

Chairman's forward:

The Parish Council year commenced with the Parish Council elections in May 2007 when several new members were welcomed on to the Council. Namely Julian Auckland-Lewis, Trevor Scadeng, Lucinda Strudwick and Richard Holland. Thanks were extended to the retiring members Naomi Deynem, Lionel Greaves, Ian Irving and Ken Hartley.

Many initiatives have taken place during the year and one of the first was the Speed Watch Device being employed during June and July at different times and locations to monitor traffic in and out of the village. The results showed that around 40% of vehicles were clocked at over 34 mph and almost 8% of those were over 45mph.

There was heavy flooding in the village on 25th June and the B5393 remained just passable but sections of other roads on the east side were impassable during the afternoon. In January the Environment Agency carried out major works to hopefully remedy the situation by installing a new drainage system. Unfortunately there was disruption especially for the residents in the Meadows and those living alongside the works depot in the garage area but hopefully all the inconvenience was worth it and during recent heavy rain there does not seem to have been a problem.

The Parish Council held its first surgery inviting residents to the Parish Rooms on a Saturday morning in June to express any concerns they had, unfortunately not one member of the public turned up. Hopefully by having our Annual Meeting as part of the School Hey Day the councillors can interact with residents and help with any concerns they may have.

The field originally purchased as a recreation area for the village unfortunately had covenants and problems which could not be overcome and the unfortunate outcome was that it was sold. However a steering group is currently looking at a promising alternative and there should be some good news for the village very soon.

The Parish Plan group is nearing the completion of their work and we look forward to the printed version very soon. The hard work will then start with the implementation of the recommendations following the many surveys carried out on all aspects of village life.

The Going Carbon Neutral Project work is continuing and a Daily diary is available on the website. The project is receiving world wide recognition and the project is receiving lots of new technology to pilot.

The Parish had been very fortunate in that we have had the services of two very good street cleansers, the village has been kept very clean and tidy and our thanks our extended them.

We have also had several very good editions of Around Ashton thanks mainly to Richard Holland and all those who supply him with information. This is a valuable tool for informing the residents of current affairs and all the news from the local organizations, not least the work of the Parish Council.

Our hardworking County Councillor John Burke sadly died during the summer of 2007 but not before he had instigated the new footpath between Ashton Hayes and Mouldsworth. The project was a co-operation between the County Council and the Going Carbon Neutral Project. A seat in memory of John Burke is located on the triangle at the bottom of Old Lane.

The Parish Clerk Andrea Thwaite has undertaken the task of helping the Parish Council to achieve Quality Status. Many hours of hard work have been put in by Andrea on our behalf hand her mentor in this task is Julian Auckland-Lewis. Hopefully the task will be completed in the not too distant future.

The role of the Parish Council is ongoing and very hard work and I would like to end this report by thanking ALL members of the Parish Council for their dedication and unstinting support. All they do is completely voluntary and they give of their time willingly for the good of the village. Thanks also to my Vice Chair and others who have stepped in during Peter's illness I am truly grateful. Thanks also to our District Councillors Hugo Deynem and Andrew Garman and our County Councillor Eleanor Johnson and last but by no means least to our Clerk Andrea Thwaite without whose support I could not have managed the last month or so.

Pauline Tilley
Chairman – May 2007 – April 2008.
www.ashtonhayespc.co.uk

FACTS:

Ashton Hayes Parish Council.....

- Has 9 elected members
- Controls assets of Parish Rooms and Land at Kelsall Road
- Employees 3 staff: Parish Clerk and Responsible Officer, Caretaker for the Parish Rooms and Street and Amenities Officer
- Has representation on School Governors
- Makes representations on Planning Applications
- Deals with Highway issues
- Undertakes an annual Beat the Bounds
- Engages with the public and local organisations
- Liaises regularly with District and County Councils
- Allows for public participation at its meetings.
- Has nine elected members that are signed up to the Code of Conduct in line with the Local Government Act 2000
- Has five Committees
- Has up to date Standing Orders and Financial Standing Orders
- Achieved £9,055.41 in grant aid during the year
- Clerk is studying towards Certificate in Local Government Administration
- Is working towards becoming Britain's First Carbon Neutral Village.
- Is producing a Parish Plan via a Constituted Steering Group
- Holds eleven meetings per year.
- Holds its Annual AGM in May each year
- Produces Annual Audited Accounts
- Produces four Parish Council Newsletters each year
- Is developing a web site which will help improve communication
www.ashtonhayespc.co.uk
- Is working towards becoming a Quality Parish Council.

AMENITIES COMMITTEE REPORT:

Community Recreation Space Project

The Parish Council purchased a field in Kelsall Road (Option 1) for recreational use in 2006.

Early in 2007 it was found that there was a restrictive covenant in the Title Deeds of Option 1. The covenant said that the land could not have anything placed upon it of any kind whatsoever, except for boundary fences and hedges. So, in September, it was resolved that the Parish Council should seek proper legal investigation into the strength of the covenant to establish if there was any way to contest it.

