



NEW ASH GREEN VILLAGE ASSOCIATION LTD

Registered Office: Centre Road, New Ash Green, Longfield, Kent DA3 8HH

Meeting of the Council of Management of the New Ash Green Village Association Limited

- Date:** 27th September 2021
- Time:** 1930
- Location:** VA Meeting Room
- Present:** Cllr S Glover – Ash-cum-Ridley Parish Council
Cllr Mrs Hobbs – Ash-cum-Ridley Parish Council
Mr B Clarke – Chairman, New Ash Green Village Association
Mrs M Galinis – Treasurer, New Ash Green Village Association
and Director & Chairman of New Ash Green Sports Pavilion
- In attendance:** Alison de Jager – Parish Clerk, Ash-cum-Ridley Parish Council
Jo McGarvey – Office Manager, New Ash Green Village
Association & Pavilion Director
- Apologies:** Cllr M Brown – Chairman, Ash-cum-Ridley Parish Council

Matters Discussed

The purpose of this meeting is to clarify concerns of the Parish Council and to set up a means of the Parish Council and Village Association liaison for the benefit of the residents of New Ash Green.

Cllr S Glover gave some historical information when the Parish Council was invited to have representatives on some of the Village Association Committees, which in the past included the Greenland Committee and Village Hall Committee. As these committees dwindled, the joined-up work ceased.

It was confirmed that the Village Hall Committee had been disbanded many years ago and that the Chairman of the Greenland Committee had disbanded this committee due to inactivity and non-attendance of members.

In June 2021, Mrs S Clarke took over as Director of Greenlands. A full 10 year Woodland Plan is required, and the Village Association needs to appoint an arborist as they have not had one since Antony George left in 2020 right at the commencement of the Covid lockdown.

Cllr Mrs Hobbs advised that a tree had fallen against a property in Chapel Wood despite the resident repeatedly reporting the dead tree to the Village Association over a two to three year period. This was due to poor administration.

The Parish Council would like to have representatives on one or two committees to aid transparency and improve the relations of the two organisations.

The Parish Council are concerned that residents and Residents Societies have experienced difficulty in obtaining responses from the Village Association. Miss McGarvey said that they are aware that some emails are still being sent to the previous Office Manager's account and that they are unable to access this mailbox. All Residents Societies have been sent the revised details, but it is up to the Residents

Societies to provide up to date contact details. It was also noted that the Residents Societies do not all clear their post boxes in the Village Association offices regularly. Residents Societies had also expressed concern in the process of applications to the Amenity Committee. In the past, when an application was received by the Village Association, they would advise the relevant Residents Society of the application and give them the date that it would go to the Amenity Committee. Once the Committee had met and a decision reached, the Residents Society would be advised of the decision. The minutes of the Amenity Committee would be distributed shortly after the meeting. Now, applications are made and decisions taken without any consultation with or advising the Residents Societies and the minutes take months to be distributed. Ms McGarvey denied that this was the case and that the former procedure was adhered to. When given specific details, Ms McGarvey advised that one application had been retrospective and that another application was made under exceptional circumstances.

Overall concerns from both residents and Parish Councillor's were that the Village Association were not serving the residents, specifically the closure of the office and the reduced hours on return to work. Ms McGarvey advised that all staff worked from home in line with Government Policy and that residents were still able to contact the Village Association. Provision of waste sacks was not available initially, but later introduced and residents were able to make appointments to collect waste sacks from the office, following COVID safety. The office is open to the public Monday to Thursday 9am to 4pm.

Questions about the structure of the Village Association and Committees were raised. Mr Clarke advised that this was under revision and that is why they were unable to provide the Parish Council with the requested structure. It was noted that there were some deep-seated problems and some decisions have been made without authority. Cllr S Glover requested that once completed, a copy of the Organisation Chart is sent to the Parish Council.

Mr Clarke advised that the Village Association had been made aware of a splinter group that had formed to call an Emergency General Meeting to obtain a vote of no confidence in the existing Council of Management. This group are anti-establishment and have refused to meet and discuss the perceived problems. Mr Clarke has been in contact with the Chairmen of the Residents Societies, and some have engaged and as a result, the Village Association will get involved and assist with concerns. The formation of the splinter group has forced the Village Association to introduce planned changes sooner than scheduled. Committee members are all volunteers, and more people are needed. The new face going forward will include working out members skill sets so that they are in the correct fields. Responsibilities sit with specific people but may not have sub-committees.

Council of Management meetings are held every 6 – 8 weeks and the Chairmen of the Residents Societies are invited to attend as observers, but do not attend. It is intended that the Council of Management meets more regularly to keep the momentum going. The Parish Council will be invited to send a representative to these meetings as an observer.

New Ash Green Sports Pavilion. Mrs Galinis confirmed that the Directors of the Pavilion receive 45% discount on all refreshments. She advised that this is normal practice within the hospitality industry and that staff often receive free or discounted refreshments. She did confirm that staff do not receive discount on drinks, only the Directors. To quantify the discount, Mrs Galinis advised that when the previous manager left, the Directors were putting in 40 – 50 hour weeks to keep the Pavilion running and as Directors, they were not entitled to be paid for these hours. The external auditor suggested, as a gesture of goodwill, that they could receive a discount on drinks. The percentage of the discount means that some drinks are purchased at cost or above and that no loss is made by this provision. A Manager has been employed but the discount continues as when short staffed, Directors are called in to provide cover. Mrs Galinis confirmed that none of the annual grant from the Village Association in the amount of £18,000.00 is used to support the bars.

What strategy is being employed to nibble away at the debt to the residents from the pavilion?

Mrs Galinis reported that the Pavilion is making a profit for the first time, and should this continue, they will be able to reduce the loan from the Village Association (Resident's money), which currently sits at £261,000.00.

Currently profits are being used to undertake structural repairs instead of this falling to the Village Association, e.g., extractor fans, fire doors, thus increasing the value of the building.

Mrs Galinis stated that the Social Committee, that arrange the fireworks, etc. are separate from the Village Association.

Manor Gardens – Mr Clarke and Mrs Galinis advised that due to a break in the chain when Span went into liquidation 30 – 40 years ago there is no obligation for the developers of Manor Gardens to enter into the Village Structure and contribute to the amenities. Issues with contractors parking on North Ash Road have been discussed with the contractors and they will try to reduce the parking and to leave pedestrian crossings clear. The plans included a pedestrian path from Manor Gardens to join the pedestrian path on Punch Croft and Mr Clarke has advised the developers that they do not have permission to build the path on Village Association land.

The meeting closed at 9.11pm