



ASH PARISH COUNCIL



NOTICE BOARD

June 2024

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ASH PARISH COUNCIL UPDATE

At the Ash Annual Parish Council Meeting on 13th May, Cllr Davey was re-elected as Chair and Cllr Halfhide as Vice Chair.

We also welcomed Cllr Alan Britten, who was co-opted onto the Parish Council at the same meeting. We wish him all the best in his endeavours as a council member.

CHAIR'S REPORT 2024

You might be surprised to hear it, but being on Ash Parish Council is far from glamorous. Most of the job involves organising, or in many cases just doing, the minutiae of Parish life. This might be arranging for the consecration of the new cemetery; sorting new disabled access paths for the village car park and the recreation ground along with proper access gates; providing, installing and maintaining defibrillators; planting trees and hedgerows and making sure that Parish land is well maintained.

To do all of this, we set and administer the Parish Precept - the share of your Council Tax that pays for the running of the Parish. For the past three years we have managed to keep this precept at the same level and not increased it at all. When the cost of living crisis was at its peak, we wanted to do as much as possible to help parishioners to make ends meet. Now that things are easing, we have had to face reality and increase the precept for the first time in three years.

During this three year period, estimates for the accumulative rate of inflation using ONS data is around 27%. Quite simply, everything that we do on your behalf is costing more than it did three years ago. Having the rate of inflation drop to something reasonable doesn't mean that prices have gone down. It means that prices are going up more slowly, and unfortunately we have had to reflect that by raising our Parish Precept by 14% - a little over half of what inflation has been doing during the same period.

The situation is not helped by the fact that the combination of government cuts and previous financial incompetence has led to the newly and expensively dreamt up Somerset Council trying to shirk off many of their responsibilities on to Parish Councils. They have presented us with a number of these 'opportunities' under the justification that we can charge you whatever we like and get away with it, whereas they are limited by statute. What they don't acknowledge is that through your council tax, you have already paid them to do the things that they are suggesting that we charge you again for.

Whilst government funding decisions have undoubtedly contributed to the financial position, there is a negative financial legacy from previous iterations of the various non-unified Somerset councils have also played a part - such as apparently spending £289 million on a property portfolio that is now worth only £220 million. We are also yet to see any of the promised financial benefits from the expensive creation of the unified Somerset authority.

Luckily, Somerset don't do a great deal directly for this Parish, and we are actively resisting all attempts to take on extra things at your expense, although we do have to make some form of contingency. For example, if Somerset stop paying for dog poo bins to be emptied then we will either have to step in, or we will literally and metaphorically be in excrement.

What we can promise you though is that Ash Parish Council will always do our best to spend your money as wisely as possible, whilst trying to make continued improvements to facilities in the Parish.

Cllr Steve Davey

Chair Ash Parish Council

DON'T LET YOUR HEDGE BECOME A HAZARD

It is that time of year when everything in the garden is growing significantly but unfortunately this has given rise to a number of complaints that overgrown gardens are obstructing pavements or obscuring sight lines for drivers. In particular this can be a problem along stretches of Main Street where the pavement is particularly narrow.

When hedges, trees or shrubs overhang the highway, pedestrians can injure themselves from the impact with the vegetation and alternatively, pedestrians can be forced towards the carriageway, which can result in an increased risk of an accident. Responsibility for cutting back vegetation lies with the landowners or occupiers of their boundary fronting the highway and pavements. Landowners must also remove any debris from the road surface to prevent nuisance and to stop it blocking surface water drainage systems.

Please can you check if any of your boundaries with the highway or pavements has offending growth and, if it has, please make arrangements to remove any overgrown vegetation.

Thank you.

Ash Parish Council



SAVE THE DATE!

Village Charity Cricket Match

Saturday 27th July 2024 Ash Pavilion & Recreation Ground

CONSULTATION ON DESIGNATION OF ASH MILLENNIUM WOOD AS A LOCAL NATURE RESERVE (LNR)

The consultation was carried out between 8th April and 10th May 2024. Community Groups and interested parties were consulted as stakeholders via email. Owners of land adjacent to the site were consulted by letter. All Parishioners were invited to comment and were informed via the Parish newsletter and Ash email alerts.

