

**Minutes of the Ashwell Parish Council meeting held on
Wednesday 5th October 2016 in the Parish Room**

Present: Councillors Mark White (Chairman), Martin Hoffman (Vice-chairman), Graham Lee, Madeleine Legg, Bridget Macey, David Short, David Sims.
The Clerk was also in attendance.
Members of the public: Three parishioners.

58. Apologies for absence None.

59. Minutes of the Council meeting 4th September 2016.

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

Clerk

60. Matters of general report from previous meetings

60.1 (August Council, 41.1) 1st Ashwell Scout Group fundraising for a Public Access Defibrillator (PAD). It was noted that refurbishment, including repainting, signage and installation of the PAD were pending.

60.2 (August Council, 41.2) Superfast broadband. It was noted that no further confirmed information had been received. The recent exacerbation of difficulties with the existing service was noted.

61. Parish management reports (current responsibilities shown in brackets)

(Routine matters concerning the management of parish assets and amenities are usually not discussed or reported to full council meetings; some are dealt with by the Management Committee, others directly by parish councillors and/or the Clerk)

(Draft minutes of last Management/Finance Committee Wednesday 17th August 2016 available)

61.1 Cemetery (Cllr Madeleine Legg)

Cllr Madeleine Legg gave an update on the Chapel of Rest tenancy. It was noted that the planned tree works were pending conservation area (TCA) permission from NHDC.

61.2 Recreation Ground and Pavilion (Cllrs Mark White and Madeleine Legg)

Cllr Madeleine Legg gave an update on the User Group. The group leader had forwarded information re the proposed new storage unit; the costs were within budget and they had been asked to progress with installation/painting etc. Cllr Legg, however, expressed her concerns that the User Group was not working as intended, ie for the User Group to manage the facilities and to propose developments for the Parish Council to consider and fund. There were many reasons why matters were not progressing as planned. It was agreed that for the time being the Parish Council would take back control of the group; it would set dates for meetings, to be chaired by the Parish Council Chairman, and invite user groups to send a representative(s). It was noted that the new signage was pending quotations from the supplier.

See also 64.1 below re project funding proposals.

61.3 Playground (Cllr Madeleine Legg)

Cllr Madeleine Legg gave an update on the minor works now completed and others being progressed.

61.4 Public toilets at the pavilion (Cllr Madeleine Legg)

A proposal was made that signage advertising the facility be installed; the previous sign on the lamp standard opposite had been missing for some years. It was agreed that a request be made to Herts Highways re this.

DRS/Clerk

See item 64.1 below re project funding proposals.

61.5 The Springs (Cllr Martin Hoffman)

Cllr Martin Hoffman reported. The planned tree and hedge works were scheduled for completion this week. The funding for the repainting of the Herts Highways railings promised by County Councillor Tony Hunter was now to be released. There were concerns, however, that it was now too late in the year for works to be progressed; they would be undertaken in the spring. The RoSPA site inspection had identified a few minor matters re fences and surfacing; these would be addressed. It had also advised that a separate water risk assessment might be undertaken but the necessity for this should be based on 'local knowledge'. Advice had been taken and it had been agreed that this was not necessary.

61.6 Small Gains (Allotments, Accies sports field and shared car parking area) (Cllr David Sims)

Cllr David Sims reported that the new surfacing had been installed. He had liaised with the supplier re a couple of concerns and these were being addressed. The funding had come from a section 106 claim to NHDC (see 64.1.1 below). He was applauded for the successful outcome of this.

61.7 Miscellaneous amenities

(The Lock Up - Cllr David Short. Merchant Taylors' Green and Carters' Pond - Cllr Martin Hoffman)
Nothing to report.

61.8 Street furniture (Cllr Bridget Macey) Nothing to report.

61.9 St Mary's Churchyard grounds maintenance (Cllr Martin Hoffman)

Cllr Martin Hoffman reported that the planned tree works along the Mill Street boundary had been completed. The supplier had also attended to the branch that had fallen from the Sycamore on the Hodwell boundary.

