

**Minutes of the meeting of the Ashwell Parish Council held on  
Wednesday 2 September 2015 in the Parish Room at 8.00pm**

**Present:** Councillors Mark White (Chairman), Graham Lee, Madeleine Legg, Bridget Macey, David Short, David Sims.

In attendance: 12 members of the public and Mrs A Griffiths (Minutes Secretary, LGS Services).

It was noted that the Clerk was on annual leave.

On a proposition by the Chairman, it was unanimously agreed to hold an *in camera* session for confidential items following the conclusion of the meeting.

**40. APOLOGIES** – Cllr Martin Hoffman.

**41. MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING 5 August 2015**

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

**42. MATTERS OF REPORT FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

*(See item 43 below for any matters re management of parish assets and amenities)*

**42.1** (05 August Council, 33.5) Poor Broadband speeds/request for information. The previously circulated correspondence from Connected Counties and from HCC was considered. It was agreed to clarify whether the reference to premises covered by the second rollout referred to the parish or the village.

**42.2** (05 August Council, 33.2) Provisional dates of 7, 8 or 9 September had been provided for the sound check on the Church Chimes. NHDC would prefer to carry out the checks in the complainant's home if possible. See 48.2.4

**42.3** (05 August Council, 33.1) Royal Mail Post Boxes. Cllr Short enquired whether the report on post boxes had been sent out.

**42.4** (05 August Council, 33.4.4) Overhanging vegetation. Cllr Short reported that the hedge in Bear Lane and the school verge had not been cut during the school summer holidays. It was agreed that Cllr Short was to contact County Cllr Tony Hunter seeking assurances that this work would be carried out during the October half term. Cllr Short asked whether the list of landowners had been compiled.

**42.5** (05 August Council, 34.2) Public toilets at the Recreation Ground/agreed additional cleaning. Cllr Legg reported that the deep clean had not taken place despite a reminder being given, and expressed disappointment at the service received so far.

**42.6** (05 August Council, 34.3) Playground proposal to get users more involved. Cllr Legg reported that a volunteer was now inspecting the playground every week.

**43. PARISH MANAGEMENT REPORTS**

**43.1** Concerns regarding unapproved bar in the pavilion. The views of the Parish Council were sought and the following concerns were expressed: the premises were not secure; the recreation area was infrequently used and queries were raised as to how it would be controlled and monitored; stock (alcohol) was being left on the premises and a glass fronted beer fridge being visible from a window; and the risk of under age drinking. There were also concerns about any liability arising if alcohol was permitted to be left on the premises. It was agreed that the Chairman should speak to the Chairman of the Cricket Club to convey the Parish Council's concerns about the bar being held on the premises and to ask him to remove it, as from now on no alcohol is to be left on the premises. The position regarding licensing is to be checked. See 48.2.3 below

**44. OTHER CORRESPONDENCE AND MATTERS RE OTHER AUTHORITIES**

**Items from parishioners**

**44.1** Concerns to police and Parish Council re alleged speeding vehicles associated with harvest. PCSO Brabrook was reminding the farmers of their responsibilities.

**44.2** Complaint re erection of outbuilding at 3 Colbron Close. Several complaints had been received from parishioners that a building was being erected without planning permission. On a proposition by the Chairman, the meeting was briefly suspended to enable a resident to comment. It was reported that the Area Planning Officer had asked the builder to submit a retrospective planning application and that an architect had been appointed. It was agreed that the Parish Council should await the application, then carry out a site visit and submit its comments. The meeting was suspended again to allow a resident to speak. He

wished to ensure that residents were consulted as part of the process. The Parish Council will inform the residents of the Close of the site meeting.

**Items from other authorities**

**44.3 HCC.** To note information received re mobile library services. Cllr Sims reported that the mobile library services were closing in October. The Church was being asked if part of the Parish Room could be used for a book swap. There was a possibility of obtaining some books from the mobile library. The rector was willing for coffee to be made available. The swap should be accessible to the public daily when the Post Office was open.

**44.4 HCC/Herts Highways.** Email to all Borough, Town, Parish Councils re LED Phase 2 street lighting for Hertfordshire. HCC are converting all street lights to LED lighting. Work in Ashwell is due to take place in September 2016. The Parish Council wished to check whether all lights were covered under the conversion plans, and also the proposed dates for conversion. A preference was expressed that all the street lights should have swan necks. The Chairman undertook to contact HCC.

On a proposition by the Chairman, it was agreed to vary the order of business.

**47.4 Speeding Watch Group (leader Cllr Martin Hoffman).** Cllr Macey reported in Cllr Hoffman's absence on Drive Safe and the Speeding Watch Group. Problems had been experienced as the equipment can not be held overnight and has to be returned to Royston and collected again in the morning. It was agreed that PCSO Brabrook should be invited to visit and meet the Speeding Watch team so that they could voice their concerns.

