

Minutes of Ashford Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday, 21 February 2019 in the Church Hall at 7.30pm.

Chaired by: Councillor G Holder	Clerked by: Sue Squire	
Present: Councillors J Bleach Mrs J Bosley G Holder V Lawson J Szymankiewicz 16 Members of the public	Agenda: - Items raised by members of the public Apologies Declarations of Interest Approval of the Minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2019 Reports Matters Arising Planning & Planning Correspondence Finance Correspondence Matters raised by Councillors / Clerk Items for the next Agenda Date of next meeting	
		Action:
104.	<p>Items raised by members of the public.</p> <p>104.1 Development of a dwelling at Long Lane. A member of the public advised that they were being affected by mud and silt as a result of the development and Long Lane is being damaged. Concerns were raised with the developers regarding the possibility of a leak as regards sewage and, as previously spoken about at Parish Council and North Devon Council meetings, slippage of the ground in the field where no answer had been received.</p> <p>An ordinary septic tank sitting on bedrock had been placed at the development which the resident can see from an upstairs window of their house. Additionally there is no drainage and the householder is worried that foul water will be present 365 days a year.</p> <p>The Planning Officer had advised the resident that because the Application had left the Department, nothing more could be done. The Enforcement Officer had written to the owners to which no reply had been received.</p> <p>Help, advice and support was requested by the resident and a member of the public in the audience was advised they could employ their own Inspector who would have access to the site and if it is incorrect, the owners would be spoken to. An approved Inspector is the old style Building Control Inspector and if the approved Inspector has made an error, he would be liable.</p> <p>Originally a water treatment plant was planned but this has not materialized. It was suggested this was a building control matter.</p> <p>A letter is to be forwarded by the Parish Clerk with a view to taking up the matter with the owner. Originally it was understood that an outlet pipe would be placed in the field, but when the development reduced to one dwelling, instead of additional affordable dwellings, this was no longer the case. There is concern that the drainage system is not capable of handling the waste.</p> <p>The surface of Long Lane is breaking up due to lorries delivering to the site and the resident would like a commitment from the owner of the site that they will honour the gentleman's agreement to make good the Lane when the building work has been completed. A construction management plan should have been submitted before the work commenced but this does not appear to be the case.</p>	Clerk

As regards the Lane, a resident advised that the issue was that the usual route to the development is only 8' wide and delivery lorries with a width of 8' 4" have to access the site via Longland Lane, pointing out that Woolstone Corner is also a tight turn. It was known that the builder had filled in some holes with scalplings.

104.2 Taw Torridge Estuary Forum. The meeting was advised that this had been set up as an independent voice comprising representatives of Town and Parish Councils and was a consultee to District and County Councils. The role was explained.

The Forum meet on a quarterly basis and the Parish Council was asked if it would consider a representative to sit on the Forum.

Councillor Holder advised that he represented Ashford Parish Council in the past and he would forward details to Councillor Szymankiewicz.

The item to be on the March Agenda.

104.3 Tarka Holiday Park. The criteria is for residents to vacate the site for two weeks to comply with the rules of the Park.

A letter to be sent to the Park asking it to confirm that the site has closed down for the two weeks in question.

104.4 Resident's letter. A letter was read on behalf of a resident which was covered later in the meeting.

104.5 The Agenda was questioned as it included the appointment of a Working Party. It was explained that this item was on the Agenda to cover this should it take place.

104.6 Neighbourhood Plan Working Party. A resident was not happy with the way certain things had been handled and the Working Party had been blamed for causing a division.

This was without foundation, and the tension had been caused from a time when a resignation of a Working Party Member occurred who disagreed with the conclusions of other Working Party Members.

Since then there had been a campaign to discredit members of the Working Party including a letter sent to Ashford Parish Council and certain members of the community in which the claims were substantially untrue and considered to be a character assassination.

In addition, the Chairman had advised that North Devon Council Monitoring Officer had received two complaints about two of the Working Party Members and it was felt the Working Party should have been advised and given the opportunity to respond.

There had been no proper response from the Parish Council following the receipt of the letter of rebuttal from the Working Party.

It was considered that if people in Ashford do not want a Neighbourhood Plan, they should be asked. It was felt that the treatment of the Working Party and the way the complaint had been handled had not followed the correct procedure. Furthermore, it was felt the way Ashford Parish Council had conducted itself should be questioned, not the Working Party or the Neighbourhood Plan. It was stated that the Working Party had worked hard for the good of the community.

104.7 Neighbourhood Plan. A resident pointed out that many of the complaints raised had been heard before and he considered it an attack on him and the legitimacy of Parish Council decisions. The resident spoke about the reason for their resignation and thoughts about the Working Party and its actions with no members to express concerns.

