

Dear Councillors: Chris Button, Nikki da Costa, Ian Duffy, Vinny Hall, Martin Hoffman, Graham Lee (Chairman), Norton Mahy (Vice Chairman), David Sims.

Councillors are summoned to attend this meeting for the transaction of business in the agenda below.

The meeting is open to members of the public and press. The meeting can be attended in person or via Zoom. Please sign up on the website (www.ashwell.gov.uk) to be sent login details and to receive regular communications on village matters, or contact the parish office direct.

District Councillor Tom Tyson and County Councillor Steve Jarvis routinely attend meetings.

Ashwell Parish Council Meeting, to be held on Wednesday 05 July 2023,

at the Parish Room at 7pm

S Mitchell

Sarah Mitchell, Deputy Clerk to Ashwell Parish Council, 28 June 2023

AGENDA

- 32 Apologies for absence
To receive and accept apologies for absence
- 33 Declaration of Interests
- 34 Minutes
 - 34.1 To confirm the minutes of Ashwell Parish Council meeting on 7 June 2023 as an accurate record of proceedings. Minutes in appendix A.

35 Public Issues and Public Participation

- 35.1 Members of the public and councillors can raise matters of concern and ask questions.
- 35.2 To discuss governance concerns received by e mail from a parishioner in relation to the following areas:
 - 35.2.1 Code of Conduct
 - 35.2.2 Declarations of interest
 - 35.2.3 Complaints
- 35.3 To consider the discussion paper produced by a parishioner in relation to influencing NHC policy on affordable housing triggers and allocations (minute 27.2.2 June 2023 Council meeting). Discussion paper in appendix B.

36 Council Documents

- 36.1 Complaints procedure

To consider the updated draft complaints procedure for adoption (minute 24, 7 June 2023 Council meeting). Previously adopted procedure, revised draft procedure and commentary on revised draft in appendix C,
- 36.2 Terms of reference for new committees
 - 36.2.1 HR committee

To review and agree proposed terms of reference for HR committee. Draft in appendix D.
 - 36.2.2 S106 committee

To discuss potential terms of reference for s106 committee and agree timescales for production of draft for adoption.

37 Planning

Summary of new and existing applications in Appendix E.

Enter NHC reference number into the planning search box for full application details:

<https://pa2.north-herts.gov.uk/online-applications/>

- 37.1 To agree responses to new consultations received from North Herts Council.
 - 37.1.1 23/01201/FPH, Valentine House, Partridge Hill – variation of planning permission granted on 02.05.23.
 - 37.1.2 22/00741/FP, Land west of Ashwell Road, Bygrave – amendments to application previously submitted.
 - 37.1.3 20/03070/FP, Development off Station Road, Ashwell – variation to condition 13 (bus stops), permission granted on 22.03.2022.
- 37.2 Tree consultations (Conservation Area and TPO) received from NHC.
 - 37.2.1 To note the situation relating to the application at 40 Gardiners Lane. (Minute 29.2.1 7 June 2023 Council meeting).

37.3 To agree a representative to speak at the NHC committee meeting relating to application reference 23/00666/FP Dixie's Meadow. Committee date not yet set.

37.4 To consider priorities and process for making a s106 request for application reference 22.03094/FP, land between Ashwell House and Hunts Ridge.

38 Reports from Working Parties and Committees

38.1 Sports Day

To receive feedback from the Sports Day working group on Ashwell Sports Day (minute 27.5.2, 7 June 2023 Council meeting).

38.2 Trees and hedges

To receive feedback from David Sims on the free survey of condition of hedge at the recreation ground (minute 27.5.1, 7 June 2023 Council meeting).

39 Reports from parish councillors on premises and other responsibilities

39.1 The Springs

To receive an update from Martin Hoffman on the proposal from a parishioner for Ashwell Springs Festival

39.2 St Mary's Churchyard

39.2.1 To receive a verbal report from Martin Hoffman and Vinny Hall on two holm oak trees and a large sycamore within the churchyard and agree next steps.

39.2.2 To receive a verbal report from Vinny Hall on concerns received in relation to St Mary's churchyard hedging obstructing the footpath adjacent to Hodwell and to agree any actions.

39.3 Ashwell Cemetery

To receive a verbal report from the Deputy Clerk on grounds maintenance conditions in areas of Ashwell Cemetery and to consider potential actions.

40 Reports to the Council

To receive reports from representatives from outside bodies, local authorities and agencies

40.1 To receive a written report from County Councillor Steve Jarvis on updates since 7 June 2023 council meeting. Report in appendix F.

40.2 To note that District Councillor Tom Tyson is not providing a verbal report this month due to holiday.

41 Appointments to other bodies and representatives to other bodies

41.1 Ashwell Village Trust (charity no. 294673)

To appoint a parish councillor to fill the vacant parish councillor trustee position (minute 26.1, 7 June 2023 Council).

42 Village Matters

Items on general village matters from parish councillors.

42.1 North of Baldock extension:

42.1.1 To note any feedback on the exhibition by Urban and Civic on July 4 in the parish room.

42.1.2 To note Urban and Civic's response to Ashwell Parish Council's request for a representative to attend community forum sessions (minute 27.1.3, 7 June Council) and to agree the Parish Council's representative.

42.2 To note any feedback received from NHC Enforcement Officer on dog fouling concerns (minute 27.1.6 June 2023 Council).

42.3 To note the survey received in relation to Hertfordshire County Council's draft Rural Estate Strategic Plan and to agree a process for responding.

