

**Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held in Ashill Village Hall on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> September 2025 at 7.30 pm**



**Present :** Cllrs P Varney (Chairman), A Crouch, R Batty , R Fry, and S Hopkins.

**In attendance:** L Gowers (Clerk), Unitary Councillor S Osborne and 7 members of the public.

**36/25 Apologies**

None.

**37/25 Casual Vacancy** - to note the Parish Council has two Casual Vacancies to be filled by co-option.  
Noted.

**38/25 Chairmans' Opening Statement**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**39/25 Public Participation**

Several members of the public wished to speak about the speed of vehicles on Wood Road. Key points were:

- The sign at Hastings was still missing.
- The surface of Thickthorn Lane had deteriorated significantly and cars had been seen to ground out on the bumps.
- The speed, general awareness of drivers and manner that vehicles are driven on Wood Road had got worse.
- There was a dip in Wood Road, near Thickthorn Lane which was dangerous if hit at speed.
- There had been a recent accident on Wood Road. The police had not been interested as nobody had been hurt.
- Could speeding data be collected for Wood Road? The Parish Council would have to finance this as Somerset Council would not.
- Village gateways were popular along with asking residents to mow verges and cut hedges to make the area look more domestic.
- The school bus dropped children off on Wood Road, near the Flying Fish pub. There were no pavements or signs here – would it be possible?
- One resident had spoken to delivery drivers along Windmill Hill who admit that their times are unachievable so they have to travel at the maximum allowed speed on a road to reach their targets.
- There is potentially a development of 120 houses being planned in Horton Parish and there was concern that Ashill would become a cut through to the A358, if this went ahead, which would make slowing traffic through the village important.
- There is a sign on Windmill Hill which classed the road as unsuitable for vehicles above 7.5mt, but it is not easily seen. The parish of Bickenhall have a blue sign which would be more visible.

A member of the public reported that a large gate post, on the footpath on Windmill Hill Lane was wobbly and the handrail was fixed to the post. This would be investigated.

A member of the public noted that the dog bins had been in place 4/5 years. Prior to the bins being installed bagged feces was hung in hedges and there was a concern that if the dog bins were removed, dog walkers would not pick up after their dogs.

Unitary Councillor Osborne reported:

- There was a temporary change to the Planning Department, and Planning Officers could no longer be contacted on a direct line. There was a generic email address that should be used. This was being done to try to reduce the waiting list of

planning applications. There would also be no site visits and simplified conditions, which could be to the detriment of the local community.

- Budget: Q1 showed an overspend. A new Section 151 Officer had started last month and in order to set the budget for 26/27 Somerset Council would need to save over one hundred million pounds. Finances were still very fragile.
- Somerset Council had used capitalization directives for the last couple of years to meet budgets and they may have to do the same again. The capitalization directive allowed a council to sell assets to cover day to day running costs. Central Government must authorize this.
- Somerset Council were keen to devolve assets and services to parishes but there was a backlog.
- Drainage, safety defects and potholes were still Somerset Council's responsibility.
- There had been a change of Highways Officer for this area.

#### **40/25 Declarations of Interests**

None

#### **41/25 Co-option:** To consider the applications to the Parish Council and vote by a show of hands.

Potential applicants could not attend this meeting.

#### **42/25 Minutes** – to approve the minutes of the Parish Council held on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> July 2025. **It was RESOLVED for the minutes of the meeting held on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> July 2025 to be agreed & signed as a true record.**

#### **43/25 Finance.**

##### **a) To receive the latest finance report.**

Received and Noted

##### **b) To note the following payments made/due since the July meeting:**

Date Paid	Payment type	Description	Total	Account Balance
19 Aug 25	DD	EDF Energy	45.88	12330.36
11 Aug 25	DPC	Ashill Village Hall	16.00	12376.24

The Clerk reminded Councillors that the Lloyds Community Account was now costing £4.25 per month from July 2025.

The payments were noted.

#### **44/25 Planning**

##### **a) To note planning applications / notifications received since the last meeting along with any further applications available on the Somerset Council Planning Portal.**

##### **25/01668/NMA Land West Of School Lane Ashill**

Non Material Amendment to approved application 20/01623/REM for alterations to elevations of plots 4, 5, 6, 7, 9 & 10 and omission of treatment plant.

Noted.

##### **b) The following planning decision notices from Somerset Council were noted.**

##### **25/01126/S73 Herron Barn Thickthorn Lane Ashill TA19 9LS**

S73 Application to vary Condition 02 (approved plans) to allow design amendments relating to planning consent 24/00439/FUL; Demolition of existing barn and erection of a single dwelling (to replace approved Class Q Prior Approval 21/02468/PAMB) with associated works to form garden, parking area and boundary treatments in addition to installation of solar pv panels in the adjoining grassed area

**Approved**

##### **25/00112/OUT The Builders Yard Wood Road Ashill TA19 9NP**

Outline Application for 3 Dwellings with all matters reserved save Access and Layout.

**Approved**

**45/25 Playing Field****a) To receive an inspection report for the playing field.**

Cllr Fry thanked the volunteers that helped to cut the playing field hedges. Rabbits were still a problem on the playing field and Cllr. Fry was investigating solutions. A volunteer had offered to fill the rabbit holes in the autumn and a dumpy bag of top soil should be purchased to go up there for him. Sonar could be purchased for £50 but it couldn't be fixed to the ground and it was possible for young children to hear them too. As the playing field was for small children this may not be a suitable option. Cllr. Fry would investigate an exterminator to manage the rabbit population.

There was a report from an anonymous person regarding the skate park. There was a gap at the bottom of the ramp between the metal and the tarmac. It was felt that the easiest option was to fill the gaps and a working party would be organized to move the metal slightly to reduce the gap.

**b) To receive for consideration any other matters regarding the Playing Field.**

None

**46/25 Highways / Footpaths****a) To receive correspondence regarding speeding vehicles on Wood Road and consider options available**

There had been much discussion regarding this subject during public participation. The Parish Council AGREED to pursue Village Gateways and the Chairman would make contact with the Highways Engineer. A small working group would be put together to identify suitable areas for gateways.

**b) To receive for consideration any matters regarding Highways / Footpaths.**

There was also a request to investigate the speed limit coming into the village. It was noted that a 30mph speed limit sign may have been removed at the bottom of Windmill Hill Lane.

**47/25 Health / Environment / Parish Assets****a) To Review the use of Dog Bins in the parish and consider the payment to Somerset Council for emptying the bins**

Following discussion it was AGREED to continue to finance emptying of the dog waste bins. The Clerk would request an updated invoice from Somerset Council.

**b) To receive for consideration any other matters regarding Health / Environment / Parish Assets.**

None.

**48/25 Village Hall****To receive for consideration any matters regarding the Village Hall.**

There was nothing to report.

**49/25 Communication and processes****a) To receive any updates from the most recent LCN meeting or working groups.**

Cllr. Varney would attend the next highways meetings of the LCN. There was discussion regarding renting a SID from a local parish for the 30mph areas of the parish.

**b) To receive an update regarding matters from the Church.**

There would be a Harvest Festival supper and quiz held in September.

**c) To receive for consideration any other matters regarding communication / processes.**

None.

**50/25 Action Status Report – Update on any outstanding actions.**

There were no updates.

**51/25 Matters of Report :**

The Clerk reminded Councillors that the budget for 2026/27 should be considered at the next meeting. A draft budget would be circulated and a finance meeting convened in October to discuss this.

**52/25 To confirm the next meeting would be held on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2025.**

The meeting closed at 21.01 pm

Signed : ..... (Chairman)  
3<sup>rd</sup> November 2025