

Minutes of a meeting of the Ashwell Parish Council held on Wednesday 3rd April 2013 in the Parish Room at 8.00pm

Present: Councillors Peter Long (Chairman), Mike Berry, Martin Hoffman, Bridget Macey, Daniel Mathews, Christine Schwick, Mark White. The Clerk was also in attendance.

Members of the public: Two parishioners.

129. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Councillors Jane Buxton (work commitment), John Connolly (family holiday).

130. MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING 6th March 2013

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

131. COUNCILLOR VACANCIES

It was noted that Cllr David Cook had not attended any meetings for more than 6 months and had thus ceased to be qualified. The Chairman reported that he had received an email from David Cook regretting that this had been due to work commitments. It was agreed that his input and particular expertise had been valued and appreciated. A casual vacancy was declared.

It was agreed that the vacancy be formally reported to the Electoral Services Manager at NHDC as soon as possible. It was understood that a bye-election could be claimed by ten electors within 14 working days of the vacancy being declared. Should no bye-election be claimed, it was agreed to consider, at the May Council meeting, whether to make a co-option to fill the vacancy.

It was noted that it would not be possible to ask for a bye-election to fill the other two vacancies as the time period allowed for this had passed.

132. MATTERS OF REPORT

132.1 (March Council 120.2) Cutting of the 202 Taxibus service and changes to the 90/91 bus service. Cllr Mathews reported that details of the new service had been published and new timetables displayed. As had been agreed, the situation would continue to be monitored (see also 140.5 below).

132.2 (March Council, 120.5) Further complaints re dog fouling. Cllr Christine Schwick reported that this continued to be a subject of concern to parishioners. She had been in contact with the police and relevant enforcement officers at NHDC; all had agreed that offenders would be pursued.

132.3 (March Council 121.3) Aircraft noise/proposal for working group. It was reported that several parishioners had volunteered to contribute. Cllr Mike Berry agreed to co-ordinate and lead the group.

MWB

132.4 The following scheduled meetings were noted for Wednesday 1st May, AGM of the Ashwell Village Trust at 7.45 pm, followed by the AGM of the Allotment for Exercise and Recreation, followed by the AGM of the Parish Council at 8pm.

133. OTHER CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

133.1 Emails via HAPTC from Herts Sports Partnership re funding for Community Games 2013. Invitation to a briefing session 26th March. It was reported that details had been forwarded to organisers of the village sports.

133.2 Email re NHS Hertfordshire; new East and North Herts Clinical Commissioning Group (PCT's cease to exist from 1st April).

133.3 Email re Rural Business Advice Service; collaborative project of east and north Hertfordshire councils for business owners.

133.4 Official notification from NHDC Electoral Services re Hertfordshire County Council Elections, 2nd May. Request to display notices.

133.5 Copy of letter from NHDC Acting Corporate Legal Manager and Monitoring Officer, Anthony Roche, to Cllr Martin Hoffman informing him that a complaint had been made against him by a parishioner relating to the Springs. It was noted that the first stage in the procedure followed by the Monitoring Officer was to exclude complaints that were considered not relevant or vexatious. The Monitoring Officer had concluded *'Having considered the matters brought to my attention I have determined that they do not amount to a potential breach of the Ashwell Parish Council Code of Conduct, therefore merit no further investigation and the matter is now closed.'* It was reported that the complaint had been made by Parishioner Sam Crawley. There had been an exchange of emails, copied to the Clerk, between him and Cllr Martin Hoffman in relation to the Parish Council's decision to ban off-lead dogs from the Springs. Mr Crawley had objected to this and had questioned whether Cllr Hoffman had made the decision himself and without consultation. Cllr Hoffman and the Clerk had both written clarifying that the problem of poorly controlled dogs and dog fouling at the Springs had been a long-standing issue and of

concern to many parishioners as well as the Parish Council. The decision to introduce restrictions at the Springs had not been taken lightly and had been agreed by the full Parish Council.

Cllr Hoffman expressed his concerns that not only had he not been informed that a complaint had been made against him but also that he had been given no information as to what the allegations were. Cllr Hoffman reported that he had taken these matters up with the Monitoring Officer at NHDC.

