



Ashton Hayes and Horton cum Peel Parish Council

Annual Report April 2025 – March 2026

Contact detailsC/O Clerk to the Parish Council ... Trudy Ryall-Harvey

Parish Councillors as at March 2026

Rachel Arnold
Barbara Craven
Stuart Eadie
Ian Dossett [Vice-Chair]
Richard Kinsey
Peter Mitchell [Chair]
Ian Ridgley
Paul Varey [Vice-Chair]

Structure, Governance and Management

As per Parish Council (PC) Standing Orders

Governance

1. The Parish Council employs a Clerk who is also the Responsible Finance Officer.
2. All (unless have a potential conflict of interest) Parish Councillors on joining the Parish Council became Trustees of the Parish Rooms.
3. All Parish Councillors identify in advance any pecuniary interests, outside body's involvement and family or personal interests they or their partners might have, and sign a declaration of interest form when elected to the Council. In addition, each Parish Councillor is expected to declare any other potential conflicts of interest with their PC duties at the start of each PC meeting.

Objectives

As per Standing Orders, but in summary to represent and seek to protect/address the interests of the community and its local residents.

Main Points of Note in 2025-26

1. Matters of concern continue to be raised under Public Participation and over the last 12 months
 - 45 concerns were raised by the public, (or by Parish Councillors on behalf of the public);
 - 29 actions were instigated and completed during the meeting it was raised at;
 - 16 concerns were noted but no action raised.
2. Twelve Planning applications were considered and commented on by the Parish Council (PC). The PC responses were heavily influenced by the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) policies and principles. Of the applications received:
 - Three were **Supported** (i.e. positively contributed to the parish as per the Neighbourhood Plan),
 - Seven were given a **Neutral** response (i.e. no material impact as per the NP or general planning considerations)
 - None were **Objected** to (i.e. adverse impact as per the NP),
 - Two Planning Consultations were not brought to the Parish Council for consultation due to them being for Agricultural Buildings (AGR), however the Parish Council did object to one AGR.
 - One new planning potential breach was referred to CWaC Planning Enforcement for their investigation. However there are still several previously reported with CWaC awaiting their investigation.
3. The PC members, as Trustees of the Parish Rooms, oversaw the sale by auction of the Parish Rooms in October 2025, this facility had become surplus to requirement with the number of community buildings that offered better facilities. Consequently, it was agreed that rather than continuing with an increasing drain on the parish precept, paid by all households, that the building be sold. This has taken place and the monies raised, invested in a Parish Room space within the Golden Lion.
4. Quarterly 'Around Ashton' (AA) newsletters were produced, typically 480 copies per issue. The PC continues to encourage residents and interested parties outside the area to receive their AA electronically. Currently **43.3%** are delivered electronically. AA costs each household £3 per annum included in the precept for paper copies.
5. The PC continues to utilise Around Ashton, its website, NextDoor and Facebook to provide access to PC papers, distribute information of potential public interest, and to promote events taking place throughout the area. These digital communication services have allowed us to reach a wider audience more quickly, whilst allowing residents to communicate more easily.
6. The PC launched the Parish Calendar and all local groups and organisations are using it to publicise their events. It is proving to be a popular one-stop shop for all events within the parish.
7. The PC has continued to provide support to the Golden Lion Community Benefit Society, following the renovation and reopening of the Golden Lion Pub in 2025. It now holds the Parish Council meetings in the Parish Rooms facility within the Golden Lion.
8. The Parish Council continued to meet with Cheshire West and Chester Council, United Utilities and the Environment Agency regarding continued concerns of flooding within the

parish. The issues identified from subsequent heavy rain events have been actively pursued but CWaC respond very slowly. The main activities in 2025-26 have been:

- CWaC investigating road drainage problems on Peel Hall Lane, including camera work and extra jetting. Further work is necessary.
- The Parish Council organising another site meeting with representatives from CWaC, Environment Agency and United Utilities to discuss further the joint agency approach to the ongoing issues.
- Repairs to two key drainage gullies, one associated with the culvert at the Church Road end of The Meadows.
- The PC is pressing CWaC for the installation of onsite emergency flood water pumping facilities at the lower junction of Peel Crescent and The Meadows. A proposal by CWaC is being put forward for the funding of this.

