

Minutes of a meeting of the Ashwell Parish Council held on Wednesday 3rd October 2012 in the Parish Room at 8.00pm

Present: Councillors Peter Long (Chairman), Mike Berry, Jane Buxton, John Connolly, Martin Hoffman, Bridget Macey, Christine Schwick, Mark White.

The Clerk was also in attendance.

Members of the public: One parishioner for item 73.

63. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Cllrs David Cook (work commitment), Daniel Mathews (work commitment).

64. MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING 5th September 2012

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

65. MATTERS OF REPORT From previous meetings:

65.1 (August Council 43.2) Annual North Herts Parish, Town and Community Conference Wednesday 24th October. Cllr Peter Long reported that he would attend and welcomed others to accompany him. **WPL**

65.2 (September Council 54.1) Localism Act/Code of Conduct/Standing Orders/Declarations of Interest.

It was reported that Declarations of Interest forms had all been completed and the Ashwell Standing Orders were being reviewed to ensure that they concurred with the Localism Act and the adopted Code of Conduct. Cllr Mathews would report to the November Council meeting. **DMM**

65.3 (September Council 55.2) Village sign/proposal for a permanent tribute in the village to celebrate the Jubilee. Cllr Christine Schwick reported that the previous design proposals were now being amended to incorporate the Jubilee proposal. **CVS**

66. OTHER CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

66.1 Letter from Herts County Council re school planning; consultation regarding a proposal to enlarge the premises of Samuel Lucas JMI School, Hitchin.

66.2 Further correspondence re campaign for superfast broadband; registrations at <http://www.superfastforherts.org/localsupport/>

66.3 Email from Parishioner Ed James drawing Parish Council's attention to the Community Right to Bid, created in the Localism Act. Details on www.communities.gov.uk/news/newsroom/2220565

66.4 Email from Central Bedfordshire re consultation on the proposed content for the Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan; ends 29th October 2012. Details on www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/

66.5 Email from Herts Police Authority re forthcoming election of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire. Cllr Bridget Macey reported that the publicity material received had been distributed.

66.6 Letter from Herts County Council enclosing copies of 'Hertfordshire Road Casualty Facts 2011' and 'Hertfordshire's Traffic and Transport Data Report 2011'. Also available online at www.hertsdirect.org Cllr Mark White agreed to review and report back. **MNW**

66.7 Letter from Parishioner Anne Stier informing that she has taken on the role of Clerk to the Trustees Moss Cottage Homes.

67. REPORT FROM PLANNING COMMITTEE

67.1 Notifications from NHDC as Planning Authority

67.1.1 Application no.12/02152/1TCA, The Old Rectory, Hodwell. Remove two Sycamore Trees (T1 and T2 on plan). Crown reduce Elm Tree by 25% (T3 on plan). Raise crown of Lime Tree to 5 metres and dead wood (T4 on plan). Raise crown of one Sycamore Tree to 3 metres (T5 on plan).

67.2 Email from NHDC re consultation on North Hertfordshire Local Plan – Draft Revised Statement of Community Involvement. Details on www.north-herts.gov.uk; deadline Friday 19th October 2012. Cllr Peter Long agreed to review and respond. **WPL**

67.3 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. It was noted that the usual policy on Listed Building applications was to follow the advice of the Conservation Officer. It was noted that the windows had already been installed. It was agreed that no comment be made.

67.4 (September Council 56.3) Application no. 12/01356/1 Land rear of 48 Ashwell Street for Alexandre Developments. It was noted that it had been agreed to draft a letter to NHDC expressing concerns at the way in which this application had been handled. Following review of the draft letter concerns were expressed and it was agreed that the letter would not be sent. It was, however, agreed that the site be keenly monitored in relation to the conditions imposed and that NHDC be informed of the concerns that

remained in relation to enforcement. It was noted that planning officers had previously expressed the view that their inability to adequately enforce conditions was due to a lack of resources and their need to prioritize.

Clerk

67.5 (September Council 56.4) Development at The Knoll, Claybush Road/enquiry to Planning Officer re lack of enforcement. It was reported that the Planning Officer had informed that the property was now for sale and it was hoped that a new owner would 'have the funds to finish the scheme and, most importantly, implement the extensive landscaping' (see also 67.4 above).

67.6 Section 106 funds. It was agreed that all committee chairmen consider inclusion of relevant projects when submitting their budget proposals.

MWB/DMM/MGH

67.7 Copy of letter from Parishioner Mark Eaton to Oliver Heald, MP, expressing his concerns over the proposed relaxation of the planning regulations.

68. REPORT FROM STREETS & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

(Committee Chairman Cllr Mike Berry)

(draft minutes meeting 12th September; next meeting scheduled for Wednesday 14th November)

68.1 Herts County Council conversion to part-night footway lighting. It was noted that some lighting units had been converted whilst others had not; there were also units that seemed to be out of action completely. It was reported that many enquiries had been received from parishioners. Cllr Mike Berry reported that an update had been requested from local Herts Highways contacts but no information had been forthcoming other than the conversion programme was a centrally controlled contract and it was running behind schedule. It was agreed to write to the portfolio holder for Herts Highways, County Councillor Rob Smith, requesting information.

Clerk

68.2 NHDC new, free recycling service for commercial premises. It was noted that the Parish Council had lobbied for this. It was agreed that a letter commending the new arrangements be sent.

Clerk

69. REPORT FROM RECREATION & FACILITIES COMMITTEE

(Committee Chairman Cllr Daniel Mathews)

(Next meeting scheduled for Monday 15th October)

69.1 (September Council, 58.1) Merchant Taylors Close. Cllr Christine Schwick reported that, following removal of the building materials, the Parish Council's contractor had now completed maintenance works to the hedges. She also reported that she was scheduled to meet with representatives of the newly formed Merchant Taylors Close Residents Association.

69.2 Allotments. Letter from Parishioner Ron Hancock with request that Parish Council takes action against current tenants not abiding by the rules, ie plots in a poor state and not properly cultivated. Cllr Jane Buxton reported that she had made several site visits to review the situation. A proposal was agreed to hold a tenants' meeting at Small Gains on Sunday 14th October at 9.00am; the Clerk would distribute publicity material. The matter would be further discussed at the next Recreation & Facilities Committee meeting.

EJB/Clerk

69.3 Church clock chimes (September Council 62.1) (see 73 below re public attendance). It was noted that it had been agreed to review the situation at this meeting. Cllr Christine Schwick reported that further correspondence from parishioners had been received, all in favour of the quarter chimes being retained throughout the day and night; of the twelve items now received, eight were in favour and four against. It was agreed that the view of the Parish Council remained that the majority of parishioners were in favour of the quarter chimes being retained throughout the day and night. It was felt that the Parish Council could not reasonably change its policy without evidence to the contrary. This mandate was based on the views expressed by parishioners during the period when there had been problems with the clock and the chimes had been out of action; these had been overwhelmingly in favour of restoring it to its original working condition once refurbishment and renovation works were complete. The Chairman advised those who were against the quarter chimes working at night to consider presenting a petition to support their case.

70. REPORT FROM CHARACTER AREAS COMMITTEE

(Committee Chairman Cllr Martin Hoffman)

(Meeting held Wednesday 3rd October, 6.00pm; draft minutes to be distributed)

Re the Springs.

70.1. Cllr Hoffman reported that the RoSPA inspection had taken place and the risk assessment had now been received; there were no significant issues requiring attention.

70.2 Cllr Hoffman reported that, following agreement to tighten the policy on dogs (only dogs on leads to be allowed), lots of positive comments had been received. One letter, which he had considered offensive,

had been received from a parishioner objecting to the new policy. This had coincided with an email and photographic evidence of two large dogs frightening children who were picnicking with their grandparents. Having ensured anonymity, he had included the latter as evidence in his response. Committee members had agreed at their meeting earlier in the day that the policy should be reinforced by additional signage that threatened stern action and possible prosecution; the difficulties of policing had been acknowledged.

It was **resolved** that the committee's proposals be progressed (unanimous).

Clerk

71. REPORT FROM FINANCE COMMITTEE

(Next meeting scheduled for Monday 22nd October)

71.1. Ashwell Village Trust insurance. The Chairman reported that this would now be included with the Parish Council's at no extra cost.

71.2 Insurance review by the North Herts Association Parish, Town and Community Councils. The Chairman reported that he had reviewed the report collating input from members; details of Barkway's insurance schedule was to be requested to see if any factors might be of use as leverage in negotiations with Ashwell's current supplier.

Clerk

71.3 Approval of October Accounts and Bills for Payment. It was noted that Cllr Jane Buxton had been granted dispensation from declaring an interest (the wages of her spouse formed part of the monthly accounts presented for approval); this would happen routinely in the future.

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

Clerk

72. REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS

72.1 Website Group Nothing to report.

72.2 Yearbook Group The Chairman (Cllr Peter Long) reported that a meeting had been held on Tuesday 2nd October; minutes would be circulated. Competitive quotes were in hand for printing; it was agreed that a decision on these would be made by the Chairman and members of the Yearbook Group.

72.3 Design Statement Review Group It was noted that a meeting of this group was pending clarification of the role the *Ashwell Village Design Statement* could play in the new planning process.

72.4 Community Housing Group It was agreed that the Chairman and the Clerk schedule a meeting with Howard Cottage Housing Association to review progress to date and give local input as required.

WPL/Clerk

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

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

73.1 Church Clock chimes. One parishioner, Mrs Olivia Hall, attended (see 69.3 above).

73.2 Police. Cllr Bridget Macey reported a successful meeting of the Neighbourhood Watch group in September. Ten parishioners had attended; this was applauded. PCSO Chris Braybrook had reported that there had been a few incidents but generally 'numbers were down'. (See also 66.4 above).

73.3 Volunteer speeding patrols. Cllr Martin Hoffman reported that there had been a delay in the necessary police checks for volunteers.

73.4 Youth matters.

73.4.1 Cllr John Connolly reported an email from Tashmina Hoque, new Pro-Action Rural Youth and Community Development Officer. She had requested information on support for the development of a youth provision in the community. He agreed to respond.

JC

73.4.2 Cllr John Connolly reported an offer from a parishioner of Hinxworth to donate a pool table to any local youth group. He had made enquiries but storage was an issue.

73.5 Baldock Half-Marathon, Sunday 18th November. Cllr John Connolly reported an email from Ashley Hawkins, Community Development Officer at NHDC, requesting input from the Parish Council. *'We are planning a second half marathon challenge for November which again will generate income for the Baldock Town Partnership so that they can continue to run events for the community in the future and continue to employ a town centre manager. We have looked at a course which starts at the industrial unit outside of Newnham and takes in Bygrave and then Ashwell including the High Street. This would bring people into the village so I hope that the Ashwell Parish can support this event.'* Concerns were expressed that the request to 'clear the High Street of vehicles' was a major exercise that was not easy to achieve; the Ashwell Show committee took on this task only with considerable manpower and planning and even then it was not entirely successful. The benefit to Ashwell of raising the village profile for retailers was also questioned as none would be scheduled to open on a Sunday. Volunteer input for community events around the Jubilee and Olympics had been considerable this year and it was questioned whether a further event not directly connected to the village would raise sufficient enthusiasm.

It was concluded that the Parish Council could not identify an individual who was prepared to take on the task of championing the proposal and thus felt unable to respond more positively.

73.6 Parking. Cllr Mark White reported a complaint from a parishioner re a VW van regularly parked on the grass verge in Dixies Close. Cllr Mike Berry agreed to investigate and, if it was determined that the vehicle was parked inconsiderately or dangerously, take appropriate action. **MWB**

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 7, 14, 21, 28 September.
- 2.** *The Clerk* SLCC September 2012
- 3.** *Clerks and Councils Direct* September 2012

By Email

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

APPENDIX 2							
ACCOUNTS AND BILLS FOR PAYMENT -October 2012					Date	3rd October 2012	
Proposed by Cllr White		Seconded by Cllr Hoffm					
				£	£	£	£
	Income			Grants	Precept	Other	Total
56	Santander interest a/c	bank interest				2.50	2.50
57	Neville Funeral Service	chapel rent August				68.75	68.75
58	NHDC	precept (2nd half payment)			24000.00		24000.00
59	E H Crouch	interment (Brown)				250.00	250.00
60	Ashwell Taxis Ltd	yearbook advert				100.00	100.00
Total					24000.00	421.25	24421.25
	Expenses		A&O	CA	Committees		
					S & E	R&F	VAT
	By Direct Debit						Total
115	Veolia (01/10/12)	allotments water				10.43	10.43
116	Veolia (01/10/12)	pavilion water				67.69	67.69
117	NHDC (01/11/12)	streets waste			78.65		78.65
118	NHDC (10/11/12)	pavilion waste				52.00	52.00
	By Cheque						
119	J C M Porter	Clerk's salary	1,069.44				1,069.44
120	J C M Porter	reimbursement office e	31.97			5.11	37.08
121	M Barden	Environmental Cleansing		48.65	155.73	48.65	253.03
122	M Barden	reimbursement expenses			12.91	2.58	15.49
123	M Chandler	Duties at Pavilion and Rec				60.12	60.12
124	N Karen	Groundskeeper duties				29.25	29.25
125	Post Office	tax&NI to Inland Reve	280.60		63.20		343.80
126	CGM Landscapes	Pitch mowing at Rec and Small Gains				152.81	30.57
127	D J Granger	grounds maintenance (worksheet		55.00		215.00	54.00
128	D J Granger	grounds maintenance (worksheet		30.00		215.00	49.00
129	D J Granger	grounds maintenance (worksheet		55.00		375.00	86.00
130	Mr Robin Bentley	reimbursement Olympi	49.52				2.30
131	Mr Keith Clifford	works to notice boards			100.00		
Total			1,431.53	188.65	331.84	1,095.83	229.56
Outstanding Accounts							
Yearbook 2012 adverts -misc						1,385.00	
Football Club		rec/pavilion rent Q3 and Q4				450.00	
Total							1,835.00
Money at bank		Date	26th September 2012				
Current Account						40,873.51	
Deposit Account						29,518.79	
Total							70,392.30
Cheques banked after/BACS transfers after							0.00
Cheques drawn but not cleared/DD's outstanding							1351.30
Total							69,041.00
Total after paying this months cheques							65,763.59
Total in current a/c after paying this months cheques							36,244.80