

Minutes of Ashwell Parish Council Meeting Wednesday 2nd September 2026 at 7pm in the Parish Room

Present: Cllrs Graham Lee (Chair), Norton Mahy (Vice Chair), Chris Button, Ian Duffy, Anna Genda, Joan Yates and Max Patterson (arrived at 7.30pm)

Also in attendance: Clerk, Sally Roberts, Deputy Clerk, Nicky Forrester, Cllrs Tom Tyson & Steve Jarvis and 5 members of the public.

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

- 67 **Apologies for absence.** To receive and accept apologies for absence. Apologies were received from Cllr Curtis Farringdon.
- 68 **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). Cllrs Lee & Mahy declared an interest for items 81.5 & 81.7 and will leave the room during discussion/vote. Cllr Duffy declared an interest for item 73.4 and will leave the room during discussion/vote.
- 69 **Minutes Proposal** to approve draft minutes of the Parish Council meeting on [5th August 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 Mahy seconded by Cllr Yates.
- 70 **Parish Issues and Public Participation:** [Protocols for Public Participation in Council Meetings](#)
- 71 To hear any new matters raised (members of the public and councillors can raise any Parish related matters).

Standing Orders to be suspended

- 71.1 Kiddies fun fair – Date scheduled for October half term. Deputy Clerk to finalise exact date and times and advise councillors at the next meeting when the pro-rata cost of hiring the Rec will be decided. Cllr Duffy suggested that a proposal is drawn up for those potentially wishing to hire the Rec for commercial purposes. Cllr Duffy to draft a proposal. **Action: Cllr Duffy.**
- 71.2 [Baldock and Villages Community Forum](#) – To note forum on 14th September at 7.30pm.
- 71.3 To receive reports from representatives from outside bodies, local authorities and agencies.
- 71.3.1 To receive a report from HCC Leader, Cllr Steve Jarvis. The Lucas Lane Speed Indicator Device is to be installed this week.

The resurfacing of the footway in Silver Street is also scheduled to be carried out shortly.

Update to Townsend Meadow footpath - HCC has agreed to legally extract the bond from the developer.

Double Yellow Lines in Hodwell, West End, Church Lane onto High Street. Public consultation is completed. The double yellow lines will be painted but the no waiting enforcement comes into effect on 5th September 2026.

- 71.3.2 To receive a report from District Councillor, Tom Tyson who expressed concern that information on the One.network website can be misleading as it announced a road closure over the weekend. The information on the website states that the work will take place during the stated time period not necessarily for the entire time period.

The new NPPF ([Click link for NPPF - August 2026](#)), came into effect on 18th August, it is a complete re-write of the previous version, with a presumption of acceptability. New developments deemed especially suitable will be those with suitable walking distance to the railway station (800m). Cllr Tyson to speak with NHC to enquire if there is possibility to receive a key point summary of changes and policies of the new NPPF from the planning office.

A parishioner raised items 81.5 & 81.7 on the agenda, stating that if external agencies consider a complaint, then it has merit and is therefore not considered vexatious. Cllr Button spoke stating that the Parish Council faces a bill of approximately £5,000 of costs for the 2023/24 investigation following objections raised by the complainant and yet more costs following the complainant's objections to the 2025/26 audit. This is unsatisfactory and that the fact that the cost is likely to be 4-5% of the village precept is disappointing! Cllr Yates stated that Ashwell PC is a small Parish Council of volunteers, some of which have full time jobs and the Parish Council have limited resources to do the work; employ two part time staff who are struggling with the historical issues raised by the complainant over the last 5 years; that work is being missed in an effort to keep on top of all the correspondence and that it is a real concern as well as being unsustainable.

Cllr Mahy spoke stating that whilst he has declared an interest he is entitled to speak outside of standing orders as a member of the public in the open session. Cllr Mahy addressed the parishioner's statement of external bodies not declaring the parishioner's complaints as vexatious, for the reason that it is Ashwell Parish Council's decision to declare a person vexatious under their UCP and not an external body and having consulted a Solicitor, it was she who was of this opinion due to the volume and type of comments that have been received by APC from the parishioner/complainant.

Standing Orders to be reinstated

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

- 72.1 **Planning Advisory Working Group.** To note any updates. Cllrs Mahy, Button & Lee met with a member of NHC planning; had been advised there is a call for sites and that external agencies are looking at the suitability of those sites.

