

## ASH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on 06<sup>th</sup> January 2025 @ 7pm at Ash Pavilion.

Present: Councillors: Steve Davey, Chairman, Caz Halfhide, Vice Chairman, Alan Britten, Antoinette Groves, Tim Groves.

Somerset Councillors: John Bailey & Emily Pearlstone.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS.**

There were three members of the public present.

It was noted that irresponsible dog owners continued to abuse the Millennium Wood area, including allowing dogs access to run free within an enclosed area. Cllr Davey will pass concerns to the wood manager.

Considerable concern was expressed regarding the proposed footpath modification order, Nos 11, 13 & 14. Order No 11 is particularly concerning as it has potentially damaging ramifications for local businesses.

### **Section 53(2) & Schedule 15. Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981. The Somerset Council (No11) Modification Order 2024. Parish of Ash.**

*The above Order, made on 29 November 2024 under Section 53(2)(b) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, if confirmed as made, will modify the definitive map and statement for the area by:*

*1. Upgrading to a restricted byway that part of Footpath Y 1/17, in the parish of Ash, which starts at the junction with Burrough Street (point A on the order plan H59-2024) and runs north (a section known as Ash Drove) for approximately 1,293 metres to OS grid ref ST 48684 21890 (point X on order plan H59-2024).*

*The width is as excluded from surrounding hereditaments on the Finance Act Plan except between OS grid ref ST 48549 21543 (point Xi on the order plan H59-2024) and OS grid ref ST 48060 20872 (point Z on the order plan H59-2024) where it is 9.14 metres.*

*2. Upgrading to a restricted byway that part of Footpath Y 1/17, in the parish of Ash, which starts at OS grid ref ST 48684 21890 (point X on the order H75-2024) and runs west (a section known as Thornhill Drove) for approximately 950 metres to OS grid ref ST 47781 22090 (point W on order plan H 75-2024)*

*The width varies between 4.2 metres and 12 metres as shown shaded yellow on the order plan H 75-2024.*

It is not immediately apparent that there is a response time, and the order has not been officially made. The covering letter details a response date, the attachment would appear to be the modification order. This item is also included in the main agenda.

### **OUTSIDE REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES**

◆ Somerset Councillors – report dated 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2024 noted

◆ Somerset Councillors – report dated 6<sup>th</sup> January 2025. Foster Parents: It was noted that foster parents are being actively sought.

Borough Street trees: Cllr Pearlstone gave a verbal update on the trees in Borough Street. After discussion which noted that the trees and land were considered *bona vacantia* or

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ownerless property, which means that it is liable to be passed to the Crown, it was also noted that the Parish Council were not legally able to carry out any work to the trees which are also under tree protection orders. Cllr Pearlstone will contact SC for updates and revert accordingly.

### 6<sup>th</sup> January 2025 AGENDA

**24/171 To receive apologies for absence and to approve reasons given:** Apologies were given & accepted from Cllrs Z England & L Andrew.

**24/172 Declarations of interests.** There were no declarations of interest.

**24/173 To APPROVE and sign as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2024. The minutes were approved and signed.**

**24/174 Matters to report from a previous meeting.**

- Martock Speed Indicator Device: Cllr A Groves will contact Martock PC to arrange for collection of the SID and associated equipment. It was noted that members of the PC are licensed for road work and can remove/collect the SID
- Signage Millennium Wood/play area – Cllr A Britten will revisit this matter and revert to the next PC meeting
- Website – update from Councillors re current content and relevance. No update at present.
- HMRC/payroll arrangements. Clerk confirmed that she had written to HMRC requesting an update of details, awaiting a response.
- Pavilion door replacement. Cllr Britten noted that he was waiting for an installation date.
- Tree damage/Burrough Street. It was noted that the recent damage to the trees which fell partly on the public highway had been dealt with by SC Highways. The trees are all under a Tree Protection Order and cannot be pollarded nor can any work be carried out under the TPO. Cllr Pearlstone will contact Highways/SC to ascertain if the road remains closed or can be re-opened.
- Auditor update: Clerk awaiting response from Auditor.