Whilst continuing to explore other options and/or proposals it was decided that should any further options become available, that for the time being, they would be explored in parallel with Option 1.



Following legal advice, including consultation with a QC, it was decided that the Parish Council would not pursue any legal challenge to the covenant on Option 1. Therefore, in January 2008 it was decided that the Parish Council would sell Option 1 and that the process was delegated to the Amenities Sub-Committee. At the same time a renewed attempt was to be made to find an alternative solution.

In the meantime, such an alternative was being worked on by an Ashton Hayes resident at the Northern end of the village, nearby the Village Hall (Option 2).

Option 1 was put up for sale at the end of February, the deadline for Private Tenders being 15 March. It was agreed that the sale of Option 1 would go ahead to one of the two Tenders received and the final sale process began in May.

In March, the Amenities Sub-Committee began consultations with the Ashton Hayes Sports and Recreation Committee, being an umbrella organisation for all the village sports clubs and the Constitution of which was approved by the Ashton Hayes Parish Council in November 2006.

Along with Option 2, the Parish Council was also in receipt of an offer for sale of another field at the Southern end of the village, off Ashton Lane (Option 3).

At the end of the 2007/2008 year, the situation was proceeding at pace, with the Parish Council agreeing in April, to pursue the Option 3 as the preferred option. Also, the sale of the Option 1 was nearing completion.

The Parish Council Amenities Sub Committee is meeting regularly striving to facilitate a more suitable solution to the Community recreation space in Ashton Hayes. Using information gained through consultations with the Ashton Hayes Sports and Recreation Committee and other groups, the Parish Council Amenities Sub Committee hope to work together in partnership with others to form a workable plan to provide a truly Community based recreation area. It remains the desire of the Parish Council to facilitate a community green recreation space within Ashton Hayes Village. The support from the village is a significant factor, as demonstrated by a Public Meeting in 2007.

HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE REPORT:

We have seen the completion of what appears to be a very successful solution to the flooding on Shay La, Pentre La and Gongar La. This did involve a considerable amount of disruption for some residents on the roads concerned. We would hope that the improvements now in place have outweighed the inconveniences suffered.

We have also seen the less successful works in relation to the resurfacing of our village's roads. The apparent poor quality of the work has been raised with the highways engineers, and they are in agreement with the views, both of the parish council and many residents, that the finished works were far from satisfactory. The parish council has been told that the contractors will be returning in the near future to correct the issue. Traffic speeds and dangerous parking are ongoing issues that the council seeks to address continually. The speeding problem is of real concern to residents and the PC alike. The council has the use of the "SID" speed warning device which is deployed a



number of times every year. However this does require two people to operate and the council would welcome any volunteers who may want to help out next time the device is in the village. We have also continued with the County Council's initiative "Set the Pace" which encourages residents to sign a pledge that they will not speed whilst driving themselves. If you are interested please contact any member or the clerk. The area around our school is the one that suffers most from thoughtless parking. The head teacher, and the school as a whole, is supported by the council in continually trying to get the message across to parents, who unfortunately are the main contributors to the problem.

GOING CARBON NEUTRAL PROJECT REPORT:

In 2006, The University of Chester carried out a baseline survey and revealed our domestic footprint was 4766 tonnes of CO2. A year later, after a repeat survey, we had reduced this by 20%. This was achieved by taking simple measures such as switching off electronic equipment, installing insulation, travelling less by car and plane. We expect to see a further reduction in 2008 as many people have gone further, installing renewable energy systems, planting more trees as a carbon sink, using wood burning stoves and using their cars less. One of the remarkable results was the drop off in air flights we have seen – both personal and business.

Since we launched the project in January 2006 we have made contact with hundreds of communities across the UK who are keen to follow our lead. In addition, we have had visits from as far afield as Australia, Romania and Canada – and these communities have all set off on the journey towards carbon neutrality. We also hosted a very successful 'carbon neutral communities grass roots conference' in April 2007 as part of the DEFRA grant.

We have harnessed the power of the Press to help us and in 2006/7 hosted press visits around 2-3 per week from print, TV and radio media from the UK. The chronology of all these events can be seen on our website www.goingcarbonneutral.co.uk. The highlights have been: BBC World Service: Launch event broadcast to 120 million listeners. Live Earth Rock Concert: Global audience of 3 billion. Ashton Hayes featured live from Wembley and had a film made about the project by Inigo Gilmour. This was presented globally via Live Earth.

Financial Times Magazine, April 2007: One million FT readers received a 6-page article (with front cover photo) about the project.

The global media coverage we have received, and our web statistics, indicate that we have reached over a billion people with our message. Many communities have also adopted our logo and use the toolkit we produced as part of the DEFRA grant. In 2007 we also hosted visits from Dr Stuart Burgess, The Rural Advocate (who recommends the village as an example of best practice in the latest report), and the Defence Academy (EU Military leaders). In 2008 we have had many visitors including Clare Short MP and Oxfam.

