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ASHENDON PARISH COUNCIL

Draft Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held in the Village Hall.

Monday 8th January 2026 at 7.30pm

PRESENT:

Councillors: Fiona Jacobs **(FJ),** Luke Jamieson **(LJ),** Sian Miller **(SM),** Venetia Davies **(Clerk and RFO)**. Richard Phillips **(RP)** and Ashley Waite **(AW),** Bucks Councillor.

Parishioners: There were no Parishioners present.

Parishioners Question Time (PQT).

There were no questions.

1. **Apologies**
   Chris Rand **(CR)**.

2. **Declarations of Interests**
   Luke Jamieson, Chair of Ashendon Community Pub Society Limited, declared an interest in Ashendon Village Community Pub.

3. **Approval of Minutes – Monday 17th November 2025.**
   The Draft Minutes of the November meeting were accepted as a true record and signed by Vice Chair, Sian Miller.

4. **Matters Arising**
   - **Replacement of structure – Dorton brook bridge.** Reconstruction of bridge (Point A) requires Environment Agency approval. Rights of Way intend to rebuild the bridge in this financial year (April 2025- March 2026) using Rights of Way capital projects money. The route will be closed during works. **ACTION: CLERK** to follow-up.
   - **PC Governance - Website.** **ACTION: CLERK** to register Councillor emails with .gov.uk at a cost of £17.49 + VAT per month.
   - **Wotton Road footpath**. The Parish Council is consider staging the works as funding allows. A quote for sections of the footpath has been received. Clerk is awaiting confirmation on procurement from BMALC as there is concern that the *clear rules for below the £30k procurements, procurements which are above £30k and below the threshold which are notifiable and, when do notices or full tenders apply* need clarifying. **ACTION: AW** to confirm if planning permission is required and recommend other contractors and funders. AW suggested looking into a public works loan and will put the PC in touch with Berryfields Parish Council. **ACTION: PC** to follow up suggestion of loan.
   - **Salt Bins.** All salt bins have been refilled. The purchase and installation of new black salt bins have been agreed in principle (£249.00 (400L) and £199.95 (200L) plus installation costs - locations to be agreed but suggestions are Wotton Rd opposite Hill Cottages,

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corner of Wotton Rd and Main St, Lower End opposite the graveyard, corner of The Close, entrance to Upper Pollicott, bottom of Lower End). As these will be PC owned, there will be cost of £100 per refill, per bin. Buckinghamshire Council has confirmed this fee cannot be waived. **ACTION: AW** to request waived refill costs and report by w/c 12th January. If this is not agreed, the PC will consider purchasing its own supply of salt.

- **Community What's App group for road closures**. **ACTION: AW** to set up Community What's App group and distribute link. **CLERK** to promote via the Village website.

5. Co-option of Councillor

The Parish Council can co-opt to fill this seat without a vacancy notice and advertise via various avenues, the seat not 'spare' and not due to a resignation. **Ongoing.**

6. Contributions from Buckinghamshire Councillor

AW updated the meeting. Highways defects are to be reported via Fix My Street. Buckinghamshire Council has proposed balanced budget plan. Please see details here. Central government's 'Fair Funding Review' has resulted in Buckinghamshire losing out by £44.4 million. Council Tax cannot be increased by more than 5% without central government consent. AW is a member of the Freight Strategy team devising the next Transport Strategy. The Freight Strategy will look at recording HGV's as they enter a village, signage and enforcement. A meeting to progress Freight Strategy is being held 2nd week February. The PC stressed concerns over the roadside erosion caused by HGV vehicles and tractors and stressed the safety hazards for cyclists and walkers. The A41 will be closed overnight w/c 12th January 2026.

7. Reports from Councillors attending meetings and outside organisations.

There were none.

8. Correspondence

- Highways Devolution Review update. Email from Buckinghamshire Council outlining key changes and decisions to Devolution Agreements. In summary, individual Local Council agreements will be replaced with an overarching Memorandum of Understanding or funding agreement; Local Councils will receive annual funding notifications following Buckinghamshire Council's budget approval in February, sign and bollard cleaning will be excluded from devolved services, the current funding level will be maintained with annual inflationary increases.
- Grass cutting will be increased to £320 (from £300) for 20256/27.
- Dog Bins. A Parishioner requested the Parish Council consider the installation of dog bins. As previously, the Parish Council agreed the expense outweighed the number of users.

9. PC Governance

Assertion 10 is a new, mandatory requirement for Town and Parish Council's in their Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for the 2025/26 financial year. **ACTION: CLERK** to circulate new IT Policy for adoption at March meeting. **ALL** to operate from .gov.uk emails.

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10. Ashendon Village Community Pub

Luke Jamieson updated the meeting. The Management Committee were very pleased that the pub opened the whole way through 2025 including all the way up to Christmas. The Committee is thrilled to have found its first tenant to run the pub. The new tenants, whose approach is highly professional, received the keys on 1st January 2026. Renovations are being made to the facilities. The Ash Tree will be opening during February and will include modern pub food, fine dining restaurant and rooms.

