

Minutes

of the Parish Council meeting held on

Wednesday 07 June 2023, at 7.05pm, in the Parish Room.

Present: Councillors Chris Button, Nikki da Costa, Vinny Hall, Martin Hoffman, Graham Lee (Chair), and David Sims. Ian Duffy joined the meeting on Zoom.

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

Following a request from a parishioner the meeting was recorded.

21 Apologies for absence

Norton Mahy sent apologies for absence due to holiday.

22 Declarations of Interest

Nikki da Costa – declared an interest in item 29.1.2 on the agenda, as a neighbour to the planning application.

The Deputy Clerk – noted she was also a neighbour to the planning application referenced 29.1.2 on the agenda.

Graham Lee – declared a non-pecuniary interest in the Community Land Trust as a founder director.

23 Proposal to approve and sign the minutes of the Council meeting on 17 May 2023 and the minutes of the planning committee meeting on 8 April.

It was **resolved** that the minutes of both these meetings be approved and signed.

Action: Deputy Clerk and Graham Lee.

24 Review of Policies

Complaints procedure: it was suggested and agreed that a revised draft of the complaints procedure be drafted for acceptance at the next council meeting. **Action: Deputy Clerk.**

Information and data protection: the policy was accepted without amendment.

Health and safety: the policy was accepted without amendment.

Volunteer policy: the policy was accepted without amendment.

Equal opportunities policy: the policy was accepted, with an amendment to monitor on gender and sex, not just on gender. **Action: Deputy Clerk.**

25 Roles and Responsibilities

25.1 Committees

- 25.1.1 It was noted that all councillors are members of the Planning and Finance committees.
- 25.1.2 It was agreed that Graham Lee, Norton Mahy and Nikki da Costa would be members of the HR committee.

25.2 Working groups

- 25.2.1 Council representatives were agreed for the following working groups:

Neighbourhood plan: Norton Mahy, Graham Lee, Chris Button.

There was a discussion around whether this should be a committee rather than a working group, due to the nature of the work involved. It was agreed that this would be reconsidered at the date of revision of the plan.

Litter picking group: Norton Mahy, Nikki da Costa.

Trees and hedges group: David Sims, Clerk.

Ashwell Yearbook: Norton Mahy.

- 25.2.2 Proposal to establish new working groups or committees.

The following new working groups and committees were proposed and established with council representatives noted:

Section 106 committee: Chris Button and Nikki da Costa. Other members to be agreed.

Drivesafe working group: Vinny Hall.

Green Energy & Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure working group: Ian Duffy, Graham Lee.

25.3 Premises

The following council representatives for premises were agreed:

Recreation ground, including the pavilion, playground and public toilets: Graham Lee.

The Springs: Martin Hoffman.

Small Gains: David Sims.

The Lock Up: Vinny Hall.

Carters Pond and Merchant Taylors Green: Vinny Hall.

St Mary's Churchyard ground maintenance and church liaison: Vinny Hall and Martin Hoffman.

Parish Clock: Vinny Hall

War Memorial and liaison with Ashwell Royal British Legion: Nikki da Costa.

Cemetery: Chris Button and Nikki da Costa.

Street furniture owned by the parish council: Nikki da Costa.

Grounds maintenance (contract): Clerk and Deputy Clerk.

25.4 Liaison with other Authorities

The following council representatives for liaison were agreed:

Hertfordshire County Council highways: Chris Button and Vinny Hall.

Hertfordshire County Council rights of way: Vinny Hall, Graham Lee, Clerk, Deputy Clerk.

North Herts Council for street cleansing: Vinny Hall, Clerk, Deputy Clerk.

26 Appointments to other bodies and representatives to other bodies

26.1 Ashwell Village Trust (charity number 294673)

It was suggested and agreed that details of this trust be circulated to all councillors to enable them to decide if they would like to fill the vacant parish councillor trustee position. It was agreed that this would be an item on the July council agenda. **Action: Clerk**

It was noted that David Sims holds one parish councillor trustee position and that the chair of Ashwell Parish Council is also the chair of Ashwell Village Trust.

26.2 Henry Colbron Trust and liaison with Ashwell Primary School

It was agreed that Chris Button would be the council's representative.

26.3 Ashwell Museum liaison

It was agreed that Martin Hoffman would continue to be the council's representative.

26.4 Village Hall liaison

It was agreed that Graham Lee would continue to be the council's representative.

