

Minutes

of the Parish Council meeting held on

Wednesday 01 February 2023, at 7pm, in the Parish Room.

Present: Councillors Ian Duffy, Vinny Hall, Graham Lee (Chairman) and David Sims. Cllrs Martin Hoffman and 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. Four members of the public were present and four also joined on Zoom for parts of the meeting.

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

- 71 **Apologies for absence from parish councillors.** Cllr Gemma Allan (ongoing dispensation due to work commitments), Cllr Norton Mahy (personal commitment).
- 72 **Declarations of interest.** Cllr Graham Lee re item 76.2.2 (former neighbour and friend of planning applicant); did not participate in discussion or vote.
- 73 **Proposal to approve and sign the minutes of the Council meeting 04 January 2023 and the Planning Committee meeting 07 January 2023.** It was agreed that these be signed. **Action: Clerk**
- 74 **OPEN FORUM - VILLAGE MATTERS, REPORTS FROM OTHER BODIES, ETC**

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

74.1 Items on general village matters from parish councillors.

- 74.1.1 Ultrafast Broadband installation by Voneus. Chairman Graham Lee reported that the Parish Council continued to take up any issues arising with Voneus and their contractor and he had recently had two further meetings with them and affected residents. Also closely involved were Cllr Vinny Hall and parishioner Al Jacoutot who also gave updates. Overall the feedback from local residents in relation to the operatives carrying out works had been positive; they had been polite, helpful and communicative. Following further meetings and exchanges, including with local residents, Voneus had agreed that telegraph poles close to St Mary's Church were unacceptable. The pole already installed would be removed and cabling placed underground along Mill Street. Voneus would be applying to Herts Highways for a road closure notice to undertake this so there could be some delay before the works were completed. Al Jacoutot reported that Voneus had informed him they were to hold a public info session on Wednesday 22 February, 1 to 7pm, at the Rose & Crown. *See the link for more information <https://www.ashwell.gov.uk/news2/>*

- 74.1.2 Community Land Trust/Community Benefit Society. It was noted that details for the members meeting had been forwarded to those who had contacted the Parish Council. *See the link for more information including the minutes of the founder members/directors' meeting.* <https://www.ashwell.gov.uk/news2/>
- 74.1.3 The Springs. Consultation by Affinity Water on Water Resources Management Plan (deadline 20 February 2023). It was noted that this was a public consultation concerning plans for future water supplies in the region and included matters such as metering, dealing with leaks, etc. Proposals re environmental impacts including the protection of chalk streams was also included and was commended. The Parish Council would be submitting a response to ensure that the existing statutory protection of the water flows to the Springs SSSI was acknowledged and assured for the future. Advice on this had been sought from Natural England. *See the link for more information* <https://affinitywater.uk.engagementhq.com/wrmp>
- 74.1.4 Village Hall trustees/re their proposal to change to an Incorporated Charitable Organisation and the future involvement of the Parish Council. It was understood that the Village Hall were to consider direct communication with the Charity Commission as an alternative option.

74.2 Items from members of the public and village organisations.

- 74.2.1 Affordable housing. A parishioner had emailed a request asking whether the Parish Council had considered the prioritisation that should be given to applicants in Ashwell. A response had been sent stating that this had been given consideration over many years particularly as part of the Neighbourhood Plan. It had been acknowledged that, as NHC was the Housing Authority for the whole district, the assessment criteria used did not always result in prioritising Ashwell people. This was a key reason for the establishment of the Ashwell CLT, and could be considered by that body should its members wish to address it. The parishioner reiterated their earlier request and in particular what was the Parish Council's view on the prioritisation that might be given to key workers such as nurses and teachers. The Chairman responded that the response already made had covered this, albeit in general terms, and this was not the forum for an in-depth debate on the matter. Any further questions could be put by email.

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

- 74.3.1 Bygrave Solar Farm. Land West of Ashwell Road, Bygrave. NHC ref. 22/00741/FP. Cllr Tyson reported that the Planning Officer had informed him that there would be further delays before this was considered by the committee. Technical issues had been raised by Herts Highways, the Environment Agency and Herts Archaeology. There was also a question of whether the application would be considered during the period up to the forthcoming elections in May. Opinions were expressed by members of the public present as to why this might be the case, or not. The Chairman noted that this was a matter for the District Council not the Parish Council.

