

Minutes

of the Parish Council AGM/monthly meeting held on Wednesday 17th May 2023 at the Parish Room.

*Present: Parish Councillors Chris Button, Nikki da Costa, Ian Duffy, Vinny Hall, Martin Hoffman
Graham Lee (Chairman) and Norton Mahy (Vice-chairman). Apologies David Sims due to illness.*

*Also in attendance: Clerk (Jane Porter), Deputy Clerk (Sarah Mitchell), District Councillor Tom Tyson
and County Councillor Steve Jarvis. Four members of the public were present and three also joined on
Zoom.*

Following a request from a Parishioner the meeting was recorded.

Standing Orders were suspended for some parts of the meeting to allow members of the public to speak.

1 Election of Chairman.

A proposal was made and seconded to re-elect Graham Lee.

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

Action: Deputy Clerk

2 Election of Vice Chairman.

A proposal was made and seconded to re-elect Norton Mahy.

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

Action: Deputy Clerk

3 Code of Conduct and Register of Interest

3.1 A proposal was made and seconded to adopt North Herts Council (NHC) Code of Conduct for Councillors, with dispensation to allow councillors to remain in the meeting room, but not participate as a councillor in the event of declaring an interest.

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

3.2 The Register of Interest form to be completed by all councillors and submitted to the NHC Monitoring Officer by the Clerk was noted.

Action: Clerk

4 Standing Orders

A proposal was made and seconded to adopt Standing Orders based on the latest NALC model (updated April 2022)

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

5 **Financial Regulations**

A proposal was made and seconded to adopt the Financial Regulations based on the latest NALC model (2019).

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

6 **Review of Policies and Documents held**

The following were noted: complaints procedure, asset register, information and data protection policy, health and safety policy, volunteer policy, equal opportunities policy, insurance.

It was noted that some of these would be reviewed with revised drafts to be considered at the next Council meeting.

7 **Roles and Responsibilities**

7.1 Committees

It was noted that the council has a finance committee and a planning committee, of which all parish councillors are members. It was suggested that the parish council will establish an HR committee on which two parish councillors will be members. It was noted that the members of this committee will be agreed at the next Council meeting.

7.2 Working Groups

It was noted that the council has a number of working groups, which are established and closed as and when required. It was noted that councillor representatives for various groups would be reviewed at the next Council meeting.

7.3 Premises

It was noted that councillor responsibilities for council owned or managed premises would be reviewed at the next Council meeting.

7.4 Liaison with other authorities

It was noted that the clerk, deputy clerk and some councillors have had responsibility for liaison with Hertfordshire Highways, Hertfordshire County Council Rights of Way and North Herts Council for street cleansing. It was noted that these will be reviewed at the next Council meeting.

7.5 Employee recruitment, contractual matters and performance reviews.

It was noted that these will be reviewed by the HR committee.

8 **Memberships**

It was noted that the council has a number of memberships in place, which are identified and reviewed as part of the budgeting process.

9 **Appointments to other bodies and representatives for other bodies**

9.1 Ashwell Village Trust (charity number 294673)

It was noted that the chairman is the chairman of the trust, one parish councillor is trustee and one further parish councillor should be appointed.

A provisional date of 28 June 2023 has been set for the next Annual general meeting of the trust.

9.2 Allotment for Exercise and Recreation (charity number 245521)

It was noted that the parish council is the sole trustee and that the annual general meeting would be the adjacent to the date of the next council meeting.

9.3 Moss Cottage Homes

It was noted that the four trustee positions nominated by the parish council currently are: John Ruch (May 2023 until May 2027), Ann Robertshaw (March 2020 until March 2024), Phillida Shaw (March 2020 until March 2024), Cath Connolly (May 2022 until Annual general meeting 2026).

9.4 Henry Colbron Trust and liaison with Ashwell Primary School

It was noted that this will be reviewed at the next council meeting now that the former council representative Gemma Allan has left the parish council.

9.5 Ashwell Museum liaison

It was noted that the current representative is Martin Hoffman, who is a trustee in his own right. The council's representative. This will be reviewed at the next council meeting.

9.6 Ashwell Village Hall liaison

It was noted that the current parish council representative is Graham Lee and that he is not a trustee.