Stakeholders consultation

Five stakeholders provided a response (Ash Primary School, 1st Fosseway Scouts, Ash Primary School, ecologist, Somerset Environmental Records Centre). All were very much in support of designation. A typical response was (from the Headteacher at the adjacent Primary School):

“We would wholeheartedly support the application for the Millennium Wood to become an LNR. This would not only protect the space for the use of the community, including the children and families of Ash Primary School and Nursery, but it would also support the development of the project over time to become an even greater haven for nature and wildlife. All our pupils and staff benefit from the woodland, and it provides an important educational and wellbeing resource.”

One response was received from landowners, in support of the proposal.

Parishioners consultation

There was a clear majority of responses supporting the designation of the wood as a Local Nature Reserve. **Of 61 responses there were 47 in support (77%) and 14 who were opposed (23%).**

There were additional questions asked:

1. **Have you visited the wood:** all answered “yes”;
2. **What do you like best:** most common responses related to its peacefulness and the chance to experience the natural environment. There were also some who enjoyed it for walking, especially with a dog.
3. **What changes would you like:** by far the most common response was to continue the current management regime. There were also many calling for greater control of dogs. Some also asked for more seating.
4. **Any further comments:** most common responses identified the site as an important community asset and valuable for people and wildlife and thanked the volunteers for looking after it.

These results will help inform the forthcoming management plan for the wood. It should be noted that the proposed LNR designation will not change the current ownership, access, management arrangements or the aim to make it a great place for wildlife and people.

INTRODUCING A MONTHLY ASH PARISH COUNCIL SURGERY

We would like to offer a new service to residents of Ash Parish. To give you a chance to ask for assistance, discuss Parish matters which concern you or just to have a chat about the way things are going in the village. We are planning to hold a surgery once a month in Ash Pavilion on Wednesday morning at 10.30 to 11.30 am.

There is no need to book, simply drop in.

It will not be possible to sort out problems there and then but it is another way to bring matters to the attention of the Parish Council.

This will be on 26th June and again on 31st July to see if the service is of use to the village.

Cllr Lesley Andrew
Ash Parish Council.

CHANGE IN PARISH NOTICEBOARD NEWSLETTER DELIVERY

We regret to inform you that some of our volunteers have encountered issues with aggressive dogs while delivering the Parish Newsletter to certain homes, leaving them concerned about delivering, especially to door-mounted letterboxes. To ensure the safety and protection of our dedicated volunteers, we have made the difficult decision to cease deliveries to any homes with potentially aggressive dogs, whether they are running loose in gardens or aggressively barking indoors.

If you believe your home is affected by this change, there are several alternative ways to receive the newsletter. You can pick up a physical copy from the Pavilion or the Bell Inn.

Additionally, an electronic version is always available for download on our village website at <https://ashpcsomerset.com/> or sign up to Ash Alerts at [Ash Alert Emails – Ash Parish Council Website \(ashpcsomerset.com\)](#) and it will be delivered directly to your inbox.

We understand this may be inconvenient for some residents, but the safety of our volunteers is our top priority. We appreciate our support and understanding in this matter and hope these alternative options will allow everyone to stay informed and connected.

Thank you for your understanding.
Ash Parish Council

ASH ROVERS U9



We are looking for players to join our new team for the 2024/25 season.

Players must be in current school year 3, (year 4 in September).

Date for try outs TBC.

If you have a child that is interested, please contact Jon on the number or email address below for more information:

07916269100

ashroversjon@gmail.com



ASH IN BLOOM – 2024 REPORT

Over the past year, our already small group of active supporters has dwindled further. Consequently, our plans for 2024 will be adjusted to be slightly less ambitious than previous years. However, we remain confident that with our current limited volunteer resources, these goals can still be attained.

