*2026/01a*

# ASHENDON ANNUAL VILLAGE MEETING

**DRAFT Minutes of Annual Village Meeting held in The Village Hall**
**Monday 20th April 2026 at 7.00pm**

**Chair:** Chris Rand, Chair
**Clerk:** Venetia Davies, Clerk
**Attendance:** There were 14 Parishioners including Councillor Ashley Waite.

1. **Apologies**
   Peter Johnson, Sian Miller, Kevin Nash, Peter and Felecity Smettem.

2. **Minutes of previous Annual Village Meeting held on Monday 14th April 2024.**
   Draft Minutes were accepted by the meeting as a true record and signed by Chair, Chris Rand.

3. **Matters Arising**
   There were no matters arising.

4. **The Ash Tree – Luke Jamieson**
   Special thanks were paid by Luke to the pub team. A big thank you went to Liam and Sue Cummings, and Shaunna Cummings, for their fantastic support throughout 'the amazing pub enterprise'. Luke said they have been a steady backbone to ensuring the pub has been open and without their input the pub would not have been open for the majority of last year. Luke also expressed sincere gratitude to Andy Howes, Paul de Lusignan, James Morris, and Andy Theobald for running the committee so effectively. Luke reiterated his sincere thanks, particularly to Michael and Sue Rand, and all who have donated and invested. He said the pub is a great success story for Ashendon. The team are very pleased to have found their first tenant. Valentin and Cara are doing an excellent job and receiving great feedback. Luke is always very happy to talk to anyone about the pub.

5. **Ashendon Community Speed Watch – Richard Phillips**
   The group's regime of varying Speed Indication Device (SiD) positioning and messaging, together with clement weather traffic greeting continues. It is proposed that the HS2 Road Safety Fund Board will provide a grant for the single purchase of a new 'Super SiD'. Outcome and delivery timescales/installation awaited. Village entry gateway features, high friction surfacing and dragons' teeth traffic calming along with associated signing and lining improvements to support the existing speed limit are also proposed in this funding. The Parish Council has stated that it would prefer for the high friction surfacing to be removed. Regular Traffic (numbers) remains largely the same at around a thousand vehicles a day. Precautions with additional security seem to have paid off and no vandalism of signage or battery theft has yet occurred.

6. **Ashendon Playing Fields Association (APFA) – Greg Woodford, Chair of APFA.**
   **Full Report filed and available to view here**. Greg Woodford, new Chair of APFA, introduced himself to the meeting. The APFA's aims for the coming year are to deliver more village events, increase fundraising, and continue improving the facilities. With support from the APFA committee, several activities are already planned, building on the success of last year's Halloween get-together. There is currently a long list of maintenance needs, including work on the pavilion and recladding. The committee is getting to grips with what is required and would welcome any concerns, suggestions or feedback from residents. It has been encouraging to see the facilities being well used. Looking ahead, the APFA hopes to deliver more events for the village and will be reaching out to other clubs and societies for help and collaboration. Access to equipment will also be reinstated so that it is available for everyone to use.
   Grass maintenance has taken a significant step forward this year. The APFA has been able to purchase its own ride on mower/lawn tractor, now owned by the Association, allowing grass cutting to be carried out by the Association. A big thank you was extended to all who have helped. A big thanks was also paid to David Crwys Williams for fundraising and enabling the club to purchase the mower tractor.

7. **Ashendon Village Hall - Richard Bates, Hon. Secretary.**
   It has been another busy and successful year for the Hall. The hall continues to be hired on a regular basis but the Trustees are aware that most of the income comes from a small number of groups within the village. To this end, they are trying to encourage as many as possible to hire the hall by keeping the hire costs to a minimum. The hall charges are to remain the same for another year and are: for any village organisation or club the charge is £17.00 per session, private parties for residents £36.00 per session, private parties for non-residents, £50.00 per session. The Trustees would like to thank their most regular hirers and in particular Ashendon Voices, the WI, the Church and the Parish Council. The Hall's accounts for 2025 showed a shortfall of £4,390 and this after a healthy surplus of £1,234 the previous year. However there are a number of reasons for this. The hall has been completely redecorated throughout; there are new fire extinguishers and an upgrading of emergency lighting and fire alarm. The most expensive item was new storage shed door and frame. Being a nonstandard size, this had to specially made as there were no off the peg doors that would fit. At the same time all costs have risen, most notably electricity charges. Despite this shortfall finances remain sound with a healthy bank balance, but clearly, more to hire the hall needs to be encouraged to ensure this happy state of affairs continues. The meeting was asked to encourage anyone they know who might need to hire a welcoming space to take advantage of the *bargain basement fees.*
   On behalf of all the committee Richard thanked all that hire the hall and keep this vital village asset thriving.

