

Minutes of a meeting of the Ashwell Parish Council held on Wednesday 6th June 2012 in the Parish Room at 8.00pm

Present: Councillors Peter Long (Chairman), Mike Berry, Jane Buxton, John Connolly, Bridget Macey, Daniel Mathews, Christine Schwick.

The Clerk was also in attendance. Members of the public: One parishioner. For item 29.1, one representative.

19. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Cllrs David Cook (family commitment), Martin Hoffman (away), Mark White (away).

20. MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING 2nd May 2012

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

21. MATTERS OF REPORT

From previous meetings:

21.1 (May Council 3.1) Localism Act/new Code of Conduct. It was reported that a letter had been received from the Acting Monitoring Officer at NHDC. This had included some further information but full details were still awaited from higher authorities. It was noted that all members had now reviewed, and updated as necessary, their declarations for the register of interests; these would now be placed on the website. **Clerk**

21.2 (May Council 3.2) Localism Act/eligibility criteria for council to have 'power of competence'.

It was reported that the Clerk had attended a HAPTC training course and had submitted the required new module for the CiLCA examination.

21.3 (May Council 6.0) Declaration of vacancy/closure of notice period. It was reported that NHDC had been notified and the advice of the Electoral Services Manager followed. The deadline for a claim of poll had now passed; none had been received. The Parish Council was now required to consider whether or not it wished to consider a co-option. It was noted that a request had previously been submitted to NHDC to reduce the number of elected members from twelve to ten. Consideration was given as to whether this request should be withdrawn but it was agreed that, at present, it should stand. It was agreed that no co-option would be made but that this could be reconsidered if necessary. It was noted that co-options had been made to committees.

21.4 (May Council 9.1) Sewerage/reiteration of requests to Anglian Water. It was reported that two responses had been received, (i) from Keith Simpson, Planning & Equivalence Team, informing that they would 'continue to monitor the performance of the existing foul water system and should the need arise; the appropriate action will be taken to ensure that residents are not affected by increased flows as is our legal obligation under Section 94 of the Water Industry Act 1991', (ii) from Neil Cartwright, Asset Planner – Ruthamford Wastewater, informing that 'a wider CCTV survey... has identified defects which will require corrective work'. Cllr Berry reported that engineers had removed what they had described as accretions of fat and soot from drains under the Mill Street/Swan Street junction area.

It was agreed that the matters relating to sewerage be delegated to the Streets & Environment Committee.

S&E

21.5 (May Council 9.4) Wolverley House signage. Cllr Schwick reported that she had updated the parishioner who had made the original complaint on the response received from North Herts Homes. She understood that others who had also registered objections would be consulted and further action considered.

21.6 (May Council 9.5) Parking issues. Cllr Berry reported that a further email had been received from Liberal Democrat representative Ian Simpson in response to the Parish Council's information on requests to Herts Highways for white lines. Mr Simpson had made proposals for some additional sites and minor amendments, also for a widespread consultation exercise to be undertaken. Cllr Berry reported that the proposed amendments had been considered and some, but not all, incorporated. It was agreed that a widespread consultation exercise would not be undertaken as this would be likely to prolong the timescale and increase the risk of the requests not being acted upon.

21.7 (May Council 11.2.1) Residents' concerns re the breach of planning conditions at the Cycle Club facility off Small Gains Lane. Cllr Mathews reported that the painting of the storage container in the

correct colour had now been completed as had the parking area provision. He had received positive comments from local parishioners.

22. OTHER CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

22.1 Invitation to HAPTC AGM Tuesday 26th June at Bricket Wood.

22.2 Letter from NHDC re Rural Grant Funding Programme 2012/3; deadline for applications 28th September 2012. It was agreed that a bid to the Environment Enhancement Fund be prepared. **Clerk**

22.3 Email from NHDC with information on new post of Rural Business Advisor for North and East Herts.

22.4 Letter from NHDC re Landscape Character Assessment informing of opportunity for update if required; consultation deadline Monday 20th August 2012. It was noted that a full response had been made in 2011 and thus no further response was required.

