

ASH PARISH COUNCIL**Minutes of the Neighbourhood Planning Committee
held in via Microsoft Teams
Tuesday 7 October 2025 which commenced at 18:30**

Chair	Cllr Michael Moriarty	✓
Vice Chair	Cllr Fiona White	A
	Cllr Philip Bellamy	A
	Cllr Mohammad Faisal	x
	Cllr Paul Golding	✓
	Cllr Carla Morson	A
	Cllr John Tonks	✓

Substitute Cllr Sue Wyeth-Price

✓ Present x Not Present A Apology for Absence

Part 1 – Public Session**51. To Accept Apologies for Absence. (agenda item 1)**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Fiona White, Cllr Philip Bellamy and Cllr Carla Morson.

52. To Receive Declarations of Interest. (agenda item 2)

There were no declarations of interest.

53. Confirmation of the Minutes. (agenda item 3)

The minutes of the previous meeting held on Tuesday 6 May 2025, copies of which had been circulated, were confirmed as a true record and will be signed by the Chair of the Committee, Cllr Michael Moriarty.

54. Adjournment. (agenda item 4)

This meeting was **not** held in public. Any members of the public wishing to join the meeting were advised to click the following link;

https://teams.microsoft.com/join/19%3ameeting_ZGE4YjRIN2YtOWQzNi00OWI4LTlhYzEtNzhIYzY2ZmFiMjY0%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%22655dc6d2-cc35-4837-9012-8b3f621f8869%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%2252a651d8-60cc-4ef0-b8b8-8585a26a9914%22%7d

Full details on how to access the meeting are available on the Parish Council website;
<https://www.ashpcsurrey.gov.uk/public-access-to-virtual-meetings/>

Resolved that the meeting be adjourned for a maximum period of ten minutes to enable a public question period to be held (as at Minute Appendix A).

17 members of the public were present at this meeting.

55. Review of Regulation 14 Engagement. (agenda item 5)

Members reviewed the outputs from the Regulation 14 formal engagement :

The Regulation 14 responses document from our consultant, Leah Coney, ONH will be put onto the website for everyone to view.

Leah Coney confirmed the Neighbourhood plan is the first draft based on the outputs from Regulation 14 which has all the Regulation 14 responses included. The Regulation 14 responses document is not the full version but summaries of each response. Highlighting the kind of material considerations that would require a change from the Regulation 14 version of the Neighbourhood plan to the submission version of the Neighbourhood plan. As a result of that, I have produced a first draft, this is not a final draft, this is a first draft as a starting point. There will be further versions of that draft. Once this committee is comfortable with the draft then a submission version will go to a full Council meeting for sign off before it gets submitted to Guildford Borough Council (GBC). Revised gap in the draft Neighbourhood plan is not what we would have wanted but is what we know GBC will approve. So really, you have two options. One option, which is recommended before you, which is a gap, which would be considered to meet the basic conditions in terms of general conformity with the local plan on the basis that policy A31 had an indicative layout. The other option is to try for a bigger gap and risk the Neighbourhood plan being rejected.

Cllr Sue Wyeth-Price confirmed she has concerns over the wording used for protection for the hedgerow and the trees down Ash Green Road.

Leah Coney confirmed that you can not repeat the wording used in the Local plan as it would get deleted by the examiner for repetition, which is why in the draft Neighbourhood plan it is worded slightly differently. I will review this wording.

Leah Coney asked in terms of the draft submission version of the Neighbourhood plan, I was looking for feedback from members in respect specifically of policy as I'm just scrolling through to it. I think it's number nine in respect of the land that was designated as F10 use. Section C of the policy wording, which was the 0.27 hectares of land, which was designated in the draft version for F2 community use, and I understand that there has been movement in respect of that site, and I just need a view from members on an appropriate alternative use for that site and that wording.

Chair confirmed that yes, there has been an application for a residential care home for that site, and this will be discussed at the next Full Council Meeting.

Cllr John Tonks confirmed that when we first looked at this a year ago, we weren't sure what was happening. Now we know that the site doesn't effectively get passed back to the developer via GBC. So, our options are quite limited. Do we propose that it should be used for residential care home or words to that effect? Personally, I'm in favor of that rather than it just being a block of flats.

Chair confirmed yes, I do concur. As much as there is a need for retirement residential care home spaces in the Parish, I don't think locking it in on the policy now would necessarily make sense. I would potentially angle towards changing up the wording to a facility with either or explicitly ancillary class F2 and leave it open as to what else is used in there but not have the wording residential care in it.

Cllr Golding confirmed that a residential care home locks it in as a residential care home, but senior assisted living and senior living is probably better wording as it is more diverse.

