ASHAMPSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held in the Jubilee Hall, Ashampstead on Monday 10th March 2025 at 7.00 pm.

Present: Councillors R Fisken (Chair), G Light, J. Goodman

In Attendance: Jean Lindsell (Clerk), Cllr Laura Coyle (WBC)

1. **Apologies –** Cllr Dick

2. **Declarations of interest -** None declared

3. **Minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting held on 6th January 2025**
The Minutes were approved and duly signed by the Chair.

4. **To discuss any matters arising from the previous meeting** – none raised

5. **District Councillor's Report**
Cllr Coyle reported on the following**:**
Bradfield College Ashampstead Road Closures – complaints from residents and businesses continued to be made regarding the road closures. The Cabinet minister for highways was meeting with Cllr Ross Mackinnon and officers but it was unlikely anything could be done to change the situation.
Cllr Fisken advised signage was acceptable but not very explicit and varied in information.
Cllr Light felt the scaffolding could have been better placed to not take up the carriageway if contractors' ancillary buildings had been placed elsewhere.
Bowlers Copse and Broom Wood (NW of Basildon/east of Ashampstead) – a resident had written to Yattendon Estates regarding destruction of the woodland and a footpath rendered inaccessible caused by forestry works. Yattendon Estates had responded advising they would inspect the area and put a plan in place to re-instate the footpath and any other remedial work required would be carried out when weather conditions improved.
WBC Budget Cutbacks
Road Gritting – a new AI model identifying road temperatures would be used in the future to direct gritters to the worst affected roads.
Black Bin Collections – the decision to change these collections to 3 weekly had been made but the implementation date was yet to be determined.
Cllr Fiskin raised the question of the merging of councils to create new unitary authorities.
Cllr Coyle advised discussions were underway with Reading, Bracknell and Wokingham and South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse.

6. **Police Matters**
Report from Cllr Dick via email:
Cllr Dick advised he had put in a bid with the Police Crime Commissioner's Community Fund for CCTV with ANPR capability at both ends of the village. Cllr Dick added he would be happy to install one on his barn and a resident at the other end of the village was happy to install the other one should the bid be successful.
Cllr Dick further advised of ongoing issues with barn/shed thefts and urged residents to consider lights/alarms and/or CCTV in outbuildings.

7. **Footpaths and Byways**
Cllr Dick had advised via email that the footpath at Quicks Green was blocked by a fallen tree forcing walkers out into the field to the south of the path.
Clerk to report.

8. Roads
Clerk to report blocked gully on the corner of Dog Lane and B4009 Haw Lane

9. Planning
a) Applications – no new applications
b) Decisions
24/02396/CERTP – Church Farm Cottage RG8 8RT
Installation of nine PV solar panels to the pitched roofs
Approved by WBC
25/00020/HOUSE – 7 Stubbles RG8 8RP
Installation of Aiko Neostar 2S 455W All Black ABC N-Type Mono solar panels
Approved by WBC

10. Open Spaces Review
Cllr Light advised there had been damage to parts of the recreation ground caused during hedge cutting resulting in deep ruts being left by the tractor.

11. Policies
a) Standing Orders – it was resolved to adopt the updated Standing Orders.
b) Biodiversity Policy – it was resolved to adopt the Biodiversity Policy.

12. Fixed Asset Register – to review and approve updated register approved
The Clerk advised the Council's litter bin had been added to the register.
It was resolved to approve the updated Fixed Asset Register.
Cllr Fisken advised that the defibrillator was in good working order and suggested Council might wish to consider arranging a further training session for residents as the previous one had proved popular but that a charge might have to be made due to budget limitations.
Clerk to add defibrillator training to the agenda for the next meeting.

13. Recreation Ground Weed Treatment – to agree area to be treated
Cllr Light suggested treatment be carried out to the areas worst affected and where there was little to no grass being in C shape along the Holly Lane, Flowers Piece and southern boundaries.
All Councillors agreed.
Cllr Light to mark area on a map and send to the Clerk.
Clerk to advise Scofell Landscapes.

14. Recreation Ground Noticeboard – to agree repairs/refurbishment
Cllr Light advised the timber header was rotten and suggested he could attempt to dry it out, inject a resin and repaint it which should last for a few more years to allow Council time to look at funding for a new noticeboard.
Cllr Light added that he would also refurbish the interior with cork covered in felt.
All Councillors agreed and thanked Cllr Light.
Cllr Light to ask ART if they have a key for the small noticeboard containing the footpath map.

Cllr Light raised the question of progressing with the new map/village information lectern style board.
Clerk to liaise with Cllr Light in April regarding purchase of the board.

Cllr Light advised he had carried out work to the door of the telephone box which now opened and closed freely. The repainting of the telephone box was discussed and it was agreed to see if any residents would be willing to assist with this work.

15. Dog Bin – to consider request for new dog bin
It was resolved that due to budget constraints the Council could not fully fund a new dog bin but would purchase a new bin on the understanding that Vicars Game would take responsibility for the installation of the bin and all future waste collection costs.
Clerk to advise Vicars Game.

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16. **Nuisance and Obstruction Overhanging Vegetation** – to consider request for assistance regarding vegetation overhanging highways and agree response to WBC
It was agreed to offer assistance to WBC regarding the administration of Level 1 and 2 letters relating to any issues of overhanging vegetation over highways from private properties.
Clerk to advise WBC.

17. **Lithium-Ion Battery Safety Campaign** – to agree to support safety campaign for e-scooters and bikes from UK Parliament
It was resolved to support the campaign.

18. **North Wessex Downs Landscape Character Assessment** – to agree any response to consultation
It was agreed no response was required.

19. **Finance**
a) To approve finance reports reconciled to bank statements.
The reports and bank reconciliation were verified, approved and signed.by Cllr Goodman.
b) S137 Grant Applications
West Berkshire Countryside Society – it was resolved to make a donation of £100 for the year 2025/26.
It was noted that the request had been for £200 and in support of the conservation work carried out by volunteers at Ashampstead Common the Council would re-look at this when setting the budget for 2026/27.
Rainbow Trust – it was resolved that no donation would made.
Greenfest – it was resolved that no donation would be made.
c) To approve payments as per payments schedule
All payments approved and the payment schedule signed by the Chair.
d) Online Payment Authorisation
The Clerk advised that Cllr Dick had been the 2nd authoriser for online payments for several months and was happy to continue but asked if any other Councillor would be willing to do this.
It was agreed Cllr Goodman would take on this role until the end of June after which time another Councillor would take on this responsibility.

20. **Items for information or next Agenda only**
Cllr Light advised there was a record of incidents/near misses caused by dangerous driving being kept to add weight to the issue of speeding in the village
Cllr Fisken raised the ongoing issue of HGV's using Palmers Hill.
The Clerk advised the WBC SID equipment loan service was available again and was liaising with the Council's volunteer to book the equipment to carry out surveys to collect speed data.
Cllr Fisken emphasised the importance of collecting as much data as possible to present a case to WBC.

21. **Date of next meeting** – Annual Council Meeting 19th May 2025 starting immediately after the Annual Parish Meeting which will convene at 6.30pm on that date.

22. The meeting closed at 8.35pm

23. **Parishioners' Question Time** – no members of the public present.

Signed:	**Position:**	**Date:**

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