

**Minutes of the Ashwell Parish Council October meeting  
held on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2020 8pm online via Zoom**

**Present:** Cllrs Gemma Allan, Martin Hoffman, Graham Lee (Chairman), Norton Mahy (Vice-chairman), David Sims, Mark White.

Also in attendance: Clerk (Jane Porter), Deputy Clerk (Laura Brooks-Payne), District Councillor Tom Tyson, County Councillor Steve Jarvis. Seven parishioners also joined the meeting.

*Members of the public who were signed up to the website ([www.ashwell.gov.uk](http://www.ashwell.gov.uk)) were invited to join the meeting using Zoom. A link with log in details was emailed to them and any others who requested.*

**25.** Apologies for absence. None.

**26.** Declarations of Interest. None.

**27.1** Proposal to approve and sign the minutes of the previous monthly meeting, 4<sup>th</sup> November 2020.

Approved for signature.

**Action: GEL/Clerk**

**27.2** Proposal to approve and sign the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting, 25<sup>th</sup> November 2020.

Approved for signature.

**Action: GEL/Clerk**

**28. OPEN FORUM - VILLAGE AFFAIRS, REPORTS FROM OTHER BODIES ETC**

*Standing Orders suspended to allow members of the public to speak if they wish.*

**28.1 Items raised by members of the public.**

**28.1.1** Damage to grass verges in Dixies Close due to large vehicles accessing the development site. This had been reported to Herts Highways but no repairs had, to date, been carried out; soft landscaping works associated with the site were ongoing. County Councillor Steve Jarvis expressed his disappointment at the difficulty of getting Highways to make developers undertake repairs. The latter often denied any responsibility and obtaining proof was time consuming and costly. He agreed to investigate the situation.

**28.1.2** Protection of trees on the development site off Station Road (*see also 29.1.1 below*). Parish Councillor David Sims reported concerns re the adequacy of protective fencing, a condition of the development. District Councillor Tom Tyson agreed to raise the matter with the NHDC Planning Officer.

**28.1.3** New footway in Station Road to serve the new development (*see also 29.1.1 below*). County Councillor Steve Jarvis reported that Highways were communicating with the developer; he had asked to be kept updated. The route was to be on the road-side of the existing hedge, which would be retained, to join up with the existing path outside no.54.

**28.1.4** Works by BT Openreach in Lucas Lane. Local residents expressed their annoyance that no notice had been given of works; the trench excavated had 'locked in' cars on drives and obstructed access. County Councillor Steve Jarvis reported that utility companies were licensed to carry out works at any time in order to deal with emergencies; problems sometimes arose with the application of this. It was agreed to investigate who was responsible, either the site manager or the developer, for informing the public about planned works as this had clearly been unacceptable in this case. The lack of co-ordination of works by different utilities that led to unnecessary disruption was also criticised. County Councillor Steve Jarvis and District Councillor Tom Tyson agreed to take the matter up with relevant parties.

**28.1.5** Ashwell Village News. Concerns were raised re the editorial policy that items submitted for inclusion should not include mention of the Covid situation as this was deemed to be too negative. The view was expressed that for some organisations the Village News was a vital means of communication and support for their members during these difficult times. Those trying to offer positive support to others were denied the opportunity to use the Village News as a means of communication. Most groups were using Zoom etc but this was not an option for all particularly many vulnerable residents. It was agreed that although there were internet-based means of communication available the Village News was still an important element in the mix.

**28.2 North Herts District Council (NHDC).** Reports/updates from our District Councillor Tom Tyson.

*See also items raised by the public in 28.1 above*

(i) Baldock Town Talk, Monday 7<sup>th</sup> December on Zoom 18.15-19.00. This would be an opportunity to discuss any matters of interest or concern with himself as District Councillor and County Councillor Steve Jarvis. Small community grants were available from the Baldock & District Committee.

(ii) Parish Council Planning Committee meetings. He was keen to attend these but as he was a member of the NHDC Planning Control Committee he had taken advice as to the rules for him to attend/participate.  
**28.3 Hertfordshire County Council (HCC).** Reports/updates from our County Councillor Steve Jarvis.  
*See also items raised by the public in 28.1 above.*

- (i) Local residents' consultation on proposed parking restrictions in Silver Street. This was ongoing.
- (ii) West End chicane. Construction was scheduled to commence in February.
- (iii) A505 Slip End junction. Some minor safety improvements were to be progressed.
- (iv) Chalk Bank Close lighting issues. These had now been resolved.

#### **28.4 Working Groups reports.**

*Members include volunteer parishioners as well as parish councillors. Offers to join or start new groups welcomed. Village Sports, New Pavilion, Litter Pickers and Springs volunteers currently on hold.*

**28.4.1 Neighbourhood Plan Group,** (leader Cllr Graham Lee, deputy Cllr Norton Mahy).

Cllr Norton Mahy reported that a meeting was scheduled to sign off documents. These would then be submitted to NHDC who would liaise with the Examiner.

**28.4.2 Local business support** (leader Cllr Graham Lee). Cllr Graham Lee reported that the Ashwell Business Group had now been disbanded. They had agreed to grant their outstanding funds held to the Parish Council. These would be placed in a reserve ear-marked for local business support.

**28.4.3 Tree Group** (leader Cllr David Sims). Cllr David Sims reported that tree planting at Small Gains was scheduled. It was noted that the Greening Ashwell group were also progressing with tree planting. It was reiterated that planting on Highways land required their permission and was only appropriate where there was space and would not interfere with sightlines. Liaising with landowners who had suitable space available was important.

**28.4.4 Yearbook Group** (leader Norton Mahy). Cllr Norton Mahy reported that a status meeting was scheduled. Contributions were being submitted at a pleasing rate and he had no major concerns.

#### **28.5 Monthly reports on actions by the Parish Council.**

*See appendices below for summary of actions completed, actions ongoing and premises matters. Also reports received from other organisations.*

**28.5.1 Carters Pond seat.** Cllr Martin Hoffman reported that repairs were underway.

**28.5.2 School.** Cllr Gemma Allan reported.

- (i) Speed awareness sessions by the police. These had been postponed; she was hopeful they could be rescheduled shortly.
- (ii) Bags of dog poo had again been thrown over the hedge into the school grounds. NHDC Enforcement and the local police had been asked to investigate.

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*End of Open Forum/Standing Orders reinstated from here.*

#### **29. Planning matters.**

*See appendix below with a summary of recent NHDC consultations and their status.*

##### **29.1 New consultations for response to NHDC.**

**29.1.1 Land at the junction of Ashwell Street and Station Road.** NHDC case ref. 20/02599/S73.

Section 73 Application: Variation of Condition 2 of Planning Permission 19/00455/FP granted 11.08.2020 amendments to design improvements and provision of loft accommodation with rooflights plans.

Parish councillors expressed their concern that this was being progressed by NHDC as an amendment rather than a new planning application. The permission that had been granted was for two storey houses of 3 and 4 bedrooms. This amendment, proposing three storey houses of 4 and 5 bedrooms was a significant alteration. The existing planning permission had been granted on the basis of statements in the Planning Officer's report and references to relevant NHDC policies. The proposed amendments would not be consistent with the statements made or comply with the policies referred to. The Strategic Housing Assessment 2016 supported the need for smaller houses and not houses of 4 to 5 bedrooms. The Ashwell Neighbourhood Plan was now significantly advanced and should be given greater weight; this was also supportive of smaller houses and against larger houses.

It was **resolved** that on the grounds of the objections stated a recommendation be made to the NHDC Planning Officer that permission be refused. **Action: Clerk**

**29.1.2** Zoar Baptist Chapel, Gardiners Lane. NHDC case ref. 20/02619/FP.

Full Planning Permission: Replacement single storey rear extension.

It was **resolved** that, as there were no objections, a response would be sent to the NHDC Planning Officer with a recommendation for permission to be granted. **Action: Deputy Clerk**

**29.1.3** 95 High Street. NHDC case ref. 20/02752/FP

Replacement of existing cladding, fascias/soffits, windows/doors.

It was **resolved** that, as there were no objections, a response would be sent to the NHDC Planning Officer with a recommendation for permission to be granted. **Action: Deputy Clerk**

**29.2 Trees in the Conservation Area/Tree Preservation Orders -submissions to NHDC.**

**29.2.1** 27 Kingsland Way. NHDC case ref. 20/02620/TCA.

Apple Tree - Reduce to approximately 1 m below current pollard points to leave viable growth where at all possible. Paper Birch - Crown reduce by up to 3 m to viable growth points. Reduce back as hard as possible to the boundary whilst maintaining viable growth. Conifer - Reduce in height by up to 10 m and trim sides into shape.

No objections were raised.

**Action: Deputy Clerk**

**29.2.2** 95 High Street. NHDC case ref. 20/02769/TCA

Trees (Conservation Area): T1, T2 Silver Birch - Reduce crown by up to 25% to a height of 20ft.

T3 Maple - Reduce Crown by up to 25% to a height of 18ft.

No objections were raised.

**Action: Deputy Clerk**

**29.3 Updates on previous planning applications.**

**29.3.1** Land at the junction of Station Road and Ashwell Street (permission granted for x9 houses)/ NHDC consultation on the developer's street name proposal. It was noted that the original proposal from the developer, for 'Poppy Fields', had been unanimously rejected by parish councillors and 'Townsend Close' suggested. The developer had now presented 'Townsend Meadows' as their preference. The use of the plural, ie 'Meadows' was felt to be inaccurate. The majority view was that 'Townsend Close' remained the preferred option and it was agreed that this be communicated to the NHDC Street Naming Officer. **Action: Clerk**

**29.3.2** Land North of Ashwell Street and South of Lucas Lane (known as Hunts Close).

NHDC case ref. 20/00126/FP. 24 dwellings.

The refusal by NHDC was noted. The Chairman reported the statement made at the NHDC Planning Control Committee in relation to the Parish Council's Highways safety concerns. If this application went to appeal these could be put to the Planning Inspector.

**30. Finance and governance matters.**

**30.1** Monthly summary of accounts. Proposal for approval.

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

**Action: Clerk**

**30.2** The Annual Return for 2019-20 received from the External Auditor was noted; this had been publicised as required.

**30.3** Budget for 2021-22.

**30.3.1** Proposal for acceptance of the budget for 2021-22.

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

**Action: Clerk**

**30.3.2** Proposal to set the Parish Precept for 2021-22 at £81,000.

It was noted that this was no increase on the previous year.

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

**Action: Clerk**

**Meeting closed: 9.20pm**

## Forthcoming meeting dates:

Next monthly Council meeting - Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2021, 8pm on Zoom.

## APPENDICES – FOR INFORMATION

### Appendix A: Parish Council actions ongoing.

- (i) Luton airport/NATS consultation on changes to arrivals routes, deadline 5<sup>th</sup> February 2021. Documents have been forwarded to parishioners who were previously members of the Aircraft Noise working group for their input.
- (ii) Village hall/transfer to the Parish Council of the holding/custodian trusteeship. The form completed by the Management Committee was passed to the solicitor to inform the drafting of their new trust deed. Further communication from the solicitor is awaited.
- (iii) Improved cycleway and carparking at the station/proposals by Cambridgeshire landowner as part of development. Further communications from the landowner is awaited.
- (iv) ‘Twenty’s Plenty’ wheelie bin stickers/posters available free from the Parish Council office.
- (v) Drainage issues in Hodwell, Station Road and elsewhere. Gully clearance by Herts Highways is ongoing; some drains will have to be manually dug out. Our county councillor Steve Jarvis is monitoring this.
- (vi) Overhanging vegetation in the High Street to Silver Street twitchel. Information on ownership of boundaries is pending.
- (vii) Street name for the Claybush development. Further information is pending from the NHDC street naming officer who is liaising with the developer and the statutory consultees.

### Appendix B: Reports/updates from other organisations.

- (i) Greening Ashwell. Regular reports on their meetings and activities.
- (ii) Regular local policing update ‘Rural News’ from our PCSO Chris Braybrook.

### Appendix C: Reports/updates on Parish Council premises management.

- (i) Small Gains (Cllr David Sims). Further tree planting funded by the developer’s mitigation for the loss of the Chestnut tree in Lucas Lane is scheduled.
- (ii) Recreation Ground (Cllr Gemma Allan) Minor works to the pavilion roof have been completed. The timed door locks on the Ladies and Gents toilets are now in operation again; they are closed at dusk.
- (iii) Tree works. Minor works agreed following the surveys are pending quotes from the supplier.

