

ASH PARISH COUNCIL

NOTICE BOARD

February 2023

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ASH PARISH COUNCIL PRECEPT 2023-2024

This year you probably won't study the itemisation of your annual Council Tax Bill, just simply scan to the bottom and look at just how much it has gone up by! The amount is likely to be significant, as the government has allowed local councils to put up their council tax by up to 5% without a referendum. Due to the soaring rates of inflation, many are doing just that.

Other items on the bill will be amounts for the Police, the Fire Authority, and the precept for the Parish. This is the amount that is given to Ash Parish to pay for maintenance and improvement of local services, which is administered by Ash Parish Council. All of these are likely to have gone up - except the amount which goes to Ash Parish Council!

We are all pretty tired of hearing about the cost of living crisis. When not droning on about errant members of the Royal Family, it seems the only thing that the media are interested in. But we can't avoid the fact that Inflation is currently running at over 10% and a simple visit to the supermarket will let anyone know that prices are rocketing. The result is that many parish councils are using the current situation as an excuse to put up their precept - some by 20% or even 30%.

Ash Parish Council have been discussing our budget for some time, but decided at their January meeting that for the second year running we would freeze our precept request, so by the end of next financial year, the amount charged for the Parish Precept will have remained the same for three years. Even though the actual amount of any potential rise might not have been significant for some, these three years will have been the toughest years financially that many of us will face, and so the Parish Council thought that it is an important point of principle when so many of our parishioners are struggling to make ends meet.

We are able to do this because of the financial responsibility of Ash Parish Council over a number of years, which has gradually put money aside for Parish projects and also because in the last year we have been very active in applying for a number of grants to subsidise these projects. The result is that we will still be able to make some significant improvements to the Parish, including the installation of bus shelters, improvements to the play area and the two car parks in the village and this year we will also finally have the cemetery extension consecrated - all without asking you for more money. Without these grants we would have had to raise the precept by over 16% to meet the same spending commitments.

We will also continue to maintain the parish, which includes keeping the green spaces, recreation ground, pavilion, car parks, cemetery and graveyard in good order.

Although a real terms a small gesture, Ash Parish Council hope that freezing the Parish precept will help your household finances slightly, and that it shows that we understand the issues our parishioners are facing.

Steve Davey.
Chair, Ash Parish Council.

CONGRATULATIONS

The Parish Council would like to offer their congratulations to our clerk Julie Ferguson for her hard-earned accomplishment in passing her CiLCA qualification. We now have a fully qualified clerk and the Parish are lucky to have her.

CONGRATULATIONS

We are delighted to announce that Mick Wooden has been awarded The Chair's award for Service to the Community 2022 from Somerset County Council. Over the past 12 years, Mick has shown outstanding personal commitment to our community as the leader and driving force of a small group of volunteers who manage and maintain Ash Millennium Wood on behalf of Ash Parish Council. In that time the Wood has been transformed from a once neglected site into a much loved and Green Flag Award winning village amenity used regularly by local people of all ages for exercise, events, dog walking and appreciation of the natural environment. Other users of the Wood that Mick works with include neighbouring Ash Primary School, Scouts, Forrest School and local youth groups. Mick is also a founder member of the Ash and Martock Nature Group, the Parish Environmental Champion for Ash, Chair of Ash Biodiversity Working Group and has served on Ash Parish Council.

COME AND LEARN CPR AND BE PREPARED TO SAVE A LIFE!

Training in CPR gives everyone the potential to help to save lives. When a person suffers a cardiac arrest or stops breathing, the key to giving them the best chance of survival is starting CPR as quickly as possible to prevent damaging effects from lack of blood flow to the brain, heart, lungs, and other organs.

Sudden Cardiac Arrest is witnessed by a bystander in approximately 37% of cases. That bystander could be you! Being trained in CPR provides the knowledge, confidence and skills to stay calm in a medical emergency and help a person in need.

Ash Parish Council are organising CPR training sessions in the village, all ages are welcome, first timers and those wanting to refresh their skills.

