ASHMORE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held at Ashmore Village Hall

on Tuesday October 20th 2026 at 7pm

Present:- Chairman Richard Coplan (RC)

Councillors:- Phillipa Kelway-Bamber (PKB), John Ball (JB), Colin Elford (CE), Angie Newnham (AN),James Grazebrook (JG)
Dorset Councillor Jane Somper
There were several members of the public present

2026.62 Apologies:- Gilly Forge (GF), and the Clerk Vivian Hitchmough.
In the Clerk's absence, Cllr Angie Newnham took the minutes.

2026.63 Minutes of the meeting of Thursday May 28th 2026 were agreed as a true record and duly signed.

2026.64 Declarations of interest. The Chairman reminded Councillors they should declare an interest whether personal, via a trust or a company in any item on the agenda and take no part in any discussion or decision regarding that interest.

2026.65 Matters arising
Update on the 20mph application.
The Chairman advised the application had gone to public consultation,
He asked villagers to comment and spread the word as there is a real need to make a response to support the application

2026.66 Updates from Officers and representatives

Planning
AN reported that the only planning application was that of Church Cottages. Objections were made and the application has since been withdrawn.

DAPTC
Nothing to report

Trees
GF had provided report : There has only been one application for tree work in the conservation area and that is at Torleigh in Green Lane. The application has been approved to fell a cherry tree to make way for a new outbuilding in the garden. At the meeting the Chairman said that the height of trees should be a minimum of 5m above the road. (Since the meeting the Chairman wishes to correct the figure according to Dorset Council to 5.2m).

Footpaths
CE has spent time tidying the footpaths and cutting back brambles and hedges to keep the footpaths open. There is a great deal of work for one person and it was suggested that a working party be set up in the future.

Pond
JB reported that the pond had dried up over the summer but with the recent rain is beginning to fill again.

Playground
JB reported that photos have been taken of tree works carried out recently Paul had pointed out that should any accidents occur a photo record would assist any potential insurance claim.

Defibrillator and telephone box
The Chairman reported both in good order and working well.

2026.67 Airfield

JG **Compton Abbas Airfield.** **Up-date for October PC meeting.**

NEWS

1. Below my report during May for reference.
2. Well-known local designer Tim Reeve now acts for the airfield on planning and development matters.
3. Consent was granted in July for change of use, allowing employee accommodation to be converted to Air BnB type accommodation.
4. The Decision seems to have been reached by one planning officer under "Delegated Powers", in spite of five registered objections from members of the public. I expected the objections would force the planning officers to take the application to Committee.
5. The Decision also "set aside" the Schedule 106 agreement of 2006 under which the accommodation created could only be used for employees. Much of the detail on the council web site has been "redacted" – blanked out so not visible.
6. The Decision document is not visible on the council web site, but five objections were registered. Precedence, perhaps under a government which tries to relax planning restrictions, seems to have been given to economic development and employment over the need to conserve the extraordinary rural area, SSSI and dark sky reserve. I have seen, but not been given a copy, of the decision notice which makes this clear.
7. The plate glass front of the entire restaurant, and the proposed balconies on the Air bnb flats (now removed), both fly in the face of the principles of the Dark Sky Reserve area.
8. Huge crowds now attend on sunny weekends. During a recent visit on a Saturday morning three of us gave up trying to get a coffee after a 40 minute wait. I counted 150 cars, 25 classic cars and motorycles and estimated a crowd of 500 plus.
9. The airfield was closed for a "private event" from 5th to 9th October with large numbers of event/exhibition type vehicles. The winter calendar has little on offer with two firework

displays and occasional evening events and car clubs days. Airfield operating hours are from 0930 to 1700 on Wednesdays to Sundays until March

10. The airfield has proposed an alternative departure route from the western end of the runway which would route aircraft towards Melbury Beacon, reducing minimally the effect on houses in Compton Abbas. There is concern this would amplify the "valley" noise effect.

MONITORING

A The Compton Abbas Airfield Monitoring Group (CAAMG) has played an active role in overseeing airfield plans and activities. They shared with me a specialist Counsel Opinion on the strength or otherwise of the 106 agreements from the mid 1970s which govern the airfield.

B CAAMG has been chaired by Philip Cayford KC, a well-known London barrister whose family have lived in Compton Abbas for 50+ years. Philip, sadly, has recently been very seriously ill. I hope the group will continue and met Philip last week. He has told me that I will be asked (in my Ashmore PC capacity) to attend future meetings.

C There is concern that the government's apparent wish to relax planning restrictions will work in favour of the airfield.