42.4 To note the Order to add a bridleway near Gravelpit Hill has been confirmed and the Notice and Order Plan are on display on the parish notice board until 3rd August 2023.

42.5 To consider a request from HCC Highways for the parish council to maintain new planters to be installed at the junction of Lucas Lane and Station Road.

42.6 To note feedback from NHC's officer on road name suggestion for Station Road development and to agree alternative suggestions.

43 Finance and Governance

43.1 Budget tracking and the monthly summary of accounts. Proposal for acceptance May and June 2023. June 2023 financial information is not available at the date of issue of the agenda, as the month end has not yet occurred.

43.2 To receive a proposal from Graham Lee to authorise expenditure of £450 on electricity bill received from Ashwell Housing Association for electricity use associated with the parish council office between November 2022 and May 2023.

43.3 To receive a proposal from Graham Lee to request a Housing Needs Survey and to authorise expenditure of £1,500 for the survey.

43.4 To exclude members of the public and press on the grounds that the next item of business involves the likely disclosure of exempt information.

43.5 To consider options relating to employment of Deputy Clerk and Clerk.

Forthcoming meetings:

Next monthly Parish Council meeting – Wednesday 7 August, 7pm in the Parish Room and on Zoom.

Appendix A

Minutes

of the Parish Council meeting held on

Wednesday 07 June 2023, at 7.05pm, in the Parish Room.

Present: Councillors Chris Button, Nikki da Costa, Vinny Hall, Martin Hoffman, Graham Lee (Chair), and David Sims. Ian Duffy joined the meeting on Zoom.

Also in attendance: Clerk (Jane Porter), Deputy Clerk (Sarah Mitchell), District Councillor Tom Tyson and County Councillor Steve Jarvis. Two members of the public were present and three joined on Zoom for parts of the meeting.

Following a request from a parishioner the meeting was recorded.

21 Apologies for absence

Norton Mahy sent apologies for absence due to holiday.

22 Declarations of Interest

Nikki da Costa – declared an interest in item 29.1.2 on the agenda, as a neighbour to the planning application.

The Deputy Clerk – noted she was also a neighbour to the planning application referenced 29.1.2 on the agenda.

Graham Lee – declared a non-pecuniary interest in the Community Land Trust as a founder director.

23 Proposal to approve and sign the minutes of the Council meeting on 17 May 2023 and the minutes of the planning committee meeting on 8 April.

It was **resolved** that the minutes of both these meetings be approved and signed.

Action: Deputy Clerk and Graham Lee.

24 Review of Policies

Complaints procedure: it was suggested and agreed that a revised draft of the complaints procedure be drafted for acceptance at the next council meeting. **Action: Deputy Clerk.**

Information and data protection: the policy was accepted without amendment.

Health and safety: the policy was accepted without amendment.

Volunteer policy: the policy was accepted without amendment.

Equal opportunities policy: the policy was accepted, with an amendment to monitor on gender and sex, not just on gender. **Action: Deputy Clerk.**

25 Roles and Responsibilities

25.1 Committees

25.1.1 It was noted that all councillors are members of the Planning and Finance committees.

25.1.2 It was agreed that Graham Lee, Norton Mahy and Nikki da Costa would be members of the HR committee.

25.2 Working groups

25.2.1 Council representatives were agreed for the following working groups:

Neighbourhood plan: Norton Mahy, Graham Lee, Chris Button.

There was a discussion around whether this should be a committee rather than a working group, due to the nature of the work involved. It was agreed that this would be reconsidered at the date of revision of the plan.

Litter picking group: Norton Mahy, Nikki da Costa.

Trees and hedges group: David Sims, Clerk.

Ashwell Yearbook: Norton Mahy.

25.2.2 Proposal to establish new working groups or committees.

The following new working groups and committees were proposed and established with council representatives noted:

Section 106 committee: Chris Button and Nikki da Costa. Other members to be agreed.

Drivesafe working group: Vinny Hall.

Green Energy & Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure working group: Ian Duffy, Graham Lee.

25.3 Premises

The following council representatives for premises were agreed:

Recreation ground, including the pavilion, playground and public toilets: Graham Lee.

The Springs: Martin Hoffman.

Small Gains: David Sims.

The Lock Up: Vinny Hall.

Carters Pond and Merchant Taylors Green: Vinny Hall.

St Mary's Churchyard ground maintenance and church liaison: Vinny Hall and Martin Hoffman.

Parish Clock: Vinny Hall

War Memorial and liaison with Ashwell Royal British Legion: Nikki da Costa.

Cemetery: Chris Button and Nikki da Costa.

Street furniture owned by the parish council: Nikki da Costa.

Grounds maintenance (contract): Clerk and Deputy Clerk.

25.4 Liaison with other Authorities

The following council representatives for liaison were agreed:

Hertfordshire County Council highways: Chris Button and Vinny Hall.

Hertfordshire County Council rights of way: Vinny Hall, Graham Lee, Clerk, Deputy Clerk.

North Herts Council for street cleansing: Vinny Hall, Clerk, Deputy Clerk.

26 Appointments to other bodies and representatives to other bodies

26.1 Ashwell Village Trust (charity number 294673)

It was suggested and agreed that details of this trust be circulated to all councillors to enable them to decide if they would like to fill the vacant parish councillor trustee position. It was agreed that this would be an item on the July council agenda. **Action: Clerk**

It was noted that David Sims holds one parish councillor trustee position and that the chair of Ashwell Parish Council is also the chair of Ashwell Village Trust.

