2025/19

ASHENDON PARISH COUNCIL
Draft Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held in the Village Hall.
Monday 20th October 2025 at 7.30pm

PRESENT:

Councillors: Fiona Jacobs **(FJ),** Sian Miller **(SM),** Chris Rand **(CR),** and Venetia Davies **(Clerk and RFO)**. Richard Phillips **(RP)**, Road Safety Lead, Ashley Waite **(AW),** Bucks Councillor were also present.

Parishioners: There were two Parishioners present.

Parishioners Question Time (PQT).
There were no questions.

1. **Apologies**
   Luke Jamieson.

2. **Declarations of Interests**
   There were none pertaining to the Agenda.

3. **Buckinghamshire Council Local Plan** Buckinghamshire Council's draft Local Plan consultation is now live. As a consultee, the Parish Council is invited to comment on the published draft Local Plan. *The new Local Plan for Buckinghamshire will set out the strategy for meeting Buckinghamshire's future housing and employment requirements through to the year 2045. It will set out what infrastructure is needed to support growth, whilst also protecting most valued environments.* This autumn consultation is about growth strategy and policies and has been prepared in two parts: **Part A: The Local Plan vision and objectives, the spatial strategies for housing and employment**, including ways to meet travelling communities' accommodation needs. **Part B: Development Management Policies**. The Housing and Economic Land Assessment (HELAA) will be published at the end of 2025**.** This will have all potential sites put forward and Buckinghamshire Council's methodology and site assessment report. Any sites proposed for Ashendon will not be known until then. In the 2017 HELAA, there were none for Ashendon. *Buckinghamshire requires approximately 91,000 new homes and a further 45.9 hectares of employment land as set out by Local Government. There are just over 22,000 homes committed for development from existing local plans (including Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan), neighbourhood plans and planning permissions. Taking account of currently available employment land supply, the overall level of employment growth needed is 219.4 ha of new land to 2045. The amount of new development required will need major infrastructure investment to avoid worsening existing issues in areas like transport, education and healthcare.*

The draft plan looks at various 'approaches' to fulfilling this housing target. It concludes that all approaches will be needed to meet the target: "Summary of Approaches to Potential

2025/20

Housing Supply. *It is likely all of these approaches are required to meet the housing needs for Buckinghamshire. The proposed housing numbers are indicative, providing a snapshot of where we have got to developing the plan so far. This will change once the technical studies have been completed. The indicative numbers are provided to show the direction of travel.*

Potential housing supply

Approach 1: Brownfield sites within existing towns and villages 1,500-2,500
Approach 2: Growth on the edges of existing main towns 23,000-28,000
Approach 3: New towns 11,000-13,000
Approach 4: Development at transport hubs 16,000-19,000
Approach 5: Expansion near key employment areas 5,000-6,000. This approach includes ***Expansion at Strategic Employment Sites (Silverstone, Westcott (see page 50 of link) and Pinewood and continued delivery of employment growth at Woodlands)***
Approach 6: Limited expansion of villages 13,000-15,000
Approach 7: Expanding urban areas on the edge of Buckinghamshire 6,000-7,000 Total 75,000-91,000
Windfall 7,400
Total housing supply + commitments 82,000-99,000
Housing requirement 91,000 with 5% buffer 95,550
N.b. the numbers in the above table do not sum due to rounding".

Following this consultation, an updated version of the Local Plan for Buckinghamshire will be published for final feedback in **July 2026**. The Local Plan and any amendments will then be submitted to the government's Planning Inspectorate in December 2026. The Bucks Local Plan is due for adoption in 2027.

The Parish Council agreed Ashendon Parish Council's response as below. ACTION: SM/CLERK to send Ashendon Parish Council's Response to Buckinghamshire Council Local Plan Consultation by email to: planningpolicyteam.bc@buckinghamshire.gov.uk (deadline: Wednesday 29th) October 2025 by 23:59pm.

ASHENDON PARISH COUNCIL – RESPONSE TO BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNCIL LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION.
Part A – Local Plan Spatial Strategy for Housing

The Settlement of Ashendon

Ashendon Parish Council welcomes the recognition in the *Buckinghamshire Settlement Review (May 2025)* that Ashendon remains classified as a **rural settlement** and is **not included within Tier 5**. This classification accurately reflects the parish's **very limited level of services and facilities**.

Ashendon scored **2 out of 7 key services** (Food Shop, Pub, Post Office, GP, Community/Village Hall, Recreation Ground, Primary School) and **1 out of 6 non-key services** (Secondary School, Place of Worship, Pharmacy, Library, Dentist, Leisure Centre). With such minimal provision, Ashendon is **not a sustainable location** for further housing growth.

2025/21

The nearest Tier 1 or 2 settlement lies almost **10 miles away**, and **public transport is extremely limited**, leaving residents reliant on private cars. Any additional housing allocation would therefore increase unsustainable travel and infrastructure pressure.
Housing Distribution and Development Pressure.

While the draft plan presents a logical framework for housing supply, the Parish Council is concerned that, if delivery targets are not met, a **"pro-rata" approach** to housing distribution could emerge, imposing disproportionate development pressures on small rural settlements. Housing numbers must instead be **directed toward sustainable locations** with existing access to employment, transport, education, and health facilities.

To date, Ashendon has **no sites identified in the Call for Sites**, which is appropriate given its rural character. We await to see if any sites are identified in the HELAA. However, significant indirect impacts may arise from developments nearby, particularly at **Westcott**, **Waddesdon**, and along the **A41 corridor,** where cumulative growth will place additional strain on roads, schools, and healthcare provision.

Buckinghamshire Council's latest *Five-Year Housing Land Supply Statement (January 2025)* identifies only **3.62 years of deliverable housing supply** in the North & Central Planning Area (predominantly the Vale of Aylesbury), below the five-year requirement. This shortfall risks triggering the **National Planning Policy Framework's "tilted balance"**, potentially inviting **speculative applications** for housing on unallocated or unsuitable rural sites.

Approach 6: Limited Village Expansion (13,000–15,000 homes)
Under this approach, expansion would extend to villages in Tiers 4 & 5. Our understanding is that Ashendon would be excluded. Annex A of the Housing Needs Study (Small Parishes) identifies a need for 17 affordable homes in the parish, which - at 40% affordable provision - translates to a total of around 43 dwellings.

The Housing Needs Study identifies a countywide requirement for 35,000 affordable homes, equivalent to around 3 affordable homes per 1,000 residents annually. The draft policy seeks 40% affordable housing on sites of more than 10 units, meaning delivery would need to increase from the current 500 affordable homes per year to approximately 1,346 per year across Buckinghamshire.

However, imposing this proportional target uniformly across all parishes fails to recognise local constraints. In a village of just over 250 residents, such a level of development would represent an increase of more than 40% in housing stock—far beyond what could be reasonably accommodated without harming local character, landscape, and infrastructure.
Ashendon Summary (Census 2021; ORS Model)
Population: 262
Households: 99
Owner-occupied: 69%
Private rent: 15%
Social rent: 16%

2025/22

Existing Challenges for Ashendon

Ashendon already faces significant and growing infrastructure pressures:

- **Traffic and HGV impact:** High volumes of commuter and heavy-goods vehicles pass through the village, creating serious concerns about **road safety, noise, vibration, and damage to verges and property**, particularly along the **C66 - through Ashendon to Westcott**, which is not designed for such traffic.
- **Cumulative growth:** Development in nearby settlements: Haddenham, Stone, Long Crendon, Thame, and Aylesbury, has steadily increased traffic through Ashendon. Parish monitoring shows a marked rise in vehicle speed, weight, and volume on narrow rural roads without pavements.
- **Freight management:** The Parish Council has long supported the proposed **Waddesdon Freight Zone**, identified in the Buckinghamshire Council Freight Strategy to restrict inappropriate HGV movements through rural villages. We are concerned that this initiative remains on hold, despite evidence from the **Ivinghoe pilot** showing a clear and positive reduction in HGV traffic.

In addition, the proposed **Littleton Green development** (up to 535 homes) near Waddesdon will generate further traffic and service pressures that will inevitably extend into neighbouring rural settlements. This reinforces the need for the new Local Plan to **require early and proportionate infrastructure delivery** alongside all major developments and control on construction traffic routes through planning conditions.

Part B – Employment Spatial Strategy

Ashendon Parish Council **supports in principle** the ~~designation~~ retention of **Westcott Venture Park** as an **Enterprise Zone and Strategic Employment Site**, particularly its focus on **high-technology and engineering sectors**. Retaining Westcott as an employment hub aligns with the goal of supporting local economic growth and innovation.

However, we have **significant concerns** about the **scale and cumulative impact** of employment-related development on surrounding rural communities, including Ashendon. While a **small amount of housing** directly linked to employment at Westcott may be acceptable **within the site itself**, we **strongly oppose any expansion** that extends into or adversely affects neighbouring villages.

Key concerns include:

- **Traffic impacts:** Heavy and fast-moving vehicles already pass through Ashendon in increasing numbers. Additional commercial and construction traffic must be strictly managed.
- **Construction management:** Developers should be required to submit and comply with a **comprehensive Construction Management Plan**, detailing routes, timings, and vehicle types to minimise disruption, and these should be enforced.
- **Infrastructure and services:** Growth at Westcott will increase pressure on local roads, schools, and healthcare facilities.

