

ASHWICK COUNCIL MEETING

MINUTES OF MEETING

Held on Wednesday 9th September 2026 at Ashwick and Oakhill Village Hall
starting at 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs David Thorley, David Barlow (Chair), David Hine, Phil Briscoe, Stephanie Dowley and Philip Briscoe.

Also, in attendance – Kate Egan (Clerk)

1 Welcome by the Chairman

Cllr David Barlow welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2 Apologies for absence

No apologies received.

3 Absent

All Councillors were present.

4 Declarations of Interest and dispensations

(a) To receive declaration of interest from Councillors on items on the agenda

There were no declarations of interest from Councillors on items on the agenda.

(b) To receive written requests for dispensations for disclosable pecuniary interests

No written requests for dispensation for disclosable pecuniary interests were received.

(c) To grant any requests for dispensation as appropriate

No written requests for dispensation as appropriate were received.

5 Public session

There were twelve members of the public in attendance. The majority asked about the planning application being submitted for Highcroft Quarry. The Parish Council were unable to discuss it as the planning application has not yet been received. Information was given about the drop-in session being held on 8th October in Binegar.

A further resident spoke about planning application 2026/1472/FUL, this was discussed under item 8(d).

Cllr Philip Blatchford joined the meeting at 7.35pm

6 Somerset Councillor Reports

Somerset Councillor Sam Phripp was in attendance but was invited to speak late on in the meeting.

7 To confirm the minutes of the meeting from the Parish Council Meeting held on 29th July, previously circulated.

The Council **RESOLVED** that the minutes from the Parish Council Meeting held on 29th July were a true record, these were signed and dated by the Chair.

Cllr David Simons joined the meeting at 7.44pm

8 Planning Applications – If other planning applications are received between the date of this notice and the date of the meeting, they may be considered.

(a) **2026/1447/FUL** Retrospective change of use of land for the purposes of commercial dog walking with associated parking. Land Adjacent to Pilgrim House, Bath Road, Oakhill. **Recommendation** Due to the deadline being between meetings, this was discussed under the delegation process and Councillors recommended approval.

- (b) **2026/1529/TCA** G1 – Mixed conifers – Crown raise to 3.6m, remove tree less than 5 cubic metres. Oakhill Manor, Zion Hill, Oakhill. **This is a notification only** – in line with Somerset Council's constitution and the adopted scheme of delegation and terms of reference, the decision for this application is delegated to the Planning Officers.
- (c) **2026/1599/PAA** Prior Approval for a proposed change of use of an agricultural building to a dwellinghouse. Barn Lying north of Harridge Coach House, Bath Road, Oakhill. **This is a notification only** – in line with Somerset Council's constitution and the adopted scheme of delegation and terms of reference, the decision for this application is delegated to the Planning Officers.
- (d) **2026/1472/FUL** Change of use of land from agricultural to equestrian use and erection of stable block for private equestrian use. Land North of Badgers Cross Farm, Ashwick. **Recommendation** Ashwick Parish Council recommended approval.

The Council **RESOLVED** to suspend Standing Orders at 7.49pm

Somerset Councillor Sam Phripp gave a verbal update on his discussion with the Planning Department at Somerset Council. The floor was also opened up to allow residents to speak about the various planning applications currently being considered for Chapelfield.

The Council **RESOLVED** to reinstate Standing Orders at 8.15pm

- (e) **Planning Applications regarding Chapelfield** – To discuss whether the Parish Council wish to make any further comments regarding the various planning applications following the public meeting held on 3rd September.

Cllr Phil Briscoe gave a history of the various planning applications for Chapelfield and the various conditions mentioned in the Inspectors report when the decision for outlying permission was overturned.

Four responses were discussed and the Council **RESOLVED** to submit these further responses to Somerset Council.

9 Planning Applications – Responses to be noted from Somerset Council.

- (a) **2026/1188/TCA** Ash (T1) – Fell, Horse Chestnut (T2). Reduce back to previous points. The View, Zion Hill, Oakhill. **Decision** Somerset have approved the application with no objections.
- (b) **2026/0960/FUL** – Proposal for 3no. detached 3-bedroom dwellings with parking and amenity space. Development land behind Rock House – land at 362338 149135, Old Frome Road to Underhill, Gurney Slade. **Decision** Somerset Council have approved the application.
- (c) **2026/1109/CLE** Certificate of Lawfulness of Existing Use of the land to rear of The Old Chapel as garden and recreational area. The Old Chapel, Chapel Lane to Stockhill, Gurney Slade. **Decision** Somerset Council have stated the development is not lawful.
- (d) **2026/1231/VRC** Removal of condition 8 (Agricultural Workers Dwelling) on consent 059708/001 (Erection of bungalow and garage). Cartwheels, Benter Cross to Upper Benter, Stratton on the Fosse. **Decision** Somerset Council have granted approval.

10 To Be Resolved / Discussed

- (a) **To note the change of date for the Parish Council meeting in April, this has now been moved to Wednesday 21st April 2027.**

The Council **NOTED** the change of date for the Parish Council meeting in April.

