MINUTES of the ASPENDEN ANNUAL MEETING of the PARISH COUNCIL on **held on Tuesday 26th MAY 2026 at 7.30pm 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)	

ELECTION OF CHAIR 2026-2027

26.21 Cllr Blackburn was proposed by Cllr Murphy and seconded by Cllr Chambers.
No other nominations proposed.

It was unanimously resolved to elect Cllr Blackburn as Chair for 2026-2027.
Cllr Blackburn signed the Chair's Declaration of Acceptance of Office and took the Chair for the meeting.

ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR 2026-2027

26.22 Cllr Murphy was proposed by Cllr Chambers and seconded by Cllr Poulton.

It was unanimously resolved to elect Cllr Murphy as Vice Chair for 2026-2027.
Cllr Murphy signed the Vice Chair's Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

APOLOGIES

26.23 Apologies were received from Cllr Devonshire due to work commitments.

It was resolved to approve Cllr Devonshire's absence.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

26.24 None

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

26.25 No public present.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

26.26 The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 10th March 2026 having been circulated previously, were before the meeting and signed as a correct record.

STAFFING COMMITTEE

26.27 Cllr Blackburn proposed the current members; Cllr Chambers, Cllr Devonshire and Cllr Poulton continue to serve on the Staffing Committee for the forthcoming Council year. Seconded by Cllr Murphy.

PARISH COUNCIL DOCUMENTATION

25.28 The Clerk reported that the Parish Council was required to have an Information Technology Policy to fulfil the requirement of Assertion 10 of the AGAR 2025 -2026.

Resolved to approve and adopt the Information Technology Policy.

The Clerk confirmed that she hadn't received any guidance from HAPTC with regard to any amendments to Council documents and Councillors hadn't requested any changes.

Resolved to approve all other current Council documents; Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Code of Conduct, Risk Assessment, Register of Assets, Complaints Procedure, Publication Scheme, Privacy Policy, Staffing Committee Terms of Reference.

CHAIR'S REPORT

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

Play Area & Village Green Flooding

We have been monitoring the return of the flooding, which whilst disappointing, has not been as significant as before and does seem to drain away relatively quickly. We continue to liaise with the contractor to ascertain whether further remedial works are required.

Dandara Phase 2/Aspenden Road

The works have been almost completed with the exception of activating the traffic signals and we are awaiting a date for when these will be in operation.

Un-named Road Between Aspenden & Westmill

Further redressing works were undertaken in April and we understand no further works are planned.

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

Village Green

Chris Newman's memorial bench has now been installed with thanks to Joe Poulton for carrying out the work.

Aspenden Village Fete & Dog Show – Sunday 2nd August 2026

The Aspenden Village Fund is pleased to announce that after the successful reintroduction of the Fete in 2024, it will be holding and organising another Village Fete & Dog Show on Sunday 2nd August from 1pm – to 6pm on the Village Green.

Any volunteers interested in helping on the day, please get in touch with Steve Parlor on 07792 204571 or aspendenvillagefund@gmail.com

COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORTS

26.30

County Councillor's Report

County Councillor Smith was not in attendance and a report wasn't received.

District Councillor's Report

Planning Issues

(i) Planning Application 3/24/0966/OUT – Land north of A507 and west of A10

Subsequent to the refusal of this planning application by East Herts Council in October 2025, an appeal has now been lodged by the applicant and will be decided by an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State at a Public Inquiry. The inquiry will be held in the East Herts District Council Chamber, Wallfields, Hertford.

The dates for the inquiry have not been announced yet.

Any comments on the original application for planning permission (unless they were marked confidential) will be sent by the Council to the Planning Inspectorate and they will be taken into account by the Inspector who decides the appeal unless they are subsequently withdrawn. If you wish to amend your comments or make any new ones, please contact the Planning Inspectorate quoting reference 6008238 by 4th June 2026. You can make a comment to The Planning Inspectorate at https://acp.planninginspectorate.gov.uk

(ii) Planning Application ref: 3/24/1255/OUT - Land South Of A507, West Of A10 Buntingford - Outline planning application for development of employment land (flexible use B2, B8, E(c) and E(g)), informal open space, associated works and infrastructure including a new access from A507, with all matters reserved except for access. This application was refused by East Herts Planning on 6 May 2026.