- 72.2 **Access to Ashwell station** includes the cycle/footway route and car parking. No update.

- 72.3 **Zero Carbon Ashwell (ZCA) Group.** (Cllrs Lee & Duffy). A public meeting to be held on 29th September at the School hall at 7pm. Leaflets announcing it will be distributed ahead of time. All are invited including District and County Councillors and their staff. Clerk to action printing of leaflets and advertising.

Action: Clerk

73 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.

- 73.1 26/01256/SO Claybush Meadow** – To note Environmental Impact Assessment from Hill Residential on NHC Planning Portal – no notification received by the Parish Council. Correspondence has been received from a potential developer and agency. Their request is to be discussed at the October meeting. **Action: Clerk**

New Planning Applications:

- 73.2 26/01898/FPH** : 49 Silver Street : Replacement windows to front and rear elevations at ground and first floor level. Cllrs resolved to have no objection. All in favour.
- 73.3 26/01873/LBC**: 56A High Street, Ashwell : Installation of chairlift. Cllrs resolved to have no objection. All in favour
- 73.4 PL/0592/26** : 54 Station Road, Ashwell : Change of use from Class C3 (residential) to Class C2 (Children's' Care Home), construction of single storey annexe, ground floor side extension, removal of 1no. tree, and associated works. Cllr Duffy left the room having declared an interest.

Standing Orders were suspended

Councillors discussed the proposed change of use and support in principle. Concerns were raised regarding the specialist nature of the facility, the number and age of children, management arrangements and the welfare of the children.

It was noted that HCC would make the final decision and Councillors agreed that further information should be requested regarding the proposed use, management arrangements, staffing and welfare of the children.

Standing Orders reinstated

Cllrs resolved to support the application in principle, subject to further information being provided regarding the proposed use and management of the facility. Cllr Jarvis to raise with HCC. **Action: Cllr Jarvis**

- 73.1 26/01992/FP** : Broad Fields, Station Road : Erection of one detached four-bedroom dwelling and widening of existing vehicular access following demolition of existing garage. Councillors considered an application for a four-bedroom detached house on an existing plot. It was noted that the proposal had been through the pre-application process with NHC and was considered to be in keeping with the character of the area.

Cllr Mahy raised concerns regarding the site being outside the settlement boundary, sustainability, lack of provision of solar panels or heat pump, and whether a four-bedroom property met local housing needs. However it was noted that the proposal was for a single dwelling on an existing plot and would not result in the loss of farmland. Cllrs resolved to support the application noting the desire for installation of heat pump/solar panels.

Existing Planning Applications:

- 73.2 25/02571/OP**: Growing Baldock. To note planning amendments have been submitted. Information is quite thin and U&C will keep the Parish Council updated.

- 73.3 **24/01444/FP: Land Between Huntsridge and Ashwell House 5 High Street** Erection of 14 dwellings (including affordable housing), (Hunts Close). The site has been sold to a new developer. Cllr Button to pass on our details to the agents involved. **Action: Cllr Button**
- 73.4 **25/02547/FP: Land To The South And East Of Senuna Park**, Residential development of 36 no. dwellings including creation of vehicular access off Station Road, associated parking, drainage, amenity space and landscaping. No update following APC submission to the Inspectorate via the Inspectorate portal. Should the appeal be upheld, the unilateral undertaking means APC will receive a S106 contribution.
- 74 **Planning Summary** – To note
- 75 **Local Plan Timetable** – No further updates.
- 76 **Tree consultations** (Conservation Area and TPO) received from NHC. To agree responses to any received.
- 76.1 **26/02007/TCA : T1 Sycamore : Prune canopy back. 1.5m : Three Tuns, 6 High Street.** Cllrs resolved to have no objections.
- 77 **Tree Planning Summary** – To note
- 78 **Footpath at Townsend Meadow** - To note update from S106 **Monitoring and Compliance Officer** - See item above 71.3.1 from Cllr Jarvis.
- 79 **Reports from Committees**
- 79.1 **HR Committee.** To note any updates. No further updates
- 80 **Reports from parish councillors on premises and other responsibilities. To receive oral reports and agree any actions needed.**
- 80.1 **The Springs.**
- 80.1.1 To note the **Springs project**, and to discuss/approve **Quote one** and **Quote two** for the project. Two quotations were considered, both within the annual budget. It was noted that the second contractor had provided more detailed advice and identified areas to consider. Cllrs resolved to accept Quote 2, with Cllr Patterson stating that it should be subject to a digging test. All councillors in favour.
- Correspondence - management of public behaviour at the Spring, **note one** and **note two**. Councillors discussed the management of public behaviour and the protection of the Springs SSSI site. It was agreed that Natural England should be asked for further advice and invited to visit the site to discuss management, signage and enforcement. Councillors also agreed that greater public awareness was needed regarding the importance of the SSSI site and the distinction between public amenity areas and protected nature areas. Clerk to prepare a response to Natural England with relevant questions and an invitation to visit the site. The Parish Council will also consider further public awareness measures. There are also links to various agencies within the Springs Management Plan where enquiries can be made, these include Natural England, National River Flow Archive, Environment Agency etc. **Action: Clerk**