8. **The Ashendon Oil Klub – Richard Philips**
   All had been going well with the bulk-buying scheme, with around thirty members enjoying steady reductions, until the effective rationing that followed the troubles in the Middle East. The group look forward to normal service being resumed ... whenever that comes.

**9. Ashendon Voices - Fiona Jacob**

**Full Report filed and available to view here**. Ashendon Voices continues to thrive, meeting most Tuesdays with 12–14 regular members, including singers from Cuddington and Brill. Now in its tenth year, the choir has rebuilt strongly after Covid and continues to enjoy singing together. They perform annually at the Beaconsfield Festival of Choirs and sing regularly in St Mary's Church, especially over Christmas when their carol repertoire is in full use. The choir has now held three concerts, the most recent in March, featuring a varied programme including Bob Chilcott's *A Little Jazz Mass*, which was challenging but very rewarding. Guest musicians are invited to support their concerts; this year they were joined by pianist Andrew Melvin, Shima on harmonica, Clive Pearce on bass guitar and Chris Gater on flute. Their finale, *Sing Gently*, has become a tradition. The event raised over £300 for the Lewy Body Dementia Association. The choir remains an important source of friendship and support. Members take on roles such as banker, tea maker and cake provider, and by using the Village Hall they help sustain a building central to village life. If you would like to know more, contact Fiona Jacob fiona_jacob@hotmail.co.uk or just turn up (with biscuits!!!)

**10. Dominoes - Kevin Nash (read by Luke Jamieson)**

Report received from Kevin Nash. The Ashendon Dominoes team play in the Aylesbury District League. The season starts in April and is just finishing now. There are six teams in the league and they are likely to finish in the middle this year but hope they will be awarded a cup for being the best doubles players. The team has already won two cups this year in competitions; the doubles and the singles. Homes games are played at The Ash Tree where they have always played except when the pub was closed when they played at Westcott Cricket Club. The team play on Thursday evenings giving custom on a slow night. There have been some problems this year with the provision of refreshments, now overcome, and with the pub wanting to close at 9.45pm when competitive games can go on to 10.30pm or 11.00pm. They intend to meet with the landlords before the start of next season to see whether they can resolve this. The Dominoes team is an Ashendon team and would like to continue playing its home games in the pub. The game played is the traditional pub game of fives and threes. It is easy to learn initially but more difficult to perfect. News members are welcomed and the team are happy to give lessons. If you are interested, please speak to any member of the team or email **dominoes@addl.uk.**

**11. Red Lion Social Club (RLSC) - Luke Jamieson**

In June, the RLSC organised a fun teens' outing to Aylesbury Bowling. After smashing some pins, they enjoyed a well-earned meal at McDonald's. In September, the Club held its popular Progressive Supper, raising £580 which was split between the Chiltern Neuro Centre and Florence Nightingale Hospice. A huge thank you was paid to everyone who hosted and to Louisa for organising this calendar favourite. In October, the classic Conkers Championship was revived, at The Ash Tree pub. It is hoped this reinvigorated event will become a regular fixture once again. Also in October, the team supported *Movember* – the men's health charity that raises awareness and funds for prostate cancer, testicular cancer, and men's mental health. These are three subjects that have historically carried taboos. A few beers were

enjoyed while judging a month's worth of moustache growth, with prizes awarded for both the most impressive efforts and the most disappointing growth!
Unfortunately, the planned Children's Under-12s Party had to be adapted this year. The chosen date did not work for many families in Ashendon, and with only four children able to attend, it was decided to gift book tokens instead of holding a party.
The Carols & Auction evening was a great success, raising £1,400. One-third of the proceeds went to the church, with the remainder supporting other events in 2026. It was a fitting closing event for Shaunna, who managed the pub. Thanks were paid to the pub for hosting, to Julian for being an excellent auctioneer, to Sian for her brilliant work as lead elf, and to everyone who donated items and bid so generously. Finally, The Club were delighted to sponsor St Mary's Easter Egg Hunt this year. Thank you to Imogen and all at the church for ensuring that the amount of chocolate consumed in Ashendon almost certainly reached record levels!