133.6 Information via HAPTC re Parish and Town Council Precepts (Referendums) Bill. Cllr Daniel Mathews agreed to review and report back as necessary. **DMM**

133.7 Consultation on Proposed Modifications to the 'Minerals and Waste Local Plan: Strategic Sites and Policies' for Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire, and Luton Borough Councils. Deadline 15th May 2013.

http://www.bedford.gov.uk/environment_and_planning/planning_town_and_country/what_is_planning_policy/documents_of_the_bdf/minerals_waste.aspx

134. REPORT FROM PLANNING COMMITTEE

(next meeting scheduled for Sunday 7th April, 9.00am)

134.1 (March Council 122.4) New on-line only system of communication with NHDC as Planning Authority. It was noted that this had commenced from April 1st. All applications would now be listed on the main council agenda and considered at that meeting. If concerns had been raised, either by a parishioner or by a Parish Councillor, a site meeting would be called. Meetings would normally be scheduled for the following Sunday allowing sufficient time for notifications.

134.2 Application for consultee comment

Listed Building consent: 13/00511/1LB 60 High Street. Replace two first floor single glazed windows on front elevation with double glazed windows of a similar appearance.

Concerns were expressed that there appeared to be some inconsistency re whether double glazing was or was not permitted on a listed building. It was agreed that the application be considered at a site meeting of the Planning Committee (Sunday 7th April, 9.00am).

134.3 Notifications from NHDC as Planning Authority

134.3.1 Application no. 12/02865/1HH Sales Acre, Buttway. For Mr Samuel Wallace.

Full Permission Householder: Two storey front and side extension and single storey side extension following demolition of existing side extension. Detached double carport with log store.

Conditional Permission.

134.3.2 Application no. 13/00071/1HH

26 Hodwell. For Mr and Mrs Highland.

Full Permission Householder: Single storey rear extension with dormer window to facilitate loft conversion.

Refused.

134.3.3 Application 13/00220/1TCA. 35 High Street. For Mr T Gawthroup (Applicant M Fathers Tree Care). Reduction by maximum of 20% of 1 Mulberry tree to reduce height.

No objection.

134.3.4 Development at 40 Kingsland Way.

(i) 13/00431/1DOC Condition 3: Details and/or samples of materials to be used on all external elevations and the roof of the development hereby permitted shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before the development is commenced and shall be implemented as approved.

Approval of details.

(ii) 13/00432/1DOC Condition 4: Landscaping details

Approval of details.

134.3.5 Developments at Whitby Farm and at 35 High Street.

(i) 12/02683/1DOC Details reserved by condition 29 - parts a,b,c and d (details of hard and soft landscaping) of planning permission ref no. 12/00812/1 granted on 31 May 2012.

Approval of details.

(ii) 12/02684/1DOC Details reserved by condition 3 (roof materials and brick details) of planning permission ref no. 12/00812/1 granted on 31 May 2012.

Approval of details.

(iii) 12/02685/1DOC Details reserved by condition 4 (sample brick panels) of planning permission ref no. 12/00812/1 granted on 31 May 2012.

Approval of details.

(iv) 12/02686/1DOC Details reserved by condition 5 (external finish to all windows and door joinery and weatherboarding) of planning permission ref no. 12/00812/1 granted on 31 May 2012.

Approval of details.

(v) 12/02687/1DOC Details reserved by condition 6 (details of window glazing bars) of planning permission ref no. 12/00812/1 granted on 31 May 2012.

Approval of details.

134.4 Parishioners concerns re developments at Kingsland Terrace and 35 High Street

It was reported that numerous complaints had been received from parishioners and business owners about the very considerable disruption caused by contractors working on the Kingsland Terrace/Silver Street cottages and the property at 35 High Street. Contractors had commenced work without satisfying condition 12 of the planning permission and without any notice to neighbours. Their vehicles had parked on the pavement, causing danger and obstruction to pedestrians; they had also left building materials on the pavement. They had, without authority, blocked off the public highway with pallets and bollards in both Silver Street and the High Street. They had, again without authority, rendered both roads impassable to traffic for considerable periods and at busy times as children return home from the village primary school. There had been a significant effect, as a result, on neighbouring businesses including the village pharmacy which by nature of its business has a high proportion of elderly and disabled customers visiting the premises. They had not left sites clean, safe and tidy nor had they removed mud and debris from the highway.

It was noted that the Logan Homes development at Whitby Farm was proceeding with a minimum of disruption. Condition 12 of the planning permission had been satisfied, the neighbours had been kept informed of progress by letter, vehicle movements had been planned to avoid busy times, the need for off-road parking had been minimised, the site had been left secure and tidy, and any mud or debris on the public highway cleared up each day.

It was reported that the concerns had been forwarded to the NHDC Planning Officer. She had responded that any action would be the responsibility of Environmental Health and/or the Highways Authority. Concern was expressed that imposing planning conditions on developers was of little value if there was no effective enforcement.

