

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting
held on Wednesday 8 January 2025, at 7.00pm,
in the Parish Room.

Present: Councillors Graham Lee (Chair) Norton Mahy (Vice Chair), Chris Button, Ian Duffy.

Also in attendance: Clerk, Sally Roberts, Deputy Clerk, Nicky Forrester, District Councillor, Tom Tyson, 6 members of the public. The meeting was recorded on Zoom. Please contact The Clerk clerk@ashwell.gov.uk if you would like a recording of the meeting.

Please see website for appendices issued with agenda and referred to in the minutes. [Ashwell Village - 2025 Meetings Minutes and Agendas](#).

Apologies for absence To receive and accept apologies for absence. Apologies were received from Cllrs Yates, Hoffman, Hall and Sims all of whom are unwell.

- 2 **Interests** (a) To receive declarations of interest from councillors on items on the agenda, (b) To receive written requests for dispensations for declarable interests, and (c) To grant any requests for dispensation as appropriate. Where any declaration of interest involved the Chair, the meeting to agree an alternative individual to take the Chair for that item(s).
- 3 **Minutes Proposal** to approve draft minutes of the Parish Council meeting on 4th December 2024. It was proposed that the Minutes were passed as a true account of proceedings and resolved that the proposal be accepted.
Action: Clerk/Chair
- 4 **Parish Issues and Public Participation** [Protocols for Public Participation in Council Meetings](#)

Standing Orders were suspended to allow members of the public to speak.

- 4.1 To hear any new matters raised (members of the public and councillors can raise any Parish related matters).

Bygrave Plantation Licence Review - A representative from Bygrave spoke to give details of the current situation.

1. AE & WA Farr Ltd is the licence holder and applied to extend their current licence to permit a further 4 events per year of up to 24,999 people. The date to respond by has now closed.
2. Bygrave Parish Council have applied for a review of the licence. Currently Farris licence is wide ranging, with unlimited events for 7,500 and one event each year for up to 14,999 people and they have 25 event days in the planning for 2025. The issues currently experienced are, little notice is given of events, they are too long, traffic volumes are too great for the lanes, the bridleway is also used by some traffic, all-night noise nuisance experienced by residents from either music or participants, anti-social behaviour, drug use and dealing, trespass, public urination/defecation, litter.

The licence holder is breaching the current licencing laws by not giving the required notice prior to festival dates, festivals which were scheduled to be held in other counties have been moved to Bygrave at the last minute, licence not complied with, exceeding the night time noise conditions etc.

Cllr Lee asked that a copy of the representation be sent to the Clerk who will issue a newsletter outlining the above implications and to give parishioners the opportunity to respond by the closing date of 20th January 2025. Cllr Tyson stated that it is unlikely that an extension date to respond by would be granted as licencing laws are subject to their own conditions.

Action: Clerk

A parishioner suggested that objections could be made to the change of use of the land from agriculture and that it is not incidental use, it is significant use and that separate planning permission/change of use should be applied for.

In addition there is a requirement that noise does not reach statutory levels and noise should be monitored.

Cllr Lee suggested that the local MP for Bygrave could also be contacted with a request for representation.

Other items – A parishioner offered his advice on planning of lawful certificates under item 6.3 and then commented on item 10.3 adding that the Parish Council had today been sent two further associated correspondence not previously copied to them in relation to the complaint made to the external auditor.

Cllr Lee commented that his understanding of the AGAR process is that it is conducted on matters that may have an impact on the financial governance of the Parish Council and the way it conducts itself. He voiced his concerns over the sense of proportionality between potential costs at stake which is not a community based approach. Cllr Button expressed his concern that thousands of pounds are potentially at stake of community money.

Cllr Lee reported correspondence received from Cllr Tyson that the applicant of the Slip End Farm application 24/00754/FP has decided not to pursue given the recommendation by the Case Officer to refuse.

- 4.1.1 To note any update on Ashwell Academical Youth Football Club (ACCIES) in an effort to keep more playing matches and training in the Village. [Appendix A & Appendix B](#)

No further updates.