26.2 **Henry Colbron Trust and liaison with Ashwell Primary School**

It was agreed that Chris Button would be the council's representative.

26.3 **Ashwell Museum liaison**

It was agreed that Martin Hoffman would continue to be the council's representative.

26.4 **Village Hall liaison**

It was agreed that Graham Lee would continue to be the council's representative.

27 **Open Forum – village matters, reports from other bodies etc.**

Standing Orders were suspended to allow members of the public to speak.

27.1 **Items on general village matters from parish councillors.**

27.1.1 Community Land Trust

Graham Lee noted that a date for the next meeting needed to be made. **Action: Clerk/Graham Lee.**

27.1.2 Village Hall trustees regarding their proposal to change to an Incorporated Charitable Organisation and any future involvement of the parish council.

Graham Lee noted that there was no further progress on this.

27.1.3 North of Baldock extension and progress with date for exhibition by Urban and Civic.

It was noted that the exhibition would be held on 4 July in the parish room between 4pm and 8pm. Publicity for the event was being discussed and agreed with Urban and Civic.

There was a discussion around other sessions which Urban and Civic were holding with selected parties. It was agreed that the Deputy Clerk would contact Urban and Civic to find out more about these sessions and to ask for a representative from the parish council to be included where possible, to allow Ashwell's representations and perspectives to be taken into account. **Action: Deputy Clerk.**

Tom Tyson noted that he would also follow this up with North Herts Council's Community & Partnerships Team Leader.

27.1.4 Electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

Ian Duffy explained that he had sent an email to Hertfordshire County Council in relation to this, but had heard nothing back. Steve Jarvis stated that he thought Hertfordshire County Council was in the process of collating emails received.

Ian Duffy noted that there were two strands to the electric vehicle charging infrastructure work stream: 1) working with Hertfordshire County Council to achieve on-street charging and 2) investigating opportunities for private sites within the village that might be suitable.

27.1.5 Events calendar

Ian Duffy noted that he would take responsibility for this. He would reach out to village organisations to get event information to incorporate. **Action: Ian Duffy.**

27.1.6 Dog fouling concerns raised on Ashwell Street and High Street

Ian Duffy explained that he had been contacted by residents citing concerns over an increase in dog fouling on Ashwell Street and High Street. David Sims noted that he had also observed an increase around the recreation ground.

There was a discussion around the potential ways to address this and the challenges associated. It was agreed that the Deputy Clerk would make contact with North Herts Council's enforcement officer to discuss enforcement options and any assistance the officer may be able to provide. **Action: Deputy Clerk.**

27.1.7 Graham Lee raised concerns over the speed of traffic on Station Road outside of the village 30 mile per hour area. Steve Jarvis agreed to request for more speed tests in this area.

27.2 Items from members of the public and village organisations

27.2.1 Ashwell Springs, festival proposal

Martin Hoffman noted that he had heard nothing further from the parishioner in relation to this.

27.2.2 Follow up on suggestion from a parishioner at the meeting of 17 May in relation to influencing North Herts Council policy on affordable housing triggers and allocations and the parishioner's offer of expertise.

Graham Lee noted that a discussion paper had been received from the parishioner and circulated to councillors. It was suggested that that this item would be discussed at the July council meeting to allow councillors to consider the paper.

27.3 Items from our district councillor Tom Tyson

27.3.1 Liaison with Steve Jarvis on the planning condition for the new footway in Station Road

Tom Tyson noted that he was disappointed by the lack of progress that had been made between North Herts Council and the developer. He explained that he was trying to establish exactly why no progress had been made. It was agreed that the parish council would wait for three weeks to see what information Tom Tyson could obtain and after that period, the parish council would contact North Herts Council to seek enforcement.

27.3.2 Tom Tyson provided the following additional updates and information:

Bygrave solar farm - two of the three planning hurdles had been overcome and updates were available on the planning portal.

Drivesafe – Vinny Hall was progressing this. The police were not enthusiastic about testing on Station Road outside the village, due to challenges with calibration of the speed machine.

Warding arrangements – considerations of changes to ward arrangements had concluded. Arbury would remain as a single ward.

27.4 Items from our county councillor Steve Jarvis

Steve Jarvis provided the following updates and information:

- 27.4.1 The Ruddery – no further update.
- 27.4.2 New footway in Station Road as a condition of planning permission for Townsend Meadow – as per Tom Tyson’s update in 27.3.1.
- 27.4.3 Hodwell drains – new kerbing and road edge repairs to be carried out in Hodwell have been scheduled, but no update on actions for long term drainage pipe upgrade.
- 27.4.4 War Memorial junction – no further update.
- 27.4.5 Junction of Back Street and West End – having reviewed further, there was no possibility of changes to existing arrangements, due to visibility. It was agreed this would be removed as an agenda item for future meetings.
- 27.4.6 Junction of Gardiners Land/High Street – signage for this junction was being investigated, but there were some concerns over the location of these. A further update would be provided at the next meeting.
- 27.4.7 Additional items
 - Kingsland Way resurfacing work was scheduled for the first week of August.
 - Concerns raised in relation to two blocked drain gullies on Bear Lane near to Ashwell Primary School were noted.
 - It was agreed Steve Jarvis would investigate the progress of works planned on Partridge Hill.

27.5 Items from working groups

- 27.5.1 Trees and Hedges. Update on the new hedge at the recreation ground.

David Sims explained that the new hedge on the Lucas Lane side of the recreation ground was suffering from lack of water and that the hedge on the horse field side was covered with weeds.