If you would be interested in attending a CPR training session, please register your interest via ashalertemails@gmail.com with your name, address, contact details and please indicate if you would prefer to attend a daytime or evening session.

CALLING LOCAL TRADERS

Ash Parish Council are looking to have some improvements done in the Parish over the next few months, and if we can, would like to give the job to one of our parishioners. The things we are planning are as follows:

- 1). Fitting sign posts and signs in the village and pavilion car parks.
- 2). Painting of regulation disabled parking bays in village and pavilion car parks.
- 3). Fitting of two pedestrian gates in the Recreation ground.
- 4). Laying an all weather path for disabled access in the Recreation ground.
- 5). Fitting a drop kerb for disabled access in the village car park.

If you run a business that can handle any or all of these jobs, then please email

chair@ashpcsomerset.com for more details.

Ash Parish Council would much rather use local tradespeople if at all possible.

DO YOU NEED A HELPING HAND?

The Diocese of Bath & Wells recently advised all Church Treasurers that funding had been made available and would be awarded in the form of grants to assist with the cost-of-living crisis.

An application was made by Holy Trinity, Ash and the sum of £400 was awarded.

The application was based on working with the Parish Council, initially through the Coffee n Chat Coffee mornings, and extending to further hours based on demand to provide a Warm Hub within our community.

As there was no uptake on the offer of the Warm Hub, the PCC of Holy Trinity have decided to convert the £400 into eight grants of £50 as we feel there may be households within the Parish that would benefit for some financial assistance in these difficult times.

If you, or someone you know would benefit greatly from a grant of £50 towards heating costs, please apply, in confidence, to me, at The Bell Inn (I am the treasurer for Holy Trinity).

The application can either be in the form of an email: cazhalfhide@aol.com or by means of a note within the post box on the side of the pub porch.

Initially, all we will need is your name, address, and a contact number.

Should demand exceed the number of grants available, we may have to ask a few additional questions to establish who the money will best help.

There is no official 'closing dates' for the applications, but obviously we would like people to have the benefit of the additional funds NOW.

Please, if you know anyone who would greatly benefit but does not receive the Ash Alert emails, let them know.

With regards
Caz Halfhide
Treasurer, Holy Trinity Ash

HOLY TRINITY CHURCH CHRISTMAS DRAW 2022

Firstly please accept my apologies for the delay in sending this email.
A MASSIVE thank you to everyone who supported the Church Christmas Draw 2022.

After the Prize Money was paid and deducting minimal costs (thank you to everyone who donated their time and to my brother Ed who made and donated the Ash Christmas Spirit Stars), we raised an amazing £927.48 for Church Funds.

The Prize Winners were:

Two First Prizes: Rosemary Gay & Peter Vaughan

Two Second Prizes: Jo Taylor & Ken Witcombe

Five Third Prizes: Henry Guy, Barbara Woodhouse, Tina Weston, Liz Patten & Peggy Horwood

With regards
Caz

Hedgehog Haven

Dear Lovely Neighbours

I'd like to introduce myself. I'm a hedgehog who lives in your street! Some of you may have seen me around. I'd love to raise my family and hang out with my friends happily in Ash as we love it here. But I need your help. Here are some suggestions.

- Leave out fresh water for us in a shallow bowl each night, especially in spring, summer and autumn when we are out of hibernation.
- Feed us meat and jelly-based cat food (not fish or gravy) and meat-based cat biscuits. Please avoid bread, milk, or mealworms as it upsets our tummies.
- We like to roam around, especially at night, but we avoid brightly lit areas. So please reduce light pollution by having your outdoor lights on a motion sensor or timer so they are not on all night and we can come out to feed.
- Make your garden part of a hedgehog highway for us. Talk to your neighbours and make a small hole at the bottom of fences etc. if it's 13 x 13cm we can get through.
- We like messy piles and dead leaves especially when it comes to looking for hibernation sites, so please make sure your garden isn't too tidy. It doesn't have to be all year but leaving the seedheads over winter and only tidying up once the weather gets warm in spring will help us.
- Make sure any garden netting you use is at least a foot above the ground. Otherwise, we can get in a right tangle!
- I love to hide in your long grass and brambles so please be careful when strimming. Always check first and if in doubt, do half a cut first with shears and check in between cuts.
- Please don't use slug pellets or other poisonous chemicals in your gardens as they make me very sick.
- Try not to dig too much, this helps build a healthy worm population for me to eat. Piles of wood, sticks and leaves are particularly good for woodlice and beetles, also, good for us to eat.
- An area of long grass; perhaps a patch that never gets mown, or an area that only gets mown once or twice per year, will help increase some butterfly and moth species, and we love to eat the caterpillars!
- Just to let you know we can go in and out of hibernation and may wake up intermittently for food and drink from time to time. Some of us won't be hibernating at all, especially if we were born late in the autumn.

