

# ASHOVER PARISH COUNCIL

www.ashover-pc.gov.uk

**Sara Atkinson**  
**PARISH CLERK**

The Sports Pavilion  
Milken Lane

Ashover  
CHESTERFIELD  
S45 0BA

TEL: (01246) 863018

E-mail:

parishclerk@ashover-pc.gov.uk



## ASHOVER PARISH COUNCIL

### BUSINESS PLAN

**2021 – 2024**

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# **1 What is a Parish Council Business Plan?**

It is a statement of the Parish Council's vision for Ashover, its purpose, values, objectives and key priorities. It is a document that sets out what Ashover Parish Council can achieve, either directly or by trying to increase its influence on the relevant delivery body, such as the District or County Council.

The purpose of having an agreed strategy for the Parish Council to work within, will enable it to operate in a more consistent and co-ordinated way. It will help the Parish Council to forecast its budgets into the future. The document will help the local community to have a better understanding of what the Parish Council does and also clarify what it doesn't do.

It is a 'live' document which will be updated regularly and reported against, enabling the Council to track and monitor its progress against key priorities. As this will be published on the Parish Council's website, Ashover residents will also be able to monitor progress.

## **1.1 Monitoring the Business Plan**

The Business Plan will be a way of communicating what the Parish Council is doing to meet the needs of the community. It is a two-way conversation. Please tell us what you think about it. We welcome your comments. If you require further information that would help you understand what we are trying to achieve, please let us know. We can also provide additional information on the issues raised in the Plan.

It is our intention to review the Business Plan annually, publish progress and make any changes considered necessary as a result.

Please respond to:-

**Ashover Parish Council**  
**The Sports Pavilion**  
**Milken Lane**  
**Ashover**  
**Chesterfield**  
**S45 0BA**  
E-mail: [parishclerk@ashover-pc.gov.uk](mailto:parishclerk@ashover-pc.gov.uk)

## 2 An overview

Ashover Parish Council was established in 1894 and is the tier of local government closest to the community. It has an important role to play in promoting the Parish, representing its interests and supporting the work of different groups in the community.

North East Derbyshire District Council is the second tier and is responsible for services including planning, car parks, housing and street cleaning. Ashover Parish Council does however employ a parish Lengthman, who ensures the parish remains in a neat and tidy condition.

Finally, Derbyshire County Council is responsible for highways (relating to both roads and pavements), education, health and social services, public rights of way and libraries.

The Neighbourhood Plan for Ashover was approved at referendum by the parishioners in February 2018 and became an important document for planning applications within the parish. The NEDDC Local Plan 2014 – 2034 has been adopted the Ashover Parish Plan will be reviewed during 2022.

The clerk receives queries relating to any of the three tiers of local government and takes any action required.

The council has adopted the requirements detailed in the Freedom of Information Act whereby the public can request sight of any council documentation (with the exception of confidential items). Most of these documents are readily available on the council's website but may also be obtained (for a fee) from the clerk.

The council also has Data Protection Registration with the Information Commission and have a Data Protection Policy posted on the website. Training has been undertaken by the clerk on the General Data Protection Regulation requirements, which will come into force on 25 May 2018, and steps have been taken to comply with the new regulations.

Ashover Parish Council has ten elected councillors who act together as a corporate body and make decisions. The Chairman of the Council is elected annually at the Annual Council Meeting in May. Councillors are unpaid and commit their time to improving Ashover Parish and maintaining it as an attractive and sustainable place in which to live, visit and to do business. Elections were last held in May 2019 and are scheduled to be held in May 2023, then again in May 2027

The full Council meets monthly (3rd Tuesday) in the Sports Pavilion in Ashover. All meetings are open to the public with a period of time set aside for members of the public to ask questions of the Council prior to the full council meeting. Public speaking time may be extended at discretion of the chairman.

Councillors hold surgeries for 15 minutes prior to every Parish Council meeting, when members of the public may attend and raise matters of concern with a member of the Parish Council in complete confidence.

The council will accept representation from groups/organisations/individuals for items to be discussed at Committee or Council meetings. For inclusion at these meetings, written details MUST be received at the clerk at least SEVEN working days prior to the meeting date. Any item received later than seven days may not be discussed until the following council meeting.

Members of the public may record or use other digital communications throughout the meeting, but it must be done in a discreet manner and to protect those who do not wish to be filmed, and anyone recording the meeting is asked to be respectful of that.