- (b) **To appoint Do the Numbers Ltd as the Internal Auditor for 2026/2027 at a cost of £190.00**

The Council **RESOLVED** to appoint Do the Numbers Ltd as the Internal Auditor for 2026/2027 at a cost of £190.00

- (c) **To consider approving a contribution of £150.00 towards the cost of the Parish Clerk attending the National Conference in October.**

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve a contribution of £150.00 towards the cost of the Parish Clerk attending the National Conference in October.

- (d) **To note that the new National Planning Policy Framework was released on the 17th August 2026.**

The Council **NOTED** that the new National Planning Policy Framework had been released.

- (e) **To note the UK government has also introduced a mandatory National Scheme of Delegation of Planning Functions across England from 31st October 2026.**

The new rules remove individual council's powers to set their own local delegation criteria, replacing them with uniform national standards.

The Council **NOTED** the new rules for the mandatory National Scheme of Delegation of Planning Functions across England from 31st October 2026.

- (f) **To note the Local Government Services, Pay Agreement for 2026/2027, providing a 3.3% increase in pay rates and allowances from 1st April 2026 to 31st March 2027, with the increase and backpay to be included in the September salary payment.**

The Council **NOTED** the 3.3% increase in pay rates and allowances from 1st April 2026 to 31st March 2027.

- (g) **To note that, following a request for a Councillor to work with Somerset Council and attend Local Community Network (LCN) meetings on a regular basis, no Councillor has come forward to take on this role. To also note that no Councillor has come forward to work with Somerset Council to progress the proposed signage on Fosse Road at the Stoke St Michael end, to discourage large vehicles from using the route. Should the proposed development on Fosse Road proceed, the route is likely to become more significant for construction and other large vehicles. Dates for future LCN Meetings will be forwarded to Councillors when they are received.**

11 Clerks / Councillors Report

- (a) Update on the installation of bus stops in Nettlebridge. **Update** No update had been received.

- (b) Two Councillors attended a site visit at Highcroft Quarry on 26th August following an invitation from the owners regarding a planning application. Pennys Group are proposing to recommence mineral extraction at Highcroft Quarry, with a new HGV entrance being constructed closer to the junction with the A37, meaning the existing road access would be closed to HGVs. The proposals are currently subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment, with planning applications expected to be submitted towards the end of 2026, and a public drop-in session is planned to be held in Binegar Village Hall at the beginning of October. Once details have been confirmed it will be advertised in the usual way. **Update** A drop-in session has been arranged for Thursday 8th October between 4.30pm and 7pm at Binegar Village Hall.

- (c) Woodstock Homes are holding an informal drop-in session on Wednesday 16th September between 4pm and 6pm. This is an opportunity for residents to find out more about the proposals for a planning application for up to 49 houses on land off Fosse Road.
- (d) A request was received from Ramblers – Don't lose your way initiative regarding the recording of historic footpaths. This was passed to Cllr David Hine the representative for Footpaths. **Update** Cllr David Hine gave a verbal update and will place further information in the Post Office in Gurney Slade regarding the footpaths in that area. Missing signs were also mentioned; Cllr David Hine will follow this up with Somerset Council.
- (e) A public meeting was held to discuss various issues around development at Chapelfield on Thursday 3rd August. – verbal update to be provided at the meeting.

12 Finance

Bank Balance as at 1st September 2026

Current account £2,832.00

Reserve account £31,632.73

(a) Receipts

Bank Interest - £41.70 – received 10.07.26

Bank Interest - £39.98 – received 10.08.26

Total Receipts – £81.68

To note the second half of the precept - £12,353.00 was received at the beginning of September.

(b) Payments

Scribe – monthly support (September) - £39.60 – pd by DD

Clerks Salary and expenses – August - £480.79

Oakhill and Ashwick Village Hall – Hall Hire - £50.00

Total Payments - £570.39

(c) Transfers

Transfer from the Reserve Account to the Current Account - £5,000

Total Transfers - £5,000

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the above payments, receipts and transfer.

13 Correspondence

(a) Training Partner Events – Summer and Autumn 2026 – forwarded 05.08.26

(b) Councillor Training Events – September and October – forwarded 26.06.26

14 Matters to report/items for next agenda

- (a) Notice has been given that Somerset Council proposes to make various roads within the Parish of Ashwick a 40mph speed limit. Somerset Council, in consultation with the Policy, is introducing a speed limit at Beacon Cross Crossroads from all approaches to improve road safety for all road users. By reducing vehicle speeds, the aim is to lower the risk and severity of collisions, creating a safer environment. The consultation period starts on 16th September and will last for 21 days.
- (b) Pennys are holding a drop-in session on Thursday 8th October at Binegar Village Hall between 4.30pm and 7.00pm. Residents will be able to find out further information regarding the application to recommence stone extraction at Highcroft Quarry.
- (c) Co-Option of a Parish Councillor
- (d) Clearance of a grassy area at the bottom of Zion Hill.

15 Under Section 1, Paragraph 2 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business because publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

The Council **RESOLVED** under Section 1, Paragraph 2 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business.

- (a) **To increase the Clerk's hours from four hours a week to six hours a week from the beginning of September.**

The Council **RESOLVED** that the Clerks hours will increase from four hours a week to six hours a week from the beginning of September.

16 Date and time of next meeting: - Wednesday 14th October at Ashwick and Oakhill Village Hall starting at 7.30pm.

Meeting closed 9.21pm