

## ASHLEY PARISH COUNCIL

The Meeting of the Parish Council was held on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> July 2026 at 7.00 pm in the Village Hall, Ashley.

Present: Cllrs S Castens (Chair), A Morgan, L Gill and N Oldham, J Medwell (Clerk) and NNC Cllr H Howes.

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### 1. Apologies for Absence:

Northants Greenway Champions T and E Bunn

NNC Cllr D Howes

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### 2. Declaration of Interest in items on the agenda or changes to the Members' Register of Interests:

There were none.

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### 3. Minutes:

The minutes of the Annual Parish Council meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2026 were approved as a true record and duly signed by the Chair.

Proposed: Cllr N Oldham

Seconded: Cllr L Gill

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### 4. Matters Arising:

There were no matters arising.

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### 5. Meeting Open to the Public:

There were no members of the public present.

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### 6. North Northants Councillor Report:

NNC Cllr H Howes reported that the NNC Highways Contract with Kier will shortly be subject to scrutiny by the Scrutiny Management Board.

Cllr Howes advised that most of the issues identified and reported to NNC during the recent village site visit have now been allocated work orders. He confirmed that he will continue to seek updates on the progress of these works.

Cllr H Howes also reported that he continues to pursue Planning Enforcement for information regarding the unauthorised mobile home on the Middleton Road.

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### 7. Safety Review of Parish Assets:

Cllr Oldham had conducted a routine asset check. The damaged benches outside The George have been removed and will be replaced. Cllr Oldham will arrange the purchase the new benches (*action NO*).

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### 8. Recreational Ground:

The Council noted that the recreation ground is in good order. Two maintenance issues were raised: a leak on the tap at the top of the ground, and damage to the cricket net, believed to have been caused by wildlife. Both matters require attention. The Council also noted that the gate posts and picnic benches are currently unstable due to the prolonged dry weather. It was agreed that these would be monitored and re-inspected following a period of rainfall before any remedial works are undertaken.

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### 9. Highways and Rights of Way:

**Parking near Stoke Road junction:** The Chair referred to a complaint about inconsiderate parking on the bend by the Stoke Road junction, particularly by parents collecting children from the school bus. The Council agreed to monitor the situation.

**Fiveways fingerboard:** It was noted that the Fiveways fingerboard has now been removed, presumably by NNC for repair. The Chair advised that one of the broken fingerposts is currently in the Village Hall. NNC Cllr Howes will follow this up with Rights of Way.

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#### 10. Neighbourhood Plan (NP):

The Council noted that work on the Neighbourhood Plan continues to progress. It was emphasised that the inclusion of a defined village boundary within the Plan is of particular importance, especially in light of the proposed new North Northamptonshire Council Local Plan, which is expected to remove parish boundaries.

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#### 11. The George and Coach House:

The Council was pleased to note that the letting of the Coach House rooms continues to operate with minimal issues and is providing a steady income stream.

Councillors were advised that plumbing and electrical works to the kitchen and toilet facilities are due to commence shortly. A roofing contractor has also been identified to complete the remaining roof works. The Council recognised that, as the project progresses, it may be beneficial to appoint a project manager or coordinator to oversee and manage the outstanding works.

The Council agreed that efforts to secure external funding should continue, including the pursuit of grant opportunities and local loan funding. Reference was made to the Eco Carbon Footprint Report, which is currently being completed by Cllr Gill. It was noted that difficulties had been encountered in completing the report and that it may be a requirement for future funding applications.

The Council also agreed that a newsletter should be produced to provide the village with an update on the progress of the project and to keep residents informed of ongoing developments and when the anticipated opening may be.

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#### 12. Specific Matters:

**a) Northamptonshire Greenway Project:** The Chair provided an update on his recent meeting with Greenway Champions Ted and Emily Bunn and Greenways Project Officer Lucy Hawes (NCC). It was agreed that initial work will focus on research to support the first section of the proposed trail, with an NCC intern compiling key stakeholder information such as landowners and parish councils over the summer. The next stage will be the preparation of an overview document with key messaging, including a case study of Braybrooke Brewery.

**b) Ashley response to NNC Local Plan Scoping Consultation:** A full and detailed response, setting out the core elements of a strategic planning vision for the parish, had been submitted to NNC as part of the Local Plan Scoping Consultation.

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#### 13. Finance:

a) The following Parish Council payments were presented and unanimously **agreed**

| Payee        | Details               | Total Amount | VAT Element | Legal Authority |
|--------------|-----------------------|--------------|-------------|-----------------|
| S Morphy     | Mowing                | £130.00      |             | OSA 1906 s.15   |
| NNC Income   | Overtime Clerk Duties | £420.46      | £70.08      | LGA 1972 s.139  |
| Village Hall | Hall Hire             | £45.00       |             | LGA 1972 s.111  |

|                                 |                         |           |         |                |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------|---------|----------------|
| BP                              | Leaf Blower Fuel        | £6.13     | £1.02   | OSA 1906 s.15  |
| P A Taylor                      | The George works        | £880.00   |         | LGA 1972 s.139 |
| Proactive Asbestos              | Asbestos removal        | £1,914.00 | £319.00 | LGA 1972 s.139 |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> Choice Property | The George works        | £340.00   |         | LGA 1972 s.139 |
| S Morphy                        | Mowing                  | £380.00   |         | OSA 1906 s.15  |
| P A Taylor                      | The George works        | £330.00   |         | LGA 1972 s.139 |
| C E Gregory                     | The George works        | £5,000.00 | £833.33 | LGA 1972 s.139 |
| S Lovell                        | Roof Tiles - The George | £570.00   |         | LGA 1972 s.139 |

b) The Council unanimously **approved** the bank reconciliation which was then duly signed by the Chairman.

c) Balances

|                            |            |
|----------------------------|------------|
| Current Account            | £3,621.31  |
| The George Current Account | £8,655.23  |
| The George Savings Account | £43,404.86 |
| Deposit Account            | £24,121.92 |

Total: **£79,803.32**

Less Ring-fenced

|                  |            |
|------------------|------------|
| Defibrillator    | £400.00    |
| MUGA Maintenance | £10,400.00 |
| The George       | £43,404.86 |

**Total Reserves £25,598.46**

All matters pertaining to finance are displayed on the website on [www.ashleyvillage.co.uk](http://www.ashleyvillage.co.uk)

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14. Planning:

**26/26/00971/FUL Proposed change of use of agricultural land to equestrian (Sui Generis) & erection of proposed stables & associated access Location: Land to south of Middleton Road**

The Parish Council objected to this application on the following grounds:

Harm to rural character and landscape

The cumulative effect of the change of use, stables, and new access causes unacceptable visual intrusion into the open countryside and harms the character and appearance of the local landscape. Approval would be inconsistent with national policy protecting the countryside and would set an unwelcome precedent for incremental residential/ domestic development on agricultural land.

Highway and access safety

The creation of a new access track from Middleton Road and any unexpected intensification of vehicle movements may prejudice highway safety. No adequate visibility or highways assessment has been submitted.

Precedent and planning balance

Granting permission for a retrospective change and associated ancillary permanent installations would set a precedent for other agricultural land to be developed similarly, undermining the development plan strategy for the countryside.

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15. Correspondence and Exchange of Information:

The Chair advised that he had received a FOI request regarding The George. The Council will endeavour to respond as necessary.

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16. Business for next meeting:

There was nothing further identified at this point.

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The date of the next meeting is Monday 14<sup>th</sup> September 2026 at 7pm in the Village Hall.

The Clerk gave her apologies for this meeting.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.42 pm

Signed.....Chairman

Date.....

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