ASHLEY PARISH COUNCIL

The Annual Meeting of the Parish Council was held on Monday 11th May 2025 at 7.00 pm in the Village Hall, Ashley.

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

---

1. Election of Chair:

The position of Chair was open to all Councillors. Cllr Oldham nominated Cllr Castens and was seconded by Cllr Gill. Cllr Castens **agreed** to become Chair.

---

2. Election of Vice Chair:

The position of Vice Chair was open to all Councillors. Cllr Castens nominated Cllr Morgan and was seconded by Cllr Oldham. Cllr Morgan **agreed** to become Vice Chair.

---

3. Declarations of Acceptance of Office:

Cllrs Castens and Morgan signed the Declaration of Office, witnessed by the Clerk.

---

4. Apologies for Absence:

North Northants Cllr D Howes.

---

5. Declaration of Interest in items on the agenda or any changes to the Members Register of Interest:

There were none.

---

6. Councillor Vacancy:

The Council was pleased to welcome new residents Tim and Emily Bunn who attended the meeting and expressed an interest in joining the Council. It was anticipated that the Council would be in a position to consider co-option at the next meeting once the eligibility criteria had been met.

---

7. Minutes:

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 9th March 2025 were approved as a true record and duly signed by the Chair.

Proposed: Cllr Oldham Seconded: Cllr Gill

---

8. Matters Arising:

There were no matters arising.

---

9. Meeting Open to the Public:

There were no members of the public present.

---

10. North Northants Councillor Report:

NNC Cllr H. Howes advised that he had met with Cllr Castens to undertake a walkaround of Ashley village in order to identify a number of significant operational issues in and around the village. These included the raised manhole cover outside the church, drainage and a weight limit on Green Lane that prevented damage to the green areas. Cllr Howes had submitted the findings in priority order for North Northamptonshire Council to address, together with proposed next steps for resolving the issues. The Chair requested that signage warning of the hump-back bridge on the B664 also be included in the report.

---

11. Safety Review of Parish Assets:

Cllr Oldham had completed the routine inspection of parish assets. He noted that the two benches outside The George were unsafe and should be removed immediately. Cllr Oldham undertook to arrange their removal *(action NO).*

---

11. Recreational Ground:

There was nothing further to report under this item.

---

12. Highways and Rights of Way:

The recurring problem of potholes was noted. Councillors were reminded of the new NNC Highways reporting tool https://highways.northnorthants.gov.uk/.

Cllr Gill mentioned that vehicles mounting the kerb were dislodging the cobbles in parts of Main Street. The Chair requested that the cobbles be retained and that the matter be reported to NNC, supported by photographic evidence.

---

13. Neighbourhood Plan (NP):

The Chair updated the Council on progress with the Neighbourhood Plan. The two principal sections, Housing and Environment, had largely been completed, although the Environment section required further work. Progress on the Plan will continue, with the aim of submitting the first stage to North Northamptonshire Council in September.

---

14. The George:

Cllr Oldham provided the Council with an update on the current works schedule for The George. Work on the kitchen refurbishment is continuing, and the next step is to obtain quotations for the electrical and plumbing works. Further funding opportunities are also being explored. The Council reviewed the current forecast income and expenditure and agreed that building costs and running costs should now be separated. Funds raised for building works should be itemised and ring-fenced so that the amount available for those works is clearly identified. It is expected that income from the Coach House will cover running costs and loan repayments.

---

15. Specific Items:

Northamptonshire Greenway Project – The Chair referred to the Northamptonshire Greenway Project, which aims to develop new green routes, both on and off road, across the county. The project includes the further development of the Welland Valley Way and the Camino del Inglais route, linking Durham and the Farne Islands via Northamptonshire to the Camino routes in France and Spain. The Greenway Board is a volunteer group led by North Northamptonshire Council's tourism, footpaths and greenways lead. The appointed Greenway Champions would represent the Council and work with Project Officer Lucy Hawes, North Northamptonshire councillors, the local MP and the wider Greenway team to help progress the project.

It was **agreed** that Ted and Emily Bunn would undertake this role as Greenway Champions on behalf of the Council.

Proposed: Cllr Castens   Seconded: Cllr Gill   All in favour.

---

16. 2025-26 Annual Governance and Accountability:

(i) Internal Audit 2025/26

The accounts had been presented for internal audit and were found to be in good order with no issues raised.

(ii) Approval of Annual Governance Statement 2025/26

The Council considered and **approved** the Annual Governance Statement 2025/26.

Proposed Cllr Oldham Seconded Cllr Morgan

This was duly signed by the Chair and Responsible Financial Officer

(iii) Approval of Annual Accounting Statement 2025/26

The Clerk had prepared the 2025/26 Financial Accounts in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

The Council considered and **approved** the Annual Accounting Statement 2025/26

Proposed Cllr Morgan Seconded Cllr Oldham

This was duly signed by the Chair and Responsible Financial Officer.

The Annual Governance and Accounts will now be presented to the External Auditor *(action JM).*

---

17. Finance:

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

Payee	Details	Total Amount	VAT Element	Legal Authority
Zurich	Insurance	£565.97		LGA 1972 s.111
Information Commissioner	Data Protection	£52.00		Data Protection Act 2018
Amazon	Office Supplies	£28.99	£4.83	LGA 1972 s.111
NCALC	Membership	£256.00	£2.40	LGA 1972 s.143
I H Arnott	Audit	£90.00		LGA 1972 s.111
S Morphy	Rec Mowing	£300.00		OSA 1906 s.15
NNC Building Control	The George Fees	£555.14	£92.52	LGA 1972 s.139
C E Gregory	The George Renovation	£5,000.00	£833.33	LGA 1972 s.139

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

c) Balances

Current Account	£3,336.22
The George Account	£9,067.93
Deposit Account	£26,931.55
The George Deposit Account	£29,398.11
Total:	**£68,733.81**
Less Ring-fenced	
Defibrillator	£400.00
MUGA Maintenance	£10,400.00
The George	£43,363.94
Total Reserves	**£14,569.87**

All matters pertaining to finance are displayed on the website on www.ashleyvillage.co.uk

---

18. Planning:

There were no planning matters to consider.

The Council noted a letter recently received from concerned residents regarding an alleged increase in business activity at a property on Main Street, which may constitute a material change in use contrary to planning regulations. The Council was not aware of any such activity and agreed to monitor the situation.

Unauthorised static caravan on the Ashley Road. NNC Cllr H Howes has pursued this with NNC Planning Enforcement but as yet no response to the Council's initial inquiry has been received.

17. Correspondence:

There was nothing further correspondence to consider.

18. Business for next meeting:

The George and Neighbourhood Plan as standing items.

The date of the next meeting is Monday 13th July 2026 at 7pm in the Village Hall.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8:52 pm

Signed..Chairman Date.......................... 11/05

Clerk: Mrs J Medwell 5 Main Street, Middleton, Market Harborough LE16 8YU Tel: 07813 696387