

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Ashwell Parish Council held on Wednesday 1st May 2013 in the Parish Room at 8.00pm

Present: Councillors Peter Long (Chairman), Mike Berry, Jane Buxton, John Connolly, Martin Hoffman, Bridget Macey, Daniel Mathews, Christine Schwick, Mark White. There were no apologies. The Clerk was also in attendance. Members of the public: One parishioner.

1. Election of Chairman

Cllr Peter Long was proposed (Cllr Martin Hoffman), seconded (Cllr John Connolly) and elected.

2. Election of Vice-Chairman.

Cllr Martin Hoffman was proposed (Cllr Mike Berry), seconded (Cllr John Connolly) and elected.

3. Code of Conduct

3.1 The Ashwell Parish Council Code of Conduct, adopted 1st August 2012, and the arrangements for the grant of dispensations and the provisions for publicity were noted. It was also noted that councillors' Disclosable Pecuniary Interests were available on the NHDC and Parish Council's websites. The new Parish Council website, currently in production, would include further information on the interests of councillors.

3.2 The document 'Openness and transparency on personal interests: A guide for councillors' published by the Department for Communities and Local Government in March 2013 was noted.

4. Standing Orders

It was *resolved* to continue with the existing orders, based on the NALC model, although noted that they should be reviewed and minor amendments made at some point.

5. Financial Regulations.

It was *resolved* to continue with the existing orders, based on the NALC model, with the following minor amendment. In any month where no full meeting of the council was held, the monthly accounts and bills for payment prepared by the RFO could be approved by any two of the bank signatories (see also item 19 below).

6. Appointments and nominations.

6.1 Committee Members All members agreed to continue as previously (see below for membership details). It was noted that, where necessary, committee chairmen would be elected at the first meetings of the committees. It was agreed that the new councillor who filled the current vacancy would be invited to join the Streets & Environment Committee.

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).

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

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

Finance Committee - (i) it was noted that this was comprised of committee chairmen and that the Internal Auditor also attended, (ii) the proposal to include the leader of the Neighbourhood Plan working group was agreed.

Planning Committee – all parish councillors.

6.2 Parish Council Working Groups

6.2.1 Neighbourhood Plan Group Cllr Daniel Mathews (group leader) and parishioner volunteers.

6.2.2 Website Group Cllrs Daniel Mathews and Christine Schwick.

6.2.3 Yearbook Group Cllr Peter Long (group leader) and parishioner volunteers.

6.2.4 Speeding watch Group Cllrs Martin Hoffman (group leader), Peter Long and Bridget Macey.

6.2.5 Community housing Group Cllrs Peter Long and Jane Buxton.

6.2.6 Aircraft noise monitoring Group Cllr Mike Berry (group leader) and parishioner volunteers.

7.3 To note appointments to other bodies and representatives.

7.3.1 Ashwell Village Trust It was noted that, 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. It was agreed that the Clerk of the Parish Council would continue to act as the Clerk to the trustees. The proceedings of the 2013 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 noted that none of the positions was due for reconsideration this year.

7.3.3 Ashwell Museum It was noted that no official appointment was made by the Parish Council. Cllr Martin Hoffman, Chairman of the Trustees, agreed to continue to report on any relevant matters.

7.3.4 Ashwell School Governing Body It was agreed that Cllr John Connolly be proposed to the School Governing Body.

7.3.5 Village Hall It was noted that no official appointment was made by the Parish Council. Cllr Mark White agreed to continue as representative.

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 3rd April 2013

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

9. COUNCILLOR VACANCIES It was noted that the latest communication from the Electoral Services Manager at NHDC advised that there was a vacancy for one parish councillor. As ten electors had made a written request to NHDC for a poll, a bye-election would be held. It was noted that the deadline for receipt of nominations was Thursday 23rd May and that the polling day would be Thursday 20th June. It was agreed that, dependent on the outcome of this, co-options to fill any outstanding vacancies would be considered.

