

Minutes of a meeting of the Ashwell Parish Council held on Wednesday 5th June 2013 in the Parish Room at 8.00pm

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

The Clerk was also in attendance. Members of the public: Three parishioners. PC Paul Marina.

20. APOLOGIES Cllr Martin Hoffman (away on holiday).

21. MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING 1st May 2013

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

22. COUNCILLOR VACANCIES The Chairman reported that there had been several developments since the May Council meeting. He also reported that he had had an email exchange with Parishioner David Short who, whilst in favour of an electoral process, had expressed his concerns at the potential cost to the parish of two bye-elections in quick succession. The Chairman summarised the current situation. NHDC Electoral Services had confirmed that, as a poll had been claimed for both vacancies (Cook and Schwick) within the required deadlines, the notices of election for these two vacancies would run to the same timetable. The purpose of the 'claim of poll' procedure through a request by ten electors, rather than the co-option route, was to facilitate nominations for an election. However, there had been no nominations within the deadline and the election timetabled for Thursday 23rd June would not take place. NHDC Electoral Services had now advised, contrary to previous understanding, that because a poll had been claimed co-option for these two vacancies was not allowed. NHDC would publish a new election timetable; deadline for nominations noon Friday 14th June, election date Thursday 11th July. NHDC would repeat this procedure until it received at least two valid nominations or until six months prior to the election date for the whole parish council at the end of its four-year term.

It was noted that the vacancies had been advertised on notice boards, on the website and, so far as copy deadlines allowed, in the reports in the *Ashwell Village News*. It was agreed that there was little further that the Parish Council could do. It was agreed that individual parish councillors would encourage and distribute information to any parishioners who expressed an interest in standing for election.

23. MATTERS OF REPORT

23.1 (May Council, 10.1) New 90/91 bus service. Cllr Daniel Mathews reported further complaints from parishioners to the county council.

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

Parishioner Joan Ridley reported that she had been in contact with County Councillor Tony Hunter re (i) the uncomfortable ride due to the poor state of the vehicle had now been addressed by a much improved bus, (ii) a representative had been in contact to address problems of misrouting and failure to pick up passengers waiting at stops, (iii) concerns with the timetable were outstanding. It was agreed to encourage bus users to continue to report complaints and to ensure that County Councillor Tony Hunter was fully aware of outstanding timetable issues.

23.2 (May Council, 18.1) Unveiling of the new village sign during the At Home. It was agreed to write to Oliver Heald, MP, thanking him for his contribution to this successful event. It was agreed to write to Parishioners Norman and Carol Elliott thanking them for their generous donation to the new sign. **Clerk**

24. OTHER CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

24.1 Central Bedfordshire Council Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan - Formal Consultation.

Deadline for responses Monday, 1 July 2013. Details on www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/gypsytravellerplan

24.2 Email from CPRE Hertfordshire re (i) Rural Living Awards Scheme, (ii) Sale of Village of the Year Trophies. Deadline for responses 30th June.

24.3 Invitation from NHDC to attend a Stakeholders Briefing on the New Waste and Recycling Service Wednesday 12th June at North Herts District Council.

24.4 Email from North Herts Association of Parish Town and Community Councils, (i) agenda for July 10th meeting, (ii) questionnaire 'your views as Members'.

24.5 Minutes of the AGM of the Trustees of the Moss Cottage Homes, 24th April 2013.

24.6 Email correspondence re grass cutting responsibilities in parish (initiated by parishioner's complaint to District Councillor Andrew Young). It was agreed that grass cutting responsibilities be included in the Neighbourhood Plan. **DMM**

24.7 Notice from HCC re Temporary Road Closure: Bygrave Road to allow replacement of existing water mains. 'The section of road will be closed for approximately 14 days during the period 17 June 2013 and 1 July 2013, when signs are in place.'

24.8 Invitation from the Southern Rural Committee to attend the Committee meeting on Thursday 6th June 2013 (NHDC Council Offices, Letchworth, 18.30 for 19.30). To include presentations on (i) Update on New Neighbourhood Policing Structure, (ii) New Waste and Recycling Services. Cllr Bridget Macey reported that she would attend and report back. **BM**

24.9 Email from Parishioner Sam Crawley, 'I have a number of items to raise or request, as follows...'. The Chairman reported that these had included several highways issues, the situation re the Church clock and an objection to the April Council minutes (see April Council, item 133.5). He had sent responses via the Clerk including (i) 'Parish Clock: The current situation is that the Parish Council have agreed to take no further action, but to review their position if any evidence were forthcoming that the noise from the Clock was a danger to public health.', (ii) Re the April minutes, 'Complaint against Cllr Hoffman. This matter is now closed and no merit is seen in further discussion.' The Chairman reported that Mr Crawley had replied; the only response that he had objected to was that re the April Council minutes.

