

Minutes of a meeting of the Ashwell Parish Council held on Wednesday 5th December 2012 in the Parish Room at 8.00pm

Present: Councillors Peter Long (Chairman), Jane Buxton, John Connolly, Martin Hoffman, Bridget Macey, Daniel Mathews, Christine Schwick.

The Clerk was also in attendance.

Members of the public: Five parishioners (one re item 95.2, three re item 95.3 one re item 95.4).

85. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Councillors Mike Berry (other commitment),

David Cook (work commitment), Mark White (other commitment).

86. MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING 7th November 2012

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

87. MATTERS OF REPORT

87.1 (November Council 76.2) Localism Act/Code of Conduct/ Standing Orders/Declarations of Interest.

87.1.1 Standing Orders. Cllr Mathews reported that he had worked through the NALC model and cross referenced this with the current Ashwell Parish Council document; a final draft proposal would be distributed for consideration at the January meeting. **DMM**

87.1.2 Code of Conduct. It was noted that an agreed code had been adopted and declarations made. Declarations were on the website and available from the Clerk. To ensure that all members' personal interests in relation to village organisations were in the public domain it was agreed that all should supply a list of their interests in local groups, whether as officials or ordinary members, by the January Council meeting and that these would be placed on the website. **ALL**

87.1.3 Dispensations for members with Disclosable Pecuniary Interests to allow their participation in meetings. It was noted that Cllr Jane Buxton had been granted a dispensation in relation to the approval of the monthly accounts, her husband being an employee of the Parish Council and in receipt of a monthly wages cheque. Cllr Peter Long reported that Cllr Christine Schwick had submitted a written request for dispensation in relation to her husband's financial support for the Village Hall; this had been granted.

It was noted that, as part of the Localism Act 2011, previous legislation in relation to members' interests and the setting of the precept and budget had changed. A proposal was made, following the advice given by the SLCC (Society for Local Council Clerks), that a dispensation be granted to all members in relation to the setting of the precept and the budget.

It was *resolved* that the proposal be accepted.

87.2 (November Council 76.3) Village sign proposal. Cllr Christine Schwick reported that the new sign would be ready in the new year. She would put forward some proposals for an event to mark its installation. **CVS**

87.3 (November Council 76.4) HCC publications on road casualty, traffic and transport data. It was noted that Cllr Mark White would report to the January Council meeting. **MNW**

87.4 (November Council 76.6) Report of parking problem in Dixies Close. It was noted that Cllr Mark White would report to the January Council meeting. **MNW**

87.5 (November Council 77.4) Email from Derek Wootton, Emergency Planning Officer at NHDC re use of village halls as emergency reception centres. It was noted that this had been forwarded to Mr Sam Wallace, Chairman of the Trustees of the Village Hall. It had contained no new information and no action was required.

88. OTHER CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

88.1 Letter from Herts County Council re LTP3 Active Travel Strategy consultation. Deadline Friday 18th November 2012. Details on www.hertsdirect.org

88.2 Letter from Herts County Council re Waste Development Framework/publication of Proposed Submission Waste Site Allocations. Details on CD supplied or www.hertsdirect.org/consultations.

88.3 Letter from Herts County Council re Adoption of Waste Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document. Details on CD supplied or www.hertsdirect.org/

88.4 Email from Monitoring Officer at NHDC with invitation for expressions of interest for co-opted parish members to the Standards Committee. Cllr Peter Long reported that he intended to put his name forward.

88.5 Email from HCC re launch of Local Authority Mortgage Scheme.

88.6 Email from Roger Flowerday, Herts Highways Locality Manager for North Herts & Stevenage, re first Highways Liaison Meeting (HLM) Monday 10th December 6pm at the Council Chamber Letchworth. This would include a presentation on the new changes to the Highway Service and provide an overview of

the Highways Locality Budget; parish councils were invited to send one representative. It was understood that Cllr Mike Berry was to attend; this to be confirmed and a substitute arranged if necessary.

