Ashby St Mary Parish Council (ASMPC)
Minutes of Parish Council Meeting Wednesday 17th September 2025
at 19:00 at Ashby and Thurton Village Hall

In Attendance: C Powell (CP), J Goldring (JG) Chair, A Ayres (AA)
District Councillor V Thomson
Minutes: Tina Higlett (TH) – Parish Clerk.

1. JG was Chair for this meeting.

   JG recommended rescheduling the public forum to allow District Councillor Vic Thomson to address the council, as he was scheduled to attend another meeting.

   Cllr Thomson advised he had forwarded a report to the clerk for circulation to members. Cllr Thomson spoke briefly of Devolution and the South Norfolk Food Waste project which will be introduced into South Norfolk in 2026. A public-information campaign starts in January 2026, before collections go live later that year. Vehicles and caddies have been ordered. Two caddies will be supplied to each household and the collection service should be fortnightly.
   Postal votes – existing postal voters who have not reapplied under the new system to do so by 31 January 2026. Failure to reapply will result in the cancellation of their postal vote.
   Flu vaccine- NHS launched this year's flu vaccine programme on 1 September 2025.

2. To consider co-option onto parish council.
   No interest shown.

3. To consider apologies for absence.
   H Roebuck – work commitments, M Rolph- health reasons.

4. To receive declarations of Interest for items on the agenda and to consider any requests for dispensations.
   Nil.

5. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on the 9th July 2025.
   a) These were approved.
      AA attended training for new councillors, where it was recommended that council's standing orders be amended to specify the appointment of a chair at each meeting, in cases where the council does not appoint a chair for the forthcoming year. Council's Standing Orders state.
      The council must elect a chair who must be a member of the council.
      The appointment of chair must be an annual appointment.
      Standing Orders also state.
      Provisions designated as 'rules' are established by law and consistently appear in bold within Standing Orders; consequently, they must not be altered or removed.

      JG stated that, should a council lack a quorum, assistance may be sought from a neighbouring parish council. The Clerk will consult Norfolk PTS for further guidance.

6. Public Forum
   a) No Public in attendance.

7. Matters arising from the previous minutes.
   I. Restoration of village sign. The Clerk reported receiving correspondence from Thurton Foundry indicating that the previously identified artist is no longer available to repaint the sign. The Chair noted she would contact the artist to inquire if they could recommend an alternative professional to undertake this work for the council. It was further proposed that restoration of the Thurton village sign could be completed concurrently.
   II. Bench costs. Clerk advised that council would be looking to spend around £400.00. However council's view is there is no suitable place and perhaps the Community Levy money would be better spent on restoring the footpath information board.

8. Administrative Issues
   I. Policy Review
      a. Lone Working Policy – council duly approved. Next review September 2027
      b. Media Policy – council duly approved. Next review September 2028
   ll. Additional bank signatory. The Chair will serve as a signatory, and CP will secure the necessary documentation.
   lll. Parish council website development. Cllr Roebuck at previous meetings of the council, informed members that he had the capability to develop a new website. However members concerns that HR's current work commitments may present challenges in assuming the additional responsibilities of developing a new website and offering continued support to the clerk. AA reported that he had reviewed parish websites, including those utilising WIX as their hosting platform. Website developer S Jackman has on two separate occasions quoted a fee of £175.00 for redevelopment work. The Clerk informed members that, in her capacity as Clerk for Thurton Parish Council, she has experience using WIX as a website host. Due to this prior experience, she confirmed that she did not anticipate additional training, which would result in a saving of £95.00.
   The cost of hosting with Wix would be £108.00. The Council has allocated funds for website redevelopment to ensure compliance with transparency and accessibility standards. Previously, it was proposed that the Clerk would be responsible for updating the website with parish council information.
   It was resolved to appoint S. Jackman to develop the parish website. Members further agreed to discontinue the current website hosting subscription with IONOS.

9. Finance
   I. The council's half year financial review was forwarded to members prior to the meeting. There were no concerns.
   The members spoke of the 2026/27 budget and suggested allocating funds for the maintenance of the defibrillator jointly used with Thurton Parish Council. Additionally, the clerk reported that the parish council laptop is operating slowly and does not meet Windows 11 compliance requirements.
   II. Approve payments.
      a) T Higlett – clerks salary Aug/Sept £386.02.
      b) HMRC – clerks taxation period 5 & 6 £91.40
      c) South Norfolk Dog waste emptying service- £225.60
      d) Autela – payroll services £84.00

lll. Salary review for Clerk

The Clerk informed the Council of a 3.20% salary increase for clerks, effective from 1st April 2025, in accordance with NJC terms and conditions.

The Chairman signed a letter authorising the payroll provider to implement this increase and backdate to April 2025.

10. Report from Village Hall Management Committee

CP reported that the Club 100 winners were July – no.28, August- no.96, September – no.88. The Gin tasting evening went well with £270.00 raised. Events planned for the rest of the year include Quiz evening with fish and chips. Christmas Quiz, and a Ceilidh. The main hall and the gents toilets will be decorated in October half term. The acquisition of new football nets is necessary, and available grant opportunities for their purchase will be explored. Several trees in the wooded area at the lower boundary of the playing field have experienced branch loss as a result of extended dry conditions. A comprehensive tree survey was completed at a cost of £300.00, and the required remedial work is estimated to incur an additional expense of £3,000.00. CP advised the Treasurer has re-signed, necessitating the appointment of a successor for this role.

11. Neighbourhood Security/Oil Buying Syndicate/ Website

MR not in attendance and no report supplied.

12. Correspondence

l. County Councillor Report for September 2025

ll. Temporary Road closure notices for Bergh Apton

lll. Broadland Futures newsletter

13. Date of next meeting – 12th November 2025.

Meeting closed at 21:10.