

Ashwell Parish Council Meeting to be held on Wednesday 04 October 2023,

in the Parish Room at 7pm

To Councillors: Chris Button, Ian Duffy, Vinny Hall, Martin Hoffman, Graham Lee (Chair), Norton Mahy (Vice Chair), 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 unless a resolution for a particular agenda item decides otherwise. 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.

Appendices to the agenda are available on the website or by request.

<https://www.ashwell.gov.uk/parish-council/meetings/full-council/2023-meeting-minutes/>

Agenda

64 Apologies for absence

To receive and accept apologies for absence.

- 65 Interests** a) To receive declarations of interest from councillors on items on the agenda, b) To receive written requests for dispensations for declarable interests, and c) To grant any requests for dispensation as appropriate. Where any declaration of interest involves the chair, the meeting to agree an alternative individual to take the chair for that item(s).

66 Minutes

- 66.1** Proposal to approve the draft minutes of the Parish Council meeting on 06 September 2023 as an accurate record of proceedings. *Draft minutes in appendix A.*
- 66.2** Proposal to approve the draft minutes sent to parish councillors of the HR Committee meeting on 13 September 2023 as an accurate record of proceedings. *See also item 70.1 below.*

67 Public Issues and Public Participation

Standing Orders to be suspended.

Members of the public and councillors can raise any matters and ask questions.

- 67.1 Pre-application/Proposed communications installation for Cellnex at Slip End Farm, Baldock to Royston Road. To consider the letter from Cellnex prior to their making a formal planning application to NHC, note any further information, and agree any action, eg publicity to residents.
- 67.2 Speeding in Lucas Lane. To note the information from County Cllr Steve Jarvis. To consider the request from a parishioner that the police be asked to monitor the traffic in these areas by hand-held guns (from time to time) or permanent installation of flashing speed checker signs.

68 Planning matters: to include new and existing applications *See summary in appendix C.*

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

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

- 68.1 New consultations received from NHC. To note any correspondence and agree responses.
 - 68.1.1 Ashfield, Springhead. NHC ref. 23/02166/FPH. Full Permission Householder: Alterations to existing fenestration including insertion of first floor front doors with Juliette balcony and roof lights to existing rear roof slope. Erection of boundary wall and gate following removal of existing wall.
 - 68.1.2 Kirby Manor Farm, Northfield Road. NHC ref. 23/02019/PNQ. Prior Approval Class Q Agric to Dwelling: Conversion of existing agricultural barn to provide 4 residential units (two 2-bed, one 3-bed and one 4-bed) with all associated building works. To note the extension of the response deadline to 07 October 2023.
 - 68.1.3 42 Silver Street. NHC ref. 23/02239/FPH. Full Permission Householder : Erection of home office/storage outbuilding following demolition of existing shed.
- 68.2 Tree consultations (Conservation Area and TPO) received from NHC. To agree responses.
 - 68.2.1 Bushel And Strike, 15 Mill Street. NHC ref. 23/02128/TCA Trees (Conservation Area) : T1 Sycamore - Remove all deadwood from canopy & reduce lower crown by 2-3m to suitable growth points. T2 Ash - Remove all deadwood from canopy & reduce lower crown by 2-3m to suitable growth points, crown lift to 3.8m. T3 Sycamore - Remove all deadwood from canopy & reduce lowest limbs by 2m to suitable growth points.
- 68.3 Hunts Close/Land between Ashwell House and Hunts Ridge. NHC ref. 22.03094/FP To note this application pending a meeting date for a decision by the NHC Planning Control Committee. To note the response made by the Parish Council in January 2023.
<https://www.ashwell.gov.uk/planning/summary/>

To receive an update from Cllrs Norton Mahy and Chris Button and agree any actions.

- 68.4 Dixies Meadow. NHC ref.23/00666/FP. To note the 'Refusal' decision by the NHC Planning Control Committee on 14 September 2023.

See the NHC Decision Notice and other details on the link below

https://www.ashwell.gov.uk/downloads/planning/dixies_meadow/dixies_meadow_23.00666.fp_nhc_decision_letter_sept_2023_refusal.pdf

A YouTube of the meeting is available on the NHC website.

<https://democracy.north-herts.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CommitteeId=151>

68.5 Bygrave solar farm. To note the deferral by the NHC Planning Control Committee on 14 September 2023. *Details of the meeting and the YouTube available on the NHC website*

<https://democracy.north-herts.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CommitteeId=151>

69 **Reports from Working Groups.** To receive updates from relevant leaders/members and agree any actions that require Parish Council input/approval.

69.1 Trees and Hedges (Cllr David Sims). To receive an update on planting at the Recreation ground. *See also 74.1.1.1 re funding.* To note the response to the Defra consultation on potential amendments to the Hedgerow Regulations.

<https://consult.defra.gov.uk/legal-standards/consultation-on-protecting-hedgerows/>

69.2 Affordable Housing.

69.2.1 To receive an update from Cllr Chris Button. *See minute 58.2 September Council and 34.3 05 July 2023 Council.*

69.2.2 Proposal that a request be made to NHC, as the relevant authority, that a Housing Needs Survey be undertaken for Ashwell. *See also 74.1.1.2 below re funding of costs.*

<https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/housing-need-north-herts>

69.2.3 To note the NHC public consultation 'Have your say on our Common Housing Allocation Scheme' and to agree any action.

