



Ash Matters

The Ash Parish Council Newsletter

Issue One 2026

Ash Community Dinner Brings Residents Together

Residents of Ash recently came together for a very successful Ash Community Dinner, hosted by the Ash chapter of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community (AMA Ash), with the support of Ash Parish Council. The event provided a welcoming opportunity for people from across the village to meet, share a meal and strengthen community connections. Held on Saturday 28 March 2026 at the Ash Centre, the free community dinner welcomed almost 130 guests. Families, friends and neighbours enjoyed a relaxed and friendly atmosphere and were treated to a complimentary three-course meal, creating a memorable evening centred on generosity, conversation and togetherness.

The event was organised by Nassar Bhatti, with



Ash Parish Council supporting the event by making the Ash Centre available. Also in attendance were The Rt. Hon. Sir Jeremy Hunt M.P. and the Mayor of Guildford, Cllr Howard Smith, highlighting the importance of the occasion and the strength of community engagement in Ash. During the evening, AMA Ash also presented awards in recognition of the excellent work carried out by the Ashes Good Neighbour Scheme, The Ash Villages Food Parcels Project, St Mary's Church, and Ash Parish Council Staff and Councillors. These presentations acknowledged the commitment and dedication of local organisations, volunteers and representatives who work tirelessly to support residents and strengthen the community.

The following photograph from the evening includes from the left, Nassar Bhatti (Organiser), Cllr John Tonks (Events Chair), Cllr Fiona White (Chair), Cllr Carla Morson (Vice Chair), Alison Watmore (Clerk), Melanie Whitmore and Cllr Paul Golding, reflecting the strong partnership between the community and the Parish Council. Also in attendance were Cllr Michael



Moriarty and Cllr Richard Lucas.

After the event, AMA Ash said that the Community Dinner was an extremely successful evening and commented: *"Events like this powerfully remind us of the true strength of community — that we share far more in common than what could ever divide us. When we come together, engage in meaningful conversations, and build genuine connections, we break down barriers, foster understanding, and create lasting unity."*

Ash Parish Council would like to thank AMA Ash for organising such a positive and inclusive event, and everyone who attended for helping to make the evening such a success. Events like this demonstrate the strong community spirit in Ash and the value of bringing people together in friendship and mutual respect.

Ash Parish Council Donates £2522 To the Basingstoke Canal Society.

Each year, Ash Parish Council (APC) organises a range of popular community events, including the Village Fete and Christmas Fantasia. These events bring residents together and play an important role in supporting local causes. All profits raised throughout the year are donated to a single nominated charity.

For 2025, the Council is pleased to announce that £2522 has been donated to the Basingstoke Canal



Society (BCS). The funds were raised through community events held over the last year, with a small fee applied to stallholders operating as businesses, alongside very successful tombolas and raffles. The donation was formally presented by Cllr John Tonks (Events Chair) and Alison Watmore (Parish Clerk) aboard *Kitty II*, the Society's new electric trip boat.



The society were very pleased to have received their new boat, whilst supporting infrastructure is being installed, with UK Power Networks scheduled to install a new supply cable and new Rolec charging pedestals already delivered. These improvements will help create a more sustainable boating experience for visitors to the canal. More than £165,000 has been raised towards the purchase of *Kitty II*, thanks to the generosity of its members, volunteers and the wider public across Surrey and Hampshire who enjoy the canal and value the work the Society does. This support played a vital role in bringing the new electric trip boat into service, with the final £75,000 secured through a successful Your Fund Surrey grant. Boat trips aboard *Kitty II* can now be booked via their website at www.basingstoke-canal.org.uk/book-a-boat-trip.

The donation from Ash Parish Council will support the excellent work carried out by the Basingstoke Canal Society in maintaining and preserving the canal for everyone to enjoy. The canal runs through our village and provides an important space for recreation, wildlife and wellbeing for residents and visitors alike. Ash Parish Council would like to express its thanks to the local community for their continued support and enthusiasm for our events. These occasions not only bring people together but also enable the Council to raise funds and celebrate the outstanding work of local charities who make a real difference to our area.