9.7 Community Land Trust

It was noted that member directors are Graham Lee, Norton Mahy and one non-parish councillor George Tait. It was noted that the secretary is the current clerk, Jane Porter.

10 **Declarations of Interest**

None

11 **Proposal to approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 5 April 2023.**

It was **resolved** that these be approved and signed. **Action: Clerk and Graham Lee**

12 **Open Forum – village matters, reports from other bodies etc**

Standing Orders to be suspended to allow members of the public to speak for agenda items 13 to 17 inclusive.

13 **Items on general village matters from parish councillors**

13.1 Update on Dixies Meadow

Graham Lee explained that the parish council has submitted a comprehensive response to the application to North Herts Council.

A parishioner asked if the parish council would consider looking into establishing an affordable housing policy and allocations group to explore the potential to influence district council level housing policy in relation to affordable housing in the village. The parishioner offered to provide expertise towards this.

After some discussion on the subject, it was suggested that this item should be added to the agenda for the next council meeting for consideration. **Action: Deputy Clerk.**

13.2 Community Land Trust

Norton Mahy noted that Graham Lee and Norton Mahy both have an interest in the Community Land Trust and asked for confirmation that no motion was being considered. Graham Lee confirmed this.

Graham Lee explained that there would be no meeting of the Community Land Trust in May and explained that a meeting was due to be held with Eastern Community Homes in May.

A parishioner asked for the number of members of the Community Land Trust, excluding the member directors. Graham Lee stated that there were none.

13.3 Ultrafast Broadband installation by Voneus

Vinny Hall provided the following update:

- The Bear Street cabinet has been fixed by Voneus to eradicate noise problems
- The works on Mill Street had been completed by Voneus without any problems
- A defect had been reported outside 93 High Street. Hertfordshire County Council had advised this should be rectified by mid June.

13.4 Village Hall trustees regarding their proposal to change to an incorporated charitable organisation and any future involvement of the parish council

Graham Lee noted that there was no further progress by the village hall trustees on this. It was noted that it will be discussed at the village hall's forthcoming annual general meeting.

14 Items from members of the public and village organisations

14.1 Ashwell Springs festival proposal

Martin Hoffman provided an update on the Ashwell Springs festival proposal:

- Martin Hoffman had spoken with the parishioner proposing the festival and the parishioner had confirmed that activities were proposed at the Springs, St Mary's Church, Ashwell Primary School and, potentially, the village hall
- Martin Hoffman explained that the parishioner had confirmed that the activities to take part at the Springs as part of the festival involved provision of information only and that only 2 entrances to the Springs would be used as part of the festival to assist with controlling numbers.
- Martin Hoffman explained that he was satisfied with the information that had been provided by the parishioner to date, but that he had spoken to the parishioner about the additional information that needed to be provided before a formal approval could be given by the council.

15 **Items from our district councillor Tom Tyson**

15.1 Proposals to form a volunteer DriveSafe group

Tom Tyson provided the following update:

- Vinny Hall had agreed to take the lead as the parish council representative.
- All other local parish councils he had contacted were happy to go ahead in principle.
- The next step was to get a time and date for a meeting with officers from the police.

15.2 North of Baldock extension

Tom Tyson provided the following update:

- He had contacted Urban and Civic on 16 May to chase for their agreement to provide an exhibition to/consultation with Ashwell parish council and parishioners.
- The next step was for the parish council to liaise with Urban and Civic to agree dates for the exhibition, noting that sooner rather than later would be better to ensure that the parish council's views were taken into account by Urban and Civic when shaping their response.

Action: Graham Lee/Clerk/Deputy Clerk

16 **Items from our county councillor Steve Jarvis**

16.1 Safer Routes to the station

Steve Jarvis explained that there was nothing further to report since his last update.

16.2 The Ruddery. Update on the request to Hertfordshire County Council Rights of Way for a change of status to improve safety

Steve Jarvis explained that there was nothing further to report since his last update.

16.3 New footway in Station Road as a condition of planning permission for Townsend Meadow. North Herts Council reference 19/00455/FP

Steve Jarvis explained that there was nothing further to report since his last update.

A parishioner stated his view that the County Council was not achieving any progress on this issue.

Steve Jarvis stated that enforcement of planning conditions is a North Herts Council issue at that the County Council cannot make any progress until the District Council decides if it will take enforcement action.