In the period 2006-2008 our project team has given over 70 talks to other UK communities, using the DEFRA grant to fund travel expenses. We have also given evidence to the House of Commons Select Committee on Climate Change: The Citizens Agenda.

This year we presented our project activities to the NALC annual conference in Bournemouth and too many other organisations. The Central Office of Information is currently recording our activity on behalf of the UK Government as an example of best practice.

Our project has also helped us to develop excellent relations with Chester City and Cheshire County Councils who have helped us to improve our recycling. CCC Highways has also built us a new footpath to the nearby railway station to help us all 'get out of our cars'. We are delighted to report that our low budget film won the 2007 IVCA Clarion Climate Change Communications Award, ahead of B&Q and other major companies. Friends of the Earth and YouTube now show our film online. A second version has been completed for 2008. The project also won the Energy Institute 'Community Initiative Award' 2007.

The Parish Council wishes to thank everyone for their continued support of the project.

AMENITIES SUB COMMITTEE – NEWSLETTER REPORT:

There were two newsletters produced during the year from May 2007 to April 2008. Each comprised an A3 sheet printed on both sides and just over 400 copies were distributed across the Parish in September 2007 and February 2008. Topics covered included the Parish Plan, Carbon Neutral project, the summer flooding and progress on the work being done to provide a new culvert, the introduction of an annual plan of projects to be tackled and other matters of concern to the residents of Ashton Hayes such as speeding motorists and safety issues.

There were articles and reports from many of the groups and organisations in the village and contact information who anyone who wished to find out more about them. The next newsletters are planned for June and early November.

FINANCIAL REPORT INCLUDING THE STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2007/08
(Unaudited accounts)

ASHTON HAYES PARISH COUNCIL

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT AS AT 31ST MARCH 2008		
	INCOME	2007/08
£		£
9,190.00	Precept	9,633.00
3,231.40	Hire of Hall	1,520.00
2,158.00	Street Cleaner Grant	3,164.83
420.00	Churchyard Grant	420.00
27,417.72	Carbon Netural	5,070.56
758.85	Projects	
-	Parish Plan	- 427.76



-	VAT	2,392.15
43,175.97		21,772.78
	EXPENDITURE	
5,029.14	Salaries	6,104.92
1,306.64	Parish Rooms	829.13
100.00	Section 107 payments	-
891.51	VAT	2,575.73
920.00	Churchyard Grant	920.00
3,335.54	Establishment Charges	4,539.28
-	Safety Surfacing	-
5,835.70	Carbon Netural	24,054.45
- 3,157.67	Parish Plan	270.34
30.00	Grants	-
10,453.81	Projects	1,592.36
		-
24,744.67	Total	40,886.21
18,431.30	Surplus	- 19,113.43
ASHTON HAYES PARISH COUNCIL		
BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST MARCH 2008		
		2007/08
	Current Assets	
3,217.86	Debtors	-
	Cash in Hand	
	Lloyds	74.77
29,835.85	Natwest	12,770.45
33,053.71	Total Assets	12,845.22
	Current Liabilities	
1,095.06	Creditors	-
31,958.65		12,845.22
	REPRESENTED BY:-	
13,527.00	Balance brought-forward	31,958.30
18,431.30	Surplus in Year	- 19,113.43
31,958.30	Balance carried-forward	12,844.87

ACHIEVEMENTS DURING 2007/08:

PARISH PLAN

During the past twelve months this committee has been co-coordinating the efforts of the four working groups who were putting together the questionnaire which was eventually distributed at the beginning of 2008. It was responsible for organising the distribution and collection of the questionnaires, and then undertook, with additional volunteers, to enter all the data, which covered many tens of thousands of responses, onto a database. Finally, the committee carried out an analysis of the closed questions and then brought the working groups back into the picture for the next stages, starting with analysis of the open questions.

The committee was also responsible for the administration associated with the Parish Plan, including looking after the finances.

EDUCATION & TRAINING.

Our Parish Council clerk continues with her ongoing training as part of the process of the Parish Council acquiring "Quality Parish Council" status. Once acquired the new status will enable the Parish Council to take on new responsibilities and roles. It will also ensure that the Parish Council plays an integral part in consultation and co-ordination arrangements set up by our local authority and its partners.

Training is also being given to members of the council that will qualify them to carry out standard health and safety checks on our village's play and recreation areas. This is a statutory obligation under the terms of our insurance. Our new street cleanser who has also achieved this qualification, issued by RPII, is currently carrying it out this duty.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE PARISH COUNCIL:

Clerk	Mrs Andrea Thwaite
Chairman	Mrs Pauline Tilley
Vice Chairman	Mr Julian Auckland-Lewis
Parish Councillors	Mr Richard Holland
	Mr Hugo Deynem
	Mrs Diane Stubbs
	Mrs Lucinda Strudwick
	Mr Dave Lee
	Mr Trevor Scadeng
	Mr Gary Charnock