David Sims noted that he had asked the contractor who had provided hedge planting services to the parish council to provide a free survey of condition of the hedge. He would report back to the next council meeting on the outcome of this.

It was suggested that watering of the new hedge should commence.

Action: David Sims and Clerk
- 27.5.2 Report from the Village Sports Day Group
 - It was noted that this item would be an item for the next council meeting.
- 27.5.3 Yearbook Appeal
 - It was noted that Norton Mahy had put out an appeal for volunteers.

Standing Orders were reinstated.

28 Monthly reports on premises/other responsibilities from parish councillors

- 28.1 Recreation Ground/upgrade of play equipment and Queen’s Platinum Jubilee Pavilion.

It was noted that there was no further update on this.
- 28.2 Report on the information received from the CDA Herts Rural Housing Officer and English Rural Housing Association. Proposal to request a Housing Needs Survey.

Graham Lee explained that he would circulate notes of the meeting with CDA Herts and English Rural Housing Association to councillors. It was noted that this item would be considered at the July council meeting. **Action: Graham Lee**

29 Planning matters

29.1 New consultations received from North Herts Council

29.1.1 42 Silver Street, planning reference 23/00967/FPH

It was **resolved** that a response of no objection should be submitted to the relevant planning officer.

29.1.2 128 Ashwell Street, planning reference 23/01159/FP

It was agreed that an on-site planning committee would be held. **Action: Deputy Clerk**

29.2 It was noted that a Certificate of Lawful Development had been granted for installation of 6 solar panels to the existing south elevation roof slope. It was noted that this was Norton Mahy's residence.

29.3 Tree consultations received from North Herts Council

29.3.1 40 Gardiners Lane

It was **resolved** that a response of no objection would be submitted to North Herts Council.

29.4 Updates on previous planning applications, developments ongoing

29.4.1 Consultation request from North Herts Council for street naming of new development off Station Road.

Graham Lee explained that Norths Herts Council had asked for parish council input on the naming of this new development. Graham Lee had contacted the previous land owner of the field to see if it had been previously named. Graham Lee had also contacted a parishioner with good local historical knowledge to see if he had any suggestions linked to historical associations with the field. Two potential names had been suggested by the parishioner: Middle Furlong and Bacon Leg.

Chris Button suggested that a name referencing Small Gains might be an option, given its well-known location within the village. It was agreed that councillors would exchange e mails on thoughts on the names discussed.

Action: all councillors

30 Finance and Governance matters

30.1 Budget tracking and the monthly summary of accounts. Proposal for acceptance.

The Deputy Clerk apologised that the monthly accounts had not been circulated. It was agreed these would be proposed for acceptance at the July council meeting.

30.2 Proposal to change bank signatories.

It was proposed that Martin Hoffman be removed as a bank signatory and that Sarah Mitchell (Deputy Clerk) be added as a bank signatory.

It was **resolved** that the proposal be accepted.

30.3 To review and accept the risk assessment policy.

The risk assessment policy was accepted.

30.4 To note the annual review of policies.

The annual review of policies was noted.

30.5 Annual Audit for the financial year 2022-2023

30.5.1 The documents supplied to the Internal Auditor were noted.

Arrangements and dates for the exercise of public rights and publicity for this were noted.

Arrangements and dates for the submission to the External Auditor were noted.

30.5.2 External Audit Submission. Proposal to approve Section 1/Annual Governance.

A proposal was made to approve Section 1/Annual Governance.

It was **resolved** that the proposal be accepted.

30.5.3 External Audit Submission. Proposal to approve Section 2/Accounting Statements and to note the basic documents to accompany the Annual Return to the External Auditor (bank reconciliation, explanation of significant variances, notice of the period of public rights)

A proposal was made to approve Section 2/Accounting Governance.

It was **resolved** that the proposal be accepted.

The basic documents accompanying the Annual Return to the External Auditor were noted.

30.6 To note the proposed arrangements for office staffing (Clerk and Deputy Clerk) from 1 July 2023.

It was agreed that the HR committee would meet to review proposals for office staffing from 1 July 2023.

Meeting closed at 9pm.

Forthcoming meeting dates:

Next monthly parish council meeting - Wednesday 5 July 2023

APPENDIX A: Summary of consultations on recent planning and listed building applications received from NHC up to 1 June 2023.

