

Minutes
Ashwell Parish Council AGM and Parish Council Meeting
in the Parish Room on
Wednesday 6th May 2026, at 7.00pm

Present: Councillors: Graham Lee (Chair), Chris Button, Joan Yates and Martin Hoffman.

Also in attendance: Clerk, Sally Roberts, Deputy Clerk, Nicky Forrester, and 6 members of the public.

Please click on links for papers issued with agenda and referred to in the minutes. [Meetings Minutes and Agendas.](#)

- 1 **Election of Chair** To receive a proposal for the council year 2026/27. Graham Lee was proposed Chairman by Cllr Yates which was seconded by Cllr Button. It was resolved that the proposal be accepted and Cllr Lee signed the Chairman's Declaration of Office.
- 2 **Election of Vice Chair** To receive a proposal for the council year 2026/27. Norton Mahy was proposed Vice Chair by Cllr Button and seconded by Cllr Yates. Cllr Mahy had indicated he would be happy to accept the office. Cllr Mahy to sign Vice-Chairman's Declaration of Office. **Action: Cllr Mahy**
- 3 **Apologies for absence** To receive and accept apologies for absence. To agree any long-term absence from meetings to comply with the 'six month rule' (Local Government Act 1972). Cllr Sims remains unwell and may not be back to Council for some months. A Dispensation to attend meetings has been granted. Apologies were received from Cllr Duffy, Cllr Mahy and Cllr Sims who is unwell.
- 4 **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 involves the chair, the meeting to agree an alternative individual to take the chair for that item(s). Cllr Lee has an on-going Dispensation to report on Zero Carbon Ashwell. No new interests were declared.
- 5 **Meeting dates for 2026/27** – Full Council Meeting will continue to be held on the 1st Wednesday of each month, (Christmas/New Year and other meetings such as the Finance Committee meeting dates may vary). Proposed dates for those will be sent to Cllrs outside of the meeting. Planning Committee Meetings to be held on an ad-hoc basis. All Cllrs in favour.
- 6 **Parish Councillor responsibilities and representatives Council Leadership Task List** - The tasks assigned to councillors who volunteered to manage respective tasks agreed to their list of responsibilities. Cllrs are happy to continue in these roles. Cllr Yates agreed to take on the role of Museum Trustee on behalf of the Parish Council. The updated list will be posted to the website.

Action: Clerk

Signed

Date

7 **Moss Cottage Homes.** - It was noted that the Parish Council has the right to nominate four trustees to this charity, also see the trustees report in the [2026 Yearbook](#). To note the request from [Moss Cottages](#) for approval of two trustees for a 4 year period. Cllrs resolved to approve the two trustees namely, Stephen Fleming and Jon Ruch for the 4 year period. All Cllrs in favour. **Action: Clerk**

8 **Council Documents** - To note those current, review as required, and propose and agree any changes.

8.1 **Financial Regulations** (NALC model version). Proposal to adopt and approve amendment to Section 6 Banking and Payments. (*fund transfers within the councils banking arrangements up to the value of the precept received, transfers between Parish Council accounts are allowed up to the value of the annual precept, in order to take advantage of bank interest rates*). Cllr Yates proposed the amendment and Cllr Button seconded. All Cllrs in favour.

8.2 **Standing Orders** Proposal to adopt Standing Orders based on NALC model version (updated May 2025). Cllr Hoffman proposed to adopt the Standing Orders which was seconded by Cllr Yates. All in favour.

The following items are routine Parish Council business

9 **Minutes Proposal** to approve draft minutes of the Parish Council meeting on [1st April 2026](#). It was proposed that the Minutes were passed as a true account of proceedings and resolved that the proposal be accepted. Proposed by Cllr Hoffman, all in favour. **Action: Clerk/Chair**

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

Standing Orders to be suspended

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

A parishioner spoke as follows: To offer assistance to Cllr Button & Mahy regarding Huntsridge and developer gifted land; to commend Cllr Mahy on the Yearbook; To question if the CLT would be involved in the project referred to in the Yearbook, in respect of Huntsridge. Cllr Lee confirmed this would be subject to discussions with the developer, NHC and any other provider of affordable housing.

To receive correspondence from parishioners regarding [concerns relating to Village Stores](#). Cllr Lee has spoken with the freehold owner of the stores. The lease and conditions of lease are currently with the solicitor with the aim of resolving some concerns. The importance of a village store to the community is understood. Cllr Yates has been approached by parishioners re the consequences of selling alcohol. An NHC representative at the meeting has forwarded concerns to Licencing at North Herts.

10.1.1 Dog poo waste bins, [Churchyard](#) and [Station Road](#) . Office staff and councillors have checked the bins usage. There is not a definite overfilling on a weekly basis and an individual bin is not consistently full/over flowing.

APC have received comments that some people are depositing garden dog waste in the bins rather than waste produced on a dog walk.

APC to continue to monitor bins before making a decision at a future meeting to potentially purchase/re-site a bin and incurring the cost along with weekly servicing charge. Clerk & Deputy Clerk to put a notice on all bins to advise house-hold dog waste is not to be deposited and that this should be disposed of in the domestic purple bin. The

Signed

Date

Parish Council would be grateful if parishioners could notify the Clerk if they have information on anyone depositing large amounts of waste into the bins.

A representative from NHC advised that Planning Officers will hold an open meeting on 15th June to talk about the new Local Plan. To take place at the Baldock community centre/hub at 7.30pm. Clerk to advertise. **Action: Clerk**

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

10.2.1 To receive a report from HCC Leader, Cllr Steve Jarvis. We have been advised that the A505 proposals from Highways are to be put back slightly by a month or so, Cllr Jarvis to update accordingly.

10.2.2 To receive a report from District Councillor, Tom Tyson. Cllr Tyson was not present at the meeting but submitted the following report:

The government is allowing developments near stations to be favoured. The report to Cabinet by [the Strategic Planning Manager - item 8.37](#) gives an indication of the potential between North Herts and South Cambridgeshire. The report to the new Local Plan, follows the government's new 30-month procedure aimed at speeding up the LP process. The Parish Council should be notified.

The Rose and Crown application has been withdrawn.

Cllr Tyson to write to Settle regarding the thatched cob wall boundary wall to Wolverley House over the responsibility of the maintenance.

Bins will be collected on Saturday this week due to the Bank Holiday.

Standing Orders to be reinstated

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

11.1 Planning Advisory Working Group. To note any updates – [Justification for S106 application](#) after clarification sought from the Developer. This has been sent to the Planning Officer.

11.2 Access to Ashwell station includes the cycle/footway route and car parking. To note any updates. Cllr Lee has been in contact with the Chairman of Steeple Morden who is encouraging the South Cambs Officer to engage with APC.

11.3 Zero Carbon Ashwell (ZCA) Group. (Cllrs Lee & Duffy). To note any updates. Comments on the draft from the consultants have been fed back and we are awaiting a Zoom meeting with them.

12 **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.

12.1 **26/00676/FP** : Land South of 35 Ashwell Street : Erection of single self-build dwelling house with detached garage and swimming pool. Cllrs proposed to have no objection subject to confirmation that the height, form and scale has not been increased to that previously approved. Proposed by Cllr Lee and seconded by Cllr Yates.

12.2 **26/00760/FP** : Land At Former Merchant Taylors School, Mill Street: Erection of two detached residential dwellings. See [Minutes from Planning Meeting](#).

- 12.3 **26/00815/FPH** : Field House, Newnham Way : Single story rear extension, first floor rear extension and replace existing rear rooflight with rear dormer window.

A member of the public advised this application is to extend the dwelling to improve the house for the family. The garage conversion and dormer windows could have been made under permitted development, however one planning application was decided to be applied for the whole house. APC were informed that the development does not affect neighbours and the rear of the house cannot be seen from footpath or road. Cllr Button proposed no objection to the applications, this was seconded by Cllr Yates, all in favour.

13 Current Applications: any updates:

- 13.1 **24/01444/FP**: Land Between Huntsridge and Ashwell House 5 High Street Erection of 14 dwellings (including affordable housing). No further updates.
- 13.2 **25/02571/OP**: Growing Baldock: To note planning amendments have been submitted. No further updates.
- 13.3 **25/02547/FP**: Land off Station Road, South & West of Senuna Park. Planning permission has been refused.