27 Open Forum – village matters, reports from other bodies etc.

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

27.1 Items on general village matters from parish councillors.

27.1.1 Community Land Trust

Graham Lee noted that a date for the next meeting needed to be made. **Action: Clerk/Graham Lee.**

27.1.2 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 on this.

27.1.3 North of Baldock extension and progress with date for exhibition by Urban and Civic.

It was noted that the exhibition would be held on 4 July in the parish room between 4pm and 8pm. Publicity for the event was being discussed and agreed with Urban and Civic.

There was a discussion around other sessions which Urban and Civic were holding with selected parties. It was agreed that the Deputy Clerk would contact Urban and Civic to find out more about these sessions and to ask for a representative from the parish council to be included where possible, to allow Ashwell's representations and perspectives to be taken into account. **Action: Deputy Clerk.**

Tom Tyson noted that he would also follow this up with North Herts Council's Community & Partnerships Team Leader.

27.1.4 Electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

Ian Duffy explained that he had sent an email to Hertfordshire County Council in relation to this, but had heard nothing back. Steve Jarvis stated that he thought Hertfordshire County Council was in the process of collating emails received.

Ian Duffy noted that there were two strands to the electric vehicle charging infrastructure work stream: 1) working with Hertfordshire County Council to achieve on-street charging and 2) investigating opportunities for private sites within the village that might be suitable.

27.1.5 Events calendar

Ian Duffy noted that he would take responsibility for this. He would reach out to village organisations to get event information to incorporate. **Action: Ian Duffy.**

27.1.6 Dog fouling concerns raised on Ashwell Street and High Street

Ian Duffy explained that he had been contacted by residents citing concerns over an increase in dog fouling on Ashwell Street and High Street. David Sims noted that he had also observed an increase around the recreation ground.

There was a discussion around the potential ways to address this and the challenges associated. It was agreed that the Deputy Clerk would make contact with North Herts Council's enforcement officer to discuss enforcement options and any assistance the officer may be able to provide. **Action: Deputy Clerk.**

27.1.7 Graham Lee raised concerns over the speed of traffic on Station Road outside of the village 30 mile per hour area. Steve Jarvis agreed to request for more speed tests in this area.

27.2 Items from members of the public and village organisations

27.2.1 Ashwell Springs, festival proposal

Martin Hoffman noted that he had heard nothing further from the parishioner in relation to this.

27.2.2 Follow up on suggestion from a parishioner at the meeting of 17 May in relation to influencing North Herts Council policy on affordable housing triggers and allocations and the parishioner's offer of expertise.

Graham Lee noted that a discussion paper had been received from the parishioner and circulated to councillors. It was suggested that that this item would be discussed at the July council meeting to allow councillors to consider the paper.

27.3 Items from our district councillor Tom Tyson

27.3.1 Liaison with Steve Jarvis on the planning condition for the new footway in Station Road

Tom Tyson noted that he was disappointed by the lack of progress that had been made between North Herts Council and the developer. He explained that he was trying to establish exactly why no progress had been made. It was agreed that the parish council would wait for three weeks to see what information Tom Tyson could obtain and after that period, the parish council would contact North Herts Council to seek enforcement.

27.3.2 Tom Tyson provided the following additional updates and information:

Bygrave solar farm - two of the three planning hurdles had been overcome and updates were available on the planning portal.

Drivesafe – Vinny Hall was progressing this. The police were not enthusiastic about testing on Station Road outside the village, due to challenges with calibration of the speed machine.

Warding arrangements – considerations of changes to ward arrangements had concluded. Arbury would remain as a single ward.

27.4 Items from our county councillor Steve Jarvis

Steve Jarvis provided the following updates and information:

27.4.1 The Ruddery – no further update.

27.4.2 New footway in Station Road as a condition of planning permission for Townsend Meadow – as per Tom Tyson’s update in 27.3.1.

27.4.3 Hodwell drains – new kerbing and road edge repairs to be carried out in Hodwell have been scheduled, but no update on actions for long term drainage pipe upgrade.

27.4.4 War Memorial junction – no further update.

27.4.5 Junction of Back Street and West End – having reviewed further, there was no possibility of changes to existing arrangements, due to visibility. It was agreed this would be removed as an agenda item for future meetings.

27.4.6 Junction of Gardiners Land/High Street – signage for this junction was being investigated, but there were some concerns over the location of these. A further update would be provided at the next meeting.

27.4.7 Additional items

Kingsland Way resurfacing work was scheduled for the first week of August.

Concerns raised in relation to two blocked drain gullies on Bear Lane near to Ashwell Primary School were noted.

