

**Minutes of a meeting of Ashdon Parish Council, held on
Monday 21 July 2025, 7.30pm at Ashdon Village Hall.**

Present: Cllrs: Goodwin, Gray, Lewis, Olley & Pardue.
In the Chair: Cllr Olley.
Clerk: Angela Balcombe.
Also present: 15 members of the public.

25/17. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

Apologies were received from Cllr Horrigan and Cllr Moran.

25/18. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING.

The minutes of 16 June 2025 were approved as a correct record of events.

Proposed: Cllr Gray. Seconded: Cllr Lewis. Agreed.

25/19. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS.

To receive any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, Other Registerable Interests or Non-Registerable Interests relating to items on the agenda.

Please note: all Councillors are Sole Trustees of the Village Hall.

Cllr Moran is a District Councillor for Uttlesford District Council (UDC).

No interests were declared.

25/20. MATTERS ARISING.

A brief update on any actions from the previous meeting.

(For information only, Councillors are reminded that no decisions can be made under this agenda item; Longfield Parish Council v Wright (1918) 88 LJ Ch 119).

- Trim Trail – Cllr Goodwin has received two quotes for the training sessions. It was agreed to accept the quote from Track 1 Fitness and include it on the September agenda to formally agree it. Bad weather, number of attendees and parking to be checked prior to booking, the equipment needs cleaning and some repairs done.
- White Railings – a good number of volunteers had turned up to help with the painting, there are plans to do more work to other railing around the Village.

25/21. COUNTY & DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORTS.

Essex County Council – apologies were received from Cllr Foley. A number of potholes have now been repaired; thanks were noted to Cllr Foley for getting this work done.

Uttlesford District Council – apologies were received from Cllr Moran.

25/22. PUBLIC FORUM

Members of the public submitted questions and statements to the Parish Council.

25/23. FINANCE.

Payments made:

103065 £549.66 M D Landscapes Ltd (Grass Cutting)

103066 £24.00 Ashdon Village Hall (Hall Hire)

103067 £645.72 A Balcombe (Clerk Costs - Salary/Mileage/Postage)

Income

H J Paintin Ltd £50.00 (Cemetery)

HMRC £1,670.08 (VAT Reclaim for Village Hall)

Clear Insurance £192.99 (Refund)

Bank Balances June 2025.

Current Account £26,412.48

Business Savings £55,539.55

Business Savings £1,106.43

25/24. PLANNING.

Application No: UTT/25/1407/LB. Replacement windows and door.

Location: Grove Cottage, Bartlow Road, Rogers End, Ashdon CB10 2HT.

Refused.

25/25. PLAY AREAS.

To agree the repairs needed at all three play areas. Quotes have been received to carry out this work, and Cllrs Gray and Pardue had met one of the contractors on site. There was a lengthy debate about the cost of the safety surfacing which was one of the more expensive items.

Cllr Gray proposed that the quote from Playquip for a total of £9,866 for all three areas be accepted, this was seconded by Cllr Lewis. A vote was taken with 4 in favour and 1 against, therefore the Playquip quote to be accepted.

Cllr Gray gave a brief report of the online training course she had attended which was provided by our insurers, Clear Councils. One of the main points raised was that weekly inspections of the play areas must be recorded and kept in case of any future insurance claims.

25/26. HEALTH OF THE RIVER BOURNE.

To discuss and agree any actions needed. To be deferred to the next meeting.

25/27. HOUSING – ALL SAINTS CLOSE.

To receive an update on any information obtained. Cllr Gray reported on the RCCE Webinar on Rural Housing. The first step is a Housing Needs Survey which can be organised by the RCCE. It was agreed to ask Laura Atkinson, who is the Senior Rural Housing Enabler & Community-Led Housing Advisor at RCCE to talk to Councillors and to perhaps hold a public meeting. Cllr Lewis suggested that we ask residents ourselves, agreed to progress this with the help of RCCE.

25/28. WORKNEST CONTRACT.

Worknest has confirmed that a 'mutually binding agreement continues to exist'.

There was a discussion around the rules of using social media, the Parish Council does have a Social Media Policy. Cllr Goodwin explained that the website was a more formal channel for information sharing whereas Facebook etc is more informal.

25/29. ALLOTMENTS.

To receive an update on any progress. Cllr Lewis gave a brief update, the meadow has been cut, no evidence of asbestos found. The hedges will be cut once nesting season is over. Agreed to leave things as they are for now.

25/30. SPEED INDICATOR DEVICES.

To agree the type of device required and to decide if they should be placed on the existing ECC poles. Maps with the exact location for the devices are still needed to be able to get permission from Essex County Council to install them.

25/31. CEMETERY TREES.

There are two Ash trees that need urgent attention by the telephone box, it was agreed to get them looked at straight away and if a specialist says they need to be cut down it was agreed to go ahead with the work straight away.

Cllr Gray gave a report on all the trees the Parish Council are responsible for, these have been plotted and listed. A full tree inventory or tree hazard survey is needed. The two Plum Ash trees in the cemetery have permission from UDC to be reduced by 25% and uplift by 25%. Quotes have been received, and it was agreed to accept the cheaper option of £960.00 inc. vat.

A quote to be obtained from our current contractor to cut back overgrown hedges at Church End and around the Rectory Lane playing fields.

25/32. CORRESPONDENCE TO NOTE.

Essex Police – new Neighbourhood Police Officer; PC Raja MOIZ 83560.

Thurlow Estate - week commencing 21st July, farmers plan to spread sludge in the nearby fields that have recently had Rapeseed growing. This may take the team up to the end of the week to complete.

25/33. ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA.

- Hedge Cutting.
- Trees in private gardens; these will be the responsibility of the landowners. It was agreed to put a notice on the Facebook page asking residents to check their trees and cut them back if necessary.

25/34. MEETING DATES 2025.

Meetings are held on the third Monday of the month (except August).

15 September, 20 October, 17 November (Budget Meeting), 15 December.

Members of the public and press will be excluded for the following item (Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960).

25/35. CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS.

- UDC Planning Enforcement Information – UDC will notify the Parish Council once any decision has been made.
- Solicitors Letter – agreed to put this on hold for now.
- Audit Response to resident – agreement needed from Councillors by 23 July.

Close of meeting 21:45

Signed (Chairman):

Date: