

Minutes of Ashwell Parish Council Meeting Wednesday 5th November 2025 at 7pm in the Parish Room

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

Also in attendance: Clerk, Sally Roberts, Deputy Clerk, Nicky Forrester, Cllr Jarvis, 8 members of the public and 4 joined by Zoom. The meeting was recorded on Zoom (partially successfully due to fading wi-fi) 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](#).

- 76 **Apologies for absence** To receive and accept apologies for absence. Apologies were received from Cllrs Sims who is unwell.
- 77 **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). Cllr Duffy declared an interest in item 86.1 and left the room during discussion.
- 78 **Parish Issues and Public Participation** [Protocols for Public Participation in Council Meetings](#)
- 79 **Minutes Proposal** to approve draft minutes of the Parish Council meeting on **1st October 2025**. It was proposed that the Minutes were passed as a true account of proceedings and resolved that the proposal be accepted. Minutes of the Finance Committee meeting will be proposed for approval at the next Finance Committee meeting.
Action: Clerk/Chair

Standing Orders to be suspended

- 79.1 To hear any new matters raised (members of the public and councillors can raise any Parish related matters).
- 79.1.1 Resignation of Cllr Vinny Hall, due to ill health. Chairman extended his thanks to Cllr Hall for all his hard work over the years, a card in recognition to be sent. **Action: Clerk**
- 79.1.2 To note parishioner correspondence - volunteer group independent to the Parish Council are [litter picking](#) on 29th November. Chairman extended his thanks to the group.
- 79.1.3 [EatFeast 2026](#) – To note request for 3 further dates in 2026 at the Rec. Confirmation to be sought from the sports clubs that the Rec will not be in use, it was noted the event was successful and welcomed by villagers in 2025. **Action: Clerk**
- 79.1.4 [Dog poo waste bins](#) – To note ongoing overflow of some dog poo waste bins and possible solution. Cllr Yates to check dog waste bin use and advise if there is a bin that could be

moved. Deputy Clerk to put note on bins requesting if bins are full, dog poo is double bagged and put in general waste at home. **Action: Cllr Yates/Deputy Clerk**

79.1.5 To note the request to hold a food festival in 2026 by Christy's Kitchens and response from [Sports Clubs using Rec](#), who have first priority. Christy's Kitchen is liaising with clubs to establish a possible free date. To be communicated to Council for decision.

79.1.6 A parishioner spoke over Zoom to say the October minutes are incorrect; that certain Cllrs, Clerk and Deputy Clerk had copies of final decision letters relating to the 2023/24 audit complaint; that the monitoring officer's email dated 2023 had been superseded; that application 25/02547/FP is likely to succeed and APC should focus on optimising S106 agreement.

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

79.2.1 To receive a report from County Councillor Steve Jarvis.

Repairs to Mill Street bridge still to be scheduled. HCC has awarded money to run franchise bus services. Desire is for restoration of a station shuttle bus during commuting rush hours morning and evening.

Chairman reported the drain work at the war memorial appears to be working with no evidence of rain water pooling.

79.2.2 To receive a report from District Councillor Tom Tyson.

LGR: administration is in favour of the 4-unitary option which would involve moving Arbury, Weston & Sandon and Royston into an East Herts unitary. The decision on North Herts' recommendation will ultimately be made soon by The Cabinet.

Standing Orders to be reinstated

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

80.1 Planning Advisory Working Group - To note, any further information regarding S106. To note [correspondence between APC and NHC Planning](#). Cllr Mahy & Button to draft a S106 agreement for 25/02547/FP. .

80.2 Access to Ashwell station includes the cycle/footway route and car parking. To note any update to [communications between APC and MP Chris Hinchliffe \(Cllr Lee\)](#). S106 monies could be used.

80.3 To receive update - Zero Carbon Ashwell (ZCA) Group. (Cllrs Lee & Duffy). Chairman introduced Consultants to the village and noted heavy use of gas and oil used to heat homes. Desired aim for proposals on how renewable electricity can be used. Parishioners will have an opportunity to communicate their thoughts. ZCA are taking this initiative for Ashwell, ahead of Governmental future guidance.

81 **Trees and Hedges (Cllr Sims)** – To note any updates, see item 86 below.