22.5 Email re meeting of North Herts Association of Parish, Town and Community Council meeting on Tuesday 19th June at Mrs Howard Hall, Letchworth starting at 7.30pm. It was agreed that two representatives would attend; Cllrs Long, White and Mathews were proposed and agreed to check their availability. **WPL/MNW/DMM**

22.6 Email from David Ramsbotham, resident of Norfolk, with request for support for petition against wind turbines; <http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/22958>.

23. REPORT FROM PLANNING COMMITTEE (next meeting scheduled for Wednesday 20th June)

23.1 Decisions by NHDC as Planning Authority

23.1.1 Application no. 12/00490/1HH 3 Ashwell Street. For Mr and Mrs Middleton

Full Permission Householder: First floor rear extension.

Conditional permission.

23.1.2 Application no. 12/00682/1HH 36 Dixies Close. For Mrs R Dear

Full Permission Householder: Two storey and single storey rear extensions and conservatory following demolition of existing conservatory. Two new windows in first floor side elevation of existing house.

Standard conditional permission.

23.1.3 Application no. 12/00490/1HH 2 Bear Lane. For Mr and Mrs Gall-Grey

Full Permission Householder: Single storey front and rear extensions. Part two storey and part single storey side extension. Insertion of two rear dormer windows and one rear roof light to facilitate conversion of loft space into habitable accommodation.

Standard conditional permission.

23.1.4 Application no. 12/00656/1HH 75 Back Street. For Mr N Donovan

Full Permission Householder: Two and single storey rear extension following part demolition of existing shed.

Standard conditional permission.

23.1.5 Application no. 12/00955/1TCA 89 Back Street. For Mrs J Porter

Crown reduce two Prunus 'Pissardii' by 15% and remove dead branches and suckers.

No objections.

23.1.6 Application no. 12/00983/1TCA 24 West End. For Mrs S Herbert

Removal of Sycamore tree and reduce Yew tree overall by 25%.

No objections

23.1.8 Application no. 12/00460/1HH 25 Back Street. For Mr Konrad Beeson.

Full Permission Householder: Two storey rear extension.

Conditional permission.

Correspondence (all forwarded to planning officer): (i) emails from two neighbours with on-going concerns re details of plans and communications between district and parish council, (ii) local residents concerns re breach of conditions re blocking of highway and footway.

23.1.9 Application no. 12/00812/1 35 High Street and Whitby Farm, Silver Street. For Logan Homes Ltd

Erection of 5 dwellings comprising of 1 four bedroom detached house with detached double garage, 2 four bedroom detached houses with attached double car ports and 2 three bedroom dwellings with double car port and storage, following demolition of existing farm buildings. Access road to plots 1-4 (inc) and access to plot 5 from Silver Street. Associated boundary walls and fencing. Two storey extension, first floor

window in east elevation of existing house, double car port and new storage building to 35 High Street following demolition of existing rear extension and outbuildings.

The Chairman reported that this application had been granted conditional permission by NHDC; 36 conditions had been imposed. It was noted that the Parish Council had recommended approval but had made specific requests for conditions in relation to (i) drainage and flooding risk, (ii) prohibition of on-street parking of contractors' vehicles during the build process. Whilst the NHDC Planning Officer had imposed conditions that related to these, they were in the form of a requirement by the developer to submit detailed plans to address the issues. Concerns were expressed that the requests made by the Parish Council might not be adequately covered. In order to ensure that they were addressed to the Parish Council's satisfaction, it was agreed to request that the Planning Officer consult the Parish Council on the detailed plans supplied by the developer before giving approval. It was agreed to keep District Councillor Andrew Young and County Councillor Tony Hunter informed of the Parish Council's position. **Clerk**

(Councillor Schwick wished it to be noted that her declarations on the register of interests included ownership of a shop adjacent to the site).

23.2 Applications to NHDC as Planning Authority

23.2.1 Application no. 12/01029/1TCA

Ashwell Cemetery, Station Road. For Ashwell Parish Council.

Raise canopy of two Holm Oak trees to approx. 5 metres.

24. REPORT FROM STREETS & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

(Committee Chairman Cllr Mike Berry)

(Draft minutes of meeting Thursday 17th May supplied)

24.1 Herts Highways works on the corner of Kingsland Way by the Post Office (see S&E minutes 17th May, 10.8). It was reported that multiple emails of complaint had been received from parishioners and passed to Gary Henning, Herts Highways. He had supplied information on the cause of delays and a copy of the letter he had sent to local residents. The works had now been completed.