11. Speed Safety Projects

- **Gen6 Speed Indicator Device (Mains) - HS2 Road Safety Fund** (Ref: RSF76)**.** Ashendon is one of the 18 (out of 24 schemes) that have been approved by the HS2 RSF Project Board for a new Gen6 SiD Flex at Traffic Technology Limited. **ACTION: CLERK** to monitor.
- **20's Plenty**. Fiona Jacob has reinstated the 20's Plenty campaign. Date for submission of poster designs agreed as 8th March. **ACTION: FJ** to progress.

12. Footpath Projects

- **Safe Footpath from Pollicott to Village End.** Ongoing.
- **Footpath/Rights of Way improvements (accessible gates).** The North Bucks rRIPLE (ramblers Repairing and Improving Public Paths for Leisure and Exercise) has identified a circular walk that incorporates Ashendon, Musk Hill Farm, Watbridge Farm and Nether Winchendon. It has previous been suggested a Footpath Working Party be formed for regular clearance and to identify access points/routes that are most used. **ACTION: SM**/Andy Howes to walk the suggested route and report on conditions/restrictions and give recommendations. **CR** to approach landowner. rRIPPLE operates Donate-a-Gate scheme, a scheme whereby anyone can donate to (pedestrian gates £350, kissing gates £500).

13. Finance

a. Balance from Minutes of previous meeting (17th November 2025)**: £59,774.66**

- **Receipts: £0.00**
- **Less Standing Orders/Direct Debits: £895.37** (Clerk Salary £685.20 + Hugo Fox £23.98, Npower £186.19)
- **Plus Outstanding BACS payments: £0.00**
- **Balance of Bank Account: £58,879.29** (as at 23rd December 2025)
- **Available Funds: £58,879.29** (balance of bank account less unpresented BACS)

b. Orders for Payment: £1,385.37

- **Venetia Davies - £26.37** (Clerk travel + Internal Auditor).
- **Ashendon Village Hall - £159.00** (Hall hire and storage of filing cabinet)
- **Ashendon Playing Field Association - £1,200.00** (annual grant towards the upkeep of the playing fields).
- **BALANCE: £57,493.92 (Available Funds less Orders for Payment)**

c. **Budget/Precept.** The budget and project considerations for 2026/27 were discussed. An *above* inflationary increase in normal expenditure was demonstrated across key expenditure including clerk salary, grass cutting and insurance. Councillors agreed this gave good reason to increase the precept by a modest amount. It was agreed that the

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most pressing project remains the Wotton Road Footpath (due to lack of funding, a public work loan will be researched). Other high priority projects for the village in 2026/27 include a safe footpath from Pollicott, improved footpaths, replacement of all 5 salt bins (many are dilapidated and beyond repair) and any 'light touch' traffic calming measures. It was noted that there will be an annual subscription of £280.00 for the new SiD and an annual electricity charge of approximately £25.00. The Buckinghamshire Council Devolution grant may well decreased/cease. Considering the above, Councillors **agreed** (Proposed LJ, seconder FJ) to increase the precept from £19,000.00 to £20,000.00 resulting in Band D Tax **estimated** £151.76 (from £144.17 in 2025/26), a 5.26% increase. **ACTION: CLERK** to return Precept request to Buckinghamshire Council and update the budget accordingly.

14. Planning

- **PL/25/5149/FA: Jasmine House, Main Street, Ashendon, HP18 0HB**
  Proposal: Demolition of existing dwelling. Erection of two dwellings and extension of dropped kerb. **Comment by:** 12th January 2026**. ACTION: CLERK** to return NO OBJECTIONS to Buckinghamshire Council.
- **Neighbourhood Plan for Ashendon**. Ashendon does not currently have a housing requirement (this to be confirmed through the HELAA of the Bucks Local Plan in early 2026). A Steering Group could commence the Neighbourhood Plan now (vision and data collection) but complete the Neighbourhood Plan in line with the Local Plan when indicative housing numbers are known. It was agreed the principal policies of an Ashendon Neighbourhood Plan will be to protect views, ensure good design (aesthetics of building) and retention of space. It was **agreed** to prepare for the first step of the process. **ACTION: SM/LJ** to signify the area the neighbourhood plan is for and prepare: *(a) a map which identifies the area to which the area application relates; (b) a statement explaining why this area is considered appropriate to be designated as a neighbourhood area; and (c) a statement that the organisation or body making the area application is a relevant body for the purposes of section 61G of the 1990 Act.* **ALL** to agree to apply for Neighbourhood Area Designation at the March meeting. **CLERK** to agenda item.

15. Items for Information including Diary Dates:

- **Invitation to Community Currents Workshop - Your Parish's Rivers and Freshwater Ecology** - Tuesday 20th January at 6.30pm, Waddesdon Village Hall.
- **West Bucks Community Board** - Thursday 22nd January 2026 at 6.30pm, online.
- **Greatmoor Meeting -** 02 February 2026 at 6pm.
- **Litter Pick. ACTION: ALL** to suggest March date.

16. Date and Time of Next Meeting:

Monday 9th March 2026 at 7.30pm in Ashendon Village Hall
ANNUAL VILLAGE MEETING – MONDAY 20th April 2026