So, do you actually have a hedgehog in your garden? Well; we have been spotted in all areas of Ash. If you check out <https://bighedgehogmap.org/> you can just put in your post code to the search area and you will see all the registered sightings in Ash and the surrounding area. We can roam a mile per night searching for food, so as long as you have a hole in your boundary 13x13cm we can get through and you could have a hedgehog visit. If you only have a stone or brick wall, don't worry, you can still have a hole, it just takes a bit more effort!

We hibernate in the winter, so this should be the wrong time of year to spot one of us. We come out of hibernation between March and May, depending on the weather. Male hedgehogs wake up first to prepare for mating season; it may still be quite cold and they will be very hungry and thirsty- we all lose 25% of our body weight while hibernating. So if you see me or one of my friends especially early in the year, it would help to put out some food for us, but don't put out food unless you know you definitely have a hedgehog or it will either be wasted or could attract rats, plus it needs to be located in a place where only hedgehogs can fit into or the local moggies will eat it too!

Not many people realise, but us hedgehogs – once so common in your gardens, on your streets, squashed on your roads that you hardly even noticed us – have (since 2020) we've been on the IUCN red list as 'vulnerable to extinction' in the UK.

Ash, with its a mosaic of green spaces, trees and shrubs, streets, wild verges and plentiful gardens, is ideal habitat for us hedgehogs, and could be even more so if people managed their gardens with your prickly friends in mind.

Yours sincerely,

Your friendly neighbourhood hedgehog.

LOVE NATURE, LOVE TAKING PHOTOS?

**JOIN US ON
FREE GUIDED NATURE WALK**

ASH MILLENNIUM WOOD
SAT 25 FEB 11.00AM - 1.00PM

Come and explore Spring stirring in the Millennium Wood and learn how to identify and record all types of wildlife using your phone and the iNaturalist app. All you need is a mobile phone and we'll show you how to use the app to make your observations.

Download the app and find out more about iNaturalist by visiting www.iNaturalist.org

Please email us at ashbiodiversity@gmail.com if you intend to join us on the walk
or
if you can't make it that day or want to know more - phone 07971 136577

ORGANISED BY ASH BIODIVERSITY WORKING GROUP

ASH ALERT EMAILS

The Ash Alert Email system was set up by the Parish Council to keep residents informed in a more timely fashion about Parish Council matters and other activities and events going on in the village. Signing up now is even more important in these times of change to make sure you are kept informed.

If you haven't already done so, why not opt-in now to Ash Alert Emails. To do so, please send your Name, Email Address, Postal Address and phone number to the Parish Council at ashalertemails@gmail.com and ask to be added to the Ash Alert Emails list.

Data protection regulations came into force two years ago which the Parish Council fully complies with. Your email address and other contact details will always be kept safe and will never be shared with any third party nor will they be visible to other recipients of Ash Alert Emails.

You can unsubscribe at any time if you no longer wish to receive them.