- 4.1.2 To note update on request from [EatFeast](#)

Three dates have been agreed with EatFeast, with a proviso to cancel the 2nd & 3rd dates should the first event not be successful for the village. Dates set are Thursdays 1st May, 3rd July, 4th September from 4pm-9pm. EatFeast provide their own insurance and commit fully to disposing and removal of rubbish. Fee charged by the Parish Council is £100 per visit.

- 4.1.3 To note update to production of [The Yearbook 2025](#)

No further updates.

- 4.1.4 To note update regarding [Station Road](#) development.

No further developments since December's meeting. Clerk to check status and write to the developers, copying in the planning officer to request repair of the hedge.

Action: Clerk

- 4.1.5 To note Highways meeting safety/traffic problems, to determine locations for painted yellow lines.

Request for yellow lines in two areas of the village. Clerk to issue a newsletter asking for parishioners views. Chairman to also incorporate into next edition of Ashwell Village News.

Action: Clerk/Chairman

- 4.2 To receive reports from representatives from outside bodies, local authorities and agencies.

- 4.2.1 To receive a report from County Councillor Steve Jarvis – No report as Steve Jarvis was unable to attend the meeting.

- 4.2.2 To receive a report from District Councillor Tom Tyson, to include an update on Urban & Civic regarding the Baldock expansion project.

Knights Templar school is the subject of discussion by the County Council whose plan is to have a single option outcome, the decision to be made is should Knights Templar remain where it is for as long as possible, accommodating extra pupils for as long as it can, or does the County Council invest in a new school with the capacity to accommodate all pupils from the Baldock expansion on the Clothall side of town? Due to funding issues their desire is to keep a flexible option, using the current site for as long as possible, keeping money in reserve for a new school as and when funding becomes available.

5 Reports from Working Groups. To receive oral updates from relevant leaders/members and agree any actions that require Parish Council input/approval.

- 5.1 **Planning Advisory Working Group** - To note, any further information regarding S106 and to note correspondence received from CDA Herts. APC are still awaiting the outcome from CDA Herts of the Affordable Housing Survey.

No response from CDA Herts re the affordable housing survey.

Cllrs Mahy & Button have been in discussion with NHC re S106. Not all amounts are time sensitive, majority of monies are allocated or have an amount of time allocated to them and Cllr Mahy & Button are putting together paperwork to address those. £17K expired last year however APC have responded with a justification that these should have been formally allocated for the Pavilion project in 2018/2019 prior to the S106 update and NHC are being helpful.

- 5.2 **Access to Ashwell station** includes the cycle/footway route and car parking. (Cllr Lee).

Cllr Lee reported the lack of response from Councillors in South Cambridgeshire and has written to the local MP. The MP has agreed to take up the matter in obtaining a response from South Cambs with reference to the missing footpath. The footpath leads through to the station and is necessary on the grounds of safety. Also to be addressed is the parking and issue of cars lining verges. It falls into the responsibility of South Cambs. Cllr Lee will continue to pursue.

- 5.3 **Trees and Hedges** (Cllr Sims).

Cllr Sims has looked at all TCAs outlined below and has communicated to the Clerk that there are no concerns.

5.4 Zero Carbon Ashwell (ZCA) group. (Cllrs Lee & Duffy).

Cllr Lee reported that yesterday he received a notification from the Greater South East Hub of the CEF that the grant application for £39,600 for a feasibility study into carbon reduction in Ashwell has been successful. However ZCA cannot progress commission with the consultancy until funding is made available from central government which is expected in the Spring, Mar-May

The working group will provide the Parish Council with three tenders and the recommendation of which of the three they feel is most suitable to appoint. The Parish Council will then make the decision.

Cllr Button congratulated ZCA on their success and thanked them for their hard work.

6 Planning matters: to include new and existing applications. To see full details of applications on the NHC website enter the reference number into the planning search box.

6.1 New consultations received from NHC. To note any correspondence and agree responses.

- 6.1.1** Prior Approval Class Q Agric to Dwelling : Conversion of existing agricultural buildings to provide 8 residential units : 24/02712/PNQ : Kirby Manor Farm, Northfield Road, Ashwell, SG7 5JQ. Extension date to respond by 10th January 2025.

