

**Minutes of the Ashwell Parish Council October meeting
held on Wednesday 7th October 2020 8pm online via Zoom**

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

Also in attendance: Clerk (Jane Porter), Deputy Clerk (Laura Brooks-Payne), District Councillor Tom Tyson, County Councillor Steve Jarvis. Two 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.

13. Apologies for absence. None.

14. Declarations of Interest. None.

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

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

Action: GEL/Clerk

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

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

16.1 Items raised by members of the public.

16.1.1 Concerns re excess speed of buses in the High Street. A detailed response had been received following the Parish Council's email to the bus company; they had assured that they took such allegations very seriously. Their manager had informed that a review of their in-cab tracking data had not indicated that buses were exceeding speed limits. The resident of the High Street had reiterated their concerns re damage to their historic property and had supplied times/dates of alleged incidents; these had been forwarded to the bus company for their further review. It was agreed that the supplier of the school bus service also be contacted with a reminder that a 20mph zone was now in place.

Action: Deputy Clerk

16.1.2 Concerns re rats in gardens off the High Street. Cllr Martin Hoffman noted that there had been reports of rats at the Springs earlier in the year. This was a seasonal issue that usually diminished at about this time; extra rubbish from so many more visitors this year had probably made matters worse. Rats were obviously also encouraged to places where there was available food, eg bird feeders, chickens etc.

16.1.3 Concerns re speeding in Claybush Road. *See also 16.6.7 below.*

16.2 North Herts District Council (NHDC). District Councillor Tom Tyson reported:

16.2.1 An update on funds held from Planning Obligations and Section 106 agreements had been issued for all parishes. It was noted that sums held for Ashwell would be reviewed at the forthcoming finance committee meeting; the new pavilion project remained the main focus.

16.2.2 Brown compost bin subscriptions had now come due. Failure to renew may have resulted in some bins not being emptied.

16.3 Hertfordshire County Council (HCC). County Councillor Steve Jarvis reported:

16.3.1 Drainage gullies. Routine clearance by the sucking machine had now been completed and any that required digging out suitably marked; he had asked for a date re this.

16.3.2 School waiting restrictions. The proposals for the enhancement of these would now go to a formal consultation by HCC; the plans would include double yellow lines on both sides of the road in Silver Street.

16.3.3 Bus services. Proposals for linking the 127 and 91 services to make them more viable had progressed and tenders would be issued in the spring; this would provide additional services to the station and Royston. Use of the taxibus service to the station had fallen even further due to Covid and all options were being considered. In response to a question he reported that central government funding for 'on demand' based services had been postponed due to Covid.

16.3.4 A505 safety improvements. Some additional measures had been installed.

16.3.5 Parking restrictions. He continued to press for the completion of the white lines outside the pharmacy; he was 'very frustrated' that Highways had not progressed this.

16.3.6 Stone trap at Partridge Hill. In response to a question he reported that the lack of action following submission of fault reports was being investigated.

16.3.7 20mph zone. Painting of the '20' road markings was commended.

16.4 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.

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

Cllr Norton Mahy reported that the number of responses to the recent consultation had been 'reasonable' and similar to the previous consultation. The next stages were, (i) review prior to the Regulation 16 submission to NHDC, (ii) NHDC to arrange for the Examiner review, (iii) parish referendum -the earliest this could be held was May 2021.

16.4.2 Local business support (leader Cllr Graham Lee).

Cllr Graham Lee reported that he was continuing engaging with local retailers re the proposal for additional signage outside their shops. Opinions had been mixed but the Parish Council's efforts to support them was being received positively.

16.4.3 Tree Group (leader Cllr David Sims)

The new hedge planting at Small Gains had now been completed.

16.4.4 Yearbook Group (leader Norton Mahy).

Cllr Norton Mahy reported on a very constructive group meeting. Requests for copy were being despatched; the timetable would be similar to last year. Some new interesting ideas had been discussed and the new designer on the group had put forward suggestions for a new look and feel; these were commended.

16.5 Reports from parish councillors.

16.5.1 School speed awareness project *See Appendix A(i) below for details.*

Cllr Gemma Allan reported that the school was now progressing this in conjunction with the police.

16.5.2 Bids to the Henry Colbron Trust. *See June Council 2020 minute 135.2.4 for details.*

Cllr Gemma Allan reported that the school had been in communication with the trustees (the Merchant Taylors' Company) but it was understood that bids from others were not currently being considered. Bids by the Parish Council for the playground and by a group of local residents for new use of the Mill Street site were therefore on hold.

16.5.3 Improved footway and cycle path to the station. *See Appendix B(iii) below for details.*

Cllr Martin Hoffman reported that he had spoken again with the landowner, Jeremy Fordham. The planning application to the Cambridgeshire authority had been progressed and would include the land for an additional section of footway/cycle path. He encouraged County Councillor Steve Jarvis to continue to push for improvements to the Hertfordshire section.

16.5.4 Churchyard biodiversity project. *See Appendix D(vi) below for details.*

Cllr Martin Hoffman reported that the contractor had strimmed the area and the volunteer group had raked up the cuttings; further work was planned.

16.5.5 Arbury Banks/ Beacons of the Past project.

<https://www.chilternsaonb.org/projects/beacons-of-the-past.html>

Cllr Martin Hoffman reported that further information had been received; it was hoped that the interpretation of the LiDAR data from Ashwell would be available shortly.

16.5.6 Carters Pond. Cllr Martin Hoffman reported that a supplier had been identified to repair the seat.

16.5.7 Accident in Claybush Road. Cllr Martin Hoffman reported that a pedestrian had been knocked over whilst walking up the hill on Tuesday evening; she was shaken and bruised but not badly hurt.

All were encouraged to wear high-vis clothing when light levels were poor.

16.5.8 Parish clock. Cllr Mark White reported that he had been asked to speak to a council in Cornwall re the chimes noise-reducing device; there were no objections.

16.5.9 Walks project. Cllr Norton Mahy reported that he had circulated his new walking routes document. He hoped this would encourage others to walk the footpaths and to visit Ashwell. He was commended for this.

End of Open Forum/Standing Orders reinstated from here.

17. Planning matters.

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

17.1 New consultations for response to NHDC. None received.

17.2 Trees in the Conservation Area/Tree Preservation Orders Submissions to NHDC were noted.

17.3 Updates on previous planning applications.

17.3.1 Hunts Close. NHDC case ref. 20/00126/FP.

The NHDC Planning Officer had informed that the application was due to be considered by the committee on 17th November. District Councillor Tom Tyson informed that he would be happy to contribute to the Parish Council’s presentation. It was agreed that a speaking slot would be booked as soon as they were made available and detailed arrangements finalised nearer the time.

Action: Clerk

17.3.2 No.4 Springhead. NHDC case ref. 20/01594/FPH. District Councillor Tom Tyson informed that he had been approached by a neighbour who had objections to the proposals. Following a site visit he recognised their concerns re privacy and had called-in the application. It was noted that the Parish Council had not objected to the application. The Chairman commended Cllr Tyson for following up the neighbour’s concerns and noted that the Parish Council had responded without a site meeting due to Covid.

18. Finance and governance matters.

18.1 Monthly summary of accounts. Proposal for approval.

It was *resolved* that these be approved.

Action: Clerk

18.2 Proposal for changes to bank account signatories (two accounts).

The Chairman made a proposal that (i) Cllr Norton Mahy be added to the existing three signatories. If banking regulations permitted Cllr Mark White would remain but if the numbers were limited to three he would be removed and be replaced by Cllr Mahy. (ii) The Deputy Clerk would be added as an account administrator; currently the Clerk was the only administrator.

It was *resolved* that the proposal be accepted.

Action: Clerk

Meeting closed at 09.08

Forthcoming meeting dates:

November Council - Wednesday 4th November 2020, 8pm.

APPENDICES – FOR INFORMATION

Chairman’s Signature.....Date.....

Appendix A: Parish Council actions completed since the previous meeting (September).