Summary of consultations on recent planning and listed building applications received from NHC up to 1 June 2023				
To view all the documents relating to an application put the NHC reference number into the planning search box https://pa2.north-herts.gov.uk/online-applications/				
Address	Application ref. Number	Brief description	Ashwell PC response to NHC consultation (see also minute reference)	North Herts Decision
42 Silver Street	23/00967/FPH	Retention of installation of raised wooden decking around swimming pool.	No objection. June Council 29.1.1	Pending
128 Ashwell Street	23/01159/FP	Erection of a two storey five-bed dwelling with a single storey 1-bed attached annexe to front elevation and detached garage following demolition of existing bungalow	On-site planning committee meeting to be arranged to agree response. June Council 29.1.2	Pending
40 Silver Street	23/00412/LDCP	Installation of 6 solar panels to existing south elevation roof slope.	Noted June Council 29.2.	Certificate of Lawful Development granted
40 Kingsland Way	23/00894/FPH	Erection of detached double garage	No objection May Council 19.1.1	Pending
16 Springhead	23/00811/FPH	Erection of detached home office and gym following demolition of existing garden shed.	No objection May Council 19.1.2	Pending
Bluegates Dairy, Dick Smiths Walk	23/00840/PRAP	Installation of roof mounted solar panels	No objection May Council 19.1.3	Pending
18 Springhead	23/00959/FPH	Single storey rear and single storey side extension, as resubmission of application ref 23/00138/FPH	No objection May Council 19.1.4	Pending
Dixies Meadow High Street	23/00666/FP	Erection of 12 dwellings with associated hard and soft landscaping, creation of vehicular access, public open space and children's play area.	Objection. See minutes Planning C'ttee 08 Apr. Also April Council 87.1	Pending
Land to the east of 5, Ashwell Street	23/00718/FP	Erection of one detached 3-bedroom dwelling with associated garage/carport including landscaping and creation of vehicular access off Ashwell Street	No objection. April Council meeting 89.1.6	Pending
11 Claybush Hill Meadow	23/00588/FPH	Erection of front porch, two storey rear extension with Juliet balcony to first floor and replace existing rear fenestration following demolition of existing porch canopy.	No objection. April Council meeting 89.1.5	Approved
Land Between Hunts Ridge And Ashwell House no 5, High Street (known as Hunts Close)	22/03094/FP	Erection of 14 dwellings including creation of access from Ashwell Street, footpath link to Lucas Lane, associated infrastructure, public open space and landscaping	Objection. See January Council meeting 69.1.1 AND Planning Committee meeting (Sat 07 at 10am)	Pending
Land West of Ashwell Road, Bygrave SG7 5EB	22/00741/FP	<u>New consultation on amendments</u> Full Planning Permission: Ground mounted solar photovoltaic (PV) farm including battery energy storage; continued agricultural use, ancillary infrastructure, security fencing, landscaping provision, ecological enhancements and associated works.	Objection. January Council meeting 69.1.1 <i>Previous response to NHC: Objection</i> <i>See June Council 2022, 18.1.4</i>	Pending
5 Swan Street	22/02966/FPH and 22/02967/LBC	Erection of front entrance canopy and side elevation porch to include conversion of existing shed into habitable accommodation following demolition of front brick wall. Additional for Listed Building Consent: Internal alterations consisting of replacing existing attic staircase and re-tank the basement.	December Council 62.1.6 No objection. Lack of off-street parking noted.	Pending

APPENDIX B: Accounts Summary – to be approved at July Council. See minute reference 30.1

ACCOUNTS - Summary for 1st to 31st May 2023					
RECEIPTS					£
R26	Nevilles Funeral Services	Rent for Chapel of Rest (May)			68.75
R27	The Pilates Corner	Yearbook 23 Advertising			85.00
R28	APC Current account	Transfer from the Current account			5,000.00
R29	Blue Pearl Granite	Yearbook 23 Advertising			260.00
R30	Emil De Maria	Allotment Rent			12.00
R31	AllroundUK	Yearbook 23 Advertising			155.00
R32	HMRC	Vat Reclaim			7,180.47
R33	Country Properties	Yearbook 23 Advertising			500.00
R34	Lawn Partners	Yearbook 23 Advertising			85.00
R35	Memorial	CW23.11			175.00
					-
				Total	£13,521.22
PAYMENTS			£ less VAT	VAT	£ inc VAT
P23	Herts Wildlife Trust	Membership Renewal	40.00	0.00	40.00
P24	DUO	Website Hosting INV-11114	25.00	5.00	30.00
P25	LG221-Pension	Staff Pension April 2023	511.25	0.00	511.25
P26	Ashwell Parochial Church Council	Parish room booking 11/5/23 inv 23013	25.50	0.00	25.50
P27	Blue Tree Company	Tree Survey Inv A-1913	1,100.00	220.00	1320.00
P28	Brilliant Lawns	Grass cutting at Recreational grounds Inv 10906	135.50	0.00	135.50
P29	Edwards Cleaning	Toilet cleaning - Inv 02507	190.00	0.00	190.00
P30	Zoom	Zoom Subscription - INV199634450	59.95	11.99	71.94
P31	Legal & General	Insurance Policy G74283	551.41	0.00	551.41
P32	Wright Accounts	Bookkeeping Services - INV01053	443.75	0.00	443.75
P33	APC Deposit account	Transfer to Current Account	5,000.00	0.00	5000.00
P34	BT	Phone & Broadband - Inv Q063 6H	184.31	36.86	221.17
P35	Brilliant Lawns	Grass cutting at Recreational grounds Inv 10981 11023	271.00	0.00	271.00
P36	Powerscribe/MCL	Webhosting	120.00	24.00	144.00
P37	E-on Next	Electricity for Public Toilets inv 01/04 -30/04	30.81	1.54	32.35
P38	DDH Garden Services	Grounds Maintenance May 23	770.83	154.17	925.00
P39	Brilliant Lawns	Grass cutting at Recreational grounds Inv 11105	135.50	0.00	135.50
P40	HMRC	PAYE	641.72	0.00	641.72
P41	Clerk (J C M Porter)	Clerk salary	1,520.29	0.00	1520.29
P42	ECO (A Beddall)	Environmental Cleansing Officer salary	262.82	0.00	262.82
P43	Deputy Clerk (S H Mitchell)	Deputy Clerk Salary	1,144.56	0.00	1144.56
P44	Grounds Officer (M Chandler)	Grounds Officer salary	146.80	0.00	146.80
			13,311.00	453.56	
				Total	£13,764.56
MONEY AT BANK					
		Current Account 31/05/2023	7,836.46		
		Reserve Account 31/05/2023	84,971.09		
		Total cash	£92,807.55		

Appendix B

Discussion Paper

Affordable Housing Provision in Ashwell

Introduction

This paper is produced following the Parish Council meeting of 17th May. It is not intended to be definitive, nor comprehensive, rather it is an attempt to stimulate debate around the merits of putting together a case for adjustments to NHDC policies which would assist Ashwellians.