Steve Jarvis and Tom Tyson agreed to liaise on this and report back to the next parish council meeting.

Nikki da Costa suggested that perhaps the parish council could look into what is best practice in drafting planning conditions to enable it to influence the success of enforceable planning conditions going forward.

It was suggested that this idea could be looked at as part of a Section 106/planning working group, to be considered at the next parish council meeting.

16.4 Hodwell drains update

Steve Jarvis reported that:

- A visit by Hertfordshire County Council had taken place, which had found and removed roots blocking the drains.
- It was thought that these roots may grow back quickly.
- Following clearance of the roots, the drains had worked as intended in the recent heavy rain.
- The county council was looking for a long term solution, taking into account how quickly the roots might regrow.
- Further works to the drains will require an application for funding. This application is in process.

Nikki da Costa raised that a parishioner affected by the drainage problems on Hodwell had asked the county council for the cost of works undertaken and had also raised concerns with the county council over the height of the proposed new curb on Hodwell, but had not received a response.

Nikki da Costa explained that parishioner in question was concerned about not having the full information about what was happening and asked Steve Jarvis to follow up on this.

Steve Jarvis agreed to ask the county council for an indicative cost of the works undertaken, but stated that his preference was for money to be spent on undertaking works rather than on a detailed investigation of the cost of undertaking works.

Graham Lee suggested that the parish council should draft a response to the parishioner in question to provide an update.

Action: Graham Lee

16.5 War Memorial junction/proposals for bollards and/or planters

Steve Jarvis explained that there was nothing further to report since his last update.

16.6 Additional items:

Steve Jarvis provided the following additional information and updates:

- The Lucas Lane safety audit is ongoing.
- The West End safety works have concluded. Vegetation has been trimmed. One sign near Partridge Hill has been moved.
- He was aware of the village incident during the week involving a large articulated lorry hitting the side of a property on the junction of High Street and Gardiners Lane. Following a discussion on the incident and potential challenges and ideas to limit future similar incidents, Steve Jarvis agreed to consider what could be done sign-wise in the area and to check if the county council has given feedback to satnav data providers on the narrowness of this junction.

A parishioner raised the question of whether the county council was going to look into the direction of the right of way on Back Street, as had been previously raised. It was noted that this would be reinstated on the list of items for Steve Jarvis to report on at the next parish council meeting.

17 Items from working groups

17.1 Village Litter pick feedback

Norton Mahy provided the following feedback:

- The turnout for the litter pick had been moderate, which was disappointing. However, he thought those who had attended had enjoyed it.
- The pick within the village did not find much rubbish, but the radial routes into and out of the village have far more rubbish.
- The event had been publicised in the usual ways.

17.2 Village Sports Day

It was noted this was being held on Sunday 21 May and that appropriate insurance provision was in place.

End of Open Forum/Standing Orders reinstated

18 MONTHLY REPORTS ON PREMISES AND OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES FROM PARISH COUNCILLORS

18.1 Recreation ground/upgrade of play equipment and pavilion

It was noted that there was no further update on this and that responsibilities for this may change at the next parish council meeting in June.

There was discussion around section 106 funding in place to go towards this project. It was noted that the parish council would go back to North Herts Council to discuss this.

19 PLANNING MATTERS

19.1 New consultations received from North Herts Council

19.1.1 – 40 Kingsland Way, planning reference 23/00894/FPH

It was **resolved** that a response of no objection should be submitted to the relevant planning officer.

Action: Deputy Clerk

19.1.2 – 16 Springhead, planning reference 23/00811/FPH

It was **resolved** that a response of no objection should be submitted to the relevant planning officer.

Action: Deputy Clerk

19.1.3 Bluegates Dairy, planning reference 23/00840/PRAP

It was **resolved** that a response of no objection should be submitted to the relevant planning officer.

Action: Deputy Clerk

19.1.4 18 Springhead, planning reference 23/00959/FPH

It was **resolved** that a response of no objection should be submitted to the relevant planning officer.

Action: Deputy Clerk

19.2 Tree consultations received from North Herts Council

None.

19.3 Updates on previous planning applications, developments ongoing

See 13.1 and 16.3

20 FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE MATTERS

20.1 Budget tracking and monthly summary of accounts

A proposal was made to accept the monthly summary of accounts.