There are Committees to deal with issues relating to the Cemetery and Finance and meet regularly throughout the year. Minutes of meetings are published on the council website.

A list of those elected to committees and working groups is agreed and published at every Annual Council Meeting in May.

Working groups may be formed to deal with issues as they emerge and may include non-Councillors.

The Parish Council achieved Quality Status in 2006 and retained this until recently when the accreditation process was updated to include three levels of award, Foundation, Quality and Quality Gold, any Parish Council with Quality Status was, by default, awarded Foundation Status. The council attained Quality Status in 2017 and re-accreditation at Quality level in 2021.

In 2012 following the Parish Clerk passing the S7 level in CiLCA the Council qualified for the General Power of Competence (GPC) which gives Town and Parish Councils more power to act. The Council currently hold a grant awarding policy under section 137, however, if a project arises GPC may be adopted at an Annual Council meeting. This brings new opportunities for Ashover Parish Council in terms of providing cost-effective services and facilities to meet the needs of local people.

The Complaints procedure is published on the Parish Councils website and a copy may be obtained from the clerk.

The Parish has a population of 1905 (2011 census).

### **3 Parish Council Staff and Management**

The Council currently employs a total of two staff, both part time as shown below.

The administration of the Parish Council is carried out by a qualified Clerk who is appointed by the Council and who is also the Council's Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) and Burial Clerk. The Parish Clerk must carry out all of the functions required by law as the Parish Council's Proper Officer and issue all statutory notifications and documentation.

The council also employs a Health & Safety Monitor/Toilet Attendant, whose duties are to inspect some parish assets on a daily and weekly basis and to clean the public toilets.

#### **3.1 Management systems**

The Parish Council operates under Standing Orders and Financial Regulations which are reviewed regularly and confirmed annually. The Parish Council has handbooks for its members and staff. Key documents are published on the Parish Council website.

There are specifications and maintenance schedules in place for the Council sites. There are procedural documents in place for operations undertaken by officers.

The Parish Council uses the RBS Rialtas accounting software and produces financial reports on a monthly basis with an analytical report.

Health and Safety, risk assessments and fire risk assessments are undertaken by the Clerk and/or nominated responsible person - advice regarding this comes from a variety of reliable sources.

The payroll and employment issues are undertaken mainly by the Parish Clerk, advice may be requested from council members or the full council.

The council also use the Local Council Risk System (LCRS) which produces annually checklists for:-

- Health and Safety
- Risk Assessments
- Insurance holding
- Overall summary
- Ongoing review
- Generates Action Plan reports

## 4 Council Vision and Objectives

The Parish Council aims to improve the quality of life for the residents of Ashover Parish by ensuring that Ashover Parish is a desirable, thriving and sustainable place in which to live. It does this in a number of ways:-

- It provides a democratic and representational voice for the community.
- Where services are provided directly, it is aimed to manage them to a good quality standard, in an efficient, effective and responsive way, at an affordable cost.
- Where services are provided by others, the Parish Council endeavours to ensure that they are dealt with effectively and in accordance with the wishes of the community.
- It works with its residents, local authorities and other service providers, businesses and community organisations with the aim of strengthening partnerships, promoting communication, achieving a safe, healthy, prosperous and sustainable community.

### 4.1 Our key objectives

#### 4.1.1 To Strengthen Partnerships

Work proactively to strengthen and improve working relationships with our partners; statutory bodies, organisations, local business and voluntary groups.

Through proactive networking and Parish Council representatives, encourage partners to approach the Parish Council with clear, well thought out constructive ideas which will benefit all sections of the community and on which there can be joint working.

#### 4.1.2 To promote Communication at all levels

Publicise the work of the Parish Council through its website, newsletters, notice boards, social media and Information Point. Information may also be obtained from the clerk.

Give the public the opportunity to ask questions at all of its public meetings. Encourage public feedback, both positive and ideas for development, during public participation at Council meetings. By including the community through questionnaires, by staff and councillors canvassing opinion and by any method which is relevant to the subject being considered.

#### 4.1.3 To Manage the Council's resources wisely

Have good financial control through legal procedures and quality auditing to ensure that resources are spent on the needs of the community.

Focus resources on what matters to our community.  
Attain maximum benefit from management of the Council's assets.  
Ensure council procedures are carried out at least cost but still maintaining quality

#### **4.1.4 To promote a Sustainable community.**

Acknowledge the diversity of what heritage means to Ashover Parish and seek to maintain this through active engagement in the ongoing reviews of the Ashover Design Statement and Neighbourhood Plan.

