

**Minutes of the meeting of the Ashwell Parish Council held on
Wednesday 6th January 2016 in the Parish Room at 8.00pm**

Present: Councillors Mark White (Chairman), Martin Hoffman (Vice-chairman), Graham Lee, Madeleine Legg, David Short.

The Clerk was also in attendance. Members of the public: Four parishioners.

76. Apologies Cllr David Sims (away), Bridget Macey (other commitment).

77. Minutes of Council meeting 2nd December 2015

It was *resolved* that the minutes be approved and signed.

78. Matters of general report from previous meetings

78.1 (November Council, 68.1) Parish Clock. The response from Mr Andrew Godman, NHDC Head of Housing and Public Protection, was noted. This included the sound data from previous recordings and confirmed that he would undertake a review of the sound levels in the spring of 2016 when atmospheric conditions were suitable. Cllr Martin Hoffman wished to note the thanks received from a parishioner at the December Council meeting and also to record the significant input from others in the previous Parish Council.

78.2 (November Council, 68.2) Library services. Cllr Madeleine Legg gave an update on progress for the Book Swap in the Parish Room. This was now up and running; it was self-managing and available whenever the Parish Room was open, eg during post office opening hours. A parishioner was progressing plans for openings on a Saturday morning with tea/coffee available.

79. Parish management reports

(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 Committee Wednesday October 21st 2015 available)

79.1 Recreation ground/pavilion (Cllrs responsible: Mark White and Madeleine Legg). Cllr Madeleine Legg reported on plans for the users to take on some management and development responsibilities. A meeting of the new users' group chaired by a Cricket Club representative had discussed specific proposals, eg new lockers/seating for the changing rooms, improvements to the flooring, enhanced storage facilities. It was noted that quotes were in hand for grass works in the spring.

79.2 War Memorial. It was reported that the proposals for cleaning were pending input from the Conservation Officer; proposals for hedge/tree works were pending local consultation. The need for the latter to be progressed within the appropriate planting season was noted.

79.3 The Springs (Cllr responsible: Martin Hoffman). Cllr Hoffman reported that quotes had been requested for the repainting of the High Street railings (these were the responsibility of Herts County Council). The work was to be funded by County Councillor Tony Hunter from his locality budget.

79.4 St Mary's Churchyard grounds maintenance (Cllr Martin Hoffman). Cllr Hoffman reported that agreed tree works had now been completed. He reiterated the need for the Parish Council to carefully monitor the costs of future tree works. These were commissioned by the St Mary's Parochial Church Council and, following agreement, funded by the Parish Council.

79.5 The Cemetery (Cllr responsible: Madeleine Legg). Cllr Madeleine Legg reported on tree works. Following the tree survey recommended works had been carried out. Quotes had been requested for further works and these would now be discussed. A meeting with the tenant of the Chapel of Rest to discuss proposals was to be scheduled; communications to date had been positive. (see also 81.1.2 re the Herts Highways verge).

79.6 Allotments at Small Gains (Cllr responsible: David Sims). It was noted that a tenants' meeting was to be scheduled for the spring.

79.7 Updates on other management matters. See 83.1 (Finance report) re proposals for section 106 funding for toilets at the Recreation Ground, storage facilities at the pavilion, safety surfacing for the playground.

80. Items of correspondence from parishioners

80.1 (December Council, 70.2.2) Re parking outside the school/safety concerns. A proposal that a request be made to Herts Highways to extend the yellow zig-zag markings to include the corner of Bear Lane/Back Street was discussed. Cllr David Short reinforced the views of others and again expressed his own concerns of the hazard to children and others caused by those who parked on the pavements, on the corners and within the existing restricted areas.

It was **resolved** that a request to extend the yellow zig-zag markings in the vicinity of the school be put to Herts Highways/County Councillor Tony Hunter. **Clerk**

It was noted that Cllr David Short in his role as the school representative (school governor in his own right) would keep the Head and Governing Body informed. **CDS**

80.2 Re Dog fouling (December Council, 70.3). The receipt of further information was noted. Two residents had reported regular incidents of bagged dog waste being deliberately thrown into their front gardens; it was believed that other properties had also been involved. The Parish Council had passed the matter on to the NHDC Enforcement Team and the police for investigation; the incidents were being treated as anti-social behaviour.

