

## Minutes of Ashwell Parish Council Meeting Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> January 2026 at 7pm in the Parish Room

**Present:** Councillors: Graham Lee (Chair), Norton Mahy (Vice Chair), Ian Duffy and Chris Button (arrived 19.03).

**Also in attendance:** Clerk, Sally Roberts, Deputy Clerk, Nicky Forrester, Cllr Tyson, Cllr Jarvis and 7 members of the public.

Please see website for appendices issued with agenda and referred to in the minutes. [Ashwell Village - 2026 Meetings Minutes and Agendas](#).

**107 Apologies for absence** To receive and accept apologies for absence. Apologies were received from Cllrs Sims, Yates & Hoffman who are unwell.

**108 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). No interests were declared.

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

**110 Minutes Proposal** to approve draft minutes of the Parish Council meeting on [3<sup>rd</sup> December 2025](#). It was proposed that the Minutes were passed as a true account of proceedings and resolved that the proposal be accepted. Proposal Cllr Mahy seconded by Cllr Lee. **Action: Clerk/Chair**

### ***Standing Orders to be suspended***

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

**110.1** To hear any new matters raised (members of the public and councillors can raise any Parish related matters). No matters from the public were raised.

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

**110.2.1** To receive a report from County Councillor Steve Jarvis. From 1<sup>st</sup> February there will be changes to No 91 bus timetable to make improved connections to the station.

A section of the A505 (tunnel) road surface has been repaired, further repairs due Spring/Summer. County Council budget should increase the number of Herts Lynx bus services in 2026.

**110.2.2** To receive a report from District Councillor Tom Tyson. Bin collections over Christmas were reasonably good. Problems with the NHC App being out of synch with NHC website. This should be rectified, but advised to check with NHC website re bin collections.

LGR submission has been made by Hertfordshire District and Borough Councils. The North Herts element to concede Arbury Ward should be in Central rather than East Herts district.

Cllr Lee advised that the road sign at Ashwell Street adjacent to Chalk Bank Close still hasn't been replaced. There is no sign to indicate even numbers going West.

Road sweeping, West End and Kingsland Way have not been swept, covered with leaves, mud, debris.

**Action: Cllr Tyson**

### ***Standing Orders to be reinstated***

**Christy's Kitchens** – Cllrs resolved to approve the event and offered Christy's kitchens one of the recommended 3 dates: Sunday 31st May, Sunday 7th June or Sunday 12th July.

Cllrs agreed a financial contribution to the Parish Council of £300 (to cover damage to grass etc) plus a charitable donation of 5% of takings from each vendor towards the charity. Cllrs resolved to agree these monies should be donated to Garden House Hospice. Cllr Duffy proposed, Cllr Mahy seconded, all in favour. Clerk to communicate.

**Action: Clerk**

- 111 Town Centres Strategy** – To note consultation open from 3<sup>rd</sup> Dec 2025 – 30<sup>th</sup> Jan 2026. Cllrs resolved to approve they would complete the survey endorsing the views of keeping Baldock Open. Cllr Mahy proposed, Cllr Duffy seconded, all in favour. It was noted that this survey is open to all members of the public. To access, click [Town Centres Strategy Consultation-2025](#)

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

Planning Advisory Working Group - To note, any further information regarding S106. To discuss proposed **[S106 application for potential development on land South & West of Senuna Park](#)**. It was agreed that the Parish Council should ask for the maximum figure available, circa £150,000. Deputy Clerk to provide quotes for upgrade to playground equipment at the February Meeting.

**Action : Deputy Clerk**

- 112.1** Access to Ashwell station includes the cycle/footway route and car parking. No further update but can raise with MP Chris Hinchliffe who has agreed to attend the February meeting to take questions relating to the A505 road safety. Clerk to advertise.

**Action: Clerk**

- 112.2** To receive update - Zero Carbon Ashwell (ZCA) Group. (Cllrs Lee & Duffy). The first stage of the consultancy time-line report has been issued by the consultants. The Working Group raised a number of questions which will be addressed by the consultancy. The S1 report is currently under revision.

- 113 Trees and Hedges (Cllr Sims)** – No new applications for tree work.

- 114 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.

- 114.1 25/02115/FP** : Conversion of 3 existing agricultural buildings to provide 8 residential units, including gardens and formation of vehicular access. Kirby Manor Farm, Northfield Road, Ashwell, Baldock, Hertfordshire, SG7 5JQ.

*Standing Orders suspended*

Public discussions took place, road safety; site location; neighbour concerns; design and sustainability was discussed.