It was agreed that the Parish Council was supportive of those who had complained and agreed to write to the property owners requesting that the specific complaints be addressed and that they undertake to ensure that their contractors behaved in a significantly more responsible manner as the project progressed. It was agreed that the letter be copied to officers and members at the relevant authorities, site neighbours and Logan Homes Ltd.

Clerk

Cllr Bridget Macey reported that the PCSO had been kept informed; he encouraged parishioners to use the 101 telephone number to report serious concerns.

134.5 (March Council 122.3) NHDC consultation on Housing Options and the Community Infrastructure Levy

It was reported that further correspondence from parishioners and copies of responses to NHDC had been received. It was noted that the Clerk had submitted the Parish Council's response to NHDC as agreed; following the Annual Parish Meeting and the publication of further information in the newsletter there had been no reason to alter the proposals made at previous Parish Council meetings.

134.6 Proposals for Neighbourhood Plan

It was noted that the material in the existing Parish Plan would require updating and additional items included. It was envisaged that the final document would be ready for the required referendum in May 2014. Over ten parishioners had already volunteered for the working group and it was agreed that a public meeting be organised to further publicise and progress the project. Cllr Daniel Mathews was proposed to lead the group; this was agreed. It was also agreed that an individual be identified willing to undertake the administration.

135. REPORT FROM STREETS & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

(Committee Chairman Cllr Mike Berry)

135.1 (March Council 123.1) Footway Lighting/Herts Highways survey. Cllr Mike Berry reported that nothing had been received and he agreed to pursue it.

MWB

135.2 (March Council 123.2) NHDC waste and recycling service for Sunnymead Orchard. Cllr Bridget Macey reported that plans had been agreed and were scheduled to commence when the new district-wide system started in June.

135.3 (March Council 123.3) Chestnut tree on Carters Pond. Cllr Mike Berry reported that the ailing Chestnut tree had now been removed following a long period of monitoring and increasing concerns. A replacement tree had been selected (a Common Hornbeam) and was scheduled to be planted shortly; the seat and litter bin would then be reinstalled.

136. REPORT FROM RECREATION & FACILITIES COMMITTEE

(draft minutes meeting 11th March; next meeting scheduled for Monday 20th May)

(Committee Chairman Cllr Daniel Mathews)

136.1 Pavilion interior works. Cllr Peter Long reported that these were scheduled to commence this week.

136.2 Public toilets. Cllr Peter Long reported that he had been called out to an incident when a young child had been locked in by the automatic door locks; she had been unable to press the emergency release button. The reasons for this were not entirely clear and he hoped that this had been a one-off incident. It was, however, agreed to organise additional signage both on the inside and outside. It was also agreed that the time clocks be re-set for the summer months.

WPL/Clerk

137. REPORT FROM CHARACTER AREAS COMMITTEE

(Committee Chairman Cllr Martin Hoffman)

137.1 The Springs. Cllr Martin Hoffman reported that an on-site meeting would be organised when the better weather arrived.

137.2 Arbury Banks. Cllr Martin Hoffman reported that he was to schedule a meeting with the landowner to discuss possible improvements to the area.

138. REPORT FROM FINANCE COMMITTEE

(next meeting scheduled for Monday 29th April)

138.1 Proposal to support claim by Museum for section 106 funding for new entrance works. Cllr Martin Hoffman wished it to be noted that he was a trustee of the Museum. He reported that he was scheduled to meet with the NHDC Listed Building Officer and a representative from English Heritage next week.

It was **resolved** that the Parish Council was in support of the proposal.

138.2 Approval of April Accounts and Bills for Payment (see Appendix 2). Item13. Cllrs Christine Schwick and Martin Hoffman declared interests as trustees of the Village Hall. Cllr Schwick also wished it to be noted that she had a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in relation to the Village Hall. It was noted that she had a dispensation in place for this and she was not required to leave the meeting.

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

Clerk

139. REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS

139.1 Website Group and Cllr Christine Schwick reported that she was continuing to supply data for transfer to the new site.

139.2 Yearbook Group Cllr Peter Long thanked all for their input. It was noted that a meeting was to be scheduled; this would combine a de-brief on the last edition and agreement of plans for the next.

139.3 Community Housing Group It was agreed that Howard Cottage Housing Association be contacted for an update.

Clerk

139.4 Speeding Watch Group Cllr Martin Hoffman reported that new arrangements for equipment were being progressed. He again expressed his frustration at the bureaucracy involved.

