

## Minutes of Ashwell Parish Council Meeting Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026 at 7pm in the Parish Room

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

Also in attendance: Clerk, Sally Roberts, Deputy Clerk, Nicky Forrester, Cllrs Jarvis and Tyson, and 8 members of the public.

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

**154 Apologies for absence.** To receive and accept apologies for absence. Apologies were received from Cllrs Sims and Yates who are unwell.

**155 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 Button declared a (non-registrable interest) in item 159.1 and will not participate in the discussion or decision. Cllrs Lee & Mahy declared an interest in item 167.5 as both are both Directors of the CLT, and will leave the room during the discussion and vote.

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

**157 Minutes Proposal** to approve draft minutes of the Parish Council meeting on [4<sup>th</sup> March 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 Button, all in favour.

**Action: Clerk/Chair**

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

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

**157.1.1** To note request for additional [dog poo waste bin or to move existing bin](#) at Station Road/Ashwell Street.

It was noted that NHC has changed servicing of the bins to Tuesdays. This schedule is set for geographical route reasons. It was noted that heavier use at weekends means some bins overflow by Monday.

It was considered that some dog owners may be putting house-hold dog waste into the bins rather than just that used when walking the dog. If this is the case, the council wish

to remind residents that dog poo from the garden can be double bagged and put into the purple domestic bin.

The cost of a larger bin and/or addition was requested, Clerk to establish costs and options. Cllrs were asked to observe which bins are under utilised, ie not overflowing by a Monday morning as a potential option to move a bin. **Action: Clerk**

A parishioner queried item 153.6 on the Minutes of the 4<sup>th</sup> March 2026 meeting. Cllr Mahy confirmed that there was no requirement for the MO to re-check the statement made under this item.

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

157.2.1 To receive a report from HCC Leader, Cllr Steve Jarvis.

A505 study into safety is expected in April. The section of road will be from the Radio Station to Royston.

LGR Government recent announcement for Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk, was to opt for the largest number of small councils. This might be a projection for what could happen in Hertfordshire.

Franchise bus services are likely to involve public engagement. It will have an impact on the way bus services in general are run.

157.2.2 To receive a report from District Councillor, Tom Tyson. Bin collection, please refer to the NHC app or website which gives up to date bin collection days over bank holiday periods.

Growing Baldock – U&C have revised traffic plans, there are highway issues, revisions will be opened up again to the public for response. Central Bedfordshire have made comments.

Action Point – Cllr Tyson to advise Cllr Lee of best contact at Settle in respect of Wolverley House. **Action: Cllr Tyson**

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

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

158.1 Planning Advisory Working Group. To note any updates – S106 Claim was sent to NHC in respect to the Planning application for the Senuna Park extension, and this has been forwarded to the developer.

158.2 Access to Ashwell station includes the cycle/footway route and car parking. To note any updates. Cllr Lee wrote to Chair of Steeple Morden PC, awaiting response.

158.3 Zero Carbon Ashwell (ZCA) Group. (Cllrs Lee & Duffy). To note any updates. Currently at the 2<sup>nd</sup> stage report from consultants who are preparing final draft report. 2<sup>nd</sup> stage grant payment has been made by CEE and the Consultant has been paid.

159 **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.

159.1 **26/00589/FPH** : 7 Colbron Close : Insertion of 2 rooflights to existing front roof slope and 3 rooflights to existing rear roof slope to facilitate loft conversion.

Four Parish Councillors (Cllr Button did not participate in the discussion or vote), reached no decision to either approve or object to this application as there was a 50:50 split of councillors views. Reasons for support: no obvious impact to neighbours; application appears to be consistent with neighbouring properties. Reasons for objection: A loft development turns a 3 bed into a 4 bed dwelling which conflicts with Neighbourhood Plan; Absence of clarification as to what Article 4 relates to. Clerk to write to Planning Officer. **Action: Clerk**

- 159.2 **26/00472/FP** : 69 High Street : Erection of external bar servery and stretch tent including ramp. [Back up notes from applicant](#) and [Parish Council](#). Following lengthy discussions, Parish Councillors resolved not to support the current application for lack of clarity over many issues and general concerns, these are: Concern over possible disturbance to neighbours from noise; Intensification of the use of the site as well as physical structure; Clarification to be requested on possible alternative positioning of the additional structures; and potential use of acoustic barriers to reduce noise. Clerk to write to the Planning Officer. **Action: Clerk**

### **Standing Orders reconvened**

#### **160 Current Applications: any updates:**

- 160.1 **24/01444/FP**: Land Between Hunts Ridge and Ashwell House, 5 High Street : Erection of 14 dwellings (including affordable housing). No further updates.
- 160.2 **25/02571/OP** Growing Baldock. To note planning amendments have been submitted. Comments may be made until 17<sup>th</sup> April 2026. See Cllr Tysons comments under 157.2.2.
- 160.3 **25/02547/FP** : Land off Station Road, South & West of Senuna Park. No further updates.

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

- 162 **Footpath at Townsend Meadow** - To note any updates. Ongoing, currently with NHC.