Our primary focus will be on the planting and maintenance of summer floral displays and Christmas decorations in the planters and pole-planters along Main Street, stretching from the buildouts at the Old School House to the lower end of the village. We extend our sincere gratitude to the Parish Council for their generous £500 grant towards our endeavours.

One of our greatest challenges remains the regular watering required by the plants throughout the summer. We are pleased to report that last year, four residents volunteered to water the planters near their homes. While this assistance was invaluable, we continue to seek more help. If you are willing to water a planter near your property, please reach out to us at ashinbloom123@gmail.com

It is evident that we are in constant need of additional volunteers. If you are interested in contributing in any way, we would be delighted to hear from you. Please don't hesitate to contact me via phone at 01935 825020 or email at ashinbloom123@gmail.com

Regards
Antoinette Groves
Chair, Ash in Bloom

PLEASE PICK UP!

There has been a noticeable increase in the amount of dog waste not being picked up from the pavements and green spaces around the village. Leaving dog mess behind is not only dirty and unsociable but also poses significant health risks. Dog waste can harbor harmful bacteria and parasites that can affect both humans and other animals.

It only takes a moment to pick up after your dog and properly dispose of the waste in one of the many dog bins that the Parish Council has provided throughout the village. These bins are conveniently located to make it easy for dog owners to do the right thing.

By picking up after your dog, you are helping to keep our village clean, safe, and enjoyable for everyone. Let's work together to ensure that our community remains a pleasant place to live. Thank you for your cooperation.

Minutes of a Meeting of Ash Parish Council held on Monday 13th May 2024 at 19:00 hrs (immediately following Ash Annual Parish Meeting)

Present: Councillors (Cllrs) – Steve Davey (Chair), Zak England, Caz Halfhide, Antoinette Groves, Tim Groves, Lesley Andrew, Alan Britten.

In attendance: Somerset Cllr (SCllr) Emily Pearlstone and four members of the public

Public Comments:

Somerset Council Report:

A written report was provided

19.00hrs - Meeting Opened

24/1 To elect a Chair

Cllr Steve Davey Elected

Proposed: Caz Halfhide, Seconded: Lesley Andrew

All Councillors voted in favour

Acceptance Form Signed

24/2 To receive apologies for absence and to approve the reasons given (LGA 1972 s85(1)).

Somerset Councillor John Bailey

24/3 Declarations of interests. Council members to declare any interests, including any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests they may have in agenda items that accord with the requirements of the Parish Council's Code of Conduct and to consider any prior requests from members for Dispensations that accord with Localism Act 2011 s33 (b-e). (NB this does not preclude any later declarations).

None Received

24/4 To elect a Vice-Chair

Cllr Caz Halfhide Elected

Proposed: Steve Davey, Seconded: Tim Groves

All Councillors voted in favour

Acceptance Form Signed

24/5 To approve and sign as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting

(LGA 1972 sch 12, para 41(1)).

RESOLVED: To approve and sign as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting held on Monday 8th April 2024.

24/6 Matters to report from a previous meeting

Caz Halfhide advised that the process of arranging a date for the consecration on the new cemetery is now underway. The Vicar has been contacted and asked if they would like to hold a service at the church and has been asked to propose some dates. She also advised that with Cllr Tim Groves assistance, she has confirmation of planning. Cllr Steve Davey is to provide a copy of the title deed. They will then be submitted, together with the plan of spaces and the process will continue.

Update regarding the straightening of the gravestone overshadowing the next plot. The family have been contacted and they have agreed. This will take place on Monday 20th May 2024.

Caz Halfhide advised that Julie Ferguson has offered to help with advice, if required, until a new clerk is appointed.

24/7 To co-opt members onto the Parish Council

Cllr Alan Britten Co-Opted

Proposed: Steve Davey, Seconded: Antoinette Groves

All voted in favour Acceptance form signed. Steve Davey to forward to Alan the additional declaration of interests form that needs completing and returning within 30 days

24/8 Planning decisions report

NONE

24/9 Planning applications

NONE – But it was noted that we were anticipating something due to a proposed change in the replacement steps to the Church Bell Tower

24/10 To review and adopt the Standing Orders

RESOLVED – ADOPTED

Proposed: Steve Davey, Seconded: Caz Halfhide

All in favour

24/11 To review and adopt the Financial Regulations

A newer model has been published.

