



Ashington Parish Council

Telephone: 07851 009655

Email: clerk@ashingtonpc.org.uk

www.ashingtonpc.org.uk

MINUTES of the Full Council Meeting held on Thursday 12th February 2026, at 7:45pm Ashington Community Centre, Foster Lane, Ashington

Present:

Councillors: Philip Kerrey (Vice-Chair), Jeanette Lowson, Graeme MacPherson (Chair), Marcus Meldrum, Tony Moss, Bruce Wallace, Malcolm Woolley

In attendance:

Clerk and RFO: Lee English

County Councillor: Paul Marshall

Members of the Public: 5

Members of the public were reminded that they limit their participation to the Public Adjournment section of the meeting, and that any matters raised should be with regards to an item on the agenda (Standing Orders allow for 5 minutes maximum per person). Questions relating to any other items that are not on the agenda should be referred to the Chair of the Council or the Clerk as appropriate and outside of the meeting.

027/26	<u>Apologies for absence</u> Cllrs Sam Barnett, Terry Kearney, John Morris District Councillor Alan Manton (apologies from Cllr Circus received after the meeting)
028/26	<u>Declaration of Interests and notification of change of interest</u> Cllrs were reminded to declare any new interests or changes to existing declarations, and to declare any interest relating to matters on tonight's agenda. None declared.
029/26	<u>To approve the minutes of the Parish Council meeting 15th January 2026</u> The minutes to be approved as a true record of the meeting. Proposed by Cllr Meldrum, seconded by Cllr Moss and APPROVED by all.
030/26	<u>Reports from District and County Councillors</u> Cllr Marshal reported – <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mayoral Combined County Authority (MCCA) – the government has formerly approved the MCCA to act as the “Strategic Authority” for West Sussex, East Sussex, and Brighton and Hove. A Mayor will be elected in May 2028. Some Mayoral powers will be passed to the strategic authority before the election takes place.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) – currently awaiting the government’s response as to whether there will be one or two unitary authorities. • WSCC Budget – a balanced budget has been presented. This will be £2.2 billion. There are no cuts to services and no proposal to draw on reserves. <p>Question –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When does HDC cease to exist? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - April 2028. There will be a unitary authority in 2027, and they will sit as a “shadow” board before then.
031/26	<p><u>Public Adjournment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parish Council budget for 2026-27 – It was noted that the budget covers 3 main categories of Wardens costs / wages / everything else. It was asked why the wages costs were budgeted to increase by £15,000 in one year; a far greater % than all other budget areas. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It had been approved in September 2025 to employ a 2nd member of staff to enable the council to undertake its current and future commitments. This includes increased governance in the council sector, projects to be undertaken in the village and most significantly, delivery of the Neighbourhood Plan which will require ongoing work to ensure appropriate use of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds that will be received. • CIL funds – will the council publish to the village what we intend to spend that money on and when? Will funds be used in accordance with the Neighbourhood Plan? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yes. As the funds will be received at various times, they will be placed into Earmarked Reserves (EMRs) and as more substantial funds are received, they will be committed to projects in line with the Neighbourhood Plan. • Environmental Cleansing Grant (ECG) – does it still exist as it is not shown in grants received on the budget? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yes, this is still received and is listed as a separate receipt to grants. • Litter on routes into the village – can the ECG be used for tidying these routes? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - These are the responsibility of HDC and WSCC for the main routes. The Wardens are in the process of organising the next litter pick, in association with the Ashington in Bloom team. <p>Cllr Marshall left the meeting at 8:08pm</p>
032/26	<p><u>Neighbourhood Wardens Steering Group</u></p> <p>The steering group had met that week with the Wardens and their supervisor. With Local Government Reorganisation underway, there was acknowledgment of the need to ensure the wellbeing of the Wardens due to future job uncertainty. They are planning various activities such as the litter pick and more Community Hub sessions. It was noted there is a lot of administration in the job and proposed that the monthly report reflected this use of hours which is often “hidden”.</p> <p>Wardens reports for January 2026 - Appendix 1</p>
033/26	<p><u>Parish Council office</u></p> <p>The working party updated the situation regarding the 3 options proposed for investigation at the previous month’s meeting –</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Request of use of ACCT facilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Awaiting a definitive answer.

