

Minutes of a meeting of the Ashwell Parish Council held on Wednesday 7th November 2012 in the Parish Room at 8.00pm

Present: Councillors Martin Hoffman (Chairman), Mike Berry, Jane Buxton, Bridget Macey, Daniel Mathews, Christine Schwick, Mark White.

The Clerk was also in attendance.

Members of the public: Six parishioners.

74. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Councillors Peter Long (away), David Cook (away), John Connolly (work commitment).

75. MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING 3rd October 2012

It was *resolved* that these be approved and signed.

76. MATTERS OF REPORT

76.1 (October Council 65.1) Annual North Herts Parish, Town and Community Conference. Cllr Martin Hoffman reported that he and Cllr Peter Long had attended. They had requested information re (i) delegation of powers to parish councils following the Localism Act and (ii) differential application of s106 claims to reflect different demands. He was of the view that neither question had been answered fully.

76.2 (October Council 65.2) Localism Act/Code of Conduct/ Standing Orders/Declarations of Interest. Re the update of the Standing Orders, Cllr Mathews reported that he had received comments from councillors. These would be incorporated into a draft and he would distribute this in time for consideration at the December Council meeting. **DMM**

76.3 (October Council 65.3) Village sign proposal. Cllr Christine Schwick reported that the new design had been drafted and wording covering the Jubilee celebrations included. She hoped that the new sign could be ready for an unveiling ceremony during 'Ashwell at Christmas'. **CVS**

76.4 (October Council 66.6) HCC publications on road casualty, traffic and transport data. It was noted that Cllr Mark White would report to the December Council meeting. **MNW**

76.5 (October Council 73.5) Baldock Half-Marathon, Sunday 18th November. It was noted that the organisers, NHDC, had delivered flyers to some households requesting clearance of parked vehicles from the High Street.

76.6 (October Council 73.6) Report of parking problem in Dixies Close. Cllr Mark White agreed to see if this had been resolved. **MNW**

77. OTHER CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

77.1 Letter from Herts County Council re LTP3 Inter-Urban Route Study consultation. Deadline Friday 30th November 2012. Details on www.hertscouncil-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal

77.2 Email from CPRE Herts with invitation to planning training day 'Change for the better?' Tuesday 20th November, Knebworth Village Hall.

77.3 Email from Judith Watson, Chairman HAPTC with report on HCC scrutiny meeting 'Relationship and Communications with town and parish councils topic group'. Email from SLCC rep giving link to background information, www.hertsdirect.org/your-council/civic_calendar/hcctownparishtg/17608660/

77.4 Email from Derek Wootton, Emergency Planning Officer at NHDC re use of village halls as emergency reception centres.

77.5 Letters and notices (all displayed on notice board) from NHDC re forthcoming election of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire.

77.6 Email from Chair of Hertfordshire Housing Associations' Chief Executives Group with invitation to conference on 'Planning and Housing' Friday 9th November 2012, 8.30am-1.00pm, Hatfield.

77.7 Emails from Parishioners Anne and Stewart Reddaway expressing concerns at the increased use of The Ruddy (section of BOAT from Kingsland Way to Station Road) by vehicular traffic. Concerns include speed of traffic and pedestrian use, exit onto Kingsland Way, directions given by sat-navs. It was noted that as this was a BOAT (byway open to all traffic), restrictions on traffic were limited. It was agreed that that the matter be considered by the Streets & Environment Committee. Cllr Daniel Mathews provided details for several websites where sat-nav problems could be reported. It was agreed that these details be publicised (see Appendix 2). **S&E/Clerk**

77.8 Email from Parishioner Mark Eaton with copy of letter to Oliver Heald, MP, re proposals for expansion of Luton Airport. HAPTC bulletin (October 11th) with report on London Luton Airport Revised Master Plan Pre-Application Consultation.

77.9 Letter from Parishioner Mark Eaton re Ash dieback disease (see 81 below).

77.10 Email from parishioner Karen Beech with request to amend notes of allotment tenants meeting to include her apologies. It was agreed that this be considered by the Recreation & Facilities Committee.

R&F

78. REPORT FROM PLANNING COMMITTEE

(Next meeting scheduled for Sunday 11th November 9.00am)

78.1 Notifications from NHDC as Planning Authority

78.1.1 Application no.12/01829/1LB: Alterations to first floor landing window.

57 High Street for Ms C Chambers. Conditional Listed Building Consent.

78.1.2 Application no.12/01852/1LB, 2 Forresters Cottages, 16 High Street.

Insertion of replacement oak windows with slimline double glazing to windows F3; F4; R3 and R4 on ground floor; windows F1; F2; R1 and R2 on first floor following removal of existing single glazed windows. Listed Building Consent.

78.1.3 Application no.12/02008/1TCA, 2 Forresters Cottages, 16 High Street.

Removal of one Yew tree, two Hawthorn trees and one Cotoneaster tree. No objections.

78.1.4. Application no. 12/02005/1HH. Eastholme, Station Road. For Mrs Churchyard

Full Permission Householder: Rear conservatory. Standard Conditional Permission.

