**A Meeting of Ashen Parish Council was held**

**on**

**Tuesday 19th September 2023 at 5.15pm in Ashen Village Hall**

**Minutes**

Present: Cllr R. Purchas (Chairman) (RP)

Cllr S Simpson (SS)

Cllr L Cockburn (LC)

Cllr O Palmer

Public: 1 member of the public was present

In attendance: Karen Melville-Ross, Clerk to the Council (KMR)

RP opened the meeting to the public. Stephen Norris expressed concern about the lack of verge cutting on safety grounds. He has raised the matter with Cllr Swire and has been told that verge cutting has been moved to District Council and that PCs are able to request funding to organise their own verge cutting. RP expressed support, agreeing that whilst ecology is important, safety for road users is paramount. KMR to send Cllr Schwire’s link to report issues to Stephen Norris.

**23.16 Apologies for Absence**

All were present.

**23.17 Declarations of Interest**

The declarations are as registered and any additional interests will be recorded as necessary.

**23.18 Approval of the minutes for the Council Meeting held 11th May 2023.**

The minutes of the above meetings were approved and signed.

**23.19 Financial Matters**

a) The iterum accounts were circulated and were approved.

b) The AGAR statement has been filed by KMR and an exemption issued.

c) Payments was made to the village hall for hall hire for the meeting, for the electricity costs and for their annual grant. The grant to the church was also paid along with KMR’s wages.

**23.20 Playing Field**

a) The bee orchids on the playing field were left and no complaints were received.

b) The boundary hedge at the playing field was accidentally set on fire by a resident, but should grow back.

c) SS is to obtain a quotation for hedge cutting at the playing field.

d) RP is to organise a working party for the playing field at the end of October.

**23.21 Village Hall**

a) Julie had circulated an update on the hall and reported a grant from Cllr Parker. The committee has also applied for grants from BDC for the rear garden and to the National Lottery for an eco heating system. They are obtaining quotations for the varnishing of the notice board. Alan Rigg has stepped down from his role at Nieghbourhood Watch due to ill health. Thanks were expressed for his years of service to the village.

b) The VHC have decided to go ahead with the sub lease. SS and RP agreed to be signatories on the deeds. KMR is to serve notice 14 days beforehand. The PC agreed to enter in the lease and sublease. BDC will engross the lease and Wayman & Long the sublease.

c) Having engaged The Zeta Group to carry out the work converting the street light to LED, they have failed to give a schedule of work. KMR to chase.

**23.22 Highways**

a) SS is continuing to monitor matters she has logged on the portal. The poles by Stoke Bridge have now been reported and the work by the airfield carried out. It was agreed that the parish is an agricultural area and agricultural traffic is to be expected. The issue of digestate traffic has been investigated previously in 2018 and the farmer has the permitted certificate, so it was felt there is no need to investigate again.

Cllr Parker has requested work on the footpath at Lower Ashen towards Clare but no work has been carried out yet.

Thanks were expressed to SS for cutting the grass triangles. It was agreed that the PC is not in a position to take up verge cutting, but it was agreed that a second cut should be requested at danger points. KMR has reported the triangles and asked for a second cut but so far had no response. SS asked for the dates of verge cutting, which KMR is to obtain.

There is a bus consultation until 5th October but it was felt this was a matter for individuals, not the PC.

b) Velda has liaised with the Footpath Officer who felt that path 8 was fine and suggested she take secateurs to any small issues. She has had no response regarding footpath 20 as yet. Path 17 has been cleared.

**23.23 Neighbourhood Watch and Police**

SS mentioned that when there have been 6 significant burglaries or attempted burglaries in the village recently and these have still not been mentioned by Neighbourhood Watch. A police Case Officer has finally been assigned and the Rural Team are trying to be more visible in the area. It was agreed that KMR should send a letter from the PC, drafted by SS.

**23.24 Village Amenity**

RP to liaise with Simon Mattholie to find out who tidied the Waiver last year.

**23.25 Administration to include:**

a) Clerks & Councils and posters from BDC were put on the noticeboard.

b) Notice of the vacancy on the Parish Council was given in May. Three residents put their names forward. It was unanimously decided to co opt Velda Ovingdon. RP is to write to the unsuccessful candidates and KMR is to contact Velda and send her the paperwork for completion. She will sign her Declaration of Acceptance at the meeting on 9th January.

**23.26 Planning**

a) Application 23/01828/PDEM at Claret Hall was circulated but no opinion was sought.

b) The information boards have been erected by the Gliding Club.

**23.27 Parish Plan**

RP has updated the action points table.

**23.28 Matters raised by the Community Agent.**

Nothing had been raised.

**23.29 Other Urgent Business**

Nothing was raised.

**23.30 Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be on 9th January 2024 at 7.15pm in the village hall.