

Minutes of Ashwell Parish Council Meeting Wednesday 2nd July 2025 at 7pm in the Parish Room

Present: Councillors: Graham Lee (Chair) Norton Mahy (Vice Chair), Joan Yates, Martin Hoffman, Ian Duffy.

Also in attendance: Clerk, Sally Roberts, Deputy Clerk, Nicky Forrester, and 6 members of the public and Cllr Tom Tyson. The meeting was recorded on Zoom, for access to the recording 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](#).

Apologies for absence To receive and accept apologies for absence. Apologies were received from Cllrs Button, Sims and Hall.

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). None.

24 **Minutes Proposal** to approve draft minutes of the Parish Council meeting on [4th June 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**

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

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

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

25.1.1 To receive update to [water issue at Small Gains Allotments](#). Consultation has taken place with members of allotments and a water meter reading has been submitted. To assist with potential failures of the tank, APC will obtain quotes to install an isolation valve close to the tank to facilitate possible tank repairs. **Action : Deputy Clerk**

25.1.2 To receive update on [street lamp condition project](#) from Parish Councillors. Please can councillors send their findings to the Clerk ASAP. **Action: Parish Councillors**

25.1.3 To note placement of logs by the stepping stones at [The Springs](#) and to note recent general disturbance/nuisance within the village. The Logs have been removed and put in a discrete corner of the Springs.

25.1.4 [Proposed Bus Shelter](#) Station Road. [Copy of Current Plans](#). Latest information received from Cllr Jarvis is that the bus stop (flag) is to go ahead but the siting of a bus shelter will be delayed pending ongoing investigation. Cllr Hoffman stated that the

decision for the bus stop was taken without consultation from the Parish Council or village. A parishioner stated that residents will be impacted when parking their vehicles. Another parishioner stated that the approved plan is outside of Highways boundary and the sight line is restricted. APC to represent these opinions and to reinforce to Highways that it is not an ideal location for a bus shelter. **Action: Cllr Lee**

25.1.5 **Community Governance Review**

A recent review by NHC was undertaken to assess the appropriate number of parish councillors per council. Ashwell Parish Council submitted their proposal to reduced from 12 councillors to 9. NHC have responded they propose to reduce the number further to 7. Councillors resolved to write to NHC to request the number of Parish Councillors for Ashwell is set at 9, stating the following reasons:

- a. An amendment to 7 councillors represents a significant reduction compared to the current 12.
 - b. Household numbers and the population of Ashwell has grown significantly since the previous councillor allocation was determined.
 - c. 9 parish councillors would provide the scope for maintaining voluntary input to support the paid staff.
- Action: Clerk**

25.1.6 **To note update to siting of a memorial bench at The Springs** (Cllrs Lee & Hoffman).

There is potential to offer a bench at the springs or instead to offer a memorial plaque at the new pavilion, (should the pavilion not be built, donations would be returned). Clerk to correspond with family. **Action : Clerk**

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

25.2.1 To receive a report from County Councillor Steve Jarvis. See item 25.1.4 above.

25.2.2 To receive a report from District Councillor Tom Tyson. Cllr Tyson reported as follows:

Tree felled at Senuna park was a Maple Tree and it has been requested that a new Maple is planted to replace it.

Bus Shelter at Senuna Park, Highways do not need permission to install street furniture (bus shelter) and lessons can be learned to be watchful of planning conditions. Cllr Lee thanked Cllr Tyson for his help.

Planning for Green Lane, NHC have given planning approval but questions of safety and legal rights of way are yet to be resolved.

Hunts Ridge application for 14 homes has been approved – Potentially both applications may be approved. Following the Inspector’s report it would appear the red line boundary to leave the hedgerow unharmed has been enforced.

Concerns are now for the Ruddy, (Ashwell Street towards Station Road). The stretch up to the entrance of the development will be resurfaced, but no further. Drivers are to be encouraged to exit right towards Woodforde Close, although this will not be enforced. Subsequently the track may become damaged by vehicle use, and safety to walkers and school children using the track should be raised with NHC & the developer.

Action: Cllr Lee

Slip End development Class Q. The application has been granted. Highways objected on its isolated location but that was not withheld, neither was APCs request that heat

source pumps and solar panels be installed. The planning officer felt it was unreasonable to impose as a condition.

Growing Baldock – Urban & Civic are continuing their consultation and listening to as many views as possible from local residents. There are a further 3 consultation dates in Baldock. These will take place on 12, 16, 18 July. APC resolved to make parishioners aware of how the development will impact Ashwell in the form of a door drop leaflet. One application has been approved for up to 200 dwellings. It was noted that as Ashwell are outside the parish boundary APC is not automatically consulted by NHC. Cllr Tyson was asked if it is possible, that this can be amended via the planning application to ensure APC are kept fully updated? (Action: Clerk, Cllr Lee & Cllr Mahy)

Bygrave festival licence review of the variation has been appealed.

