

Community News from Ashton Hayes Parish

Parish Council response to planning application (11/05914/FUL)

Many thanks to the 150 people or so who came out on a freezing morning to discuss the planning application for 15 homes alongside the Methodist Chapel in Ashton Lane. We had a full and lively discussion despite Equity Housing not showing up to present and answer questions on their proposal. At the meeting 95% of those present were against the planning application but 90% also said that they were not opposed to affordable homes or sheltered housing being built in Ashton Hayes – but not in the location proposed by Equity Housing.

As a result of the feedback, the Parish Council is opposed to the application and does not want consent to be granted by Cheshire West & Chester Council. Our response, which was helped by comments from many residents, is given in full on the Parish Council Website and on the CWAC Planning Portal. (www.ashtonhayespc.co.uk).

Since the meeting, Lynn May kindly put some questions to Equity Housing to clarify some issues and their reply is also on our website. We understand that we may have a decision on this application from CWAC during March.

Neighbourhood Planning and You ...

As part of the new Localism Bill, communities such as ours are expected to produce Neighbourhood Plans which, when accepted by the local Council, will be influential in future matters to do with planning consents, building developments and the future shape of the community. Where areas have Parish or Town Councils, these organisations are required to develop the plans through engagement and consultation with the wider community throughout the process. Ashton Hayes Parish Council has agreed to push ahead with this work and will, over the next few days be, holding an initial meeting of those who have already expressed interest in being involved. This first meeting will consider the task ahead and decide on how it might be tackled and in particular how communication with and the involvement of others can best be achieved. Once we have agreed on a process this will be publicised along with the information about how the community will be engaged.. If you are interested in being involved, please contact Jane Colville janecolville@btinternet.com.

You are invited to an Ashton Hayes Community Energy Company meeting at the primary School on Thursday 22nd March at 7pm.

Come along to hear news and ideas about Developing Sustainable Ashton Hayes. On the agenda will be: Scottish Power's monitoring scheme in the village - results and update. What is the Green Deal about and how can it help with energy efficiency and improvement at home; How can Ashton Hayes become more self-sufficient in energy; Financial support and funding possibilities for community and home renewable energy; The 'Energy Information' hub, and an update progress on our Neighbourhood Plan ideas.

Spring in Ashton brings song and dance to the streets`

Anyone interested in singing for fun can be part of a one-off session on Saturday 3rd March at the Parish Rooms at a cost of £25 for the day. All proceeds going to the *Railway Children* charity [contact Margaret Garman on 01829 751557 for detail]. You could also join a singing group meeting on Mondays in the Village Hall from 7.30 to 9.30 from 20th February to 26th March [contact ashtonsings@yahoo.co.uk]. If dance is more your thing there are a series of new classes being arranged shortlyballroom dancing for adults and street dance and drama for young people ...for detail contact Jenny on 01928 725282. Talking of dance, we wish those taking their dance exams over the next few weeks good luck ...over 90 local youngsters will be taking exams this time.

Ashton Hayes Theatre Club

Therese Raquin is a psychological thriller of sorts which and seeks to examine the repercussions of a criminal act. Set within the dingy backstreets of Paris, a repressed and silently resentful young woman is forced into a loveless marriage to her sickly cousin Camille. But when Thérèse meets Laurent, something is unleashed that drives them ultimately to commit a crime that will haunt them forever. Thérèse Raquin caused a scandal when it appeared in 1867 and brought its twenty seven year old author Emile Zola a notoriety that followed him throughout his life.

"The law can look as deeply as it likes, but when the crime itself goes unsuspected, well, there's many a murderer basking in the sun."

Tickets are available from the Village Shop.

The Golden Lion - what's happening?

Many of you may be wondering what is happening at the pub, which has been up for sale for several months. A survey last year showed an encouraging response to the idea of a community owned pub. However it was decided to see whether a commercial purchaser would be successful. Several offers have been made but have not completed. The Parish Council has asked for a survey of the property, which is kindly being undertaken for free by resident, Peter Johnston (of LegatOwen). Depending survey outcome, we may make an offer to the seller, Punch Taverns, who have indicated that they are happy to receive a community bid. If this offer is acceptable we will launch our fund-raising project with a public meeting to gauge the level of support before taking further steps.

We have secured four days of consultancy available from The Co-op Enterprise Hub to help with the setting up of a Co-operative to run the pub and with the legal aspects of a constitution and the share issue. Thanks to Kate Harrison for all the research. kate.harrison2@btopenworld.com

DECC Village of the month!

We are pleased that the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) is featuring Ashton Hayes as the 'Village of the month' on its Community Energy Online website.

DECC awarded us a further £42,000 in funds last month to under its new LEAF programme which will enable us to demonstrate the value of our concerted efforts and highlight how we might insulate some of our older buildings in the village.

Under the LEAF project, we will be engaging the New Economics Foundation to do some pioneering research to quantify the value of our carbon neutral project and other projects in terms of social cohesion. Not easy!

Shock news - Our Nissan Leaf is up for sale.

Our experiment with the community electric vehicle has not been as successful as we hoped as we have not been able to get enough memberships of the car club to enable us to finance the car and online system for 2012. Despite the enthusiastic efforts of Greg Ambrose and Tom Ellis, we did not boost numbers. Most people are self contained with cars it appears! So if anyone wants to buy a fabulous vehicle for personal use, ask Roy

Alexander or Kate Harrison for details of the price. The cash raised will be spent on village projects, so there is a silver lining.
kate.harrison2@btopenworld.com

Ashton Hayes Cricket Club AGM

The club's AGM is at the Golden Lion on Sunday, 25th March 2012 at 8pm and new players are welcome to this meeting. We have a full fixture list of Sunday friendlies starting this year on 22nd April away at Barnton and will also play mid-week games and be attempting to win the Chester & North Wales mid-week league Division 1 title for the third successive year.

Mid-week fixtures commence at the beginning of May. Anyone interested in playing on Sundays or mid-week should contact Robert Lewis (01829-751541) or Martin Bolton (01829-752092).

Around Ashton is produced on behalf of the Parish Council for the benefit of all residents, clubs and societies. Full details of the Parish Council Meetings, Agendas, Minutes and other activities can be found on our website at www.ashtonhayespc.co.uk.

We welcome feedback and our meetings are open to everyone. They normally take place on the second Monday of every month (except August) and start at 8pm in the Parish Rooms. Check website for details