



**Minutes of the Ashfield-cum-Thorpe  
Annual Parish Meeting  
held on  
Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2026  
In the Community Hall**

19 in attendance, including 5 Parish Councillors and the County Councillor and District Councillor

Apologies – Councillor Simon Garrett

**1. Welcome by Chair of Ashfield-cum-Thorpe Parish Council**

Chairman Robert Grimsey opened the meeting, thanking everyone for coming.

**2. Agreement of Minutes of the Previous Annual Parish Meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2025**

The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting 2025 as a true and accurate record, were proposed by Councillor Lindsay Pearson, seconded by Councillor Tom Luxmoore, all voted in favour and **IT WAS SO RESOLVED**. The Minutes were signed by the Chair and the Clerk

**3. Matters Arising from the Previous Annual Parish Meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2025**

None

**4. Report by the Chair of Ashfield-cum-Thorpe Parish Council – verbal report presented by Chairman Robert Grimsey.**

It has been quite a typical year really, as some know I was somewhat indisposed once or twice and I am very grateful to fellow Councillors for keeping things going in my absence. I am also very pleased to report that the Council was up to the full seven members for some time, following three co-options last summer, but now one Councillor has retired, so we once again have an opportunity for someone to come forward. During the year we have dealt with several with planning applications, along with keeping an eye on the village footpaths and various other legal reports and compliance. During the last year the village website has had to be redone due to Government regulations coming in requiring us to have a gov.uk domain name for our website and emails. This has meant that the previous website, which was jointly run by the Community Council and Parish Council has had to be split into two. This has led to extra costs, but it is not unique to our village and we did save costs with the Clerk and Councillor Simon Garrett putting in the work to ensure the right information is now on the right website.

**5. Report from Mid Suffolk District Councillor Teresa Davis**

The full Annual Report from the District Councillor is available on the Ashfield-cum-Thorpe village website.

TD highlighted the new recycling regime which is due to start on 1<sup>st</sup> June. If anyone in the village has not yet received their new bins then please get in touch with the District Council as there is a team going round delivering to any that may have been missed. A query was raised about whether tablet blister packs could be recycled via a central point in the village. TD noted that the Debenham Green Team meet at their hall once a month and take this sort of waste, so possibly a similar thing could be arranged in Ashfield-cum-Thorpe. The Clerk will make contact with the Debenham Green Team and see what could be arranged.

A query was also raised about what skills are being taught at the new Gateway 14 Centre. TD explained that the centre was collaborating with three different colleges and private training companies, so a wide range will be available, not only for full time students, but evening school options for upskilling or career changers.

Finally the issue of Stonham Barns was touched upon again, TD will ask the District Councillor for Stonham to provide an update, but understands that the case is progressing slowly, with evidence being collated ready for court action.

Signed ..... (Clerk) Signed ..... (Chair)

**6. Report from Suffolk County Councillor Matthew Hicks**

The full Annual Report from the County Councillor is available on the Ashfield-cum-Thorpe village website:

Councillor Chris Sharpe asked about the cost impact of Suffolk Libraries transferring back to County Council control. MHi explained that funds are currently allocated to upgrade the IT systems – something that would not have been done by the previous provider – so although the cost may be slightly more it will be a better service.

Councillor Lindsay Pearson expressed some concerns about the ongoing proliferation of solar farm applications, especially as the ability to connect some sites to the grid seems very limited. MHi agreed that there is currently some disconnect between planning approvals and the reality of the technology, but it is not necessary to prove that a connection is possible in order to put in planning, in many cases it is being done speculatively.

A parishioner wanted to express praise to the Suffolk Highways team that had done the recent patching work on the A1120, noting that the finish is better with larger patches than just immediate small pot hole repairs.

A query was raised about why roads are closed when no work appears to be happening. MHi explained that under statute there has to be a width of the lane, plus half of the next lane clear from a site for worker safety. If it is less then road closed signs officially have to be left up, even if a car can potentially squeeze through, as it would not be safe for larger vehicles to use the road. MHi recommended that everyone signs up for alerts in their area on the website <https://one.network> which provides details of all planned roadworks – although this will not necessarily have information about emergency closures.

A parishioner asked whether Suffolk Highways were inspecting trees alongside roads, as there are a lot of trees that are posing a serious risk. MHi explained that there is no automatic inspection and it maybe that the trees in question are the landowners responsibility, but if there are serious concerns about the safety of a tree then please report the matter using the Suffolk Highways Online Reporting Tool: [Report a highways issue - Suffolk County Council](#) or it might be that the Parish Council could help to make contact with the landowner.

**7. Report by a Representative of Ashfield Footpaths Group – Report on village website - presented by Councillor Robert Grimsey – will send amended version**

CS suggested that more volunteers are asked to come forward to help monitor the paths to help spread the load of responsibility. RG will speak to current volunteer about the idea.

**8. Report by the Chair of Ashfield Community Council – Report on village website, along with Treasurer's Report & Accounts – presented by Andy Pitts. Need chairs report**

RG – noted that the last of the original Community Hall founders passed away recently and it was a great loss to the village.

**9. Report by the Group Organiser of Ashfield Ladies Group – Report on village website – presented by Susan Hansen. Will send amended version**

**10. Report by a Trustee of Ashfield Welfare Trust – Report on village website – presented by Ann Burton.**

Query about returns – investment rules by Charities Commission restrict options.

**11. Report by Ashfield's Village Recorder –A brief summary of the report was provided by the Village Recorder, Anita Sharpe. Will send**

Praise for the very readable report.

**12. Open forum for questions and discussion**

The Clerk encouraged all present to take free information packs provided by the Suffolk Resilience Foundation about Household Emergency Preparedness. An email will be circulated to the village asking for volunteers to come forward to help with formulating a village wide Emergency Plan.

It was noted that the Parish Council has recently received some Community Infrastructure Levy monies and will be seeking ideas for spending this money to provide the best benefit to the village.

The Council presented expressed thanks to Myles Hansen, who has stood down from the Parish Council after many years of service, with the meeting concluding with the presentation of a gift.

Meeting closed 9 pm

DRAFT

Signed ..... (Clerk) Signed ..... (Chair)