24.2 Letter from HCC re implementation of part-night street lighting; works due to commence in North Herts Rural 2nd week June. County Councillor Tony Hunter had informed that he was required to undertake local consultation with parish councils on the proposals put forward by Herts Highways and the police. After consideration, the following were agreed: (i) Re the chicane in Station Road and the three junctions identified (High Street/Kingsland Way, Ashwell Street/Claybush Road, West End/Newnham Way/Hinxworth Road) - Herts Highways safety considerations acknowledged, ie selected lights to stay on, (ii) Re the Station Road/Walkdens junction –view held that these should be included in part-night lighting; no reason why they should be considered any differently to other residential areas, (iii) Re High Street 'shops area' - view held that all of these lights should be included in the part-night lighting; concur with police view that no impact on crime, (iv) Re lights supplying signs - request that Herts Highways consider the safety issue if these to be included in part-night lighting.

Concerns were raised over the outstanding issues (new columns incorrect colour, switching box in High Street unpainted, some bulbs orange not white, etc) that Herts Highways had previously promised would be addressed in conjunction with part-night lighting works. It was now acknowledged that the part-night lighting works were being undertaken as an entirely separate, stand-alone project and that other issues would have to be progressed through different channels.

24.3 Newnham waste site/parishioner's concerns that heavy vehicles were accessing the site via Ashwell (see S&E minutes 17th May, 10.11). It was reported that the parishioner had been requested to supply details so the complaint could be pursued.

25. REPORT FROM RECREATION & FACILITIES COMMITTEE

(Committee Chairman Cllr Daniel Mathews)

(Draft minutes meeting Monday 21st May supplied. Next meeting scheduled for Monday 11th June)

25.1 Public toilets at the pavilion. Cllr Mathews reported that these were now operational. The funding contribution for this year had been received from NHDC.

25.2 Small Gains. A formal request had been received from the Cycle Club to facilitate a supply to their site from the existing supply to the allotments. It was agreed that this would be considered including whether any advance payment would be required.

25.3 Cllr Mathews reported that Parishioner Mark Stier had been co-opted to the committee in relation to the pavilion.

26. REPORT FROM CHARACTER AREAS COMMITTEE

(Committee Chairman Cllr Martin Hoffman)

26.1 Springs. It was reported that parishioners had raised concerns re (i) a rope swing erected by local youths; this had now been removed, (ii) breaking up of the old ash tree stump; expert advice had been taken and, although no immediate action was considered necessary, the situation would be monitored.

27. REPORT FROM FINANCE COMMITTEE

27.1 The Chairman reported that the insurance schedule had been updated; new assets had been added and amendments made in relation to the footway lighting columns. Appropriate cover was in place for forthcoming village Olympics celebrations (see 28.7 below).

27.2 The Chairman reported on the 2011-12 audit, (i) a satisfactory report had been received from the internal auditor, (ii) the public notice period had been publicised and was on-going, (iii) the external audit was scheduled for 2nd July and all necessary documents would be submitted in time for this, (iv) the Audit Commission was undertaking a consultation on the appointment of an external auditor for 2012-2016; no response was considered necessary.

27.3 Proposals for publication of annual report including statement of accounts (unaudited) by 30th June. It was agreed that these would be published on the website and in the form of a newsletter distributed to all households. Cllr Mathews agreed to collate this.

DMM

27.4 Approval of June Accounts and Bills for Payment.

It was *resolved* that these be approved and paid with the exception of item 61; this to be held until given clearance by the Recreation & Facilities Committee.

Clerk/R&F

28. REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS

28.1 Website Group Cllr Mathews reported that a good meeting had been held with a potential supplier for a new website that could be edited in-house. Full proposals were being prepared.

28.2 Quality Status Group Nothing to report.

28.3 Yearbook Group Meeting scheduled for Wednesday 18th July.

28.4 Design Statement Review Group Nothing to report.

28.5 Community Housing Group

28.6 Jubilee 2012 Group It was agreed that Mrs Jill Powell and her team be formally thanked for organising the successful event held last Sunday on the Recreation Ground.

