

Ash Parish Plan: Feedback from Open Days

Ash Village

Comments focussed on friendliness, the local services & shops with local produce, Post Office, Chemist and Surgery, library, local recycling, network of footpaths, the recreation area, the Church, URC Hall, Village Hall, housing for pensioners, schools, gardens, allotments and variety of clubs. Village services were used by people from outside the Parish. The new community policing was also appreciated.

A frequent proposal was for a café in Ash (perhaps associated with a bakery or a pub, perhaps with internet access) to provide a drop in centre for people to meet, open in the evening for young people. Other proposals were for a family pub with a restaurant, and a sales outlet in the village for local veg, fruit and meat – even if only occasionally.

The question was asked – how can the Parish plan help to promote or even retain local services and businesses?

Traffic and parking issues, vandalism and the car park toilets were major issues. The most common complaints were about insufficient litter bins, litter not being swept up from gutters, and dogs fouling pavements, footpaths and the recreation area.

Traffic

Speeding, parking and the problems caused by large vehicles were of real concern.

Speed: The existing speed limits of 60mph on the by-pass and 30mph in the village were regularly broken. The existing limit of 60mph was inappropriate on the narrow lanes throughout the Parish, which were also used by children and adult pedestrians, cyclists and horses. Several comments made about past accidents and near-misses. Proposals for reduction in speed limits, speed bumps, police patrols & enforcement.

Parking: Driving into Ash to use the bus services to go to work, and using the village shops & services (both actively encouraged) has resulted in parking problems in the car parks and in the roads. On-road parking makes driving hazardous, makes emergency access impossible, & makes bus passengers stand in road (near-misses reported).

Proposals: more parking places, bus-car park outside village (co-ordinated with Stagecoach), restricting parking (pay & display), widen roads, using Village Hall parking space better & enforcement of parking restrictions.

Large lorries: realisation that lorries necessary for local businesses, but concern over size & speed and effect on road surfaces, verges and hedges in lanes. Remove 'services' sign into village. Access from East end only, not through village. Provide parking area for them outside village to raise money

Transport

Valued in village, but poor in evenings/weekends. Pricing policy – cheaper to Canterbury than Sandwich. Why? Proposal for bus service/postbus for Westmarsh and outlying areas.

Built Environment

Positive comments on Church, houses and their gardens.

Concerns: No further housing developments, no loss of open spaces, build on brown field sites, but not until better infrastructure. Derelict house in New Street? Need planning permission flexible for redundant buildings. Poor road maintenance outside Ash – repairs over Christmas already potholes again. Potholes & storm water problem on roads.

Many comments on toilet block. Toilets necessary, open block in recreation ground. Use car park toilet block for teas/coffees/info, police, internet access. Boarded-up/vandalised toilets waste of space. Secure bike store in village, Museum for archive collection suggested

Crime

Focussed on vandalism to toilets, cars, windows. Police initiatives welcomed. More for young people? Plea for adults to give time, leadership. Proposal for paid, qualified youth leader. Fly tipping is major problem around Westmarsh. Concern over East European car insurance, road worthiness & motorbikes in fields near Westmarsh.

Services

Requests for mains drainage PLEASE in areas outside village and locations in Ash. Request for gas supply to areas outside village. Underground BT cables requested for Hoaden. Pub, recycling bins wanted in W'marsh & litter collection from roads.

Concern over unofficial, unregulated camp sites, caravan parking, and lack of policing outside Ash village.

Natural Environment/Open Spaces

Open spaces, associated wildlife, footpaths, cycling, allotments are valued. Concern that further development would be to detriment of open spaces. More allotments, better used.

More cycle paths welcome. Proposal for hanging baskets/pots in Ash.

Advice from Kent Wildlife to encourage wildlife on Jack Foat land & hedgerows. Clear pond, platform for dipping. Timing of verge cutting to maintain plants. Householders to cut back hedges, contractors to clear cuttings from road, not just sweep to side. Rubbish in ditches deterring wildlife.

Large vehicles to stay on roads, not verges.

Footpaths: Continuous footpaths proposed Ash to Staple, Ash to Sandwich (well lit), & Sandwich Road to school, between schools. Concern over access, exact routes. Footpath group formed.

Light pollution from Pzifers- can it be reduced? Initiatives to reduce energy use? Green day, energy advice from DDC please.

Leisure & Activities

Library, recreation ground (park), clubs valued. Comments on use of Village Halls and Recreation ground. Link between youth activities and lowering vandalism.

Recreation ground –comments from young people. Request for tyre swing to be unlocked, toilets open. All-weather basketball/football 'cage' with seating, lighting. Shelter weatherproofed with seats & door. Abseiling tower. Landscaped skate & bike ramps. Youth club & leader. Shooting club, Pool table/club, paint balling, mini-moto club, wall for graffiti all suggested.

Young suggested car wash in car parks to raise money for these proposals.

Village Halls: Café/internet. Evening classes for workers (Interior design, garden design, upholstery suggested), PA system in Ash please. Westmarsh: IT club, art, exercise classes, licence for marriages. Choir proposed. Some common aims - Sports & leisure forum?

Proposals: Ash Bash, firework display, community Easter egg hunt, street parties on regular basis

Signage

A picture sign for Ash village. Village signs for all roads into Ash, Westmarsh and hamlets.

Finally,

Communication

Many people at the Open Days were unaware of all the activities in the Village. Communication in Ash village via noticeboard; outside Ash village via parish magazine or Parish Council Website only. The parish Website to be re-vamped.

Would Parish magazine distributors be willing to distribute paperwork?

Large sign for events (matches etc) on entrance to Ash Village.

Noticeboards in all hamlets with network of people with e-mail in every hamlet to print out notices/what's going on. Develop welcome pack for people moving in to area (with co-operation of Estate agents) to provide information about village services & events

Request for Web link to Parish plan with unique e-mail address.

Side Benefits of Open Day – support for carers group, Web designer assistance, Lisa White involving youth