Having read the comprehensive notes on the planning portal and the Parish Council's objections to the earlier application in September/October which was withdrawn, Cllr Lee suggested that the Parish Council's response would still apply to this application and would be happy to support residents objections.

Cllr Button commented that he couldn't see any major changes and that he didn't feel our previous objections would be different.

It was resolved that the Parish Council object to the application on the same grounds as their previous objection. Proposed by Cllr Lee and unanimously agreed by all.

- 6.1.2** Full Permission Householder : Insertion of external wall insulation and replace render to existing solid walls : 24/02793/PFH : 53 Station Road, Ashwell SG7 5LR

It was commented that the above alterations had already been carried out on another property in Station Road. The alterations are positive in energy saving and was in-keeping. It was resolved that the Parish Council have no objection.

- 6.1.3** Full Planning Permission : Erection of two 2-bed dwellings, three 3-bed dwelling and two four-bed dwellings, with associated access, landscaping and parking: 24/02214/FP : Land On The North West Side Of, Green Lane, Ashwell, SG7 5LW

The changes to this application vs earlier application are in respect of two pull-in places, but neither impacts on what is the pinch point of 3.7m. Neither does it have impact on traffic entering Station Road at the junction of Green Lane near the war memorial. Concerns are still there with regarding to access and highway safety.

It was resolved that the Parish Council object on the same grounds previously objected plus neighbourhood plan policy references re protection of rural environment at the edge of the village..

6.2 Current Applications awaiting NHC Decision:

- 6.2.1 To note any updates to 24/01444/FP: Land Between Huntsridge and Ashwell House 5 High Street Erection of 14 dwellings (including affordable housing), (Hunts Close).

No further updates.

- 6.3 To note any updates to [Appeal Consultation 22/03094/FP](#): Land Between Huntsridge and Ashwell House 5 High Street Erection of 14 dwellings including creation of access from Ashwell Street, footpath link to Lucas Lane, associated infrastructure, public open space and landscaping – To agree a response to the appeal consultation. See [Appeal letter to Inspector](#) and [Appendix B.](#) (Hunts Close).

No further update.

To note the [Planning Summary](#) as of 2nd January 2025.

7 Tree consultations (Conservation Area and TPO) received from NHC. To agree responses to any received.

- 7.1 T1: Silver Birch - Crown reduce to previous points to leave viable growth where possible. This will amount to 1 - 1.5m : 24/02584/TCA : 5 Silver Street.

It was resolved that the Parish Council had no objections.

- 7.2 Trees (Tree Preservation Order) : T5: Sycamore - Fell. Land Between : 24/02775/TPO : Ducklake House And 19, Springhead.

It was resolved that the Parish Council had no objections.

- 7.3 T1: Ginkgo Biloba- Crown Reduce by 1m. T2: Wild Cherry - Crown Reduce by 1.5m. T3: Holly - Reduce in height be 4m: 40 High Street : 24/02895/TCA

It was resolved that the Parish Council had no objections.

To note the [Tree Planning Summary](#) as of 2nd January 2025.

8 Reports from Committees

- 8.1 HR Committee. To receive an oral reports and agree any actions.

None

9 Reports from parish councillors on premises and other responsibilities. To receive oral reports and agree any actions needed.

- 9.1 **The Springs.** Report from Cllr Hoffman.

No updates to report

- 9.2 **St Mary's Churchyard Grounds Maintenance.** Report from Cllr Hoffman.

The Church Clock is displaying the incorrect time and is being addressed along with it's annual service by end of next week.

- 9.3 **Recreation Ground including the playground, pavilion and public toilets.** To consider next steps (including formation of a working party). See [2024 Pavilion Consultation working documents](#) for discussion.

- 9.3.1 To review & consider [working party applications](#).

Closed session meeting to discuss volunteer selection for Pavilion Working Party.

Exclusion of Press and Public. It was unanimously resolved that under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and representatives of the press and broadcast media be excluded from the meeting as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, namely:

Pavilion Working Party Selection.