28.7 Olympics 2012 Group Cllr Long reported that all necessary insurances had been arranged for celebrations centred around the village sports on the Recreation Ground. The group had now requested permission to run a licensed bar; it was agreed that the Parish Council had no objections to this.

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

Item taken at 8.30pm

29.1 Pre-application presentation from Mr Nick Makasis representing GML Architects for a proposed planning application at 61 Station Road. The Chairman wished it to be noted that no formal planning application had yet been made to the Planning Authority, NHDC, and reminded all parish councillors that any discussions at this 'pre-application' stage were subject to very strict rules designed to avoid any allegation of pre-determination or bias. Mr Makasis explained that pre-application advice had been given by the NHDC Planning Officer and the latter had proposed that the Parish Council be asked to contribute its thoughts.

The current proposals were for the replacement of the existing single dwelling house on the site and associated outbuildings and replacement with a residential development of family houses accessed from Station Road and with a shared landscaped area within the site centre.

Advice and comments from parish councillors included, (i) it was felt unlikely that parishioners would object in principle to the site being developed for housing, (ii) the inclusion of social housing was welcomed; preference was indicated for Howard Cottage Housing Association to be involved, it having a good record of working in local rural communities and a policy geared towards the retention of housing stock, (iii) consideration of the Ashwell Village Design Statement was applauded, (iv) sewerage and

flooding issues had been a particular problem in this area of the village and should be adequately addressed, (v) a plan to ensure there were no parking issues that would adversely affect local residents during the build process should be prepared, (vi) access to the site from Station Road would be preferred over Ashwell Street, the latter being single track with multiple types of users, (vi) the Parish Council was currently pushing for an increase in section 106 contributions from developers.

It was agreed that the NHDC Planning Officer be informed of the above.

Clerk

29.2 Police matters. Cllr Macey reported that she had met with PCSO Chris Braybrook in relation to the security of the Lock Up. Useful advice had been given and would be followed up.

Clerk/BM

29.3 Village sign. Cllr Schwick reported that, following suggestions made by parish councillors, the supplier was to forward a revised design proposal.

29.4 Request for publication of a register of attendance of parish councillors at meetings. It was reported that emails had been received from Parishioner Stewart Reddaway reiterating his previous requests and asking the Parish Council to reconsider. Parishioner Reddaway stated that a register had been published in the past and he was of the view that not doing so was a step backwards in transparency. It was agreed that the Parish Council did not wish to reconsider the matter (see Annual Parish Meeting 21st March 2012, minute 13.1).

Meeting closed at 9.20pm

Appendix 1 – General material received

Hard copy –‘Items on the table’