**48. PARISH AFFAIRS, REPORTS FROM OTHER BODIES AND OPEN FORUM**

**48.1** To receive any items re Police matters, the Village Hall, Ashwell School Governing Body, the Museum, Henry Colbron Trust and youth matters.

**48.1.1** It was noted that no work done had yet been done on the A505 junction.

**48.1.2** Concerns were expressed at the levels of the footings in the Walkdens extension in Station Road and the implications for the height of the buildings. A letter is to be sent to the Planning Officer, Richard Tiffin, with a copy to David Price, expressing the Council's concern at the height of the buildings on the Walkdens extensions.

**48.1.3** In response to a query, the Parish Council confirmed that it did not have any objections to an interment taking place on a Sunday.

**48.1.4** Complaints had been received from a parishioner regarding the condition of Ashwell Street between the tennis courts up to the junction with the Ruddy. Some potholes had been filled but the southern side had ruts on the Cambridgeshire side. The resident had written to HCC to pursue the matter. See 48.2.1 below.

**48.1.5** School Governing Body. The new Head Teacher, Lisa Hall, had taken up her post. The Parish Council wished to write to welcome her, and also to write to Kate Oxley wishing her well on her retirement. It was reported that water had come in through the new roof of the new block while being put on.

**48.1.6** Cllr Legg paid tribute to the sterling work of the volunteers at the Ashwell Show, despite the poor weather conditions. The Parish Council will write to the Show Committee expressing its appreciation and congratulating the volunteers on the success of the event.

**48.1.7** Following reports from a resident that the verges and island at the bottom of Claybush Hill near the Mole's Yard development had been churned up by vehicles parking, it had been suggested that the builders reinstate them. The Chairman will look into the matter and check the position.

**48.1.8** The road on the school side is also in a poor condition.

At 8.41 pm, the meeting was suspended to enable residents to make comments and observations.

**48.2** To receive any items raised by parishioners

**48.2.1** A resident complained about the condition of the track between the cycle field and the crossroads, where the surface had been damaged. Cllr Short will speak to the Rights of Way officer. The Parish Council expressed the hope that planings from the work on the A505 would be applied to the Ashwell part of the track.

**48.2.2** It was reported that the verges on the opposite side of the road to the Station Road/Philosopher's Gate development had been worn away by lorries and foul water was coming from the drain. Traffic was travelling down the side of the road with no pavement due to builders' vehicles being parked opposite and

stones were coming down from the Ruddery. It will be necessary to await the completion of the work before reinstatement can take place. The Clerk will be asked to contact Gary Henning at Highways to report that the sewage system cannot cope at times of heavy rain.

**48.2.3** A resident asked about the bar at the pavilion and asked whether it could be used when a charity cricket match was due to be played on 12 September. The Parish Council confirmed that it was agreeable for one-off events to take place but was not happy with alcohol being left on the premises.

**48.2.4** Clarification was sought by a resident regarding the visit of the Noise Abatement Officer to carry out a sound check. This will be an agenda item for the next meeting. The Parish Council reiterated that it wished to give North Herts District Council an opportunity to carry out the necessary procedures to establish the sound levels. The Parish Council was working with the District Council to try to resolve the matter in the proper manner.

**48.2.5** A complaint was received regarding a light on the chicane which had not been working for over a year. The Parish Council explained that this had been noted on the lights survey and had been reported.

**48.2.6** It was reported that the building works had encroached onto the pavement at the Philosopher's Gate development and the pavement was not as wide as previously. The Chairman is to take a look and contact the builders.

**48.2.7** A resident returned to the subject of the chimes. The Council reiterated that it was working with the District Council to solve the problem and whilst this was a lengthy process, was doing all it could. The matter will be considered again at the next meeting.

**48.2.8** Dog fouling was reported along the whole length of Ashwell Street from the top of the alleyway to the allotments, causing a hazard for children walking along the street. A resident expressed concerns that owners were not picking up after their dogs and waste bags had been hung from branches and placed in a resident's bin. A dog waste bin was requested by the bench opposite the allotments. The Parish Council agreed to look into the matter but it was felt that there was a need for education on this subject. This will be discussed at the next Streets and Environment Committee meeting.

The meeting resumed at 9.03 pm.

**48.1 (continued)** To receive any items re Police matters, the Village Hall, Ashwell School Governing Body, the Museum, Henry Colbron Trust and youth matters.

**48.1.1** Village Hall. A meeting needs to be rescheduled.

**48.1.2** Ashwell School Governing Body. Report taken earlier under 48.1.5.

**48.1.3** Ashwell Museum. Not present.

**48.1.4** Henry Colbron Trust. Nothing to report.

**48.1.5** Youth matters. Nothing to report. Matters are raised on an ad hoc basis.

## **45. REPORT RE PLANNING COMMITTEE**

### **45.1 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)*

**45.1.1** 15/02116/1 - 17 High Street – Change of use of former Post Office and shop to residential in association with existing dwelling. Single storey rear extension and first floor rear extension and additional first floor window in side (east) elevation.