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

20.2 Grass cutting contract update

It was noted that the contract was now in place and that the contractor had started undertaking work.

20.3 Additional update

Graham Lee provided an update on the complaint against Norton Mahy and Graham Lee in relation to the conservation area review that had been referred to the monitoring officer at North Herts Council. Graham Lee stated that Norton Mahy and Graham Lee had responded to a letter received from the monitoring officer.

21 Graham Lee stated that he and Norton Mahy had received a second complaint against them in relation to declaration of a pecuniary interest in the Community Land Trust. Graham Lee stated that he and Norton Mahy had both responded to the monitoring officer in relation to this complaint.

Meeting closed at 8.45pm.

Forthcoming meeting dates:

Next monthly parish council meeting - Wednesday 7 June 2023

APPENDIX A: Summary of consultations on recent planning and listed building applications received from NHC up to 11 May 2023.

Signed

G Lee

Date

18/6/23

Summary of consultations on recent planning and listed building applications received from NHC up to 11 May 2023

To view all the documents relating to an application put the NHC reference number into the planning search box
<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
40 Kingsland Way	23/00894/FPH	Erection of detached double garage	No objection May Council 19.1.1	
16 Springhead	23/00811/FPH	Erection of detached home office and gym following demolition of existing garden shed.	No objection May Council 19.1.2	
Bluegates Dairy, Dick Smiths Walk	23/00840/PRAP	Installation of roof mounted solar panels	No objection May Council 19.1.3	
18 Springhead	23/00959/FPH	Single storey rear and single storey side extension, as resubmission of application ref 23/00138/FPH	No objection May Council 19.1.4	
Dixies Meadow High Street	23/00666/FP	Erection of 12 dwellings with associated hard and soft landscaping, creation of vehicular access, public open space and children's play area.	Objection. See minutes Planning Cttee 08 Apr. Also April Council 87.1	Pending
Land to the east of 5, Ashwell Street	23/00718/FP	Erection of one detached 3-bedroom dwelling with associated garage/carport including landscaping and creation of vehicular access off Ashwell Street	No objection. April Council meeting 89.1.6	Pending
11 Claybush Hill Meadow	23/00588/FPH	Erection of front porch, two storey rear extension with Juliet balcony to first floor and replace existing rear fenestration following demolition of existing porch canopy.	No objection. April Council meeting 89.1.5	Approved
Land Between Hunts Ridge And Ashwell House no 5, High Street (known as Hunts Close)	22/03094/FP	Erection of 14 dwellings including creation of access from Ashwell Street, footpath link to Lucas Lane, associated infrastructure, public open space and landscaping	Objection. See January Council meeting 69.1.1 AND Planning Committee meeting (Sat 07 at 10am)	Pending
Land West of Ashwell Road, Bygrave SG7 5EB	22/00741/FP	<u>New consultation on amendments</u> 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.	Objection. January Council meeting 69.1.1 <i>Previous response to NHC: Objection</i> <i>See June Council 2022, 18.1.4</i>	Pending
5 Swan Street	22/02966/FPH and 22/02967/LBC	Erection of front entrance canopy and side elevation porch to include conversion of existing shed into habitable accommodation following demolition of front brick wall. Additional for Listed Building Consent: Internal alterations consisting of replacing existing attic staircase and re-tank the basement.	December Council 62.1.6 No objection. Lack of off-street parking noted.	Pending
Valentine House Partridge Hill	23/00548/FPH	Erection of double garage with ancillary storage and usable roof space	No objection. April Council meeting 89.1.1	Approved
Land to the west of 35 Ashwell Street	21/02650/FP	<u>March, new consultation on further amendments</u> Full Planning Permission: Erection of two detached 4-bedroom dwellings and double garages, including alterations to existing vehicular access (as amended by plans received 18.03.23).	No objection. April Council meeting 89.1.2 <i>Previous response to NHC: Objection</i> <i>See July council 2022, 25.1.1</i>	Approved
9 Springhead	23/00530/FPH	Single storey rear and single storey side extension, as resubmission of application ref 23/00138/FPH	No objection. April Council meeting 89.1.3	Approved
1 Claybush Hill Meadow	23/00462/FPH	Conversion of garage into habitable accommodation, including replacement of garage doors with 2 large windows and brickwork.	No objection. April Council meeting 89.1.4	Approved
Bluegates Farm, Loves Lane	23/00369/FP	Installation of agricultural silage clamp and concrete apron.	No objection. March Council meeting 82.1.3	Approved