1. North Herts District Council ‘Members Information’ w/e 4, 11, 18, 25, May.
2. HAPTC training course information.

By Email

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

| Appendix 2 | | ACCOUNTS AND BILLS FOR PAYMENT - June 2012 | | Date | | 6th June 2012 | |
|---|-----------------------------|---|----------|-------------------------|---------|---------------|-----------|
| Proposed by Cllr Mathews | | Seconded by Cllr Macey | | Declared interest -None | | | |
| | | | | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| Receipts | | | | Grants | Precept | Other | Total |
| 14 | Santander interest a/c | bank interest | | | | 2.42 | 2.42 |
| 15 | Neville Funeral Service | chapel rent April | | | | 68.75 | 68.75 |
| 16 | Henry Harris Funfair | recreation ground rent | | | | 400.00 | 400.00 |
| 17-28 | various | allotment rents | | | | 75.00 | 75.00 |
| 29-31 | various | yearbook adverts | | | | 710.00 | 710.00 |
| 32 | Mrs D P Hankin | interment (Roberts) | | | | 320.00 | 320.00 |
| 33 | Neville Funeral Service | memorial (Kitely) | | | | 50.00 | 50.00 |
| 34 | Neville Funeral Service | memorial (Kitely) | | | | 110.00 | 110.00 |
| 35 | Herts Groundwork Trust | HCC P3 grant | | | 665.00 | | 665.00 |
| | | | | | 665.00 | | |
| | | | | | | 1,736.17 | 2,401.17 |
| | | | | Committees | | | |
| Payments | | | A&O | CA | S &E | R&F | VAT |
| By Direct Debit | | | | | | | Total |
| 34 | Herts & Middlesex Wildlife | membership subscription | 40.00 | | | | 40.00 |
| 35 | British Telecom (04/05/12) | x2 phone lines and broadband | 117.56 | | | 46.50 | 196.87 |
| 36 | NHDC (21/05/12) | streets waste (outstanding from 2011-12) | | | 251.45 | | 251.45 |
| 37 | NHDC (21/05/12) | pavilion waste (outstanding from 2011-12) | | | | 122.20 | 122.20 |
| By Cheque | | | | | | | |
| 38 | J C M Porter | Clerk's salary | 1,069.44 | | | | 1,069.44 |
| 39 | J C M Porter | reimbursement office expenses | 34.00 | | | | 34.00 |
| 40 | M Fox | Environmental Cleansing | | 38.92 | 151.94 | 38.92 | 229.78 |
| 41 | M Fox | reimbursement expenses | | | 2.39 | | 2.39 |
| 42 | M Chandler | Duties at Pavilion and Rec | | | | 60.12 | 60.12 |
| 43 | N Karen | Groundskeeper duties (from 23/04) | | | | 58.50 | 58.50 |
| 44 | N Karen | reimbursement expenses | | | | 7.41 | 7.41 |
| 45 | Post Office | tax&NI to Inland Revenue | 280.60 | | 23.20 | | 303.80 |
| 46 | MCL Communications | web hosting services | 21.60 | | | | 21.60 |
| 47 | HAPTC | power of competence training course | 30.00 | | | | 30.00 |
| 48 | SLCC-CiLCA Management | power of competence submission fee | 20.00 | | | | 20.00 |
| 49 | Business Presentations | Yearbook design and layout | 1,000.00 | | | | 1,000.00 |
| 50 | Business Presentations | website editing 13/12/11 to 09/05/12 | 300.00 | | | | 300.00 |
| 51 | Mrs K Mills | reimbursement Olympics group expenses | 116.50 | | | | 116.50 |
| 52 | CGM Landscapes | Pitch mowing at recreation ground (25/04) | | | | 25.28 | 30.34 |
| 53 | CGM Landscapes | Pitch mowing at Small Gains (25/04) | | | | 42.51 | 51.01 |
| 54 | CGM Landscapes | Pitch mowing at recreation ground (10/05) | | | | 25.28 | 30.34 |
| 55 | CGM Landscapes | Pitch mowing at Small Gains | | | | 42.51 | 51.01 |
| 56 | D J Granger | grounds maintenance (worksheet no.3) | | | 45.00 | 245.00 | 348.00 |
| 57 | Clements Play Management | playground repairs and seat refurb | | | | 751.00 | 901.20 |
| 58 | Sarah Wroot | design for Arbury Banks information panel | | 200.00 | | | 200.00 |
| 59 | CGM Landscapes | Pitch mowing at rec and Small Gains (21/05) | | | | 67.79 | 81.35 |
| 60 | D J Granger | grounds maintenance (worksheet no.4) | | 55.00 | | 250.00 | 366.00 |
| 61 | The Liberty Corporation Ltd | locks to pavilion toilets | | | | 998.00 | 1,197.60 |
| 62 | Mrs J Powell | jubilee group reimbursement | 24.17 | | | | 29.00 |
| | | | 2,896.31 | 293.92 | 222.53 | 2,612.32 | 514.31 |
| Outstanding Accounts | | | | | | | |
| Yearbook 2012 adverts -misc | | | | | | 1,740.00 | |
| Football Club | | rec/pavilion rent Q3 and Q4 | | | | 450.00 | |
| Allotment rents | | for three plots | | | | 20.00 | |
| Total | | | | | | | 2,210.00 |
| Money at bank | | 23rd May | | | | | |
| Current Account | | | | | | 32,200.83 | |
| Deposit Account | | | | | | 29,508.87 | |
| Total | | | | | | | 61,709.70 |
| Cheques banked after/BACS transfers after | | | | | | | 865.00 |
| Cheques drawn but not cleared/DD's outstanding | | | | | | | 1,333.95 |
| Total | | | | | | | 61,240.75 |
| Total after paying this months cheques | | | | | | | 54,701.36 |
| Total in current a/c after paying this months cheques | | | | | | | 25,192.49 |