It was agreed to defer until another meeting once reviewed. ACTION: CH

24/12 To review and adopt the Code of Conduct

RESOLVED – ADOPTED

Proposed: Steve Davey, Seconded: Caz Halfhide

All in favour

24/13 To review and adopt the Dignity at Work/Bullying and Harassment Policy

RESOLVED – ADOPTED

Proposed: Steve Davey, Seconded: Caz Halfhide

All in favour

24/14 To review and adopt the Freedom of Information Policy

RESOLVED – ADOPTED

Proposed: Steve Davey, Seconded: Caz Halfhide

All in favour

24/15 To review and adopt the Publication Scheme

It was proposed and agreed to defer to another meeting.

Cllr Antoinette Groves advised that she would shortly be attending a meeting relevant to this and would update the other Councillors following the meeting –

ACTION: AG

24/16 To review and adopt the Data Protection Policy

RESOLVED – ADOPTED

Proposed: Steve Davey, Seconded: Caz Halfhide

All in favour

24/17 To review and adopt a Grievance Policy

RESOLVED – ADOPTED

Proposed: Steve Davey, Seconded: Caz Halfhide

All in favour

24/18 To review and adopt a Complaints Policy

RESOLVED – ADOPTED

Proposed: Steve Davey, Seconded: Caz Halfhide

All in favour

24/19 To agree Councillor Roles and Responsibilities

Councillor roles and responsibilities were appointed as follows:

Cllr Andrew – Village Hall liaison, cemetery fees & Pavilion

Cllr Davey – Millennium Wood, trees, cemetery, churchyard & Pavilion

Cllr A Groves – Grass cutting & ground maintenance, ranger, highways (including Speedwatch, village car park & Streetscene), website & IT, Pavilion, play area & recreation ground

Cllr T Groves – Trees, grass cutting & ground maintenance, Pavilion, play area & recreation ground & planning

Cllr C Halfhide – Finance, budget, Pavilion, play area & recreation ground, village hall liaison, events co-ordinator & hr representative.

Cllr Z England – School liaison, cemetery & churchyard, structural & Pavilion

Cllr A Britten – Structural & Pavilion

It was agreed to review again at the September Parish Council Meeting

24/20 To approve Risk Assessment for Ash Village Fete and confirm approval of use of Recreation Ground and Pavilion.

RESOLVED – APPROVED

Proposed: Steve Davey, Seconded: Caz Halfhide

All in favour

24/21 Finance – To APPROVE the payment schedule for May 2024

PAYEE	PARTICULARS	AMOUNT	
Plusnet	Pavilion Internet	£32.28	REPORT
British Gas	Pavilion Electricity	£183.77	REPORT
Staff	Salaries & Expenses	£872.47	REPORT
S Davey	Virtual Landline	£5.95	REPORT
Evis RA	Ground Maintenance April 24 SO	£458.33	REPORT
KL Bungay	Pavilion Cleaning April 24 SO	£90.00	REPORT*
British Telecom	Pavilion Internet	£120.50	REPORT
Water2Business	Pavilion Water	£129.09	REPORT
S Davey	Postage	£4.05	Approved
Glen Prince	Newsletter Printing	£40.00	Approved
	TOTAL	£1936.44	

*Cllr Halfhide advised of an hourly rate increase of £2.00 per hour from May 2024 (which no-one disagreed with) The standing order needs to be amended to reflect this.

24/22 Finance – To APPROVE a grant request from Ash In Bloom £500

RESOLVED - APPROVED

Proposed: Steve Davey, Seconded: Caz Halfhide

All in favour

NOTE: This was for 2023/2024 and a further grant request from Ash In Bloom will be made for 2024/2025

24/23 Finance – To APPROVE changing ranger duties from Somerset Council to local contractor.