	<p>2. Identify additional office space in the village</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A local estate agent had been visited, and online research had been undertaken also. No suitable spaces were identified at this time. <p>3. Investigate use of the Parish Yard for a temporary structure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This was discussed and agreed that any structure would need to be secure. It was noted that there will be future office space in the new Sports Pavilion on the Land West of the School site, but an office is needed now, particularly with the approved recruitment of a 2nd member of staff. Previous costs were approx. £50,000 to make the site secure and install a temporary structure. No further costs will be explored until a definitive answer is received from ACCT.
034/26	<p><u>Speed reduction request Wiston PC – Hole Street and Water Lane</u></p> <p>It was noted that Wiston Parish Council are looking to proceed with a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) application to reduce the speed limit on Water Lane and the Wiston section of Hole Street from 40mph to 30mph. This would leave a section between the Wiston boundary and Ashington village. The council didn't propose an application for a separate TRO at this time for the remaining section, but should Highways approve the Wiston PC TRO and decide it was appropriate to extend the speed reduction area, they would consider the matter at that time.</p>
035/26	<p><u>Speed reduction and HGV use on Rectory Lane and Park Lane</u></p> <p>Further to previous discussions, a resident wishes to progress an application to reduce the speed limit to 20mph from the junction of Park Lane / Muttons Lane and the junction of Rectory Lane / Meiros Way (233/25).</p> <p>Any TRO application would require community support, and County support. The parish council have previously agreed support as has Cllr Paul Marshall. Rocco Homes have also said they would support a speed reduction along that section.</p> <p>The issue regarding HGVs using the country lanes has been raised with Highways. There are existing width restrictions in place but given that larger vehicles need to access properties and farms, the existing signs are stated as "access only". However, all the signage on roads that enter the HGV restriction area have been reviewed and signs are being relocated or new ones installed to ensure every entrance throughout the restriction zone will be covered. This extends to access points in Ashington, Thakeham, Goose Green and Rock Road.</p>
036/26	<p><u>Correspondence received for action</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. HDC Annual Plan for 2026/27 17th February 6pm, Ashington Community Centre - Cllrs will be attending to meet with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources and the Director of Resources, regarding the plan. 2. HALC meeting 25th Feb 7pm via Zoom - Cllrs Kearney and Moss will attend.
037/26	<p><u>Correspondence received for Councillor information</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. AYC report for Q3 Oct - Dec 2025 2. ACCT Board of Trustees meetings calendar for 2026 3. WSCC new combined authority - Government has confirmed a Sussex & Brighton Combined County Authority will be created May 2026, with the first mayoral election due to take place in May 2028. 4. Clerk report – Appendix 2