<https://northhertscouncil.civilspace.io/en/projects/common-housing-allocation-scheme/engagements/have-your-say-on-our-common-housing-allocation-scheme/sections/1>

69.3 Section 106. To receive an update from Cllrs Norton Mahy and Chris Button and agree any actions.

69.4 Green Energy & EV Charging Infrastructure. To receive an update from Cllrs Ian Duffy and Graham Lee and agree any actions.

69.5 Yearbook. To receive an update from Cllr Norton Mahy and agree any actions.

70 **Reports from Committees**

70.1 HR Committee. To note the meeting held on 13 September 2023. *See item 66.2 above.* To receive any further reports from the HR Committee and agree any further actions. To note the advert for the Clerk and Deputy Clerk positions and agree any further actions.

<https://www.ashwell.gov.uk/news2/vacancies-for-clerk/>

71 **Reports from parish councillors on premises and other responsibilities**

71.1 The Springs. To receive an update from Cllr Martin Hoffman on (i) agreed tree works , (ii) minor repairs pending to fencing and steps.

71.2 St Mary's Churchyard Grounds Maintenance. To note any update from St Mary's re the requested works to the two Holm Oaks adjacent to the property in Swan Street.

71.3 War Memorial. To note any update on the professional valuation sought.

- 71.4 Cemetery. To note any update on the professional valuation sought for the Chapel.
- 71.5 Recreation Ground including the playground, pavilion and public toilets. To receive an update from Cllr Graham Lee and agree any actions needed.
- 71.6 Rights of Way. To note the information from the HCC officer re their proposals for a change of status to the Ruddy. *See also item 72.11 below/County Councillor's report.*
- 71.7 Street furniture.
 - 71.7.1 Litter bin survey (Cllr Norton Mahy). To note the agreement with NHC to review the location and number of litter bins on the streets that they are responsible for emptying. To receive a report from Cllr Mahy and agree any further action. *See appendix D plan of existing locations.*
 - 71.7.2 Seats. To note the ongoing communications with the WI re their desire to sponsor the replacement of the existing seat in Angells Meadow that is in poor condition and agree any action.
- 71.8 To receive any other premises/responsibilities reports.

72 Reports to the Council

- 72.1 To receive reports from representatives from outside bodies, local authorities and agencies.
 - 72.1.1 To receive a report from County Councillor Steve Jarvis.
 - 72.1.2 To receive a report from District Councillor Tom Tyson.

73 Village Matters

- 73.1 North of Baldock extension and communications with Urban & Civic. To receive an update from the Chair and agree any further action.
- 73.2 Collapsed wall in Gardiners Lane. To note the request from the householder and agree any action.

74 Finance and Governance

- 74.1 Budget tracking and the monthly summary of accounts. To note the information up to 30 September 2023 circulated to parish councillors after the end of the month. Proposal that the summary of receipts and payments be issued with the draft minutes and the two nominated parish councillors sign off the accounts in accordance with internal control procedures.
 - 74.1.1 Proposals to approve payment/accept quotes for the following items not specifically detailed, or above the sum allocated, in the set budget.
 - 74.1.1.1 Grounds maintenance works at the Recreation Ground. Proposal to agree the quote in hand for (i) barrier to protect the new hedging alongside Station Road, (ii) installation of reinforced surfacing material at the new pedestrian entrance. *See item 56.2.2 September 2023 council meeting.*
 - 74.1.1.2 Housing Needs Survey. *See also 69.2.1 above.* Proposal to agree the contribution as requested by CDA Herts towards the proposed costs of conducting a Housing Needs Survey for Ashwell.
 - 74.1.1.3 Grant to St Mary's Church as a contribution towards hosting the Post Office in the Parish Rooms. Proposal to agree their request.

- 74.1.2 Proposal to seek quotations for purchasing (on a monthly fee basis) an accountancy software package suitable for providing digital invoice approval, budget monitoring and reporting of Parish Council finances.
- 74.1.3 Proposal to approve transfer of funds greater than £10,000 (Financial Regulation 5.5c) from the current account to the savings account now that the second half of the precept (£48,175.00) has been received.
- 74.2 Audit 2022-23. To note the completion within the deadline of 30 September, the response from the External Auditor and the publication of the required documents including the Notice of Conclusion.
- 74.3 Budget setting for 2024-25. To note the timetable, ie discussion and preparation of a first draft by the Finance Committee (all councillors are members) in October, final proposal to November or December council meeting, agreed pre-cept figure to NHC in January. To agree a date for a meeting of the Finance Committee to commence this.
- 74.4 Co-option(s). To receive any applications and agree how these to be handled. *See minute 56.2.3 September Council. See link below to document 'Co-options: Qualifications & Appointments process'.*
<https://www.ashwell.gov.uk/parish-council/roles-and-responsibilities/>
- 74.5 Council documents: Ongoing review of Policies and Procedures following the election of the new Parish Council in May 2023.
 - 74.5.1 Public Participation in Council Meetings. *See minute 56.1 September Council.* Proposal to adopt a protocol based on the HAPTC model. *See appendix E.*
 - 74.5.2 Complaints Policy. *See minute 63.4.6 September Council.* Proposal to replace the current policy based on the NALC model and adopt one based on the SLCC model. *See appendix F1 SLCC model and appendix F2 SLCC model with amendments.*
 - 74.5.3 Code of Conduct. *See minute 63.4.7 September Council.* Proposal to adopt a new Code as requested by NHC that is consistent with the document provided by them and based on the Local Government Association model. *See appendix G.*

Issued by Jane Porter, Acting Clerk to Ashwell Parish Council, 28 September 2023