

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Ashwell Parish Council held on Wednesday 2nd May 2012 in the Parish Room at 8.00pm

Present: Councillors Peter Long (Chairman), Mike Berry, John Connolly, David Cook, Bridget Macey, Daniel Mathews, Christine Schwick, Mark White.

The Clerk was also in attendance. Members of the public: Five parishioners.

Apologies: Cllrs Jane Buxton (other commitment), Martin Hoffman (away).

1. Election of Chairman. Cllr Peter Long was proposed, seconded and elected.

2. Election of Vice-Chairman. Cllr Martin Hoffman was proposed, seconded and elected.

3. To note and agree changes resulting from the Localism Act 2011.

3.1 The duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct,

to adopt a Code of Conduct, to note arrangements for dealing with misconduct, to agree arrangements for the disclosure and registration of interests, and to make provision for publicity.

Correspondence from central government, the SLCC, HAPTC and NHDC was noted. It was also noted that more detailed guidance was awaited; NHDC had informed that information from the Monitoring Officer was unlikely to be available before the end of June. The proposals made following discussion at the Finance Committee were noted: Code of Conduct and declaration of interests - to maintain the current code but with amendments in line with the new legislation, (i) to narrow the definition of prejudicial interests to 'disclosable pecuniary interests', (ii) to amend the requirement for those with prejudicial interests to leave the meeting; this would be at the discretion of the chairman, (iii) whilst repetition of interests existing in the register was no longer required, where it would be of merit, such as where members of the public were present, and in particular at planning meetings, declarations would continue to be made as previously, (iv) the register of members interests would be placed on the website.

It was *resolved* to accept these proposals.

Clerk

3.2 To note the requirements for the new General Power of Competence and agree arrangements for meeting the conditions of eligibility.

It was noted that the requirements for two-thirds of members to be elected and for the Clerk to be qualified were fulfilled. It was agreed that the Clerk attend the necessary training sessions and make a submission for the additional new 'competence' module of the CiLCA qualification.

Clerk

4. Proposal to adopt revised Standing Orders.

It was *resolved* to re-adopt these with the minor amendments recommended by the Finance Committee.

5. Proposal to adopt Financial Regulations.

It was *resolved* to re-adopt these.

6. Appointments and nominations. The Chairman reported that he had been in contact with Cllr Graham Scott. Cllr Scott had apologised that he had not been able to contribute as he had originally intended; his election had coincided with unforeseen time pressures from his new business. Although Cllr Scott had offered his resignation, according to the law he had 'ceased to be qualified' as he had not attended meetings for six months. The Chairman thus declared a vacancy; NHDC would be notified as the electoral authority. It was noted that, according to the law, a bye-election would be called if requested by ten electors within fourteen working days. NHDC would be obliged to organise this but the Parish Council would bear the costs; these were estimated at c£2,000. If no poll was claimed the Parish Council would have the power to co-opt but it was noted that the Parish Council had petitioned NHDC for a reduction in the number of members from twelve to ten.

6.1 Committee Members It was noted that, where necessary, committee chairmen would be elected at the first meetings of the committees.

The following were agreed

6.1.1 Recreation and Facilities Committee Cllrs Daniel Mathews (Current Chairman), Jane Buxton, Martin Hoffman, Peter Long and Christine Schwick. Carol Moore (Co-opted member for the Cemetery).

6.1.2 Streets and Environment Committee Cllrs Mike Berry (Current Chairman), John Connolly, David Cook, Bridget Macey and Mark White. Martin Lush (Co-opted member for Rights of Way).

6.1.3 Character Areas Committee Cllrs Martin Hoffman (Chairman), Jane Buxton, Bridget Macey and Christine Schwick. Martin Lush (Co-opted member).

6.1.4 Finance Committee Noted that comprised of chairman of above committees.

6.1.5 Planning Committee Noted that comprised of all parish councillors.

6.2 Parish Council Working Groups

6.2.1 Website Group Cllr Daniel Mathews supported by Cllrs Mike Berry and Christine Schwick.

6.2.2 Quality Status Group Cllr Martin Hoffman supported by Cllrs John Connolly and David Cook.

6.2.3 Yearbook Group Cllr Peter Long as Group Chairman and Parish Council's representative.

6.2.4 Ashwell Village Design Statement Review Group Cllrs Peter Long, Mike Berry and Christine Schwick. David Short (Co-opted member).

6.2.5 Community Housing Group Cllrs Peter Long, Bridget Macey and Jane Buxton.

7.3 To note appointments to other bodies and representatives.

7.3.1 Ashwell Village Trust In accordance with the deed, the Chairman of the Parish Council is the Chairman of the Trust. It was agreed that the two other Parish Council trustees, Mark White and Jane Buxton, would continue. The proceedings of the 2012 AGM were noted.

7.3.2 Moss Cottage Homes It was noted that, according to the terms of the Trust, the Parish Council appointed four 'nominative trustees' who held office for four years. It was reported that the positions held by Mrs Carol Moore and Mrs May Cook were due for reconsideration this year. Both had indicated that they would be pleased to be re-nominated and this was agreed. It was noted that Ms Madeleine Legg and Dr Reno Coladangelo were in post until 2014.

7.3.3 Ashwell Museum It was noted that the Parish Council had no powers to elect or nominate. Cllrs Martin Hoffman and Christine Schwick were trustees in their own right and reported back to the Parish Council as necessary.

7.3.4 Ashwell School Governing Body It was noted that Cllr David Cook was a governor in his own right but currently also acted as the Parish Council's representative. The Parish Council was entitled to make a proposal for one position on the Governing Body but this was currently not filled.

7.3.5 Village Hall It was agreed that Cllr Mark White continue as the Parish Council's representative. It was noted that Cllrs Martin Hoffman and Christine Schwick were trustees in their own right but this was independent of the Parish Council.

7.3.6 Henry Colbron Trust and youth matters It was agreed that Cllr John Connolly continue as representative.

7.3.7 Police matters It was agreed that Cllr Bridget Macey continue as representative.

8. MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING 4th April 2012

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

9. MATTERS OF REPORT

9.1 (April Council 137.3) Sewerage/reiteration of request to Anglian Water re future capacity. It was reported that an acknowledgment had been received with a commitment for a full response by 10th May.

9.2 (April Council 138.1) HCC draft Rural Transport Strategy consultation. Cllr Daniel Mathews reported that he had drafted a response (i) welcoming the opportunity to comment, (ii) highlighting that, contrary to section 2.2 Access to Rail Stations, many residents of Ashwell did use the train to travel to work, predominantly from Ashwell & Morden Railway Station (outside of the county boundary), (iii) many residents relied on the 202 bus service to commute between Ashwell village and Ashwell & Morden Railway Station as part of an integrated public transport solution, (iv) the 90/91 and 202 bus routes were key services for Ashwell residents providing important integrated transport links to railway stations and town centres.

Cllr Mathews also reported that the email from Oliver Heald, MP, highlighted the importance of this consultation as a way in which rural areas could have a say. It was agreed that the proposed response be sent and copied to Oliver Heald, MP.

DMM

9.3 (April Council 138.4) Hosepipe ban/request to water authority for clarification re Recreation Ground. It was reported that a response had been received from Anglian Water, 'watering sports or recreation grounds using a hosepipe is not allowed, apart from where not doing so would lead to a health and safety risk. For example, whilst watering an entire cricket pitch would not be allowed, watering the cricket square would be permitted as it would be unsafe to play on very dry wicket however watering a bowling green would not be allowed'. It was agreed that the policy of the Parish Council would remain that hose pipes would not be used on the Recreation Ground during the ban as to do so would set a poor example. It was noted that any health and safety issues that might arise during the playing of cricket were the responsibility of, and covered by the insurance of, the Cricket Club.

9.4 (April Council 138.5) Wolverley House signage considered out of keeping in the conservation area/request to North Herts Homes (NHH). It was reported that the NHDC Area Planning Officer was of the view that, if the signage was outside of regulations, this was only marginal. He had, however, requested that NHH remove the old signage. A response had been received to the letter sent to NHH requesting removal and replacement with a more appropriate design; they had not been prepared to do this. It was agreed that Cllr Christine Schwick contact the parishioners who had made the initial complaint to discuss any future action. **CVS**

9.5 (March Council, 126.2) Email from Liberal Democrat representative Ian Simpson in response to Parish Council's information on requests for white lines to Herts Highways; he concurred with the proposals. Items pending

9.6 (April Council, 145.2) Matters of report from the Annual Parish Meeting. Disappointment was expressed that numbers of parishioners attending was again low and the worth of such meetings questioned. It was agreed to consider the options available. **ALL**

10. OTHER CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

10.1 Letter from Parishioner Ruth Rowntree re her concerns at speeding in Gardiners Lane. It was noted that this had been passed to Cllr Martin Hoffman as leader of the speed monitoring group.

10.2 Email from residents re concerns following unruly behaviour and vandalism in the vicinity of Springhead. It was noted that a recommendation had been made that this be reported to the police; it was understood that this had been done.

10.3 Letter and booklets re Hertfordshire Police Authority Strategic Policing Plan 2012-2015. Full version also available on www.hertspa.org

10.4 Email from HAPTC requesting support for an Early Day Motion tabled in Parliament (EDM 2824, dated 6th March 2012) proposing that Parish and Town Councils should have the same right of appeal on planning decisions as have developers. It was agreed to write to Oliver Heald, MP, expressing support. **Clerk**

11. REPORT FROM PLANNING COMMITTEE

(Draft minutes meeting 18th April supplied, next meeting scheduled for 16th May)

11.1 Decisions by NHDC as Planning Authority

11.1.1 Application no. 12/00338/1TCA

69 High Street (Rose & Crown). For Greene King plc. Removal of Leylandii.

No objections.

11.1.2 Application no. 12/00424/1TCA

11 Fordham Close. For Mr E Humbert. Removal of 4 Leylandii and 1 cherry tree.

No objections.

11.2 Correspondence

11.2.1 Emails from residents of Small Gains Lane, Tracy Young and Grant Mitchell, expressing concerns re the breach of planning conditions at the Cycle Club facility; also copies of their letters sent to the planning department at NHDC. Concerns included the failure to complete required parking facilities (this was felt to be particularly important due to the nationally advertised event to be hosted on 6th May) and failure to paint the storage container the correct colour. It was understood that the Area Planning Officer had noted the complaints and made some enquiries; it was noted that he had previously advised that local solutions be sought wherever possible as NHDC enforcement resources were over-stretched and had to be prioritised. Cllr Daniel Mathews reported that he had made contact with a club official to register the Parish Council's continuing concerns over this and other issues relating to the site; he hoped that he could continue a useful dialogue. It was agreed that the Cycle Club was a great asset to the village, particularly the opportunities available for children. It was, however, also agreed to be a great shame that the club was not more successful in fostering better relations with its neighbours at Small Gains. It was agreed that (i) Cllr Mathews continue the dialogue with the club and (ii) a letter be sent to the head of the planning department at NHDC (copy to District Councillor Andrew Young). **DMM/Clerk**

11.3 Future meetings. It was noted that the next meeting was scheduled for 16th May; an amended application for the Whitby Farm site would be on the agenda. Cllr David Cook agreed to prepare a report on the s106 proposal in the design and access statement for distribution to councillors prior to the meeting.

DC

12. REPORT FROM STREETS & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

(Committee Chairman Cllr Mike Berry)

(Next meeting scheduled for Wednesday 17th May)

Nothing further to report.

13. REPORT FROM RECREATION & FACILITIES COMMITTEE

(Committee Chairman Cllr Daniel Mathews)

(Next meeting scheduled for Monday 21st May)

13.1 Public toilets at the Recreation Ground. Cllr Mathews reported that from May 1st the Parish Council had taken over responsibility from NHDC. The facilities would be closed to the public for a short period whilst essential works were completed.

14. REPORT FROM CHARACTER AREAS COMMITTEE

(Committee Chairman Cllr Martin Hoffman)

(Draft minutes meeting Wednesday 4th April supplied)

Nothing further to report.

15. REPORT FROM FINANCE COMMITTEE

(Draft minutes meeting Wednesday 18th April supplied)

15.1 Audit 2011-12. Proposal to sign (i) Accounting Statements and (ii) Annual Governance Statement, for submission to the External Auditor subject to a satisfactory report from the Internal Auditor.

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

WPL/Clerk

15.2 Annual Report. It was noted that this was required to be published by 30th June. It was agreed that it also be included in a newsletter to residents; Cllr Daniel Mathews agreed to co-ordinate a draft, and Cllrs Peter Long and Christine Schwick to contribute, for submission to the June Council meeting.

DMM/WPL/CVS

15.3 Proposal for bank account changes. It was noted that further proposals would be made to the Finance Committee.

Clerk

15.4 Approval of May Accounts and Bills for Payment.

It was **resolved** that these be approved and paid with the exception of item 33; as this would include commercially sensitive data it would be discussed as a Part II.

16. REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS

16.1 Website Group Cllr Mathews reported that a meeting with the supplier of the Steeple Morden site was scheduled to discuss possible options and costs.

16.2 Quality Status Group Nothing to report.

16.3 Yearbook Group Part II in relation to print invoice noted.

16.4 Design Statement Review Group Nothing to report.

16.5 Community Housing Group Nothing to report.

16.6 Jubilee 2012 Group It was reported that plans were progressing well; details were on the website.

16.7 Olympics 2012 Group Cllr Long reported that he had submitted a risk assessment to the insurer and was waiting to hear if anything further was required.

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

It was **resolved** that Standing Orders be suspended for this item.

17.1 Henry Colbron Trust. It was noted that the trustees would visit the village on Tuesday 8th May.

17.2 Village sign proposals. Cllr Schwick presented a draft design. She agreed to circulate this to councillors for comments; initial responses were positive. It was agreed to determine whether it could be installed in time for the Jubilee celebrations.

CVS

17.3 Church clock. Cllr Schwick reported that the contractor would be coming week commencing 14th May to repair the chimes.

17.4 Parishioner Liz Moynihan reported that the railings where the stream ran under the road adjacent to the dairy were in a poor state. It was noted that this should be reported to Hertfordshire Highways as the authority responsible. Cllr Berry agreed to ensure that it was. **MWB**

17.5 Parishioner Liz Moynihan reported her concerns re the footpath that ran across the field from Partridge Hill to Arbury Banks. Whilst the farmer had left a wide swathe between the crop this had been sprayed to kill weed growth and as a result was very muddy. She was also concerned that a rare bell-flower, which used to flourish in the locality, had been severely affected. She requested that this be brought to the attention of the farmer. It was agreed that the request be passed to the Character Areas Committee. **CA**

17.6 Parishioner Fergus Moynihan asked whether the Parish Council was still of the view that the footway lighting in the village should be white in colour; he was aware that a significant programme of change was currently being undertaken by Hertfordshire Highways in order to facilitate night-time switch-off. Cllr Berry responded that the desire of the Parish Council for the village to continue to be illuminated with white light had been made clear to Hertfordshire Highways.

17.7 Parishioner Fergus Moynihan reported to the meeting the situation with regard to the future Editor of the *Ashwell Village News*. The previous Editor had retired and the lady who was to have succeeded him was unlikely to be able to take on the role due to unexpected ill-health.

17.8 Parishioner Ann Vidler reported her concerns re the hedge on the Lucas Lane boundary of her property. Increasing erosion of the adjacent grass verge by vehicles was resulting in severe damage to the hedge; attempts to add soil and seed it with suitable grass species had not been successful. She requested that the appropriate authority take action; the loss of the hedge would be detrimental to the conservation area. It was noted that this should be reported to Hertfordshire Highways as the authority responsible. Cllr Berry agreed to ensure that it was. **MWB**

8. Dates of meetings for May 2012-April 2013 It was noted that a new summary sheet would be circulated. **Clerk**

Meeting closed at 9.10pm

PART II *‘under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined ... and the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.’*

1. May Accounts and Bills for Payment item 33. (Reason: this would potentially include commercially sensitive data).

Appendix 1 – General material received

Items on the table

1. North Herts District Council ‘Members Information’ w/e 13, 20, 27, April.

By Email

2. HAPTC Briefings and Bulletins. Information re new proposals for NHS in Hertfordshire.
- 3 *Rural News* from PC Marina.

Appendix 2								
ACCOUNTS AND BILLS FOR PAYMENT - May 2012					Date	2nd May 2012		
Proposed by Cllr Mathews		Seconded by Cllr Cook	Declared interest -none					
				£	£	£	£	
	Receipts			Grants	Precept	Other	Total	
1	Santander interest a/c	bank interest				2.88	2.88	
2	Neville Funeral Service	chapel rent April				68.75	68.75	
3	Mr and Mrs Skerman	cemetery reservation				720.00	720.00	
4	E H Crouch	memorial fee (Searle)				100.00	100.00	
5	Mrs L Nash	memorial fee (Blunt)				100.00	100.00	
6	HMRC	VAT reclaim (Oct-Mar)				5,921.98	5,921.98	
7	R F King	yearbook advert				40.00	40.00	
8	J Miles	yearbook advert				60.00	60.00	
9	Bluegates Farms	cemetery reservtions				3,150.00	3,150.00	
10	E H Crouch	interment fee (Coiley)				100.00	100.00	
11	NHDC	precept (1st half payment)			24,000.00		24,000.00	
12	Santander	refund bank charges				32.00	32.00	
13	Santander	compensation bank errors				45.00	45.00	
					24,000.00	10,340.61	34,340.61	
					Committees			
	Payments		A&O	CA	S & E	R&F	VAT	Total
	By Direct Debit							
18	British Gas (13/04/12)	pavilion electricity			80.83		4.04	84.87
19	NHDC (20/05/12)	pavilion waste				52.00		52.00
20	NHDC (20/05/12)	streets waste			78.65			78.65
	By Cheque							
21	J C M Porter	Clerk's salary	1,069.44					1,069.44
22	J C M Porter	reimbursement office expense	45.88				7.21	53.09
23	M Fox	Environmental Cleansing		48.65	183.13	48.65		280.43
24	M Chandler	Duties at Pavilion and Rec				60.12		60.12
25	N Karen	Groundskeeper duties (from 23/04)				29.25		29.25
26	Post Office	tax&NI to Inland Revenue	280.60		35.80			316.40
27	SLCC annual membership	annual membership	140.00					140.00
28	North Herts APTCC	annual subscription	20.00					20.00
29	Ashwell Village Museum	donation re rent paid by fair f	100.00					100.00
30	Mrs S Price	jubilee group reimbursement	15.00					15.00
31	D J Granger	grounds (worksheet no.1)		30.00		215.00	49.00	294.00
32	D J Granger	grounds (worksheet no.2)		30.00		215.00	49.00	294.00
33	Parkes Print & Design	yearbook print	4,397.91					4,397.91
			6,068.83	108.65	297.58	620.02	105.21	7,200.29
	Outstanding Accounts							
	Yearbook 2012 adverts -misc						1,740.00	
	Total							1740.00
	Money at bank	23rd April 2012						
	Current Account						34,955.45	
	Deposit Account						29,506.45	
	Total							64,461.90
	Cheques banked after/BACS transfers after							3,350.00
	Cheques drawn but not cleared/DD's outstanding							410.29
	Total							67,401.61
	Total after paying this months cheques							<u>60,201.32</u>
	Total in current a/c after paying this months cheques							30,694.87