

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 03 July 2024, at 7.00pm, in the Parish Room.

Present: Councillors Graham Lee (Chair) Norton Mahy (Vice Chair) and Chris Button

Also in attendance: Trainee Clerk Sally Roberts, Deputy Clerk Nicky Forrester, 5 members of the public, District Councillor Tom Tyson, County Councillor Steve Jarvis, and the meeting was recorded on Zoom.

Please see website for audio recording and for appendices issued with agenda and referred to in the minutes. [2024 Meeting Minutes and Agendas](#)

22 Apologies for absence To receive and accept apologies for absence.
From Cllrs David Sims, Vinny Hall, Martin Hoffman and Ian Duffy.

23 Interests (a) To receive declarations of interest from councillors on items on the agenda, (b) To receive written requests for dispensations for declarable interests, and (c) To grant any requests for dispensation as appropriate. Where any declaration of interest involved the Chair, the meeting to agree an alternative individual to take the Chair for that item(s).

Cllr Lee has an ongoing Dispensation from the April meeting to report on Zero Carbon Ashwell.

24 Minutes - to approve draft minutes of the Parish Council meeting on 5 June 2024
It was proposed that the Minutes were passed as a true account of proceedings and resolved that the proposal be accepted. **Action: Clerk/Chair**

25 Parish Issues and Public Participation [Protocols for Public Participation in Council Meetings](#)
Standing Orders were suspended.

25.1 To note the following ongoing consultations/surveys, responses to date and agree any actions.

25.1.1 Consultation on the Outreach Post Office service hosted by St Mary's Church in the Parish Room to gain local residents' views on the impact of the service reduction to two sessions per week. [Survey : Ashwell Outreach Post Office](#)

To note further correspondence following the temporary closure forced due to post office equipment failure.

The Post Office service is 2 mornings per week. As no further correspondence has been received by the Parish Council, it is therefore thought the public are content with the arrangement.

25.2 To note any police matters.

It was noted that there were 3 burglaries to outbuildings/garages and a bike was stolen. Parishioners signed up to Herts Connected will receive alerts – if you wish to receive these please sign up to [Herts Connected](#).

25.3 To hear new matters raised (members of the public and councillors can raise any Parish related matters). To include:

[Brockwood Festival, Bygrave Woods, Newnham](#)

It was noted that limited correspondence has been sent to parishioners. The above link gives full details of the festival. A news item notice of the event to be added to the PC website highlighting the NHC Hotline mobile number for parishioners to use in the event of concerns - which is 0744 4296 236.

Action: Clerk

25.3.1 A parishioner addressed the subject of the Parish Council’s choice of a working group vs a sub committee stating that discussions were ‘behind closed doors’, that knowledge and expertise could be available which might be of benefit to the discussion. The parishioner enquired if there was a draft of the Pavilion project. Cllr Lee said there would be a report on this under the relevant section of this meeting.

25.4 To receive reports from representatives from outside bodies, local authorities and agencies.

25.4.1 To receive a report from County Councillor Steve Jarvis, to include report from Highways Liaison meeting.

Parishioners observed that in high wind, vegetation is blown onto Claybush Road, causing a hazard as vehicles swerve to avoid it. Whilst it was unclear on whose land the vegetation sits, the Parish Council will locate exactly and write to the landowner asking them to prune the hedge.

Action: Clerk

Steve Jarvis confirmed Highways have agreed to move the dropped kerb by the War Memorial located at the end of Lucas Lane and install bollards to prevent vehicles from mounting the pavement. It was agreed that the Medway style pertains to the current bollards in Ashwell and that it might be better painted black rather than green. This is because the bollards come black powder coated and would therefore not need to be hand painted green, thus preserving their upkeep for longer. Clerk to seek confirmation from St Mary’s Church and the British Legion.

Action: Clerk

Steve Jarvis confirmed that the street lamp outside of Crump Butchers will be replaced and painted.

Action: S Jarvis

Steve Jarvis confirmed also that a traffic volume survey will be carried out in Claybush Road after the school holidays in Q4.

Action: S Jarvis

Drainage in Back Street was discussed. It was noted that many gullies do not appear on the database. The Parish Council are noting the problematic gullies, and whilst this may take some time to gather the information, they can then identify those which are blocked.