RESOLVED – APPROVED

Ryan Evis. 8 hours per month at £235.00

Proposed: Tim Groves, Seconded: Steve Davey

All in favour

24/24 To CONFIRM a public consultation has been carried out on the designation of Ash Millennium Woods as a Local Nature Reserve

RESOLVED – CONFIRMED

Cllr Antoinette Groves reported 77% in favour & 23% opposed. 58 responses by form, 3 post, 1 email. 4 stakeholder reports. Still waiting for Nature England

24/25 Finance – To CONSIDER quotes for Pavilion replacement doors:

a) £1490 + VAT

RESOLVED – CONSIDER but with additional information to be obtained

Proposed: Steve Davey, Seconded: Caz Halfhide

All in favour, subject to:

Checking the excess on the insurance to see if it is a viable claim **ACTION: SD**

Check the full specification with Yeovil Windows to ensure the disability access

requested meets with our requirements **ACTION: CH**

Check the specification with a fire officer/expert to ensure compliant **ACTION: TG**

The kitchen door was also discussed as difficult to close, which results in problems with the alarm on occasion. Caz agreed to ask Yeovil Windows their opinion.

24/26 Reports – To receive reports from:

a. Parish Councillors

b. Working Groups

Cllr Zak England reported that the pillar cap in the Cemetery that had come loose due to an overgrown tree had been refitted and the tree trimmed back.

He also reported that problems with the road in Witcombe Lane had been reported for appropriate action.

Cllr Antoinette Groves reported that the work with traffic regarding SID's etc had been set back by 18 months and the process would have to start all over again. There is currently a preference for solar powered SID's which would mean 4m posts. Cllr Antoinette Groves to discuss this with homeowners near the nominated sites and report back. It was also noted that the average speed on Martock Lane was recorded at 19 mph, a figure which it was thought reduced by the impact of residents slowing to turn into their driveways.

It was suggested that as the SID's for which Ash paid £400 to Martock PC, are no longer working, and Ash really hasn't had much use of them, we ask for our money to be returned. **ACTION: AG & SD**

Cllr Antoinette Groves agreed to draft an email to email Martock PC with the request for Cllr Steve Davey to email from the Chair's email account.

24/27 Clerks report and correspondence

NOT APPLICABLE, AS NO CLERK

24/28 Items for the next or future agenda

NONE NOTED

24/29 Date of next meeting – 3 June 2024

20.45 Meeting Closed

IF THEY DON'T KNOW ABOUT IT, THEY CAN'T FIX IT!

Please report ALL highway issues you notice.

You can report issues online to Somerset Council - Report a Problem



<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/.../report-a-problem-on-the.../>

IMPORTANT: If you are reporting a problem outside Somerset Council's normal working hours (Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 5pm) and you believe it is urgent and a risk to public safety, please call 0300 123 2224.

You can also report issues via Fix My Street - Report a Problem



<https://ashpcsomerset.com/fix-my-street-2/>

Fix My Street is a helpful website for reporting various road and street problems. All reported issues are automatically forwarded to the appropriate local authority.

When submitting a report, please include a photo. Pictures provide valuable context and make it easier to understand the situation. Visuals are always helpful and can significantly enhance the information provided.

Common issues to report are:

- | | |
|--|---|
|  Abandoned vehicles |  Bridges and retaining walls |
|  Drains and gullies |  Flooding on the road |
|  Flyposting and graffiti |  Fly tipping |
|  Hazards on the road |  Harmful or poisonous weeds |
|  Mud on the road |  Overgrown verges or hedges |
|  Pavements and cycle paths |  Potholes, road damage |
|  Street light problems |  Tree issues by the road |
|  Road markings |  Road signs and bollards |
|  Snow and ice on the road |  Traffic light faults |
|  Vehicles parked on grass verges |  Weeds |
|  Unauthorised use of roadside verges |  Road and verge edge loss |

Thank you for helping to keep our roads safe!