

## **GREAT ASHFIELD – ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PARISH**

**Date:** 30 May 2025

**Time:** 7.30pm

**Venue:** Lord Thurlow Village Hall, Great Ashfield

### **Present:**

#### **Parish Councillors:**

Mark Livens (acting as Chair)

Stephen Miles ('SM') (also representing the Parochial Church Council)

Brian Barker

James Harding ('JH')

Jonathan Myers

#### **Parish Clerk**

David Ogden

#### **District Councillor:**

Richard Winch ('RW')

### **Members of the public**

A number of members of the public attended the meeting. It is generally regarded as good practice not to formally identify those attendees.

### **Apologies for absence**

#### **Parish Councillors**

Donia Stick

Neil Jones

#### **County Councillor**

Andy Mellen (who had provided a report in advance) ('AM')

### **Village Hall Representative**

Simon Laidler

## **1. Minutes of the 2024 Meeting of the Parish**

It had become apparent that no minutes had been published from the annual meeting held in 2024, when the Parish Council had been in a state of flux. *Post-meeting note: RW advised that there was no merit at this stage in attempting to reconstruct minutes but reminded the current members of the Council that it was a responsibility to arrange for the publication of minutes henceforward,*

## **2. Report from Suffolk County Council**

RW presented the report on behalf of AM. Highlights included:

A scheme to make solar panels available free to businesses, subject to a revenue sharing arrangement with the County Council.

The ongoing debate to abolish the District and County Councils in favour of establishing up to three local authorities covering the whole of Suffolk & Norfolk

Motion to ameliorate delays in the provision of agreed infrastructure projects.

Ongoing difficulties in the Council's financing arrangements

*The full report will be made available*

### **3. Report from Mid-Suffolk District Council**

RW presented his report. Highlights included

The expectation, although not yet formally confirmed, that the local government reorganisation referred to in AM's report that the District council will be abolished, despite its finances being in good order

That planning and housing targets set by government had increased substantially.

Changes to recycling, enabling domestic level recycling of glass, plastic and food waste.

Ongoing efforts to revitalise town centres, including a £2.5m programme in Stowmarket.

Protecting biodiversity by working with landowners and work to improve river quality,

*The full report will be made available*

### **4. Parish Council Annual Report**

The Clerk presented the report. Thanks were given to a significant number of individuals who had served on the Council in the past and to those who had stepped up to become Councillors when there was a significant risk that the Council may become inquorate. Thanks were also due to Carol White, Mandie Beckley and Arthur Peake for work they had done over many years for the parish.

He highlighted the factors that had led to a significant percentage increase in the Council's precept and also explained the need for the Council's banking arrangements to be changed.

*The full report will be made available*

## **5. Parochial Church Council Report**

SM reported that the PCC had met 4 times in 2024.

He highlighted the daily opening of the church, with services continuing as previously, in addition to various festival services. He offered the PCC's thanks to all who had helped during the year.

SM flagged that sums left to the church as legacies had facilitated the redecoration of the nave and side aisles and considered that scheduled maintenance requirements were manageable.

He added that the Churchyard had been well maintained by John Miles & Sons and that joint fund-raising events with the village hall had been well received.

## **6. Lord Thurlow Village Hall Report**

Simon Laider was unavailable. He intended to provide a report subsequent to the meeting, and this will be made available in due course. It was noted that the Living Well in Winter grant had funded four well attended events.

## **7. Great Ashfield and Badwell Ash WI Report**

The president of the WI had provided a report for the meeting. Highlights included a number of interesting talks on a wide variety of topics, and it was encouraging that membership had remained steady despite the sad loss of the longest serving member.

*The full report will be made available*

## **8. Newsletter Annual Report**

As noted earlier, thanks were offered to Mandie Beckley for all her work in producing the newsletter. JH, who had produced recent editions, advised that a volunteer had come forward to take on the task in the future.

## **9. Community Speed Watch**

In the absence of any volunteers coming forward the scheme could not continue. The speed gun would be sold, and the proceeds would revert to the Parish council. Other equipment would be returned to the police. The roadside monitors would continue to collect data although action could only be taken if average speeds exceeded pre-set thresholds of 20% higher than relevant speed limits

## **10. Public Forum**

No other issues were put forward for debate and the meeting closed at 8.45pm

**David Ogden**  
**Clerk to Great Ashfield Parish Council**  
**June 2025**

**Confirmed to represent an accurate record of the meeting**

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**Chair, 7 July 2025**