Action: Clerk

25.4.2 To receive a report from District Councillor Tom Tyson.

Cllr Tyson reported how disappointing it was that the organisers of the Brockwood Festival had given little communication to the village regarding the event. These type of

events are in the hand of the Licencing Authority – Cllr Tyson will follow up with the Licencing Team to request the Parish Council is kept better informed.

Action: T Tyson

With regard to the Solar Farm at Bygrave, the applicant has submitted a financial offer to Bygrave village which is disappointing. Comparisons were made on what was offered by similar projects, ie Great Wymondley amongst others. It was asked when work might start, but there is not yet a firm date. UK Power will drive the first part of the project but Highways have to remodel the Bygrave junction onto the North Road prior to work commencing.

It was requested that a meeting with Shaun Greaves and the Parish Council be set up to better understand the S106 process and what may or may not be applied for.

Action: T Tyson

Reporting on Bins – a new contract will start in May 2025 with collection service commencing in the Summer 2025. There will be communication to ensure all parishioners are aware of what to expect.

Urban & Civic (master developer for north of [Baldock development](#)) will commence a series of community forum meetings regarding the Baldock expansion. It is assumed they will ask Councillors and the Parish Council to be part of the forum. Tom Tyson will ask the representative of U&C to keep him informed. The Local Plan has been approved but as yet this is no planning approval.

Action: T Tyson

Standing Orders to be reinstated.

26 Reports from Working Groups. To receive oral updates from relevant leaders/members and agree any actions that require Parish Council input/approval.

26.1 Planning Advisory Working Group - To note, any further information regarding S106 and awaiting the outcome from CDA Herts of the [Affordable Housing Survey](#). It was noted this is still ongoing. CDA confirmed there was a total of 143 responses, this is disappointing as they were hoping for 25% (ie over 200). A new CDA representative has been appointed and the final report is therefore unlikely to come through until the Autumn.

26.2 Access to Ashwell station (includes the cycle/footway route and car parking). (Cllr Graham Lee).

It was noted that Cllr Lee is arranging a meeting with Guy Reed and Cllr Button to join. Dates to be advised.

Action: Cllr Lee

26.3 Trees and Hedges (Cllr David Sims).

Cllr Sims was absent from the meeting and will report in August.

It was noted that the newly planted hedge along Lucas Lane is not thriving. It is unclear what is causing the problem, Cllr Sims to be consulted upon his return and potentially to contact the contractor who planted the hedge or the supplier.

Action: Cllr Sims

A new application was received regarding the felling of a Beech Tree under 24/01412/TCA. Comments to be sent to NHC by 20th July. Cllr Sims to comment.

Action: Cllr Sims

26.4 Zero Carbon Ashwell (ZCA) group. (Cllrs Graham Lee & Ian Duffy).

Cllr Lee advised that ZCA are awaiting a response from the consultant to a draft feasibility study application form. The next tranche of grant will be determined in September at the earliest. A communication leaflet and website are being produced with Steve Jarvis offering to cover the costs. To be discussed at the August meeting.

27 Planning matters: to include new and existing applications. Full details of applications on [NHC Planning website](#)

27.1 New consultations received from NHC. To note any correspondence and agree responses.

27.1.1 19 Lucas Lane. NHC ref. 24/00816/FPH. Full Permission Householder: Two storey side single storey front and single storey rear extension and alterations to existing fenestration following demolition of existing detached side garage and garden store. Alterations to existing vehicular access following partial demolition of existing boundary wall.

NHC have decided to grant Conditional Permission.

27.1.2 17 Lucas Lane. NHC ref. 24/00815/FPH. Full Permission Householder: Single storey rear extension, replace existing front garage door with an entrance door and windows to facilitate conversion of garage into habitable accommodation and alternations to existing fenestration. Widen existing vehicular access following partial demolition of existing boundary wall.

NHC have decided to grant Conditional Permission.

27.1.3 28 Hodwell. NHC ref. 24/01072/FPH. Full Permission Householder: Partially replace existing picket boundary fence and associated gates and erect side fence and gate. NHC status – Registered.

27.1.4 A revised application had been received prior to the agenda being issued, for 54 Station Road NHC Ref 24/02560/FP. The Parish Council had not raised objections to the previous application but raised matters of concern, ie position of bus stop, some of which have been considered by the Planning Officer. It was agreed that Cllr Button would look further into the application and respond to the Clerk prior to 12th July allowing the PC time to respond to NHC.