61.10 Parish Clock (Cllr Mark White) Nothing to report.

61.11 War Memorial Nothing to report.

62. Items re other authorities/organisations

62.1 Herts Highways

See www.hertsdirect.org/hertfordshire/CouncillorLocalityBudgets (County Councillor Tony Hunter)

62.1.1 It was noted that responses were pending from County Councillor Tony Hunter re (i) Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs), (ii) Re-surfacing of the footway on Station Road at the entrance to Small Gains Lane, (iii) Verge protection bollards outside the Cemetery, (iv) Station Road safety improvements, (v) A505 Odsey junction, (vi) LED street-lighting, (vii) Yellow lines, (viii) Overgrown verges.

Cllr Martin Hoffman requested that a reminder be sent to County Councillor Tony Hunter; many of these matters had been outstanding beyond the agreed timescales.

62.1.2 It was noted that the letter from a parishioner requesting an update on the items outstanding in 62.1.1 above had been forwarded to County Councillor Tony Hunter.

62.1.3 Road closure notice for various works in Slip End and Ashwell. It was noted that clarification and further details had been sought from County Councillor Tony Hunter.

62.2 Herts Highways/Rights of Way

62.2.1 Reprint of the Ashwell footpath leaflet. It was noted that these had now been received; they had been funded from P3 (Parish Paths Partnership).

62.3 Herts County Council

62.3.1 Transport Vision 2050: Public Consultation on a new Local Transport Plan for Hertfordshire.

It was noted that a Rural Transport Strategy would follow this. It was agreed that this would be responded to and input from parishioners sought.

62.4 North Herts District Council (see 63 below re planning and the draft Local Plan)

62.4.1 Farr Festival/questions re the license granted by NHDC. It was noted that this was pending a response from District Councillor Janine Paterson following her enquiries to the licensing officer.

62.4.2 Waste/recycling bins stored on the public footway/complaints from parishioners. It was noted that letters had been sent from the Parish Council to householders requesting their co-operation. Only one response had been received informing that bins were only stored on land owned by the householder. It was agreed that bins stored in full view of the public was not appropriate for the conservation area and was 'anti-social'; in some cases there was an obstruction issue. It was noted that neither NHDC nor HCC would take any action. It was agreed that this matter be considered when the bye-laws were next reviewed.

63. Reports re planning matters

(draft minutes of Planning Committee meeting held on Sunday 2nd October available)

63.1 Consultations received (from NHDC as Planning Authority to Parish Council as consultee)

(If any objections are raised either by a parishioner or a parish councillor an on-site meeting of the Planning Committee is convened to consider those items; see notice board or contact Clerk for agenda)

New applications received as of 28th September.

63.1.1 NHDC Case Ref No: 16/02154/1 J Cooke Engineering, Ashwell Street

Full Planning Permission: Erection of 6 x 4 bedroom dwellings and 1 x 3-bedroom dwelling with detached double garage; associated car parking and ancillary works following the demolition of existing factory building.

It was noted that Cllr Graham Lee declared an interest for this item (a contiguous neighbour).

It was noted that a meeting of the Planning Committee had been held on site on Sunday 2nd October (see separate minutes). The applicant's agent had attended to answer questions. As per the usual procedure, members of the public had been given the opportunity to ask questions and to put forward their views.

(i) Parish councillors applauded the applicant's agent (Mr Russell Swan of Swan Edwards Architecture) for his attendance at the site meeting and for his positive attitude. He had stated that he would be willing to consider any minor amendments that the Parish Council felt would improve the application and make it more acceptable. He did, however, caution that his brief was to make proposals that were

financially viable to the applicant; this dictated the number of dwellings and their size. It was noted that the proposals were within the national planning guidelines.

The objections raised at the Planning Committee meeting were noted. These had included inadequate on-site parking provision, adverse impact on the right of way, highways safety concerns particularly for pedestrians, over-dominant to existing properties, loss of the Art-Deco frontage.