JG **17.10.26**

Compton Abbas Airfield. **Report for May 2026**

---

1. Guy Ritchie bought the airfield in October 2022. Andrew Wood was appointed Manager in November 2022. He was replaced by Jason Hammond in April 2024. He was replaced by Ben Perkins in January 2026.
2. Ben is also MD of Aero Legends who organised the air show two years ago. He was responsible, perhaps, for the (200?) illegally placed road signs promoting the air show and the closure of the airport road which was then sold as VIP car parking.
3. He is supported by a "Head of Aviation" – James Wostenholme. Ben is the "Accountable Manager" – i.e. responsible to the Civil Aviation Authority.
4. You can watch a recent interview with the two of them at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R-WaCsBht7Y This suggests that they recognise the need to make friends locally, while expanding the airfield considerably.
5. Ben promises "wing-walking", more flying events and more flexible opening hours, apparently including more evening flying and apparently 24 hour opening.
6. Planning matters are dealt with by Tim Reeve, a local architect. Tim is a strong supporter of developing local employment and the commercial success of the airfield.
7. A planning application has been filed to use the old staff accommodation as two "lettable" units for aviators and enthusiasts. This contradicts the existing planning consent.
8. Philip Cayford, a long-standing Compton Abbas resident, organises the Compton Abbas Airfield Monitoring Group - CAAMG. Philip is an extremely capable KC. The group has filed an objection to the application.
9. I am aware that Philip has done a great deal of research on the airfield planning consents and am happy to share a summary verbally at a future meeting.
10. Philip has invited me to attend a future CAAMG meeting. I have accepted.

2026.68 Mast Working Group
No updates

2026.69 Dorset Councillors report

Beacon Ward Report to Parishes
Dorset Council
Cllr Jane Somper
Autumn 2026

Dinah's Hollow – Standing Item

I recently visited Dinah's Hollow with MP, Simon Hoare to see how the stabilisation scheme is coming along, and I was impressed by how much has been done since my last visit. The project team has made strong progress, and it was reassuring to see that so many trees are being kept, with wildlife and habitats protected along the way.

As we all know this has been a problem for our area for a long time, so it's encouraging to see a lasting fix taking shape. I've been told the work is on track to finish by the end of the year, giving everyone who uses the road a safer and more dependable route.

Who Connects Rural North Dorset

Dorset Council's new public transport plan promises more bus journeys, demand-responsive transport (DRT) and stronger support for community transport. That is welcome, but for those of us in North Dorset's villages and hamlets, the real question is whether it will reach the places the conventional bus network never does.

For rural residents, the issue isn't how many buses Dorset has. It's whether you can get to a GP or hospital appointment, to town, to work or to college, and back home again, without a car. The Council's own business case accepts that fixed-route buses can't serve every rural community, and that community transport and DRT will need to fill the gaps.

However, the funding is far from secure. The programme is estimated at £67.6 million over seven years, with £39.25 million still to be found and no indication of where it will come from. The plan also says delivery may be phased or scaled back depending on future budgets. That leaves some important questions unanswered

Which North Dorset communities are guaranteed a service, and which are still waiting?

What happens to villages that aren't on a commercially viable route?

How often will DRT run, and can people book it without a smartphone?

Will it work for an 8am hospital appointment, a 9am college start or a trip home after work?

What happens to the community transport groups already doing this work, given the Council's own finding that funding uncertainty and a shortage of volunteer drivers are major problems for them?

These matter because a cancelled journey can mean a missed medical appointment for an older resident, or a lost opportunity in education or employment for a young person.

Although I welcome the ambition, I want to know what turns it into a real service with secured funding, clear routes, vehicles, drivers, timetables, accessibility and firm commitments for the villages that currently fall through the gaps.

The question isn't whether Dorset has a transport strategy. It's when someone in a small North Dorset village will be able to rely on getting where they need to go. North Dorset needs the connection, not just the promise of one.

20mph Temporary Speed Limits on the A350

I am waiting to hear from officers on the decision on whether the 20mph temporary speed limits along the A350 will remain in place until the end of the works at Dinah's Hollow or if they will be removed before then.

Dorset Police carried out enforcement during August and have supplied their data to Dorset Council. The council will collate this data with their own, which will inform their decision.

This is imminent, and I have chased it. I know many residents and road users are keen to know what will happen, and I will share the outcome as soon as I have it.

For any ward work, please contact me at CllrJane.Somper@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk.

2026.70

Any Other Business

CE has been litter picking in the area for thirty years. He was saddened to report the increase in litter over the years in Woodley Lane, North Road and Airport Road. He suggested people do not seem to have the same respect for their surroundings anymore. T

2026.71 Items for next agenda

Road markings are fading in locality (Dennis Lane) although not in Ashmore Parish and accidents appear to be increasing again. JG volunteered to report the lack of road markings to Wiltshire County Council.

2026.72 The Chairman closed the meeting at 19.56

Date for next meeting Tuesday 19th January 2027 at 7pm