

**Minutes of the Ashford Parish Council Meeting**  
**Held on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> September 2023 at 7pm in the Church Hall,**  
**St Peter's Church, Ashford**

**Present:** Cllrs P Hughes (Chairman), J Bosley, G Holder, B Kettle, V Lawson, and M Withey

Mrs V Woodhouse, Locum Parish Clerk

16 Members of the public

2309/01

**Apologies**

K Furse, County Cllr Maskell and District Cllr Knight.

2309/02

**Declarations of Interest**

Cllr Hughes declared a Personal Interest in Item 2309/06 as a resident well known to him had told him in a personal conversation that the resident was considering bidding for the land in question.

2309/03

**Minutes**

It was **resolved**, with no votes to the contrary, to approve and sign the minutes of the Extraordinary Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> September 2023 as a correct record.

2309/04

**County Councillor Report**

The County Cllr had sent her apologies and confirmed that she had followed up all of the items discussed at the meeting with reference to highway concerns.

2309/05

**District Councillor Report**

The District Cllr had sent his apologies.

2309/06

**Land in Meadowside**

The Chairman explained that there were several overriding factors of why the Parish Council decided not to bid for the land at auction. He explained that there was insufficient information, not enough time to explore funding options and the legal pack was not available until a few days before the auction. The Chairman explained the Parish Council's financial position and liabilities, the Parish Council felt that the resident that had indicated an interest in bidding would be willing to go higher than the Parish Council would be able to afford and therefore it was agreed to seek a formal lease from the resident at a peppercorn rent for a 20year term to ensure the land is available for community use. Two people bid on the piece of land which sold for £17,000, plus fees, to Mr R. The Parish Council does not know the purchaser and discussed ways in which it could try to protect the land for future community use. It was **resolved**, with no votes to the contrary, to appoint a working party to seek to register the land as a village green and to seek to register the land as an Asset of Community Value.



2309/07

### **Highway Concerns**

The report, attached as Appendix One, was circulated prior to the meeting. Members considered the content and noted that some of the items were not achievable. After discussion it was **resolved**, with no votes of the contrary, to:

- Proceed with joining the Speed watch Scheme and seek volunteers from the community.
- Agree support for a pedestrian crossing on the A361.
- Cllr Withey to investigate obtaining priorities from the community.

2309/08

### **Coronation/Jubilee Tree**

Cllr Withey explained that the funds are still available for the planting of a tree, the Committee tried to place on the corner of Meadowside, however, highways would not allow, and they are seeking suggestions on land where a tree can be planted, the Committee is also open to other suggestions. It was suggested that a seat or bush might be found acceptable by highways and agreed for Cllr Withey to go back to Highways, request a site meeting and investigate if the issue is with a tree or if an alternative such as a seat would be acceptable.

2309/09

### **Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2022/2023**

Members were informed that, whilst the 2021/2022 AGAR had been completed it had not been approved, the Internal Auditor had requested that it is approved at this meeting prior to the 2022/2023.

2309/09BA

Annual Governance Statement 2021/2022

It was **resolved**, with no votes to the contrary, to approve the Annual Governance Statements for 2021/2022.

2309/09BB

Accounting Statements 2021/2022

It was **resolved**, with no votes to the contrary, to approve the Accounting Statements for 2021/2022.

2309/09BC

Certificate of Exemption 2021/2022

It was **resolved**, with no votes to the contrary, to Certify Ashford Parish Council as Exempt from a Limited Assurance Review and agree the Certificate of Exemption for 2021/2022.

2309/09AA

Annual Governance Statement 2022/2023

It was **resolved**, with no votes to the contrary, to approve the Annual Governance Statements for 2022/2023.

2309/09AB

Accounting Statements 2022/2023

It was **resolved**, with no votes to the contrary, to approve the Accounting Statements for 2022/2023.

2309/09AC

Certificate of Exemption 2022/2023

It was **resolved**, with no votes to the contrary, to Certify Ashford Parish Council as Exempt from a Limited Assurance Review and agree the Certificate of Exemption for 2022/2023.



2309/10

### Payment and Receipts

The following Payments and receipts were received:

#### Payments

1. Gallagher, Insurance	£721.49
2. Ebuyer, Laptop	£928.46
3. Amazon, Hard Drive & Mouse	£50.96
4. DALC, Annual Membership	£85.48
5. DALC, Cllr Training	£90.00
6. DALC, Code of Conduct Training	£36
7. WesternWeb Ltd, Emails	£116.40
8. Ashford Church Hall, Hall Hire	£80
9. PKF Littlejohn, External Audit for 2020	£48
10. Fremington Parish Council, Postage & Laminating	£7.35
11. Clerk's Expenses (mileage)	£69.66
12. Clerk's Invoice for hours to end of September 23	£860
13. Julie Snooks, Internal Audit 2022/2023	£100
<b>Payments</b>	<b>£3,193.80</b>

#### Receipts

£0

It was **resolved**, with no votes to contrary, to approve the payments and receipts.

2309/11

### Calendar of Meetings

The Calendar of meetings for the remainder of 2023 and 2024 were circulated prior to the meeting. Cllr Withey raised concerns about not meeting monthly especially as new Cllrs learning about the Council and dealing with outstanding issues. It was **resolved**, with no votes to the contrary, to hold monthly meetings until the end of 2023 and review in 2024, the meeting calendar would be amended accordingly and circulated.

2309/12

### Review of Governance

The draft Code of Conduct and Document Retention Policy were circulated prior to the meeting. It was **resolved**, with no votes to the contrary, to adopt the Code of Conduct and Document Retention Policy.