2025/23

- **Environmental impacts:** Expansion risks higher levels of light pollution, noise, and loss of rural tranquillity.

We therefore expect Buckinghamshire Council to ensure that all development at Westcott is supported by:

- A **Traffic and Construction Management Plan** that protects nearby villages from through-traffic.
- **Early and proportionate infrastructure delivery**.
- **Robust environmental safeguards**.
- **Regular monitoring and enforcement**

We also note the recent **Acorn Bioenergy** application to build a large methane biodigester near Long Crendon, which could increase HGV movements through Ashendon by **50–150 percent**. Such an escalation would be unacceptable in safety, environmental, and amenity terms.

Ashendon Parish Council urges Buckinghamshire Council to **reinstate and prioritise the Waddesdon Freight Zone initiative** as a matter of urgency, incorporating it into the **Local Transport and Infrastructure Strategy**. This measure is essential to protect vulnerable rural roads and prevent cumulative impacts from major industrial and employment developments.

In summary, while the Parish Council supports the principle of economic growth at Westcott, we stress that all development must be **tightly controlled, infrastructure-led, and sensitive to the rural character and limited capacity** of neighbouring settlements.

Conclusion

Ashendon Parish Council supports a Local Plan that:

- Focuses housing and employment growth in **sustainable locations with existing infrastructure.**
- Protects **small rural settlements** from inappropriate or speculative development.
- Ensures **early, proportionate infrastructure delivery.**
- Requires **robust transport and construction management plans** to safeguard rural communities.

Ashendon remains a **small rural village with minimal services** and should **not be identified for housing allocations**. We ask that the Local Plan continues to reflect and protect that status, while ensuring that development elsewhere, particularly at **Westcott** and along the **A41 corridor,** does not indirectly compromise the infrastructure capacity or quality of life of our residents.

The Parish Council looks forward to the next stage of plan preparation and urges Buckinghamshire Council to adopt a **cohesive, forward-looking strategy** that integrates housing and employment growth with realistic, timely infrastructure delivery.

2025/24

4. Ashendon Neighbourhood Plan

The meeting discussed a Neighbourhood Plan (NP) for Ashendon. Whilst Ashendon in its response to the Settlement Review did not consider a NP necessary, the Parish Council has since agreed to form a Steering Group to consider a NP for Ashendon.

Buckinghamshire Council's latest *Five-Year Housing Land Supply Statement (January 2025)* identifies only **3.62 years of deliverable housing supply** in the North & Central Planning Area (predominantly the Vale of Aylesbury), below the five-year requirement. This shortfall risks triggering the **National Planning Policy Framework's "tilted balance"**, potentially inviting **speculative applications** for housing on unallocated or unsuitable rural sites. A NP would give Ashendon protection if the housing requirement for Ashendon was met (but there is no protection against Permitted Development).

Ashendon does not currently have a housing requirement (this to be confirmed through the HELAA of the Bucks Local Plan in December 2025). Design principles in a NP must be consistent with Buckinghamshire Council's design principles. It was agreed that the Steering Group could commence the Neighbourhood Plan now (vision and data collection) but complete the Neighbourhood Plan in line with the Local Plan when indicative housing numbers are known.

The first step of the Neighbourhood Plan process is to apply for Neighbourhood Area Designation to signify the area the neighbourhood plan is for: *(a) a map which identifies the area to which the area application relates; (b) a statement explaining why this area is considered appropriate to be designated as a neighbourhood area; and (c) a statement that the organisation or body making the area application is a relevant body for the purposes of section 61G of the 1990 Act. The Parish Council was signposted to a number of guidance documents and planning resources, including:* https://www.gov.uk/guidance/neighbourhood-planning--2. How to create a Neighbourhood Plan: Your step-by-step roadmap guide - Locality Neighbourhood Planning. **ACTION: LJ and SM** to propose next steps at November meeting.

5. Planning Enforcement Case NC/25/00039/NAPP - Barns Off Main Road, Upper Pollicott, Ashendon, Buckinghamshire, HP18 0HH. Despite the Parish Council efforts to demonstrate the change of use of agreed tradition roof materials and the resultant harm in the traditional character on the approach to Ashendon, the case has been advised as *closed*. The Parish Council's only option is to make a formal complaint to Buckinghamshire Council against the handling of the case.

6. Date and Time of Next Meeting:

Monday 17th November 2025 at 7.30pm in Ashendon Village Hall