**24/175 Planning decisions report.** None to report.

**24/176: Planning Applications:** Install EV charging point, listed building 52 Burrough Street. This item was tabled, considered and the PC noted they had no objection to this application. Clerk to inform SC planning department.

**24/177 Finance – To APPROVE** the regular payment schedule as detailed below, regular payments to be reviewed at the AGM or when the payment amount changes, whichever is sooner. Approved and signed.

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Schedule of Regular Monthly Payments, for report only.

Monthly	S Davey	Virtual Landline	£6.50	SO Report
Monthly	R A Evis	Ground Maintenance December	£458.33	SO Report
Monthly	KL Bungay	Pavilion cleaning	£102.00	SO Report

Signed: ..... Date: .....

Payment requests as at 06<sup>th</sup> January 2025

06/01/25	S Davey	Post & Chain Barrier Kit	131.96	
06/01/25	PG FIRE & SECURITY	Alarm maintenance	33.60	
06/01/25	Bristowes Electrical		145.54	

Signed:.....Date: .....

Direct Debit payments between 28/11/24- 31/12/24

28/11/24	BRITISH GAS	Utility	103.38	
04/12/24	BT GROUP	Utility	34.46	
17/12/24	BANK CHARGES		8.95	
30/12/24	BRITISH GAS	Utility	181.81	

**24/178 Finance:** To discuss the payment requests as detailed below & minute decisions. Approved and signed

**24/179 Finance:** To approve & sign the Bank reconciliations - December 2024. Approved and signed.

Ash PC December 2024 Bank recs for signature					
Date	Type	Payee	Money rec'd	Payments	Balance
28/11/2024	OB				4370.61
28/11/2024	SO	CLERK		286.23	4084.38
28/11/2024	DD	BRITISH GAS		103.38	3981
02/12/2024	DEP	M Trusson	10		3991
02/12/2024	SO	EVIS RA		458.33	3532.67
02/12/2024	SO	KL BUNGAY		102	3430.67
03/12/2024	SO	S DAVEY		6.5	3424.17
04/12/2024	DD	BT GROUP		34.46	3389.71
04/12/2024	FPO	HAM & DOULT STONE		300	3089.71
04/12/2024	FPO	KL BUNGAY		25.5	3064.21
04/12/2024	FPO	PINNACLE		98.4	2965.81
04/12/2024	FPO	WATER4BUSINESS		149.27	2816.54
04/12/2024	FPO	BATTENS SOLICITORS		45	2771.54
05/12/2024	FPO	BRISTOWES ELECTRICAL		324	2447.54
05/06/2024	FPO	PAULLS MARTOCK		120	2327.54
09/06/2024	DEP	PAULLS MARTOCK	120		2447.54
12/12/2024	FPO	BELL INN		120	2327.54

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17/12/2024	PAY	BANK CHARGES		8.95	2318.59
30/12/2024	DEP	M Trusson	40		2358.59
30/12/2024	SO	CLERK		286.23	2072.36
30/12/2024	DD	BRITISH GAS		181.81	1890.55
			170	2650.06	
Opening Balance					
DECEMBER	4370.61				
INCOME	170				
EXPENDITURE	2650.06				
BALANCE C/F	1890.55				

**24/180 Finance** – to approve & sign the Bank Statements November - December 2024. Approved and signed

**24/181 Finance** – to approve budget for financial year 2025/6. The budget was tabled and approved. It was noted that the small increase in precept for the next financial year was partly due to an underspend on the Clerk's salary for 2024. If inflation is applied to the precept, the increase may be higher, it is therefore effectively a decrease.