12. **Parochial Church Council (PCC): St Mary's Ashendon - Peter Johnson (read by Richard Bates).**
**Full Report filed and available to view here**. **Worship and Services.** The regular service pattern has continued throughout the year: Lego Church on the first Sunday in the Village Hall, informal worship led by Peter Johnson on the second Sunday, and Holy Communion on the fourth Sunday. Informal worship typically attracts around 10 attendees, and Holy Communion around 13, with significantly higher numbers at festival services. Christmas Day saw 26 in church, Easter Day 35, "Love Your Church" 38, and the Remembrance Day service 37. The Carol and Christingle service was particularly well attended with 46 present. Attendance at Lego Church varies, sometimes low but rising to around 20 when families from the wider benefice join. **Church Building and Churchyard.** The church building remains in generally good repair, though, as with any historic structure, cracks and minor leaks require ongoing monitoring. The persistent leak above the pulpit appears to have been resolved, and other occasional leaks occur only in severe weather. The main concern is the perimeter wall near the war memorial, which is at risk of collapsing into the road. John Curtis has agreed to undertake the repair, and the aim is for the work to be completed this summer. The newly levelled floor at the back of the church has proved highly successful, improving both worship space and social use, including cream teas and the clothes swap. A new PA system has been installed, with equipment securely housed behind a new door in the choir stalls. A churchyard working party was held in the autumn, completing a substantial amount of maintenance. Thanks were expressed to all who took part and to the volunteers who continue to mow the churchyard. **Helpers at St Mary's church**. St Mary's Church is blessed with a willing community of volunteers who support it. The full report lists 63 people from 35 households and demonstrates the amazing support and give thanks for helping the church flourish during the year.

13. **Women's Institute - Sue Rand**
**Full report filed and available to view here**. Ashendon WI held its Annual Meeting on 11 November, a date of remembrance, opening with a moment of silence to honour the women who founded the Institute. This year marks 87 years since the first members met in 1939,

gathering in The Hut during the early days of the Second World War. Their resilience continues to inspire the group today. The first President was Mrs Fountaine of Pollicott farmhouse; Vanessa now serves as President. The WI currently has 19 members who contribute actively to village life. Each year they prepare Remembrance Poppy displays for the Church, Church wall and lytch gate. In addition to the November installation, this year the 80th Anniversary of VE Day was also marked. Members decorated the Church for Christmas and plan to reintroduce angel decorations this year. WI flower arrangements continue to be requested for village events, and last year Mary provided the stunning hanging baskets for the Pub. Throughout the year, members enjoyed a varied programme of talks and activities. Topics included scam awareness, the 2025/26 Resolution "Bystanders Can Be Lifesavers," defibrillator training, travels in Jordan, reading English churches, the work of female wartime pilots, the River Thame restoration, FitSteps exercise, the life of singer Al Bowlly, and a recent talk on Waddesdon Manor and the women who shaped its history. The group also entered the WI County Show Competition and displayed a range of craftwork. Social events included a Christmas supper, a visit to Manor House and Gardens on the Carrington Estate, a trip to Thrift Farm in Buckingham, lunch at Pitchott Kitchen, and a well-attended Literary Lunch featuring historian Helen Fry speaking on women in intelligence during the World Wars. Ashendon WI remains a sociable and hardworking group, committed to learning, community contribution and friendship. New members are warmly encouraged to join.

**14. Book Group – Sian Miller (read by Vanessa Bates)**

Between April 2025 and April 2026, the Ashendon Book Group read and reviewed six books: *The Mercies* by Kiran Millwood Hargrave, *The Old Ways* by Robert Macfarlane, *A Chip Shop in Poznań* by Ben Aitken, *The Art of a Lie* by Laura Shepherd-Robinson*, A Gentleman in Moscow* by Amor Towles, and *That Bonesetter Woman* by Frances Quinn. The standout favourites were *A Gentleman in Moscow* and *The Art of a Lie*, both strongly recommended, and *The Mercies* was also admired for its depth and emotional impact. Other titles generated a range of views and lively discussion, with *That Bonesetter Woman* dividing opinion *and A Chip Shop in Poznań* the least well-received. The group has 22 members in total, and although not everyone can attend each meeting, the current book often provides a welcome talking point when members meet informally at other times. The group continues to thrive as a strong and sociable part of village life. Meetings are held every two months, with each book chosen from three recommendations. They are very pleased to be meeting again at The Ash Tree pub and would like to thank Valentin and Cara for their warm hospitality. The group also maintains a blog where reviews are shared: **https://ashendonbookgroup.blogspot.com/.** The Book Group are currently reading *Whale Fall* by Elizabeth O'Connor and look forward to meeting again on Thursday 14th May at 8pm, at The Ash Tree, to discuss. Anyone who would like to join us is very welcome to come along to the meeting or contact Sian Miller via WhatsApp to be added to the Book Group WhatsApp.

