2025/01a

ASHENDON ANNUAL VILLAGE MEETING

Minutes of Annual Village Meeting held in The Village Hall
Monday 14th April 2025 at 7.00pm

Chair: Chris Rand, Chair
Clerk: Venetia Davies, Clerk
Attendance: There were 19 Parishioners including Councillor Ashley Waite, Police Constable Eleanor Fenemore and PC Newall.

1. **Apologies**
   There were no apologies.

2. **Minutes of previous Annual Village Meeting held on Monday 15th April 2024.**
   Draft Minutes were accepted by the meeting as a true record and signed by Chair, Chris Rand.

3. **Matters Arising**
   There were no matters arising.

4. **Waddesdon & Haddenham Neighbourhood Team.**
   PC Eleanor Fenemore introduce herself and PC Newall. The team covers a large area in Buckinghamshire with many different issues. Main priorities including speeding, theft from motor vehicles and burglaries, the order of which changes through the seasons. Currently there is a serious increase in theft from motor vehicles. There has also been a lot of rural crime on farms. Please keep vigilant of vehicles you see and anything suspicious and call 101 or 999. Thames Valley Alerts is a free email messaging system where you can receive regular crime updates, information on ongoing incidents and crime prevention relevant to your local area. Please sign up by clicking the link.

5. **The Ash Tree – Luke Jamieson**
   Report filed and available to view here. A year ago, the Ashendon Community Pub Society received confirmation that it secured £250,000 from the government's Community Ownership Fund to purchase the pub, along with an additional £50,000 to cover initial running costs. This gave the foundation to launch a share sale to raise the remaining funds needed. With the efforts of so many people, enough money was raised to buy the pub. The Ash Tree opened just before Christmas. The Society is now seeking a tenant. It is planned to open the B&B and kitchen by 1st May. Please read the full report for a complete insight of what has been achieved. Felicity thanked everyone involved for making the community pub happen and said we need to remember what an amazing community we are living in.

6. **Ashendon Community Speed Watch – Richard Phillips**
   This year has been taken up with practicalities, developing a sensible Health and Safety manual. and physical maintenance. The team has concentrated less on data analytics, i.e. recording those who speed but rather what we are good at, keeping traffic from speeding in the first

place, by continual re-deployments of the Speed Indicator Device (SiD) and whenever possible, site/time specific display messaging, together with the help of village volunteers the teams of friendly traffic greeters. SiD constantly monitors traffic- if only to record the evidence of overwhelming diversions of traffic, such as 600% increase in traffic recorded over the weekend horribilis last August. Last year, several nearby SiD installations were vandalised to remove their apparently valuable batteries. Because it is widely known that SiD's have a recording ability, the SiDs were also stolen or damaged beyond repair to prevent any evidence of theft being retrieved. To try to prevent this Happening in Ashendon, security on our own SiD, a very valuable piece of equipment in both is traffic management capabilities and replacement cost, has been increased to include the provision of cctv monitoring, extra locks, strong chains and a dye canister. This is particularly pertinent for lessons learned to be applied in the future - as we have passed into the final stage of a grant & procurement process to obtain a sophisticated custom programable "Super SiD", designated for the East Farm site and will be applying all the lessons learned for security and need for permanent power to this installation, should we successfully pass through the final procurement stage. Regrettably last year, our very successful season of Sid Sitting-or traffic greeting was constantly curtailed by bad weather. The team is hoping to remedy this shortly with a new campaign. Once again, I would like to commend to you your team of volunteers, Paul Horwood, Peter Johnson, Chris Pullin and myself Richard Phillips, constantly trying to make a difference to the quality of life in our village, which according to past evidence, working together with SiD sitters, we do beyond expectation. Please contact **Richard Phillips - therichardphillips@hotmail.com**