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

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

140.1 Annual Parish Meeting Wednesday 20th March (draft minutes distributed and on website).

Re item 3.1 Attendance of parish councillors at meetings. Parish councillors expressed their disappointment that negative views had again been voiced at a public meeting. Some parishioners seemed to judge parish councillors' worth and performance only on their attendance record at meetings. It had been pointed out on many occasions that parish councillors undertook many more tasks than sitting in meetings. It was therefore very inappropriate to use this as a measurement of their value. It was agreed that a positive effort be made to publicise all the work that parish councillors undertook as volunteers and what they achieved for the benefit of the community.

140.2 Police. See 134.4 above.

140.3 Henry Colbron Trust. It was noted that the representatives of the Trustees, the Merchant Taylors' Company, would visit the village on Friday 19th April.

140.4 Ashwell School. The Chairman proposed that Cllr John Connolly be put forward to fill the school governor position; this was agreed.

140.5 Bus services. (See also 132.1 above) A parishioner representing bus users expressed their concerns re the new service. The vehicle she had travelled on between Ashwell (09.47) and Letchworth (13.30) was 'old and rickety' resulting in a very uncomfortable journey. There had been no indication of the operator's name or contact details to enable a complaint to be made. It was noted that there were various service criteria required by the operator and it was agreed to contact the appropriate officer at Herts County Council to take the matter further.

DMM/Clerk

Meeting closed at 9.10pm

Appendix 1 – General material received

Hard copy – 'Items on the table'

1. North Herts District Council 'Members Information' w/e 1, 8, 15, 22 March.

By Email

2. HAPTC Briefings and Bulletins (28th March issue with link to new DCLG guide on Code of Conduct/personal interests) **3.** *Clerks & Councils Direct* March 2013 **4.** *Rural News* from PC Marina.

APPENDIX 2							
ACCOUNTS AND BILLS FOR PAYMENT -April 2013				Date		3rd April 2013	
Proposed by Cllr White		Seconded by Cllr Berry					
				£	£	£	£
	Income			Grants	Precept	Other	Total
122	Santander interest a/c	bank interest				2.27	2.27
123	Neville Funeral Service	chapel rent March				68.75	68.75
124-126	various	yearbook adverts				140.00	140.00
127	NHDC	rural grant		1000.00			1000.00
128	Royston Vet Centre	yearbook advert				125.00	125.00
129	HMRC	VAT reclaim (01/10/12 to 06/03/13)				1447.00	1447.00
	Total			1000.00		1,783.02	2,783.02
Committees							
	Expenses		A&O	CA	S & E	R&F	VAT
	By Direct Debit						Total
208	E.ON (27/3/13)	pavilion electricity (30/01/13- 12/03/13)			60.85	3.04	63.89
1	Affinity Water (01/04/13)	allotments water			8.48		8.48
2	Affinity Water (01/04/13)	pavilion water			51.35		51.35
	By Cheque						
3	J C M Porter	Clerk's salary	1069.44				1,069.44
4	J C M Porter	reimbursement office expen	32.97			8.60	41.57
5	M Barden	Environmental Cleansing		38.92	120.74	58.38	218.04
6	M Chandler	Duties at Pavilion and Rec				60.12	60.12
7	Post Office	tax&NI to Inland Revenue	280.60		54.40		335.00
8	K Clifford	Premises duties				30.00	30.00
9	K Clifford	Reimbursement expenses				34.14	40.97
10	The Liberty Corporation L	cleaning toilets 04/02 to 03/03				80.00	16.00
11	D J Granger	grounds maintenance (worksheet no.1	30.00			215.00	55.00
12	SLCC annual membership	annual membership	145.00				145.00
13	Ashwell Village Hall Trust	grant	3500.00				3500.00
14	East Herts Signs & Engraving	cemetery plaques				104.00	20.80
15	M Fathers	remove tree and grind out stump			700.00		700.00
16	M Barden	Reimbursement expenses			12.00		12.00
	Total		5,028.01	68.92	887.14	641.47	107.23
	Outstanding Accounts						
	Yearbook 2013 adverts -misc					1,810.00	
	Yearbook 2012 adverts -misc					870.00	
	Football Club					850.00	
	Total						2,680.00
	Money at bank		Date	26th March 2013			
	Current Account					27,572.04	
	Deposit Account					29,533.41	
	Total						57,105.45
	Cheques banked after/BACS transfers after						1572.00
	Cheques drawn but not cleared/DD's outstanding						1311.42
	Total						57,366.03
	Total after paying this months cheques						50,603.26
	Total in current a/c after paying this months cheques						21,069.85