Minutes of Hopesay Parish Council

Meeting of the Parish Council Meeting, Monday 19th October 2026, held in Aston on Clun Village Hall, 7.30pm.

Present: Cllrs. R Hartas, J Bowers, J Campion, B Day, K Gripton, T Record.

Absent: None

In attendance: Unitary Cllr J Dickin, approximately 14 Members of the Public.

Clerk: Mrs M Gwilliam.

1. Apologies for Absence: None.

2. Co-option of new councillors: None.

3. Declarations of i) Disclosable Pecuniary and ii) Personal Interests, and written requests for dispensations: Cllr Gripton declared an interest in agenda item 7 Aston Green – Dogs.

4. Minutes of the Parish Council meeting 24th August 2026: The minutes were approved as an accurate record, and the Chair was authorised to sign them. **Resolved**.

5. Public Participation: Members of the Public addressed the meeting on the subject of dogs being required to remain on the lead while at Aston Green. Some were in favour of dogs having to be kept on a lead, whereas others (some were parishioners, others were from outside Hopesay parish) argued against Council's decision to have all dogs kept on leads while at Aston Green. The Chair thanked everyone for attending and those who had spoken for their contributions.

6. Unitary Councillor Report: Cllr Dickin gave a report covering Severn Trent activities along Broome Rd, Shrewsbury Park and Ride bus reprieve, a bus from Newtown would run through Aston on Clun regularly, and concerns about the proposed removal of the Cash Machine in Corvedale Rd.

7. Aston Green - Dogs: Cllr Gripton left the room for this item.

Having been led to believe that it could order dogs on leads at Aston Green, Council had resolved at its August meeting that all dogs (excepting those supervised and performing in dog shows, or supervised and attending dog training classes) must be kept on a lead and closely supervised whilst on Aston Green. However, Council had very recently been informed that its 'dogs on leads' policy could not be enforced, being legally a request only, not an order.

Councillors discussed the views expressed by residents and other members of the public about Council's 'dogs on leads' policy. Some views had been communicated to Council via email, some had been expressed in the Public Participation Session, and yet other views had been previously expressed to councillors by residents: A dog walker had informed Council that a group of dog owners were prepared to approach, educate, challenge or report those who did not pick up after their dog or whose dogs were out of control generally. Some residents did not want dogs on Aston Green at all. It was believed that dogs were not allowed on Aston Green when it was first created. Some dog walkers had called the 'dogs on leads' policy ridiculous.

Some councillors expressed the view that Council might agree to postpone the original start date of the 'dogs on lead' policy in order to assess if the responsible dog walkers initiative made any difference. However, it was also noted that there were members of the public who were not dog owners/walkers who avoided the Green when dogs were loose there. 'Loose' meant 'out of control' for many. Dogs should always be kept under control and owners should not allow their dogs to be a nuisance to others. A 'dogs on lead' policy would help to prevent this. The 'dogs on leads' policy was not ridiculous, and dog walkers should understand that walking dogs at Aston Green was not a right but a privilege.

Other points made were: Aston Green was not a free resource, the parish budget to maintain it this year was £4,500; it was parish residents who paid for Aston Green maintenance and therefore any consultation would be with parish residents only; notices asking people to pick up after their dogs had been up for years yet dog mess had remained constant; and councillors were concerned that the presence of dogs discouraged some people. This was an issue about how dogs were managed.

Following debate Council **agreed** to postpone the start of the dogs on leads policy to 1st January 2027. At its December meeting Council would assess whether volunteers from the dog walking fraternity had managed to bring about major improvements in dog fouling and nuisance behaviour at Aston Green. Crucially, Council would be looking for a substantial reduction in dog fouling, and significantly closer control of dogs generally. Without serious and sustained improvement in dog behaviour and dog fouling, the dogs on leads policy would go ahead. Other measures would also be looked at in future and a general ban could not be ruled out. The current situation was unacceptable and Council was determined to improve it.

The Chair and other councillors were willing to meet with the group of responsible dog owners to discuss suggestions. However, the onus on making this happen would be with the dog owners.

8. Planning: Cllr Gripton returned to the meeting. No new applications.

9. Correspondence: Including various bulletins, newsletters, and information sheets, including Shropshire Council Local Plan Update. Also, various emails concerning Council's intention to request that dogs are to be kept on leads at Aston Green.

Temporary parish road closures: none received.

10. Council Tax Support: Council noted Shropshire Council's recent messages on Council Tax Support and the reinstatement of the 'Child Benefit income disregard' which may affect the tax base.