The Parish Council had become aware of the lack of public confidence in the Working Party and the reasons for this.

The complaint was as a result of contacting North Devon Council.

There had been no open consultation to appoint members to the Working Party like the Parish Council

GH

March
Agenda

Clerk

	<p>is doing now and the Working Party was unrepresentative of the community.</p> <p>104.8 A former member of the Working Party asked not to be referred to as a pack or gang.</p> <p>104.9 A resident felt the Working Party was a course for good.</p> <p>104.10 A former member of the Working Party noted that the member who had resigned and the former members of the Working Party were not going to alter their stance and felt an impartial decision should be obtained.</p> <p>104.11 Letter from Mrs S Hughes (who had agreed for her name to be mentioned), regarding the Neighbourhood Plan. The letter was read to the meeting which advised that she welcomed the disbanding of the Working Party and felt regret about the division caused in the village. She expressed the hope that the Parish Council would vote to discontinue with the Neighbourhood Plan.</p> <p>104.12 Letter to the Chairman and North Devon Council Monitoring Officer regarding questions relating to the Neighbourhood Plan raised at the January 2019 meeting which require a response. The letter was not read to the meeting as the sender did not wish for it to be summarized.</p> <p>104.13 Letter asking the following question: ‘What justification does the APC have for proceeding with a new Neighbourhood Plan in the light of the recently stated evidence held by Mr Holder regarding 60 residents “dislike for the procedure”. Councillor Holder to reply to the questions.</p> <p>104.14 Letter regarding the Conservation Area (not the Neighbourhood Plan as stated on the Agenda) requested that it is circulated to Councillors to study ahead of the meeting, which had been done. The resident was advised that at the October 2017 Parish Council meeting, the then Planning Manager of North Devon Council attended the meeting and an extract of the Minutes were read to the meeting and this was noted. The resident stated that the worry is in the future when Planning Applications are considered, if the Conservation Area does not have a character appraisal, it may dismiss it and we do not want to lose sight of it. To be an item on the March Agenda.</p> <p>104.15 Email regarding the future of the Neighbourhood Plan CCTV equipment. A written reply to be sent suggesting it is sold and the funds returned to Devon County Council for which a grant had been obtained.</p> <p>104.16 Email regarding the continuing use of ORS for any work engaged with the Neighbourhood Plan. A written reply to be sent advising that should a new Neighbourhood Plan Working Party be approved, advice would be taken from a qualified consultant from Devon Communities Together as to the company to be used.</p> <p>Chairman’s update. Councillor Holder read from a prepared statement which informed that he had been speaking privately with Working Party Members accompanied by Councillor Lawson (Vice Chairman) to find common ground. The issue had also been put to the Devon Association of Local Councils. He had tried to deal with the items to the best of his ability.</p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>GH</p> <p>March Agenda</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p>
105.	<p>Apologies. Councillor Mrs B Sandwell, County Councillor Mrs C Chugg, District Councillor Mrs A Davis (both at Devon County Council Budget Setting Meeting in their role as County Councillors).</p>	
106.	<p>Declarations of Interest.</p>	

	<p>Councillor Holder declared a Personal Interest in respect of Minute No. 109.2.</p> <p>Councillor Mrs Bosley declared a Prejudicial Interest in respect of Minute No. 111.2 and 111.3 – reimbursement cheque.</p>	
<p>107.</p>	<p>Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting held on 17 January 2019.</p> <p>The Clerk advised there had been a suggestion to delete two words of Minute No. 96.5, third paragraph: The meeting discussed the disbanding of the Neighbourhood Plan Working Party, the rebuttal of a document prepared by the Working Party and confirmation...</p> <p>The two words deleted were 'of a' to provide clarification on this point. This suggestion was acknowledged by the Clerk who asked Councillors to approve the Minutes accordingly.</p> <p>Councillor Szymankiewicz pointed out that the second paragraph did not give details of the four topics covered and felt these should be included.</p> <p>The Clerk to include these details and circulate to Councillors ahead of the meeting to ensure all were in agreement.</p> <p>The Minutes of 17 January 2019 were not approved and would be added to the March Agenda with a view to approving.</p>	<p>Clerk</p>
<p>108.</p>	<p>Reports:</p> <p>108.1 Police. The February 2019 Newsletter had been received, circulated to Councillors and sent for inclusion on the Ashford website.</p> <p>108.2 County Councillor Mrs C Chugg. Written Report received and circulated, which focused on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Climate Change Motion ▪ North Devon Link Road ▪ Waste <p>108.3 District Councillor Mrs A Davis. Written Report received and circulated, which focused on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Changes to waste collections in North Devon ▪ Budget Meeting <p>108.4 Councillor V Lawson. Defibrillator Check. In order.</p> <p>It was noted that the defibrillator had been accredited with the South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust.</p> <p>It had been arranged with the Ambulance Officer who had called on the Clerk to complete the paperwork that the first online report would be sent by her when a confirmation letter from South Western Ambulance Service had been received, with the second online Report being sent after this meeting.</p> <p>The Clerk advised that the letter had not been received and had telephoned South Western Ambulance Service and had been advised that the confirmation letter had been sent to Ashford Church Hall being the address noted in the records. Future correspondence will be sent to the Clerk. It was suggested that the first report could be done immediately, and the Clerk did this. Confirmation had been received and was shown.</p> <p>Councillor Lawson had also submitted a report and these would be sent by the Clerk in future.</p> <p>The second report as a result of this meeting would be submitted 24 hours after the meeting.</p> <p>108.5 Neighbourhood Plan.</p>	<p>Clerk</p>