78.1.5 Application no.12/02063/1TCA. 49 Silver Street. Reduce 1 Beech Tree (1) by 30-40% Reduce 1 Snake Bark Maple Tree (2) by a maximum of 30%. Reduce 1 Apple Tree (3) by a maximum of 30%. Reduce 1 Holly Tree (4) by approximately 50% and shape to balance. Reduce 1 Elder/Ivy Tree (5) by approximately 60% and reduce 1 Maple Tree (6) by approximately 25%. No objections.

78.2 Re 35 High Street and Whitby Farm (Application no. 11/03117/1 and Application no. 11/03145/1CAC). The Chairman reported that a letter had been sent to some neighbours by the developer, Logan Homes, informing that, from 18th October, the site had been sold; the rear portion of the plot to Logan Homes and the front portion, 35 High Street, to Mr and Mrs Gawthrup. The letter requested contact details to facilitate invitations to a meeting to discuss arrangements for site clearance and demolition planned for November/early December. A proposal had been made that the Parish Council consider co-ordinating this; it was agreed that Cllr Peter Long would progress this.

WPL

The Chairman reported that several complaints had been received from neighbours re mud on the road. The NHDC Planning Officer had informed that (i) she had not yet received a build plan from the developer and (ii) any matters relating to site clearance such as alleged nuisance from noise/dirt, removal of asbestos etc would be dealt with by the Environmental Health Officer. Cllr Christine Schwick wished it to be noted that, as proprietor of Rhubarb & Mustard, she had an interest in this. Her view was that all problems should be taken up immediately with the developer. It was agreed to recommend that establishing a good relationship with the developer would be of merit to all parties.

79. REPORT FROM STREETS & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

(Committee Chairman Cllr Mike Berry)

(Next meeting scheduled for Wednesday 14th November 2012)

79.1 (October Council 68.1) HCC conversion to part-night footway lighting. Cllr Mike Berry reported that, following concerns, a letter had been sent to the County Councillor responsible. A response had been received informing that the project had now been completed and that any snagging issues should be reported using the routine maintenance system. Cllr Berry reported that numerous concerns still existed and that a full survey covering colour of light, type of bulb and painting of columns had been requested from Herts Highways.

79.2 (October Council 68.2) NHDC new, free recycling service for commercial premises. Cllr Mike Berry reported that details had been forwarded to members of the retailers association; the scheme would also be publicized at the forthcoming business group meeting. Cllr Christine Schwick wished it to be noted that practical arrangements would take a while to co-ordinate.

79.3 Emails from parishioners and HCC Officer re works to Ashwell Street BOAT no.15. It was noted that works had been undertaken following successful lobbying by local residents.

79.4 Winter salting routes. It was noted that the junction of Bear Lane/Silver Street/Back Street was not included. It was noted that over the past two years requests had been made for a minor extension of existing routes to cover this key junction. County Council members and officers had been lobbied but the requests had been refused. A request for an additional salt bin to be sited in Dixies Close and provide for the very sloping footpaths (right of way from Back Street, crossing Dixies Close and up to Ashwell Street) had also been refused.

79.5 Speeding. Cllr Martin Hoffman wished it to be noted that national regulations with regard to 20mph speed limits had changed; he had information from various sources in hand. It was agreed that the Committee reconsider the situation. **S&E**

80. REPORT FROM RECREATION & FACILITIES COMMITTEE

(Committee Chairman Cllr Daniel Mathews)

(Draft minutes of meeting 15th October; next meeting scheduled for Tuesday 15th January 2013)

80.1 Church clock chimes/further correspondence from parishioners both in favour and against. See 84 below.

80.2 Pavilion toilets. Cllr Daniel Mathews reported that automatic door closures had been installed and the automatic door locks adjusted to winter opening hours.

80.3 War Memorial. It was noted that Cllr Christine Schwick had undertaken some new ornamental planting; the Chairman commended her for this. It was noted that any final tidying prior to Remembrance Sunday was to be undertaken by British Legion members. Cllr Jane Buxton reported on-going concerns re the poor state of the boundary hedge. Works to rectify this, and in particular removal of the ivy, would involve a drastic cut back; she was concerned that this would be unsightly for a period. It was agreed that quotes be obtained for works. **Clerk**

81. REPORT FROM CHARACTER AREAS COMMITTEE

(Committee Chairman Cllr Martin Hoffman)

(Draft minutes of meeting 3rd October 2012)

81.1 Policy re dogs at the Springs. It was noted that further correspondence had been received from the parishioner who had objected. A response had been sent including detailed information from minutes on past discussion and actions.