7. Ashendon Parish Council – Chris Rand

The PC has had a fairly active year. Funds have been spent on a new defibrillator, a grant to support The Ash Tree, a donation to Ashendon Playing Fields Association for grass cutting, as well as grass cutting in the village, a devolved service from Buckinghamshire Council. The commemorative Elm tree has now been planted in the Playing Field. In January, the PC had to make the difficult decision to increase the Precept by £1,000 (an increase of 5.56%) to cover rising costs and to build a fund for new projects including replacement salt bins, a safer footpath from Pollicott to Ashendon and the ongoing Wotton Road footpath. Funding for the Wotton Road footpath was rejected by HS2 at the Stage 2 tranche but other funds are being sought. Before summer, Pollicott road had a full service. There has been a lot of damage done in the village from vehicle movements through the village. There was a very successful litter pick, kindly arranged by Fiona Jacobs. Other concerns have been Open Reach broadband and speeding through the village – a reason why the PC tries to support Richard and his speed watch team as much as possible. Sian updated the meeting – Pollicotts, Forge Close and Brick Hill have been added to Openreach Ultra Full Fibre build plans. Sian will contact Openreach and Greg Smith to push for Lower End, Main Street and Watbridge Cottages. Chris said that one of the biggest concerns now is the extent of development at Westcott Venture Park that will inevitably cause increased traffic through the village. Chris thanked Les Curtis for all his work on the Parish Council since he joined in 2012. The Parish Council will look to co-opt. He also thanked Venetia and Councillors for all of their work, and thanked Ashley Waite for his contributions and continuous help.

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A **Financial Report** was circulated which detailed expenditure in 2024-25, grants and projects received, and planned expenditure for 2025-26.

8. Ashendon Playing Fields Association (APFA) - Andy Theobald.

Report filed and available to view here. Four meetings have been held including the AGM on 22nd February 2025. The next meeting is on **Tuesday 13th May** at the Playing Field Pavilion Please come along if you are interested in joining the Association. End of year account have been submitted to the Charity Commission website. The APFA has done a thorough cost exercise - running costs are around £3-3.5k per annum once main outgoings and income are accounted for. Andy thanked the Parish Council for its annual contribution towards grass cutting. Insurance costs are over £1,000 this year (maintenance). The Association is looking at the option of doing the grass cutting for the playing field and paddock themselves to see if its more cost effective than using a contractor. An annual playground inspection is book for next month. There is a What's App group whose members regularly monitor the area. Chearsley Men's Football Team and Long Crendon Junior Team are using the facilities. Four allotments are let (£25 per year). The paddock sadly still remains unoccupied. Lottery income provides £442.00 per annum from 10 supporters (17 tickets). Please visit www.valelottery.co.uk and nominate APFA as your chosen cause. You could be in with a chance of winning a £20,000 jackpot! Tickets cost just £1 a week. The Association are looking to do more fundraising now that the pub is underway. The possibility of a village orchard was raised which could be supported with Community Board funding.

9. Ashendon Village Hall - Richard Bates

The Village Hall continues to flourish and despite the village's small population, the hall is hired on a regular basis, pretty much once or twice every week. At the last AGM the treasurer reported that the hall's finances were in a healthy state with excess receipts over expenditure of £1,234. Total rental income was £2,500, greatly helped by the steady regular income from Ashendon Voices, (best customers!), the Church, the Parish Council, the WI and the last general election. With finances in a healthy condition, it was agreed at the last AGM not to raise rental charges, so they remain the same as last year (village organisations - £17 per session, private parties for residents - £36 per session, private parties for non-residents - £50 per session) and are surely the lowest rental charges in all Bucks. The hall has just carried out a full fire safety assessment, generously carried out by Pete Jolley. A few small changes were required, mainly signage plus there are now new fire extinguishers with a service contract in place. The fire alarm and smoke alarm are also to be serviced. New small tables have been ordered as has a new shed door and, in the coming year, it is hoped to have the hall redecorated. With so much fund-raising effort going towards the Ash Tree community pub, the hall committee has decided not to hold a fundraising event this year but will review the situation next year. On behalf of all the hall's trustees, Richard thanked all those who use the hall and help to keep this important village asset thriving.

