

ASHFORD PARISH COUNCIL.

DRAFT Minutes of Meeting held on Wednesday, 23rd December 2020 at 7.30pm.

The meeting was conducted remotely, via Zoom owing to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Meeting was Chaired by Councillor P Hughes	Clerk – Katherine Cole.
<p><u>Councillors Present:</u> Mrs. J. Bosley. Mr. D. Hall. Mr. P. Hughes. Mr. G. Holder. Mr. V. Lawson. Mr. M. Moss. Mrs. S. Sampson.</p> <p>District Councillor: Mrs. A. Davis. 6 Members of the public were in attendance.</p>	<p><u>Agenda:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Representations from the public. 2. Apologies for absence. 3. Declarations of interest from members. 4. Approval of minutes – Meeting 19/11/20. 5. Matters arising from previous meeting. 6. Reports. 7. Correspondence. 8. Financials. 9. Planning. 10. Email Network. 11. Update on FOI request. 12. Recording of Parish Council Meetings. 13. Appointment of Clerk. 14. Date of next meeting.

Item:		Action:
	<p>The Chairman welcomed attendees to the meeting and apologised for the meeting being rearranged from 17th Dec due to Zoom failings</p> <p>The Chairman went on to confirm that Mrs. Katherine Cole has been appointed as new Parish Clerk. After thanking Mrs. Cole for standing in as Temporary Clerk since late summer the Chairman invited her to make a brief statement.</p> <p>Mrs. Cole thanked Ashford Parish Council for appointing her as Clerk – a role she is looking forward to fulfilling. Mrs. Cole went on to say that as Clerk to the Parish she will work to ensure that correct protocols and procedures are followed at all times.</p> <p>Advice has been received from DALC which clearly states that any complaints against the Councillors has to be directed to the Monitoring Officer at NDC, and such complaints against Councillors should not be read or discussed at Parish Council meetings.</p> <p>The Chairman reiterated this last point and stated it was not a choice for APC to take this stance.</p>	
1.	<p>Representations of the public:</p> <p>1.1: A Parishioner requested clarity on raising issues at Parish Council meetings, particularly concerns with the behaviour of Councillors.</p>	

	<p>Despite the statement made by the Clerk at the start of the meeting 2 parishioners tried to read complaints about Councillors and unfortunately had to be stopped by the Chairman in line with the advice from DALC regarding complaints about Councillors.</p> <p>At this point in the meeting DC Davis addressed the meeting, and supported the protocol defined by the Parish Council</p>	
2.	Apologies: There were no apologies.	
3.	Declarations of Interest from Members: None.	
4.	<p>Approval of minutes relating to meeting held on 19th November: The minutes of the Meeting held on 19th November 2020 had been circulated prior to the meeting. The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record of events, and approval was proposed by Councillor Lawson and seconded by Councillor Holder. All in agreement.</p>	
5.	<p>Matters Arising: There were no matters arising.</p>	
6.	<p>6.1: County Councillor Chugg: A written report had been sent to the Clerk by C.C Chugg and circulated to Councillors. A few local points: The report confirmed that work is set to begin in the New Year on upgrading the A361 between South Molton and Portmore. The £60million upgrade will improve safety and driving conditions. (Facilities will be place for cyclists and pedestrians). Some work on maintenance of drains in the area has been carried out. Please report any work not carried out to CC Chugg. A reminder was made to report potholes – CC Chugg is prepared to follow up any reported (with a reference number). Some additional funding has been secured to improve the worse surfaces in the area. The Nightingale Hospital has been opened as a precautionary measure, but indicates that there is a rising number of Covid patients. A Hatoc meeting has been briefed on the Tarka Trail, and everything is being done to push the project forward. There is potentially funding to finish the link. CC Chugg also confirmed that bus stops on the A361 dual carriageway will be reopened from 20th December 2020. In the longer term a scheme will be looked into for a footway along the A361.</p> <p>6.2: District Councillor Davis: DC Davis opened her report by confirming the financial situation of NDC. A £50 thousand shortfall is predicted for this financial year, and this figure is set to rise to £2 million next year, and £3 million in the following financial year. There are numerous cost cutting measures being proposed including transferring the responsibility of public conveniences back to Parish Councils.</p>	

	<p>DC Davis again drew attention to the Covid Business Support Grants which are available for businesses adversely affected by the pandemic. DC Davis will assist any interested parties with contact information etc.</p> <p>DC Davis confirmed that there are more beds available in North Devon Hospital for Covid patients. It is looking likely that the area will move in to Tier 3 restrictions owing to the changing situation. North Devon Council climate week is planned for March 2021.</p> <p>DC Davis encouraged those present to sign the petition for Heanton Hill Lane before confirming that NDC Offices will be closed from 2pm on the 24th December until 4th January 2021.</p>	
7.	Correspondence: There was no correspondence.	
8.	<p>Financials:</p> <p>8.1: An invoice has been received from Notts Contractors for the hire of the road sweeper. The invoice totals £120 + vat of £24. Payment was proposed by Councillor Bosley and seconded by Councillor Lawson. The Chairman commented that the invoice was for less than the original quote, so a further invoice may be a possibility.</p> <p>Councillor Hall added that there have been many positive responses to the work carried out.</p> <p>8.2: Proposals to change banks and adopt an internet banking procedure was briefly discussed. To be reviewed in the New Year.</p> <p>8.3: Confirmation of balances:</p> <p>The Clerk presented a breakdown of balances, as below, and confirmed that the bank balance as at 17th December 2020 was £9309.41p.</p> <p><u>Balance 20th October 2020 - £10,399.41p</u> Less Payment Chq 1131 - £ 40.00p (Data Protection).</p> <p><u>Balance 20th November 2020 - £10,359.41p</u> Less Payments Chq 1133 - £390.00p (M.Baker esq). Chq 1134 - £300.00p (Ashford Church). Chq 1135 - £360.00p (ORS).</p> <p><u>Balance 17th December 2020 - £9,309.41p.</u></p>	<u>Clerk to forward payment.</u>
9.	<p>Planning:</p> <p>9.1: Planning Ref: Application 72570.</p> <p>Councillors had had opportunity to study the submitted plans to replace two windows at the Old Post Office. No problems were anticipated, and the need for listed building consent was noted. The application was proposed for approval by</p>	<u>Clerk to respond to NDC.</u>

	Councillor Holder and seconded by Councillor Hall. All in favour. 9.2: Correspondence: There was no planning correspondence.	
10.	Email Network: The Clerk confirmed that the register of those wishing to be included in the Email network has been updated, and stands at 55 households and 85 individuals. The Clerk was clear that the data is being treated as highly sensitive, and is stored securely and confidentially. A suggestion was made that a reminder be circulated for further submission of names.	
11.	FOI Request: There are no updates. An investigating Officer will be allocated to the case in due course	
12.	12.1: The recording of meetings: The possibility of recording Parish Council meetings, using the Zoom facility, was discussed. The recording would be used solely as an aid to accurate minute taking, and would be deleted immediately following the approval of the minutes they relate to. It was agreed that other Parish Councils are finding the facility beneficial. Councillor Hall proposed recording future meetings, and this was seconded by Councillor Bosley. All Councillors in favour. (The privacy policy will be looked at to ensure compliance, and the January meeting will be recorded providing appropriate policies are in place).	
13.	Appointment of Clerk: The Chairman confirmed the appointment of Mrs. Katherine Cole as Parish Clerk to Ashford Parish Council from the 1 st December 2020.	
14.	Date of next meeting: The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Thursday, 21 st January 2021 via Zoom. The Chairman declared the meeting closed after wishing everyone a very happy Christmas and New Year.	