- **Councillor Holder to respond to representations made at the January 2019 meeting.**
Covered in the Chairman's update, Minute No. 104.16.
- **Councillor Holder will advise on the response from the Monitoring Officer regarding the Neighbourhood Plan.** Covered in the Chairman's update, Minute No. 104.16.
- **To consider if the Neighbourhood Plan should proceed and if so, to contact Dawn Eckhart to be involved and the criteria to appoint a Working Party.**
Councillors were invited to give their thoughts.

Councillor Szymankiewicz's interpretation on feedback gained was that there was no serious appetite to consider a Neighbourhood Plan in the village. The situation was different now than when it started. Ashford has zero housing requirements in the North Devon and Torridge Local Plan.

The Neighbourhood Plan was set up to identify land to satisfy a government shortage. North Devon Council had confirmed that there is more than 5 years supply to meet the housing needs up to 2031, when the current Local Plan expires.

The Neighbourhood Plan commenced in 2017, when the big concerns were the development of the Tarka Holiday Park.

Counillor Szymankiewicz stated there was not such a crucial need for a Neighbourhood Plan now. His comments are as a result of the high level of negative feeling around the process and the quoted 60 residents who had contacted Councillor Holder about their concerns.

That represented half the properties in Ashford and Councillor Szymankiewicz felt it could be reasonably concluded that the majority of residents are fed up and not in favour.

Councillor Szymankiewicz did not feel that the Parish Council had a mandate to proceed, and the only way to undertake this was for a full referendum. Any other decision would be based on individual preferences and prejudices.

Also there is a risk of continuing the division in the village. He supported the Working Party position and the circumstances which was considered were caused by an individual.

Councillor Szymankiewicz continued by saying that only 12 residents came to the December Ashford Parish Council meeting which indicated there was no groundswell of support for a Neighbourhood Plan.

There are still very serious issues that have not been addressed which has resulted in a formal complaint that has been lodged with the Monitoring Officer.

Councillor Szymankiewicz proposed that the Neighbourhood Plan process comes to an end with it being terminated permanently with the focus on a possible Parish Plan, to be looked at after the Parish Council election.

The issues that came up in the Neighbourhood Plan Drop In Sessions, which are contained in their entirety in the Catalogue of Evidence produced by the Working Party, shows a lot of the issues that matter to residents. Most of these are included in neighbourhood planning and if the Neighbourhood Plan had progressed, they would have been in an Appendix or a separate document.

Various needs have already been identified as part of the Neighbourhood Plan process, which would be part of a Parish Plan such as a cemetery, play area and car parking.

Councillor Szymankiewicz included in his proposal that all efforts should be put into a Parish Plan to bring harmony back to the village and to fulfill the needs of most residents, to set up a Steering Group under the Parish Council and move forward in a more positive way.

Councillors were given the opportunity to give their thoughts.

Councillor Holder had spoken with Elizabeth Dee (North Devon Council Planning Department with a specific interest and brief for Neighbourhod Plans) and Andrew Austin (North Devon Council Strategic