10. The Ashendon Oil Klub – Richard Philips

After many years as Ashendon's very own oil procurement mogul, Roger Pike handed the baton or rather prospectors' hat over to Richard Phillips. Richard has been trying to get the best price for Ashendon's 30, or so, oil fired boiler users by bulking up orders to get the best deal. Comparison with online site show Ashendon is getting very good deals regularly from a local supplier, often bulk purchase savings exceed one off urgent purchases by 5 or 6 pence per litre - a regular 10% saving or £50/£60 per order. There is no longer a fixed joining fee, it's free and participants can make an unspecified fee will donation instead. Our own Clerk shared a very recent example of a local individual purchase at 58p litre, almost at the same times Ashendon's Oil Klub at 52p. That is Ashendon Oil Klub, doing its best to keep us warm!

11. Dominoes - Kevin Nash

The dominoes team play in Aylesbury District Dominoes League. The team play home and away games every Thursday from October to March. They play the traditional pub game of Fives and Threes and welcome new members to the team. If you have never played before, they are quite willing to teach you, so please contact Kevin Nash or one of the team and see how you like it. Experienced players are also very welcome. The team are looking forward to returning to the Ash Tree for its home games next season. They have been playing at Westcott Cricket Club while the pub has been closed but consider their true home to be the pub. Thank you, Westcott Cricket Club, for allowing the dominoes team to use your facilities. If anyone is interested in learning more about the game or would like to join the team, please contact **Kevin Nash - kevinpnash@yahoo.co.uk.**

12. Red Lion Social Club - Luke Jamieson

Report filed and available to view here. Thanks were paid to all members of the Red Lion Social Club for their dedication in organizing events throughout the year. Luke said their hard work has been part of ensuring Ashendon is very special place. A warm welcome was given to new members: Kerry Yates, Yann Cluchey (treasurer), and Peter Fountain. Luke acknowledged the loss of Kelvin last month after a brief illness. He said Kelvin was a cornerstone of the RLSC, always encouraging and passionate about making Ashendon a vibrant community. He will be deeply missed by us all.

13. Parochial Church Council (PCC) - Peter Johnson, read by Richard Bates

Throughout the year, the PCC has maintained its regular schedule of worship services and developed Peter Johnson's informal service, making use of the new space at the back of the Church. There has been a steady attendance in all services and great feedback of the warm welcome received from both regular parishioners and visitors. In February, the PCC again hosted our *Love Your Church* service, with handwritten personal invitations of thanks to all those villagers who contribute in any way to the maintenance of the church and the production of services each month. There was a record attendance for this service and all enjoyed bacon butties after the service. Acknowledgement and thanks to all those who help run the church are listed in this month's Bernwode News. It is a long list! In September, the PCC held it's Flower Celebration Weekend, organised by Belinda Watt and her team and

incorporated the Benefice service, encouraging villagers from all over the Benefice to join the celebrations with our harvest festival. During the celebrations there were children's activities, a prayer space, flower arranging and cream teas. The whole event was a great success, especially the cream teas and so more cream teas in the church have been organised during the summer, the first of these on **10th May**. During the course of last year, all the work recommended in the PCC's quinquennial report for the church building were carried out. This included repointing cracks in the wall both inside and outside and replacing damaged or missing tiles on the roof above the chancel. The one outstanding problem mentioned in the quinquennial report is the churchyard wall running close to the road. Cutting back the Lime tree has alleviated the problem somewhat, but the wall will need rebuilding in the near future. Other repairs carried out on the church were to the lead roof above the nave and a small leak above the pulpit, still not completely fixed. New flooring has been ordered to level up the open space in the back of the church. This will greatly improve the space and make it a fully functioning social area when not being used during church services.

14. Women's Institute - Sue Rand

Report filed and available to view here. The WI continue to be proud of Ashendon WI and all it represents in the community. The group has enjoyed a variety of talks and various events ranging from quizzes, lunches, Investigation and Discovery Days. Sue extended an invitation the Ashendon WI Literary Lunch to be held in the Village Hall on Saturday 26th April. Two courses, puddings to "die" for, all drinks and an enthralling speaker: Helen Fry. Women in Intelligence which fits the 8th May remembrance of 80th anniversary of V E Day. The group continue to meet on the second Tuesday of the month at 7.30 pm. Notices are always in the Hall window. The WI are now on the Village Support WhatsApp Group.