Encourage ways in which our community can improve our environment and promote building resilience for the future and mitigate against Climate Change. This includes being proactive in emergency planning and flood awareness. Work to encourage balancing the current needs of people, the economy and the environment without compromising the future. Be sensitive to our environment and contribute to a high quality of life. Promote safety and inclusion, opportunities and good services for all. Work with the business community to sustain economic vibrancy. The Parish Council wish to provide an improved service for its community and will explore every opportunity to take responsibility for those services which may prove to be provided more reliably, efficiently, sustainably and economically on a local basis.

#### **4.1.5 Core values**

Leadership - councillors are elected to represent their communities and to lead on issues that will affect the lives of local people.

Integrity – operating with integrity, being ethical, trustworthy and reliable and treating others with respect.

Tenacity/ Persistence – work proactively to achieve the decision of the Council even if it takes a long time and a great deal of effort.

Communication – to give the public the opportunity to ask questions and engage with the Council, and to publicise the work of the Parish Council.

Strong financial management – to ensure that the Council’s resources are managed effectively and efficiently, at least cost, yet maintain quality.

Training – to support relevant training for Councillors and staff members.

Working as a corporate body – to respect decisions made democratically.

*These values ensure that local people gain good value for money and improved local services.*

## 5 Current position

The Parish Council's asset portfolio includes:-

Ashover recreation ground

Ashover cemetery with its associated chapel of rest and cemetery shed

Children's playground

Multi Use Games Area (MUGA)

External fitness equipment

Six allotments situated on Moor Road

9 Flower planters situated throughout the Parish

33 Benches and seats throughout the Parish

37 Winter grit boxes spread throughout the Parish

5 Bus shelters

2 Red Telephone box's

War memorial

The pinfold (Ancient monument)

CCTV equipment

Various items of office equipment

Lap top computer

11 Tablet Computers

6 Defibrillators and associated secure cabinets

The Parish Council has entered into leases for:-

The Public toilets on Moor Road

The Ashover Community Medical Centre Ltd. (ground lease)

The Ashover Cricket Club (pavilion ground lease)

The Village Hall has recently opted for CIO status and as such has taken into its ownership the Sports Pavilion. The Village Hall management committee have taken over responsibility for the provision of changing rooms and shower facilities within the pavilion. The Parish Council are in the process of taking over ownership of the car park entrance which places the whole of the car park under one authority. The Parish Hall is also in the process of transferring a small parcel of land which the MUGA occupies to the Parish Council.

We use several methods to communicate with the community. These include the Parish Council websites, Facebook, Twitter, Parish Council notice boards, Parish Council information point, quarterly newsletters, news bulletins, the Parish Council Annual report (delivered to every household in the parish) and information can also be requested from the clerk.

Parish Councillors are involved with the majority of events in the parish and try to attend as many local events as possible so that we can outline and promote the activities of the Council.

The Parish Council is keen to raise its profile and to secure, as far as possible, services which may, without intervention, be lost to Ashover Parish. The increase in technology across the Council commensurate to cost and efficiency, and operating as effectively and efficiently as possible is also high on the Council's priorities.

The Parish Council has the advantage of being elected by the local community and working for residents in the Parish. Almost all councillors live within the community and are therefore better informed of the issues and problems which are causing concern to local residents.

The Parish Council is constant, enduring, transparent and encourages public participation. Ashover is the 'hub' of a cluster of settlements and hopes to take advantage of the position more and more to lead the local area.

Working collaboratively can assist our community through economies of scale and through shared expertise and networking.

### **5.1 Key issues to consider when considering projected budgets.**

#### **2023/24**

External influences such as the further devolution of power by Central Government and the potential English devolution.

External financial influences such as inflation, interest rates, salary increases, staffing changes and equipment replacement.

Reduction in funding from key hirers of parish facilities

Reduced income from the tennis courts and the cost of maintaining the site.

Reduced income from football clubs and the cost of maintaining the facility.

Funding for providing Public Conveniences in Ashover.

Changes to funding and income for the sports pavilion

Loss of support grant from NEDDC

The need to monitor and maintain the Adopted Neighbourhood Plan

Consider the possible effects of the Country leaving the EEC

Events and the Parish Council's involvement.