80.3 Re fly-tipping. Incidents had been reported to the NHDC contractor, Veolia, and the NHDC Enforcement Officer (Mordens Road, litter bin adjacent gate to Recreation Ground).

80.4 Re Post office services in the Parish Room. Cllr Martin Hoffman proposed that a meeting be requested with Post Office Ltd to review the service now it had been operational for six months including the Christmas period. He also wished to pursue the communications issue that had forced the closure of the service on Monday last; it was believed that this was due to the inadequacy of the BT/Openreach service that provided the required internet and mobile signals.

80.5 Re 'Clean for the Queen' street cleaning campaign. See 86.2 below.

81. Items re other authorities/organisations

81.1 Hertfordshire Highways

81.1.1 Responses from County Councillor Tony Hunter were noted. These had informed that (i) replacement of missing 'Ashwell' signage on the A505 was scheduled as part of the safety upgrade package, (ii) road closures at West End had been due to contractors' licensed works. Cllr Martin Hoffman expressed his view that the response to the latter was inadequate; he had written personally to County Councillor Tony Hunter on the matter.

81.1.2 Various ongoing proposals/concerns put to County Councillor Tony Hunter and his Highways Officer Gary Henning were noted. These included (i) safety improvements for Station Road collated by Cllr David Sims, (ii) installation of wooden posts outside the Cemetery to protect the grass verge from damage by parked vehicles, (iii) improvements to verges/road perimeter in the section of Back Street where there is no pavement, (iv) repainting of bollards/signposts/lighting columns, (v) damage at the junction of Kingsland Way and Silver Street.

81.1.3 It was noted that various agreed works were pending including (i) drainage maintenance in Northfields Road, (ii) safety improvements at the Odsey A505 junction.

81.1.4 It was noted that a proposal had been made for expenditure of section 106 funds held by Herts County Council to fund collection of traffic data (speed and volume) at specific locations. It was understood that this data would be required to support various proposals including those for safety works in Station Road.

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

81.1.5 Works to remove dead/dangerous trees from the Bear Lane verge adjacent to the school. Cllr David Short expressed his concerns. Despite the potential safety risk, it had taken many months of campaigning, including the involvement of the MP, to achieve any action. Once works had been agreed they had been inadequately carried out. Within a few weeks a dead, ivy-covered tree that had been missed had fallen into the road. This was not only hazardous, it was costly to the public purse.

It was **resolved** to write to the HCC portfolio holder for Highways, copied to County Councillor Tony Hunter, requesting that he demand an explanation from those responsible and inform the Parish Council of the outcome. **Clerk**

81.2 Hertfordshire County Council (HCC)

The following items of correspondence received from HCC were noted.

81.2.1 Letter re consultation on phased withdrawal of passenger assists from taxis that currently accompany primary aged children to and from school. Details on www.hertsdirect.org/PAconsultation. Deadline 31st January 2016. Cllr David Short agreed to ensure that the school had already been informed. **CDS**

81.2.2 Letter of notification re adoption of Waste Local Plan/Employment Land Areas of Search (Supplementary Planning Document). Details on www.hertsdirect.org.

81.2.3 Hertfordshire Traffic and Transport Data Report 2015. Details on www.hertsdirect.org/ttdr.

Cllr David Sims was requested to review and report back if necessary. **DRS**

81.2.4 (December Council, 71.3) Bus services/concerns re punctuality of 90/91 service. County Councillor Tony Hunter had emailed informing that ‘...a revised timetable has been prepared to allow more running time...’ and ‘...a new timetable registered to start in January.’ Parishioner Joan Ridley was thanked for pursuing this matter.

81.3 North Hertfordshire District Council (NHDC) Receipt of information on the current ‘Recycling Right’ campaign with a request to assist in publicity to residents was noted. The view was expressed that improvements that would reduce costs were of benefit to all council tax payers as well as to the environment. It was agreed to assist with publicity; the information provided would be forwarded to the *Ashwell Village News* and placed on notice boards. **Clerk**

81.4 Sport England. Request to update their ‘Active Places Data Platform’ re the Recreation Ground. It was agreed that information be supplied. **Clerk**

82. Reports re planning matters

82.1 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)

It was noted that a meeting of the Planning Committee was scheduled for Sunday 10th January 2016 to consider:

NHDC Case Ref No: 15/03014/1. 22 and 24 Hodwell.

Full Planning Permission: Two replacement 2 bedroom dwellings following demolition of existing dwellings and ancillary works. Applicant: Heathcourt Properties Ltd.

82.2 Re NHDC Case Ref No: 15/00691/1 Land rear of 39-59 Station Road/Appeal to Inspectorate.

Outline Application: Outline Planning Application (all matters reserved, except for access) residential development comprising of 14 dwelling with associated access off Green Lane (as amended by plan 130425- 06 received 5.6.15).

(December Council, 72.2) It was noted that a response had been sent on 16th December 2015 to the Planning Inspector in support of the NHDC refusal of the application. A further letter had since been received from NHDC informing that the Planning Inspector had now allowed a time extension (until 13th January 2016); additional material, Planning and Transport appeal statements, had been submitted by the applicant.

It was **resolved** that a further response be sent to the Planning Inspector reiterating the objections made in the response of 16th December and, in addition, expressing the view that the additional material supplied by the applicant did nothing to alter the views of the Parish Council. With specific reference to highways, the objection remained that the proposals for access were inadequate. The report supplied by the applicant contained various errors and inaccuracies and, it was felt, used wording calculated to support the appeal.

Clerk

82.3 Applications to NHDC for which Parish Council not a consultee

The following was noted:

NHDC Case Ref No: 15/03066/1AG Barn at Whitby Farm, Partridge Hill. Two Steel Frame Lean-to buildings with elements of cement sheeting to be constructed on either side of an existing Agricultural Shed. 14m x 7m and 14m x 8m.

Applicant Mr A Mack.

82.4 Decisions on applications by NHDC as Planning Authority

The following was noted:

NHDC Case Ref No: 15/02746/1HH. 3 Colbron Close.

Full Planning Permission Householder: Retention and modification of outbuilding in rear garden.

NHDC Planning Control Committee decision (Thursday 17th December 2015): permission granted with conditions, ‘... the building hereby approved shall be painted/stained black to match the principal dwelling. All of the approved works to modify the building, including painting black, shall be carried out within 2 months of the date of this permission or a period otherwise agreed in writing with the Planning Authority.’ (see also minutes Planning Committee 15th November 2015, item 12)

82.5 Requests to NHDC re works to Trees in Conservation Area (already responded to)

82.5.1 Responses of ‘no objection’ conveyed to the Planning Officer were noted re the following:

15/02814/ITCA: 6 Fordham Close (Norway Maple crown reduce 30%, Sycamore crown reduce 30%)

15/02991/ITCA: 52 Back Street (Crown reduction by 40% 1 Sycamore Tree)

15/02992/ITCA: 77 High Street (Reduce height by 4-5 metres approximately 1 Holm Oak (T1), Remove limb resting on wall 1 Mulberry Tree, reduction to clear building by 50% and reduce crown by 20% (T2), Fell 1 Ash Tree (T3), Crown reduction by 25% 1 Norway Maple Tree (T4), Fell 1 Ash Tree (T5), Fell 1 Walnut Tree (T6), Crown reduction by 25% 1 Ash Tree (T7))

82.5.2 Current applications to NHDC re works to Trees in Conservation Area and those covered by Tree Protection Orders

15/03100/ITPO 3 Woodforde Close (Crown reduction of 1 metre and lift by 1.5 metres 1 Sycamore)

15/03106/ITPO 7 Woodforde Close (Re pollard by approximately 5 metres 1 Horse chestnut Tree)

15/03105/ITCA 5 Woodforde Close (Reduce crown by approximately 4 metres 1 Sycamore Tree)

15/03117/ITCA 87 Back Street (Crown reduction by approximately 2 metres 1 Mulberry Tree)

It was agreed that there were no objections.

It was noted that trees identified to be of amenity value were being considered as part of the current Neighbourhood Plan initiative.

