MINUTES of the PARISH COUNCIL MEETING held on Tuesday 10th MARCH 2026 at 7.00pm in THE FOX ASPENDEN.

Present	Cllr Richard Blackburn (Chair)	Cllr Stuart Chambers
	Cllr Joe Murphy	Cllr Thomas Poulton
	0 members of the public	
Officer attending	Denise Anderson (Clerk)	

APOLOGIES

26.01 Apologies were received from Cllr Tracy Devonshire due to work commitments.
It was resolved to approve Cllr Devonshire's absence.
Apologies were received from District Councillor Sue Nicholls who was attending an EHC meeting. Cllr Nicholls sent a report.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

26.02 None

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

26.03 No public present.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

26.04 The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 18th November 2025 having been circulated previously, were before the meeting and signed as a correct record.

CHAIR'S REPORT

26.05 **Aspenden Parish Council Chair's Report**

Play Area & Village Green Flooding

We are aware of the return of the flooding and we are liaising with the contractors who undertook the original works to address the issue.

Tree Survey

The Tree works identified by a Tree Safety Survey commissioned by the Parish Council were undertaken in January 2026.

Dandara Phase 2/Aspenden Road

These are now underway and due to be completed in April 2026. The road will be closed form 7th April to 14th April from 8.00pm to 5.00am.

Un-named Road Between Aspenden & Westmill

Initial preparatory works were undertaken in November and further works are planned for 20th – 24th March 2026.

Highways

We would recommend residents continue to report pot holes, broken surfaces etc. through the East Herts website: https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/highways-parking/report-street-light-or-pothole

COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORTS

26.06

County Councillor's Report

County Councillor Smith was not in attendance and didn't send a report.

District Councillor's Report

Public Consultation on Local Government Review

The Government are inviting residents to comment on plans for Local Government Reform as part of a public consultation.

Full details of the three proposals put forward in Hertfordshire (for two, three and four unitary authorities), including business cases, financial analysis, maps showing the proposed boundaries, and a link to the Government's consultation are available at: www.hertfordshire-lgr.co.uk

The closing dates for comments on the consultation is 26 March.

East Herts Environmental and Climate Forum – next Teams meeting

The date of the next online East Herts Environmental and Climate Forum is 18 March from 7.00pm to 8.30pm. Following on from the success of the Local Nature Recovery Summit, the focus of the forum will be bringing people and ideas together and actions that can be taken by local communities and private individuals. Anyone who would like to attend please contact Vanessa Sartori, East Herts Climate Change and Sustainability Project Officer at vanessa.sartori@eastherts.gov.uk who will send you a teams link for the meeting.

Buntingford Active Travel Consultation and 20mph proposals

It was really encouraging to attend a briefing with Herts Highways and local councillors about the Active Travel Phase 2 plans for Buntingford last week. Herts County Council have listened to my call for a whole town 20mph speed limit in the town and amended the Active Travel proposal that previously just included a small 20mph zone to now include two options for the extent of 20mph speed limits in the town. The preferred option, backed by the County Council Cabinet member for Highways and in line with the Council's new speed management strategy policy, is for a whole town 20mph speed limit. The public consultation on proposals will be open to comment between 16 March and 26 April and will include an all-day drop in event at the Manor House on 21 March.

It was not possible to see what the proposed boundaries are for the whole town 20mph proposal. Once more details are available, I would recommend responding to the consultation and strongly supporting the whole town proposal as it offers the best benefits for road harm reduction and wider community benefits that are not available from a small zone scheme. Also pushing for the whole town proposal to include not only Aspenden Road (I'm hoping that it will be included), but also the whole of Aspenden village to widen the benefits beyond Buntingford itself. The cost of extending the scheme to Aspenden would be minimal but would see many benefits.

New Waste Contract update – big reductions in residual waste

Just five months after the new East and North Herts waste contract was introduced, the amount of residual waste being collected has reduced by 5883 tonnes compared to the same period last year. Of that total, 2,717 tonnes is food waste which has been prevented from going into general waste and instead sent to processing into biogas and fertiliser to support greener farming and renewable energy production. Preventing food waste from ending up in landfill significantly reduced methane production, which is so detrimental to the environment.

https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/latest-news/2026/east-and-north-herts-sees-bin-credible-reduction-non-recyclable-waste-five-months

New East Herts Council Thermal Imaging camera loan scheme

A new Thermal Imaging Camera Loan Scheme has been launched by East Herts District Council, in partnership with Hertfordshire County Council. The initiative will enable residents to borrow a thermal imaging camera free of charge from their local library to households identify where heat may be escaping from their homes, highlighting insulation gaps, draughts and other areas where energy efficiency improvements could be made.

Cameras are now available to borrow at five libraries across the district: Buntingford, Bishop's Stortford, Hertford, Sawbridgeworth and Ware. Understanding where warmth is being lost, households can make targeted and cost-effective improvements that may reduce energy bills, enhance overall comfort and contribute to lower carbon emissions.