038/26	<p><u>Meetings attended</u> Cllrs Meldrum, Moss and clerk – Met with Elizabeth Greenfield ref: defibrillators review 5th February. Clerk - HDC Community Support Networking Marketplace, 4th February.</p>
039/26	<p><u>Chairman’s Announcements</u> - none</p>
	<p><u>OPEN SPACES AND ENVIRONMENT</u></p>
040/26	<p><u>Tree works between 30 Warminghurst Close and The Sands</u> To review a proposal to carry out works along the footpath, namely to remove hawthorn branches overhanging the path, remove 3 small elms and 1 hawthorn, and lower 3 Field Maples down to mid roof height.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quote 1 - £825 +vat (includes £50 TPO application) - Quote 2 - £900 (includes £50 TPO application) <p>Quote 2 (Ashurst Arborists) was APPROVED.</p>
041/26	<p><u>Annual Land Inspection</u> It was agreed to meet 10am, Friday 13th March.</p>
042/26	<p><u>Nature Recovery Award</u> Wilder Horsham District have awarded £1,615 to fund the project on the Ashington Nature Trail. It was felt the proposed measures would improve the biodiversity of the trail as well as helping to engage the community with wildlife. Positive feedback was received and advice given on some aspects of the application. Thanks were given to Cllr Morris and the team for their work on securing the award.</p> <p>Cllrs are continuing to support the Ashington in Bloom initiative, of which the parish council Open Spaces areas will be a part of.</p>
	<p><u>PLANNING</u></p>
043/26	<p><u>Planning correspondence received</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Neighbourhood Plans and the new NPPF – briefing notes received from Steve Tilbury regarding the current situation. Passed to Cllrs. 2. Neighbourhood Plan – free online session delivered by Locality, for those at any stage of an NP. 2nd March 10:30 – 12. Booking link passed to Cllrs.
044/26	<p><u>HDC Local Plan</u> The Government Inspector and HDC will meet on 26th February to explore the feasibility and practical arrangements of progressing with the Local Plan Examination. The meeting will be livestreamed and also recorded and added to the Examination Library.</p>
045/26	<p><u>Ashington Neighbourhood Plan (ANP)</u> It was noted that the ANP will be 5 years old in June 2026. A Neighbourhood Plan does not “expire” but will obviously become more out of date as time passes. A plan does offer some protection under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) against speculative applications in the first 5 years. The council will always get 25% for CIL monies even after 5 years (15% without an NP). It was decided not to make a decision at this time, pending further information to come regarding the HDC Local Plan, and to keep the situation under review.</p>

	<u>Horsham District Council Planning</u>
046/26	<p><u>Applications</u> Received after agenda was posted DC/26/0111 Fell 1x Common Beech (<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>) Land to rear of Jenny Wrens, 32 Rectory Close, Ashington, RH20 3LP. No objections were raised.</p>
047/26	<p><u>New Enforcement Allegations</u> EN/26/0027 Alleged: Development not in accordance with DC/22/0372 (plots 2, 4 and 5) Chanctonbury Nurseries, Rectory Lane, Ashington, RH20 3AS</p>
048/26	<p><u>Decisions</u> Permitted DC/25/1906 Erection of a single storey rear extension. Installation of 3no. rooflights to side pitched roof. Erection of an outbuilding to the rear. 30 Warminghurst Close, Ashington, RH20 3QD.</p> <p>DC/25/1919 Conversion of existing carport and garage to create an enlarged annexe, including roof and fenestration alterations. Springfield, Spring Gardens, Washington, RH20 3BS</p> <p>DC/25/1976 Erection of a detached outbuilding for use as a sauna (in connection with glamping pods). Land Parcel at 512008 115712 Park Lane, Ashington, RH20 3AN</p> <p>DC/25/1990 Erection of a single storey rear extension 17 Chanctonbury, Ashington, RH20 3QE</p>
	<u>FINANCE</u>
049/26	<p><u>Correspondence received for Councillor information</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> S137 expenditure figure for 2026/27 is £11.60 (previously £11.10) per elector. Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 enables local councils to spend a limited amount of money for purposes for which they have no other specific statutory expenditure. Lloyds Bank 95 Day Notice account – The request to transfer £30,000 funds from this account has created an additional “holding” account during the notice period. Cllrs NOTED this new account. Unity Trust Bank complaint - £500 interest has been received to cover the bank’s 4-month delay in opening the new Fixed Term Deposit account and £100 in compensation. Clerk is still pursuing the situation as the compensation is considered inadequate and some matters still not addressed.
050/26	<p><u>Finance matters to review</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Parish Yard Café Earmarked Reserve (EMR) – the EMR currently holds £38,241.46 which is a combination of a £23,000 donation from a resident for a community café in the village and parish funds added for developing the site. As the site is no longer considered a viable option for a café, it is proposed to separate the funds as follows – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parish Yard Café EMR to be renamed Community Café - £23,000 New EMR to be named Parish Yard Development - £15,241.46 Cllrs APPROVED the proposals.