- 9.4 **Small Gains and Track** (Accies pitch and allotments). Report from Cllr David Sims to include maintenance costs of track and allocation of costs among users (ref item 10.2.2.).

The Parish Council have received a quote for approx. £1000 for repair work to the track. The primary users are allotment holders, cycle club and ACCIES, along with other users.

It was suggested that the Parish Council pay 50% with the remainder divided by those using the track.

It was agreed that it would be established who uses the track including home owners and to raise at the February meeting.

Action: Clerk

- 9.5 **Cemetery** – To note a report from Cllr Mahy.

The last 'tidy-up' session was cancelled due to bad weather. A new date will be proposed when the weather is better.

The Box hedge is in need of urgent attention and quotes have just been received for the work.

It was resolved that a meeting of the Finance Committee will shortly be held to approve the work and in time to meet the deadline of the planting season. Clerk to schedule a meeting and publish agenda.

Action: Clerk

- 9.6 **Street furniture.**

To note the [response](#) from NHC [Shared Waste Services](#) re Litter bin review. (November agenda item 65.5.1)

Reduction in bins - NHC were in consultation with APC as to which bins were to be removed and this has been taken into consideration, resulting in a loss of at least 7 bins.

Cllr Lee to communicate to the village in the next AVN, and it was suggested that should the current bins not be large enough to accommodate waste that APC request larger bins from NHC. Clerk to request potentially larger bins via Shared Waste Services.

Action: Clerk

10 Finance and Governance

- 10.1 **Budget tracking** and the monthly summary of accounts. To note the information up to month end to be circulated to parish councillors after the end of the month. Proposal that the summary of receipts and payments be issued with the draft minutes and the two nominated parish councillors sign off the accounts in accordance with internal control procedures.

To note any variances of actual expenditure compared to budget.

- 10.2 **Budget 2025/26 Update** – To note any updates.

10.2.1 [Fees for Club use of Rec & Pavilion](#)

It was discussed if the community should pay for services above their level of freedom to use. Currently the Parish Council are subsidising sports club users. It was agreed that

Signed

G. Lee

Date

6/2/25

the Parish Council will write to the clubs to justify an increase in fees. Cllr Duffy commented that fees should be kept in line with inflation annually. **Action: Clerk**

10.2.2 Allocation of costs for upkeep of Small Gains Lane.

See 9.4 above.

10.2.3 Budget 2025/26 – for discussion

The draft Budget is proposed to be set at £128,069, (2024/25 budget set at £127,369). With an increase in total income projected to 0.55% it is estimated there will be less income from Yearbook income and cemetery income.

Cllr Button commented that numbers have been looked at and there are necessary contingencies, of which he is fully supportive. Cllr Duffy agreed.

It was resolved to approve the proposed Budget for 2025/26, at £128,069 proposed by Cllr Mahy and unanimously agreed.

10.2.4 Precept for 2025/26 – to be issued following approval of budget

The proposed Precept demand is calculated at an increase of 1.9%. Set out in NHC terms it is a request of £112,613.29, plus the CTRS grant of £1569.71 giving a total Precept to the village of £114.183. The increase costs for a Band D house is set out in the table below

	Financial Year		% change
	2024/2025	2025/2026	
Ashwell Parish Council			
Precept Demand Value	£110,656.76	£112,613.29	+1.77%
Council Tax Base	911.3	901.7	-1.05%
Band D Council Tax Value	£121.43	£124.89	+2.85%

It was resolved to set the Precept as above, proposed by Cllr Mahy and unanimously agreed.

10.3 Annual Audit for the 2023-24 financial year. To note the Interim review received from the External Auditor, but a final report is pending their review of **correspondence from a Parishioner**. To consider the parish council's response and costs which would subsequently be charged to the Parish Council.

See above in 4.1. Public Participation.

10.4 To note any updates to change of bank signatories to reflect new Clerk.

This has been chased with the bank and the bank is making it a priority.

10.5 To note date of next APC meeting and Parish Meeting 2025

- Wednesday 5th February 2025 at 7pm
- Wednesday 5th March 2025 at 7pm
- Advance notice of the Parish Meeting in the School Hall at 7pm on Wednesday 19th March 2025.