

Minutes

of the Parish Council meeting held on

Wednesday 2nd November 2022, at 7pm, in the Parish Room.

Present: Councillors Ian Duffy, Vinny Hall, Martin Hoffman, Graham Lee (Chairman), Norton Mahy (Vice-chairman) and David Sims. Cllr Mark White joined the meeting on Zoom.

Also in attendance: Clerk (Jane Porter), Al Jacoutot (IT support), District Councillor Tom Tyson, County Councillor Steve Jarvis. Three visitors from Jarvis Homes Ltd (see item 51.1). Four members of the public were present and two also joined on Zoom.

Following a request from a parishioner it was agreed that the meeting could be recorded.

- 48 Apologies for absence from parish councillors. Cllr Gemma Allan (long-standing dispensation due to other commitments)
- 49 Declarations of interest. *See item 55.3.*
- 50 Proposal to approve and sign the minutes of the Council meeting, 5th October 2022, and the Joint Committee -Finance & Management, 11th October 2022. It was resolved that the proposal be accepted.
Action: Clerk/Graham

51 OPEN FORUM - VILLAGE MATTERS, REPORTS FROM OTHER BODIES, ETC

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

- 51.1 Presentation by Jarvis Homes Ltd acting as an agent for the landowner on their proposed planning application for land at Dixies Meadow. [The Parish Council had agreed at short notice to their request to attend the meeting. It had been stated that the Parish Council would be pleased to receive information so that it could then publicize this to parishioners but would not be entering into any discussion or expressing any opinions at this pre-application stage. As with any potential development of this nature what an applicant might subsequently propose in their formal planning application submission to NHC could change substantially. The Parish Council would wait to receive the formal consultation from NHC and listen to the views of parishioners before agreeing its own response. The Parish Council is aware from research that was undertaken in preparing the Neighbourhood Plan that this site has significant community 'interest'. Also that there appears to be a division in that community interest between those who would like the green space preserved, and those that see it as a site that could be developed to provide housing for the benefit of residents of the local community. Recognising the level of interest in this particular site (and also the small number of other potential sites in the village) the Parish Council took legal advice earlier this year about establishing a Community Land Trust. We were advised this week that Ashwell Community Land Trust Ltd has been successfully registered. *See 51.3.2 below*]

A proposed site plan was shown that included a layout with 12 houses, a pond adjacent to the High Street and an open area at the rear. They stated that their intention, following this pre-application stage, was to submit a planning application to NHC probably by the end of the year. The scheme had been designed to take into account local building styles and factors identified in the Neighbourhood Plan. It would enhance the biodiversity of the site. Three 2-bedroom units were included as affordable housing; the involvement of a housing association was an option but not yet decided. Sustainability had been considered and current building regulations would be met. Public access may be permitted including to an area at the rear of the site potentially with a children's playground; this could be assured for the long term through a legal agreement. A sports area had not been considered.

51.2 Items from members of the public.

51.2.1 Doctors Surgery. A parishioner raised concerns about not being able to book an appointment. Chairman Graham Lee agreed to give feedback on this to the next meeting of the Patient Liaison Group.

51.3 Items on general village matters from parish councillors.

51.3.1 Safer routes to the Station/ Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) public consultation. <https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/have-your-say-walking-and-cycling-routes> The Parish Council's response to the NHC officer was agreed and would be sent by the deadline of 7th November. *See the link following for more information* <https://www.ashwell.gov.uk/news2/safer-routes-to-the2/>

51.3.2 Community Land Trust/Community Benefit Society. *See the link for more information.* <https://www.ashwell.gov.uk/news2/community-land-trust/> This had now received FCA approval and a meeting of the three founder members would be scheduled to discuss the next steps.

51.3.3 Village Hall trustees/re their proposal to change to an Incorporated Charitable Organisation and the future involvement of the Parish Council. Nothing to report.

51.4 Items from our district councillor Tom Tyson. He reported:

51.4.1 Bygrave Solar Farm. Land West of Ashwell Road, Bygrave. NHC ref. 22/00741/FP. There was still no committee date for this. He understood that there had been hold-ups due to a technical matter and it was possible that re-consultation would be undertaken by NHC.

51.4.2 NHC consultation on their review of the Ashwell Conservation Area. All material was with the consultant and there was nothing to report. The timescale for anything further was not known.

51.4.3 NHC Local Plan. NHC Full Council were to vote on the adoption of this on 8th November. The Inspector's report had included a modification to exclude the Claybush site in Ashwell as it had already been built. A review of the Plan was scheduled for 2023.