A proposal was made that the following response be made to the Planning Officer and communicated to the agent.

The Parish Council could not recommend approval of this application in its current form. However, subject to the inclusion of the minor amendments listed, that would address some of its concerns, it would not submit a formal objection.

It was **resolved** to accept the proposal.

Clerk

63.1.2 Proposal for the response to the following application.

NHDC Case Ref No: 16/02283/1HH 37 West End

Full Planning Permission Householder: New external chimney.

It was **resolved** to recommend to the NHDC Planning Officer that the application be accepted.

Clerk

63.1.3 Works to Trees in Conservation Area (TCA) applications to NHDC.

The following were noted; there were no objections.

NHDC Case Ref No:16/02281/1TCA 41 West End.

Reduce height of 1 Conifer and reduce height of 1 Sycamore tree.

63.1.4 NHDC Case Ref No: 16/01797/1 Land rear of 4-14, Claybush Road.

Full Planning Permission: 33 dwellings together with associated access, parking, amenity and open space.

Receipt of the CPRE response to the NHDC consultation was noted.

Further correspondence received from parishioners was noted. This had included concerns re a possible underground stream.

It was noted that local residents had taken legal advice with regard to the proposed use of the private road for pedestrian access; it was understood that there were liability and insurance implications.

See also 63.3 below re the draft Local Plan public consultation.

63.1.5 Application received from NHDC

Case Ref No: 16/02236/1 Land rear of 22, High Street.

Applicant Mr Brian Deal.

Full Planning Permission: Erection of 1 x 3 bed dwelling and creation of vehicular access off of Hodwell.

It was agreed that this be considered at a meeting of the Planning Committee, Sunday 6th November, 9am.

63.2 Decisions made by NHDC as the Planning Authority on planning applications.

63.2.1 68 High Street.

It was noted that the Star of India take-away was to close on 8th October due to their tenancy not being renewed. NHDC had granted approval for the change of use to residential.

(i) NHDC Application No: 16/01345/1 68 High Street, Ashwell, Baldock, SG7 SNS

Applicant Name: Mr & Mrs Luggeri Merser

Description: Change of use of existing take away shop to additional residential floorspace and removal of existing flat roof single storey rear extension and existing commercial flue. Alterations to ground floor windows and door in front elevation and insertion of first floor windows in side (west) elevation.

(as amended by plan received 5.9.16)

Decision: Conditional Permission Decision Date: 21/09/2016.

(ii) NHDC Application No: 16/01346/1 LB 68 High Street, Ashwell, Baldock, SG7 SNS

Applicant Name: Mr & Mrs Luggeri Merser

Description: Internal and external alterations in part to facilitate change of use of existing take away shop to additional residential floorspace. Removal of existing flat roof single storey rear extension and existing commercial flue. Installation of external flue on rear elevation for wood burner. (as amended by

plan received 5.9.16)

Decision: Conditional Listed Building Consent. Decision Date: 21/09/2016.

Parish councillors expressed their disappointment at this decision. They had submitted strong objections and their recommendation to the NHDC Planning Officer had been that permission for the change of use should be refused. The Planning Officer's report had raised several issues that it was agreed should be pursued. These included:- (i) Given the strong objections from the Parish Council, and many parishioners,

why had the application not been 'called-in' for a committee decision. (ii) The policies in the draft of the new Local Plan were clearly supportive of the retention of commercial premises and associated employment. The Planning Officer had, however, concluded that as the draft plan had yet to be approved, these carried 'little weight'. Parish councillors were keen to know whether this would also apply to other applications such as that for the Claybush Hill site.

It was **resolved** that the District Councillor Janine Paterson be invited to the next Parish Council meeting to answer questions on this matter. Clerk

63.3 District Local Plan 2011-31

63.3.1 (September Council. 54.4.1)

63.3.1.1 Letter sent to Mr David Scholes, CEO, expressing concerns at the decision to progress the draft Local Plan 2011-31 without amendment. It was noted that receipt had been acknowledged and that a full response would be sent.