83. Reports re Finance matters

83.1 (December Council, 73.1) Section 106 funding. It was noted that a response had been received from NHDC. They had confirmed that the claim proposed by St Mary's PCC for the funding of new windows at the Parish Room was eligible. NHDC had also confirmed that the claim for a mower proposed by the Cricket Club and formally supported by the Parish Council at its October 2015 meeting would now be put forward for approval.

Following discussion it was agreed that further information be sought from NHDC on the following,

(i) as the Parish Room was a community facility was it correct that this claim would be funded from the 'Community Centre & Town and Village Hall' category, (ii) as there was some confusion, please could guidelines be issued that clarified precisely what information was needed by NHDC and the communication routes that should be used, (iii) at what stage should a parish council get involved if a claim was led by a community group; parish councillors felt that they should have all the details, particularly costs, before considering their support for a claim, (iv) please could a spreadsheet be provided that summarised the totals in each category available for Ashwell, ie not separate amounts by each development that had to be added up as this caused confusion, (v) please could fuller information be supplied as to which category any particular claim would come under; parish councillors were concerned that when considering a claim they needed to ensure that they were not 'running dry' a particular category when there were other projects pending.

It was **resolved** to support the claim by the St Mary's Parochial Church Council (who manage the premises on behalf of the village) for release of section 106 funds for new windows at the Parish Room.

It was **resolved** to request further information from NHDC on the points raised.

It was **resolved** to ensure that NHDC were aware of other projects that have been at discussion stage for some time and that the Parish Council hoped to bring forward in the near future. These included toilets at the Recreation Ground, storage facilities at the pavilion, safety surfacing for the playground.

83.2 Monthly Accounts and Bills for Payment.

It was **resolved** that these be approved and paid (see appendix). Cllr David Short declared an interest (item 191; reimbursement of expenses due from the setting up of the Book Swap in the Parish Room).

Clerk

84. Training

84.1 Information on forthcoming training courses from HAPTC, SLCC and LCPAS was noted.

85. Reports from working groups

85.1 Ashwell Neighbourhood Plan Group (leader Cllr David Short) It was noted that the report on the Housing Survey had been received. Cllr David Short reported that a very productive meeting involving a representative from NHDC had taken place. The group had also met to discuss various aspects and to progress the next stage of the plan.

85.2 Website Group (leader Cllr Graham Lee) Cllr Graham Lee reported that a meeting had been held to establish various aspects and to inform further proposals.

85.3 Yearbook Group (leader Cllr David Short) Cllr David Short reported that production was progressing well. He expressed some concern that advertising commitments to date were less than at this stage in previous years, particularly from village businesses; group members had been putting effort into making further contacts with potential advertisers. It was noted that the policy had been agreed some years previously to accept an element of financial risk; a sum had been set aside in allocated reserves to cover

any shortfall. Following discussion it was agreed that publication should be progressed even if there was some shortfall between income and expenditure.

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

Standing Orders suspended for this item to allow public participation. Item taken at 8.30pm

86.1 Police matters. It was noted that PCSO Chris Brabrook would be holding a Neighbourhood Watch open session this Friday 8th January, 10-12 in the Parish Room; all parishioners were welcomed to attend and raise any issues with him.

A request to respond to a survey on the monthly parish-focused newsletter was noted; it was agreed that this be circulated. **Clerk**

86.2 Cllr David Short reported on preliminary proposals that he had made to the Museum and others to celebrate the 1100th anniversary, in 2017, of the founding of Ashwell in 917. More information would follow.

86.2 Items raised by parishioners.

86.2.1 Re the 'Clean for the Queen' street cleaning campaign (details on www.cleanforthequeen.co.uk). It was noted that an email outlining the proposal had been received from Parishioners Fergus and Liz Moynihan. Parishioner Liz Moynihan reiterated the need to address the significant problem of litter on the roadside verges on the outskirts of the village. She proposed that an event linked to this campaign be organised and had ear-marked the morning of Saturday 5th March. Publicity material and practical items such as refuse sacks could be obtained by groups who had registered with 'Clean for the Queen'. The pavilion could be used as a base with tea/coffee supplied to volunteers. A local farmer had been approached who was willing to supply a vehicle and trailer to collect filled sacks. Liz Moynihan agreed that she would create a schedule of routes/locations and manage arrangements for the base at the pavilion. Cllr Graham Lee agreed to organise publicity; Cllr David Short would encourage the school to be involved and the Scouts would also be approached. **GEL/CDS**