It was **resolved** that the responses by the Chairman correctly represented the views of the Parish Council. **Clerk**

24.10 Letter of thanks from St Mary's PCC for the donation re *Ashwell Village News*.

25. REPORT RE PLANNING COMMITTEE

25.1 Consultations received (from NHDC as Planning Authority to Parish Council as consultee).

It was noted that seven items had been received for comment. As objections had been raised either by a parishioner or a parish councillor an on-site meeting of the Planning Committee had been convened to consider them (Sunday 9th June 2013, 9am).

25.2 Notifications of decisions made by NHDC as Planning Authority.

25.2.1 Case Ref No: 13/00684/1TCA 32 Lucas Lane. Fell three lime trees.

No objection.

25.2.2 Case Ref no. 13/00786/1NMA 40 Kingsland Way. For Jasmine Box Ltd.

Amendment to boundary between plot 3 and 40 Kingsland Way (Non-material amendment to Planning Application 12/01617/1 granted 25.1.2013)

Agreed.

25.2.3 Case Ref no. 13/00236/1HH Whittington Farm, Hinxworth Road

Full Permission Householder: Proposed two storey side extension and remodelling to dwelling.

Refused.

It was noted that the Parish Council had recommended acceptance.

25.2.4 Case Ref No: 12/02861/1HH 9 West End.

Full Permission Householder: Single storey front and rear extensions.

Standard Conditional Permission.

25.2.5 Case Ref No: 12/02767/1 land adjacent to 92 Ashwell Street.

Detached three bedroom bungalow (reserved matters for outline planning application 11/02885/1 granted 10.08.1) (Amended plans received 10/01/13 and 16/05/13).

Conditional permission.

It was noted that amended plans had addressed some of the highways concerns and that permitted development rights had been withdrawn.

25.3 (Planning Committee 7th April 2013) Request to officer for clarification re double glazing on listed buildings Re Case Ref. 13/00511/1LB 60 High Street.

Listed Building: Replace two first floor single glazed windows on front elevation with double glazed windows of similar appearance. Conditional Listed Building Consent granted 17/04/2013.

It was reported that a very comprehensive response had been received from the NHDC Conservation Officer Mark Simmons. It was noted that this would be very helpful when considering future applications and responding to questions. It was agreed to write and thank him for his time and effort. **Clerk**

26. REVIEW OF COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

Proposal to move Churchyard and Merchant Taylors' Green from Recreation & Facilities Committee to Character Areas Committee.

It was **resolved** that this be accepted.

27. REPORT FROM STREETS & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

(draft minutes meeting 22nd May available; next meeting scheduled for Wednesday 17th July)

(Committee Chairman Cllr Mike Berry)

27.1 Hertfordshire Highways. It was noted that a meeting was to be scheduled with County Councillor Tony Hunter and his assigned officer. **MWB/BM/Clerk**

27.2 20 mph speed limits. It was agreed that this be included in the Neighbourhood Plan. **DMM**

27.3 Footway Lighting. It was noted that the most recent version of Cllr Mark White's survey had been forwarded to County Councillor Tony Hunter for his attention.

28. REPORT FROM RECREATION & FACILITIES COMMITTEE

(Committee Chairman Cllr Jane Buxton)

(draft minutes meeting 20th May available; next meeting scheduled for Monday 22nd July)

28.1 The Chairman thanked Cllr Jane Buxton for agreeing to act as interim committee chairman.

28.2 Pavilion (see item 32 below).

29. REPORT FROM CHARACTER AREAS COMMITTEE

(Committee Chairman Cllr Martin Hoffman)

(draft minutes meeting 23rd May available)

Nothing further to report.

30. REPORT FROM FINANCE COMMITTEE

(draft minutes meeting 29th April available)

30.1 Audit 2012-13

30.1.1 To note (i) receipt of satisfactory report from the Internal Auditor, (ii) public notice period publicised and on-going, (iii) external audit scheduled for 1st July.