APPENDIX B: Accounts Summary

ACCOUNTS - Summary for 1st to 30th April 2023					
RECEIPTS				£	
1	Bickerdikes Garden	Yearbook 23 Advertising		155.00	
2	Nevilles Funeral Services	Rent for Chapel of Rest (April)		68.75	
3	Gill George	Yearbook 23 Advertising		45.00	
4	Liric Accountants	Yearbook 23 Advertising		155.00	
5	Nicki Holmes	Yearbook 23 Advertising		45.00	
6	North Herts District Council	Half of Precept for 2023-2024		48,175.00	
7	Meril Deal	Small Gains Allotment		60.00	
8	Yvonne Wright	Small Gains Allotment		12.00	
9	Shonagh Blair	Small Gains Allotment		12.00	
10	Collings Electrical	Yearbook 23 Advertising		85.00	
11	Sigma Office	Yearbook 23 Advertising		210.00	
12	EH Crouch	Yearbook 23 Advertising		85.00	
13	Jane Buxton	Yearbook 23 Advertising		85.00	
14	R&A Transport	Yearbook 23 Advertising		85.00	
15	Hamish & Jennie Davidson	Small Gains Allotment		30.00	
16	Memorial	CW22.18		245.00	
17	Gwen Lambert	Small Gains Allotment		24.00	
18	Edwards Cleaning & Maintenance	Yearbook 23 Advertising		85.00	
19	Ken & Do Coyne	Small Gains Allotment		12.00	
20	Ashwell Academical	Rent at recreation & Small gains		860.00	
21	Sunshine Gardens	Yearbook 23 Advertising		260.00	
22	David Simms	Small Gains Allotment		12.00	
23	Santander	Reserve Account Interest		27.11	
24	APC Current account	Transfer from the Current account		42,000.00	
25	Santander	Reserve Account Interest		42.88	
				-	
				-	
			Total	£92,875.74	
PAYMENTS		£ less VAT	VAT	£ inc VAT	
1	DUO	Website Hosting	25.00	5.00	30.00
2	Castle Water	Water rates for Pavilion	34.00	0.00	34.00
3	Edwards Cleaning	Toilet cleaning	237.50	0.00	237.50
4	HAPTC	Membership Renewal	802.11	0.00	802.11
5	HAPTC	new clerk Training	45.00	0.00	45.00
6	Ashwell Hosuing association	Office Rent	498.96	0.00	498.96
7	Ruggles	Toilet Repairs	84.00	0.00	84.00
8	Abacus	Stationery	189.27	37.85	227.12
9	Wright Accounts	Bookkeeping Services	291.25	0.00	291.25
10	Community Land Trust	CLT Membership	85.00	0.00	85.00
11	APC Deposit account	Transfer to Deposit Account	42,000.00	0.00	42000.00
12	NHDC	Recreation Ground trade waste bin	122.85	0.00	122.85
13	NHDC	Streets Support trade waste bin	139.10	0.00	139.10
14	NHDC	Springs trade waste bin	139.10	0.00	139.10
15	E-on Next	Electricity for Public Toilets inv 01/03 -31/03	31.25	1.56	32.81
16	Sarah Mitchell	Reimbursement for New Laptop	599.98	120.00	719.98
17	Brilliant Lawns	Grass cutting at Recreational grounds	135.50	0.00	135.50
18	ECO (A Beddall)	Environmental Cleansing Officer salary	262.82	0.00	262.82
19	Clerk (J C M Porter)	Clerk salary	1,520.49	0.00	1520.49
20	Grounds Officer (M Chandler)	Grounds Officer salary	147.00	0.00	147.00
21	Deputy Clerk (S H Mitchell)	Deputy Clerk Salary	1,144.76	0.00	1144.76
22	HMRC	PAYE	641.12	0.00	641.12
			49,176.06	164.41	
				Total	£49,340.47
MONEY AT BANK					
		Current Account 30/04/2023	3,079.80		
		Reserve Account 30/04/2023	89,971.09		
		Total cash	£93,050.89		

Signed

Date