Registration would be progressed and details of materials available confirmed. **Clerk**

86.2.2 Parishioner Fergus Moynihan raised his concerns at parking close to the bend at West End. He expressed the view that this was increasing, and thus increasingly hazardous, and made a plea for residents to park elsewhere. The Chairman, Cllr Mark White, declared an interest as a resident of West End; family members used on-street parking in this vicinity as no other option was available to them. He had investigated other options, including renting land, but none was available. It was noted that problems at this location had been discussed on previous occasions. Parish councillors expressed their shared concerns and noted that the lack of available parking was increasingly problematic at this, and other locations, in the village. It was generally agreed that there was no obvious solution.

Meeting closed at 10.00pm

Next monthly Council meeting Wednesday 3rd February 2016, 8pm in the Parish Room.

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.
- Sunnymead Park Homes newsletter

Appendix 2

ACCOUNTS AND BILLS FOR PAYMENT -January 2016			Date	6th January 2016	
Proposed (i) Cllr Legg (ii) Cllr Lee		Declarations: 191 Cllr Short			
		£	£	£	£
Receipts		Precept	Grants	Other	Total
69	Santander interest a/c	bank interest		11.22	11.22
70	Neville Funeral Service	chapel rent		68.75	68.75
71	J Davidson	allotment rent		7.50	7.50
Total			0.00	87.47	87.47
Payments		Admin, staff costs & Other Misc	Management of Parish Assets & Amenities	VAT	Total
By Direct Debit					
176	E.ON (01/01/16)	Pavilion electricity	39.50	1.98	41.48
177	E.ON (30/12/15)	Public toilets electricity	16.36	0.82	17.18
178	E.ON (04/012/16)	chapel electricity	11.00		11.00
By Cheque					
179	J C M Porter	Clerk's salary	1,083.11		1083.11
180	J C M Porter	reimbursement office expenses	20.52		20.52
181	HCC Pensions-LGPS Acco	clerk's pension	398.00		398.00
182	M Barden	Environmental Cleansing*	595.78		595.78
183	M Chandler	Duties at Pavilion and Rec	57.52		57.52
184	Post Office	tax&NI to Inland Revenue*			
185	K Clifford	Premises duties	30.00		30.00
186	Information Commissioner	Data protection registration renewal	35.00		35.00
187	MCL Communications Ltd	domain renewal (until 30/10/2017)	68.00	13.60	81.60
188	Sigma Office Ltd	PC diagnostics/hard drive	81.00	16.20	97.20
189	Ashwell St Mary's PCC	Parish room hire (monthly meetings 2016)	144.00		144.00
190	ESE Direct Ltd	x2 trolleys for Book Swap	553.18	110.64	663.82
191	C D Short	reimbursement labels/notebook for Book Swap	20.40	4.08	24.48
192	D J Granger	grounds maintenance sheet 19 plus extra Silver St	1,150.00	230.00	1380.00
193	Liberty Co Ltd	toilets cleaning (30/11-03/01)	100.00	20.00	120.00
194	Alison Eardley	Neighbourhood Plan survey analysis	225.00		225.00
195	The Blue Tree Company	St Mary's churchyard tree work	1845.00	369.00	2214.00
Total		2,054.63	4,418.74	766.32	7,239.69
Outstanding Accounts					
Football Club rent (last installment)				335.00	
Yearbook 2015 adverts (x1 advertiser)				70.00	
Total					405.00
Money at bank					
Current Account		04 January 2016		58,195.89	
Deposit Account		03 December 2015		30,335.46	
Total					88,531.35
Cheques banked after/BACS transfers after					-
Cheques drawn but not cleared/DD's outstanding					150.00
Total					88,381.35
Total after paying this months cheques					81,141.66
Total in current a/c after paying this months cheques					50,806.20
* no payment due to HMRC because of M Barden tax refund (part also carried forward to Feb return)					