Main reasons:

Siting and location - The proposals by reason of scale, form, visual impact and siting on the west side of the A10 outside of the Buntingford Settlement Boundary, would intrude upon and have a significantly harmful urbanising impact upon the 'Cherry Green Arable Plateau'

Poor quality and unsafe active travel connections and unsafe environment for pedestrians, cyclists and other highway users.

The proposed development results in a conflict with Policies BUNT3, INT1, DPS2, GBR2, DES2, ED1, TRA1 and TRA2 of the District Plan (2018) and Policies ES1 and BE2 of the Buntingford Community Neighbourhood Plan (2017). Thus, the proposals fail to comply with the Development Plan as a whole.

New Five Dinners Scheme is launched

The new Five Dinners scheme is now available through East Herts Council. It offers a simple, easy-to-use meal planning service designed to take the stress out of weekday cooking and provides a weekly plan of five healthy, family-friendly meals, along with a ready-made shopping list, helping you to save time, reduce food waste, and make the most of seasonal ingredients.

The scheme helps you to:

- Try new recipes using fresh, in-season produce
- Cut down on food waste and unnecessary shopping
- Spend less time planning and more time enjoying meals together

The scheme is available free to residents, more information and sign-up details can be found on the provider's webpage https://fivedinners.com/my-community-food-hub/mycommunity/

Ward Freman Swimming Pool

The latest news from the Pool Group is that the freehold of the pool has now been transferred to them. They can now start moving on with Phase 1 of the works to get the pool open again. This includes work in the plant room on the filtration and chemical dosing system and setting up an independent water supply, repairing broken tiles and expansion joints in the pool, a deep clean and heating system assessment. The aim is to reopen by the end of the year. The pool group will be sharing updates in the next few weeks on repair work, dates for open days and volunteer days to tackle cleaning and maintenance. So far over £239,000 has been raised to save the pool.

You can find more information, make a donation and sign up for their newsletter by visiting their website https://wardfremanpool.org/

Buntingford Repair Café

The next Buntingford Repair Café will be at Seth Ward Community Centre, 6 June from 2pm to 5pm. All repairs are carried out for free by our volunteers who will available to fix variety of items including:

Small electrical & battery items (eg hairdryers, coffee makers)
Household repairs (eg small furniture, toys)
Sewing, mending and textile repairs
Jewellery items
Knife and tools sharpening.
Bike maintenance and small repairs

Booking is required using this link https://www.tickettailor.com/events/buntingfordrepaircafe
or by emailing us at repaircafebuntingford@gmail.com

It's worth coming along even if you have nothing to repair as we will have a pop-up café selling a range of drinks and homemade cakes. All café sales go towards our running costs such as hall hire and purchasing equipment.

NEB Screening – 24 June, 7.30pm at Seth Ward Community Centre (Bunters Suite)

The National Emergency Briefing was an event that took place in London last year, hosted by Chris Packham, and featured climate scientists and experts from other fields sharing an honest account of the changes that are happening with climate and nature, including the latest evidence on extreme weather, food security, health and the cost of living and what the implications are for everyday life in the UK.

I am hosting a screening of the film (as local councillor and chair of the Buntingford Community Project) based on the event. Following the 50-minute screening, there will be an open discussion about the issues raised and what the changes might mean for the future of our local community. Also, an opportunity to discuss what we can all do, both individually and collectively, to help make a difference. Chris Hinchliff MP will be attending the event and I am hoping that Ben Crystall, leader of East Herts Council will also be able to attend.

Tickets are free and available at the following link
https://www.tickettailor.com/.../buntingfordcommu.../2153077
You can also find a map which includes details of all planned screenings across the UK
here https://www.nebriefing.org/screening-map

Buntingford Active Travel Fund Part 2 Proposed Scheme

Herts County Council held a briefing for local councillors and Exec Members from East Herts Council on feedback from the public consultation on the ATF2 plans for Buntingford. There was very positive support for the scheme and in particular the two proposals for 20mph limits within it. There was good support for both options – a small and a town-wide limit, which received support from 60.8% of those engaged with the consultation. I am really pleased that the decision has been made to go ahead with the whole town option. The boundaries of the whole town scheme have not been decided yet and I have requested that it should be expanded to include Aspenden. Further details to follow.