15. Ashendon Voices - Fiona Jacob

Report filed and available to view here. Ashendon Voices has now been a feature of Ashendon village life for around 6 years. It's an opportunity to meet, learn, make new friends and spend time with existing ones. It's so much more than just a choir. Although the social side continues to be of significant importance, the group has become much more proficient at singing! The groups sing at Church Services and at the Beaconsfield Festival of Choirs each year. The group's own concert in Ashendon Church in July 2024 was very well received. The next concert is on 18th October 2025. The group raised over £1,000 for Bucks Association for the Care of Offenders (BACO). The group meet on Tuesday afternoons at 2pm and welcomes new members from Ashendon and surrounding villages. If you would like to join Ashendon Voices, please contact **Fiona Jacob - Fiona.m.jacob@gmail.com.**

16. Book Group – Lynda Fairclough

Report filed and available to view here. Ashendon Book Group meet on a Thursday evening, once every two months, in The Ash Tree, to discuss a book chosen and read during the previous months. The group has grown this year to around 20 members and the Group always welcome new readers from Ashendon and surrounding villages.

Each meeting has around 8-12 members coming along to discuss the book in person and those that are unable to attend will often send in their thoughts to be included in the discussion. The Group's blog http://ashendonbookgroup.blogspot.co.uk has wide readership and gets good feedback. Over the past year, the Book Group has read 7 books on a wide range of topics.

17. Buckinghamshire Council – Cllr Ashely Waite

Ashley gave a full account on roads and infrastructure, a key issue for Ashendon with HS2 traffic movements. He said housing developments are booming with a 42% increase in homes, mainly in North Buckinghamshire. The Littleton Green Development project is now at the planning stage. The Council Tax was set at 4.9%, lower than several neighbouring councils. Of the £1.2 billion budget, 77% (£924 million) has been allocated, leaving a balance of £276 million. The funding continues to be focused on the Children's Social Care, Adult Social Care, Home to School Transport and Temporary Accommodation. Important key projects for Ashendon is controlling freight and addressing speeding concerns and looking at options for the Wotton Path. The Community Support Services – I'd Like to Borrow, I'd Like a Bike, I'd Like a Bus are thriving. The North Bucks Food Drive collects on the first Saturday of every month. Ashley thanked Ashendon for its continued support with this initiative. The meeting stressed safety concerns particularly at Cannon's Hill, *'the perfect black spot for accidents*.' Residents asked for better signage and road markings. There is a marked increase of haulage companies travelling through Ashendon. Again, the meeting stressed that more signage is required (crossroad junction into Ashendon and also from the A41 end of the village). Ashley highlighted Causeway One Network where traffic authorities can transmit live road closures updates to sat-navs. Buckinghamshire Council has applied to the Government to implement a new Lane Rental Scheme (LRS) in the county. The scheme incentivises those who need to carry out works on the county's road network to become more efficient with how they manage the works when a road or lane closure is needed. This should encourage those working on the roads to either move their works to less busy times, or complete them in a quicker timescale, to avoid accumulating charges. The result should help reduce congestion and create more reliable journeys for road users. 37 providers are licenced to work on Buckinghamshire Roads and all would have to adhere to the scheme.

18. Gatehangers Association

Dinner - 16th May in The Ash Tree. Bookings: pietro@ranieri.agency 07590 454126.

19. Diary Dates

Please view ***Upcoming Events*** on the Village website: www.ashednonparish.org.uk or sign up to Email Alerts for notifications.

Closing Comments

Chris thanked everyone for attending the meeting and for everyone's collective efforts that make Ashendon the village it is.

Parish Council AGM – Monday 12th MAY 2025 at 7.30pm

Ashendon Village Hall