



## ASHFIELD-CUM-THORPE PARISH COUNCIL

**All Councillors are reminded of their obligations under the Code of Conduct Regulations.**

Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> October 2025 at the Community Hall

Attendance Myles Hansen (MHa) Chris Sharpe (CS) Simon Garrett (SG)  
Lindsay Pearson (LP) Tom Luxmoore (TL) Monica Brown (MB)  
Sarah Clare (Clerk)

Public present at the meeting: 0

### ACTPC 25-05-01 Apologies for Absence & Appointment of Chair

Robert Grimsey (Chair) (RG) had sent his apologies due to personal commitments. The Council accepted.

In light of the absence of the Chair MHa was nominated to act as Chair for the meeting by CS, seconded by MB and **IT WAS SO RESOLVED.**

Teresa Davis (District Councillor) (TD) and Matthew Hicks (County Councillor) (MHi) had also sent apologies.

### ACTPC 25-05-02 Public Forum

None

### ACTPC 25-05-03 Declaration of Interests to include applications to be considered for Dispensation for Disclosable Pecuniary Interest as Received

The Clerk disclosed that dispensation applications had been received from Councillors Lindsay Pearson (LP), Tom Luxmoore (TL) and Monica Brown (MB) in relation to the setting of the Budget & Precept for Ashfield-cum-Thorpe Parish Council, with reasoning given that:

- a) Without dispensation the number of persons unable to participate in the transaction of business would be so great as to impede the transaction of the business, and:
- b) The dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the authority's area

MHa proposed permitting the dispensation, CS seconded all voted in favour. The Clerk will process the application accordingly and inform the Monitoring Officer at the District Council.

### ACTPC 25-05-04 Update from County Councillor

The County Councillor's Report had previously been circulated to the Council and has also been posted on the village website <https://ashfield.onesuffolk.net>.

### ACTPC 25-05-05 Update from District Councillor

The District Councillor's Report had previously been circulated to the Council and has also been posted on the village website <https://ashfield.onesuffolk.net>.

### ACTPC 25-05-06 Minutes of previous meetings

The Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> August 2025 as a true and accurate record, were proposed by CS, seconded by MB all voted in favour and **IT WAS SO RESOLVED.** The Minutes were signed by the Chair and the Clerk

### ACTPC 25-05-07 Matters Arising and Action Points from the August Minutes

1. Arrange for information about Stop Deben Solar to be sent out on Ashfield Talk. DISCHARGED

Signed ..... S. Clare ..... (Clerk) Signed ..... R. Grimsey ..... (Chair) 13

2. Contact relevant landowners about cutting back hedges that are overhanging the highway. DISCHARGED
3. Contact Suffolk Highways to arrange a site visit about reflective posts to mark dangerous ditches at the edge of the road. ONGOING
4. Investigate cross field pathway between Ashfield-cum-Thorpe and Debenham. ONGOING
5. Contact Emergency Planning Officer at the District Council for an informal chat about setting up a plan for the village. ONGOING – Councillors agreed that it would be a good idea for the Clerk to invite the Emergency Planning Officer to the December meeting, so that the whole Council could find out more about the process.
6. Complete process of getting CS added to bank mandate and allow for online access. DISCHARGED
7. Submit responses to Planning Department at District Council as agreed. DISCHARGED
8. Organise Register of Interests, Dispensation Forms and Training for new Councillors. DISCHARGED
9. New Councillors to set up Parish Council specific email addresses. DISCHARGED
10. Research legal position of the use of human sewage for spreading. To be discussed later in meeting.
11. Contact contractor/landowner to ask for assistance in mitigating the problems caused by the unpleasant smell. To be discussed later in meeting.
12. To distribute payments as approved at the August meeting. DISCHARGED
13. Publicise change of meeting dates October to March. DISCHARGED

#### ACTPC 25-05-08 Planning

- a) To consider planning applications that had been submitted since the last meeting: None
- b) To consider any planning applications that have been submitted since agenda was published: None
- c) Updates and outcomes on previous planning applications: None
  - i) DC/25/03423- Householder Application – Erection of a single-storey rear extension, conversion of the garage into a habitable room, connecting it to the existing house with a glass roof, internal alterations and adding roof lights. Tanzen, The Street, IP14 6LX - Granted

#### ACTPC 25-05-09 Parish Council Activities

- a) Update on concerns about the unpleasant smell causing problems in the village – CS reported that he will be arranging a face-to-face meeting with the landowners, RG wants to be involved and has suggested that it is delayed until the current planting season is completed, so they won't be so busy. SG had looked into the legal position about the use of human sewage as a fertiliser and guidelines basically leave the responsibility with the water authorities to treat the sewage to make it safe for use, not the farmers using it as a fertiliser. That said that the rules were set more than 30 years ago. The main guidelines for farmers mostly relate to ensuring it doesn't pollute the groundwater, but does also state that precautions should be taken to avoid causing a nuisance to local properties. The action will currently remain ongoing and SG will forward links to the guidelines to all Councillors.

