea in the Old School House (Church Lane) and/or dinner somewhere afterwards)</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">An informal 'book club' to feature books in the Ashford Phone Box Library).</p> <p>Later meetings will include https://www.facebook.com/groups/1669979376649139/ village and local speakers introducing their interests, a DIY wine tasting, and a session on using Facebook and the Ashford website.</p> <p>The committee is (alphabetical): Sara Bleach, Dale and Rachel Hall, Martin and Sandra Knight, and Mary Szymankiewicz.</p>	
3g iv	<p>Ashford Parochial Church Council.</p> <p>Our special events, Mothering Sunday, Lent Lunch, Rogation, Petertide and Carol Service were all well supported and enjoyed. It is hoped that we may also stage some fund-raising events in 2017.</p> <p>At the end of the year, we suffered the great loss of Dudley Booth, our Treasurer. He never failed to be cheerful and encouraging to Mark and the Finance Committee as they grappled with the intricacies of the accounting system. Our deepest sympathy goes to Rosemary and the family. We look forward to Rosemary returning to mastermind our music. In her absence we continued singing, with congregation members taking turns to choose the hymns. Bridget and Brian Kettle kindly stepped in to rehearse us for the Carol Service, and we have also enjoyed Nigel's playing on third Sundays.</p> <p>Two key figures have left the village during the year. Joan Arthur who so faithfully opened and closed the church each day and Ann Burnham who has sold her house and will be moving to Prieford. Her organising and hospitality skills will be much missed. Being allowed to park at The Old Rectory has</p>	

	<p>been a great boon, but we need to remember that we managed quite well before Ann came to Ashford!</p> <p>We have identified our main mission focus as <i>Mission through increased involvement within village life</i> and we are encouraged by how this is developing. At our Carol Service the readers represented many aspects of our village life including the Parish Council and various clubs. Similarly, the Knitting Group donated teddies to go with our harvest produce to the Women's Refuge, and woolly hats for the shoebox appeal. The village is aware that we collect for the Food Bank and Headway (plastic bottle tops) in the church. Villagers also help to keep the church open every day (another complex co-ordination task for Derek) and The Gardening Club are about to help with the maintenance of the churchyard. Other new clubs, such as The Poetry and Culture, as well as The Gardening Club are using the Church Hall, which has boosted Hall income. The Cycling Club is also very popular</p> <p>Two weddings were held in the church this year – either side of our Harvest Festival. With some creative thinking and lots of co-operation, we were able to offer the Harvest flowers (arranged by the Ladies' Group) to the two appreciative brides, and villagers also rang the bells on both occasions.</p> <p>As regards the church building, we have completed the work highlighted in the Quinquennial Report. Having consulted with the congregation, we are going ahead with plans for a toilet and improved tea and coffee facilities in the church, thanks to the generous legacy we received from our dear friend Joyce Stanley. We have already upgraded our lighting, making evening events safer by lighting the churchyard paths.</p> <p>Finance</p> <p>We are looking at ways of reducing our costs and increasing our regular income, with hopefully additional planned giving from parishioners. Keeping an eye on meter readings carried out by suppliers and the changing of tariffs can all help the figures, together with cost cutting ventures such as asking for assistance from members of the village in the regular maintenance of a tidy churchyard.</p> <p>Charitable Giving has continued with the proceeds of our Carol Service going again to our Ugandan Charity, 'Amigos', run from Barnstaple by a small group of volunteers. Glachuki in Kenya, has again been supported and the Parish hosted the visit from Africa of The Reverend Daniel and a local Farmer, our permanent contact there, Joseph, whose flight costs were partially financed from generous donations by individual members of our two congregations. Our visitors were given a comprehensive itinerary of visits to give them an insight into our way of life and the work of our two Churches in the Parish including their attendance at services in each Church which gave them a flavour of our worship styles and size of congregation, where St Peter's currently stands at 20, somewhat different from their congregations which are well into the hundreds for any service! St Peter's continues to contribute suitable foodstuffs to the Barnstaple Food Bank, situation next to the large Tesco store; the sizeable quantity of 90kg has been donated this year.