14 [Planning Summary](#)

- 15 **Footpath at Townsend Meadow** – APC have no contact with the developers as this is via NHC, with Highways involved. Discussions are ongoing but until a decision has been reached NHC cannot advise.

- 16 **Tree consultations** (Conservation Area and TPO) received from NHC. To agree responses to any received. None to discuss.

17 [Tree Planning Summary](#)

18 Reports from Committees

- 18.1 HR Committee. To receive an oral report and agree any actions. No actions or reports.

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

- 19.1 The Springs. Report from Cllr Hoffman. **[To note correspondence received by the PC](#)**. Work is being carried out at the Springs in consultation with Greening Ashwell.
- 19.2 St Mary's Churchyard Grounds Maintenance. Report from Cllr Hoffman. Nothing to report.
- 19.3 Recreation Ground including the playground, pavilion and public toilets. To receive any updates from Pavilion Working Party. APC are making a claim for the pavilion damage once all invoices have been received. The Police Team responsible for Juniors are handling the vandalism. The Parish Council would like to thank parishioners for responding to the alert put out by the Parish Council which identified the offenders.

Refurbishing the playground at the Rec Cllr Lee is compiling a picture-book of equipment after visiting various playgrounds that appear to be used/favoured by children and this will be used to involve schools and parents via Ashwell School and Knights Templar in a consultation.

Signed

Date

- 19.4 Small Gains and Track – To note any updates. There is continued contact with the ACCIES over use of facilities new agreement. This is yet to be finalised and revisions agreed.
- 19.5 The Ruddery - To consider relocation of underused [dog poo waste bin](#). See item 10.1.2.
- 19.6 Cemetery – To note any updates from Cllr Mahy. Update on disposal of accumulated soil heap. APC has been in touch with the farmer from whom the land was acquired. In the past the farmer has removed the waste soil. **Action: Deputy Clerk**
- Quotes for tree work at the cemetery, options for pruning, removal and replacement in context of the budget are also being sought. Deputy Clerk to chase. **Action: Deputy Clerk**
- 19.7 Street furniture - To note any updates Cllr Mahy. No further updates.

20 Finance and Governance

- 20.1 **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.
- 20.2 **Budget 2025/26 Update** – To note any updates.
- 20.2.1 To receive a verbal update on proposed licence agreement for ACCIES. See item 19.4
- 20.3 **Annual Audit 2023/24 & 2024/25** – To note any updates.
- 20.3.1 Annual Audit for the 2023/24 financial year.
- 20.3.2 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.
- 20.4 **Annual Audit 2025/26** – To note the following:
- 20.4.1 (i) [The documents supplied to the Internal Auditor](#) (*updated Financial Regulations to be sent after approval by Council see 7.1*)
- 20.4.2 (ii) [The documents supplied to the Internal Auditor](#) - Allotments for Exercise & Recreation Charity.
- 20.4.3 (iii) Arrangements and [dates for the exercise of public rights](#).
- 20.4.4 (iv) Arrangements and dates for the [submission to the External Auditor](#).
- 20.5 **CFR Car Team** – to consider request for [grant to fund a chair raiser, to benefit parishioners](#).
- A voluntary group liaising with the ambulance service, medically trained in first aid who operate out of Steeple Morden have assisted in Ashwell. APC have been approached to make a donation from S137 to help fund a chair raiser, see link above.
- A representative from NHC advised there is a Community Grant scheme which may enable them to obtain funds. Cllrs agreed that the Clerk should contact the CFR Car Team and liaise with NHC. If this is not forthcoming, APC to consider approving a donation at the next meeting.
- 20.6 To consider an application for co-option to fill the vacancy on the Parish Council and to agree any appointments.

Signed

Date

Cllrs Button & Hoffman were happy to recommend Max Patterson. The proposal to Co-Opt Max was proposed by Cllr Lee and seconded by Cllr Hoffman. All in favour. Clerk to undertake admin duties for set up and provide induction pack. **Action: Clerk**

Date of next Parish Council meeting: 3rd June 2026 at 7pm in the Parish Room.

The meeting closed at 20.13hrs

APPROVED

Signed

Date