*Standing Orders reinstated*

Cllrs resolved to agree to object to the application on the grounds of Highways concern to road safety; site is not sustainable, no pedestrian/cycle path or public transport and to support neighbour concerns. Cllr Mahy proposed, Cllr Button seconded, all in favour.

- 114.2 **25/03050/FP** : Erection of 4 dwellings including parking and landscaping : The Ruddery, Ashwell Street, Ashwell, Hertfordshire, SG7 5QF.

*Standing Orders suspended*

The applicant was present and took questions from parish councillors.

*Standing Orders reinstated*

Cllrs noted that whilst the proposed development falls within the settlement boundary the development location on the edge of the settlement boundary should consist of a lower density of dwellings. Cllrs considered the building design of good quality; proposed air-source heat pumps and solar panels and the climate impact of the design is positive. But it was acknowledged that the Ashwell Neighbourhood Plan policy ASH2 reflects the need for smaller, more affordable, dwellings in the community.

Cllrs resolved to respond to NHC Planning with the above comments. Cllr Mahy proposed, Cllr Button seconded, all in favour.

115 **Current Applications:** any updates:

- 115.1 **24/01444/FP**: Land Between Huntsridge and Ashwell House 5 High Street Erection of 14 dwellings (including affordable housing), (Hunts Close). No further updates.

- 115.2 **25/02571/OP** Growing Baldock – No further updates.

116 **[Planning Summary](#)**

117 **Footpath at Townsend Meadow** – No further updates.

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

- 118.1 **25/03092/TCA** : 9x Sycamore - Fell to ground level. Fell all the smaller trees/shrubs beneath for access and allow them to regenerate. Elderberry -Remove. G2: Sycamores - Fell and eco plug. Ashwell Springs , Springhead, Ashwell, Hertfordshire, SG7 5LL - was discussed at last meeting. FB post to say why this is Natural England's advice, natural ecological balance at Springs – FB post. This was discussed at the December meeting. Clerk to notify the village via HUB and website newsletter

**Action : Clerk**

119 **[Tree Planning Summary](#)**

120 **Reports from Committees**

- 120.1 HR Committee. We have been made aware that a formal complaint about a Parish Councilor has been made to the NHC Monitoring Officer by a parishioner. This will be handled by NHC and is a matter for the Monitoring Officer to consider.

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

121.1 The Springs Report from Cllr Hoffman. Nothing to report

121.2 St Mary's Churchyard Grounds Maintenance. Report from Cllr Hoffman. Nothing to report

121.3 Recreation Ground including the playground, pavilion and public toilets. To receive any updates from [Pavilion Working Party](#).

121.4 Small Gains and Track – To note any updates from Cllr Sims. The agreement currently being finalised is to be presented to the ACCIES as the original time agreement has lapsed and will be used as a template for other user groups.

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

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

**122 Finance and Governance**

122.1 **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.

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

122.2.1 To receive an oral update on proposed licence agreement. See above 122.4

122.2.2 To receive and approve [quotations for publication of the Yearbook 2026](#)

Cllr Mahy presented the council with a sample of work from the Supplier of Quote 1. Cllrs approved the sample and resolved to approve the supplier. Proposed by Cllr Button, seconded by Cllr Duffy, all in favour.

122.3 **Draft Budget 2026/27 and Precept** – To note and approve draft [Budget](#) and [Precept](#).

In preparation of the draft budget Cllrs have tried to keep it in line with inflation/real costs of circa 5%. However there are two costs increasing this percentage, a major maintenance contract is higher than anticipated and the unknown cost of the legal fee associated with the external audit investigation.

These costs raise the proposed budget by 9% at £142,719.56.

Cllrs agreed that these costs have to be accommodated and it was resolved to approve the draft budget. Proposed by Cllr Mahy, seconded by Cllr Duffy, all in favour. **Action: Clerk**

It was then resolved to approve the Precept figure set at £124,862.08 with Band D figure set at £137.36. Proposed by Cllr Mahy, seconded by Cllr Duffy, all in favour. **Action: Clerk**

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

122.4.1 Annual Audit for the 2023/24 financial year. We received a response from the External Auditor to advise that they have not reached a conclusion to the objections and will be in contact in 3 months time with an update.

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 who is unable to finalise until the 2023/24 audit has been concluded.

**Date of next meeting :** 4<sup>th</sup> February 2026 at 7pm in the Parish Room.

The meeting closed at 8.32pm

DRAFT