51.4.4 Solar Together project. The deadline for signing up for this had now passed.

51.5 Items from our county councillor Steve Jarvis. He reported:

- 51.5.1 New footway in Station Road as a condition of planning permission for Townsend Meadow. NHC ref. 19/00455/FP. This would be pursued again.
- 51.5.2 The Ruddy. Update on the request to HCC rights of way for a change of status to improve safety. A new HCC officer was now progressing this.
- 51.5.3 Highways works in Station Road adjacent to the War Memorial and the new pedestrian entrance to the Rec from Lucas Lane. There had been multiple communications relating to possible dates for these works. It was understood that they would now progress after Remembrance Sunday.
- 51.5.4 West End chicane. Line painting works were still outstanding. A post-installation safety audit was to be undertaken by Highways officers. Concerns were expressed at the speed of traffic and pedestrian safety on the narrow section of footway. It was noted that the original design had included an additional section to widen the footway but this had been rejected in the pre-installation safety audit due to sightlines in relation to an existing driveway. It was agreed that the concerns would be looked into and options considered.

51.6 Items from working groups.

- 51.6.1 Trees and Hedges Group (leader Cllr David Sims). Quotes had been obtained for the further hedge planting at the Rec and were to be considered.
- 51.6.2 Yearbook (leader Cllr Norton Mahy). As had been agreed at the last meeting, following good references the supplier for design and printing had been appointed.

End of Open Forum/Standing Orders reinstated.

52 ITEMS OF REPORT FROM PARISH COUNCILLORS Nothing to report.

53 MONTHLY REPORTS ON PREMISES/OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES FROM PARISH COUNCILLORS.

See also Appendix A below.

- 53.1 Recreation Ground/upgrade of play equipment and Queen's Platinum Jubilee Pavilion. Chairman Graham Lee reported that nothing had yet been decided and options were still being considered. A meeting had been requested with the NHC officer to discuss the funds available from planning obligations/section 106. *See the link for more information.*
<https://www.ashwell.gov.uk/news2/fundraising-for-the/>
- 53.2 Small Gains/rabbit problems. Cllr David Sims reported that the pest controller was to attend pending suitable weather conditions.
- 53.3 Springs/new bins and planned tree works. Cllr Martin Hoffman reported that the three replacement bins had been installed and were being monitored. A tree quote for removal of some of the Sycamores, in line with the Management Plan, was being considered. The annual tree survey and assessment had been scheduled. It was noted that the input of the Greening Ashwell group was 'a big help' in the day-to-day upkeep of the site.
- 53.4 Litter bins review. This was ongoing and proposals would be agreed with NHC re the relocation of some bins to higher usage sites.

54 PLANNING MATTERS *See summary in Appendix B below.*

Full documents are available on the NHC website. Put the NHC ref. no. into the planning search box <https://pa2.north-herts.gov.uk/online-applications/>

54.1 New consultations received from North Herts Council.

Further amendments. 32 West End. NHC ref. 22/02163/FPH. Two storey side extension to include integrated garage following demolition of existing side extension and existing detached garage (as amended by plans JG01B, JG02B and JG03C received 14th October 2022).

Standing Orders suspended to allow the neighbour and the district councillor to speak.

The neighbour wished to note thanks to the applicant for taking into account their concerns. On the basis of the latest amended plans they no longer wished to make an objection so long as a condition was put in place to ensure that the footprint could not in the future be extended closer to their house.

A proposal was made that the Parish Council's response to NHC reflect this.

It was resolved that the proposal be accepted.

Action: Clerk

54.2 Tree consultations (Conservation Area and TPO) received from NHC.

54.2.1 18 Springhead. NHC ref. 22/02629/TCA. Trees (Conservation Area): T1 Lime - Crown reduce by approx 40% removing all large limbs growing over neighbouring property. 6x Lime - Reduce to previous pruning points. It was noted that a response had been made prior to the deadline of 29th October, 'no objections'.

54.2.2 52 Back Street. NHC ref. 22/02739/TCA. Trees (Conservation Area): T1 Sycamore - Reduce back to old pollard points. Reduction up to 5m.

A proposal was made to respond 'no objections'.

It was resolved that the proposal be accepted.

Action: Clerk

54.2.3 9 John Sale Close. NHC ref. 22/02777/TCA. Trees (Conservation Area): T1 Variegated Norway Maple - Crown reduce by up to 2m to leave viable growth points. T2 Cotoneaster - Crown reduce by up to 2m to leave viable growth points. T3 Copper Sycamore - Crown reduce by up to 2m to leave viable growth points.