It was agreed Steve Jarvis would investigate the progress of works planned on Partridge Hill.

27.5 Items from working groups

27.5.1 Trees and Hedges. Update on the new hedge at the recreation ground.

David Sims explained that the new hedge on the Lucas Lane side of the recreation ground was suffering from lack of water and that the hedge on the horse field side was covered with weeds.

David Sims noted that he had asked the contractor who had provided hedge planting services to the parish council to provide a free survey of condition of the hedge. He would report back to the next council meeting on the outcome of this.

It was suggested that watering of the new hedge should commence.

Action: David Sims and Clerk

27.5.2 Report from the Village Sports Day Group

It was noted that this item would be an item for the next council meeting.

27.5.3 Yearbook Appeal

It was noted that Norton Mahy had put out an appeal for volunteers.

Standing Orders were reinstated.

28 Monthly reports on premises/other responsibilities from parish councillors

- 28.1 Recreation Ground/upgrade of play equipment and Queen’s Platinum Jubilee Pavilion.
It was noted that there was no further update on this.
- 28.2 Report on the information received from the CDA Herts Rural Housing Officer and English Rural Housing Association. Proposal to request a Housing Needs Survey.
Graham Lee explained that he would circulate notes of the meeting with CDA Herts and English Rural Housing Association to councillors. It was noted that this item would be considered at the July council meeting. **Action: Graham Lee**

29 Planning matters

- 29.1 New consultations received from North Herts Council
- 29.1.1 42 Silver Street, planning reference 23/00967/FPH
It was **resolved** that a response of no objection should be submitted to the relevant planning officer.
- 29.1.2 128 Ashwell Street, planning reference 23/01159/FP
It was agreed that an on-site planning committee would be held. **Action: Deputy Clerk**
- 29.2 It was noted that a Certificate of Lawful Development had been granted for installation of 6 solar panels to the existing south elevation roof slope. It was noted that this was Norton Mahy’s residence.
- 29.3 Tree consultations received from North Herts Council
- 29.3.1 40 Gardiners Lane
It was **resolved** that a response of no objection would be submitted to North Herts Council.
- 29.4 Updates on previous planning applications, developments ongoing
- 29.4.1 Consultation request from North Herts Council for street naming of new development off Station Road.
Graham Lee explained that Norths Herts Council had asked for parish council input on the naming of this new development. Graham Lee had contacted the previous land owner of the field to see if it had been previously named. Graham Lee had also contacted a parishioner with good local historical knowledge to see if he had any suggestions linked to historical associations with the field. Two potential names had been suggested by the parishioner: Middle Furlong and Bacon Leg.
Chris Button suggested that a name referencing Small Gains might be an option, given its well-known location within the village. It was agreed that councillors would exchange e mails on thoughts on the names discussed.

Action: all councillors

30 Finance and Governance matters

- 30.1 Budget tracking and the monthly summary of accounts. Proposal for acceptance.
The Deputy Clerk apologised that the monthly accounts had not been circulated. It was agreed these would be proposed for acceptance at the July council meeting.

30.2 Proposal to change bank signatories.

It was proposed that Martin Hoffman be removed as a bank signatory and that Sarah Mitchell (Deputy Clerk) be added as a bank signatory.

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

30.3 To review and accept the risk assessment policy.

The risk assessment policy was accepted.

30.4 To note the annual review of policies.

The annual review of policies was noted.

30.5 Annual Audit for the financial year 2022-2023

30.5.1 The documents supplied to the Internal Auditor were noted.

Arrangements and dates for the exercise of public rights and publicity for this were noted.

Arrangements and dates for the submission to the External Auditor were noted.

30.5.2 External Audit Submission. Proposal to approve Section 1/Annual Governance.

A proposal was made to approve Section 1/Annual Governance.

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

30.5.3 External Audit Submission. Proposal to approve Section 2/Accounting Statements and to note the basic documents to accompany the Annual Return to the External Auditor (bank reconciliation, explanation of significant variances, notice of the period of public rights)

A proposal was made to approve Section 2/Accounting Governance.

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

The basic documents accompanying the Annual Return to the External Auditor were noted.

30.6 To note the proposed arrangements for office staffing (Clerk and Deputy Clerk) from 1 July 2023.

It was agreed that the HR committee would meet to review proposals for office staffing from 1 July 2023.

Meeting closed at 9pm.