Road Safety Strategy Public Consultation.
The Herts County Council Road Safety Strategy is out for public consultation until 22 June. You can read it and add your comments at this link. People's views will help us understand which road safety issues and priorities matter most to people who live, work and travel in Hertfordshire.
https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/about-the-council/consultations/transport-and-highways/road-safety-strategy.aspx

FINANCE

26.31 **Finance report and payments authorised**
To receive the finance report. The report is an appendix to the minutes.

26.32 **Annual Governance and Accountability return (AGAR) 2025-2026**
The completed AGAR 2025-2026, having been circulated previously, was before the meeting and the following documents required approval at this full Council meeting.

26.33 **Certificate of Exemption**
Resolved to formally certify that Aspenden Parish Council meets the qualifying criteria for exemption.
The Chair and Responsible Financial Officer signed and dated the Certificate of Exemption.

26.34 **Internal Auditors Report**
Resolved to approve the Internal Auditors Report

26.35 **Annual Governance Statement**
Resolved to approve the Annual Governance Statement
The Chair signed the Annual Governance Statement

26.36 **Accounting Statements**
Resolved to approve the Accounting Statements
The Chair signed the Accounting Statements

26.37 **Dates for the period of Public Rights**
Resolved that the period of Public Rights would be Wednesday 3rd June to Tuesday 14th July 2026

26.38 **Parish Council Insurance**

Resolved to approve a renewal premium quote for a Long-Term Undertaking (LTU) of 3 years for £2,156.04.

26.38 **New Parish Council Laptop for Clerk**
The Clerk was unable to present a quote at this meeting but would do so at the next meeting. It was confirmed that £1,000 had been allocated in the budget for this purchase.

PLANNING

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

26.40 **Planning Applications since the Parish Council meeting held on 10th March 2026.**

3/26/0391/HH	Tannis Court Farm Aspenden Bridleway And Footpath 003 Aspenden Hertfordshire SG9 9PH	There was no comment from the Parish Council on this Planning Application.

26.41 **Planning Applications**
None

HIGHWAYS

26.42 **Aspenden Road Works and Diversion & Unnamed Road between Aspenden and Westmill**
This was updated in the Chair's Report. Cllr Blackburn has asked when the traffic lights will be activated.

PARISH MATTERS

26.43 **Police Report APRIL 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.

26.44 **Pavilion Management Committee (PMC)**

Cllr Blackburn reported a PMC meeting was held on 18th March 2026. The budget for the year 2026 – 2027 was agreed. The insurance premium attributable to the pavilion from the Cricket Club was confirmed as £1,150.84 which will be paid in September 2026. Some work was required to part of the shower floor.

26.45 **Children's Playground**

I. Scheduled Works

The Clerk reported that all the scheduled works on the Broadmead Leisure quote had been completed and that she will ask for a quote to replace the wooden post on the Adventure Trail.

Resolved to pay the Cricket Club £125 per annum to maintain the playground area.

II. Flooding

Cllr Murphy reported that the works had been effective in the majority of areas and that it would be necessary to wait for the next heavy rain when Terrain Aeration Services Ltd. would come back to assess the situation in the Children's Playground area.

26.46 **General Village Matters**

I. Aspenden Defibrillator Annual Support

The Clerk reported that she was still pursuing an invoice for the Aspenden Defibrillator annual support package from Community Heartbeat.

II. Aspenden Village Sign

The Clerk reported that the 100 Parishes Society had grants available and the restoration of the Village Sign met their criteria. She had approached a specialist company asking them to assess the sign and provide a quote. She had been pursuing this being mindful that the deadline for grant application was 31st May 2026.

Cllr Murphy said he would speak to a local tradesman he knew for an alternative quote.

CLERKS REPORT AND CORRESPONDANCE

26.47 **Clerks Report and Correspondence**

The Clerk had nothing further to report.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Date	Meeting	Venue
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 7.55pm.

Signed _____

Date _____