

MINUTES OF ASHMANHAUGH ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

held in the Preston Rooms, Ashmanhaugh on

Tuesday 5th May 2026 at 8pm

(Commenced at 19:30)

Chair: Cllr H Buxton

Clerk: Sarah Martin

Members of public present: 12

Apologies received from PC Matt Pritty, Bernie Everett (Cricket Club) and Anne Mulhall (Churchwarden).

The Chair welcomed all attending and stated that this was not a Parish Council meeting but the Annual Parish Meeting. After the usual reports, parishioners could raise any matters of concern to them or the village.

1. Agree minutes of the previous meeting – 6th May 2025

It was confirmed/agreed the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 6th May 2026.

2. Norfolk Police Beat Manager Report for the Village

Apologies received from PC Matt Pritty – report read by Sarah Martin.

Thank you for the invite but I cannot attend I'm afraid , I am now office based and will soon be retiring , I apologise for my lack of attendance to the parish meetings - as soon as a new beat manager has been appointed, I will ensure they reach out so you have a point of contact

A report covering the past 12 months:

We have had 15 calls from the parish dated between 26/04/26 to 26/04/2026 , broken down these are:

4x emergency calls which were 2x road traffic collisions and 2x reports of sheep in the road

4x priority calls which appeared to be all personal matters which wouldn't affect the parish

7x calls which were either abnormal loads or sheep /deer in the road

My colleagues have also been out conducting speed enforcement when possible

As a parish you will still be covered by my colleagues at North Walsham who have been covering for me during my absence

That's it , on summary no real issues to report

Thank you for your support since I've been in the beat manager role , you've certainly been one of the quieter parishes I've had to look after and it's been a pleasure to have been your beat manager

As soon as the new beat manager is known I will ensure you're updated

With very best wishes, Matt Pritty

3. Parish Councils Chair's report

The Parish council has met six times in the last year, along with the hosting of the Annual Parish Meeting. During this time we have welcomed one new Councillor, Jane Pond, following the resignation of Annie Naylor-Clements who moved away from the Parish. We thank Annie for her time and involvement on the Council and welcome Jane.

As always we are thankful to Nigel Dixon for giving up his time to keep Ashmanhaugh informed of the wider picture. Nigel is stepping down as County Councillor, but will remain our District Councillor for a while longer.

There will be changes to come with the Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution, and we will continue to keep you up to date at Parish Council meetings when information is received.

The Parish Council continues to monitor speeding throughout the village using the SAM2 camera. Thank you to Chris Ramsbottom for moving and collating the data, which we regularly share with the Police, and is available on the PC website for all to view.

We just last week saw the installation of a gateway on Stone Lane and hope this will assist with speed reduction along this busy village road and keep our parishioners safe. Apart from some speeding issues we are very fortunate that there are very few other issues within the Parish.

We thank to our Parishioners who come to the meetings to keep up to date with what we as a Parish Council are working on. We are here to represent the community, deliver local services and enhance the quality of life for residents. If you have any suggestions please contact our Clerk and these can be raised and considered at the PC meetings.

We have been notified a couple of times that our community defibrillator has been deployed however when checking it appears to have not been needed, which is good, but proves this is a vital piece of equipment for our community. Thank you to Steve who regularly checks and reports on this – it is much appreciated.

Financially the Parish Council ended the year with £3,700.66. We continue to have a reserve for projects that may arise and we are committed to making Ashmanhaugh a place to be proud of. Costs for all are ever increasing and although we try to keep the precept as low as possible increases are necessary.

In 2026/27 we will be looking at improvements to the Common. This however will not be a short term project. We have limited funds, although we will look into grants, and all Councillors are all volunteers so we will be coming up with a plan and priorities for the next few years. Updates will be given at the regular meetings.

All parishioners are welcome to attend the Parish Council meetings which are advertised on our website or noticeboards, and can contact our clerk if you would like to raise any issues: clerk@ashmanhaughparishcouncil.gov.uk or 07749 167735

Finally, I would like to thank all of our Parish Councillors and our clerk for their hard work and diligence throughout this year and all the volunteers who help around the Parish.

4. District and County Councillor's report from Nigel Dixon – read by Jane Pond

I have attended almost all PC meetings in the past year and reported the most notable topics as they have emerged. The most notable challenges at County and District Council levels that will continue to evolve over the next few years and affect Ashmanhaugh in the future are:

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) - I will spare you the history on this but the decision to create 3 Unitary Councils for Norfolk is the most problematic of the 3 options available to Central Government especially regarding the following:

Service Delivery – all services (County & District) will be delivered by each of the 3 Unitaries and East Norfolk Unitary (ENU) will cover Ashmanhaugh. That means services will continue to be delivered from existing offices and current contractors until reviews and renewals result in changes and rationalisations. It's proposed the ENU HQ will be at Gt Yarmouth.

Democratic Representation – while the ENU area, as proposed, is known - the precise boundaries are subject to confirmation, so could change for a range of reasons. Similarly, proposals have been made regarding the number of Unitary Cllrs to cover ENU - based roughly on the County Divisions effective from 8 May 2026; currently that equates, roughly, to 2 per Division and they will act in shadow form from when elected in May 27 till 1 Apr 28 when the ENU goes live. The ENU Cllrs will serve for 4 years till May 32. During that time, a Boundary Review is expected to decide the Democratic Representation structure for the May 32 elections.

LGR is subject to a high level of risk in delivering at least the same quality of current services and an even higher risk to financial viability without significant rises in Council Tax from 2028 onwards. We can't discount the risk that LGR may be abandoned HMG by another U turn prior to Apr 28!