	<p>2. Budget 2026-27 – The budget figures and rationale, precept request and predicted year end general reserves figure have been collated onto one spreadsheet. Cllrs APPROVED publishing the spreadsheet on the website.</p>
051/26	<p><u>Expenditure to review and approve</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CiLCA training for clerk - training £450 and SLCC qualification £495 - expenditure budgeted for 2025-26. Authorised by Finance Committee (Cllrs Morris, Moss, Woolley) to meet course start date. Cllrs APPROVED the payments. 2. Hanging baskets - quote received from existing supplier of £1676.77 +vat, for 58 half baskets. Includes plant feed, installation and removal of the baskets on 29 lampposts (last year £1620.07 +vat, 3.5% increase) Cllrs APPROVED the quote from Ferring Nurseries. 3. Hanging basket watering costs - to increase the weekly watering payment from £70 to £80 per week as proposed by OS&E Committee 302/25 6. Maximum of 20 weeks. (included in approved budget figures) Cllrs APPROVED the increase. 4. Lamppost Testing – Non-Destructive Testing (NDT) required for the hanging baskets to be installed. CFWD pending receipt of a 2nd quote. 5. Purchase of Yellow Rattle plants for parish Open Spaces - £45.82 +vat. Cllrs APPROVED the purchase.
052/26	<p><u>Receipts</u> £135 Parish Yard parking</p>
053/26	<p><u>Payments – Appendix 3</u> Cllrs APPROVED payments made on the clerk’s debit card in January totalling £602.06 £7 Land Registry fee (Planning Committee 18th Dec 2025 - agenda item 3) £595.06 McVeigh Parker materials for woodland gate replacement (015/26)</p> <p>Councillors APPROVED the schedule of invoices for February totalling £2151.65</p> <p>All invoices checked and signed by Cllrs Kerrey and Meldrum.</p>
054/26	<p><u>Date of next meetings</u> Held at Ashington Community Centre, unless listed otherwise Planning Committee: 7:00pm Thursday 26th February Parish Council Meeting: 7:45pm Thursday 12th March</p> <p>Ashington In Bloom meetings 2:30-4:30pm Friday 13th February 6:30-8:30pm Monday 16th February Held at the Ashington Youth Club, Church Lane.</p>
	<p><u>CONFIDENTIAL SESSION</u> - the Chairman proposed, under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, and in accordance with Standing Orders 3d, to exclude the press and public on the grounds that the confidential matters to be discussed under item 055/26 below would be prejudicial in the public interest. Seconded by Cllr Woolley and APPROVED by all. Confidential session started at 8:42pm</p>

055/26	Clerk overtime Cllrs APPROVED a request for overtime totalling 35hrs for the months of December and January as per minute ref: 255/25.
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Meeting closed at 8:52pm

Signed: Date:

Working Groups Action Log

Min ref	Action	Allocated to	Timescale / update
009/26 January	Public Access Defibrillators To review the current situation and make any recommendations as required.	Meldrum Moss	Present review and any actions to be proposed by July 2026
008/26 January	Parish Council Office To investigate options available.	Kerrey Lowson Meldrum	Initial findings reported at February 2026 meeting. Further update to be received at March 2026 meeting.

Warden Monthly Report

January 2026 Ashington

Anti-social behaviour (ASB) and crime

We have spent a lot of time this month working with residents and businesses at the south end of the village. This followed on from reports of residents and businesses reporting intimidating behaviours, vehicle damage, and rising tensions. We have been visiting residents and businesses to offer support, and signpost where necessary. We have also been working with the managing agent for the building, and the police, and are looking at how we can work together to alleviate tensions as well as to address the parking complaints for residents and businesses down there. We are continuing to work on this with the businesses/ residents/ the managing agent and the police to come to a resolution for everyone.

Fly tipping/littering/graffiti

We have been out litter picking at different points this month across the village. We are keen to organise a big spring litter pick and tidy up of the village.

Community engagement/events/meetings

We had another successful journey session with parents and carers this month.

We held another community hub session this month, we will continue to get the word out there and see if we can increase the numbers of families attending in the spring.