It was *resolved* that these be noted.

30.1.2 Proposals (i) to approve the Annual Return including Accounting Statements and Governance Statement, (ii) to publish the annual report including the unaudited statement of accounts on the notice board and website by 30th June and the audited statement of accounts by 30th September.

It was *resolved* that the proposals be accepted.

Clerk

30.2 Approval of June Accounts and Bills for Payment (see Appendix 2).

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

Clerk

31. REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS

31.1 Neighbourhood Plan Group. Group leader Cllr Daniel Mathews reported that the first meeting was to be scheduled; Cllr Martin Hoffman had agreed to assist him with this.

31.2 Website Group. Cllr Daniel Mathews reported that a considerable amount of material had now been forwarded to the supplier; although no longer a parish councillor Christine Schwick had agreed to complete her role in the project.

31.3 Yearbook Group (notes available from meeting 7th May).

Group leader Cllr Peter Long reported that the group had considered a proposal to change the publication date from March to April to reduce the amount of work required over the Christmas holiday period. It was agreed that, in principle, the Parish Council would have no objection to moving the Annual Parish Meeting to a date in April.

31.4 Speed Watch Group. It was noted that additional constraints had been placed on the group's activities since the appointment of the Police Commissioner.

31.5 Community housing Group. The Chairman reported that Origin Housing Association had been in contact with the Planning Officer at NHDC re the site adjacent to Walkdens with a view to holding pre-application discussions. Howard Cottage Housing Association had informed that it was still pursuing an interest in the village.

31.6 Aircraft noise monitoring Group. The Chairman reported that several parishioners had expressed an interest in contributing. It was agreed that the Parish Council would be pleased for a parishioner to lead the group and report back to the Parish Council as and when necessary.

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

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

(see also item 23.1 above)

32.1 Police. PC Paul Marina attended and informed that this would be his final visit pending his retirement later in the year. His colleague PC Nic Musto would be taking over his role as the rural areas officer. Cllr Bridget Macey reported plans to publicly thank him at the Ashwell Show. It was agreed that she and Cllr

John Connolly co-ordinate this. Cllr Bridget Macey reported that she had requested input from PCSO Chris Braybrook on home security advice for residents.

32.2 Village Hall. Cllr Mark White reported that he had attended the recent AGM. The financial situation was optimistic; support from the Parish Council was appreciated and requested for a further year. It was hoped that the outstanding loan would soon be paid off. Improvements to the car park had been proposed.

32.3 Museum. It was reported that the section 106 funding for the new entrance project agreed to be released by NHDC was still outstanding.

32.4 Pavilion. Parishioner Graham Scott reiterated his concerns that the hot water system supplying the showers was not working and had been problematic for some time. Cllr Peter Long responded that a contractor was due to attend tomorrow to undertake immediate repairs. The Parish Council was aware of the long-term problems associated with the inadequate electrical capacity for the whole building. It had recently been agreed to obtain quotes for extensive rewiring and to pursue the possibility of section 106 funding for this. Parishioner Mark Stier wished to draw the Parish Council's attention to the poor state of the chairs and tables. It was agreed that replacement would be looked into. **R&F**

33. Dates of future meetings. It was noted that it had been agreed to omit the months of January and July from the schedule of full council meetings and that procedures had been put in place to approve the accounts and sign cheques if necessary. The Chairman proposed that a decision be made by 18th June whether there was a need to call a Planning Committee meeting in July; also if there had been developments in any other areas that would necessitate a full council meeting.

Meeting closed at 9.00pm

Declaration of a 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.'

The Chairman reported that there was a requirement for two items to be discussed *in camera*.

Appendix 1 – General material received

Hard copy – 'Items on the table'

1. North Herts District Council 'Members Information' w/e 3, 10, 17, 24, 31 May.

(includes press release PR2387 'Free advice for rural businesses'.

www.north-herts.gov.uk/news_display.htm?id=60512)

2. *The Caravan Club Magazine* July 2013. (includes article on walk around Ashwell from Ashridge Farm caravan site).

By Email

3. HAPTC Briefings and Bulletins.

4. *Rural News* from PC Nic Musto.

5. *CMS News* Spring 2013

6. SLCC News Bulletin

7. NALC Chairman's report

8. Arts, Museums & Heritage Forum Newsletter June 2013 from North Herts Museums Service.

Chairman's Signature.....Date.....
