

ASHMORE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held at Ashmore Village Hall on Thursday September 4th 2025 at 7pm

Present:-

Chairman – Richard Coplan (RC)

Councillors – Philippa Kelway-Bamber (PKB) Gilly Forge (GF) Angie Newnham (AN)

Colin Elford (CE) John Ball (JB)

Dorset Councillor Jane Somper

Vivian Hitchmough (Clerk)

There were 5 members of the public

2025.37 Apologies Cllr James Grazebrook (JG)

2025.38 Minutes of the meeting of Thursday 15th May 2025 were agreed as a true record and duly signed.

2025.39 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.

2025.40 Matters arising.

Update on a possible 20mph speed limit in Ashmore

Since the last meeting we have conducted a survey amongst the village to see if there is good support for a 20mph speed limit. We had 73 respondents of which 72 were in favour and one against. On the back of this overwhelming positive response, we made the formal application to Dorset Council for the reduced speed limit. At the same time, we checked with the Traffic Data Team at DC who advised that they would support our application. Cllr Jane Somper advised that she had supported the application and it was now going through a technical design process and our application is currently in Phase Group 5.

Update on road and fingerpost signs

The 1950s road sign by the pond should be reinstated this autumn.

This has been on hold for various reasons, but primarily for the weather to soften the ground prior to erecting the new posts.

You might have noticed the splendid new fingerpost sign at the corner of Woodley Lane. We are just waiting for the roundel to be manufactured which will finish it off. We want to extend a big

thankyou to all those who kindly donated toward this, speaking of which a total of £1160 was raised and we will be applying for a £200 grant from CPRE. There are two additional finger posts that need replacing, one opposite the turning to the airfield on North Road and another one at Possessions Corner. We are very grateful to the Filly Committee who have generously agreed to donate £1000 towards this project.

Drainage issues

The drains have been reported as running clear, especially during the recent downpours. We need to be vigilant during the Autumn to ensure drains don't get blocked with leaves. If householders live by a drain, it would be helpful if they could keep an eye on them.

2025.41 Updates from Officers.

Planning

No applications to discuss

DAPTC

We have received a survey from DAPTC which is specifically aimed at smaller parishes. We have until 31st October to submit our responses. The Chairman will circulate the survey to Councillors.

Trees

GF advised there had been one application for tree work in the conservation order. Permission was given to fell a Yew at The Old Parsonage.

Footpaths

CE reported that local landowners had kept footpaths open on their land and he recommended this should be carried out annually. CE has cleared many footpaths and bridleways as it was pointed out that overhanging trees were a danger to riders. CE asked if dog owners could keep their animals under control in areas where pheasants are likely to hide.

Pond

JE reported that Constantine and Philip had worked really hard clearing weed and buckets of silt from the pond and all the nettles were cleared.

Playground

JB had been sent the ROSPA report on the inspection of the playground with a couple of remedial changes needed. He has since replaced the bolt on the swings but said there was a need to be mindful that the equipment is wooden and has been in place for twenty years.

Defibrillator/telephone box

The telephone box has been tidied up and a big thankyou from us goes to Michael Moodey for this. The defibrillator is in good working order and is regularly checked.

Airfield

JB said there was nothing to report, but there is a meeting in October which he will attend.

2025.42 Finance

We have received and settled the invoice of £153.38 for the Woodley Lane fingerpost. The new precept will be set in January 2026

We are thinking that we should start building a reserve fund for unscheduled repairs etc. The fingerposts are a good example however an even more expensive repair/refurbishment will be the playground equipment. The Chairman proposed that the council raise the precept by £2000 per annum specifically to build a reserve fund.

GF asked what reserves were in place at the moment and the figure of £2000 was stated.

2025.43 Update from the Mast Working Group

There is a pause at the moment as there is no suggestion that Cornerstone will proceed with an application at present. JB will continue to hold a watching brief.

2025.44 Dorset Councillor's report

Autumn 2025

Malpractice in Dorset Council

As a Councillor of Dorset Council I am deeply dismayed by the findings of the SWAP report. I've been a councillor for 14 years working alongside officers who've shown nothing but total integrity and professionalism. The scale of the financial mismanagement, lack of internal oversight and disregard for due process, the scheme of delegation by a very small number of people with potential criminal intent is staggering and a profound breach of public trust. Residents and members rightly expect transparency and accountability from the local authority. Instead the council is faced with £9million spent largely off-book, questionable contracts and decisions made outside the safeguards designed to protect public funds. This isn't just about process, it's about trust that has been badly eroded. I will be seeking assurances on what action will be taken to restore that trust, prevent any repeat of this, and that those responsible are held to account.

NRS Collapse – at home equipment

Following serious concerns and rumours that NRS Healthcare had gone bust I made urgent enquiries with Dorset Council, as no information had been shared with elected members at the time. NRS has been the provider of home equipment for residents, including those discharged from hospital or receiving care at home. I was advised in a briefing with a senior officer that Medequip will be taking over Dorset's equipment loan service replacing NRS as the provider. I have been given assurances that there will be no disruption to the loan service, however I will monitor the situation closely and advocate for all residents especially those who may otherwise fall through the gaps. If you as parish councillors become aware of anyone who is not receiving the equipment they need please ask them to contact me either directly or through yourselves.

The Dorset Council local plan

The consultation is now open and I cannot emphasise enough the importance of responding with a focus on your village. There are two opportunities to attend drop in sessions in North Dorset. September 16th Shaftesbury 2-6pm, Town Hall, September 25th Gillingham 2-7pm Town Hall. Officers will be on hand to answer questions.

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

2025.45

Any other business

Dorset Plan - The Chairman will send a link published via the Parish Council email.

Security

We would like to remind households that security begins at home. Dorset

police emphasised that you start with equipment and items which need to be secured e.g. garden machinery which could be sprayed pink to deter thieves. Place smaller items in a secure steel cabinet bolted to the floor and think about passive infra-red activated CCTV cameras that can alert your smart phone. These can be rigged up to switch lights on, sound an alarm and they are generally inexpensive.

A member of the public kindly distributed comprehensive information regarding ANPR camera systems which he feels would act as a deterrent and would prevent fewer thefts in the area. He suggested a small working group to cost the system and explore funding.

The Chairman felt the police advice should be followed initially and the fruits of these measures should be reviewed later.

A member of the public advised that more pot holes had appeared and should be reported to Dorset Council.

2025.46 Date of next meeting

Thursday 15th January 2026.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.40pm