Electrical inspection and testing of buildings and equipment.

Electrical inspection and testing of MUGA

Consider any implications of the North East Derbyshire Local Plan

Maintenance of Defibrillators across the parish

Effect of Covid-19 pandemic on council income

Effect of rising inflation and price increases across the board

#### **2021/24 generally**

Potential housing development in Ashover Parish could put more pressure on services but gives additional income from Precept and Section 106 monies.

The approved Neighbourhood plan needs to be monitored on an annual basis in line with the annual council meeting and reviewed in line with the NEDDC Local Plan.

The Parish Council submitted its application for Quality status under the LCAS award scheme and attained the required standard in 2017. On an ongoing basis this standard needs to be maintained and re-accreditation at Quality level was again attained in November 2021.

The Parish Council will wish to raise its profile and to increase its opportunity to provide value and service to its residents.

To explore how we can continue to work with our neighbouring parishes and to work with key partners to provide improved facilities in Ashover parish at the most competitive prices.

To consider the effect of reduced funding especially in relation to outside economic factors.

To consider staff and member time restraints and how they will affect services.

To be aware and take account of external factors such as possible increased devolution by Central Government.

External financial influences such as inflation, interest rates, salary increases, staffing changes, equipment replacement.

Increase in housing, more residents and the need for additional services.

Closely monitor the effect of the removal of the support grant from NEDDC

Try to ensure that any precept changes remain within the guidelines with respect to limits to any increase to ensure the council would not have to go to referendum if central government pass any legislation relating to this issue.

To monitor the effects, on the Parish as a whole, of the Covid-19 pandemic.

To include a full review of services to be provided by the Parish Council and how they should be delivered to give best value.

## 6 Financial Budgets and forecasts

	<u>2021/2022</u>		<u>2022/2023</u>		<u>2023/2024</u>	
	Income	Expenditure	Income	Expenditure	Income	Expenditure
<u>Cost Centre 101 Administration</u>	<u>£2,570.00</u>	<u>£40,302.00</u>	<u>£2,575.00</u>	<u>£37,087.00</u>	<u>£21,500.00</u>	<u>£35,000.00</u>
<u>Cost Centre 102 Section 137</u>		<u>£600.00</u>		<u>£600.00</u>		<u>£600.00</u>
<u>Cost Centre 105 Pavilion</u>	<u>£1040.00</u>	<u>£5250.00</u>	<u>£840.00</u>	<u>£6,050.00</u>	<u>£0</u>	<u>£0</u>
<u>Cost Centre 106 Toilets</u>		<u>£2,200.00</u>		<u>£2,480.00</u>		<u>£2,700.00</u>
<u>Cost Centre 109 Capital Projects</u>		<u>£10,472.00</u>		<u>£12,183.00</u>		<u>£2,000.00</u>
<u>Cost Centre 201 Allotments</u>	<u>£60.00</u>	<u>300</u>	<u>£60.00</u>	<u>£300.00</u>	<u>£120.00</u>	
<u>Cost Centre 202 Cemetery</u>	<u>£10,000</u>	<u>£10,650.00</u>	<u>£12,000.00</u>	<u>£12,400.00</u>	<u>£14,000.00</u>	<u>£2,000.00</u>
<u>Cost Centre 203 Parish Upkeep</u>		<u>£27,265.00</u>		<u>£34,130.00</u>		<u>£36,000.00</u>

### Notes

- 1 2021/2022 Figures are based on actual spend
- 2 2022/2023 Figures are based on anticipated Budget figures and submitted to District Council.
- 3 2023/2024 Figures are based on anticipated Budget figures used for precept calculations.
- 4 Capital project costs based on excel spreadsheet long term maintenance
- 5 Fees for cemetery and booking fees for other parish facilities are regularly reviewed and any changes will be reflected in the future updates.
- 6 Cost Centre 109 expenditure due to spend on playground refurbishment

ISSUE/REVIEW	DATE	MINUTE
Finance Cttee	October 2015	recommendation
First Issue	October 2015	144/15
Reviewed	May 2016	014/16
Reviewed	June 2017	58/17
Reviewed	May 2018	015/18
Reviewed	May 2019	019/20
Reviewed	May 2020	021/20
Made Accessible	Aug 2020	110/20
Reviewed	Feb 2021	245/21
Reviewed	May 2021	023/21
Reviewed	May 2022	016/22
Review	May 2023	