- 80.2 St Mary's Churchyard Grounds Maintenance. No updates.
- 80.3 **Recreation Ground including the [Playground](#)**, pavilion and public toilets. To receive any updates from [Pavilion Working Group](#). No update since the last meeting.
- 80.4 Small Gains and Track – See item 80.6
- 80.5 Cemetery – To note any updates from Cllr Mahy. Proposed assessment and tidy-up proposed at the cemetery. Deputy Clerk and Cllr Mahy to action. Local farmer will remove the soil shortly from the cemetery and will liaise with the Chair or Deputy Clerk.

Action: Deputy Clerk/Cllr Mahy/Cllr Lee.

- 80.6 To receive a verbal update on proposed licence agreement for ACCIES. The proposed final agreement has been sent to the ACCIES, awaiting their decision. Cllr Button to chase.

Action: Cllr Button

81 Finance and Governance

- 81.1 **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.
- 81.2 **Annual Audit 2023/24** – to note any updates. Correspondence received from External Auditor. Decision is likely to be received in approximately two weeks and the cost is approximately £5,000 to Ashwell Parish Council.
- 81.3 **Annual Audit 2024/25** – to note any update.
- 81.4 **Annual Audit 2025/26** – to note any updates – See 81.5
- 81.5 **[Unreasonable Complaints Procedure Policy](#) – Proposal to implement Stage 4.3 of the Policy:** *If the disruptive behaviour continues, the Clerk will issue a reminder letter to the complainant advising them that the way in which they will be allowed to contact the Council in future will be restricted.* Reference the letter sent to the Complainant by [Wilkin Chapman Rollits](#).

Cllrs Lee & Mahy left the room and it was proposed that Cllr Yates Chair the item.

Cllr Yates gave a short introduction as to why we are at this point. The Clerk informed the meeting that the behaviours had been ongoing for over 5 years and that the Parish Council held over 80 folders of correspondence from the Complainant. Following advice from the Solicitor, should the Complainant's behaviour continue, Cllrs to decide to move to the next stage of the UCP Policy. Despite the Complainant receiving the Solicitors letter on 20th July 2026, the complainant subsequently issued objections to the external auditor regarding the 2025/26 AGAR and has also engaged in further correspondence with the council and staff. Cllrs resolved to implement the next stage of the Unreasonable Complaints Procedure by issuing a reminder letter setting out restrictions on how the complainant may contact the Parish Council in future. Proposed by Cllr Patterson, seconded by Cllr Duffy.

Action: Clerk

- 81.6 **Insurance renewal** – To review at the October meeting.

81.7 Recording of Parish Council Meeting - To discuss the recording of the Parish Council meeting by a member of the public and whether the Parish Council should request a copy of the recording for its records, having regard to applicable data protection legislation, including the *UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018*. *recording the Parish Council Meeting*.

Cllr Yates was appointed to Chair the item. Following Cllrs Lee & Mahy leaving the room after declaring an interest.

It was noted that Council meetings had been recorded since the Covid period and due to technical issues the Council had voted to no longer use Zoom to record them. Since this period a parishioner had undertaken their own recording. Cllrs resolved not to request a copy of the recording from the parishioner as the Clerk was using Sound Recorder on the laptop to record proceedings.

Date of next Parish Council meeting: 7th October 2026 at 7pm in the Parish Room.

The meeting closed at 21.08 hrs.

DRAFT