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

- 74.4.1 The Ruddy/the request to HCC rights of way for a change of status to improve safety. Highways were still in the process of considering and responding to the

objections made. He had requested information on what the objections were. *See also the link below for the minutes of the meeting at which the planning application for Hunts Close was discussed* <https://www.ashwell.gov.uk/parish-council/meetings/planning-committee/>

- 74.4.2 New footway in Station Road as a condition of planning permission for Townsend Meadow. NHC ref. 19/00455/FP. Nothing further to report.
 - 74.4.3 Hodwell drainage. An on-site meeting with local residents and Parish Council representatives was scheduled for Monday 13th February.
 - 74.4.4 Silver Street surface damage following freezing weather. This had not yet been repaired and was being chased up.
 - 74.4.5 War Memorial junction. The streetlight had been repaired and investigations were ongoing to determine the owner of the overhanging vegetation. The drainage issues were being investigated. Further reports had been received of vehicles mounting both the new paved area and the extended footway on the opposite side. Bollards had been proposed to prevent this. Large floral containers were suggested as an alternative to bollards on the War Memorial side and it was agreed to investigate this.
 - 74.4.6 Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs). Newnham Way residents had raised concerns re the speed of traffic going up the hill. It was agreed that the SID be reversed for a period and those responsible for the overhanging hedge requested to cut it back. It was also agreed that the SID in Station Road be reversed. Following a question from Cllr Martin Hoffman it was noted that the Community Speed Watch scheme that he used to lead was still operational in other villages and could be restarted in Ashwell if volunteers could be found.
- 74.5 Items from working groups.
- 74.5.1 Trees and Hedges Group (leader Cllr David Sims). The further hedge planting at the Rec was scheduled for mid-February.

End of Open Forum/Standing Orders reinstated.

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

- 75.1 Recreation Ground/upgrade of play equipment and Queen's Platinum Jubilee Pavilion. Chairman Graham Lee reported that clarification was being sought from NHC re the section 106 funds held by them. *See the link for more information.* <https://www.ashwell.gov.uk/news2/fundraising-for-the/>
- 75.2 Small Gains. Quotes for rabbit fencing had been obtained and it was agreed that the option proposed be accepted. A date for the ferreter was still awaited.

76 PLANNING MATTERS See summary in Appendix A below.

Full documents are available on the NHC website. Put the NHC ref. number into the planning search box <https://pa2.north-herts.gov.uk/online-applications/>

- 76.1 Response to NHC re Land between Slip End booster station Ashwell and Wicker Hall Reservoir Royston. NHC ref. 22/03298/HN. It was noted that a response had been sent in order to meet the required deadline, 'no objections to this application so long as the hedges

are reinstated according to an approved specification and in a timely manner following the works in accordance with the appropriate planting season’.

76.2 New consultations received from North Herts Council. The following responses were agreed:

76.2.1 9 Springhead. NHC ref. 23/00138/FPH. Full Permission Householder: Two storey rear and single storey side extension. It was noted that no comments had been posted on the NHC website. A proposal was made, and agreed, that a response ‘no objections’ be made to the NHC Planning Officer. **Action: Clerk**

76.2.2 86 High Street. NHC ref. 23/00091/FPH. Full Permission Householder: Single storey rear extension, insertion of bay window to existing ground floor side elevation and erection of side elevation garden wall with a timber gate following demolition of single storey rear extension. *See item 72 above re declaration of interest.* It was noted that no comments had been posted on the NHC website. A proposal was made, and agreed, that a response ‘no objections’ be made to the NHC Planning Officer.

Action: Clerk

76.3 Updates on previous planning applications, developments ongoing. *See also 74.3.1 and 74.4.2 above.*

77 FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE MATTERS.

77.1 The latest budget tracking and the monthly summary of accounts were noted and proposed for acceptance. This was agreed.

77.2 Co-option consideration. The Chairman Graham Lee proposed that this item be held *in camera* on the grounds that it would include matters of a sensitive nature and personal information. *Standing Order item 62.*

Meeting closed to the public: 8.02pm

[*In camera* minute]

77.3 Co-option. The agreed procedures for considering co-options to the Parish Council were noted. It was agreed that parishioner Nikki da Costa be co-opted.

77.4 Banking. It was agreed that Cllr Mark White be removed from the list of signatories for the three accounts with Santander (current, reserve and the charity account ‘Allotment for Exercise and Recreation’). He stated that he would not be seeking re-election in May as he no longer met the required criteria. It was agreed that Yvonne Wright of The Wright Accounts be added to the three accounts with Santander (as above) to facilitate the contract for her to provide book-keeping services to the Parish Council.

Forthcoming meeting dates:

March Parish Council on Wednesday 01 at 7pm.

Annual Parish Meeting on Wednesday 22 March at the school.