81.2 Cubs working group. Cllr Martin Hoffman reported a very successful event. It was agreed that a formal letter be sent commending the cubs and their supervisors. The Chairman wished it to be noted that the cubs had worked enthusiastically and together as a team; he felt the latter reflected the high standard of supervision. **Clerk**

81.3 Ash dieback disease. Cllr Martin Hoffman reported numerous concerns from parishioners (see also 77.9 and 84. 1). It was noted that a variety of differing advice had been published in the media and on various authorities' websites. He reported that he had spoken to the Forestry Commission and local experts. The Parish Council had on file a list of all trees on its land and areas that it managed. No records were held of those on other land. There were 27 Ash trees at the Springs, two in the Cemetery and two on the west boundary of the Recreation Ground; there were also others in the Churchyard and at Small Gains. All these would continue to be monitored. It was noted that, at present, there was no clear advice as to the course of action to be taken where Ash trees were assumed to be healthy. As this was a fungal disease spread by airborne spores there was no merit in sanitary measures such as disinfectant footbaths as had been used to stem epidemics such as foot and mouth. It was agreed that the situation be monitored on a day-to-day basis and if clear advice was issued this would be considered and appropriate action taken if needed. With regard to any potential cost implications, it was noted that funds were held in Allocated Reserves and, should it be necessary, money could also be vired from elsewhere.

82. REPORT FROM FINANCE COMMITTEE

(Draft minutes of meeting 22nd October 2012)

82.1 Procedures for setting the precept and budget for 2013-14 were noted. Proposals would be made to the December Council meeting.

82.2 Insurance. Cllr Martin Hoffman reported that the review of parish councils' insurance being co-ordinated by NHDC had been covered at the recent conference he had attended (see 76.1 above); Ashwell had compared well in this.

82.3 Approval of November Accounts and Bills for Payment (see Appendix 3). Cllr Jane Buxton voiced her concerns re outstanding invoices for Yearbook adverts. It was noted that the matter had been covered at the recent Finance Committee meeting.

It was *resolved* that these be approved and paid. **Clerk**

83. REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS

83.1 Website Group It was noted that the agreed supplier would be formally appointed and Cllr Daniel Mathews would progress the project.

83.2 Yearbook Group Next meeting scheduled for Tuesday 20th November.

83.3 Design Statement Review Group Nothing to report.

83.4 Community Housing Group It was reported that the Chairman and the Clerk had met with representatives of Howard Cottage Housing Association. It was understood that contact had been made with potential developers of the site at 61 Station Road. Other potential sites for social housing were still being pursued.

84. PARISH AFFAIRS, REPORTS FROM OTHER BODIES AND OPEN FORUM

It was **resolved** that Standing Orders be suspended for this item; taken at 8.30pm.

84.1 Ash dieback disease (see also 81.3 above) Parishioner Sam Wallace of Farrows Farm reported his concerns and his intention to keep abreast of developments. Over the last ten years he had planted some seven to eight hundred Ash trees on his land. He was of the hope that a percentage of trees, particularly older specimens, would show resistance; this should be considered before any attempt to contain the disease by large scale removal of healthy trees.

84.2 (October Council 69.3) Church clock chimes. Five parishioners attended re this item. The Chairman reported that a total of 15 items of correspondence had now been received from parishioners, nine in favour of the quarter chimes being retained throughout the day and night, and six against. All parishioners present requested silencing of the chimes at night. Points made included (i) disturbed sleep caused by night-time noise was recognised as a serious health issue, (ii) parishioners living closer to the church, who were more severely affected, were the minority whilst those who lived further away, and were less affected, were the majority; a conclusion based on numbers was thus not valid, (iii) those who objected had no wish to be confrontational as had happened in other parishes where legal proceedings had been initiated, (iv) although the chimes had been a feature of the village for many years this did not mean that this should not change; this had happened elsewhere, (v) those who did not have a problem, as well as the Parish Council, should be asked to consider taking a more compassionate attitude towards those that did.

Cllr Christine Schwick (Parish Councillor with responsibility for the church clock) wished it to be noted that this matter had become a significant issue in the village with parishioners expressing strong views on both sides. The Parish Council was keen to avoid confrontation.

It was noted that the technology existed to permit automatic silencing of the chimes at night. It was agreed to obtain costs for this although noted that any decision was still pending.

Clerk

Meeting closed at 8.50pm

Appendix 1 – General material received

Hard copy – ‘Items on the table’

1. North Herts District Council ‘Members Information’ w/e 5, 12, 19, 26 October.
2. *Parish Matters* – autumn issue magazine from insurers Came & Co (on website www.parishinsurance.co.uk)
3. *Wildlife Matters* - autumn issue magazine from Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust

By Email

4. HAPTC Briefings and Bulletins.
5. *Rural News* from PC Marina.

Appendix 2 – Information for reporting of sat-nav problems

There are 3 mapping companies that supply base maps to the Sat Nav manufacturers, ‘Ordnance Survey’ (OS), ‘TeleAtlas’ (TA) and ‘NavTeq’ (NT).

OS are British, TA are European and NT are American. All three of these companies now have websites which have links allowing individuals to update and modify errors currently being caused by Sat Nav usage. The links are as follows:

NavTeq

<http://mapreporter.navteq.com/dur-web-external/secured/submitDur.do?userType=CONSUMER&language=en>

TeleAtlas

<http://navigation.teleatlas.com/en/improvement/>

Ordnance Survey

<http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite/products/osmastermap/layers/itn/errors.html>