10. MATTERS OF REPORT

10.1 From previous meetings: (April Council, 132.1) 90/91 bus service/further communications. Cllr Daniel Mathews reported further complaints from parishioners to the county council re (i) the poor state of vehicles, (ii) the timetable, (iii) failure of the bus to stop and pick up waiting passengers. It was agreed to continue to log complaints and to ensure that the new county councillor, following the election this week, was fully aware of the situation.

11. OTHER CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

11.1 Letters and notices (3) from NHDC as electoral authority re County Councillor North Herts Rural elections on Thursday 2nd May; notices displayed as requested.

11.2 Email from CPRE Hertfordshire re Rural Living Awards Scheme; two categories – Rural Community Living and Rural Environment. Also awards for a young person aged up to 18 and an adult making outstanding contributions to Rural Life. Deadline for nominations 30th June.

11.3 Letter (by email) from Chairman Hertfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board re new health and social care changes from April. Further information on www.hertsdirect.org/hertshelp

11.4 Letter of thanks from the Chairman of the Village Hall Trustees, Sam Wallace, re grant of £3,500; 'this will enable the outstanding loan to be reduced to £10,000.'

11.5 Email from Parishioner Richard Slatter giving information on aircraft overflying the village.

11.6 Email from NHDC requesting use of the Recreation Ground for Play Rangers sessions, Tuesdays and Thursdays 15.00-16.30 for four weeks from w/c 29th July. This was agreed. **Clerk**

11.7 Email from the Clairefest organising team with an application to hire the Recreation Ground on 7th September as the location for their 2013 fund raising event. Some concerns were raised as to the suitability and adequacy of the Recreation Ground to host this event. Councillors were uncertain as to whether it was proposed to be a low-key event similar to the Jubilee picnic or whether something more akin to a music festival was planned. It was agreed to request clarification on several points including:-

(i) What was the planned number of attendees? Insurance cover would require precise numbers; this would need to be set in advance and monitored/restricted on the day. (ii) Was the organising team aware that it would not be possible to prevent free access to the area and thus sale of tickets would be difficult? (iii) Was the organising team aware that the electricity supply to the pavilion was not adequate for anything other than a low-key event and an additional supply might have to be brought in? (iv) Was the organising team aware that the toilet facilities were limited and additional units might have to be brought in? (v) What was planned for parking facilities?

It was agreed that the matter be further considered once a response to these questions had been received.

11.8 Letter from HAPTC inviting nominations for Executive Committee. Deadline 31st May 2013.

11.9 Email from NHDC re new Parish Charter; 'The aim of the Parish Charter is to ensure both officers and councillors at all tiers of local government, including Parish, Town and Community Councils, maintain effective ways of working. The Charter includes information on how we will consult and also practical support we can provide.'

12. REPORT RE PLANNING COMMITTEE

12.1 Notifications from NHDC as Planning Authority to Parish Council as consultee.

It was agreed, consistent with policy, that as concerns had been raised by either a parishioner or a parish councillor re all of the items notified by NHDC (see below 12.1.1 -12.1.6) that a meeting of the Planning Committee be called to consider them on site (Sunday 5th May 9.00am).

12.1.1 Case Ref No: 13/00748/1CAC 30 West End.

Conservation Area: Demolition of existing detached bungalow and garage.

12.1.2 Case Ref No: 13/00571/1 30 West End.

Full Planning Permission: Replacement detached four bedroomed dwelling and shed following demolition of existing bungalow and garage.

12.1.3 Case Ref No: 13/00852/1CAC 24 West End.

Conservation Area: Partial demolition of boundary wall.

12.1.4 Case Ref No: 13/00851/1HH 24 West End.

Full Permission Householder: Partial demolition of boundary wall and rebuild section to match existing.

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

Full Permission Householder: Single storey front and rear extensions.

12.1.6 Case Ref No: 13/00618/1HH East Lodge, 22 Lucas Lane.

Full Permission Householder: Alterations to detached garden store to facilitate its use as a residential annex.

12.2 Tree applications to NHDC.

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

It was noted that a letter of objection had been sent to NHDC.

12.3 Notifications on decisions from NHDC as Planning Authority.

12.3.1 Application no. 13/00328/1PUD Ashwell End Farm, Loves Lane. For Mr Higgins. Conversion of existing outbuilding into habitable space.