Declaration of Interest

I have 4 daughters, all of whom are now, or will when they finish their studies be, priced out of the local housing market.

Background Context

Ashwell is a popular village with good schools and transport links.

It is acutely difficult for young persons at the start of their career or those with modest, or even intermediate means to access the local housing market.

There are other structural issues with the local housing market – lack of suitable “downsizing” homes; new stock invariably being 4 & 5 bedroomed houses etc – however, that is not the subject of this paper. The rest of this paper will focus on the provision of affordable housing and local access to that affordable housing.

Affordable Housing

There is a national statutory definition of affordable housing. Let us put aside if that is indeed “affordable” and focus on two issues which are within the gift of NHDC. Firstly, when and how affordable housing requirements are triggered, and secondly, the criterion for prioritising access to that affordable housing.

i. Affordable Housing Triggers

The current national default threshold which requires developers to provide affordable housing is the quantity of houses built – 9 homes or less being below the threshold. Above that affordable housing is triggered. The thinking goes larger sites are more viable/profitable as the fixed costs of development are spread over more units.

This is a (poor) proxy for the margins developers might expect and thus their capacity to deliver affordable houses within a reasonable viability envelope.

The flaw in this thinking is twofold: -

- I. That all “houses” are equal.
- II. That all locations are equal.

An example:-

9 (say 4 & 5) bedroomed houses in a premium location, such as Townsend Meadow in Ashwell, will yield between 40 & 45 bedrooms and a retail sale value of around £10m.

Contrast that with an imaginary scheme in the less popular postcode area of Letchworth for say ten 2/3 bedroomed houses. A yield of half the bedrooms and probably around a third to a half of the retail sale proceeds. However, such a scheme would trigger affordable housing.

In higher value areas where bigger (higher value) homes are built, there is a strong case for affordable housing triggers applying earlier, or for affordable housing triggers to be better sensitised to the scale and location of the houses.

In order to depart from the national policy, NHDC would need to make a credible local policy to put to the Inspector as part of its current local plan revision work.

OBJECTIVE 1

Secure commitment from NHDC to seek some appropriate sensitivity in the NHDC's triggers for affordable housing. (A planning policy issue as part of its Local Plan submission).

ii. Access to affordable housing.

All affordable housing is in the “pool” and NHDC allocates affordable housing based on a points system. The pooling and points system means that in practice, the local Ashwell (& surrounds) population gets no prioritisation in the allocations policy – or even if some modest allowance is made as a one-off on a particular development, it is overwhelmed by other higher weighted criterion in the allocation policy.

OBJECTIVE 2

Nudge the allocations policy so connectivity to locality is consistently given a greater weighting and/or that some affordable homes are exclusively offered to those with strong local connections (a housing policy issue).

Next Steps

Whilst it would be possible for a well-motivated and informed individual to gather the necessary evidence, including illustrative case studies and then frame a set of proposals, it would be better to have wider engagement with interested parties on the Parish Council and in the wider community.

Similarly, whilst there are strategies which I would commend, it is perhaps preferable to pool ideas with a wider interest group.

David Cook
19th May 2023

Appendix C

Information on revised draft of complaints procedure

This paper is prepared by the Deputy Clerk to outline the basis for the revised draft of the complaints procedure to be considered by the Council on 5 July.

- 1 The revised draft of the complaints procedure is based on the model complaints procedure for parish councils from the SLCC (Society for Local Council Clerks).
- 2 The existing version of Ashwell Parish Council's complaints procedure was based on the model document by HAPTC (Hertfordshire Association of Parish and Town Councils). It does not include provisions for appeals to decisions made on complaints and does not include clearly defined timescales for responding to complaints.
- 3 The SLCC advises that their model forms the basis for a model complaints procedure which can be adapted by parish and community councils to suit their own particular circumstances.
- 4 The model version forming the draft for consideration in appendix A has been adapted to include sections from the HAPTC model complaints procedure, which make it clear that where the Clerk or Chair receive a complaint about themselves, they shall refer it to full Council, after letting the complainant know that this will be done.
- 5 The model version has been further adapted based on the principle adopted by a number of parish councils (and identified on askyourcouncil.uk) that where a complaint is heard by full council, two councillors should not take part, to allow them to handle the complaint in the event of an appeal against the original decision.
- 6 The SLCC advises that all complaints policies require regular reviews and that a review every two years might be thought suitable. This enables councils to take account of structural and legal changes. It is therefore recommended that, when a complaints procedure is adopted by council, a review date of two years should be set and clearly identified on the procedure.