Leah Coney confirmed that the reason I put residential care home or nursing, because A, that's obviously what is coming forward. However, if it was just straightforward C2, that could also include other things like residential training centers, for example. Happy to drop the designation, but just to be aware that if you do and all you are requesting is that whatever comes forward on that site includes an element of ancillary F2 class that's fine but that does allow for it to come forward as open market housing as C3. If members are comfortable with that and it's the ancillary F2 use class on there that is the more important elements. So if you're saying you're not actually particularly fussed what goes on there, so long as there is a community use element within the development, clearly, it is far easier to have a community use connected to C2 development because it is more likely to have things like cafes or common rooms or common spaces within the development than you wouldn't say a C2 flat development. I think in terms of the overall use of the site, in terms of timing, if you are pushing on with the Neighbourhood plan, on the time scale that we are looking at in terms of submission within the next couple of months chances are the plan is going to have by the time it gets to the end of Regulation 16, it will have weight. By the time it gets through examination, it will have further weight. Therefore, there is a chance that the Neighbourhood plan will be in place before any planning application is determined on that site. So if you want to remove the C2 and just push for the F2 use on there, you can again it might have to be clearly if you with the care home provider, you are going to object to that designation being put on the overall site because it would preclude you from putting your care home on there, if it was just for F2 use. So it depends whether you want to push for the community benefit that was originally intended on that site, whether you're happy for it to be an ancillary F2 community use, which allows for something else to pay for that community benefit on the site because at the moment there's no funding attached to any community use on that site, but happy to be advised by you.

Chair asked if you included the wording not C3 use, I imagine that's not going to go through with the Inspector?

Leah Coney confirmed that it was far too wide. You could put a shop on it.

Chair confirmed that he meant non-housing use not C3 use.

Leah Coney confirmed that it doesn't really work that way. You need to specify. We can go back to the original policy wording, which is allocated as F2. This will get an objection at Regulation 16 from the proposed developer who will make representation to the examiner as well as there's a value to this land. We're looking to demonstrate that there is a need for care facilities within Ash and therefore that policy could be deleted. You either risk it by putting F2 and this gets deleted or look at ancillary on the basis that something else on that site is going to fund your community uses, but you're right it's watered down from the original intention of putting the medical facility on the site but with that section 106 agreement falling away due to the passage of time, there is no residual commitment to keep that land for community use.

56. Draft Submission Version of the Neighbourhood Plan for Ash. (agenda item 6)

Members reviewed the draft submission version of the Neighbourhood Plan for the Parish of Ash :

Cllr Sue Wyeth-Price asked once the Neighbourhood plan is submitted, can residents have an open forum to provide representations?

Leah Coney confirmed that no residents cannot make representations at an open forum, they can only make written representations.

Cllr Sue Wyeth-Price stated that basically, GBC decide what we have in our Neighbourhood plan?

Leah Coney confirmed that once the final version of the Neighbourhood plan is submitted, it goes to an external examiner. The examiner will critique the Neighbourhood plan and say whether it holds up or not.

Cllr Sue Wyeth-Price asked if we submit the Neighbourhood plan with the buffer zone we want, and GBC would say we don't want it. Is it the external examiner that decides?

Leah Coney confirmed yes, that is correct. However, you would have to justify why you are now extending the buffer zone from what you submitted at Regulation 14. I think if you can justify that position and say, you know, we had a larger proposed gap. It was only reduced in size due to the Regulation 14 response from GBC but as I said it must be evidenced.

Chair advised that he was bringing this item to an end. Regarding the map, I feel the best course of action is to discuss this further offline. The final version of the Neighbourhood plan goes before Full Council at a future meeting before submission. All Council meetings are public.

57. Policy Development and Next Steps. (agenda item 7)

Members agreed the following Policy Development and the next key steps for the Neighbourhood Plan for the Parish of Ash :

Further discussions regarding specific wording and Local Gap placement will be held offline, and the final version of the Neighbourhood plan will be submitted at a future Full Council meeting.

58. Correspondence. (agenda item 8)

There was no correspondence.

59. Next Meeting. (agenda item 9)

No further meetings for this committee are required.

The meeting concluded at 19:49.

Chairman _____

Date _____

MINUTE APPENDIX A

PUBLIC ADJOURNMENT.

On my comments, I stressed the importance around the local gap. It's obviously stated in policy A3 that the local gap or sometimes referred to as the buffer, is important to stop the coalescence of Ash Green, Tongham and Ash. The problem I have, the buffer that was proposed in the Ash Neighbourhood plan is smaller than I thought it was going to be so it wouldn't be recognised as a gap, although some of it is very welcome especially the parts around Ash Manor which are important as they are protecting some of the things around the historic asset. So that makes it easier to put it there as well. My problem is if that gap narrows so much, it will cause coalescence and will not be as stated in the A31 plan. I think there's a tension between the gap and what Guildford Borough Council wants. They've obviously put a lot of money into a bridge and want to get their money back. So, they would like to put houses all over the land, but that's not what policy A31 says.