11. Chair/Clerk Reports: Deferred.

12. Parish Council Community Shop Loan, to approve an application form for the PWLB: A draft application form for the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) in respect of the £50,000 loan (approved by parish consultation to aid the purchase of a new Community Shop building) was presented. Council considered in detail the application form, **approved** the submission of the application form and **resolved** to seek the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities, and Local Government's approval to apply for borrowing approval of £50,000, over the borrowing term of 10 years to provide a grant to the Community Shop at Aston on Clun, to aid redevelopment of the Community Shop. The annual loan repayments will come to around £6,500. It is also intended to increase the Council Tax Precept for the purpose of loan principal repayments by 29.25%, which is the equivalent of an additional £5.000 per year. A condition of the grant to the shop is that the shop

will finance all loan interest costs for the duration of the loan. A consultation with all households in the parish has already been undertaken resulting in an approval response rate of 86.6%.

13. Training: Council **resolved** to retrospectively **approve** the 'Fundamentals' training for Cllr Gripton at £45.

14. Finance:

September (no meeting):

A Bank reconciliation to the end of August was circulated to councillors in September along with a Finance Report and list of invoices. No variances. The Council had £32,250.98p in the bank, on 31st August.

The annual £10 ground rent from Aston on Clun village hall was received on 1st September.

The Clerk/RFO submitted a VAT reclaim for the financial year 2024 2025 to HMRC online. Council received the sum of £1,010.53p in respect of the 2024 2025 VAT reclaim on 17th September.

SEPTEMBER INVOICES PAID: For retrospective authorisation

Voucher	Name	for	Budget (from)	£amount	Method
34, 35,	Staff costs/HMRC	Sept 2026 Salary, PAYE tax, NIC, homeworking costs	Salary, tax, admin, Employer NIC	833.07	SO, BACS
36	Clerk	Back pay to 1st April 2026	salary	92.20	BACS
37	Ditton Services	Grass cutting, Sept instalment	292.33 Aston Green 58.47 VAT	350.80	SO
38	David Evans	P3 Group fencing costs	P3	49.96	BACS
39	Unity Trust Bank	Monthly service fee **30/9/26**	admin	7.00	fee
			Total	**£1,333.03p**	

October:

A Bank Reconciliation would be circulated for the next meeting as the RFO had had no time to prepare one.

OCTOBER INVOICES TO PAY:

Clerk's expenses of £112.41 included the late addition of the poppy wreath purchase. Aston Green costs included the late addition of meadow mowing which had been previously budgeted for.

Voucher	Name	for	Budget (from)	£amount	Method
40, 41	Staff costs/HMRC	Oct 2026 Salary, PAYE tax, NIC, homeworking costs	Salary, tax, admin, Employer NIC	792.76	SO, BACS
42	Ditton Services	Grass cutting, Oct instalment	292.33 Aston Green 58.47 VAT	350.80	SO
43	J Campion	Wildflower seed, sundries Meadow mowing	Aston Green 320.68 + 130 VAT 90.14	540.82	BACS
44	Clerk	Stationery expenses/inks 84.91	Admin 71.12	112.41	BACS

		Poppy wreath 27.50	Grants 22.92 VAT 18.37		
45	T P Jones	Payroll July - Sept	admin	58.50	BACS
46	SALC	Councillor training	training	45.00	BACS
47	Unity Trust Bank	Monthly service fee 31/10/26	admin	7.00	fee
			Total	**£1,907.29p**	

Council accepted the Finance Reports and authorised all payments as listed. Resolved.

15. Aston Green, Maintenance: Council gave thanks to Cllr Campion for all the work he had carried out at Aston Green.

16. CIL Local Fund: A draft application form for CIL Local Fund monies was presented. Council discussed the application in detail and **approved** it. There was a final step to take before the form could be submitted. It was hoped that Unitary Councillor Dickin would be able to advise Council on the best way to proceed with this.

17. 2027 Meeting Dates: Council **agreed** the proposed 2027 meeting dates of 25th January, 22nd February, 22nd March, 26th April, 24th May, and 21st June 2027. Meeting dates for July – December 2027 would be agreed at a future meeting. **Resolved.**

18. Risk Register Rolling Review: Deferred.

19. Policies reviews: Deferred.

20. Meetings Attended: Cllr Bowers reported that the Village Hall Committee was considering removal of the other flower bed to maximise parking space, and more solar panels.

21. Reports of Parishioners Issues, Future Agenda Items: None.

22. Next Meetings: Monday 9th November, 14th December 2026.

23. To exclude members of the Press and Public: Council **resolved** that by the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1992, the public and press be excluded for the remainder of the meeting on the grounds the business involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the Acts.

24. NJC Pay Award: Council **noted with approval** that the National Joint Council for Local Government Services had agreed the new pay scales for 2026 2027 which were backdated to 1st April, and that the new rates had been implemented in the September pay roll.

The Chair closed the Meeting at 9.30pm.

Chair Signed:

Date: ……