27 June 2023

Working draft: 27 June 2023

Ashwell Parish Council

Working Draft Complaints Procedure

Adopted on: [draft - not yet adopted]

Next review due on: [draft – not yet adopted]

1. Ashwell Parish Council is committed to providing a quality service for the benefit of the people who live or work in its area or are visitors to the locality. If you are dissatisfied with the standard of service you have received from this council, or are unhappy about an action or lack of action by this council, this Complaints Procedure sets out how you may complain to the council and how we shall try to resolve your complaint.
2. This Complaints Procedure applies to complaints about council administration and procedures and may include complaints about how council employees have dealt with your concerns.
3. This Complaints Procedure does not apply to:
 - 3.1 complaints by one council employee against another council employee, or between a council employee and the council as employer. These matters are dealt with in accordance with the ACAS Code of Practice on Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures.
 - 3.2. complaints against councillors. Complaints against councillors are covered by the Code of Conduct for Members adopted by the Council on 17 May 2023 and, if a complaint against a councillor is received by the council, it will be referred to the Standards Committee of North Herts Council. Further information on the process of dealing with complaints against councillors may be obtained from the Monitoring Officer of North Herts Council.
4. The appropriate time for influencing Council decision-making is by raising your concerns before the Council debates and votes on a matter. You may do this by writing to the Council in advance of the meeting at which the item is to be discussed. There will also be the opportunity to raise your concerns in the public participation section of Council meetings. If you are unhappy with a Council decision, you may raise your concerns with the Council, but Standing Orders prevent the Council from re-opening issues for six months from the date of the decision, unless there are exceptional grounds to consider this necessary and the special process set out in the Standing Orders is followed.
5. You may make your complaint about the council's procedures or administration to the Clerk. You may do this in person, by phone, or by writing to or emailing the Clerk. The addresses and numbers are set out at the end of this document.
6. Wherever possible, the Clerk will try to resolve your complaint immediately (except where the complaint is about his/her/their own actions). If this is not possible, the Clerk will normally try to acknowledge your complaint within five working days.

7. If you do not wish to report your complaint to the Clerk, you may make your complaint directly to the Chairman of the Council who will report your complaint to the full Council. If the Clerk or Chairman receives a complaint about his/her/their own actions, it shall be referred to full Council after first notifying the complainant of the manner in which it is intended to attempt to settle the complaint.

8. The Clerk or the full Council (as appropriate) will investigate each complaint, obtaining further information as necessary from you and/or from staff or members of the Council. In the event that the complaint is investigated via full Council, you will be notified of the date of the meeting at which the complaint will be heard and you will be given an opportunity to explain your complaint orally. In the event that the complaint is handled by full Council, two councillors will be nominated not to take part in proceedings, so that they are able to deal with any decisions that are appealed.

9. The Clerk or the Chairman of the Council will notify you within 20 working days of the outcome of your complaint and of what action (if any) the Council proposes to take as a result of your complaint. (In exceptional cases the twenty working days timescale may have to be extended. If it is, you will be kept informed.)

10. If you are dissatisfied with the response to your complaint, you may ask for your complaint to be referred to the full Council, or in the event that the complaint was handled by full Council initially, to the two councillors who did not take part in the initial investigation, and (usually within eight weeks) you will be notified in writing of the outcome of the review of your original complaint.

Contacts

The Clerk of Ashwell Parish Council
6A Back Street,
Ashwell
Telephone: 743706
Email: clerk@ashwell.gov.uk

The Chairman of Ashwell Parish Council
Spade Acre
Ashwell Street
Ashwell
Telephone: 742843
Email: graham.lee@ashwell.gov.uk

End of working draft complaints procedure

Existing complaints procedure

Ashwell Parish Council Complaints Procedure

1) If a complaint about procedures or administration is notified orally to a Councillor or the Clerk and they cannot satisfy the complainant fully forthwith the complainant shall be asked to put the complaint in writing to the Clerk and be assured that it will be dealt with promptly after receipt.

The complaint shall include the following:

Name of the complainant •

Address of the complainant •

Telephone number and/or email address •

Details of the complaint 2)

2) If a complainant prefers not to put the complaint to the Clerk, he or she shall be advised to put it to the Chairman.

3) a) On receipt of a written complaint the Clerk or Chairman, as the case may be, shall (except where the complaint is about his or her own actions) try to settle the complaint directly with the complainant but shall not do so in respect of a complaint about the behaviour of the Clerk or a Councillor without first notifying the person complained of and giving an opportunity for comment on the manner in which it is intended to attempt to settle the complaint. b) Where the Clerk or Chairman receives a written complaint about his or her own actions he or she shall forthwith refer the complaint to the Council.

4) The Clerk or Chairman shall report to the next meeting of the Council any written complaint disposed of by direct action with the complainant.

5) The Clerk or Chairman shall bring any written complaint which has not been settled to the next meeting of the Council and the Clerk shall notify the complainant of the date on which the complaint will be considered, and the complainant shall be offered an opportunity to explain the complaint orally.

6) The Council shall consider whether the circumstances attending any complaint warrant the matter being discussed in the absence of the press and public but any decision on a complaint shall be announced at the Council meeting in public.

7) As soon as may be after the decision has been made it and the nature of any action to be taken shall be communicated in writing to the complainant.

8) A Council shall defer dealing with any written complaint only if it is of opinion that issues of law or practice arise on which advice is necessary from Hertfordshire Association of Parish and Town Councils. The complaint shall be dealt with at the next meeting after the advice has been received.

Last review: May 2021

Appendix D

HR Committee

Membership: Cllr Graham Lee, Cllr Norton Mahy, Cllr Nikki da Costa

Quorum: Three

Meetings: As required to ensure that Ashwell Parish Council complies with the requirements of employment law and follows best practice in providing good working conditions for staff.

Terms of Reference:

The HR Committee will be responsible for the following:

- 1) Recruitment of Parish Clerk/ Responsible Financial Officer and other staff as required.
- 2) Annual staff appraisal and development.
- 3) Review of staff contracts.
- 4) Review of staff and accommodation requirements.
- 5) Management of rights relating to leave, time off and illness.
- 6) To ensure the health and safety of all staff.
- 7) To keep up to date with developments in employment law.
- 8) The HR Committee will serve as the disciplinary or grievance panel as and when required.
- 9) To agree the members to sit on an appeals panel to hear appeals against a decision on a grievance.

