

Minutes of Ashwell Parish Council Meeting Wednesday 1st July 2026 at 7pm in the Parish Room

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

Also in attendance: Clerk, Sally Roberts, Deputy Clerk, Nicky Forrester, Cllrs Steve Jarvis and Tom Tyson 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.](#)

- 35 **Apologies for absence.** To receive and accept apologies for absence. Apologies were received from Cllrs Max Patterson and Joan Yates,
- 36 **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 declared.
- 37 **Minutes Proposal** to approve draft minutes of the Parish Council meeting on **3rd June 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 Duffy, all in favour.
- 38 **Parish Issues and Public Participation:** [Protocols for Public Participation in Council Meetings](#)
- 39 **Standing Orders to be suspended**
- 40 **To hear any new matters raised (members of the public and councillors can raise any Parish related matters).**
- 40.1 **To receive any update relating to Village Stores.** It was noted that opening hours are becoming increasingly erratic. The freehold owners Solicitor is aware of the situation in regard to the lease.
- 40.2 **To note [Highways consultation for double yellow lines](#)** at three areas within the village, (Hodwell, the exit from Church Lane onto the High Street, and the corner of West End where cars parked on the approach to the bend force cars into the centre of the road). This is currently in public consultation. Two objections have been received by the Parish Council. All objections will be considered by Highways who will make the final decision.

To note [HCC Speed Management Strategy Survey](#) open until 27th July. This is a public consultation and has been published to the Ashwell HUB and via a newsletter. The public are encouraged to respond. A parishioner suggested a 20mph limit should be set on all Byways Open to All Traffic (BOAT) where they are located in residential areas (e.g. The Ruddery) and asked for the Parish Council's consideration to endorse. Cllr Jarvis advised that the legal speed limit is confusing in some areas such as the Ruddery and Ashwell Street. Parish Council to

complete the survey and the Clerk is to resend a newsletter to encourage residents to engage in the consultation.

Action: Clerk

- 40.3 **To discuss Community Based Speed Monitoring.** Cllr Jarvis highlighted the challenges to implement this task following a conversation with the Police Crime & Commissioner and suggested that APC discuss with PCSO Braybrook. Clerk to make contact with PCSO Braybrook.

Action: Clerk

- 40.4 **To note request to hold a [young children's fun fair](#)** at the recreation ground in September. Councillors were in favour of holding the fun fair at the rec providing the rec is not in use by sports clubs or that it damages the grass. Deputy Clerk to check with Sports Clubs re their games schedules, if there is no conflict of dates, APC will respond in the affirmative, proposing an intended charge of £100+ per night pro rata to event hours vs food events. **Action: Deputy Clerk**

- 40.5 **To note the retirement of Cllr Hoffman.** APC has received a letter from Cllr Hoffman who has retired from the Parish Council with immediate effect. Cllr David Sims has also sent a letter of resignation, retiring, due to long term ill health. Electoral Services have been notified. Both Councillors have been long-standing members of the Parish Council, contributing greatly across a range of activities, and are commended for their services and Parish Councillors send their thanks and gratitude to them both.

- 40.6 **To propose [Parish Councillor volunteer to undertake signage of the Icknield Way](#)** – East and West Sections. Cllr Button volunteered, with the option for additional councillors to assist. The Clerk will liaise with the Secretary of the Icknield Way and Cllr Button. Tasks include identifying post locations, exploring support from local farmers for installation, and sourcing posts. Secretary of the Icknield Way should be able to advise who might be consulted in respect of posts installation.

Action: Clerk / Cllr Button

A Parishioner commented on the Slip End ten house planning application, querying whether a S106 bid was submitted and if there remains an opportunity to do so. The parishioner stated that there is a likelihood that a national direction towards increased delegation of planning decisions will be adopted to enable faster housing delivery.

Concern was expressed that continued development will impact our villages, heritage, history, and community identity whilst putting pressure on roads. Planners may deem Ashwell sustainable due to its school, shops, GP surgery, dentist etc, thus reducing reliance on cars.

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

- 40.7.1 To receive a report from HCC Leader, Cllr Steve Jarvis. The A505 resurfacing works to address defects on both sides of the tunnel from the Wallington junction to the roundabout is to be carried out.

An online meeting on safety improvements to the A505 has been requested with parish engagement and is scheduled for approx. 2 weeks time. Clerk to contact a local parishioner to enquire if they wish to take part, alternatively Cllr Lee will participate. Clerk to notify Cllr Jarvis.

