



ASHMANSWORTH PARISH COUNCIL

**ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2021
19th MAY**



Annual Parish Meeting Agenda

- Welcome and Apologies
- Elections
- Presentation on Achievements and Financial Report
- Report from Borough / County Councillors
- Police Report
- Update on Climate Emergency
- Public discussion and questions



Parish Council Elections for 2021/22

- Election of Chairman
- Election of Vice-chairman
- Parish council due for election in May 2022



Who were we in the past year?

- Alan Cox Chairman
- Kieron Black Vice-chairman
- Andrew Bays
- Sally Burch
- Angela Harris
- Sadie Owen Clerk



Our Role

- Cover villages of Ashmansworth and Crux Easton.
- Lowest level of democracy.
- Provide guidance on Planning Applications.
- A link to Borough and County Councils on what is planned and what we want.
- Focus of local interest.
- Non-political.
- One of the smallest in the county, limited budget.
- Thanks to all members for their hard work!

What do we do?

- We meet every ~8 weeks, by zoom this year due to Covid - reverting to physical meetings from now on.
- We had 11 new Planning Applications in last year. All of these were approved or are still pending, except for 1 we objected to which was withdrawn. Also 5 tree applications OK.
- Slow signs repainted by HCC at last!
- Concern at reduction in plastic Recycling facilities.
- We have updated our joint emergency plan (with Highclere and East Woodhay).

What do we do +?

- Village details on new improved Website.
- We have new email addresses for council business.
- Ashy-PC very popular, allowing any member to email everyone – no spam!
- Lengthsman repaired stiles, cleared footpaths and cut hedges.
- Added plaque to war memorial commemorating Norman Scull's crossing Atlantic in Airship R34.
- Greatly appreciate Neighbourcare Covid support.
- Budget to spend our Precept to benefit Parish.

Concerns

- Access to Newbury Newtown Road Recycling.
- Resolution of planning applications taking too long.
- Taxi-share suspended due to low use and Covid.
Hope it will be restored shortly.
- Verges cut during Spring, damaging daffodils –
requesting cut for autumn only.
- Roadside litter, though residents have been
collecting it – council cannot, due to insurance!
- Would like residents of Crux Easton to use more of
our services, Taxi-share, village hall, table tennis...

Covid-19

- Not so badly impacted as some areas
- Looking forward to easing of restrictions
- Greatly appreciate support from Neighbourcare and neighbours assisting each other!

Clerk's Report 1

- The parish council has once again kept its precept at the same level this year, despite continued cut backs and increases from both county and borough.
- Communication with the wider community is important to the PC and all our agendas, minutes and other documents are available on our revised website www.ashmansworth-pc.org.uk. There is also a link to all planning applications within our new website so if you haven't already, then please do take a look at it.

Clerk's Report 2

- The lengthsman has undertaken some good work in helping the PCC clear the churchyard vegetation, and has also been busy again around the parish mending stiles and clearing footpaths.
- Our mowing contractors remain the same and we hope that they continue with the great work that they have carried out to date.

Financial Report

- Income was as expected but less than last year due to ongoing cuts.
- Income of £285 in BDBC Grants & £4,123 Precept.
- Expenditure roughly as expected.
- Reserves have decreased by a small amount. Opening balance £5,396, closing £4,782.
- Annual return figures are not yet available – audit booked for tomorrow, May 20th.

The Year Ahead

- The Precept for 2021/22 has remained at last year's amount of £4,123.
- This is in line with budget spend predictions and will also allow the council to make some small donations.
- The Lengthsman scheme will continue for 2021/22 and we again have a budget of £1,000 to allocate to local works. Please do let us know about any suggested tasks.

New Borough Council

- A Conservative majority of 12 plus Whitchurch independent
- 54 councillors in 18 Wards – reduced from 60
- Reorganisation - **Evingar** – with 7 parishes
- East Woodhay, Hurstbourne Priors new to us
- Graham Falconer, John Izett and Sam Carr

Borough Issues

- Local Plan - ongoing rolling 5 year review. SHELA , 5 year land supply
- Planning – staffing issues
- HWRC – AS-is for this year
- Fly tipping – successful prosecutions
- Finance – £28m in pandemic grants to business
- Pandemic shortfall about £1m, rest covered by government grants

County Council Issues

- Councillor Tom Thacker re-elected
- County Council Report
- Roads – potholes and white lines
- Recycling – still no access to Newbury HRC
- Lengthsman – doing a good job

Climate Emergency

- Basingstoke & Hampshire declared a climate emergency
- We are in discussions with Basingstoke + “Sustainable Overton”, so far with zoom meetings and by email
- Impact of carbon emissions on climate change – for us, mainly house heating and vehicle use
- Impact of plastic use, need less packaging, better recycling
- Reduction of food waste, reuse of clothing etc
- Avoid exporting emissions – China making products with coal-fired electricity, oil based shipping and flights...

House Heating

- Today, most use oil and/or log burners. No mains gas.
- Will be discouraged/banned due to emissions + pollution
- Propose use of heat pumps
 - Air pumps less efficient but cheaper and easier to install
 - Ground pumps more efficient but more expensive to install, needing large trenches or holes to bury pipes
 - Neither provides water as hot as required so ideally needs underfloor heating or some other boost
- New ideas like “heat batteries” look very promising
- Need good insulation – plan to buy IR cameras to loan

Caldera Heat Battery



Electricity

- May have solar panels on some houses but difficult on thatch or listed buildings
- Large batteries (electrical or thermal) for storage of off peak or solar. Hope costs fall.
- Possibility of village-wide energy projects - solar panels, wind turbines or anaerobic digestors
- Probably uneconomic for now so await developments!

Alpha 311 Wind Turbine



Travel

- Encouraging use of electric vehicles as diesel and petrol phased out
- Concern at range for long distance travel
- Chargers being installed across the country
- We are fortunate that nearly all our houses have off-street parking – major problem in other areas
- Fly less unless new developments, eg hydrogen or “bio-fuels” made from hydrogen

Farming Emissions

- There may be restrictions on methane emissions, especially from cattle
- There may also be restrictions on nitrates, especially on muck-spreading
- We await developments on tractors and HGVs, possibly using hydrogen rather than batteries?

Plastic & Recycling

- Concern at excessive use of plastic causing pollution
- Much plastic is not recycled by BDBC, even when marked as recyclable
- Hope new developments will allow local recycling of **all** types of plastic
- Consumers should minimise plastic use and pressure shops and suppliers to use less packaging

Who does what?

- Individuals can choose to be more efficient and less polluting – and persuade others!
- Government likely to enforce this with persuasion, legislation and taxation – tax oil and gas like petrol?
- Research should create new opportunities and market forces should cut prices
- Hopefully home heating and electric vehicles will become more affordable!

Risks and Opportunities

- Very expensive to green every existing house
- Subsidies impractical if impact nearly everyone!
- Avoid buying everything from China
- Research needed for new technologies + cheaper:
 - batteries and solar panels using less precious/scarce metals
 - less obtrusive wind turbines
 - hydrogen generation and conversion into bio-fuels
 - ...

Conclusions

- Thanks to all for their hard work and especially to Andrew Bays for providing Zoom!
- We are enjoying meeting up in the hall again!
- We welcome suggestions and assistance from everyone, especially for Community Enhancement
- What more would you like us to do?