9. Highways issues have been a constant challenge throughout the year. The Parish Council continue to monitor and report highways problems that require actioning. Outstanding issues are chased through CWaC by the Parish Council **The key actions have been/are:**

- Reporting multiple potholes where they are more than 4cms deep. This is the minimum size at which CWaC will repair them. The public are also encouraged to report problems, as they see them, via the CWaC online reporting tool.
- Working with the local traffic enforcement team and CWaC Highways to try to establish a police monitoring area on Church Road for a Police Van to use. Still waiting on costing for this from Highways.
- SID monitoring of speeds through the village is still being undertaken by volunteers. The data collected has helped get police attention and also to apply for the above pilot scheme.
- Installation of a 20mph zone along Village Road and Church Road. The consultation process for this was completed in 2024, but unfortunately due to funding restrictions experienced by CWaC this project was not completed until late 2025/early 2026
- Hedge monitoring identified several hedges requiring attention. Most were dealt with quickly, but 3 had to be reported to CWaC, all except for 2 problem hedges have been satisfactorily resolved, and CWaC are following up on those hedges that require further action.

10. The Parish Council has continued to arrange and coordinate the twice-yearly community clean-up events that local residents volunteer to get involved in. This has proved to be popular and is felt by many residents to be an important community activity, with a positive outcome in terms of maintaining the village and the wider parish.

11. Representatives of the Parish Council have been involved in a number of external conferences & activities including the Cheshire Association of Local Councils (CHALC) Net Zero Group, Cheshire West and Chester (CWaC) Connections Events and meeting with the Police & Crime Commissioner.

12. The Parish Council continues to front the Plastic Free Steering Group. The Parish Council would like to thank local businesses, community groups and the Primary School who have come together to support the Parish Council in achieving this status.

Financial Performance

- For the year 2025-26 the Parish Council budget was £32,881 with a precept set of £19,920 which was a 4.5% increase resulting in a charge of £41.21 on a Band D household per year.
- Overall for 2025-26, the PC operating costs came in above budget (as did the income) due to the sale and reinvestment of the money received from the Parish Rooms.
- For the year 2026-27, the Parish Council for the first time in a number of years is not increasing its Precept. The precept will remain at £19,760 which is a charge of £41.21 on a Band D household per year.

Council Attendance 2025-26

- For 2025-26 there were 11 councillors' assigned slots, with eight being filled and three vacancies as this report is written.
- Ashton Hayes and Horton-Cum-Peel Parish Council held 11 Parish Council meetings between May 2025 and April 2026.
- An average of 5 councillors attended each council meeting.
- CWaC Councillor Hugo Deynem attended one meeting in March and sent his apologies to all the other Parish Council meetings.
- Over the year 9 members of the public attended council meetings.
- The PCSO was noted to be absent from all of the Parish Council meetings this last year.

Grant Process

For 2026-27 the Parish Council set a budget of £2,500 towards supporting local organisation wishing to develop sustainability initiatives. In September 2025 adverts were placed in Around Ashton and NextDoor to raise community groups' awareness of the opportunity for worthy causes to apply for money from the Parish Council to benefit local residents.

Two notifications of interest were received, followed by full grant applications. A total of £2,535 was applied for. The Parish Council reviewed all applications, all applicants were invited to attend the Parish Council meeting to hear the decision of the Parish Council:

- **Support fully** one applicant, these being Ashton Hayes Primary School Parent Teacher and Friends Association (PTFA) for the installation of a Wildflower meadow and tree planting together with the creation of rain forest harvesting and an edible gardening.
- **Unsuccessful** application, this being the Ashton Hayes Sports and Recreation Association (AHSRA) due to the application not fulfilling the sustainability criteria. However, the Parish Council is liaising with AHSRA re its financial position and any opportunities to improve it .

It was agreed that these grant monies above would be paid out in May once the precept has been received, and the remaining monies be carried over and reviewed again later in the year as to how they could be spent.

This report is signed and dated following a meeting of the Parish Council, where the report was approved by all present.

Signed on behalf of the Parish Council
Peter Mitchell (Chair)
09/03/2026