Action: Clerk

- 40.7.2 To receive a report from District Councillor, Tom Tyson. There is a tree giveaway initiative currently running with a fund for approx 100,000 native tree 'whips' and is available via

the “Your Tree, Our Future” link: <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/recycling-waste-and-environment/countryside-management/news-and-campaigns/tree-giveaway.aspx> Trees are expected to be delivered in December. APC discussed potential for inclusion at the Springs project. Deputy Clerk to investigate. **Action: Deputy Clerk**

Local Plan: Scoping work and settlement hierarchy has been completed. Next consultation including Call for Sites submissions is scheduled for October. NHC has published the Design Code SPD and updates to the S106 SPD; details available on the NHC website. Local Plan and its timetable to be added as a recurring Agenda Item and Clerk to send around the timetable to councillors. **Action: Clerk**

Planning - The National Scheme of Delegation will change how applications are determined by local authorities. Smaller applications (up to 9 dwellings) and minor commercial proposals will be decided by planning officers, removing them from Planning Committee consideration. This will be effective from 31 October 2026.

Standing Orders to be reinstated

- 41 **Reports from Working Groups.** To receive oral updates from relevant leaders/members and agree any actions that require Parish Council input/approval.
- 41.1 **Planning Advisory Working Group.** To note any updates. Cllr Button to investigate the situation raised regarding the S106 application re Slip End. He will also follow up with NHC Planning Officer Anne McDonald re a meeting to discuss the Local Plan process and whether s.106 applications can be made due to the impact on the SSSI at The Springs from developments in other settlements nearby. Councillors Mahy and Button to consider setting up a wider working group to utilise skills and experience of parishioner volunteers in relation to the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan. **Action: Cllrs Button/Mahy**
- 41.2 **Access to Ashwell station** includes the cycle/footway route and car parking. No further updates, although concerns have been fed to Urban & Civic at Growing Baldock update, see notes below Minutes.
- 41.3 **Zero Carbon Ashwell (ZCA) Group.** (Cllrs Lee & Duffy). To note any updates. The Working Group is progressing with the developer and was hoping to hold a Public meeting prior to the school holidays; this will be deferred until September.
- 42 **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.

New Planning Applications:

- 42.1 **26/01269/LBC:** 28 Hodwell, Listed Building Consent: Internal and external alterations to curtilage-listed outbuilding (toilet block). No concerns from Cllrs, no objection.
- 42.2 **26/01484/LBC:** 57 High Street, Listed Building Consent : Replace existing front door. No concerns from Cllrs, no objection.
- 43 **Existing Applications,** any updates:
- 43.1 **25/02571/OP:** Growing Baldock. To note planning amendments have been submitted. See notes attached to agenda.

- 43.2 **24/01444/FP:** Land Between Huntsridge and Ashwell House 5 High Street Erection of 14 dwellings (including affordable housing), (Hunts Close). English Rural is in discussion with the NHC Housing Officer with the hope to bring the affordable dwellings into English Rural Housing Association, subject to S106 change.
- 44 **Planning Summary** – To note
- 45 **Tree consultations** (Conservation Area and TPO) received from NHC. To agree responses to any received,
- 46 **Tree Planning Summary** – To note
- 46.1 **26/01472/TCA:** The Lodge, Merchant Taylors Close, T1: Walnut - Reduce overall crown by 2.5m. Application submitted by the Parish Council.
- 46.2 **26/01591/TCA:** Spring House, 7 High Street, T1 Silver Birch, fell to ground level, T2 Medlar fell to ground level, T3 Cork Screw Hazel fell for ground level, T4 Sycamore reduce in height by 4 – 5 meters. None of the work is visible and is within a mature rear garden, Cllrs have no objection.
- 47 **Footpath at Townsend Meadow** – No further updates from NHC.
- 48 **Reports from Committees**
- 48.1 HR Committee. No updates.
- 49 **Reports from parish councillors on premises and other responsibilities. To receive oral reports and agree any actions needed.**
- 49.1 The Springs. Proposal for mix of tree replacements. APC to put in an application for whips through the ‘Your Tree Our Future’ scheme. **Action: Deputy Clerk**
- 49.2 St Mary’s Churchyard Grounds Maintenance. Work concurrent with Grounds Maintenance Contract.
- 49.3 Recreation Ground including the playground, pavilion and public toilets. To receive any updates from **Pavilion Working Group**. Plans to reseed areas around the goal mouths at the Rec are ongoing and once the work has been completed the ACCIES will water the areas to assist the grass to be in good order for the September season.
- 49.4 Small Gains and Track – Legal agreement, APC are liaising with the village Solicitor who is currently working on the agreement.
- Cemetery – To note any updates from Cllr Mahy. To discuss and agree action plan for **Holm Oaks management at the cemetery**. Quotes have been received for the felling of two trees and replacement with hornbeams which are more manageable and slower growing. It was agreed that Quote 1 be accepted, subject to clarification of price for one tree only.
- Action : Deputy Clerk**
- 49.5 To receive a verbal update on proposed licence agreement for ACCIES. Still ongoing and finalisation is expected shortly.