Action: Cllr Button

To note the [Planning Summary](#) as of 20th June 2024.

27.1 Slip End Farm, Royston Road, Slip End. NHC ref. 24/00754/FP. Full Planning Permission : Erection of two 3-bed, three 4-bed and two 5-bed dwellings with associated hard and soft landscaping, parking, garaging and private gardens following the demolition of existing agricultural barns. To note that this will be considered at an NHC Planning Committee meeting. Response received from Planning Officer that a speaking slot will be allocated to Ashwell when the subject is raised at Committee.

Slip End planning is currently on hold until issues surrounding a potential ancient monument have been resolved.

27.2 Tree consultations (Conservation Area and TPO) received from NHC. To agree responses to any received.

A new TCA had been received prior to the agenda being published, NHC Ref: 24/01413/TCA to fell a Beech Tree at 24 Dixies Close. Cllr Sims will be asked to give his view and the PC will feed back their thoughts to NHC.

Action: Cllr Sims

27.3 To note the [Tree Planning Summary](#) as of 27th June 2024.

28 Reports from Committees

28.1 **HR Committee.** To receive an oral report and agree any actions.
No further reports

28.2 To discuss application for Co-option to the Parish Council.

Exclusion of Press and Public. To resolve that under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and representatives of the press and broadcast media be excluded from the meeting as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, namely Co-option of a Parish Councillor.

The Parish Council are pleased to report that a new applicant has applied to join the Parish Council. An interview with the new applicant was conducted in the private session, as a result of which there was unanimous agreement to co-opt.

29 **Reports from parish councillors on premises and other responsibilities.** To receive oral reports and agree any actions needed.

29.1 **The Springs.** Report from Cllr Martin Hoffman.

With Cllr Hoffman being absent it was reported that the Parish Council were in receipt of a tree survey report that identified a number of trees requiring attention. Each Councillor responsible for their areas, ie The Springs, St Marys Church, Recreation Ground and Cemetery can view the report and decide the priority trees requiring work. **Action: All Councillors**

29.2 **St Mary's Churchyard** Grounds Maintenance. Report from Cllr Hoffman.
Cllr Hoffman to report at the next meeting

29.3 **Recreation Ground** including the playground, pavilion and public toilets. Report from Cllr Graham Lee. To include the previously published consultations on the playground and the pavilion and further consultation and actions re the pavilion and public toilets.

Cllr Lee is putting together a consultation document with the aim to be issued and discussed at the next meeting. The PC is hopeful to be in a position to consult with Parishioners in September after the summer holidays. **Action: Cllr Lee**

29.4 **Small Gains** (Accies pitch and allotments). Report from Cllr David Sims.
Cllr Sims to report at August meeting.

29.5 **War Memorial.** To note any updates re the Highways issues, quotes from suppliers re cleaning, minor works to the steps and insurance valuation update.

Two quotes have been received, awaiting a third. All companies have been researched and deal with listed structures. Deputy Clerk to enquire what cleaning methods are used.
Clerk to address insurance. **Action: Clerk/Deputy Clerk**

29.6 **Cemetery.** To note any updates.

Concerns regarding tree overgrowth, identifying certain trees/bushes for removal/work. Cllr Button to meet Clerk onsite to identify work to be carried out vs budget available.

29.7 **Street furniture.**

29.7.1 **Litter bin review.** Report from Cllr Norton Mahy. To include the ongoing consultation and communications with NHC.

No further report to Council

30 Finance and Governance

30.1 Budget tracking and the monthly summary of accounts. To note the information up to 30th June 2024 to be circulated to parish councillors after the end of the month. Proposal that the summary of receipts and payments be issued with the draft minutes and the two nominated parish councillors sign off the accounts in accordance with internal control procedures.

The new online approval system is proving to be an asset to the Council.

30.2 Annual Audit for the 2023-24 financial year. To note any further updates:
The Clerk reported that the AGAR and associated documents had been sent to the External Auditor on 25th June 2024.

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 7th August 2024, 7pm.

Issued by: Sally Roberts
Trainee Clerk to Ashwell Parish Council
4th July 2024

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<i>Signed</i>	<i>Date</i>
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