Appendix A: Planning summary

Summary of consultations on recent planning and listed building applications received from NHC up to 01 February 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
9 Springhead	23/00138/FPH	Full Permission Householder: Two storey rear and single storey side extension	No objection. February Council meeting 76.2.1	Pending
86 High Street	23/00091/FPH	Full Permission Householder: Single storey rear extension, insertion of bay window to existing ground floor side elevation and erection of side elevation garden wall with a timber gate following demolition of single storey rear extension.	No objection. February Council meeting 76.2.2	Pending
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,</i>	Pending
Land to the west of 35 Ashwell Street	21/02650/FP	<u>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 12.12.2022).	On-site planning meeting (Sat 07 at 11am) <i>Previous response to NHC: Objection</i> <i>See July council 2022, 25.1.1</i>	Pending
59 High Street	22/02867/LBC	Listed Building Consent : Replace rotten sill beam on left front wall	No objection. January Council meeting 69.1.3	Permission granted
8 Swan Street	22/03093/FPH	Apply external wall insulation and replace render to west elevation, cavity wall insulation to north elevation. Replace existing doors. Replace existing timber and Upvc windows with wood-grain effect Upvc windows.	No objection. January Council meeting 69.1.4	Permission granted
1 Townsend Meadow	22/03261/FPH	Full Permission Householder : Single storey front and side extension.	Objection. January Council meeting 69.1.5	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
High Acre, Partridge Hill	22/02796/FPH	Full Permission Householder : Single storey rear orangery extension and side dormer with clock tower; replacement front porch and addition of covered front and side veranda; alterations to the roof by removing the existing hip end to the gable roof and continuing gable end to top of roof; alterations to fenestration and addition of external white timber cladding; alterations to existing garage including enlarged front dormer window and rear roof lights; external landscaping including installation of a swimming pool following demolition of existing single storey rear extension; erection of electric timber gates.	December Council 62.1.2 No objection on the assumption that the fenestration was to be amended.	Permission granted
Ashridge Farm Cottage, 7 Ashwell Street	22/02795/FPH	Full Permission Householder : Single storey front, single storey side (north west elevation), two storey rear and first floor side (north west elevation) extension, enclosure of existing carport to form a garage and partial conversion of existing garage to habitable accommodation. Alterations to external wall finishes.	December Council 62.1.1 No objection.	Pending

Signed

Date

Appendix B: Monthly accounts summary

ACCOUNTS - Summary for 1st to 31st January 2023					
RECEIPTS				£	
55	Santander	Reserve Account Interest		19.97	
56	Nevilles Funeral Services	Rent for Chapel of Rest (January)		68.75	
57	Ashwell Cricket Club	Recreation Ground/pavilion rent 2022 season		1,750.00	
			Total	£1,818.75	
PAYMENTS			£ less VAT	VAT	£ inc VAT
192	Duo Creative Services Ltd	Website monthly Fee (Jan)	25.00	5.00	30.00
193	Castle Water	Cemetery water Apr 22-Mar 23	24.87		24.87
194	Wave	Sewerage charges Pavilion 16/6/22-15/12/22	12.42		12.42
195	ICO	Data Protection	35.00		35.00
196	Deputy Clerk	Deputy Clerk Salary pay and leave entitlement	451.48		451.48
197	Deputy Clerk	Deputy Clerk Salary Tax rebate missed from salary	87.20		87.20
198	Clerk	Reimbursement office costs	120.96	22.35	143.31
199	HMRC PAYE	Tax & NI to Inland Revenue	421.26		421.26
200	HCC Pensions-LGPS Account	Clerk & Deputy Clerk Pension to LGPS	662.31		662.31
201	Eon Next	Pavilion electricity 1 Dec -31 Dec	75.73	3.79	79.52
202	North Herts Council	Recreation Ground trade waste bin	111.80		111.80
203	North Herts Council	Streets Support trade waste bin	126.10		126.10
204	North Herts Council	Springs trade waste bin	126.10		126.10
205	The Countryside Charity	Countryside Membership renewal	36.00		36.00
206	Eon Next	Toilets electricity 1 Dec-31 Dec	31.14	1.56	32.70
207	Edwards Cleaning & Maintenance	Toilets cleaning and consumables December Inv No 2465	107.00		107.00
208	St Mary's PCC	Parish Room hire meeting 02/02/2023	10.20		10.20
209	Councilor - Graham Lee	Reimbursement Costs	20.88		20.88
210	Screenprint & Display Ltd	20's Plenty signs	341.00	68.20	409.20
211	Grounds Officer	Grounds Officer salary	156.40		156.40
212	Clerk	Clerk salary	1,527.69		1527.69
213	ECO	Environmental Cleansing Officer salary	269.60		269.60
			4,780.14	100.90	
				Total	£4,881.04
	MONEY AT BANK	Current Account 31/01/2023	19,284.26		
		Reserve Account 31/01/2023	52,833.63		
		Total cash	£72,117.89		

Signed

Date