MARSTOCK AND DISTRICT u3a

On Wednesday March 8th we have Wills and Power of Attorney starting at 2.15pm, The Parish Hall Martock. All welcome, to enjoy a chat over refreshments and to find out about the learning, hobby and interest groups you can join through Martock & District u3a. More information about Martock & District u3a: email martocku3amembership@gmail.com, telephone 01460 240788. website www.u3a.org.uk

STAY IN THE LOOP

Quick and easy ways to get news and information from **ASH PARISH COUNCIL**

WEBSITE visit www.ashpcsomerset.com

ASH ALERT EMAILS sign up to receive Ash Alerts at ashalertemails@gmail.com

FACEBOOK follow us on <https://www.facebook.com/Ash-Alerts-104800641092793/>

Clerk to Ash Parish Council Julie Ferguson. Chilthorne Knapp, Chilthorne Domer, Yeovil, BA22 8QZ. Tel: 07783 475200 E-mail: clerk@ashpcsomerset.com



SATURDAY 18th March Hedge Planting

A hedge planting event will take place on Saturday 18/3/23 to plant the new hedge in the new extension of Ash Cemetery. Come with family and friends bring a spade to make slits for tiny, bareroot saplings. Some spades will be available if you don't have one. Virtually no digging involved. Volunteers of all ages welcome. Please email ashbiodiversity@gmail.com and let us know you're coming or just turn up, stay as long as you want.

Organised by Ash Biodiversity Working Group.



SATURDAY 15TH JULY The Millennium Wood Festival

Following last year's success, the PTA are planning another festival this year. The event is planned to be held in the grounds of the school and in Ash Millennium Wood on Saturday 15/7/23 from 2.00pm to 10.00pm.

Organised by Ash Primary School PTA

The Blue Campaign is Coming to Ash

What is The Blue Campaign - The Story

The Blue campaign was founded in 2014 by wildlife film maker Fergus Beeley, in response to dramatic biodiversity and biomass declines in the UK. Easy and effective, the only requirement is to allow a patch of land to grow and see what plants and creatures return.

As with all the best ideas it's amazingly simple and has been taken up across the country. People have been rewilding private gardens, allotments and business yards. An increasing number of councils are also working with the Blue Campaign to rewild council land and roadside verges. To mitigate any concerns regarding neglect of the area, an initiative called the Blue Campaign begun which encourages people to erect a blue heart on a wooden post to alert members of the public to the project.

Rewilding Ash

One simple but incredibly effective action that Ash Parish Council can take is to turn the roadside verges outside the Village car park into a native wildflower meadow. This requires far less maintenance than traditional mowing schedules, saving the council money, reducing our carbon footprint and significantly increasing local wildlife density and diversity. At its meeting on 9th January 2023 the Parish Council agreed to allow the grass to remain uncut around the Village car park verges to allow any wildflowers to flourish, before considering additional sowings for future re-wilding. It was agreed that the edges would remain tended to indicate the purposeful nature of the uncut area.

Starting this season these verges will have just one annual cut-and-collect followed by little to no maintenance. This will allow native plants to quickly begin to re-establish themselves, bringing with them a wonderful variety of invertebrates, birds, amphibians, reptiles and mammals.

If you would like to find out more about the Ash Biodiversity Working Group
email: ashbiodiversity@gmail.com for more information regarding the
Blue Campaign go to: <https://bluecampaignhub.com>





Draft Minutes of Ash Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 9th January 2023 at 19:00hrs

Present: Councillors (Cllrs) – Lesley Andrew, Steve Davey (Chair), Rebecca Gray, Tim Groves, Caz Halfhide, Lily Humby

In attendance: J Ferguson (Parish Clerk), County Cllr Emily Pearlstone and 1 member of the public.

County & District Councillors Reports - A County Cllr report had been circulated by email and Cllr Pearlstone gave a brief overview of progress with LCNs and towards a unitary Somerset Council.

Public Open Session - There was nothing discussed at this time.

19:10 – Meeting opened

22/194 To receive apologies for absence and to approve the reasons given Apologies had been received and accepted from Antoinette Groves.

22/195 Declarations of interests. **None.**

22/196 To approve and sign as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting

RESOLVED: To approve and sign as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting held on 5/12/2022.

