

**Minutes of Ashford Parish Council Extraordinary Meeting hold
on Thursday, 27th August 2020 commencing at 7.30pm,
by Zoom.**

**An extraordinary meeting of Ashford Parish Council was held
remotely, owing to the Covid-19 situation to discuss
Matters Relating to the proposed email network in Ashford.**

The Meeting was Chaired by Councilor. P. Hughes.

Clerk – Katherine Cole (Temporary Clerk).

Present: Councillors

Mrs. J. Bosley

Mr. D. Hall

Mr. P Hughes

Mr. G Holder

Mr. V Lawson

Mr. M. Moss

Mrs. S. Sampson

District Councillor Mrs A Davis

9 members of the public joined the meeting.

I. Chairman's welcome:

The Chairman, Councillor Hughes, welcomed attendees to the extraordinary meeting of Ashford Parish Council, and reminded all present that the meeting was not a regular meeting, and there would be no opportunity for Public Participation at any point in the proceedings.

The purpose of the meeting was solely to consider the single item on the Agenda 'Matters relating to the potential email network in Ashford.'

II. Apologies: No apologies received.

III. Declarations of interest from members:

The Chairman requested that Councillor Hall be admitted to the 'Zoom waiting room' owing to his personal interest in the matters to be discussed. Mr. Hall duly left the meeting.

There were no other declarations of interest.

IV. The Potential Email network of Ashford Parish, and associated matters:

The first matter for ratification was to recognize the work done by ORS, and to honour the Parish Council's responsibility to settle the invoice covering this. The sum due was confirmed as £400 plus VAT. (£480 in total – VAT to be reclaimed).

Councillors agreed that payment should be made, when the relevant invoice is received. This was proposed by Mr. V. Lawson and seconded by Mr. G. Holder. All in favour.

The recommendation from the Monitoring Officer of NDC is that the data collected and held by ORS should be transferred to the Parish Council when correct GDPR protocols are in place.

All Councillors were in favour of this proposal.

Councillor Hall rejoined the meeting at this point.

The Chairman gave an account of events relating to the Communications Committee and proposed Email network. A full copy of this statement can be found on the Parish website. The Chairman also read an email received from the NDC Monitoring Officer which has also been added to the Parish website.

The Council then addressed the concerns and questions of two residents received by email.

1) A parishioner had asked a) what was happening to the data collected now that the initiative had been abandoned and b) what were the costs incurred. The Chairman explained that although the Committee had been disbanded the Council still intended to continue with the setting up of an email network. The costs were as above - £400+ vat and there was also overtime claimed by the Clerk last year of £150 which was believed, at least in part, to be associated with the network. A letter/email to be sent to the resident confirming this answer. All in favour.

2) A second resident had written to the Council following a strongly worded verbal statement he had made at a previous meeting. This letter contained his belief that the Council had mismanaged the whole project. Included in this letter was an FOI request giving the Council twenty working days to respond. The Chairman said that the whole

Council was dismayed by the tone of the speech made at the previous meeting. Councillors were invited to give their views. Councillor Lawson felt the FOI request was personally directed at Cllr Hall and that in line with many of the reasons expressed on the ICO website Section 14 dealing with FOI, this request was vexatious. Cllr Moss said he felt uncomfortable that the complainant had not had a chance to contribute at this meeting and that perhaps the Council should invite him to an informal meeting to express his views. The Chairman confirmed his understanding of that view but felt that this meeting was to answer the points already raised by the resident and not to get into a discussion with him which might well raise further questions which the Council would then have to consider before the next meeting. He also stated he was always happy to have personal discussions with any resident, something he had been warned not to do unless he was accompanied. However, in this particular case he felt the matter had gone too far to be dealt with by a friendly chat. The Chairman proposed a letter be drafted and circulated to Councillors, excluding Councillor Hall, for agreement and then sent to the complainant. This was seconded by Councillor Lawson. In favour Councillors Bosley, Sampson, Holder and Moss. Councillor Hall excluded. A response to be sent by 31st Aug.

The Chairman thanked all attendees for joining the Zoom meeting, and confirmed that business had been completed. The date of the next routine Parish Council meeting was confirmed as Thursday, 17th September. (Joining details will be circulated with the agenda).

The meeting was declared closed at 7.55pm.

These minutes were approved by Councillors, and duly signed as an accurate record of events.
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Signed:
