

**Minutes of the Ashwell Parish Council October meeting
held on Wednesday 4th November 2020 8pm online via Zoom**

Present:

Cllrs 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. Six parishioners also joined the meeting.

Members of the public who were signed up to the website (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.

19. Apologies for absence. Cllr Gemma Allan (work commitment).

20. Declarations of Interest. None.

21.1 Proposal to approve and sign the minutes of the previous monthly meeting, 2nd September 2020.

Approved and signed.

Action: GEL/Clerk

21.2 Proposal to approve and sign the minutes of the Finance committee meeting, 14th October 2020.

Approved and signed.

Action: GEL/Clerk

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

Standing Orders suspended to allow members of the public to speak.

22.1 Items raised by members of the public.

Including reports received earlier and any matters raised at the meeting.

(i) Springs boundary hedge alongside Springhead. Cllr Martin Hoffman confirmed that this was scheduled to be reduced in height and width in January.

22.2 North Herts District Council (NHDC).

Reports/updates from our District Councillor Tom Tyson.

(i) Waste and recycling collection problems in Silver Street. He (and County Councillor Steve Jarvis) had responded directly to the resident. Inconsiderate parking preventing access had again been the issue. Silver Street had been added to the list of problem areas and further investigations would take place to seek a solution. *See also 23 below re planning.*

22.3 Hertfordshire County Council (HCC).

Reports/updates from our County Councillor Steve Jarvis.

(i) Additional yellow lines at the Silver Street pinch point, the corner of Gardiners Lane/High Street and the front and rear entrances to the school. A public consultation would be required for the Silver Street lines; once this was agreed TRO's would be progressed for all the locations. This was a 'slow process' but he was hopeful that road painting would take place in the first quarter of next year.

(ii) Lighting in Chalk Bank Close. Issues with lights not turning off overnight and excessive brightness were being pursued.

(iii) Bus services. The 90/91 and 217 routes were to be combined; all would now go to Royston via the station.

The 202 taxibus had seen very low levels of use and routes including both Ashwell and the Mordens were being discussed to make the service viable. The route through Ashwell might have to be curtailed to reduce the time of the journey; this was not ideal but would keep the service going. Contracts awarded would be for one year and then reviewed.

22.4 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.

22.4.1 Tree Group (leader Cllr David Sims). New planting at Small Gains and other potential sites was being looked into.

22.4.2 Yearbook Group (leader Norton Mahy). Articles for the 2021 edition were coming in; he reminded all that the deadline was the end of November. Due to Covid the next edition would have to look different but he felt that this 'could be a positive thing'.

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

(i) Cllr Norton Mahy reported: The latest draft would be submitted to NHDC in the next few weeks. Overall the timescale was still on target but the central government moratorium on elections and referenda until May 2021 was still in place.

(ii) The Chairman, Cllr Graham Lee, reported: The responses from parishioners in the recent consultation had included a significant number of comments about the health service provided to the village. In line with the Neighbourhood Plan's policy to actively liaise with the health service providers he had established contact with the Surgery and the Ashwell patient liaison group (PPG). A meeting with representatives from both had taken place and, subject to the Parish Council's approval, it had been agreed that all parties would work together to consider and, where possible, to encourage the issues raised in the consultation to be addressed.

It was agreed that, once suitably redacted to remove sensitive data, ie names, addresses etc, the comments from the consultation would be shared. This would be used to inform further discussion and agreed actions.

Action: GEL/NWM

22.5 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.

22.5.1 Improved footway and cycle path to the station. See Appendix B(ii) below for details.

Cllr Martin Hoffman reported that further communications with the landowner had taken place. As the land involved was in Cambridgeshire the Parish Council had no power to be directly involved. He had again expressed the view that the hedge should be retained.

22.5.2 Arbury Banks/Beacons of the Past project. Cllr Martin Hoffman reported that he was pursuing the proposal for the leader of the team to give a talk in the village sometime next year. He was hopeful that this could be held at the school with involvement of children and adults.

End of Open Forum/Standing Orders reinstated from here.

23. Planning matters.

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

23.1 New consultations for response to NHDC.

The Chairman suspended Standing Orders for this item for members of the public to speak.

23.1.1 Land East Of 35, Ashwell Street. NHDC case ref. 20/02309/FP. Full Planning Permission: Erection of 1 x 3 bed detached single storey dwelling including basement and light-well.

The objections and concerns expressed by neighbours were noted; these included overlooking of their properties and the proximity of the proposed house.

Parish councillors expressed the view that they would like to see some further information before they could respond to the NHDC consultation. This would include details/drawings that would inform them further on the impact on neighbours particularly the houses in Broadchalke, ie elevations that showed respective ridge heights and street scene elevations that included the Broadchalke houses. Also additional drawings to enable the impact on the skyline looking into and out of the village to be assessed.

Another concern that was raised was the stability of the chalk bank in relation to the extended access road where it would be very close to the cliff face adjacent to Broadchalke. This was an issue that had caused problems in developments elsewhere in the village and the residents had reported that there were regular rock falls.

It was agreed that the Planning Officer be requested to obtain and supply further information before the application could be considered further and a response agreed.

Action: Clerk

23.1.2 10 High Street, Ashwell. NHDC case ref. 20/02252/FP. Full Permission Householder:

Replace five existing front elevation windows and one existing side elevation window with powder coated aluminium frames in Anthracite.

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: Clerk

23.2 Trees in the Conservation Area/Tree Preservation Orders

The following submission to NHDC was noted.

6 The Dovecote, Back Street. NHDC case ref. 20/02375/TCA. Silver Birch: crown reduce by up to 2m to viable growth points and lift to approximately 3m. Purple-leaved Plum: re-pollard.

23.3 Updates on previous planning applications.

23.3.1 Land at the junction of Station Road and Ashwell Street (permission granted for x9 houses)/ NHDC Street Naming Officer's consultation on the developer's street name proposal of 'Poppy Fields'.

The criteria that the Parish Council had agreed in relation to other development sites were noted:

A. Principles

- The proposal(s) from the developer have no particular relevance to the site or to Ashwell.
- Currently all the road names in Ashwell have relevance to the community and/or a particular site; there is a desire to retain this.
- None of the plant species referenced is, or has in the known past, been found on the site.
- The names proposed are of a style felt to be more associated with suburban developments than an historic village settlement.

B. Practicalities

- The site is already widely referred to locally by a name that meets the criteria above.
- Adopting an existing, widely used name would significantly enhance the ease with which delivery drivers, emergency services, visitors etc could locate it.

It was **resolved** that an objection be made to the developer's proposal and 'Townsend Close' be put forward.

Action: Clerk

23.3.2 Land (known as Hunts Close) north of Ashwell Street and south of Lucas Lane between Hunts Ridge and East Lodge, 22 Lucas Lane.

Information from District Councillor Tom Tyson confirmed that this would now be an agenda item for the NHDC Planning Control Committee scheduled for Thursday 19th November. It was agreed that the Parish Council would request a slot to address the meeting.

Action: Clerk

24. Finance and governance matters.

24.1 Monthly summary of accounts.

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

Action: Clerk

24.2 Budget setting for 2021-22/Review of draft no.3. It was noted that once all matters had been discussed the budget would be formally proposed to the December Council meeting for approval.

The meeting was closed to the public for an *in camera* session on the grounds that this item included discussion of financial matters - contracts, prices, salaries etc.

Standing Order item 62. That in view of the special nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the press and public be temporarily excluded and they are instructed to withdraw.

Meeting closed at 10.00

Forthcoming meeting dates: December Council - Wednesday 2nd December 2020, 8pm.

APPENDICES – FOR INFORMATION

Appendix A: Parish Council actions completed since last meeting.

(i) Development between Dixies Close and Back Street (x 2 bungalows). Local residents concerns re damage to verges have been forwarded to our county councillor Steve Jarvis; also concerns re the new fence and gate on the Bear Lane boundary.

(ii) Damage to the right of way and adjacent farmland by off-road vehicles at Partridge Hill has been reported to the police who are undertaking more frequent patrols.

Appendix B: Parish Council actions ongoing.

- (i) Village hall/transfer to the Parish Council of the holding/custodian trusteeship. The Management Committee have completed a short form and this has been passed to the solicitor to inform the drafting of their new trust deed. Once this stage is completed the phase involving the Parish Council can be completed.
- (ii) Improved cycleway and carparking at the station/proposals by Cambridgeshire landowner as part of development. Cllr Martin Hoffman has had further communications with the landowner re the proposed new section of footway/cycleway just over the Cambridgeshire border; the desire to retain the existing hedgerow has been emphasised.
- (iii) Luton airport/NATS consultation on changes to arrivals routes, deadline 5th February 2021. Documents have been forwarded to parishioners who were previously members of the Aircraft Noise working group for their input.
- (iv) 'Twenty's Plenty' wheelie bin stickers/posters available free from the Parish Council office. Availability is being publicised including on notice boards and a piece submitted to the Village News.
- (v) Lighting in Chalk Bank Close. Local residents' raised concerns that the lighting is too bright and not in accordance with 'part night lighting'; this was taken up with the developer. Our county councillor Steve Jarvis has now been requested to gather further information.
- (vi) Drainage issues in Hodwell. Gully clearance by Herts Highways is ongoing. The Parish Council has passed on local information to our county councillor Steve Jarvis to aid further investigations.
- (vii) Overhanging vegetation in the High Street to Silver Street twitchel. Local residents concerns were passed to Herts Highways for action. Clearance and possible replanting has been suggested but is pending information on ownership of boundaries.
- (viii) Taxibus service to the station. A response has been sent to our county councillor Steve Jarvis following his request for input from the Parish Council and the users group on proposals to maintain the service; current usage is running at about 19% of normal.
- (iii) Street name for the Claybush development. There have been further communications with the NHDC street naming officer again rejecting the developer's proposals. He has reconsulted statutory bodies and will subsequently communicate again with the developer.

Appendix C: Reports/updates from other organisations.

- (i) Greening Ashwell. Regular reports on their meetings and activities.
- (ii) Royal British Legion. The Parish Council has supported the proposal for a pop-up stall on Carters Pond to sell poppies on Saturdays leading up to Remembrance Sunday.
- (iii) School PTA 5th November guy event. The Parish Council has supported the proposal and offered various locations for guys to be sited.
- (iv) Regular local policing update 'Rural News' from our PCSO Chris Braybrook.

Appendix D: Reports/updates on Parish Council premises management.

- (i) Streets support. The Environmental Cleansing Officer employed by the Parish Council will provide some support for the NHDC seasonal leaf clearance as resources allow. NHDC contractors will work to a schedule that covers the whole district but will be requested to prioritize any problematic locations in the village.
- (ii) St Mary's Churchyard Grounds Maintenance (Cllr Martin Hoffman). Local volunteers are progressing works to improve the biodiversity of the area adjacent to Hodwell. The Parish Council's contractor has done some extra strimming and volunteers have been raking and removing the cuttings. Seed sowing and planting is planned for the spring.
- (iii) Small Gains (Cllr David Sims). New tree planting funded by the developer's mitigation for the loss of the Chestnut tree in Lucas Lane is scheduled for this season.
- (iv) Recreation Ground (Cllr Gemma Allan) The sports clubs are continuing limited use of the facilities in accordance with Covid guidelines. Minor works to the playground equipment have been agreed and are pending attendance by the supplier.
- (v) Tree works. Minor works agreed following the surveys are pending attendance by the supplier.
- (vi) Grounds maintenance. Grass cutting has now finished for the season.

Appendix E: Summary of recent NHDC Planning Application consultations and their status -as of 4th November 2020.

NHDC includes the Parish Council in its consultations on planning applications. Full details of applications are available on the NHDC website www.north-herts.gov.uk

Address	Application Number	Brief description	Ashwell PC Comments	North Herts Decision
Land East Of 35 Ashwell Street	20/02309/FP	Erection of 1 x 3 bed detached single storey dwelling including basement and light-well.	Further information requested from NHDC	Pending
10 High Street	20/02252/FPH	Replace five existing front elevation windows and one existing side elevation window with powder	PC to NHDC: recommendation for permission to be GRANTED	Pending
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	Still Pending. Scheduled for NHDC Planning Control Committee 17th November.
Land East of 35, Ashwell Street	20/01712/FP	Erection of 1 x 2 bed detached single storey dwelling including creation of new vehicular access off Ashwell Street (renewal of planning permission 17/02200/1 granted 02.03.2018).	PC September meeting PC to NHDC: recommendation for permission to be GRANTED	Permission Granted on 28/9/2020
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 F: Monthly accounts summary

ACCOUNTS - Summary for 01/10/2020 - 31/10/2020 OCTOBER					
RECEIPTS			£ less VAT	VAT	£ inc VAT
54	Nevilles Funeral Services	Rent for Chapel of Rest (Oct)			68.75
55	Dignity Funerals	Payment for Ashes Burial			140
56	Mills & Sons	Payment for Yearbook 2020 Advert			40
57	Hiscox Insurance (Arthur J Gall)	Insurance overpayment refund			152.33
58	Santander	Interest Payment			0.17
				Total	401.25
PAYMENTS					
139	Edward's Cleaning and Maintenance Services	Cleaning of Public Toilets for August Inv no 2109	249.00		249.00
140	The Play Inspection Company	Annual Inspection fo Springs and playground Inv 42991	135.00	27.00	162.00
141	Duo Creative Services Ltd	Website monthly fee (Oct) Inv 9488	25.00	5.00	30.00
142	Duo Creative Services Ltd	Accessibilty Compliance Updates	560.00	112.00	672.00
143	Parkes Printing	Typo work on 2020 Yearbook	49.50		49.50
144	Brilliant Lawns	Grass Cutting on the Rec on 12/10 Inv no 8147	115.00		115.00
145	The Green Revival	Small Gains Hedgerow Planting	330.00		330.00
146	D J Granger Grounds Maintenance Ltd	Grounds Maintenance Worksheet 86, Inv 20968	507.00	101.40	608.40
147	HMRC accounts ref 321PF00003624	tax&NI to Inland Revenue	602.52		602.52
148	HCC Pensions-LGPS Account,	Clerk & Deputy Clerk Pension to LGPS	798.60		798.60
149	EON	Electricity for Public Toilets	9.03		9.03
150	Clerk	Clerk's salary October	1,521.26		1,521.26
151	Deputy Clerk	Deputy Clerk's Salary September	904.13		904.13
152	Grounds Officer	Grounds Officer salary and overtime	166.75		166.75
153	ECO	Environmental Cleansing Officer salary	230.40		230.40
		TOTAL	6,203.19	245.40	6,448.59
MONEY AT BANK					
		Current Account 31/10/2020	45,978.55		
		Reserve Account 31/10/2020	20,701.47		