- b) Report from Chairman: Although RG was absent he had prepared a statement to update the Council on the following:

#### Highways & Footpaths: Report on activity since the last meeting including:

- i) Concerns about erosion of verges by large agricultural vehicles. – It is difficult to address this situation, as essentially the roads are too narrow for the large modern vehicles. If there are areas where there is a serious drop-off at the edge of the tarmac then this needs to be reported using Suffolk Highways Online Reporting Tool, as then someone will come out and assess the risks. It may be that kerbing could be incorporated to help protect verges, but this will need to be a decision from Suffolk Highways.

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- ii) Update on hedges overhanging the highway – RG had been in contact and the hedges concerned have now been cut back. CS offered to put a note out on Ashfield Talk and into next Parish Council summary to remind residents about the need to keep vegetation cut back from roads and pathways.
- iii) Reflective posts to mark dangerous ditch – RG is planning to meet with MHi about the issue.
- iv) Cross field path to Debenham – concerns yet to be addressed, but RG is planning to undertake a full audit of the footpath/bridleway network in the coming weeks.
- v) Broken bridleway sign opposite Corner View – first reported 11 months ago and still remains broken. RG will be chasing this up with MHi to address various concerns.
- vi) Roadside Drainage – RG expressed disappointment with the quality of the workmanship from a team working on behalf of Suffolk Highways, when cleaning of the roadside drains had actually left several kerb off lets more obstructed after the visit. MHi had attended and taken photos and will be raising the issue with the contractors concerned.
- vii) Anglian Water – RG reported that he had been in contact with Anglian Water about why road closures were put in place separately for two repairs, which were less than 50m apart, rather than both being addressed at the same time and is awaiting a response.
- viii) MB reported the bridge on the path leading to Thorpe Farm was currently affected by a nest of aggressive hornets. All agreed that the footpath warden should be informed, so that signs could perhaps be put up and a note could go out on Ashfield Talk to let everyone know of the danger.

Update on Consideration of an Emergency Plan – As per the action arising it was agreed that the Clerk would invite the Emergency Planning Officer to the December meeting.

- c) To consider and review the Council's Risk Assessment – With no recommended updates, MHa proposed re- adoption, SG seconded, all voted in favour and **IT WAS SO RESOLVED**. The Clerk will arrange for the document to be published on the village website.
- d) To consider and review the Council's Health & Safety Policy - With no recommended updates, MHa proposed re- adoption, SG seconded, all voted in favour and **IT WAS SO RESOLVED**. The Clerk will arrange for the document to be published on the village website.
- e) To ratify the decision to renew the Parish Council Insurance Policy confirming it is adequate for the coming year - The Clerk had circulated the policy due for renewal for Councillors to consider between meetings, as the renewal had to be confirmed by 1<sup>st</sup> October, or the Council would have been left uninsured for a week due to the changes of meeting dates. It was noted that currently the policy does not include Cyber Security Cover (which is a new mandatory requirement) due to the Council computer currently not having any paid for antivirus software in place. The policy has been renewed on the same basis as last year, with only uplifts for income and volunteer numbers.

After discussion CS proposed that the decision to accept was ratified, SG seconded, all voted in favour and **IT WAS SO RESOLVED**.

- f) To adopt Model IT and Email Usage Policy – One of the requirements for Cyber Security Cover to be included in the insurance policy is that the Council has an IT and Email Usage Policy. SALC have provided a model policy, which the Clerk had tailored to Ashfield-cum-Thorpe Parish Council. Although at present the insurance does not include Cyber Security Cover, SG proposed acceptance of the policy, so it was in place should the other criteria for the cover to be added be met, LP seconded, all voted in favour and **IT WAS SO RESOLVED**. The Clerk will publish the new policy on the village website.

During discussion SG queried about how current back-ups are created for Council data, Clerk confirmed that this is currently done with the Gmail account on Google Drive.

- g) To consider purchase of Anti-Virus Software for Parish Council Laptop – A further requirement for Cyber Security Cover from the insurers is that the Council computer has a paid for Anti-Virus Software in place, as “this has proven to be more secure than an included Anti-Virus Software”. The Parish Council laptop is currently only protected with the included Microsoft Windows Defender. Councillors have raised queries about why this is the case, but currently no technical information has been received.