		2024/5 BUDGET	2025/6 Budget
Memorial Inspection		£1,000.00	£1,000.00
Ranger		£4,000.00	£4,000.00
General maintenance - Grass & Grounds		£5,500.00	£6,000.00
General Maintenance - Trees		£2,000.00	£1,500.00
Contingency	10% of overall budget		£4,500.00
Biodiversity/new trees		£1,500.00	£1,500.00
Play area inspections, including fences & maintenance		£750.00	£1,250.00
Pavilion maintenance(inc. servicing & cleaning)		£1,600.00	£2,250.00
Parish utilities (Electric, water, WiFi)		£2,500.00	£2,500.00
Defibrillator maintenance		£200.00	£500.00
Cemetery			
Parish Projects and events			£500.00
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>£19,050.00</b>	<b>£25,500.00</b>
<b>OFFICE &amp; ADMIN</b>			
clerks salary	Gross salary	£11,700.00	£8,000.00
audit fees	Internal & external	£500.00	£500.00
insurance		£3,000.00	£4,000.00
Subs (Parish online, NALC& SALC,ICO)	SALC	£300.00	£350.00
Street planting/MW grant/Coronation - S137 Grants		£2,500.00	£3,000.00
Election		£0.00	£500.00
General admin		£2,400.00	£1,200.00
Digital/Media communications		£1,800.00	£1,800.00
Training (Councillors & Clerk)		£500.00	£750.00
Legal costs		£1,000.00	£1,000.00
VAT			£2,500.00
SC provision for devolved services			£3,000.00
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>£23,700.00</b>	<b>£26,600.00</b>
<b>Approved 06/01/2025</b>			<b>£52,100.00</b>

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**24/182 Finance** – to approve precept request for financial year 2025/6. The precept request for £52,100 (Fifty-two thousand one hundred pounds only) and percentage increases were tabled and approved. Clerk to file precept request.

**24/183- Parish Matters:** VE Day 2025, to consider Parish events for VE Day. After discussion which noted that Ash Village would probably want to take part in this anniversary, it was agreed that Cllr Hafhhide would approach the Parish Church with a view to possibly renovating the flagpole to mark this event. Further discussions will be held at subsequent PC meetings.

**24/184 – Parish Matters:** to consider letter from Somerset Council detailing bin emptying charges for 2025/6. It was noted that SC have indicated that any bins located on SC land will be emptied by SC. Cllrs will monitor this situation carefully should SC change their stance on this matter.

**24/185 Parish Matters** –To note footpath modification orders numbers 11, 13 & 14. See Public comments above. The Parish Council noted that they had objected to these proposals previously and this position had not changed. The Parish Council voted to object to all three of these Modifications on the grounds that they will represent a significant loss of current amenity to Parishioners. Proposed Cllr S Davey, seconded C Halfhide. Agreed unanimously. It was agreed that the notices would be put on the Parish website separately to the PC meeting papers noting the response dates and advising parishioners of their right to object.

**24/186 Parish Matters** – to consider correspondence regarding revised expression of Interest in devolution, committing to a Mayoral Combined Authority for the Heart of Wessex region. This was considered, it was noted that Parishes had very little input or influence in decisions made by central Government. In view of the current financial position with Somerset Council and the economy in general, comment was made regarding the necessity and cost of this exercise. It was also noted that the cost of forming a Unitary Council for Somerset still had to be confirmed. Any redundancies resulting from the Unitary Council formation would appear to have been made on numbers rather than skill set.

**24/187 – Parish matters** – to consider footpath access to playground. A redacted email was tabled noting that the pathways may not be suitable for wheelchair users. Clerk will forward email to Cllrs. Cllr Z England will be asked to inspect the pathways and revert to the next meeting.

### **24/188 Exempt Session – Exclusion of the Press & Public**

The Council is recommended to resolve that under section 1, paragraph 2 of The Public Bodies (admission to meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business because publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

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**24/190** To consider completion of Parish Clerk's contracted probation period and set pay scale.

It was agreed that the Clerk had completed her probation period satisfactorily, an increase in hours to 30hrs per month and a higher pay scale was agreed. Proposed by Cllr S Davey, seconded by Cllr C Halfhide. Agreed unanimously.

It was also agreed to back date the pay scale increase to 1<sup>st</sup> December 2024 and the increase in hours from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2025. Proposed Cllr S Davey, seconded Cllr C Halfhide, agreed unanimously.

The meeting closed at 20.55hrs.

Date and time of next meeting: TBC

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