22/197 Matters to report from a previous meeting

Cllr Andrew presented a prepared submission to SSDC for nomination of The Bell as an Asset of Community Value. The PC were pleased with the report and thanked Cllr Andrew, who agreed to submit the text as part of the SSDC nomination application. **ACTION: Cllr Andrew**

22/198 Planning decisions report - **None.**

22/199 Planning applications - **None.**

22/200 Finance – To approve the payment schedule for January 2023 (REPORT)

1 STAFF SALARIES £1,010.65

2 SSDC RANGER - NOV22 £192.07

3 BREAKTHROUGH COMMUNICATION CLERK TRAINING £72.00

4 P G FIRE AND SECURITY ALARM MAINTENANCE £46.80

5 BEN JONES REIMBURSE FLOODLIGHTS £119.80

RESOLVED: To approve the January 2023 Payments totalling £1441.32 **ACTION:** Cllrs Davey & A Groves

22/201 Finance – To approve the cashbook and bank reconciliation to 31 December 2022

RESOLVED: To approve the cashbook and bank reconciliations to 31 December 2022.

22/202 Finance – To approve the 2023-24 budget **RESOLVED:** To approve the 2023-24 budget.

22/203 Finance – To approve the 2023-24 Precept request **RESOLVED:** To approve a 2023-24 precept request of £43,723. **ACTION:** Parish Clerk

22/204 Finance – To consider 3 quotes for 2 bus shelters and to approve the preferred quote.

Three quotes were presented with details to be finalised (all ex VAT):

- Quote 1 - Two bus shelters supplied and installed for £7,974 (with perch seat)
- Quote 2 - Two bus shelters supplied and installed for £5,645 (no perch seat)
- Quote 3 - Two bus shelters supplied and installed for £7,935 (with perch seat)

RESOLVED: To approve quote 1 for two bus shelters at a cost of £7,974. **ACTION:** Cllr A Groves

22/205 Finance – To approve a payment of up to £400 towards a new Millennium Wood bench

RESOLVED: To approve a payment of up to £400 towards a new Millennium Wood bench.

ACTION: Parish Clerk

22/206 To appoint a Human Resources (HR) Committee

It was decided that an HR representative would be more suitable for a parish council with a single employee, rather than a committee. **RESOLVED:** To appoint Cllr Humby as the HR representative for Ash Parish Council. **ACTION:** Cllr Humby

22/207 Civility and Respect Project – To report on progress towards taking the Pledge Cllr Humby had started to look at the steps required and would report back at a future meeting. **ACTION:** Cllr Humby

22/208 Ash Biodiversity Working Group (ABWG) – To approve updated Terms of Reference

RESOLVED: To approve the ABWG Terms of Reference as presented and dated.

22/209 Reports – To receive reports from: a. Parish Councillors - Cllr Davey reported that the Pavilion electricity contract had been switched to a cheaper supplier, with the potential for considerable savings. Cllr T Groves reported on plans for tree planting in the Cemetery, for which he was obtaining quotes.

b. Working Groups - ABWG asked for the PC to allow the grass to remain uncut around the village car park verges to allow any wildflowers to flourish, before considering additional sowings for future re-wilding. It was agreed that the edges would remain tended to indicate the purposeful nature of the uncut area. All members of the PC agreed this would be a good start towards allowing biodiversity to flourish.

22/210 Clerks report and correspondence

The following items of correspondence had been sent by email:

- SSDC Dry January campaign,
- Temporary road closure notices,
- London Hearts Community Defibrillator grants

- SALC Newsletters,
- SWP briefings, • Community Review – Smart Communities,
- SSDC Member briefings
- New Somerset branding,
- LCN briefings,
- Pavilion Alarm Maintenance report,
- Tintinhull YFC - Request for sole use of the playing field. Cllr Davey agreed to seek clarification on a few points before a decision could be made.
- Platinum Jubilee Fund

22/211 Items for the next agenda - There was nothing identified at this time.

22/212 Date of next meeting – 13th February 2023

22/213 Exempt Session – Exclusion of the Press & Public

The clerk explained her salary breakdown to Cllr T Groves to clear up some confusion.

20:55 - Meeting closed.