The Chairman reported on the proposal not to call a planning meeting for the application. However, the position was unclear as the plans appeared to show two dwellings. Clarification will be sought as to whether the application is for two separate dwellings. It was agreed to convene a Planning Committee meeting to consider the application.

### **45.3 To note decisions on applications by NHDC as Planning Authority**

**45.3.1** 15/02188/1NMA - 29 Angells Meadow – Increase height of duo pitch roof to the front of the property by 400 mm. Agreed. Noted.

### **45.4 To note 'Tree(s) in Conservation Area' applications to NHDC as Planning Authority**

Noted.

**45.5** (Planning Committee 05 August 2015, item 09) To note email from neighbour received after meeting at which considered; advised to ensure the NHDC planning officer aware of views

Noted.

**46. REPORT FROM FINANCE COMMITTEE**

**46.1** Proposal for approval of monthly Accounts and Bills for Payment.

It was *resolved* that these be approved and paid (see appendix). It was *resolved* that the payment of £4926.36 to Came and Company (insurance premium) should be paid, subject to the Chairman confirming this with the Clerk, as this was due by 30 September. (Prop ML, 2nd BM, unanimous) **Clerk**

**47. TO RECEIVE ANY REPORTS FROM CURRENT WORKING GROUPS**

**47.1** Ashwell Neighbourhood Plan Group (leader Cllr David Short) Cllr Short reported that another date had been scheduled for the next meeting.

Concerns were expressed about the implications of the closure of the Post Office. A proposal by Cllr Lee that the Parish Council consider a campaign encouraging parishioners to use the village facilities will be brought to the next meeting. An article is to be placed in the Ashwell News expressing concern about a drop in footfall in shops in the village.

**47.2** Website Group (leader Cllr Graham Lee). It was suggested that the website could be launched at the Annual Parish Meeting in March, but it is unlikely to be ready by then. A request was made for a report to be emailed to members before the next meeting. The view was expressed that Social Media and Twitter should be incorporated into the review.

**47.3** Yearbook Group (leader Cllr David Short) A meeting will take place later this month.

**47.4** Speeding Watch Group (leader Cllr Martin Hoffman) Taken earlier.

At 9.25pm, on a proposition by the Chairman, carried unopposed, in accordance with *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.*

Items to be considered at an *in camera* session on the grounds that include personnel matters.

The remaining members of the public left the meeting. The Minutes Secretary was invited to remain.

At 9.42 pm, the meeting was re-opened to the public. No members of the public returned. There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.42 pm.

Chairman's Signature.....Date.....
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## Appendix

ACCOUNTS AND BILLS FOR PAYMENT -September 2015			Date	02 September 2015	
Proposed (i) Cllr Madeleine Legg (ii) Cllr Bridget Macey			Declarations: Cllr Sims receipt 55		
			£	£	£
			Precept	Grants	Other
					Total
<b>Receipts</b>					
54	Santander interest a/c	bank interest			11.57
55	D Sims	allotment rent and deposit			75.00
56	personal cheque	cemetery works 15.15			100.00
<b>Total</b>				0.00	186.57
			Admin, staff costs & Other Misc	Management of Parish Assets & Amenities	VAT
<b>Payments</b>					Total
<b>By Direct Debit</b>					
98	Affinity Water (01/09/15)	Pavilion water		107.47	107.47
99	Affinity Water (01/09/15)	Allotments water		27.25	27.25
100	Affinity Water (01/09/15)	Cemetery water		16.02	16.02
101	BT (18/08/15)	Office telephone and broadband	141.19		28.23
<b>By Cheque</b>					
102	J C M Porter	Clerk's salary	1083.11		1083.11
103	HCC Pensions-LGPS Acco	clerk's pension	398.00		398.00
104	M Barden	Environmental Cleansing	253.03		253.03
105	M Chandler	Duties at Pavilion and Rec	57.52		57.52
106	Post Office	tax&NI to Inland Revenue	296.65		296.65
107	K Clifford	Premises duties		30.00	30.00
108	D J Granger	grounds maintenance sheet 13		306.00	61.20
109	Came and Company	annual insurance premium (01/10/2015-30/09/2016)	4926.36		4926.36
110	M Barden	reimbursement expenses	9.00		9.00
<b>Total</b>			7,164.86	486.74	89.43
<b>Outstanding Accounts</b>					
Allotment rents (xl plot)					7.50
Football Club rent (last installment)					335.00
Yearbook 2015 adverts (xl advertiser)					70.00
<b>Total</b>					412.50
<b>Money at bank</b>					
Current Account			18th August 2015		55,212.10
Deposit Account			1st August 2015		30,289.86
<b>Total</b>					85,501.96
<i>Cheques banked after/BACS transfers after</i>					175.00
<i>Cheques drawn but not cleared/DD's outstanding</i>					1,119.20
<i>Total</i>					84,557.76
<i>Total after paying this months cheques</i>					76,816.73
<i>Total in current a/c after paying this months cheques</i>					46,526.87