50 **Finance and Governance**

- 50.1 **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.
- 50.2 **Budget 2025/26 Update** – No updates, to be removed from agenda next month.
- 50.3 **Annual Audit 2023/24 & 2024/25** financial year – Still in the hands of the external auditor for a decision.
- 50.4 **Annual Audit 2025/26** financial year – [External Audit Submission](#) has been sent to PKF Littlejohn.
- 50.5 **To consider an application for co-option** to fill the vacancy on the Parish Council and to agree any appointments. It was noted that an application by Curtis Farrington had been made and that Curtis comes highly recommended. Thanks were given by Cllr Mahy and Cllr Button to Curtis who they consider will be a valuable addition to the team. It was proposed to invite Curtis to join the Parish Council by Cllr Mahy and 2nd by Cllr Button; all in favour. **Action: Clerk**
- 51 **Date of next Parish Council meeting:** 5th August 2026 at 7pm in the Parish Room.

Meeting closed at 8.15pm.

Signed

Date

See above item 43.1

NOTES FROM Urban & Civic - Baldock Expansion Update - 19 June 2026

Those present: The Communities, Communications & Partnerships Representative and the Development Manager from Urban & Civic. Graham Lee and Sally Roberts from Ashwell Parish Council.

Introduction

The meeting provided an update on the Baldock expansion planning application, including progress since submission, key changes, transport modelling, education provision, and community concerns.

Planning Application Update

The outline planning application was submitted in October 2025. This triggered a second (Reg 25) consultation, mainly due to delays in completing the HCC COMET transport model. The transport modelling has now been completed and the links below provide updates:

- [Growing Baldock Transport Update - Growing Baldock](#)
- [Updates submitted to North Herts Council – March 2026 - Growing Baldock](#)

Next Steps

S106 agreement is expected to be signed by end of 2026. If approved it will focus on detailed design work.

Ongoing engagement by U&C includes, Advisory and Community forums, Parish Council meeting and Stakeholder discussions.

Education

No land will be allocated for a Special Educational Needs school. Instead, a financial contribution will be made.

Secondary school provision remains undecided, this will either be an expansion of the existing Knights Templar school, or a new (Knights Templar) secondary school. The education authority has not confirmed a preferred option yet. Plans are for to also engage with Year 8 students in September.

Transport and Infrastructure

U&C advised that the COMET transport model has been verified and tested by consultants and it confirms the development is viable and functional from a transport perspective. It includes testing of traffic scenarios and identifies required improvements.

Planned transport measures will be several highway interventions such as upgrades to J9 of the A1M and there is a long-term mitigation fund in the form of a 'pot of money' for unforeseen issues.

Roads, Walking, and Cycling

Part of Bygrave Road will become a walking and cycling route and this change will occur once a new bridge is operational and a link road is completed.

The Council Approach is strong focus on reducing car usage and promoting active travelling, ie walking & cycling.

Ashwell Parish Council Concerns

Impact to resident from nearby villages and the northern part of the expansion are less convenient routes to the station along with safety and the practicality of walking/cycling and the impact of weather.

Public Transport Plans

A shuttle bus service is planned and expected frequency is every 15 minutes and will connect the development to Baldock station. This is likely to operate into the evening and discussions with bus providers are ongoing. There are limitations as developers can fund improvements related to the development via S106, but cannot resolve existing wider bus service issues such as Ashwell connections.

Parking and Station Access

Concern expressed by Ashwell PC is that the proposed changes will push more users to Ashwell station. The developer's position states that transport modelling suggests no significant shift to Ashwell station and focus remains on changing travel behaviour, not increasing parking.

Park and Ride Proposal

Ashwell PC suggest a small-scale park and ride facility to serve Ashwell, Bygrave, and surrounding villages. Whilst it is acknowledged that the Cambridge park and ride model does not reflect the scale of Growing Baldock, a small park and ride area could accommodate surrounding village residents using Baldock station.

U&C advised that the aim is to reduce the need for car dependency and encourage sustainable travel which is the plan for long-term behavioural change. Concerns however were raised by Ashwell PC that there is continual housing growth in the surrounding villages which will exacerbate the impact on station use and the need for access to the station by car.

U&C to take Ashwell PC's request to Transport Consultant at the next meeting and will follow up on park and ride consideration and transport modelling clarifications. **Action: U&C**