- (i) Speeding traffic/20 mph zone. Cllr Martin Hoffman arranged a meeting with our local Royston Police team (PCSO Chris Brabrook and PC Mark Ellwood). It was agreed that the police would carry out further speed checks at key locations and report what action had been taken against offenders. The police were to contact the school to arrange speed awareness sessions with the children. Further publicity of the 20mph zone has commenced including distribution of the ‘Twenty’s Plenty’ wheelie bin stickers/posters; these are available free from the Parish Council office.
- (ii) Details of an Environment Agency initiative on resilience to flooding was forwarded to residents with concerns re flood risk.
- (iii) Dario’s Fish & Chip van. Suggestions for suitable locations for his trailer to be sited on a Thursday evening were forwarded.
- (iv) Local resident’s concerns re site clearance at land in Gardiners Lane. Advice was sought from the NHDC Area Planning Officer and passed on to the resident.
- (v) Lighting in Chalk Bank Close. Local residents’ concern that the lighting is too bright and not in accordance with ‘part night lighting’ was taken up with the developer who is responsible for the units within the site.

Appendix B: Parish Council actions ongoing.

- (i) Village hall/transfer to the Parish Council of the holding/custodian trusteeship. The Management Committee have been asked to complete a short form; this will be 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. (Action: Clerk)
- (ii) Request for an additional Speed Indicator Device (SID) adjacent to Shire End Close off Station Road. A bid is to be made to the Police & Crime Commissioner’s Road Safety Fund in the next round due to be open from November. (Action: Deputy Clerk)
- (iii) Improved cycleway and carparking at the station/proposals by Cambridgeshire landowner as part of development. Communications established with the landowner (Cllr Martin Hoffman). County Councillor Steve Jarvis and District Councillor Tom Tyson are both supportive but cautioned that creating an enhanced cycle route to the station from Ashwell would involve Cambridgeshire as well as Hertfordshire councils and would not be easy to construct particularly in some sections.
- (iv) Street name for the Claybush development. The NHDC street naming officer has reconsulted following a response from the developer. The Parish Council’s earlier proposal was ‘Scarp Meadow’ but the developer has now put forward alternative suggestions.

Appendix C: Reports/updates from other organisations.

- (i) Greening Ashwell. Regular reports on their meetings and activities.
- (ii) Royal British Legion. Arrangements for Remembrance Sunday; the proposals were commended.
- (iii) Theatre Club Halloween Event. The Parish Council was informed of the outline proposals as a courtesy. The organisers were commended for their thoroughness in planning this event and the idea thought to be good.

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

- (i) Covid update. The Pavilion has, as required, been registered for Track & Trace using the QR code system; alternative arrangements have been made for those not able to use this. Access to the building is restricted to a limited number of individuals for limited purposes. All of the clubs using the Recreation Ground have carried out appropriate risk assessments. Communication between the clubs and the Parish Council is ongoing to ensure guidelines are followed.
- (ii) The annual RoSPA inspection reports for the Recreation Ground and the Springs have been received and agreed actions put in hand.
- (iii) Playground (Cllr Gemma Allan). A report was placed on social media that a child had received a minor injury whilst using the play equipment. As soon as the Parish Council was aware of this the item of equipment concerned was inspected, cordoned off and action taken to rectify the situation.

(iv) The Springs (Cllr Martin Hoffman). The annual RoSPA inspection report has been received and reviewed. Minor matters agreed for action will be progressed. The green railings along the High Street belonging to the county council were damaged by a contractor carrying out electricity works; HCC were informed and are pursuing the matter. Natural England have informed that their next routine review of the SSSI will be in 2021/22.

(v) St Mary's Churchyard Grounds Maintenance (Cllr Martin Hoffman). Proposals to improve the biodiversity of the area adjacent to Hodwell were put to the Churchwarden and, following agreement, discussed with a potential volunteer who would progress the project. The Greening Ashwell group are to assist with practical tasks.

(vi) Small Gains (Cllr David Sims). Following liaison with adjacent landowners, measures to control rabbits are now taking place. Detailed proposals for new tree planting are to be drawn up now the £1300 mitigation funding for the loss of the Chestnut tree in Lucas Lane has been received from the developer.