It's an approximate number for houses on that land, and therefore, doesn't have to be filled to the maximum number of houses, because it's got to fit with the A31 policy and it has to respect the historic setting of Ash Manor, the great two star listed property.

So, there's some tension here between what the Planning Officers have said, what the person who legally put the Guildford Local Plan in place, and that has been checked. So, they've written it into the policy, but Guildford are doing something else to be able to get their money back for the bridge, which can be done in other ways and doesn't have to be done on this piece of land.

So, I welcome the gap in the original plan. I do not like the way it's being challenged in different places. When planning applications come through from Guildford Borough Council, I don't even think they recognise any gap or any buffer at all. Which is stated and legally binding in their local plan. So, your Neighbourhood plan fits with the Local plan. They must work together, they can't override each other, that's fine, but they're not from the draft I saw and I commented on, they're not doing that. So, what I'd like you to do is make sure that that gap is there, and it is of appropriate size which would be recognised by a normal person as being there, and to prevent the coalescence of Ash Green, Tongham and Ash.

Chair - I'll try to sum that up quickly. We'll talk a bit more about this when we get to that point in the agenda. However, the reason why the gap is the shape it is, we initially said it would be larger in the draft plan. Then we had meetings with the Planning team, of which they informed us quite firmly that parts of it would not be approved under any inspection, which is the areas sort of around Foreman Road. We tried to push back a little bit further on that, but they were quite firm due to its allocation and as part of A 31, on the local plan. So, we have changed it to the way it is now, which covers the historic site of Ash Manor and covers parts south of Foreman Road. I'm sure I will be saying this quite a few times. It's not as much as we wanted it to be but it's effectively as much as we think we can get approved, and it should be workable. Then the rest of it in terms of oncoming development, which is unfortunately inevitable in that area, will have to be developed by sort of designed by Planning and responses to each. We'll touch on these more later when discussing with Leah, who's our consultant from ONH.

Cllr John Tonks – I just wanted to add that my understanding is that we wanted a wider gap and Guildford must approve our Neighbourhood plan, and they pointed out that what we put in our Neighbourhood plan, they wouldn't approve because it would conflict with their current Local plan. So obviously, we've articulated, or we've had feedback on, but ultimately, we can't override the existing local plan, our Neighbourhood plan must fit within it and the instruction from Guildford is we must change the wording to fit with their Local plan. Is that a fair abbreviated summary?

Chair - There's two parts there. One is, I think the resident was referring to the previous draft size of the map, which we changed before we went to Reg 14. That was after conversations with Guildford. We will speak more about this when we get to that point on the agenda. However,

Guilford are happy with the revised gap. They've got some questions about the wording for Ash Green and some of the definitions for infill developments, but we will speak more about this later.

Cllr Sue Wyeth-Price - I am extremely unhappy with Guildford. I think Guildford have taken a stance that its houses at all costs and ignore every other recommendation in policy A31. In fact, they're not recommendations. The Planning inspector added those lines and added words like "must". It's not an option. The other thing is their arguments around housing volumes. It says, "approximately 1750 homes", it doesn't say exactly and, you know, to my mind, it begs the question, why have we bothered doing our own Neighbourhood plan when Guildford are just going to rewrite it for us? You know, we could have just gone and asked Guildford right at the beginning, "What do you want in it"? They would have said, you can't have anything that you want. You can just have this and that's it. I know that's a very cynical approach, but God, I've been around these arguments with Guildford for years now. I also think it's quite interesting that in the letters that I've seen, there's no name on the bottom of it from Guildford, so you don't even know who you've got to go and have a discussion with.

I remember sending you the historic England advice. If you go to the latest land at Ash Manor, you'll find a new version of that advice. Well, you'll think it's a new version. They've just amended the two old versions and then said, "We still think this is exactly the same." So, I won't preface it, but you should go back and have a look at it. If you've still got it on your plan, they're relying on policy A31, everything else, to basically put that in place. So that's why it's enforcing the local gap and buffer, you know that's there. So, just to make you aware then, there are now two, well three sets of comments. Luckily, you only have to look at one from Historic England to be able to come up with the answer. So, it would be worth reviewing that as well. I know Guilford has a different mechanism. Sometimes, but they are a statutory consultee, obeying policy A31 and doing the piece to protect the Ash Manor historically, as a grade two listed * property, which you've been trying to do in your Neighbourhood plan, which I think was good as you've been putting the gap around it. Guildford wants to relax that, but why would you do that with a statutory consultee saying the same? Well, we'll find out when that comes to Planning at some point.

Chair - Okay. Thank you. We are now over the 10-minute period, so bringing this to a close. Thank you for all your comments.