Ashes Good Neighbour Scheme Nominated Chariry

Ash Parish Council is pleased to announce that the Ashes Good Neighbour Scheme is this year's nominated

charity. Funds raised through Parish Council community events and activities across the year will be donated to the scheme, helping it to continue providing valuable support to residents who need it most.



The Ashes Good Neighbour Scheme is set up to support elderly or vulnerable residents within our community. The scheme offers practical help to people living in Ash, Ash Vale and Ash Green, including transport to medical appointments such as doctors, hospital and dentist visits, assistance with shopping, visits to the library or local clubs, or simply a friendly chat over a cup of tea.

All volunteers who have face-to-face contact with clients have undertaken a DBS check, ensuring the highest standards of safety and care. **If the scheme would be of benefit to you or someone you know**, please call **07935 515221**. Anyone interested in volunteering is warmly welcomed and can make contact via office.ashesgn@gmail.com.

Flooding Prevention at Hollybush Park



Ash Parish Council continues to work with partner authorities to reduce flood risk across the parish. In 2024, following representations by local councillors, Guildford Borough Council undertook significant clearance and maintenance works on the River Blackwater at Hollybush Park. The works were delivered by the Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership, which manages the site on behalf of the Borough Council. The clearance focused on removing vegetation and obstructions that were restricting water flow through this section of the river. Improving the river's capacity to carry water has already helped to reduce the risk of flooding in the Lakeside, Sopwith Close and Wellington Place areas during periods of heavy rainfall.

Looking ahead, in 2026 the Parish Council will continue to press for further upstream maintenance works. We will be engaging with the Environment



Agency and the Lead Local Flood Authority to seek additional clearance north of North Camp Station, which would help improve drainage for the Avondale Road and Firacre Road areas.

Flood risk management remains a priority for Ash Parish Council, and we will continue to work with relevant authorities to deliver practical, long-term measures that protect homes, infrastructure and open spaces across the parish.

Ash Villages Food Parcels Project and Community Fridge



The Ash Villages Food Parcels Project continues to provide vital support to residents in need through its Food Parcels, Hygiene Bank, Baby Bank and Community Fridge.

The Community Fridge is located at The Chapel, Wharf Road, GU12 5AY, and is open to everyone. Working closely with local supermarkets, the project rescues short shelf-life items such as bread, fruit and salad, making them freely available to residents and preventing good food from going to waste. This work complements the weekly food parcel distribution. In 2025, the project operated at a cost of around **£33,000** and helped provide food support to approximately **4,600** people living in Ash, Ash Vale, Ash Green and Tongham. Demand is expected to increase further during 2026, highlighting the continuing importance of this local service. The Food Parcels Project relies heavily on the generosity of the local community, grant funding and donations.

Residents wishing to donate tins and long-life food items can do so via collection points at the Co-op on Wharf Road, Ash Manor School, The Chapel, and St Mary's Church. These donations are greatly appreciated and play a crucial role in meeting local need. Donations of funds are also hugely appreciated, so the team can buy food in, you can donate via the QR code or see "How To Donate" on their website.



For foodbank referrals or further information, please contact the Ash Villages Food Parcels Project directly on 📞 **07730 60944**. More information can also be found online: 🌐 ash-vale.org.uk/foodparcels-2. Ash Parish Council would like to thank the Food Parcels Project team, volunteers, donors and partner organisations for their ongoing commitment to supporting residents during difficult times.

New Playground equipment for Harpers Recreation Ground



Ash Parish Council has approved a major programme of further improvements for Harpers Recreation Ground. The resurfacing of the car park and the completion of a new footpath linking the car park directly to the playground have already improved access to the site and form part of a wider plan to enhance facilities for all users. The Council was able to approve and fund this project through Section 106 contributions. These are developer contributions used to help fund local infrastructure and community projects required as a result of new housing or development. The new play area will cost £130,000 and will provide inclusive facilities designed to be enjoyed by children of all abilities. In addition, drainage improvements have now been completed at Harpers Recreation Ground. As a result of these works, the site is currently hired by Ash United Youth for weekly football practice sessions.