82 **Planning matters: to include new and existing applications.** Full details of applications on the [NHC website](#).

82.1 **25/02380/FPH** : High Acre, Partridge Hill : Single storey rear orangery extension and side dormer with clock tower; replacement front porch and addition of covered front and rear veranda and pergola; alterations to the roof by removing the existing hip end to the gable roof and continuing gable end to top of roof, alterations to fenestration and addition of external white timber cladding; external landscaping including installation of a swimming pool and means of enclosure; replace existing car port roof and erection of electric timber gates.

A neighbour's request to NHC was noted that there should be no overlooking windows of the adjacent property. Cllrs resolved to approve providing this request was taken into consideration.

82.2 **25/02343/FPH** : at Land Adjacent To Beresfords Gardiners Lane : erection of stables and use as a paddock land. Currently paddock land is used for cattle, there was previously a derelict building taken out that could make this a brownfield site and a single story stable would not be in conflict and would be for agricultural use. No objections, Cllrs resolved to approve.

82.3 **25/02502/FPH** : Single storey rear extension following demolition of existing rear extension : 18 Dixies Close, Ashwell. Footprint is wider along back of house. No objections, Cllrs resolved to approve.

82.4 **25/02487/FPH** : Part single, part two storey rear extension, insertion of rooflight to existing rear roof-slope, alterations to existing fenestration and replace existing flat roofs following demolition of existing rear kitchen, porch and library extensions and existing rear conservatory. Repair existing boundary wall : The Engine, 50 Back Street. No objection, Cllrs resolved to approve.

82.5 **25/02410/FPH** : Single storey rear extension following demolition of existing rear extension : 10 Lucas Lane, Ashwell. No objection, Cllrs resolved to approve.

82.6 **25/02547/FP** : Residential development of 36 no. dwellings including creation of vehicular access off Station Road, associated parking, drainage, amenity space and landscaping : Land South and West of Senuna Park, Station Road. It was decided that as the extension date for comment has been extended to 5th Dec, APC will draft their response to be discussed at the December Council meeting, to include Ashwell Primary School capacity, number of affordable dwellings, and conflicting policies from Ashwell's Neighbourhood Plan. **Action: Cllrs**

82.7 **25/02571/OP** : Growing Baldock : Planning application live on NHC portal, Growing Baldock has issued a guide, see their website [A Guide to the Outline Planning Application - Growing Baldock](#). To note neighbour expiry date to comment Friday 21st Nov. 2025. And to consider invitation from Urban & Civic for [planning consultancy support](#). Cllrs resolved to accept the invitation, providing the Planning Consultant writes to explain how he will avoid a conflict of interest as he is employed by Urban & Civic. Cllrs resolved to approve to send a 'Statement of Concern' to NHC Planning in regard to disruption of access to Baldock Station and Baldock town that will be negatively impacted and is likely to also impact Ashwell Station as well as congestion in Ashwell High Street that has been highlighted by current road diversion. **Action: Cllrs/Clerk**

83 **Current Applications:** any updates:

83.1 **24/01444/FP**: Land Between Huntridge and Ashwell House 5 High Street Erection of 14 dwellings (including affordable housing), (Hunts Close). To note any updates. To note [correspondence from Greening Ashwell](#) No further updates.

84 **Planning Summary** – to note updates.