Forthcoming meeting dates:

Next monthly parish council meeting - Wednesday 5 July 2023

APPENDIX A: Summary of consultations on recent planning and listed building applications received from NHC up to 1 June 2023.

Summary of consultations on recent planning and listed building applications received from NHC up to 1 June 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
42 Silver Street	23/00967/FPH	Retention of installation of raised wooden decking around swimming pool.	No objection. June Council 29.1.1	Pending
128 Ashwell Street	23/01159/FP	Erection of a two storey five-bed dwelling with a single storey 1-bed attached annexe to front elevation and detached garage following demolition of existing bungalow	On-site planning committee meeting to be arranged to agree response. June Council 29.1.2	Pending
40 Silver Street	23/00412/LDCP	Installation of 6 solar panels to existing south elevation roof slope.	Noted June Council 29.2.	Certificate of Lawful Development granted
40 Kingsland Way	23/00894/FPH	Erection of detached double garage	No objection May Council 19.1.1	Pending
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	Pending
Bluegates Dairy, Dick Smiths Walk	23/00840/PRAP	Installation of roof mounted solar panels	No objection May Council 19.1.3	Pending
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	Pending
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 C'ttee 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

Signed

Date

APPENDIX B: Accounts Summary – to be approved at July Council. See minute reference 30.1

ACCOUNTS - Summary for 1st to 31st May 2023					
RECEIPTS					£
R26	Nevilles Funeral Services	Rent for Chapel of Rest (May)			68.75
R27	The Pilates Corner	Yearbook 23 Advertising			85.00
R28	APC Current account	Transfer from the Current account			5,000.00
R29	Blue Pearl Granite	Yearbook 23 Advertising			260.00
R30	Emil De Maria	Allotment Rent			12.00
R31	AllroundUK	Yearbook 23 Advertising			155.00
R32	HMRC	Vat Reclaim			7,180.47
R33	Country Properties	Yearbook 23 Advertising			500.00
R34	Lawn Partners	Yearbook 23 Advertising			85.00
R35	Memorial	CW23.11			175.00
					-
				Total	£13,521.22
PAYMENTS			£ less VAT	VAT	£ inc VAT
P23	Herts Wildlife Trust	Membership Renewal	40.00	0.00	40.00
P24	DUO	Website Hosting INV-11114	25.00	5.00	30.00
P25	LG221-Pension	Staff Pension April 2023	511.25	0.00	511.25
P26	Ashwell Parochial Church Council	Parish room booking 11/5/23 inv 23013	25.50	0.00	25.50
P27	Blue Tree Company	Tree Survey Inv A-1913	1,100.00	220.00	1320.00
P28	Brilliant Lawns	Grass cutting at Recreational grounds Inv 10906	135.50	0.00	135.50
P29	Edwards Cleaning	Toilet cleaning - Inv 02507	190.00	0.00	190.00
P30	Zoom	Zoom Subscription - INV199634450	59.95	11.99	71.94
P31	Legal & General	Insurance Policy G74283	551.41	0.00	551.41
P32	Wright Accounts	Bookkeeping Services - INV01053	443.75	0.00	443.75
P33	APC Deposit account	Transfer to Current Account	5,000.00	0.00	5000.00
P34	BT	Phone & Broadband - Inv Q063 6H	184.31	36.86	221.17
P35	Brilliant Lawns	Grass cutting at Recreational grounds Inv 10981 11023	271.00	0.00	271.00
P36	Powerscribe/MCL	Webhosting	120.00	24.00	144.00
P37	E-on Next	Electricity for Public Toilets inv 01/04 -30/04	30.81	1.54	32.35
P38	DDH Garden Services	Grounds Maintenance May 23	770.83	154.17	925.00
P39	Brilliant Lawns	Grass cutting at Recreational grounds Inv 11105	135.50	0.00	135.50
P40	HMRC	PAYE	641.72	0.00	641.72
P41	Clerk (J C M Porter)	Clerk salary	1,520.29	0.00	1520.29
P42	ECO (A Beddall)	Environmental Cleansing Officer salary	262.82	0.00	262.82
P43	Deputy Clerk (S H Mitchell)	Deputy Clerk Salary	1,144.56	0.00	1144.56
P44	Grounds Officer (M Chandler)	Grounds Officer salary	146.80	0.00	146.80
			13,311.00	453.56	
				Total	£13,764.56
MONEY AT BANK					
		Current Account 31/05/2023	7,836.46		
		Reserve Account 31/05/2023	84,971.09		
		Total cash	£92,807.55		

Signed

Date