2309/13

### Website

Cllr Lawson reported that Cllr Furse has put a lot of work into making the presentation of the website easier to navigate, it is an ongoing process and is still being updated. Cllr Lawson cannot get all of the viewing data, however, there have been 185 visits in the last 30 days with 861 pages being looked at. Cllr Lawson can an overview of the details on the website and confirmed that they are open to any suggestions, it was agreed that any information for inclusion on the website should be sent to the Clerk. There is still a 404 error which they are trying to correct.

2309/14

### Defibrillator

Cllr Hughes explained that he had been approached about the location of the Defibrillator and asked members if it is in the right location, it was noted that if it was moved or a second defibrillator purchased it would require an electricity supply for the cabinet.



The Chairman suspended Standing Orders to allow members of the public to comment.

Members of the public explained the difficulty in the current location and acknowledged the lack of electricity supply in alternative locations. It was noted that a solar powered cabinet might be an option, however, this could be expensive.

The Chairman reinstated Standing Orders and it was **resolved**, to investigate funding options with a view to purchasing a solar powered cabinet for a second defibrillator.

2309/15

**Exclusion of Press and Public**

**To resolve:** 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**

2309/16

**Freedom of Information Act**

The members of the working party confirmed they had carried out the review of the FOI request submitted in June 2021. The working party provided an overview of the background that led to the request and confirmed that this was not a Parish Council matter and should not have been dealt with by the Parish Council. The working party had found that one item that had been disclosed by a former Cllr to the requestor had been redacted before being disclosed. The Parish Council was unaware that the item had been redacted and had received confirmation that it had been disclosed, the professional advice received by the Parish Council at the time had confirmed that only information that had not already been disclosed would needed to be included, had the Parish Council known it had been redacted a full copy would have been disclosed at the time.

After discussion it was **resolved**, with no votes to the contrary, to reply to the requestor, apologising for the delay, disclosing an unredacted copy of the correspondence along with explaining that the Parish Council was unaware of the redacted copy and confirming there is nothing further to disclose.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.40pm.

Signed  .....

Dated 19/10/23 .....

**IMPORTANT NOTE – IF YOU DO NOT AGREE WITH ANYTHING PLEASE CONTACT THE LOCUM PARISH CLERK AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AND NOT LATER THAN 7 DAYS BEFORE THE NEXT MEETING. IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO AGREE ANY CHANGES, YOU SHOULD CONTACT THE CHAIRMAN WHO WILL DETERMINE ANY CHANGES AND INFORM THE COUNCIL PRIOR TO THEIR FINAL APPROVAL.**



Report for Ashford Parish Council  
Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> September 2023

1. Background

A report produced by a resident of the parish had, along with a request from the parishioner for the Parish Council to reconsider a case for a 20mph speed limit in Ashford and improvements to the A361 crossing to the Tarka Trail or any other safety measures for the village was considered at the Parish Council Meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2023. After discussion it was agreed for the Clerk and Chairman to meet with the County Cllr to discuss the proposals and obtain an update on highway initiatives in the parish and criteria from the County Council and report back to the next meeting. The Chairman and Clerk met with the County Cllr for the parish to discuss highway safety measures as detailed below.

2. Highway Safety Measures

2.1 20mph speed limits

The County Cllr confirmed that the Parish Council had submitted an application in 2021 which was unsuccessful.

The County Cllr further confirmed that there is not any funding at the moment for further schemes and if there was Ashford is not a likely candidate as priority would be given to those with facilities such as a school or shop.

2.2 Community Speed Watch

It was agreed that this could be a useful tool for Ashford, the Police provide the equipment and training and the County Cllr would support the PC in setting up. The County Cllr confirmed that the data goes to the Police and drivers do get a letter if they were speeding, if there is persistent speeding from a single driver it can be followed up and if there is a persistent problem in an area the Police will carry out some enforcement in the area. The data collected could support a future 20mph application.

2.3 Signage

The possibility of slow being painted on the road was discussed and the County Cllr confirmed that the Parish Council could not paint this itself on the highway and there is strict criteria along with a requirement for it to be considered at HATOC (Highways and Traffic Orders Committee) with little chance of the Highway Authority approving the request for Ashford.


The County Cllr suggested the installation of a triangular flashing signing with a picture of an adult and child which would provide warning of walkers, might be more effective if installed on the road into the village from the garden centre, they are solar powered, and the County Cllr would investigate the cost and criteria.

2.4 Speed Monitoring

The County Cllr confirmed that DCC is going to carry out some monitoring in the area and this is likely to be on the top road, but location is still yet to be agreed. There was discussion about the PC hiring equipment and carrying out further speed monitoring in different locations around the village.

2.5 Mirrors

DCC's criteria is not supportive of mirrors.



2.6 Pedestrian Crossing on A361

DCC has an aspiration and there is a fund for safer roads opening which the crossing will likely qualify for, the estimated cost of the crossing which was given in 2022 is in the region of £100,000 and this crossing is a priority of the County Cllr and has been identified by the highway safety team. DCC is looking at other safety measures for the dual carriageway and there are schemes in a design phase, including the potential of a footpath, but this is dependent on funding.

The County Cllr concluded that there is limited capacity to improve the highways in the village and suggested that the PC ask the community their priorities through the email network or a questionnaire.

3. Recommendations for the Parish Council to consider

- 1) To note the report.
- 2) To consider joining Community Speedwatch Scheme.
- 3) To consider supporting signage as above.
- 4) To consider hire of equipment (subject to costs) and undertaking some speed monitoring at different points within the village.
- 5) To confirm support for pedestrian crossing on A361.
- 6) To consider obtaining priorities from community.

V Woodhouse  
September 2023

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'V Woodhouse', written over a horizontal line.