Clerk/MWB

88.7 Letter from SLCC informing that the Clerk had achieved a pass in the Certificate in Local Council Administration Section 7 General Power of Competence. The Parish Council, should it so wish, could now act under a 'general power of competence'.

88.8 Letter from Postmistress Maureen Coston informing that the Royal Mail had withdrawn their mail work from Ashwell Post Office. 'This means that all mail for Ashwell will be delivered from the Letchworth Delivery Office...results in significant loss of income to Ashwell Post Office'.

It was **resolved** that a letter be sent to Oliver Heald, MP, to inform him of the Parish Council's objections to this action and its view that the continuing withdrawal of services was a back-door method by Royal Mail to achieve closure of Ashwell Post Office. The Parish Council's view remained that the village post office was of significant value to the community, both private individuals and local businesses, and every effort should be made to support it as a viable business and ensure its future. Concerns were noted that mail deliveries from Letchworth were not as efficient.

Clerk

88.9 Email from NHDC re consultation on the changes proposed by the North Herts Housing Partnership to the Common Housing Allocation Scheme. Responses to housingstrategy@north-herts.gov.uk by 6th January 2013. Full copy of the current CHAS at

www.north-herts.gov.uk/index/housing/apply_for_housing/common_housing_register

88.10 Email from Hertfordshire Association for Local History (HALH), an independent association promoting the study and enjoyment of local history in Hertfordshire. Details forwarded to the Museum and local historian Mr David Short.

89. REPORT FROM PLANNING COMMITTEE

(Next meeting scheduled for Sunday 11th November 9.00am)

Personal interests were declared by Cllr Peter Long re item 89.2.2 (neighbour at Vine Cottage no. 20 High Street) and Cllr Christine Schwick re item 89.3 (owner of neighbouring shop, Rhubarb & Mustard, in High Street).

89.1 Notifications from NHDC as Planning Authority

89.1.1 Application no.12/02405/1TCA. For Mr R Willson. Jessamine House 15 High Street. Removal of Yew tree from front garden. No objections.

89.1.2 Application no. 12/02089/1HH

28 Hodwell. For Mrs Susan Greenbank. Full Permission Householder: Replacement greenhouse. Standard Conditional Permission.

89.1.3 Application no. 12/02281/1

The Fox, Station Road. For Mr and Mrs Rowson-Brown

Full Permission Householder: Single storey rear extension following demolition of existing conservatory. Standard Conditional Permission.

89.1.4. Application no. 12/01822/1HH

8 Newnham Way. For Mr and Mrs Hughes

Full Permission Householder: Two storey rear extension. Glass balustrade to existing rear flat roof to form balcony. Standard Conditional Permission.

89.1.5 Application no. 12/02025/1HH

Westbury Spring House, West End. For Mr C Self

Full Permission Householder: Alterations to access and erection of gate piers and 5 bar oak gates. Standard Conditional Permission.

89.2 From NHDC for Parish Council's consideration

89.2.1 Application 12/02528/1NMA Jessamine House, 15 High Street. Reduce the height of the railings and change the post head detail (non-material amendment to application 10/00626/1 granted 08.06.2010).

It was **resolved** that a recommendation for approval be made.

Clerk

89.2.2 Application 12/02645/1HH 2 Foresters Cottages, 16 High Street. Full permission householder: Retaining wall, raised planter, trellis and arbour rail and gate to rear garden.

It was **resolved** that a recommendation for approval be made.

Clerk

89.3 Re 35 High Street and Whitby Farm development.

89.3.1 Email from the Planning Officer informing that the two new owners (Whitby Farm by Logan Homes Ltd and 35 High Street by Mr and Mrs Gawthrouph) had submitted proposals to NHDC re the

demolition stage of development; these could be viewed on the NHDC website (12/02523/1DOC). It was noted that a separate application would be made for the construction phase. It was noted that a request had been made to the Planning Officer that she consult the Parish Council prior to approving the applications containing the detailed proposals for fulfilment of the conditions imposed. The Planning Officer had agreed to consult the Parish Council but not necessarily to act on any requests made.