- 85 **Footpath at Townsend Meadow - [To note any updates](#)** NHC in ongoing discussions with developer and Highways regarding enforcing construction of a footpath. APC to be notified of any updates.
- 86 **Tree consultations (Conservation Area and TPO) received from NHC.** To agree responses to any received.
- 86.1 **25/02550/TCA** : T1: Beech, Canopy reduction of up to 1.5m : Townsend House, Ashwell Street. Cllr Duffy left the meeting. No objection Cllrs resolved
- 86.2 **25/02656/TCA** : 27 Kingsland Way, as follows : T1: Apple - Reduce the height to up to 3m and prune on all sides by 1.5m. All cuts to be made to viable growth, balancing the crown. T2: Birch - Reduce the height up to 3m and shape and balance the remainder of the crown, cutting to viable growth, clear branches back from the neighbouring property to give 1.5m clearance. No objection, Cllrs resolved to approve.
- 86.3 **25/02700/TCA** : United Reform Church, High Street : T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T6: Lime – Re-pollard. T7: Yew - Crown reduction by 0.5m. T8: Box - Crown Reduction of 0.5m. T9: 3x Yew - Prune back of Church Building by 0.5m. T10: Ash – Re-pollard. No objection, Cllrs resolved to approve.
- 86.4 To note the [Tree Planning Summary](#)
- 87 **Reports from Committees**
- 87.1 HR Committee. To receive an oral reports and agree any actions. To note annual appraisals carried out by the Chairman & Cllr Yates for the Clerk and Deputy Clerk , completed to the satisfaction of all parties.
- 88 **Reports from parish councillors on premises and other responsibilities. To receive oral reports and agree any actions needed.**
- 88.1 The Springs Report from Cllr Hoffman. The Springs have been well used, work required dictated by the Management Plan but insufficient funds have prevented work from being carried out previously.
- 88.2 St Mary's Churchyard Grounds Maintenance. Report from Cllr Hoffman. No change.
- 88.3 Recreation Ground including the playground, pavilion and public toilets.

To receive any updates from [APWG Notes](#), [Draft Pavilion Plan](#), [Grants Sheet](#). Support has been given by Ashwell Village Hall and the URC especially for family user groups. Suggestion to consult with all potential user groups-to gain their interest. External WC's are for 3 multi-use and disabled facilities. Parking could be an issue along with space allocated for storage.

Action: APWG

Suspended standing orders to allow public speaking for item 88.3.1.

To note request from British Legion to install a [memorial bench](#) by the war memorial at the rec. As there is no room at the rec for further benches a Cllr suggested one of the existing benches could be potentially moved. It was decided that the British Legion will consider contacting Highways to request if it may be sited and bolted down adjacent to the Lutyens cross which is Highways owned land. Cllrs were fully supportive of this idea.

Reinstated Standing Orders

88.4 Small Gains and Track – To note any updates from Cllr Sims. As no voluntary legal advice is available from qualified parishioners in the village the Chairman will draft a proposal using a suitable template to discuss with ACCIES. **Action: Cllr Lee**

88.5 Cemetery – To note any updates from Cllr Mahy. Cllr Mahy thanked the 2 parishioners who volunteered to join him and his wife to tidy the cemetery. 9 graves obscured by ivy were uncovered; it was suggested that those families who have recently buried a loved one might be prepared to volunteer at the next tidy-up booked before year end.

Action: Cllr Mahy/Deputy Clerk

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

88.7 Ashwell Village Trust – To note Parish Council Trustee vacancy. With Cllr Hall standing down, Cllr Yates volunteered to fill the vacancy. **Action: Clerk**

89 Finance and Governance

89.1 **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.

89.2 **Annual Audit 2023/24 & 2024/25** – To note any updates.

89.2.1 Annual Audit for the 2023/24 financial year. No update.

89.2.2 Audit for the 2024/25 financial year – Internal Auditor has authorised the 2024-25 audit and all documents have been sent to the External Auditor. No update.

89.3 To agree and approve 50/50 share of cost with [Highways of Cypress tree removal](#) in Station Road. It was noted that Highways have agreed to contribute £1600. It was resolved to approve Quote 1 and to publicise why and when the tree is to be felled. **Action: Clerk**

89.4 To propose amendment to payment of [Accounts Clerk](#) from monthly variable invoice to fixed monthly fee. Cllrs resolved to approve after a job specification is produced. **Action: Clerk**

89.5 To consider request for donation to [Royston & District Community Transport](#). Cllrs resolved to approve a donation of £200. **Action: Clerk**

89.6 Reorganisation of [Community Governance Order](#) – To note, Order received from NHC. Confirmation that APC can comprise of 9 parish councillors. Cllrs to approach parishioners to put forward for co-option. **Action: Cllrs**

89.7 **Financial Regulations** in relation to [thresholds](#) – to note and approve amendment. Cllrs resolve to approve amendment to regs to increase the threshold of between £5,000-£60,000 for quotations and over £60,000 for tenders. **Action: Clerk**

90 **Date of next meeting** : 3rd December 2025 at 7pm in the Parish Room.