To borrow a camera, residents must be library members. You can register as a library member in person at your local library or by visiting the Herts library website at:

https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/libraries-and-archives/libraries-and-archives.aspx

FINANCE

26.07 **Finance report and payments authorised**

To receive the finance report. The report is an appendix to the minutes.

26.08 **Lloyds Parish Council Bank Accounts**

The Clerk reported that the issues with the Lloyds Account had now been resolved and the council were in receipt of £150 compensation.

PLANNING

26.09 **Planning Report**

To receive the updated Planning Report. The report is an appendix to these minutes.

3/25/1353/FUL	Aura Westmill Hertfordshire SG9 9LA	Approved

26.10 **Planning Applications since the Parish Council meeting held on 18th November 2025**

3/25/1986/FUL AMENDED	Buntingford Business Park Baldock Road Buntingford Hertfordshire	There was no comment by the Parish Council
3/25/1986/FUL	Buntingford Business Park Baldock Road Buntingford Hertfordshire	There was no comment by the Parish Council

26.11 **Planning Applications**
None

HIGHWAYS
26.12 **Aspenden Road Works and Diversion & Unnamed Road between Aspenden and Westmill**
This was updated in the Chair's Report.

HERTFORDSHIRE'S LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION PROPOSALS
26.13 Cllr Blackburn suggested that Councillors access the link in the email that had been circulated by the Clerk to view the various proposals. Comments should be sent to the Clerk for collation and submission. The consultation is open to 26th March 2026.

PARISH MATTERS
26.14 **Police Report FEBRUARY 2026**
The monthly comprehensive Police Report by the Neighbourhood Policing Team had been received and circulated to Councillors. There were no reported crimes for Aspenden.

26.15 **Pavilion Management Committee (PMC)**
In January a large group of people gathered at the pavilion late at night and carried out some vandalism. Mark Pankhurst cleared up most of it with the exception of a shopping trolley and a large refuse bin that were dumped in the brook. Cllr Blackburn reported there was a PMC meeting scheduled for 18th March 2026.

26.16 **Children's Playground**
I. Scheduled Works
The Clerk reported that the works were scheduled for March/April. She will talk to Broadmead Leisure about the flooding issues with the playground and discuss with them the best course of action for undertaking the required works.

II. Flooding
Cllr Murphy reported that he had met with Terrain Aeration Services Ltd. Regarding the recent flooding. It was noted that the cricket area had benefitted significantly from the works. It was felt that the flooding was coming from the direction of Poulton's field towards the playground. The Terrain Aeration process could not be carried out close to the playground equipment as it would damage the foundations of the equipment and render them unusable. Cllr Murphy was awaiting a report from Terrain Aeration Services as to a way forward.

26.17 **Tree Survey**
As per the Chair's report the tree works identified by the Tree Safety Survey had been carried out. To support The Local Nature Recovery Scheme Cllr Chambers has set up and planted a wild flower area on Aspenden Village. A village clean up was discussed and it was felt the river should be a focus. A date will be agreed at a future meeting.

26.18 **Chris Newman Memorial Bench**
It was reported that the bench had been delivered and Cllr Poulton was kindly storing it. Joe Poulton had agreed to install the bench and the bench currently on the site will be refurbished and re-sited.

26.19 **General Village Matters**
I. Aspenden Defibrillator Annual Support
The Clerk reported that despite her continued efforts she still hadn't managed to obtain an invoice for the Aspenden Defibrillator annual support package from Community Heartbeat. She will continue to pursue this.

Cllr Blackburn stated the there would be a Village Fete this year on Sunday 2nd July 2026.

CLERKS REPORT AND CORRESPONDANCE

26.20 **Clerks Report and Correspondence**

The Clerk reported that she had been asked to raise the issue of dog poo bags being left in Wakely Lane. Cllr Chambers reported this had improved since the placement of signs asking dog walkers to place these in the dog bins provided. More dog poo bins had also been requested. It was noted this was an additional expense for the Council in purchasing one and paying the annual fee for emptying. This will be further investigated.

There was still an ongoing problem with the collection of the Litter Picker rubbish sacks whereby the Clerk was having to repeatedly ask for them to be collected. She had also asked repeatedly for clarification on the new system for collection but was still awaiting and answer. She will continue to pursue this.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Date	**Meeting**	**Venue**
Tuesday 19th May 2026	Annual Parish Meeting and Annual Meeting of the Parish Council	The Fox
Tuesday 21st July 2026	Parish Council Meeting	The Fox
Tuesday 22nd September 2026	Parish Council Meeting	The Fox
Tuesday 17th November 2026	Parish Council Meeting	The Fox
Tuesday 16th February 2027	Parish Council Meeting	The Fox

Agendas will be put on the Parish Council website www.aspendenpc.org.uk and the village noticeboard.

The meeting closed at 8.20pm.

Signed _____

Date _____