

Ashby St Mary Parish Council (ASMPC)
Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting
Wednesday 20th May 2026 19:30 at Ashby and Thurton Village Hall

In Attendance: A Ayres (AA) Chair, J Goldring (JG), C Powell (CP), Anita Kemp (AK)
Minutes: Tina Higlett (TH) – Parish Clerk.

1. Election of Chair and to sign declaration of acceptance.
Alan Ayres was proposed by JG and seconded by CP. AA duly accepted and signed declaration of acceptance.
2. Election of Vice Chair.
CP was proposed by JG and seconded by AA. CP duly accepted.
3. Co-option onto parish council.
Anita Kemp had approached the council in 2025 with a view to becoming a councillor and apologised she hadn't been able to attend past meetings due to unforeseen circumstances. It was agreed to co-opt Anita Kemp onto the council. Anita signed the declaration of acceptance of office and joined the council immediately.
4. To consider apologies for absence.
None.
5. To receive declarations of Interest for items on the agenda and to consider any requests for dispensations.
None.
6. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on the 18th February 2026.
These were approved.
7. Public Forum
 - I. No Public in attendance.
 - II. No reports from either County or District councillors.
8. Matters arising from the previous minutes.
 - I. Restoration of village sign.
Members indicated unanimous support for proceeding with the quotation as presented by R Walden of £200.00. It was proposed a meeting to discuss further. AK and JG said they would be happy to attend a meeting. Clerk to arrange accordingly. The post may also require replacing and AK advised she will ask someone to take a look and advise accordingly. **Action: Clerk**
 - II. Public rights of way signage.
CP advised the Perspex needs replacing and the map is fine. Will see if there is someone locally that can replace Perspex. **Action: CP**
9. Responding to and working with other bodies
 - I. Planning
 - a) To consider responding to planning applications

2026/0416 Proposal: Erection of new agricultural building

Location: Land South East of The Old Rectory Church Road Ashby St Mary. Comments by the 23rd May 2026

Members stated they had no objection but would like to see the hedge and trees remain to shield the building

- b) 2026/0120 Proposal: Creation of new access and driveway

Location: Land South East of The Old Rectory Church Road Ashby St Mary. Comments by the 23rd May 2026.

Members stated that they have no objection to the application. They requested that adequate drainage is provided to manage surface water so that it does not discharge onto the highway. They would also like confirmation that vehicles accessing the driveway have adequate space to pull clear of the carriageway, thereby avoiding any obstruction to passing traffic while awaiting entry to the site.

- c) 2026/0789 Location: Ashlea Mill Common Ashby St Mary. Proposal: Sunroom extension

Comments by 22nd May 2026

Council had no objection.

10. Administrative Issues

I. Ownership of War memorial.

Council insurance policy included additional cover for monuments and memorials.

Members to their knowledge do not require this on their policy. It is not known who is responsible for the war memorial in the church yard. After corresponding with South Norfolk Council and the War Memorials Trust Clerk advised neither have any record of the owner. Council unanimously agreed to remove from insurance policy.

II. Insurance renewal.

Premium this year will be £241.00 after the removal of the monument/war memorial/statue cover.

III. Banking and payment frequency.

It was agreed that payments would now be paid monthly rather than waiting to the bi monthly meeting of the council. Suppliers CAN make a charge for late payment and council would like to avoid this. Payments have already been approved in the budget. Going forward payments made between meetings will be ratified at the next full council meeting.

IV. Subscription to Norfolk PTS

Council approved membership. Clerk will advise Chair on Chairmanship training. New councillor training is also available to AK and clerk will advise on dates. **Action: Clerk**

V. Internal Control

Summary of findings;

The Chair confirmed that overall, the records and processes were in very good order, with only two exceptions noted during the review

- Unsigned November invoices — November invoices had not been signed by the two required authorisers before payment was made by BACS. This indicates a break in the internal control process and should be corrected to ensure compliance with financial procedures.
- Missing Clerk's November expenses — The Clerk's November expense claim was not included. This related specifically to reimbursement for the Council's new web-site domain.

Both oversights were attributed to the transition in signatories following the resignation of M Rolph, which temporarily disrupted the usual authorisation workflow.

11. Finance

- I. To consider the Internal Auditors report for year ending 31st March 2026. Forwarded to members prior to meeting.
R Goreham had completed the audit for this year and suggested council look to adopting a safeguarding policy. Clerk to address and report back at next meeting. **Action: Clerk**
There were no areas of concern. Members passed on thanks to Clerk.
- II. To consider whether to exempt from an external audit and if so to authorise the Clerk and Chair to sign the form.
This was considered and agreed and the Clerk and Chair were authorised to sign the form.
- III. To consider the assertions on and complete the Annual Governance Statement 2025/26 and to authorise the Clerk and Chair to sign.
The Council considered the assertions on the Annual Governance Statement, completed the form and authorised the Chair and Clerk to sign on their behalf.
- IV. To consider and approve the Accounting Statements 2025/26 and to authorise the Chair to sign.
The Council considered and agreed the Accounting Statements and authorised the Chair to sign on their behalf.
- V. Bank reconciliation for year end 2025/26
This was duly noted.
- VI. To approve payments
 - a. T Higlett – clerks salary May- £217.98
 - b. HMRC – clerks taxation period 2- £52.00
 - c. Zurich Insurance- £241.00
 - d. Norfolk PTS subscription- £72.00
 - e. Ashby & Thurton Village Hall bookings £120.00
- VII. Payments made between meetings were noted and approved
 - a. T Higlett – clerks salary April- £218.18
 - b. R Goreham – Audit £70.00
 - c. HMRC £51.80
 - d. Autela Payroll- £102.00
- VIII. To note receipts since last meeting.
 - a. S N Precept £2,750.00 1st half precept.

12. Periodic Items

- I. To review and approve the Parish Councils Standing Orders- these were reviewed with the following amendment.
 - 2(m) An agenda item that would result in a reversal of a decision made within the last six months, shall not be included unless requested in writing by 4 councillors
- II. To review and approve the Parish Councils Financial Regulations – these were reviewed with no changes.
- III. To review Equalities and Diversity Policy – this was reviewed.

13. Items for consideration and included on July agenda.

Chair brought to members' attention that the dog waste bin on Mill Common is consistently overflowing by the weekend. Several potential solutions were suggested for consideration:

- Amending the emptying day — adjusting the current collection schedule to better match usage patterns.
- Purchasing a larger bin — replacing the existing bin with a higher-capacity unit.
- Increasing emptying frequency — arranging for the bin to be emptied twice weekly instead of once.

The Chair recommended that this matter be included on the July agenda, when Council will be able to make an informed decision once the associated costs are known. **Action: Clerk** Village sign, PROW map, dog waste bins, footpath on Mill Common, overgrown and gate installed.

14. Date of next meeting 22nd July 2026

Meeting closed at 21:25