**15. Buckinghamshire Council – Cllr Ashely Waite**

Full report filed and available to view here. Ashley provided a full update for Buckinghamshire Council which included a *Highways and Transport Updates, Finance and Strategic Overview,*

*Economic Development and High Streets, Major Infrastructure Projects, Libraries and Community Services, Housing and Homelessness, Planning and Infrastructure, Environmental Enforcement, Community Safety and Support and Children and Young People.* Please read the full report for a complete insight. Ashley, an advocate of Fix My Street, encouraged the meeting to report any issues via the Fix my Street website or app. With regard to Community Engagement, a new **Community What's App Group** has been set up. Ashley said it is the fastest way to get information. Please join here: **https://chat.whatsapp.com/LJw6YgvJlOg2HXZRpURR4p**.

**Significant roadworks** are scheduled over the coming months. All dates remain subject to change.

**A41 (Buckinghamshire):**

- 27–29 April: Overnight closure at Woodham (resurfacing)
- 8–10 June: Overnight closure at Canalettos (resurfacing)
- 12–23 June: Overnight closures at Ludgershall & Fleet Marston (resurfacing)

**A41 (Oxfordshire – outside parish remit):**

- Weekend closures (4am Saturday to 6pm Sunday):

25–26 April, 9–10 May, 16–17 May

Buckinghamshire Council has paused the Waddesdon Freight Strategy as a result of the unsuccessful Ivinghoe Freight Zone pilot. A new localised HGV-management options is being developed. Cuddington and Pollicott bridges will be subject to a 7.5-tonne weight restriction. These limits will be implemented through a Traffic Regulation Order, which will in turn influence sat-nav routing and will be enforced by cameras. Standard exemptions will apply, ensuring essential and emergency access is maintained. Farm vehicles are exempt.

**16. Ashendon Parish Council – Chris Rand**

It has been a reasonably quiet year for the Parish Council. The year began with the search for an additional councillor, and it is hopeful that someone has been gently persuaded to join the team. A number of planning applications came through the village, all of which were granted. The Council continues to keep a close eye on wider developments, particularly at Westcott, where increased traffic and light pollution remain a concern. The Council also objected to the Littletown Manor Farm application, an urban scale development, which has been appealed (and will be held in the Gateway at Buckinghamshire Council on 6th May), and also raised concerns regarding the new farm buildings at Pollicott that has deviated significantly from the original consented planning approval. Throughout the year, the Speed Awareness team has continued its valuable work and the Parish Council is very grateful for the works carried out by Richard Philips and team. The Parish Council awaits final information on the Freight Strategy and efforts to restrict HGV. In more practical news, new salt bins are expected for next season. Dog litter was raised as an issue, with a request for additional bins; however, after reviewing the costs, the Parish Council concluded that installing and servicing them would be too expensive at present. The Precept, always a lively topic, was increased slightly this year (from £19,000 to £20,000). With rising costs and ongoing commitments—including the

long-running effort to secure the Wotton Footpath—this was considered necessary. The Parish Council came close to securing HS2 funding for the footpath, but the project was ultimately deemed unviable after HS2's valuation came in at nearly double the assessed cost. The litter pick was a great success and thanks were paid to Fiona Jacob for organising. The amount of rubbish collected was amazing — particularly along the stretch from the village towards Westcott, where the volume found in the hedgerows was unbelievable. Chris paid thanks to Venetia, Ashley and all the Pairsh Councillors for their support and input.

**17. Gatehangers Association**

Dinner – Friday 15th May 2026 in The Ash Tree. Bookings: pietro@ranieri.agency 07590 454126.

**18. Diary Dates**

Please view ***Upcoming Events*** on the Village website: www.ashednonparish.org.uk or sign up to Email Alerts for notifications.

**Closing Comments**

Chris thanked everyone for all they do in the village and said without everyone doing a bit, it wouldn't be much of a village. He said that everyone appreciates the work that everyone does.

**Parish Council AGM – Monday 18th MAY 2026 at 7.30pm**

**Ashendon Village Hall**