Cllr Peter Long reported that an offer to facilitate meetings between the developers and local residents had been made. It was, however, his understanding that meetings in relation to the details for demolition and build had taken place and there were, at this stage, no particular concerns or the need for the Parish Council to aid communications.

It was **resolved** that a recommendation for approval be made in relation to the demolition proposals for both 35 High Street and Whitby Farm.

Clerk

It was **resolved** that thanks be forwarded to NHDC for consulting with the Parish Council although this was not a statutory requirement.

Clerk

89.3.2 Email from NHDC Street Naming & Numbering Officer. Proposal re 89.2.1 above, development to be called '35 High Street' and 'Whitby Farm' ie, 1-4, Whitby Farm, Silver Street.

It was **resolved** that a recommendation to accept the proposal be made.

Clerk

89.4 (Planning Committee 11th November 2012, 18) Application no. 12/02239/1HH and 12/02240/1LB 6 Springhead. For Dr and Mrs Rubio. Full Permission Householder: Single storey side extension, insertion of a roof light in existing south east and north west roof slopes and ancillary works. It was noted that a recommendation to grant permission had been forwarded to NHDC. Cllr Christine Schwick reported that the applicant had approached her for advice. Her understanding was that the Conservation Officer had submitted a report recommending that the Planning Officer refuse all parts of the proposals. It was noted that the applicants had now withdrawn their application.

CVS

90. REPORT FROM STREETS & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

(Committee Chairman Cllr Mike Berry)

(Draft minutes Wednesday 14th November; next meeting scheduled for Wednesday 30th January)

90.1 (November Council 79.1) HCC conversion to part-night footway lighting. It was reported that Herts Highways had agreed to undertake a full survey covering part night lighting and also the outstanding issues of colour of light, type of bulb and painting of columns.

90.2 (November Council 79.2) NHDC new, free recycling service for commercial premises. It was understood that this was being progressed through the Ashwell Retailers Association.

90.3 Winter salting. Cllr John Connolly reported that he had spread salt along the twitchell from Back Street to Dixies Close and on the steps in Back Street using the supplies in the 'residents use' yellow salt bins provided by Herts Highways. It was noted that the request to Herts Highways for an additional salt bin to be sited in Dixies Close and provide for the very sloping footpaths (right of way from Back Street, crossing Dixies Close and up to Ashwell Street) had been refused. It was agreed that the Streets & Environment Committee investigate whether purchase of additional bins by the Parish Council was feasible.

S&E

90.4 Dog fouling. Cllr Christine Schwick reported her own and parishioners' concerns. Notices for display around the village had been received and would be installed as soon as possible at locations known to be problematic. It was noted that dog waste bins are provided around the village by the Parish Council and their emptying contracted through NHDC. Problems can be reported on www.north-herts.gov.uk/dog_fouling or 0800 028 6136.

CVS

90.5 20 mph speed limits. It was noted that now there had been legislation changes the Parish Council was keen to press ahead with proposals for a 20 mph limit in the village so long as this could be achieved without an excess of engineering measures. It was acknowledged that there were concerns about certain aspects including how it would be policed and managing changes between different speed zones. It was agreed that there should be a consultation with residents but that fuller details were required before any proposals could be aired. It was agreed that Cllr Mike Berry obtain these from appropriate authorities and present a draft proposal to the January Council meeting.

MWB

Cllr Martin Hoffman reported that the monitoring activities of the speeding volunteer group had resulted in police warning letters being sent to offenders. Following two offences the police would consider a prosecution; the Parish Council's objective was to achieve a few high profile prosecutions to act as a deterrent.