</p> <p>Incidentally this Tesco store provides free of charge items such as bread and fruit to the Food Bank.</p> <p>Despite these gifts of food this centre has occasion to call for assistance from the nearby Bideford Branch, so we do still need to recognise the continued requirement of our generosity in this venture.</p> <p>We have seen some challenging changes in our church and in the village in the last year and we can look forward with optimism to 2017.</p>	
3g v	<p>Neighbourhood Watch. Mr Bunce suggested that Mr Worby's emails were more widespread in connection with alerts.</p>	
3g vi	<p>Planning Residents Group.</p> <p>The first and most important thing to say and make clear is that there is, in fact, no Ashford 'Planning Residents Group', despite me standing here apparently representing one!</p> <p>Yes, a group of us got together to contest 59288, which was a planning application for land off Long Lane. But that group was mostly people in neighbouring properties or those who had strong feelings about a possible development in Ashford's Conservation Area.</p> <p>It was never intended that the group would go on to represent residents in other planning applications. However, some important lessons were learned from what we did, which are worth considering here. Firstly, if you wish to contest an application you have to research and construct a clear and rational</p>	

	<p>argument. Arguments must come from the head, not just from the heart. That means you have to start to understand the planning rules and that is not an easy task.</p> <p>Secondly, you have to persuade the Parish Council to support your point of view. That means you have to come to the PC meeting when it is due for discussion and make your case. The ND Planning Committee do appear to give some weight to PC recommendations, not always, but it is far better to have the PC supporting you, than not.</p>	
3g vii	<p>Ladies Group. Have been meeting for approx 20 years. We have 36 members at present and meet every month except August for a variety of talks and activities. Each year we have a Charity Strawberry Tea in a member's garden and a lunch in December. During the last 12 months we have had Talks about Guide Dogs for the Blind, Headway, Recycling and this month Fair Trade, also Demonstrations of Cake Icing, Flower arranging and Make up, and Lunches at SQ, The Imperial and a Bring & Share in a members home. Donations to Charity include £127 from our Garden Party, £100 to the Guide Dogs for the Blind, £437 to N D Hospice from our sponsored Knit & Natter and £190 to Headway.</p>	
3g viii	<p>Knitting and Crochet Circle. Started in June 2016, we meet at the Garden Centre Restaurant at 2-30pm – 4pm, usually 2nd & 4th Mondays of each month. We have produced a variety of items for several Charities including Trauma Teddies & Blankets (Woman's Refuge) Hats & Scarves (Christmas Shoe Boxes) Small Chunky Cushions (Breast Surgery Patients) and Squares for Blankets (N D Hospice). Several members are knitting Nativity Figures at the moment, which will be displayed in St Peter's Church at Christmas. Some of our fifteen members bring their own knitting along. We always have a cuppa and a lot of chat when we meet!</p>	
3g ix	<p>Village Coffee Mornings. Started more than forty years ago for neighbours to get together and chat, it continues every month on the 2nd Wednesday in the Church Hall from 10-30am. In recent months Jane Bosley has baked cake for us! We have an enjoyable time each month as we share coffee & biscuits / cake and plenty of chat.</p>	
4.	<p>Statement of Accounts. Statement of Income and Expenditure for 2016/2017. Circulated and noted.</p>	
5.	<p>Electors' Questions. None.</p>	
6.	<p>Business brought forward at the discretion of the Chairman. None. The meeting ended at 8.49pm.</p>	
<p>Summary of Decisions: ➤ Minutes of 19 May 2016</p>		
<p>These Minutes are agreed by those present as being a true record.</p>		
<p>Signed: Chair of Ashford Parish Council:</p>		<p>Date:</p>