63.3.1.2 Public consultation. It was noted that the following information had been received from NHDC:- 'The final Proposed Submission Local Plan is being taken to September Cabinet (26th) for approval for consultation. This public consultation is due to take place between the 19 October and 30 November 2016. Following on from this the Plan is scheduled to be submitted to Government in March 2017, with an Examination in Public due later in the year.'

It was agreed that this public consultation be publicised as widely as possible and parishioners urged to respond.

It was noted that NHDC had invited the Parish Council to send a representative to a briefing meeting on 19th October. It was agreed that Cllr David Short would attend.

It was noted that the Parish Council would agree its response to the consultation at its November Council meeting.

64. Reports re Finance matters

64.1 (August Council, 13.1) Section 106 claims and grant proposals to NHDC.

64.1.1 Small Gains. Further correspondence, and a positive response, from the NHDC Community Development Manager, Stuart Izzard, re the claim for development/resurfacing of the shared car park area was noted. See also 61.6 above.

64.1.2 Public Toilets Enhancement/section 106 claim. Cllr Madeleine Legg reported that outline proposals with indicative costings were being progressed. Once additions re the Gents were complete all would be forwarded to NHDC.

64.1.3 Pavilion Upgrade/NHDC grant bid. Cllr Madeleine Legg reported that outline proposals with indicative costings, as requested by NHDC, had been sent to them. See also 61.2 above.

It was agreed that a volunteer with suitable skills and commitment to project manage both the pavilion and the toilets projects should be sought. ALL

64.2 Insurance. It was noted that the agreed minor additions/amendments had been included in the new schedule.

64.3 Budget. The following were noted:-

The current budget tracking and allocated reserves for the financial year 2016-17.

The timetable for budget setting and precept for the financial year 2017-18, ie the first draft to be reviewed during October and a final proposal made to the November Council meeting.

It was noted that funding for a deputy clerk and the setting up of office space at Bear Farm would be included. It was agreed that an additional meeting would be convened. ALL/Clerk

64.4 Proposal for approval of monthly Accounts and Bills for Payment.

It was **resolved** that these be approved and paid (see Appendix). Clerk

65. Reports from working groups

65.1 Ashwell Neighbourhood Plan Group (leader Cllr David Short) (see 63.3 above)

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

Standing Orders suspended for this item; taken at 8.30pm

66.1 Museum. Cllr Martin Hoffman (Chairman of the trustees in his own right) reported that a survey was to be undertaken re the problems with damp.

66.2 School Governing Body. Cllr David Short (a school governor in his own right) reported that the new MUGA (Multi Use Games Area) was being well used.

66.3 Local business support. Cllr Graham Lee reported that notes from the meeting held on 5th September had been circulated. Proposals included the following:- (i) Parking provision; spaces outside retail outlets with time restrictions and a village car park, (ii) Tourist signage outside the village to encourage visitors and signs of a distinctive common design, suitably positioned, to identify individual outlets. Parish councillors expressed the view that those who parked all day outside retail outlets when clear alternatives were available were being very anti-social.

It was agreed that the proposals be further investigated. It was noted that similar ideas had been pursued without success in the past but there was value in making new approaches to the relevant authorities.

66.4 Volunteers who support the work of the Parish Council. Cllr Madeleine Legg proposed that a social event be held to which current volunteers be invited as well as any others who might wish to become involved. The proposal was agreed. **MFL**

66.5 Items raised by parishioners.

66.5.1 Small Gains. Concerns had been raised re surveying activity in several fields. It was noted that the Parish Council had received no information re this.

66.5.2 Street lighting faults. Parishioners were encouraged to report these direct to Herts Highways online or by telephone (details in the Yearbook and on the ‘green cards’).

66.5.3 Dog attack on sheep. Cllr David Short reported that one of his ewes had been killed; the police were investigating. It was agreed that this be publicised.