### Appendix D: Summary of recent NHDC Planning Application consultations and their status

Details of applications are sent from North Herts District Council (NHDC) to the Parish Council as a consultee. Full details of applications are available on the NHDC website [www.north-herts.gov.uk](http://www.north-herts.gov.uk)

Consultations on recent planning and listed building applications received from NHDC as of December 12th 2020				
Address	Application Number	Brief description	Ashwell PC Comments	North Herts Decision
95 High Street	20/02752/FPH	Replacement of existing cladding, fascias / soffits, windows / doors	PC to NHDC: No Objection	Pending North Herts decision
Zoar Baptist Chapel	20/02619/FPH	Replacement single storey rear extension	PC to NHDC: No Objection	Pending North Herts decision
Land at Jct of Ashwell Street & Station Road	20/02599/S73	Erection of 9 dwellings, application already granted (19/00455/FP) this is an application for a change in design to utilise roof space for additional bedrooms and insert rooflights	PC to NHDC: Objection	Pending North Herts decision
Land east of 35 Ashwell street <i>(NB this is an additional proposed dwelling to the one recently granted permission for on the same site 20/01721/FP)</i>	20/02309/FP	1 x 3 bed dwelling inc basement & light-well	PC to NHDC: recommendation for Permission to be GRANTED (with conditions)	Pending North Herts decision
10 High Street	20/02252/FPH	Replace five existing front elevation windows and one existing side elevation window with powder coated aluminium frames in Anthracite	PC to NHDC: recommendation for Permission to be GRANTED	Permission GRANTED 26/11/2020
Land (known as Hunts Close) north of Ashwell Street and south of Lucas Lane between Hunts Ridge and East Lodge, 22 Lucas Lane.	20/00126/FP	Erection of 24 dwellings including creation of vehicular access off Ashwell Street, footpath link to Lucas Lane, associated public open space and landscaping (as amended by plans received 17.08.20).	PC to NHDC: Objection	Permission REFUSED 26/11/2021
4 Springhead	20/01594/FPH	Insertion of dormer to existing rear roof slope.	PC August meeting PC to NHDC: recommendation for permission to be GRANTED	Still Pending

## Appendix D: Summary of accounts – November 2020

ACCOUNTS - Summary for 01/11/2020 - 30/11/2020 NOVEMBER					
	RECEIPTS		£ less VAT	VAT	£ inc VAT
59	Nevilles Funeral Services	Rent for Chapel of Rest (Nov)			68.75
60	Ashwell Garage	Payment for Yearbook 2020 Advert			70.00
61	Paul Norman	Payment for Yearbook 2020 Advert			40.00
62	Santander	Reserve Account Interest			0.18
		<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>178.93</b>
	PAYMENTS				
154	D J Granger Grounds Maintenance Ltd	Grounds Maintenance Worksheet 88, Inv 21022	67.00	13.40	80.40
155	Duo Creative Services Ltd	Website monthly fee (Nov) Inv 9544	25.00	5.00	30.00
156	Edward's Cleaning and Maintenance Services	Cleaning of Public Toilets for November Inv no 2075	300.00		300.00
157	North Herts DC	recreation ground trade waste bin	104.00		104.00
158	North Herts DC	streets support trade waste bin (at office)	117.00		117.00
159	North Herts DC	springs trade waste	117.00		117.00
160	Ashwell Housing Association	Rent for office October2020 to March 2021	450.00		450.00
161	D J Granger Grounds Maintenance Ltd	Grounds Maintenance Worksheet 89 Inv 21065	1,308.00	261.60	1,569.60
162	Parkes Printing	Vat left off invoice from item 143 paid in October	0.00	9.90	9.90
163	Rec & Charity Account	Payment to keep the account running	10.00		10.00
164	Raymond Smith	Half payment for refurb of Carters Pond bench	650.00		650.00
165	Gillian George	Public toilet door electrical investigation	45.00		45.00
166	T&J Fire & Security	Fire inspections at office and pavilion	192.55	38.52	231.07
167	PKF Littlejohn LLP	External audit payment 2019-20	400.00	80.00	480.00
168	BT for Business	line rental and broadband Nov 2020 to Jan 2021	166.58	33.31	199.89
169	EON	Electricity for Public Toilets	7.08	0.35	7.43
170	Herts Computer Services	IT assistance for office laptops	20.00		20.00
171	HCC Pensions-LGPS Account,	Clerk & Deputy Clerk Pension to LGPS	720.33		720.33
172	HMRC accounts ref 321PF00003624	tax&NI to Inland Revenue	466.14		466.14
173	Clerk	Salary for November	1,350.87		1,350.87
174	Deputy Clerk	Salary for November	848.26		848.26
175	Environmental Cleaning Officer	Salary for November	230.40		230.40
176	Grounds Officer	Salary for November	149.75		149.75
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7744.96</b>	<b>442.08</b>	<b>8187.04</b>
	<b>MONEY AT BANK</b>				
		Current Account 30/11/2020	<b>37970.26</b>		
		Reserve Account 30/11/2020	<b>20701.65</b>		