Planning Policy and Local Delivery – Lots of reforms to the Planning system are under consideration by HMG aimed at driving much higher housing delivery; this will be very problematic for NNDC which has recently approved its Local Plan for the next 15 years.

Highways Maintenance and Safety – Budget reductions over the years has deprived Highways from carrying out structural maintenance and safety improvements essential to ensuring the long-term condition of the road network. Current plans struggle to keep the roads watertight and the friction course effective for safe traction. Major efforts focus on pot-hole filling but this is mostly "fire-fighting" and does nothing to address the underlying structural decay. Surface water flooding and roadside drainage system maintenance present similar problems and risks to road stability and surface condition.

Not the brightest of pictures of the future but in some ways a continuation of the past and present!

5. Church Warden's report

Apologies received from Churchwarden Anne Mulhall – report read by Sarah Martin.

The pattern of services whereby we have one Benefice Holy Communion service at St Swithin's every month continues to be successful. It ensures a regular congregation of 25-30 come together to worship, and enjoy fellowship and refreshments after the service. We are also fortunate to have a regular organist, Paul Taylor, who so kindly provides his services free of charge. The other regular service – a short Friday Morning Worship has also been greatly appreciated as a quiet time for contemplation and prayer before the weekend. Festivals and important days of remembrance still remain as parish services. These are often attended by those who might not come to church on a regular basis.

Across the benefice the work of our Rector to attract more young people and parents into the church with regular Sunday Clubs and special outings continues to increase our congregations. The benefice away day at Walsingham was also a wonderful opportunity to explore views and perspectives across the five parishes and begin to sketch out a plan of action for the future, that will, hopefully initiate new benefice wide collaborations.

As always the parish share, now over £9,000 p/a, paid to Diocese is a steady drain on our funds. We have been very fortunate to have received some legacies in the past years, but we are now running on a deficit year on year and are having to use our capital funds to make good our outgoings.

Fund raising is, by default relatively low key in such a small church but the annual quiz for Tariro Children's Charity in Zimbabwe was a great success and will be repeated. As will the Grand Christmas Draw following the Carol Service that attracts many of our parishioners.

As always our thanks are due to several parishioners and friends who help with services and maintain the church and churchyard. Simon Hannant, who cuts the grass and keeps the churchyard neat and tidy. Pam Culley who has tended the plants outside and also the displays of flowers inside the church; Helen Coleman who continues to clean the church for us and Paul Taylor the organist. I would like to record my thanks to everyone who gives of their time and skills to St Swithin's.

6. Preston Rooms report

Verbal report from Steve Newstead - Preston Rooms Committee

The Preston Rooms continues to be well used for various activities and by groups including the Norfolk Military group, Wreath making, Pop up café, Deaf & Sign Language café (*funding received to support this*), cosy supper and more.

The hall has achieved a 5* hygiene rating for the kitchen.

7. Cricket Club report

Apologies received from Bernie Everett – Cricket Club Chair. Report read by Harry Buxton

The 2026 cricket season has begun for all teams and age groups at both Ashmanhaugh & Barton Turf

Both grounds have been improved and refurbished over the winter, including disabled toilet & baby changing facility at Barton Turf.

ECB All Stars for ages 5-8 commences 8th May – and all junior age groups are participating in leagues and competitions

Cricket:

Our overseas professional player for 2026 has been announced as Jayden Draper, fresh from representing Australia in the U19 World Cup!

He took to the field at Barton Turf on Sat 2nd May and proceeded to break 3 East Anglian Premier League records. Highest ever score with a bat (250), highest ever partnership (420) and highest ever EAPL score in a 50 over match (477) – for an 18 year old this was an incredible achievement and was reported immediately in the Australian press!

Jayden will be coaching our juniors as well as providing skills sessions when required & hosting summer camps.

Volunteer and Sponsorship Opportunities:

- The club is always looking for volunteers to help and new sponsors. There are great packages available for businesses to get involved and support grassroots sport.
- We are currently supported by many local businesses, and we give back as much as we can in the way of advertising – please ask for more info.

Community Engagement

Did you know that over the past few years

- We have hosted cricket competitions for a group of local primary schools
- We have enjoyed cricket taster sessions for local Brownies, Guides & Rangers
- We have donated surplus kit to local organisations who need it
- We have provided free 1st Aid courses, training courses and support to club members
- We have provided free coaching sessions in local schools
- We have hosted fun matches for local organisations and businesses

If you are a local group and are interested in what we do, please get in touch!

Contact Information: Feel free to reach out with any queries

- For playing inquiries: joeverett333@gmail.com
- For activities and events: ABWCC.events@gmail.com

Stay Updated:

- Follow the club on Facebook, Instagram, and X for all the latest news.

Get in touch now or join us on the boundary!

8. Poor's Land report – read by Neal Sharpe (Trustee)

We have a full complement of Trustees. They are Mrs Rachel Buxton (Chair), Mr Terry Childerhouse, Mr Chris Phillipo, Mr John Pond and Mr Neal Sharpe.

The Board has three regular meetings a year but will call extraordinary meetings if necessary.

The objective of the Trust is:

- The relief of poverty
- To improve the quality of life for those residents who have need by reason of youth, age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantages.
- The advancement of education.
- The advancement of community development.
- Greater use of community buildings.

The Charity has made one Grant this year, to a resident in need.

Currently, the Trust has some £1,000 of uncommitted funds available for grants

The annual return to the Charity Commission has been completed and is available to view, on the Charity Commission website.

If there is any person or group, who is in need of a grant and meets the objective, please contact one of the Trustees.

9. Any further reports

None.

10. Open forum

None.

Thanks were given to all those who attended – refreshments served.

Meeting closed: 19:52.