91. REPORT FROM RECREATION & FACILITIES COMMITTEE

(Committee Chairman Cllr Daniel Mathews)

(Next meeting scheduled for Tuesday 15th January 2013)

91.1 Church clock chimes/further correspondence from parishioners both in favour and against. See also 95.3 below. It was reported that quotations for the installation of a timing mechanism that would allow night-time silencing had been requested. Various options were discussed and considered. Various views with regard to compliance with environmental legislation, health considerations and the need for compromise were expressed. It was also emphasized that the key point made by those who had raised objections was the high value they placed on the clock chimes as a feature of the community and that turning them off was another retrograde step towards creeping urbanisation. It was agreed that every effort should be made to avoid a situation that was reported to have occurred in Baldock where, it was understood, confrontation had resulted in bad feeling within the community. It was agreed that no decision should be made based on the small number of written representations that had been made to the Parish Council (currently 15 in favour of the chimes and 9 against) and that a wider consultation be undertaken. It was agreed that a public meeting would be organised on the morning of Saturday 19th January; this would be widely publicized and provide a platform for parishioners to present their views. Having listened to the points made, the Parish Council could consider the matter again at its February meeting. **Clerk**

91.2 Cemetery memorial plaques. Cllr Daniel Mathews reported that the availability of these had been publicized and a few requests already received.

92. REPORT FROM CHARACTER AREAS COMMITTEE

(Committee Chairman Cllr Martin Hoffman)

92.1 Springs working parties. Cllr Martin Hoffman reported that the next would take place on Saturday 15th December, 10 am – 12.30 and/or 1.30 pm – 4.00. All volunteers were welcome. Following the success of the last Cubs event, another would be arranged for the new year.

92.2 Springs tree work. Cllr Martin Hoffman reported that a request had been made to the planning authority, NHDC, for permission to undertake works to trees in the conservation area. This was for the next phase of tree work as per the agreed management plan.

92.3 P3 (Parish Paths Partnership) grant. Cllr Martin Hoffman reported that a bid had been made to support proposed surfacing works to the path from Hodwell to the Springs.

92.4 Ash dieback disease. It was reported that a proposal had been made to set up a working party in relation to this covering the whole village. Cllr Peter Long reported that two parishioners had already volunteered to participate.

93. REPORT FROM FINANCE COMMITTEE

93.1 Proposals re Section 106 payments/planning obligations. It was noted that a draft document had been circulated. The following proposals were made (i) that the draft be accepted, (ii) that items identified should be separate from the budget, (iii) the document be named the 'Ashwell Infrastructure Delivery Plan'.

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

93.2 Proposal for setting the precept for 2013-14 at £49,000. It was noted that, due to an increase in the number of households, this figure, although increased by £1,000 over previous years, would result in no increase for individual households.

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

93.3 Proposal for setting the budget for 2013-14. It was noted that full discussions had been undertaken in committees over the past three months and a final draft was now proposed.

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

93.4 Approval of December Accounts and Bills for Payment (see Appendix 2).

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

94. REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS

94.1 Website Group See also 95.2 below. Cllr Daniel Mathews reported that a great deal of effort had been made to produce a new website using in-house expertise but it had eventually been agreed to use a commercial supplier. A meeting with the chosen supplier had been scheduled in the new year.

94.2 Yearbook Group Minutes of meeting Tuesday 20th November.

94.3 Design Statement Review Group Nothing to report.

94.4 Community Housing Group Cllr Peter Long reported that Howard Cottage Housing Association were in contact with potential developers of the 61 Station Road site with regard to the proposed social housing element. Other potential sites for social housing were still being pursued.

94.5 Speeding Group Cllr Peter Long reported that a further volunteer training session was scheduled for this week that would permit direct reporting to the police computer.

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

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

95.1 Police. Cllr Bridget Macey reported residents' requests for Neighbourhood Watch signage following a recent burglary. She had been in contact with PCSO Chris Braybrook who was arranging for installation at suitable locations on the entrances to the village and in other areas of concern.

95.2 Website. Parishioner Barny Shergold expressed his concern that the Parish Council's website had not been redesigned in eight years and his disappointment that his offers to assist had not been acted on. Cllr Daniel Mathews agreed to meet and discuss his concerns. **DMM**

95.3 Church clock chimes. Three parishioners attended re this item. All were in attendance to receive an update on their requests that the chimes be silenced at night. See 91.1 above.