We have visited Rock Road again this month to engage with the young people. It was nice to see them after their Christmas break where they were very keen to tell us about things they got for Christmas. We look forward to catching them again at Youth Club soon. This has created some really good relationships where the young people feel they can come and talk to us, encourages communication and they go out of their way to talk to us about anything they are worried about, so we find it hugely important.

Patrols (foot/visible and car)

We have been out on patrol covering all of Ashington this month, either by foot or vehicle. It has been nice to have an increase in residents engaging with us when we are out.

Older, vulnerable people and youth

We have been supporting people in the village with food this month. The Storehouse were extremely helpful but we have also been in touch with The Wholesome Warehouse for continued ongoing support. They are happy to assist and we will continue to arrange food for people that need it. As well as this we are also signposting for other support that people might not be aware of to make sure they are getting all the help they can.

Vehicle related issues

We received a report of a vehicle slowly driving around the village doing the same route slowly. This caused a resident concern and they reported it to us. We have liaised with the police and have submitted intelligence.

Parish specific/other

We reported a broken man hole cover along Church Lane which was a hazard for residents walking along the footpath.

We have reported numerous pot holes along The Sands and other places in the village, some of which have been marked to be repaired.

We are currently working on two neighbour disputes in the village. These continue to be ongoing and there is partnership working with the police and other services on these.

We received a report from a resident who received a prosecution letter from a train company after someone got caught for fare evasion and falsely gave their address to send the fine to. We have provided support and guidance to them in how to deal with this.

Social media/press

We are getting positive feedback about the articles we have written for Sussex Local magazine. If any residents would like further information then they are welcome to contact us. We are also posting on Facebook to advertise the events we are running.

Bryony Sparks: 07764 146368

Christina Arnold: 07764 146367 Email: ashington.wardens@horsham.gov.uk

Appendix 2 – Clerk report – actions since last meeting

Rotten swing top - Foster Lane	Reported to play equipment company as under warranty.
Village speed humps	Reported village wide issues to Highways requesting a steward meets clerk to go over all issues.
Speed humps The Sands	Reported for a 2nd time as only 1 of 3 reported in January was deemed needing repair at that time. Subsequent further deterioration of the other 2 – reported again.
Flooding of properties at Spear Hill Corner	Visited residents and submitted report to WSCC for culvert clearance and other associated Highways maintenance.
TRO application for Rectory Lane and Park Lane	Visited resident and discussed process for application.
Speed Indicator Device (SID) data	7 months worth of data submitted to Speedwatch Coordinator requesting targeted Police speed enforcement sessions, given the excessive speeds being recorded. Copy sent to Cllr Marshall, PCSO Robbins and Neighbourhood Wardens.
Planning application DC/25/1124 Triangles, Mill Lane	Letter sent to HDC Planning requesting clarity regarding land ownership related to permitted application to move a boundary fence.
Reallocation of s106 funds totalling £3,800	Chased again with WSCC as should have been received some months ago – to be used towards Speed Indicator Device and maintenance costs.

Appendix 3 – Payments

DEB	HM Gov Land Registry	Land Registry Title Plan (re land ownership)	£7.00
DEB	McVeigh Parker	Materials for 2 x woodland access gates	£595.06
	TOTAL		£602.06
BACS	Lee English	Home office (Jan 2026)	£26.00
DEB	Giff Gaff	Mobile phone topup	£6.00
BACS	Mark Adsett	Landscape gardening (Jan 2026)	£782.50
BACS	Radikls	Website & email hosting (3 months)	£132.62
BACS	Wilbar Associates	SID maintenance (Jan-Mar 2026)	£216.00
BACS	Business Stream	Water supply - Parish Yard (3 months)	£23.31
BACS	Smartestenergy	Electricity supply - Parish Yard (1 month)	£11.72
DD	Lloyds	Bank charges (monthly)	£8.50
BACS	SLCC	CiLCA qualification fee	£495.00
BACS	Richard Price Consulting Ltd	CiLCA training	£450.00
	TOTAL		£2,151.65