

Ashwell Parish Council Meeting to be held on Wednesday 06 September 2023,

at 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](http://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

### 53 Apologies for absence

To receive and accept apologies for absence.

### 54 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).

**54.1** To note the document 'Advice to Town and Parish Councils on handling requests for dispensations at a meeting' from HAPTC and based on NALC guidance. *See appendix A.1*  
Proposal that a form based on the model included in this be used when necessary. *See appendix A.2.*

### 55 Minutes

**55.1** To confirm the minutes of Ashwell Parish Council meeting on 05 July 2023 as an accurate record of proceedings. *Draft minutes in appendix B.*

**55.2** To confirm the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting on 19 June 2023 as an accurate record of proceedings. *Draft minutes in appendix C.*

**55.3** To confirm the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting on 26 July 2023 as an accurate record of proceedings. *Draft minutes in appendix D*

55.4 To confirm the minutes of the Extraordinary meeting held on 26 July 2023 as an accurate record of proceedings. *Draft minutes in appendix E.*

## 56 Public Issues and Public Participation

56.1 To note the document from HAPTC 'Protocols for Public Participation in Council Meetings' and to decide whether this should remain as 'noted for guidance' or a draft proposed and formally adopted. *See appendix F.*

*Standing Orders to be suspended.*

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

## 57 Planning matters: to include new and existing applications *See summary in appendix G.*

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

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

57.1 To agree responses to new consultations received from North Herts Council.

57.1.1 Blackberry Barn, Loves Lane. NHC ref. 23/01788/FPH. Full Permission Householder : Single storey side/rear extension to connect cottage and annexe buildings and insertion of rooflights to annexe roof slope.

57.2 Tree consultations (Conservation Area and TPO) received from NHC. To agree responses.

57.2.1 The Springs. NHC ref. 23.01896.TCA. Acer pseudoplatanus, x3 Fraxinus excelsior, Sambucus nigra - Cut back overhang to footpath.

57.2.2 35 Silver Street. 23/01918/TCA. T1 Conifer - Height reduction 2.5m, side reduction 1m, crown lift 3m.

57.3 Land between Ashwell House and Hunts Ridge. NHC ref. 22.03094/FP To receive an update from Cllrs Norton Mahy and Chris Button on progress with the s106 claim (minute 36.4 05 July 2023 Council meeting) and agree any actions. *See discussion paper in appendix L.*

57.4 Dixies Meadow NHC ref.23/00666/FP. To receive an update on the representation at the NHC Planning Control meeting understood to be scheduled for 14 September 2023 (minute 36.3 05 July 2023 Council meeting) and agree any actions.

57.5 Bygrave solar farm. To note that the detailed comments in support of the objection to the amended application had been sent to the NHC Planning Officer.

57.6 To note the communication from NALC on the consultation by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) relating to neighbourhood plans and to agree any response. *See appendix M.*

## 58 Reports from Working Groups

58.1 Trees and Hedges group. To receive an update from Cllr David Sims on the hedge at the Recreation Ground (minute 37.2 05 July 2023 Council meeting).

58.2 Affordable Housing group. To receive an update from Cllr Chris Button (minute 34.3 05 July 2023 Council meeting) and agree any actions.

## 59 Reports from Committees

- 59.1 Proposed Section 106 committee. To review previous proposals for the setting up of this committee (minute 35.2.2 05 July 2023 Council meeting) and agree any actions.
- 59.2 HR Committee. To note the Terms of Reference (item 3, Extraordinary Meeting 26 July 2023) and agree any amendments. *See appendix N.* To receive and agree a proposal for the position of Chair. To note the agenda for the scheduled meeting including the formal complaint made against the Clerk and how this to be handled (*agenda to be issued w/c 04 September 2023*). To note the draft advert and actions taken re the vacancies for the Clerk and Deputy Clerk positions.

## 60 Reports from parish councillors on premises and other responsibilities

- 60.1 The Springs. To receive an update from Cllr Martin Hoffman on (i) the Ashwell Springs Festival held on Sunday 23 July (*carried over from August meeting*), (ii) proposed tree works -*see item 63.1.1.2/Finance re quotes*, (iii) minor repairs pending to fencing and steps, (iv) any actions following recent site assessment review.
- 60.2 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.
- 60.3 War Memorial. To note an update on the professional valuation had been being sought. *See item 63.1.1.4/Finance>Insurance.*
- 60.4 Cemetery. To note the Clerk's report on matters as the Burial Authority. To note an update on the professional valuation for the Chapel had been sought. *See item 63.1.1.4/Finance>Insurance.*
- 60.5 Recreation Ground including the playground, pavilion and public toilets. To receive an update from Cllr Graham Lee and agree any actions needed.
- 60.6 Rights of Way. *See also item 63.1.1.3/Finance>footpath leaflet reprint.*
  - 60.6.1 To receive an update from the Chair re drainage issues at Partridge Hill (BOAT 015) following exchanges with the HCC rights of way officer and a meeting with a local farmer.
  - 60.6.2 Bridleway Order affecting Caldecote & Newnham (09) and Ashwell (33). To note the final Notice had been displayed and returned as required.
- 60.7 Street furniture. To note the agreement with NHC to review the location and number of litter bins on the streets that they are responsible for emptying and to agree further action.
- 60.8 Trade waste bins. To note the correspondence with NHC re the Parish Council's bins located at the Recreation Ground, The Springs, the Cemetery and the Back Steet office.
- 60.9 To receive any other premises/responsibilities reports.