95.4 Request for bollards outside Foresters Cottages in the High Street. Parishioner Jo Auckland attended to receive an update on the request to Herts Highways for a bollard(s) to prevent damage to her listed building and to inform the Parish Council of a recent incident when she had been struck by a vehicle. It was agreed that this latest report was a safety matter that should be investigated by the police. Cllr Christine Schwick expressed her concern that vehicles mounting the pavement was an increasingly common occurrence and was a significant hazard. It was agreed that a request be made to the police for a clandestine surveillance camera to be installed to gather evidence for a prosecution. It was agreed that Herts Highways be requested for an update on proposals for protecting the listed building; this would also be raised at the Highways Liaison meeting scheduled for 10th December. **Clerk/MWB**

95.5 Ashwell Live Advent Calendar. Cllr Christine Schwick applauded those who had organised this new and successful venture.

Meeting closed at 9.25pm

Appendix 1 – General material received

Hard copy – 'Items on the table'

1. North Herts District Council 'Members Information' w/e 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 November.
2. *The Clerk* Magazine from SLCC November 2012

By Email

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

APPENDIX 2							
ACCOUNTS AND BILLS FOR PAYMENT -December 2012					Date	5th December 2012	
Proposed by Cllr Buxton		Seconded by Cllr Schwic					
				£	£	£	£
	Income			Grants	Precept	Other	Total
67	Santander interest a/c	bank interest				2.42	2.42
68	Neville Funeral Service	chapel rent November				68.75	68.75
69	HMRC	VAT reclaim (mar-oct)				1786.55	1786.55
70	Ashwell Academicals FC	rent rec and small gains				1550.00	1550.00
71	The Hares Clinic	yearbook advert				40.00	40.00
Total					0.00	3447.72	3447.72
		Committees					
	Expenses		A&O	CA	S &E	R&F	VAT
By Direct Debit							Total
149	British Telecom (19/11/12)	line and broadband				93.18	18.63
By Cheque							
150	J C M Porter	Clerk's salary	1069.44				1,069.44
151	J C M Porter	reimbursement office e	11.00			1.56	12.56
152	M Barden	Environmental Cleansing	38.92	155.86	38.92		202.42
153	M Barden	reimbursement expenses		7.5			7.50
154	M Chandler	Duties at Pavilion and Rec			60.12		60.12
155	Post Office	tax&NI to Inland Reve	280.60	58.20			331.16
156	Filcris Ltd	signage		70.00		14.00	84.00
157	The Liberty Corporation L	cleaning toilets 29/10 to 02/12			100.00	20.00	120.00
158	The Liberty Corporation L	fit toilet door closures and repair lights			150.00	30	180.00
159	The Liberty Corporation L	call-out and repairs to toilet door			38.00	7.60	45.60
160	D J Granger	hedge works as per contract			368.00	73.60	441.60
161	James Pepper Monumenta	safety works to memorials			100.00	20.00	120.00
162	Mr D Horne (Horne Builde	insulation and works to pavilion toilets			375.00		375.00
163	CGM Landscapes	Pitch mowing at Small Gains on 24/09			25.28	5.06	30.34
164	Rob's Mobile Gden Machi	repair and service trimmer and blower		67.00			67.00
165	Digley Associates Ltd	annual RoSPA recreation ground			40.00	8.00	48.00
Total			1,361.04	108.92	288.56	1,295.32	179.82
Outstanding Accounts							
Yearbook 2012 adverts -misc						1,385.00	
Football Club		rec/pavilion rent Q4				100.00	
Total							1,485.00
Money at bank		Date	26th November 2012				
Current Account						37,089.49	
Deposit Account						29,523.71	
Total							66,613.20
Cheques banked after/BACS transfers after							1590.00
Cheques drawn but not cleared/DD's outstanding							1252.53
Total							66,950.67
Total after paying this months cheques							63,755.93
Total in current a/c after paying this months cheques							34,232.22