Proposed use refused.

12.3.2 Application no. 12/00228/1HH 18 Angells Meadow. For Mr N Wilkinson and Mrs K Marshall.

Full Permission Householder: Single storey side extension and alterations.

Conditional Permission.

12.3.3 Application no. 13/00309/1HH The Knoll, Claybush Road. For Mr and Mrs Macleod.

Full Permission Householder: Front entrance porch, rear lobby and rear conservatory. Erection of detached machinery store.

Standard Conditional Permission.

12.3.4 Application no. 13/00511/1LB 60 High Street. For Mr and Mrs van Maurik.

Listed Building: Replace two first floor single glazed windows on front elevation with double glazed windows of similar appearance.

Conditional Listed Building Consent.

It was noted that the request to the Conservation Officer for clarification re double glazing on listed buildings was still outstanding.

Clerk

12.3.5 Application no. 13/00385/1DOC 40 Kingsland Way. For Oakbridge Homes Ltd.

Condition 15: Environmental Risk Assessment.

Refusal of details.

12.4 Development at Whitby Farm. Nothing further to report.

12.5 Developments at 35 High Street and Kingsland Terrace. It was reported that a response had been received to the letter listing significant concerns. The owner had apologised, taken action to address the concerns and given a mobile number for use by parishioners wishing to contact her directly in the future.

12.6 Other planning correspondence

12.6.1 Letter from Planning Officer re amendments to application 12/02417/1HH.

Full Permission Householder: Part two storey and part first floor extension with raised ridge height and extension over vehicular access, including two dormer windows to Lane elevation. Erection link building to main house and removal of chimney.

12.6.2 Copy of response to NHDC Housing Options consultation from Parishioner David Short.

12.6.3 Proposal for new rectory. Letter from PCC representative Andrew Gillborn seeking to clarify that, should plans proceed, there would be no question of the Church ever selling the new rectory.

12.6.4 Notification from HCC re grant of planning permission, including section 106 agreements, for biogas farm on south side of the A505. It was noted that parishioners at Slip End had previously registered their concerns re lorry traffic and odour. It was agreed to pass on any concerns raised at this stage to District Councillor Andrew Young.

13. REPORT FROM STREETS & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

(Committee Chairman Cllr Mike Berry)

13.1 (April Council 135.1) Footway Lighting/Herts Highways survey. Cllr Mark White agreed to update the survey he had undertaken earlier in the year.

13.2 NHDC waste and recycling service/new locations for bins. It was reported that the NHDC officer had agreed to the proposals for relocating the waste bins currently in Alms Lane and also to the provision of a brown composting bin at the Cemetery; the latter would be emptied at no charge.

13.3 Sewerage. Cllr Mike Berry updated councillors on the repair/replacement works by Anglian Water currently underway in Hodwell, Swan Street and Mill Street; the old clay sewers were being re-lined with modern materials. It was noted that reassurances re the capacity of the system to cope was requested for all planning applications that would create additional demands.

13.4 (April Council 135.3) Carters Pond. It was reported that the ailing Chestnut tree had been removed and replaced with a Common Hornbeam. The seat and litter bin had been refurbished and reinstalled. Peter Greener had written an item for the *May Ashwell Village News*; this was applauded.

13.5 Other correspondence. It was noted that this would be considered at the next committee meeting.

14. REPORT FROM RECREATION & FACILITIES COMMITTEE

(Committee Chairman Cllr Daniel Mathews)

(next meeting scheduled for Monday 20th May)

14.1 Pavilion. Cllr Mathews reported that the new kitchen had been installed and interior redecoration completed.

15. REPORT FROM CHARACTER AREAS COMMITTEE

(Committee Chairman Cllr Martin Hoffman)

15.1 Cllr Hoffman reported that now the evenings were light a meeting would be held on site at the Springs.

15.2 Watercress. Cllr Hoffman reported that an enquiry had been received re the management of the watercress (selective clearance undertaken at regular intervals following the guidance of local expert Trevor James). The enquirer had commended the council for its rapid response.