	<p>approached other landowners to gauge any interest in selling a piece of land for this purpose. He would draft a letter for the Clerk to send to all landowners.</p> <p>109.3 Date of the April 2019 meeting. Fixed for 18th – Maundy Thursday. Councillors were in agreement that this was held a week earlier on Thursday, 11 April commencing with the Annual Parish Meeting.</p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk to book Hall & cancel 18 April booking</p>									
110.	<p>Planning & Planning Correspondence.</p> <p>110.1 There were no Planning Applications to consider.</p> <p>110.2 Planning Correspondence. Further to DCC's Application for improvements to the North Devon Link Road, and this Council's support for the scheme, a letter from DCC was noted advising that planning permission had been granted.</p>										
111.	<p>Finance.</p> <p>111.1 Balances. NatWest Current Account as at 18 January 2019: £6,501.72</p> <p>Budgetary figures for January 2019 were circulated to Councillors.</p> <p>111.2 Postman's Retirement. This took place at St John's Garden Centre on 11 February 2019 attended by approximately 30 parishioners. The postman was pleasantly surprised with the gift handed to him.</p> <p>Tea and coffee was provided and Councillors were asked if they agreed to the Parish Council either giving a donation to the Garden Centre or bearing the full cost of £71.21.</p> <p>Councillor Mrs Bosley declared a Prejudicial Interest.</p> <p>Councillor Holder proposed that the Parish Council reimburse Councillor Mrs Bosley. Seconded by Councillor Mrs Sampson. Agreed.</p> <p>111.3 The following payments were approved and authorised:</p> <table> <tr> <td>Mrs S Squire</td> <td>February Salary (Councillors were given the details)</td> <td>Redacted under DPA</td> </tr> <tr> <td>HMRC</td> <td>February PAYE</td> <td>£ 27.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mrs J Bosley</td> <td>Reimbursement for tea / coffee at postman's retirement at St John's Garden Centre event on 11/2/19</td> <td>£71.21</td> </tr> </table> <p>111.4 NatWest Bank.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Addition of Cllr Bleach as cheque signatories. Councillor Bleach did not have the form to hand. ▪ Letter advising about an issue that affected one or more cheque payments made from the account due to a technical issue with an overnight system change. It has been confirmed that the isolated issue has been resolved in full. ▪ Booklet entitled 'Some changes we'd like to tell you about'. <p>111.5 Ashford PCC. Email received advising that as from 1 April, the rent for a session will be £17.</p>	Mrs S Squire	February Salary (Councillors were given the details)	Redacted under DPA	HMRC	February PAYE	£ 27.00	Mrs J Bosley	Reimbursement for tea / coffee at postman's retirement at St John's Garden Centre event on 11/2/19	£71.21	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Ch.No. 065 Ch.No. 066 Ch.No. 067</p>
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Mrs J Bosley	Reimbursement for tea / coffee at postman's retirement at St John's Garden Centre event on 11/2/19	£71.21									
112.	<p>Correspondence. Notices and publications received were put on the table to see, read and go in the circulation bag.</p> <p>112.1 Tarka Country Trust. Ash Dieback Commemoration Project. The Trust is initially writing to the four Parish Councils in North Devon and Torridge whose names include the word 'ash', inviting</p>										

	<p>them to consider setting up a small environmental project in the Parish that would commemorate the ash tree in a suitable form and apply to the Trust for a grant to carry it out. The letter had been circulated to Councillors.</p> <p>It was considered there was a possibility to plant such a tree in the new Play Area.</p> <p>It was known that Ash trees could be purchased, despite Ash dieback disease being prevalent in the Country and a check must be made that there is no risk of bringing the disease into the village.</p> <p>112.2 North Devon Council. Taw -Torridge Estuary: Recreational use and bird disturbance study. Invitation to a presentation to share the findings so far on Wednesday, 13 March at 6pm at Caddsdow Business Support Centre, Bideford. Details had been circulated to Councillors.</p> <p>112.3 Kier. Notification of road closure from 20 – 22 May 2019 as Strand Lane for South West Water to complete utility works near to The Old Rectory.</p>	Clerk
113.	<p>Matters raised by Councillors / Clerk. 10.1 Councillor Mrs Bosley. Planting of the verge on the corner of Meadowside.</p> <p>Representations had been made for crocus and daffodils to be planted together with boulders to stop lorries driving over the verge.</p> <p>The land was thought to be in the ownership of Highways and the Clerk to ask County Councillor Mrs Chugg to set up a meeting with the Neighbourhood Highways Technician.</p>	Clerk
114.	<p>Items for the next Agenda.</p> <p>Councillor Szymankiewicz – handling letters from the public.</p>	March Agenda
115.	<p>Date of next Meeting: Thursday, 21 March 2019 in the Church Hall at 7.30pm.</p> <p>The meeting ended at 9.28pm.</p>	
<p>Summary of Decisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Neighbourhood Plan not to proceed and be terminated and for a Parish Plan to be progressed after the Parish Council Elections ➤ Councillor Holder to sign the Land Registry document in respect of the proposed new Play Area ➤ Reimbursement to Councillor Mrs Bosley in respect of refreshments at the postman’s retirement event at St John’s Garden Centre ➤ Payments 		
<p>These Minutes are agreed by those present as being a true record.</p>		
Signed: Chair of Ashford Parish Council:	Date:	