A proposal was made to respond 'no objections'.

It was resolved that the proposal be accepted.

Action: Clerk

54.2.4 31 High Street. NHC ref. 22/02747/TCA. Trees (Conservation Area): T1 Bay - Crown reduce by up to 2.5m to leave viable growth points

A proposal was made to respond 'no objections'.

It was resolved that the proposal be accepted.

Action: Clerk

54.3 Updates on previous planning applications, developments ongoing. *See 51.5.14 above.*

55 FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE MATTERS.

55.1 Latest budget tracking and the monthly summary of accounts.

It was proposed, and resolved, that these be accepted.

55.2 Budget and precept proposals for 2023-24. It was noted that the final draft was to be proposed at the December council meeting.

55.3 Audit for 2021-22. It was noted that the completion of the audit had been advertised as required.

55.4 Complaint from a parishioner. It was noted that the adopted Complaints Procedure was being followed. The complaint was against the Chairman Graham Lee, the Vice-chairman Norton Mahy, Cllr Martin Hoffman, Cllr Cath Connolly and the Clerk in relation to the NHC Conservation Area Review. It was agreed that the councillors concerned would not participate in any discussion or vote and this item would be chaired by Cllr Mark White.

In accordance with the Complaints Procedure, the complainant was given the opportunity to speak.

Standing orders suspended.

The Chairman asked if they had anything to add what had been received in writing. The complainant asked that the members concerned be requested to leave the room; the Chairman declined to request this. The complainant reiterated aspects of their complaint and questioned whether the Parish Council had the necessary training or skills to deal with the complaint.

Standing orders reinstated.

A proposal was made that the matter be referred to the NHC Monitoring Officer.

It was resolved that the proposal be accepted.

Action: Clerk/Mark

55.5 Chairman Graham Lee reported that Cllr Cath Connolly had resigned for personal reasons. He thanked her for her much-valued contribution to the Parish Council but understood the reasons for her action and respected them.

Meeting closed at 8.30

Appendix A: Additional notes re premises management. (Please ask for any further information)

New dog waste bin for Ashwell Street/now installed.

Pavilion electricity/replacement of faulty meter completed and dialogue with supplier ongoing.

New seat at the Rec/pending replacement fittings from supplier.

Small Gains water supply upgrade/pending quotes.

Playground and Springs RoSPA inspection/pending report.

Regular tree surveys for all sites/pending reports.

St Mary's Churchyard grounds maintenance, the Parish Clock and support for the post office service in the Parish Room/meeting with St Mary's representatives scheduled.

Appendix B: Planning Summary

Summary of consultations on recent planning and listed building applications received from NHC up to 02 November 2022				
To view all the documents relating to an application put the NHC reference number into the planning searchbox https://pa2.north-herts.gov.uk/online-applications/				
Address	Application ref. Number	Brief description	Ashwell PC response to NHC consultation (see also minute reference)	North Herts Decision
32 West End	22/02163/FPH Further amendments-see below	Two storey side extension to include integrated garage following demolition of existing side extension and existing detached garage.	November Council 54.1 No objection with condition.	Pending
32 West End	22/02163/FPH AMENDED	Two storey side extension to include integrated garage following demolition of existing side extension and existing detached garage.	October Council 46.1.1 Response held due to concerns re inaccurate/lacking information	Pending
1 High Street	22/02425/FPH	Alterations to existing windows, insertion of rooflights to existing front and side roof-slopes, render and boarding to existing facade.	October Council 46.1.2 No objection	Withdrawn 10/10/2022
Slip End Farm, Royston Road	22/01541/FP AMENDED -see below	Replace existing entrance gates with acoustic gates, decommission existing vehicular access and install protective landscape bund to boundary.	October Council 46.1.3 No objection	Pending
Land Adjacent To 4, Ashwell Street	22/01844/S73	Section 73 Application : Variation of condition 2 of planning permission 22/00880/FP granted on 29/06/2022 - Erection of a detached 3 bedroom dwelling, and detached car port; ancillary works and new vehicular access onto Ashwell Street as shown on plans 21-005 Rev I and 20/005/101/D.	PC to NHDC: No Objection September council, 39.1.1	Permission granted 14/10/2022
Spring House 7 High Street	22/02161/FPH and 22/02062/LBC	Replace three existing front elevation gates.	PC to NHDC: No Objection September council, 39.1.2	Pending
Land to the east of 35 Ashwell Street	22/01847/S73	Variation of condition 2 of planning permission 20/02309/FP granted on 08.12.2020 - Erection of 1 x 3 bed detached single storey dwelling including basement and light-well as shown on plans.	PC to NHDC: Objection August council, 32.1.1	Conditional permission granted 25/10/2022
Land to the west of 35 Ashwell Street	21/02650/FP (amendments to original)	Erection of two detached dwellings (1 x 2-bed and 1 x 4-bed) including alterations to existing vehicular access (amended plans received 16.06.2022).	PC to NHDC: Objection July council, 25.1.1	Pending
Slip End Farm, Royston Road	22/01541/FP	Replace existing entrance gates with acoustic gates, decommission existing vehicular access and install protective landscape bund to boundary.	PC to NHDC: No Objection July council, 25.1.2	Pending
Land West of Ashwell Road, Bygrave SG7 5EB	22/00741/FP	Full Planning Permission: Ground mounted solar photovoltaic (PV) farm including battery energy storage; continued agricultural use, ancillary infrastructure, security fencing, landscaping provision, ecological enhancements and associated works.	PC to NHDC: Objection June Council, 18.1.4	Pending
Meadow View, Loves Lane	21/01745/FP	Erection of one detached 2-bed dwelling including creation of new vehicular access off Loves Lane, landscaping and ancillary works.	PC to NHDC: Objection	NHDC -Refused Appeal to the Inspector: Permission granted 08/09/2022