Standing Orders to be reinstated

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

26.1 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**.

APC has received the final draft of the affordable housing survey. This is available in hard copy for parishioners to view. Incorporated into the draft is input from the NHC Housing Officer. Following a request from a parishioner the respond to deadline date has been set for 10th July. Cllr Lee commented that the document is clear and reflects the numbers. The report was deemed to be sound and without fundamental flaw.

Ashwell Parish Council resolved to accept the final draft but will delay their confirmation to CDA Herts for one week (10th July 2025) in order to receive parishioners comments. **Action: Clerk**

26.2 Access to Ashwell station includes the cycle/footway route and car parking.

To note **communications** between **APC and MP Chris Hinchliffe** (Cllr Lee) . See 25.2.2 above. It was felt the **information received from Urban & Civic** does not show the impact of Baldock on Ashwell residents who access Baldock currently, neither does it show the impact to access Baldock Station that may also impact Ashwell station.

APC resolved to produce a leaflet and will make a door drop to parishioners raising their awareness along with the consultation date (up to 18th August).

26.3 Trees and Hedges (Cllr Sims).

26.4 To receive update - Zero Carbon Ashwell (ZCA) Group. (Cllrs Lee & Duffy). There has been a request form Greater South Eastern hub for further information, most of which is contained within the application. Cllr Lee to respond.

27 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.

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

27.2 Current Applications awaiting NHC Decision: To note any updates to 24/01444/FP: Land Between Huntridge and Ashwell House 5 High Street Erection of 14 dwellings (including affordable housing), (Hunts Close).

It was noted that 5 affordable dwellings will form as part of the development and there may be an opportunity to gain greater control over those houses for Ashwell residents.

It was also noted that a clearer specification is required to address the following:

- What is the proposed road surface to be used?
- What is the proposal to ensure tree preservations around the boundary are in place?
- Why is the proposed entrance further away from where the current gate sits? Moving the entrance further impacts environmentally.
- Is there a need for pedestrian access, and for a restricted byway?

It was resolved that APC make these enquiries and Cllr Lee offered to contact NHC and the developers.

Action: Cllr Lee

27.3 To note any updates to the letter to North Herts Council regarding outstanding [footpath at Townsend Meadow](#).

Cllr Lee received a response from NHC who are endeavouring to see what action can be taken against the developer.

27.4 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).

See 25.2.2 above.

To note the [Planning Summary](#)

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

28.1 25/01532/TCA : T1: Lime - Reduce lateral branches away from roof by up to 2m to suitable growth points. Majority of pruning will be no more than 1.5m : Ashwell Bury, Mill Street. APC resolved to have no objection.

Councillors resolved to have no objections.

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

29 Reports from Committees

29.1 HR Committee. To receive any oral reports and agree any actions. No update.

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

30.1 **The Springs** Report from Cllr Hoffman. Correspondence has been received from River Rhee Info regarding the purity of the water at the Springs to be 'excellent'. Clerk to establish if River Rhee Info have any Government affiliations.

Action: Clerk

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

To note [Church Clock](#) displaying incorrect time and incorrect chimes. The office has received confirmation from Clockwise Restoration that they will reset the clock on Friday 11th July.

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

To receive any updates from Pavilion Working Party.

Cllrs Lee and Mahy visited Pirton pavilion and spoke with the chairman of their committee. The building is impressive, brick built and demonstrates with a growing village there is a demand for a sports facility, village hall and venue. The representative at Pirton also has a consultation document on how to address VAT.

30.4 Small Gains and Track – To note any updates (Cllr Sims). Nothing to report

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

30.6 Street furniture - To note any updates Cllr Mahy. NHC Shared Waste have requested further information on bins that Cllr Mahy will respond to. **Action: Cllr Mahy**

31 Finance and Governance

31.1 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.

To note any variances of actual expenditure compared to budget.

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

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

Interim invoices are to be issued pending a meeting to discuss with representatives from the ACCIES and Cricket Club over fees for the current year.

31.3 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.

External auditor has requested a response from the complainant by 7th July 2025. APC continue to cooperate with the process.

31.4 Audit for the 2024/25 financial year – Internal Auditor has signed and authorised the 2024-25 audit and all documents have been sent to the [External Auditor](#).

Date of next meeting : Wednesday 6th August 2025, 7pm

Meeting ended at 8.28pm.