Formal Written Report to Council: Annually in September

Appendix E

Summary of consultations on recent planning and listed building applications received from NHC up to 28 June 2023				
To view all the documents relating to an application put the NHC reference number into the planning search box https://pa2.north-herts.gov.uk/online-applications/				
Address	Application ref. Number	Brief description	Ashwell PC response to NHC consultation (see also minute reference)	North Herts Decision
Land west of Ashwell Road, Bygrave	22/00741/FP	Amendments to application previously considered	For July Council	
Development off Station Road, A	20/03070/FP	variation to condition 13 (bus stops), permission granted on 22.03.2022.	For July Council	
Valentine House, Partridge Hill	23.01201/FPH	Erection of detached garage with ancillary storage with usable roof space (as a variation of planning permission 23/00548/FPH granted 02.05.23)	For July Council	
42 Silver Street	23/00967/FPH	Retention of installation of raised wooden decking around swimming pool.	No objection. June Council 29.1.1	Permission granted 13/06
128 Ashwell Street	23/01159/FP	Erection of a two storey five-bed dwelling with a single storey 1-bed attached annexe to front elevation and detached garage following demolition of existing bungalow	No objection, subject to defined planning conditions: obscured glass on all east and west elevation windows which overlook neighbouring properties, garage not to be converted to double storey or habitable accommodation, construction working hours 9am-5pm Monday-Friday, retain existing side hedge, mixed native hedging to be established on front boundary to height of 8-10 ft, construction traffic to access village via Claybush Road or Slip End Road. Jule 19 Planning Committee.	Pending
40 Kingsland Way	23/00894/FPH	Erection of detached double garage	No objection May Council 19.1.1	Pending
16 Springhead	23/00811/FPH	Erection of detached home office and gym following demolition of existing garden shed.	No objection May Council 19.1.2	Permission granted 19/06
Bluegates Dairy, Dick Smiths Walk	23/00840/PRAP	Installation of roof mounted solar panels	No objection May Council 19.1.3	Pending
18 Springhead	23/00959/FPH	Single storey rear and single storey side extension, as resubmission of application ref 23/00138/FPH	No objection May Council 19.1.4	Permission granted 13/06
Dixies Meadow High Street	23/00666/FP	Erection of 12 dwellings with associated hard and soft landscaping, creation of vehicular access, public open space and children's play area.	Objection. See minutes Planning C'ttee 08 Apr. Also April Council 87.1	Pending
Land to the east of 5, Ashwell Street	23/00718/FP	Erection of one detached 3-bedroom dwelling with associated garage/carport including landscaping and creation of vehicular access off Ashwell Street	No objection. April Council meeting 89.1.6	Pending
Land Between Hunts Ridge And Ashwell House no 5, High Street (known as Hunts Close)	22/03094/FP	Erection of 14 dwellings including creation of access from Ashwell Street, footpath link to Lucas Lane, associated infrastructure, public open space and landscaping	Objection. See January Council meeting 69.1.1 AND Planning Committee meeting (Sat 07 at 10am)	Pending
Land West of Ashwell Road, Bygrave SG7 5EB	22/00741/FP	<u>New consultation on amendments</u> Full Planning Permission: Ground mounted solar photovoltaic (PV) farm including battery energy storage; continued agricultural use, ancillary infrastructure, security fencing, landscaping provision, ecological enhancements and associated works.	Objection. January Council meeting 69.1.1 <i>Previous response to NHC: Objection</i> <i>See June Council 2022, 18.1.4</i>	Pending
5 Swan Street	22/02966/FPH and 22/02967/LBC	Erection of front entrance canopy and side elevation porch to include conversion of existing shed into habitable accommodation following demolition of front brick wall. Additional for Listed Building Consent: Internal alterations consisting of replacing existing attic staircase and re-tank the basement.	December Council 62.1.6 No objection. Lack of off-street parking noted.	Pending

Appendix F

Ashwell Parish Council 5th July 2023

County Councillor's Report

Station Road footway

The section 278 agreement has now been completed and the developer has paid the bond required by the highway authority. I am still awaiting details of when the work is expected to be done.

The Ruddery

Nothing further to report at present.

Hodwell drainage

The potential for lining the pipe from the road to the outfall in the ditch is being investigated. This would overcome the problem of root growth into the pipe and a problem with the levels in the inspection chamber but some further work is required to determine whether this is feasible.

Lucas Lane junction

The project team are working to resolve the outstanding issues. They are also looking into the installation of posts and planters to deal with over-running issues. They have asked whether the parish council would be prepared to undertake the maintenance of the planters if these are installed rather than posts in front of the war memorial.

Partridge Hill

Rights of Way are arranging for some temporary repairs to Partridge Hill whilst they continue to investigate a more permanent solution.

Gardeners Lane

The initial proposal for "Unsuitable for large vehicle" signs at Gardeners Lane were for these to go right on the corner (outside 68 High Street). I have asked for some alternative locations in advance of the junction to be investigated.

Grass Cutting

There were a number of complaints about failure to cut visibility splays at the junctions on the A505. My investigations revealed that these appeared to have been deleted from the cutting programme. I have asked for these to be included in the visibility splay cutting lists and this has now been done.

Cutting of other rural verges is done once or twice a year, with the length of the grass being very dependent on the weather.