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

- 163.1 **26/00629/TCA** : Elder – Remove : 4A Dixies Close. Cllrs resolved to approve, but pruning would be preferred to removal. Clerk to notify Planning Officer **Action: Clerk**
- 163.2 **26/00634/TCA** : T1: Apple - Pollard, back to previous points. T2: Prune - Reduce the height by 3-4m and shape the crown, cutting to viable growth where possible : 8 Woodforde Close. Cllrs resolved to approve. Clerk to notify Planning Officer **Action: Clerk**
- 163.3 **26/00710/TCA** : 2x Cherry Laurels, Bay Laurel, Japanese Spindle, Windmill Palm, Common Dodder – Remove : 22 Dixies Close. Cllrs resolved to approve. Clerk to notify Planning Officer. **Action Clerk**
- 163.4 **26/00754/TCA** : 40 High Street : T1: Prunus - Prune growth back to original. T2: Gingko Fell. T3: Apple - Remove bough overhanging neighbours garden. Cllrs resolved to approve. Clerk to notify Planning Officer **Action: Clerk**
- 163.5 **26/00780/TCA** : T1, G1: Lilac, T2 Spruce, T5, T7: Apple, T6: Sycamore - Fell. T3: Sorbus - Reduce height by up to 5m, lateral reduction of up to 3m (1.5m each side) and lift canopy to achieve up to a 3m clearance from the ground. T4: Holly - Reduce height by up to 3m, lateral reduction of up to 2m (1m each side) and lift canopy to achieve up to 3m clearance from the ground: 17 Hodwell.

Cllrs resolved to approve, but to request replacement with native species. Clerk to notify Planning Officer.

**Action: Clerk**

#### 164 [Tree Planning Summary](#)

#### 165 Reports from Committees

165.1 HR Committee. To receive an oral report and agree any actions. From w/c 13<sup>th</sup> April the Office will be open Monday to Wednesday 9.30am – 2.30pm There will be no reduction of hours worked for Clerk or Deputy Clerk.

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

166.1 The Springs. Report from Cllr Hoffman. [To note correspondence received by the PC.](#) Sycamore stumps have been left higher than anticipated. Deputy Clerk to investigate.

**Action: Deputy Clerk**

166.2 St Mary's Churchyard Grounds Maintenance. Report from Cllr Hoffman. First grass cut has been carried out, no further updates.

166.3 Recreation Ground including the playground, pavilion and public toilets. To receive any updates from [Pavilion Working Party](#) (since last WG notes dated 9<sup>th</sup> Feb 2026). Included in actions will be the playground area. Information has been received from NHC playgrounds contact. Cllrs are checking which items are most heavily used. This will be fed to Ashwell School for consultation with children, siblings and parents via a questionnaire. **Action: Cllrs**

Damage to pavilion – two incidents of damage to the pavilion have recently occurred. Police have been notified, crime number allocated and eye witness accounts have been logged with the Police. Parish Council to submit insurance claim for damages.

166.4 Small Gains and Track – To note any updates from Cllr Lee. Cllrs Button & Lee held a meeting with Chair of the ACCIES and representative of the Cricket Club to discuss agreement over the usage of small gains. Awaiting a revision from ACCIES re payment timings.

166.5 Cemetery – To note any updates from Cllr Mahy. No plans for another working party until probably in October. Neighbours have raised concerns over the Holm Oaks size, debris and over shadowing which is causing. Deputy Clerk to arrange quotes for removal of some trees vs pruning. There are no TPOs on the trees. **Action: Deputy Clerk**

166.6 Street furniture - To note any updates Cllr Mahy. No updates.

#### 167 Finance and Governance

167.1 **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. These will be summarised when year end accounts are available.

167.2 **Budget 2025/26 Update** – To note any updates. No further updates

167.2.1 To receive a verbal update on proposed licence agreement for ACCIES. See point 166.4.

**167.3 Annual Audit 2023/24 & 2024/25** – To note any updates. No further updates.

**167.3.1** Annual Audit for the 2023/24 financial year. Awaiting a response from the External Auditor.

**167.3.2** 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.

**167.4 Annual Audit 2025/26** – No further updates.

**167.5 CLT Payments** – to consider request for approval from S137 to pay for Parish Room hire (approx. £27) for the AGM of the Ashwell Community Land Trust and for [the annual membership renewal fee](#) (£180), both payments due in April.

Cllrs Lee & Mahy left the room as both had declared an interest. Cllr Button agreed to chair the meeting.

Cllr Button suspended Standing Orders whilst a parishioner spoke about: CLT renewal papers attached with the agenda; responsibility of where CLT lies; running costs of CLT; when is the CLT to be financially independent?

Cllr Button reconvened Standing Orders.

Cllr Button asked councillors to consider a request for approval to pay membership of £180 and room hire of approximate cost £27 - both payments due in April.

*Request of renewal of membership is sent to the Ashwell Parish Council Clerk's email address who forwarded to the Secretary of the CLT (previous APC Clerk), CLT Secretary verbally requested APC Clerk to put to Councillors for their consideration.*

It was resolved that the payments be made (*under S137 Local Government Act 1972*) Cllr Duffy proposed, all Cllrs in favour.

Cllrs Lee and Mahy rejoined the meeting.

The meeting closed at 9pm - Date of next PC meeting and AGM : 6<sup>th</sup> May 2026 at 7pm in the Parish Room.