

Minutes

Ashwell AGM and Parish Council Meeting Wednesday 4th June 2025 at 7pm in the Parish Room

Present: Councillors: Graham Lee (Chair) Norton Mahy (Vice Chair), Chris Button (arrived 19.06hrs), Joan Yates, Martin Hoffman, Ian Duffy.

Also in attendance: Clerk, Sally Roberts, Deputy Clerk, Nicky Forrester, and 2 members of the public and Cllr Steve Jarvis. The meeting was recorded on Zoom. Please contact The Clerk clerk@ashwell.gov.uk.

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

- 16 **Minutes Proposal** to approve draft minutes of the Parish Council meeting on [7th May 2025](#). It was proposed that the Minutes were passed as a true account of proceedings and resolved that the proposal be accepted.

Action: Clerk/Chair

- 17 **Parish Issues and Public Participation** [Protocols for Public Participation in Council Meetings](#)

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

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

- 17.1.1 To receive update to [water issue at Small Gains Allotments](#)

An isolating valve and pipe to feed directly into the tank is required. Deputy Clerk and Cllr Yates endeavouring to contact a plumber to quote for the job. **Action: Deputy Clerk**

- 17.1.2 To receive update regarding [Senuna Park tree felling](#). Cllr Tyson has informed APC that this is with the Monitoring Officer at NHC to pursue with the developers.

- 17.1.3 To receive update on [street lamp condition project](#) from Parish Councillors. Ongoing project to be fed back to Highways in time for the next meeting scheduled for 30th September 2025.

Cllr Lee has inspected, taken photos and sent to the Clerk (each lamp coded to the same code on the lamp).

- 17.1.4 To receive a request for a [memorial bench](#).

There is only one spot at the springs where a bench could be placed. Cllrs resolved to approve the siting of the bench upon inspection by Cllrs Hoffman & Lee.

It was noted that the village has very little room for further memorial benches and it was resolved that should future enquiries be received from friends/relatives of the deceased, that a donation and a memorial plaque be given towards the pavilion renovation fund.

17.1.5 To receive a report regarding the [Ashwell Pavilion Requirements Specification](#).

A parishioner stated that if the specification catered for functional space for meeting rooms this precludes it from being for charitable use only. However, if owned by a Trust and run for charitable use, VAT can be avoided. Cllrs Lee & Mahy are meeting with representatives from Pirton Village who are currently building a new pavilion, to gain knowledge and an understanding of processes. Cllr Button asked if a copy of their specification and advice on VAT could be obtained.

Action : Cllrs Lee & Mahy

(May Minutes item 16.3.3) Cllr Lee advised that a response had been received from St John's Ambulance to confirm their presence was at 'Ashwell At Home' and they propose to attend 2-3 other Ashwell events during the year. The Parish Council therefore confirmed their resolution from last month to donate £150 to SJA.

Action : Clerk

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

17.2.1 To receive a report from County Councillor Steve Jarvis.

War Memorial – Cllr Jarvis advised that discussions are ongoing regarding the dropped kerb. To rectify it will cost in the region of £8,000 and there is a dispute about slabs no longer being available and these would be mismatched. Ongoing. **Action: Cllr Jarvis**

The plates that the black bollards are sited upon are rusting. Clerk to take photos to send to Cllr Jarvis.

Action: Clerk

White lines have been repainted around the village but not at Back Street junction with West End which needed them as a priority. Cllr Jarvis to investigate why and when this will be addressed.

Action: Cllr Jarvis

A Speed Indicator Device for Lucas Lane is under consideration. However budgeting means it will be considered in next years budget.

Double Yellow Lines – An informal consultation with local residents to West End is considered to gauge response to double yellow lines on both sides of the road as it would defer parking and potentially speed up traffic. APC to contact residents in the vicinity.

Action: Clerk

High Street into Church Lane junction meets the requirements of the Highway Code as a safety issue.

Hodwell needs further advice from County Council.

17.2.2 To receive a report from District Councillor Tom Tyson.

Cllr Tyson was unable to be present but sent the following report :

Baldock Expansion item to be discussed at NHC full council meeting on 16th June and he is aware of APC's views.

Tree felling at Senuna Park - See 17.1.2 above

Townsend Meadow footway. This will have been passed to the acting Director of NHC during the interim period of recruiting a new Director.

Standing Orders to be reinstated

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

18.1 Planning Advisory Working Group - To note, any further information regarding S106 and to note update of report on Ashwell Housing Needs Survey, please contact Clerk to view a hardcopy of report at clerk@ashwell.gov.uk - See link to **Affordable Housing Survey**.

No updates on S106

AHN Survey Report is in the hands of CDA Herts who met with the Housing Officer at NHC to discuss revising the terminology of the wording in the report. It is hopeful that APC should receive a report within the next 2-3 months.

18.2 Access to Ashwell station includes the cycle/footway route and car parking. To note **communications** between **APC and MP Chris Hinchliffe** (Cllr Lee).

After sending the above correspondence, Cllr Lee is hopeful for a meeting with Stakeholders from Herts & Cambs to discuss how the two counties resolve the issues of footpath and parking at the station.

18.3 Trees and Hedges (Cllr Sims) – See below

18.4 To receive update - Zero Carbon Ashwell (ZCA) Group. (Cllrs Lee & Duffy).

No update since last meeting.

- 19 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.

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

19.1.1 25/01171/FPH : Single storey rear extension following demolition of existing rear conservatory. Relocate existing front door, erection of oak-framed front porch and front door canopy. Installation of bay windows to lounge and kitchen and alterations to fenestration following demolition of existing glazed porch. Alterations to fenestration of existing detached garage to facilitate partial conversion to create ancillary guest accommodation. External cladding and installation of flue following removal of existing chimneys. : 15 Swan Street, Ashwell.