## 61 Reports to the Council

- 61.1 To receive reports from representatives from outside bodies, local authorities and agencies.
  - 61.1.1 To receive a report from County Councillor Steve Jarvis. To include (i) parishioners' request for yellow lines in Hodwell now that the new kerbing has reduced the road width, (ii) options for 'unsuitable for heavy goods vehicles' sign for Gardiners Lane,

(iii) local residents' concerns re a tree in Station Road on the boundary with The Maltings and shading of the street light and blockage of drains.

61.1.2 To receive a report from District Councillor Tom Tyson.

## 62 Village Matters

62.1 North of Baldock extension and communications with Urban & Civic. To receive an update from the Chair and agree any further action.

62.2 Survey received in relation to Hertfordshire County Council's draft Rural Estate Strategic Plan (minute 41.3 05 July 2023 Council meeting). To note the response made and agree any further action.

62.3 To note the correspondence from a parishioner re Climate Change and agree any actions.

## 63 Finance and Governance

63.1 Budget tracking and the monthly summary of accounts. To note the information up to 31 August 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.

63.1.1 Proposals to approve payment/accept quotes for the following items not specifically detailed, or above the sum allocated, in the set budget.

63.1.1.1 Office electricity. £450 as per the request received from Ashwell Housing Association for electricity use associated with the Parish Council office between November 2022 and May 2023. (minute 42.2 05 July 2023 Council meeting). Proposal to accept (budget category: Administration/Office running costs)

63.1.1.2 Springs tree works. To note the four quotes in hand and to receive a recommendation from Cllr Martin Hoffman. Proposal to accept (budget category: Springs/Tree surveys and works).

63.1.1.3 Footpath leaflet reprint. To note the quote in hand. Proposal to accept (budget category: Section 137 Community Support).

63.1.1.4 Annual Insurance review from by 1st October 2023 for 'Ashwell Parish Council and the Ashwell Village Trust'. To note the communications with the broker and return of their questionnaire; this had including requests for amendments to certain items on the schedule. To note the proposal and recommended quote from the broker including the option for a three-year agreement. Proposal to agree a response. (budget category: Administration/Insurance).

63.2 Audit 2022-23. To note the period for the Exercise of Public Rights (03 July to 11 August) had been publicised as required.

63.3 To note the confirmation from NHC Electoral Services that as no by-election had been claimed the Parish Council could proceed to co-opt if it so wished. To agree any action.

63.4 Council documents: Ongoing review of Policies and Procedures following the election of the new Parish Council in May 2023.

63.4.1 To note the following already agreed for adoption/re-adoption based on models and guidance notes from HAPTC (Hertfordshire Association of Town & Parish Councils), NALC (National Association of Local Councils), SLCC (Society of Local Council Clerks):-

Financial Regulations (NALC model); Standing Orders (NALC model); Freedom of Information (FOI) & Data Protection/ Information & Data Protection Policy, FOI Guide to information available, Retention & Disposal Policy, Data Breach Policy (all SLCC models); Health & Safety Policy (NALC model); Equality & Diversity Policy (NALC model); Volunteer Policy (HAPTC model).

63.4.2 Proposal to include a clause in all relevant policies and procedures the option to refer to external parties for advice and/or determination where this is appropriate. The default being HAPTC and/or the body that created the model document; in the case of the Code of Conduct this to be the Monitoring Officer at NHC. *See 63.4.7 below.*

63.4.3 Proposal to include a scheduled review date in all relevant policies and procedures and agree what this should be (either annual, biennial or following the election of a new parish council, ie usually every four years). Also to include the wording 'or when agreed to be necessary, or prompted by external bodies'.

63.4.4 Proposal to adopt a Disciplinary Policy based on the NALC template. *See appendix H.*

63.4.5 Proposal to adopt a Grievance Policy based on the NALC template. *See appendix I.*

63.4.6 Complaints Policy. To note the ongoing discussions (June Council 24 and July Council 35.1) to replace the current policy based on the NALC model with one based on a variation of the SLCC model, the proposed variations to the model (*see SLCC model document appendix J.1 and the revised version 'Working draft: 27 June 2023' see appendix J.2*), the suggested amends received from the parishioner dated 02 July 2023 (*see appendix J.3*) and the further suggested amendments and draft of a suggested policy from the parishioner received 31 July 2023. *See appendices J.4 and J.5.*

Proposal to agree a policy and formally adopt it.

63.4.7 Proposal to adopt a new Code of Conduct as requested by NHC that is consistent with the document provided by them and based on the Local Government Association model.

To note the document 'Guidance on Local Government Association Councillor Code of Conduct for Local Councils/Written by the LGA - Adapted for local town and parish councils as part of the Civility and Respect project in October 2022'. *See appendices K1 and K2.*

***Issued by Jane Porter, Acting Clerk to Ashwell Parish Council, 31 August 2023***