Appendix C: Monthly accounts summary

ACCOUNTS - Summary for 1st to 31st October 2022					
	RECEIPTS				£
43	Nevilles Funeral Services	Rent for Chapel of Rest (October)			68.75
44	Parishioner	Cemetery Burial Rights reservation CW 22.24			660.00
45	Ashwell Football Club	Recreation Ground/pavilion rent 2022-23 season			500.00
46	Parishioner	Cemetery Burial Rights reservation CW 22.30			150.00
47	Santander	Reserve Account Interest			4.34
				Total	£1,383.09
	PAYMENTS		£ less VAT	VAT	£ inc VAT
132	Duo Creative Services Ltd	Website monthly fee (Oct)	25.00	5.00	30.00
133	Brilliant Lawns	Grass Cutting on Rec 21/09/2022 Inv No 10241	127.50		127.50
134	AJGIBL GBP Client NST account/Gallagher	Annual insurance premium	3,148.02		3,148.02
135	Edwards Cleaning & Maintenance	Toilets cleaning and consumables Septt Inv No 2438	237.50		237.50
136	PKF Littlejohn LLP	External Audit fee	400.00	80.00	480.00
137	Cllr David Sims (reimbursment)	Supplies (canes) for Hedge planting at the Recreation Ground	8.00	0.00	8.00
138	CPM Playgrounds Ltd	Works to play equipment at the Recreation Ground	1,005.00	201.00	1,206.00
139	D J Granger Grounds Maintenance Ltd	Grass cutting on 12/10/2022	384.00	81.41	488.45
140	W N Francis T/A Clockwise Restorations	Annual service and repairs to chimes mechanism Parish Clock	609.94	0.00	609.94
141	St Mary's Church PCC	Grant to support the post office outreach in the Parish Room	1,000.00		1,000.00
142	Allotment for Exercise and Recreation	Annual grant to the Recreation Ground charity	10.00		10.00
143	North Herts Council	Recreation Ground trade waste bin	111.80		111.80
144	North Herts Council	Streets Support trade waste bin	126.10		126.10
145	North Herts Council	Springs trade waste bin	126.10		126.10
146	Eon Next	Electricity toilets at pavilion 01-31 Sept 22	12.01	0.60	12.61
147	HCC Pensions-LGPS Account	Clerk & Deputy Clerk Pension to LGPS	775.47		775.47
148	Greening Ashwell	Grant for bulb planting at the Springs	76.99		76.99
149	HMRC accounts ref 321PF00003624	tax&NI to Inland Revenue	524.28		524.28
150	Grounds Officer	Grounds Officer salary	156.40		156.40
151	ECO	Environmental Cleansing Officer salary	244.00		244.00
152	Deputy Clerk	Deputy Clerk Salary	920.53		920.53
153	Clerk	Clerk salary	1,458.18		1,458.18
		Sub-totals	11,486.82	368.01	
				Total	£11,877.87