The council resolved there was no objection.

19.1.2 24/02214/FP: Amended plan. Erection of two 2-bed dwellings, three 3-bed dwellings and two four-bed dwellings, with associated access, landscaping and parking: Land on the North West Side of Green Lane, Ashwell.

The revision is a modest pedestrian zone, it has not dealt with where the road narrows to just over 3m which was one of APC's objections previously. What is proposed does not change the safety issues or rights over maintenances of the road way.

It was resolved that majority of councillors agreed with one councillor abstaining to object on the grounds of safety issues. Clerk to write to the Planning Office.

Action: Clerk

19.2 Current Applications awaiting NHC Decision: 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).

19.3 To note a letter to North Herts Council regarding outstanding [footpath at Townsend Meadow](#).

The NHC Officer standing in for the interim period for the Director of NHC responded to say the letter has been passed to a colleague who will investigate. To be followed up by Cllrs Lee and Tyson.

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).

It was reported that the Inspector has made a site visit.

To note the [Planning Summary](#)

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

20.1 To note the [Tree Planning Summary](#)

20.2 25/01256/TCA: T1 Yew: Reduce in height to match Yew hedge. Land adjacent to 12 Swan Street.

20.3 The council resolved to have no objection.

20.4 25/01354/TCA: T1: Ash - Crown Reduction of 1.5m max. T2: Hawthorn - Remove to ground level. T3: Silver Birch - Crown lift to 3m. T4: Willow – Lower canopy reduction by 2m. T5: Ash - Crown Lift to 5m no large limbs removed. T6: Ash - Crown Lift to 5m no large limbs removed. T7: Ash - Crown Lift to 5 metres no large limbs removed. T8: Beech - Crown reduction by 1.5m: Westbury Spring House, West End, Ashwell,

The council resolved to have no objection.

25/01352/TCA: Willow, remove to ground level, 72 Ashwell Street, Aswell

The council resolved to have no objection but to request the tree is replaced with an alternative small native species.

21 Reports from Committees

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

Nothing to report.

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

22.1 **The Springs** Report from Cllr Hoffman.

Having seen members of the public filling drinking flasks from the Springs the question of water quality was raised. However this has been done in the past with no concerns. Government agencies will not test FOC and a private laboratory would need to test incurring an unknown expense. It was resolved that the Parish Council would place notices at the Springs to advise

water is not tested for drinking. It was also noted that flow rates are checked regularly and are normal.

Action : Deputy Clerk

22.2 St Mary's Churchyard Grounds Maintenance. Report from Cllr Hoffman.

Nothing to report.

22.3 Recreation Ground including the playground, pavilion and public toilets.

To receive any updates from Pavilion Working Party. [2024 Pavilion Consultation working documents](#).

The draft specification has been developed by the working group that includes representatives from clubs in the village. An enlarged indoor ball sport area has been suggested but this would add a further 100sqm space. Ball-park figures have been estimated at between £1.2m - £1.75m however building/construction techniques and low cost options will be explored.

Cllrs Lee and Mahy are meeting with representative from Pirton village hall to gain further knowledge and understanding of their project.

Currently APC has approx. £250K-£300K of monies made up from Section 106 and reserves, and the working group will need to fund raise extensively.

22.4 Small Gains and Track – To note any updates (Cllr Sims).

See above 17.1.1. Pot holes along the track will be attended to by the ACCIES who use the track.

22.5 Cemetery – To note any updates from Cllr Mahy. Nothing to report.

Street furniture - To note any updates Cllr Mahy. Nothing to report.

23 Finance and Governance

23.1 Budget tracking and the monthly summary of accounts and bank reconciliation. 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.

Monthly Reconciliation document to be signed by Cllr Lee, and councillors are happy with performance against budget.

To note any variances of actual expenditure compared to budget. None

23.2 Budget 2025/26 Update – To note any updates.

23.2.1 To receive an oral update on proposed [Fees for Club use of Rec & Pavilion](#)

Clubs have not responded to APC. It appears the Senior Football Team are no longer playing at Ashwell. Cllr Lee to contact to finalise up-to-date payments and confirmation they are no longer using Ashwell facilities.

Action: Cllr Lee

All other clubs to be sent letters confirming new fees.

Action: Cllr Lee/Clerk

23.3 **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](#), and [further correspondence from objector and External Auditor](#). To consider the parish council's response and costs which would subsequently be charged to the Parish Council.

To date we have received no further correspondence from the external auditor.

23.4 **Audit for the 2024/25** financial year – Documents sent to the Internal Auditor, we are waiting to hear back that all is satisfactory. Dates of Exercise of Public Rights will be placed on the noticeboard and published to the website. Cllrs to approve the following:

23.4.1 Proposal to approve Section 1/Annual Governance Statement [documents supplied to the Internal Auditor](#)

Cllr Hoffman proposed to approve section 1 Governance Statement, seconded by Cllr Yates.

23.4.2 Proposal to approve [documents supplied to the Internal Auditor](#) (*Allotments for Exercise & Recreation Charity*)

Cllrs resolved to approve.

23.4.3 Proposal to approve [Arrangements and dates](#) for the exercise of public rights.

Dates have been approved as 30th June – 12th August 2025

23.5 **Bank Signatories** - To note any updates to change to reflect new Clerk.

This has now been actioned.

Date of next meeting : Wednesday 2nd July 2025, 7pm

Meeting closed at 8.37pm.