16. REPORT FROM FINANCE COMMITTEE

16.1 Chairman's report on meeting Monday 29th April (draft minutes available).

16.1.1 The following had been proposed (i) an allocated reserve to be set up to fund the clerk's pension, (ii) £3,000 from the Character Area Committee budget to be placed in the Allocated Reserve no. I, previously called 'Springs', now to be called 'Character Areas', (iii) the sum remaining in the Recreation and Facilities Committee budget 'expenditure from grants' category to be placed in an Allocated Reserve called 'Pavilion'.

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

16.1.2 Audit and Annual Report. It was noted that the Annual Return and audit documents would be proposed to the June Council for approval and signature. It was noted that the Annual Report was required to be published by 30th June. It was agreed that copies would be placed on the notice board and website and be obtainable from the Clerk; its availability would also be publicised in the *Ashwell Village News*.

16.2 Approval of May Accounts and Bills for Payment (see Appendix 2). Some concern was raised at the cost of the professional delivery of the last newsletter given the problems there had been. It was noted that this was the first time such a service had been procured and without access to accurate and comprehensive address lists had been less than successful. It was agreed that for the next delivery a parishioner volunteer group for deliveries be set up.

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

Clerk

17. REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS

17.1 Neighbourhood Plan Group. Group leader Cllr Daniel Mathews briefly outlined the phases of the process required; this included a public consultation phase. Grant funding was available for some parts; the local authority would cover the cost of the referendum. A first meeting of volunteers had been scheduled.

17.2 Website Group. Cllr Daniel Mathews reported that packages of data were being forwarded to the supplier. A plea was made for all councillors to forward details for their personal profiles and updated photographs if wanted.

17.3 Yearbook Group. Group leader Cllr Peter Long reported that a meeting was scheduled for next week. The group was keen to recruit an apprentice editor for when the current incumbent retired. An individual to undertake the handling of the finances would also be good.

17.4 Councillor Hoffman, the Speed Watch group leader, reported that the leadership of this has changed. Having been led by the Police it was now to be led by the new Hertfordshire Police Crime Commissioner (PCC). He had received no direct strategic communication from the PCC. Speeding motorists will apparently still be written to, most likely, by the Police. Some of the promised changes appear now not to be taking place (e.g. the use of speed guns which are used elsewhere in the country). Barley Parish Council Speed Watch had ceased operations due to the lack of information between the Police and the PCC regarding this matter.

Our group will continue during May and then review the situation. Because of some of the high speeds still recorded, it is desirable for the safety of Ashwell residents of all ages that this program continues. The name "Speed Watch" is to change.

17.5 Community housing Group. It was agreed that Howard Cottage Housing Association and Origin Housing Association be contacted for an update. **Clerk**

17.6 Aircraft noise monitoring Group. Group leader Cllr Mike Berry reported that he was to schedule a meeting.

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

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

18.1 Village Sign. Cllr Christine Schwick reported that this was to be installed on 9th May for the official unveiling during the At Home on Sunday 12th.

18.2 Museum. Cllr Martin Hoffman reported that NHDC had agreed to release section 106 funding for the new entrance project.

18.3 Sewerage. Parishioner John Hare questioned whether residents were adequately aware of the responsibilities of the utility company re shared sewers and the service from the main sewer onto a property; the rules on this had changed in 2011. He had written to the Parish Council on this matter and it had duly been recorded but following reports to the recent Annual Parish Meeting he wondered whether wider publicity was merited. It was agreed that this be included in the next *Ashwell Village News* item and a future newsletter.

19. Dates of future meetings. The Chairman proposed that the number of full council meetings be reduced. It was noted that some parish councils did not hold a meeting in the month when many councillors were away on summer holidays. It was also noted that the first Wednesday of January 2014 fell on a bank holiday. A proposal was made, for this council year, ie until May 2014, that only ten meetings be held, omitting the months of January and July (see also item 5 above).

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 5, 12, 19, 26 March.

By Email

2. HAPTC Briefings and Bulletins.

3. *Rural News* from PC Nic Musto.

<i>Chairman's</i> <i>Signature</i>	<i>Date</i>
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