Construction of the new playground equipment is due to start in the spring and is expected to be completed in the summer of 2026. Together with the recently completed car park resurfacing and new footpath, these further improvements represent a substantial investment in Harpers Recreation Ground and demonstrate the Council's ongoing commitment to improving accessibility and providing high quality facilities for the whole community.

Have You Visited the Community Policing Hub at The Ash Centre?

Surrey Police launched the hub on 9 September 2025, providing a regular local presence in the heart of the village. The hub is staffed by police officers every Tuesday from 12pm to 4pm. These sessions are not only an opportunity to report crime, but also a chance for residents to drop in, meet their local officers, ask



questions and raise any concerns that may need police attention. Engagement from the community is important, so officers can better understand local issues and demonstrate the value of having a regular police presence in Ash. Reporting crime is crucial. It helps prevent future incidents, safeguards others from becoming victims and allows the police to build an accurate picture of crime in the area. Every report matters and can make a real difference. The police offer several methods for reporting crime in addition to calling 101.



To report online visit surrey.police.uk. Here, you can utilise the “Live Chat” feature or complete the web form if it is not an emergency. Our local police can also be contacted via Facebook. In addition to following their page, you can ask questions through Facebook Messenger at [facebook.com/GuildfordPolice](https://www.facebook.com/GuildfordPolice).

Ash In Bloom 2026

It's that time of year again to start thinking about entering **Ash In Bloom**. A free to enter a competition,

where residents are asked to submit photographs of their entries in our four categories:

Best Border
Best Hanging Basket



Best Tub or Container
Best Vegetable Patch

Ash In Bloom

The photographs are placed online, and residents are invited to vote for their favourite in each category. The entry with the most public votes in each category wins! In 2026 the winners will receive gardening vouchers which are kindly sponsored by **Bridges & Squires Garden Centre**.

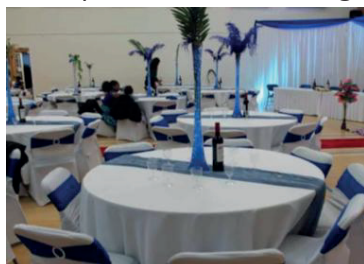


If you enjoy gardening regularly or even if you only have a few pots or a solitary hanging basket, why not enter **Ash in Bloom 2026**? From the beginning of June, you can enter yourself, your business or nominate a neighbour, friend, or other Parish resident. The deadline for entries is **August 31st 2026** and the photographs **MUST** be taken this year. If you are unable to take your own photographs, please contact the Ash Parish Council Office who will make arrangements to help you. **To enter**, email events@ashpcsurrey.gov.uk, stating the competition category, your email address, your full name and your postal address including postcode. Good Luck!

Council Hall And Kitchen Hire

The Ash Centre provides competitively priced Halls, Meeting Rooms, and a Kitchen. The adaptable and spacious design enables the fully air-conditioned Centre to serve admirably as a venue for commercial, social events and sporting activities. The Centre has dedicated parking and easy access for the disabled. With each booking, the Centre Staff will prepare the hall to your specifications, managing the placement of tables and chairs for you. A member of the centre staff team will remain on-site throughout your booking to resolve any issues you may have. To find out more about the facilities on offer, and booking charges, visit our website ashpcsurrey.gov.uk/ash-centre.

To book the Ash Centre please email bookings@ashpcsurrey.gov.uk or call **01252 328287**.



Ash Parish Council Meeting Dates

The Council meets face to face on the **2nd Monday** of each month, except in August, for its full Council meetings. The Planning Committee and the Amenities, Finance & Administration (AFA) Committee usually meet on the 4th Monday of every month. Please visit the Ash Parish Council website ashpcsurrey.gov.uk/meetings.

Other Diary Dates For 2026
 Village Fete (20th Jun)
 Ash in Bloom (Enter by 31st Aug)
 Remembrance Sunday (8th Nov)
 Ash Fantasia (28th Nov)

Information of useful numbers and contacts are available on the ashpcsurrey.gov.uk/directory			
For Emergencies 999	Police Non-emergencies 101	NHS Non-emergencies 111	Power Cut 105