

Astley Parish Council

N O R T H W A R W I C K S H I R E

Thursday 17th July 2025 at 7.00pm
in The Reading Room, Castle Drive, Astley

MINUTES

Present: Chairman Webber (Chairman), Cllr Orton, Cllr Hunter, Cllr Proctor, Parish Clerk Helen Billington.

Also in attendance: Adam Weaver, Peter Markham.

10/25

Apologies

No apologies received; Chairman Cllr Webber declared he would need to leave the meeting before 8pm to attend a work commitment. The Council unanimously agreed to complete the meeting as required, with a Councillor voted to chair.

11/25

Open Forum

Nothing reported.

12/25

Declaration of Interests

No conflicts noted

13/25

Minutes of ordinary meeting and Minutes of the ACM held on the 15th May 2025

Both Minutes were confirmed as an accurate record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

14/25

Matters Arising

Confirmation of the following PC meeting dates:

- Wednesday 10th September 2025
- Thursday 20th November 2025
- Thursday 15th January 2026
- Thursday 19th March 2026
- Thursday 21st May 2026

15/25

Update on Local Events

- Cllr Proctor provided an update on a very successful open weekend. Almost £3000 was raised, and the cross over between the Church and Parish Council group was much appreciated and contributed to its success.
- There is a Planning Meeting for the next Open Weekend/Heritage Open Day (taking place September 13/14th) to be held at 7pm on August 5th in the Reading Room.

- Cllr Proctor asked that questionnaires related to local activities could be completed and either returned to him or left in the Reading Room (blank copies available in the Reading Room)

16/25

Councillor vacancy/Deputy Chair

- The Clerk reported that no requests for an election had been made, so the Council can proceed with co-opting a Councillor if anyone steps forward.
- The Chairman suggested a Deputy Chair would be helpful to run a meeting in the event of his absence. The Clerk advised it was best practice to appoint a Deputy to Chair a meeting if the Chairman was absent.
- However, the Council agreed they would prefer to be flexible if the occasion arose and would vote in a Councillor on the night to pick up Chairman role.

17/25

Nursery Parking

- Arbury Estate Manager has been in contact with the nursery. It appears some of the parking issues have eased. He will liaise with the manager to minimise issues.

18/25

MP Planning Meeting

- Cllr Webber asked the Clerk to follow up the invitation sent to the MP, to ask her again to meet with the Council.
- It was suggested it might need to take place during Recess or when the MP is in her constituency on a Friday.

19/25

Solar Farm Payment

- There was discussion around the duration of the Community Fund Payment, and which account it was to be paid into.
- The Clerk will clarify these details with Innova.

20/25

Highways Update

- The Clerk has received a reply from Highways. A non-refundable fee of £1000 is required for any speed management measures assessment required.
- The Clerk logged two issues on the website (the main one regarding the blind exit from Castle Drive) and she will contact Highways to clarify if this fee is required to assess installation of a "Blind Exit" road sign.
- There was discussion that the school sign has also been knocked off.

21/25

Emails from residents

- The Clerk received an email asking if there had been other issues locally with power supply and bills (there have been issues in the Reading Room).
- Councillors did not report any issues locally.
- Another resident raised three issues, which were each discussed and as the resident hopes to be able to come to the September Parish Meeting, the Council would like to discuss further then and achieve a solution where possible -

1. Parking at the nursery, and alternative options locally- using the Reading Room car park was suggested. However, it was felt that this would impact regular attendees of the Reading Room attendees, as the car park is regularly full in the day.
2. Public Footpaths overgrown and Solar Farm development impacting farm tracks whilst walking to Arley- the Estate Manager offered to ensure that future crops don't impact the footpaths. The track that the solar farm construction is using is not a Public Right of Way (confirmed by the Estate Manager in the meeting) so shouldn't be used for walking.
3. Lime Trees in the Churchyard- this is the Church responsibility and not the Estate.

22/25

Risk assessment

- The Clerk reported that this is not yet completed. Cllr Webber suggested that Richard Fellows might have a template from previous employment that could be adapted for Parish Council.

23/25

Financial

- Mandate has been updated to remove previous Chairman and added Cllr Simon Webber, new Chairman.
- The Clerk confirmed that the insurance renewal provides good value for money and the Council unanimously agreed to renew with Zurich.
- The Clerk confirmed the balance in the account is £817.40.
- Cheques approved and signed by Cllr Webber and Cllr Orton.

Astley Parish Council Accounts May-July 2025			
Date	Expense	Amount	Method of payment
06/04/2025	ICO certificate	£47	<i>direct debit 16/05/2025</i>
22/05/2025	stamps	£6.96	Clerk
01/07/2025	Dog bin installation	£170.00	Direct cheque
17/07/2025	Clerk salary		Direct cheque
15/08/2025	Zurich insurance renewal	£196.00	Direct cheque

Chairman Cllr Webber had to leave the meeting at 7:40pm and Cllr Orton continued to Chair the meeting with agreement from the rest of Council.

24/25

Asset Register

Confirmation that the Council owns:

3x grit bin
 2x dog bin
 Laptop
 Defibrillator

Disaster box

25/25

Clerk contract and hours worked

- The Clerk provided details of the 102 hours worked since taking on the job 19th September 2024.
- The clerk role was offered as 60 hours per year, and this is a significant underestimate of the time needed.
- WALC advised that even a small Parish should require 4 hours per week.
- The Clerk proposed that the job be contracted for the rest of this year as 7 hours per month (2 hours per month extra), until the situation can be reviewed again next financial year.

Clerk Salary	annually	monthly	weekly
Job advert	60	5	1.25
WALC recommend minimum for small parish	192	16	4
Actual hours worked since 24th Sept 2024 to July 19 th 2025	107	10.8	2.7
Proposed new hours from Sept 2025	84	7	1.75

- Even paying these extra hours, the end of year finances should still have a balance of approx £480.
- This proposal was carried unanimously by the Council.
- There was discussion that basic Clerk training has been completed and there will be familiarity with the systems in the future. This will mean no extra additional hours or training fees for this.
- The Clerk Contract had been supplied to all Councillors prior to the meeting so it was agreed in principle, but it was unanimously agreed that that the Chairman should sign it in person at the next meeting.

26/25

Financial regulations policy

- It was resolved to defer this to the next meeting

27/25

Councillors Report and Items for Future Agenda

- Next agenda- use of the Reading Room Car Park for cars other than users of the Reading Room.

Meeting closed at 8.10pm

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 10th September 2025 in The Reading Room Castle Drive, Astley.

Chairman signature

Date

Draft created by
Helen Billington, Clerk,
July 18th 2025