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After discussion CS proposed that the Council proceeds to purchase the Anti-Virus Software to enable the Cyber Security Cover to be put in place, but to continue to pursue answers to the questions raised, MHa seconded, 3 voted for, 1 abstained and **IT WAS SO RESOLVED**. SG will contact CAS for information

CS further proposed that the Cyber Security Cover be added to the insurance policy, with a sum of up to £200 authorised to be paid immediately to the insurers, rather than waiting until the next meeting, LP seconded, all voted in favour and **IT WAS SO RESOLVED**.

The Clerk will arrange purchase of the Antivirus Software and claim reimbursement at the next meeting, along with arranging for the Cyber Security Cover to be added to the insurance policy for a fee of not more than £200

- h) Report from Clerk on new Assertion 10 Requirements for Year Ending March 2026, including Mandatory Adoption of Gov.uk domain and emails and consideration of next steps to be taken - The Clerk had circulated notes from a training session that explained that to pass Audit in 2026 a Gov.uk website and emails need to be adopted. There was also guidance on ensuring that the website complies with accessibility requirements, the current website is not in the ownership of the Parish Council and has several issues relating to accessibility.

The use of the Gov.uk domain has limitations on what can and cannot be included, so if the website was to be transferred to the Parish Council it would need to be pared down to only hold Parish Council information, with links to direct people to other pertinent information.

Quotes had been obtained for a new website, or for the Parish Council to take on the existing Onesuffolk website.

After discussion SG proposed that the current OneSuffolk website is duplicated and set up with the gov.uk domain, then together with CS the two websites can be tailored, one to remain with the address of <https://ashfield.onesuffolk.net> and to carry Community based information, the other to be <https://ashfieldcumthorpe-pc.gov.uk> and to carry the Parish Council information. CS seconded the proposal, all voted in favour and **IT WAS SO RESOLVED**.

As part of the process of moving to gov.uk domain, all Councillors will be set up with an email address to be [firstname.lastname@ashfieldcumthorpe-pc.gov.uk](mailto:firstname.lastname@ashfieldcumthorpe-pc.gov.uk) which was chosen as the preferred option from the those available.

The Clerk will contact Community Action Suffolk to make the changes. SG offered to contact the Community Council to explain the situation.

- i) Consideration of whether to respond to Community Governance Review – After discussion it was felt that no response was required.

#### ACTPC 25-05-10 Finance

- a) To review the Financial Statement as supplied by the Clerk – The Clerk had previously circulated the Financial Statement. There were no queries. CS proposed acceptance, CS seconded and **IT WAS SO RESOLVED**. The Chair signed the corresponding Bank Statements to confirm the figures.
- b) Virement to Reserves – balances on financial statement to quarter for:
- i) Asset Replacement Fund – As per the approved budget for 2025-26 MHa proposed the movement of £100 from the current account into reserves to be added to the Asset Replacement Fund, SG seconded, all voted in favour and **IT WAS SO RESOLVED**.
  - ii) Contingency Fund – As per the approved budget for 2025-26 MHa proposed the movement of £100 from the current account into reserves to be added to the General Contingencies Fund, SG seconded, all voted in favour and **IT WAS SO RESOLVED**.
- c) To adopt new Model Statement of Internal Control - The Clerk advised that SALC has issued a new model Statement of Internal Control, which replaces the Internal Financial Control Statement. The document had been circulated prior to the meeting for Councillors to consider. After discussion TL proposed that it be adopted, SC seconded, all voted in favour and **IT WAS SO RESOLVED**

Signed ..... S. Clare ..... (Clerk) Signed ..... R. Grimsey ..... (Chair) 16

- d) To accept NJC recommended pay settlement, including backdating pay claim to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 – The Clerk had circulated the document prior to the meeting for Councillors to consider. CS proposed acceptance of the full terms, TL seconded, all voted in favour and **IT WAS SO RESOLVED**. The Clerk will advise SALC payroll.
- e) To agree payments as detailed on the Payment Schedule  
CS proposed authorisation, SG seconded and **IT WAS SO RESOLVED**.

ACTPC – 25-05-11 Urgent Matters to be brought to the attention of the Council

- a) Items for next agenda:
  - Budget & Precept

Items for the December Agenda – please notify the Clerk of any further items for the agenda as soon as possible and by Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> December at the latest, with any accompanying paperwork ready to be circulated with the agenda upon publication.

There being no further business requiring the attention of the Parish Council, the meeting was closed at 9.20pm. The next meeting is set for **Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> December 2025** at 7.30 pm in the Community Hall.

Sarah Clare  
Parish Clerk

Robert Grimsey  
Chair

APPROVED