



**Minutes & Actions from the Ashford Residents Association
Quarterly Residents Meeting
Held at Salvation Army Woodthorpe Road TW15 3JY
10.00 – 12.00 Saturday 27th September 2025**

Attendees:

ARA Chair - John Dickens
ARA Secretary - Penny Kielty
ARA EC: Julie Holman/ Philomena Meddelton/ Nik Urquhart/ Jenny Frost
Residents of Ashford TW15

Invited Guests:

Cllr Joanne Sexton
Cllr Greg Neall
Cllr Harry Boparai
Cllr Denise Turner-Stewart
Cllr Chris Bateson
Cllr Katherine Rutherford
Cllr Michelle Arnold
Sergeant Thea Jackson-Sedgwick
PCSO Marianne Ashford

The third Ashford Residents Association (ARA) meeting on **27 September 2025** brought together over 130 residents, council members, and police representatives to address the growing concern over **Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)** in Spelthorne. The meeting focused on the legal, planning, safety, and social implications of HMOs, as well as updates on crime reduction, community safety, and the proposed Adult Gaming Centre (AGC) on Church Road.

Key Topics & Bullet Points

1. HMOs – Definition & Local Impact

- HMOs are properties rented by 3+ people from 2+ households sharing facilities.
- 252 licensed HMOs in Spelthorne; many more unlicensed or pending.
- HMOs are often used to house vulnerable individuals, including migrants and low-income residents.
- Poorly managed HMOs are linked to antisocial behaviour, overcrowding, and property devaluation.

2. Resident Concerns

- Drug use, noise, fire hazards, and unsafe living conditions.
- Lack of transparency and communication from the council.
- Emotional testimonies from residents whose lives have been disrupted.

- Planning not considering the concerns of residents.
- Property Value/Financial Loss
- Lack of supervision from the environment agency.
- Lives impacted to those living in close proximity.

3. Council Response & Action Plan

- Action Plan to be published by December 2025.
- Follow up meeting to be confirmed at Council Offices December 2025.
- Unlicensed HMO campaign to launch in early 2026.
- Article 4 Direction in place to require planning permission for HMOs. Full borough coverage by March 2026.
- Council exploring HMO caps in specific areas.
- Improvements underway to make HMO data more accessible online.

4. Planning & Enforcement Issues

- Builders exploit permitted development rights to convert homes into HMOs.
- Council lacks power to intervene unless planning rules are explicitly broken.
- Building control often outsourced to private firms with limited oversight.
- Parking and infrastructure concerns frequently overlooked.

5. Police & Community Safety Update (Sgt. Thea Jackson)

- Crime down 4.7% across Spelthorne (Sept 2023–Sept 2024).
- Burglary ↓ 45%, Assaults ↓ 22.7%, Shoplifting ↓ 15.5%, Public order ↓ 25%.
- 40 prolific shoplifters identified using facial recognition.
- 90% shoplifting detection rate.
- Increased patrols and 10 drug warrants executed.
- Clear, Hold, Build initiative launching in January 2026 to improve safety and tackle crime.
- Ashford will be receiving additional CCTV & ANPR cameras.

6. Adult Gaming Centre (AGC) Opposition

- Strong community opposition to proposed AGC at 39 Church Road.
- Over 100 valid objections submitted.
- Licensing Sub-Committee hearing scheduled for 8–9 October at Spelthorne Borough Council.
- ARA committee member Nik Urquhart will speak on behalf of residents at the hearing.

7. Actions Agreed

- Council to publish HMO Action Plan and follow up meeting by December.
- Council to launch unlicensed HMO investigation campaign in early 2026.
- Council to improve online access to HMO data.
- Detailed overview of the scope/limitations of Article 4.
- ARA to continue updates and encourage community participation.

8. Looking Ahead

- Next ARA meeting to focus on:
 - HMO Action Plan follow-up.
 - Quicker Police updates on incidents in Ashford.
 - Community-led solutions for a safer Ashford.
 - Collaboration between Police, Ashford Neighbourhood Watch Schemes and Ashford Residents Association.
- Residents encouraged to stay engaged via ARA website and social media.

Ashford Residents Association (ARA)

info@ashfordra.co.uk

<http://ashfordra.co.uk>

John Dickens - Chairman

Penny Kielty - Secretary

Debbie Cousens - Treasurer

EC: Julie Holman/ Philomena Meddelton/ Nik Urquhart/ Jenny Frost



Stay Connected with the Ashford Residents Association <https://ashfordra.co.uk>

Visit the Ashford Residents Association News Page to stay up to date with the latest community news, updates, and important information. It's your go-to source for everything happening in Ashford. <https://ashfordra.co.uk/news>

Looking for helpful resources or local groups?

Check out our Links Page for a curated list of community services and support networks.

<https://ashfordra.co.uk/links>

Got an event coming up in Ashford?

We'd love to help spread the word!

Share your event details with us, and we'll feature them on our Community Events page.

<https://ashfordra.co.uk/events>

PASS IT ON!

Invite your family, friends, and neighbours to join us. Help us to grow a safe, vibrant and united community together!

<https://ashfordra.co.uk/membership>