(vii) Dog waste bins. A problem with one overflowing bin was reported to the contractor. Members of the public are encouraged to report any problems using the contact details on the 'green cards' distributed with the Yearbook.

Appendix E: Summary of recent NHDC Planning Application consultations and their status -as of 7th October 2020.

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

Address	Application Number	Brief description	Ashwell PC Comments	North Herts Decision
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
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
Valentine House Partridge Hill	20/01426/S73	Section 73 Application: To remove condition 3 which restricts the exercise of permitted development rights, as imposed on the original planning permission issued under reference 94/00713/1.	PC September meeting PC to NHDC: recommendation for permission to be REFUSED	Application withdrawn by applicant
52 Back Street	20/01469/FPH	Rooflight and roof repairs.	PC August meeting PC to NHDC: recommendation for permission to be GRANTED	Permission Granted on 27/8/2020
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 01/09/2020 - 31/09/2020 SEPTEMBER					
	RECEIPTS		£ less VAT	VAT	£ inc VAT
47	Nevilles Funeral Services	Rent for Chapel of Rest (Aug)			68.75
48	Logan Homes	Mitigation Re; Lucas lane Tree loss			1,300.00
49	North Herts DC	Precept - second half			40,500.00
50	Ashwell Football Club	PART payment for rent for 2019-20			350.00
51	HMRC	Job Retention Sceme payment (furlough)			311.15
52	Allotment Tenant	Allotment Plot 12b			10.00
53	Santander interest Account	interest 01/09/2020			0.18
				Total	42,540.08
	PAYMENTS				
114	North Herts DC	recreation ground trade waste bin	117.00		117.00
115	North Herts DC	streets support trade waste bin	117.00		117.00
116	North Herts DC	springs trade waste bin inv	104.00		104.00
117	20's Plenty for us	Wheelie Bin 20mph stickers	220.00		220.00
118	Edward's Cleaning and Maintenance Services	Cleaning of Public Toilets for August Inv no 2075	240.00		240.00
119	Duo Creative Services Ltd	Website monthly fee (Sept)	25.00	5.00	30.00
120	D J Granger Grounds Maintenance Ltd	Grounds Maintenance Worksheet 83 Inv 20776	385.00	77.00	462.00
121	Brilliant Lawns	Rec Grass Cutting on 3/9/2020 Inv 7909	115.00		115.00
122	The Blue Tree Company	Clearing fallen tree at the springs Inv 2392	250.00	50.00	300.00
123	EON	Electricity for Public Toilets (05/09/2020)	8.21	0.41	8.62
124	Ashwell PCC	Payment for yearbook meeting in Parish Room	16.00		16.00
125	Ashwell Village Museum	Donation from the PC	2,000.00		2,000.00
126	D J Granger Grounds Maintenance Ltd	Grounds Maintenance Worksheet 84 Inv 20826	385.00	77.00	462.00
127	Jane Porter	Office reimbursements	89.99	1.16	91.15
128	HCC Pensions-LGPS Account,	Clerk & Deputy Clerk Pension to LGPS	676.80		676.80
129	Brilliant Lawns	Rec Grass Cutting on 16/9/2020 Inv 8003	115.00		115.00
130	HMRC accounts ref 321PF00003624	tax&NI to Inland Revenue	420.65		420.65
131	D J Granger Grounds Maintenance Ltd	Grounds Maintenance Worksheet 85 Inv no	452.00	90.40	542.40
132	Came & Company Insurance	Annual Insurance for Ashwell Village Trust & Parish Council	3,096.61		3,096.61
133	Parkes printing & Design	NP questionnaires & leaflets printing	997.97		997.97
134	Brilliant Lawns	Autumn fertiliser to football pitches Inv 8035	435.00		435.00
135	Clerk	Clerk's salary August	1,322.90		1,322.90
136	ECO	Environmental Cleansing Officer salary	230.40		230.40
137	Deputy Clerk	Deputy Clerk's Salary	751.92		751.92
138	Grounds Officer	Grounds Officer salary and overtime	149.75		149.75
		TOTAL	12721.20	300.97	13,022.17
	MONEY AT BANK				
		Current Account	52,026.36		
		Reserve Account	20,701.30		