66.5.4 Claybush Hill planning application. See 63.1.4 above.

Meeting closed at 9.40pm

Forthcoming meetings:

Next monthly Council meeting Wednesday 2nd November 2016, 8pm in the Parish Room.

Planning Committee Sunday 6th November, 9am (see 63.1.5 above)

Appendix 1 – General material received

Items routinely forwarded to parish councillors by email

- North Herts District Council -weekly ‘Members Information’
- HAPTC -Briefings and Bulletins.
- SLCC -updates and newsletters.
- Police OWL/Rural News/Neighbourhood Watch bulletins.

Appendix 2

ACCOUNTS AND BILLS FOR PAYMENT -October 2016			02 October 2016			
			Declarations : None			
Proposed (i) Cllr Sims (ii) Cllr Legg						
			£	£	£	
Receipts			Precept	Grants	Other	
					Total	
41	Neville Funeral Service	chapel rent			68.75	68.75
42	Santander	bank interest			7.73	7.73
43	NHDC	precept 2nd installment	27,250.00	0.00		27,250.00
44	Jeremy Rule Funeral Service	burial (cemetery works 16.17)			300.00	300.00
45	Jeremy Rule Funeral Service	burial (cemetery works 16.17)			120.00	120.00
46	Ashwell Academics	rent rec and Small Gains 2016-17			650.00	650.00
Total			27250.00	0.00	1,146.48	28,396.48
			Admin, office costs & Other Misc	Management of Parish Assets & Amenities	VAT	Total
Payments						
By Direct Debit						
124	E.ON (29/08/16)	toilets electricity		9.04	0.45	9.49
125	E.ON (29/08/16)	pavilion electricity		17.34	0.87	18.21
126	E.ON (01/09/16)	chapel electricity		11.00		11.00
By Cheque						
127	J C M Porter	Clerk's salary	1097.79			1,097.79
128	HCC Pensions-LGPS Account,	clerk's pension	402.70			402.70
129	M Barden	Environmental Cleansing		202.38		202.38
130	M Chandler	Duties at Pavilion and Rec		73.20		73.20
131	Post Office	tax&NI to Inland Revenue	230.20	52.40		282.60
132	K Clifford	Premises duties	30.00			30.00
133	Ashwell St Mary's PCC	parish room hire (17/08 and 05/09)	24.00			24.00
134	Came and Company		2118.94			2,118.94
135	Parkes Print & Design	footpath leaflet reprint (P3)	319.97			319.97
136	Sarah Wroot	footpath leaflet artwork update	40.00			40.00
137	Balaam Brothers Ltd			1500.00	300.00	1800.00
138	The CGM Group (East Anglia) Lt	pitch mowing at the rec 31/08		29.07	5.81	34.88
139	CPM Playgrounds Ltd	Play equipment refurbishments		390.00	78.00	468.00
140	D J Granger Grounds Maint. Ltd	grounds maintenance worksheet 16		682.00	136.40	818.40
141	The Liberty Co Ltd	toilets cleaning (29/08-02/10)		160.00	32.00	192.00
142	F T Gearing Landscape Services	car park surface at Small Gains	5,620.00		1,124.00	6,744.00
143	The CGM Group (East Anglia) Lt	pitch mowing at the rec 16/09		29.07	5.81	34.88
Total			9883.60	3155.50	1,683.34	14,722.44
Outstanding Accounts						
Yearbook 2016 adverts (x1)					65.00	
Total						65.00
Money at bank						
Current Account			29 September 2016		34,119.99	
Deposit Account			01 September 2016		30,422.86	
Total						64,542.85
<i>Cheques banked after/BACS transfers after</i>						1,070.00
<i>Cheques drawn but not cleared/DD's outstanding</i>						96.00
Total						65,516.85
<i>Total after paying this months cheques</i>						50,794.41
<i>Total in current a/c after paying this months cheques</i>						20,371.55