

**Minutes of the Ashwell Parish Council meeting held on
Wednesday 1st February 2017 in the Parish Room**

Present: Councillors Mark White (Chairman), Martin Hoffman (Vice-chairman),
Madeleine Legg, Bridget Macey, David Sims, David Short.
The Clerk was also in attendance.
Members of the public: One parishioner.

101. Apologies for absence Graham Lee (away on business).

102. Minutes of previous meetings: Council meeting 4th January 2017

It was *resolved* that the minutes be approved and signed.

Clerk

103. Matters of general report from previous meetings

103.1 (January Council, 92.1) 1st Ashwell Scout Group fundraising for a Public Access Defibrillator (PAD). The Chairman reported that the Scouts had encountered delays in obtaining the required paint. Refurbishment, including repainting, signage and installation of the PAD was pending. The Scouts had made plans to hold public training sessions; these would be publicized as widely as possible. The importance of making the public aware that the equipment could be easily used by anyone was emphasized.

103.2 (January Council, 92.2) Superfast broadband. It was noted that no further official information had been received.

103.3 (January Council, 92.4) Post office services in the Parish Room. The response from Sir Oliver Heald, MP, following his enquiries to Post Office Ltd was noted. He had been assured that upgraded equipment would shortly be available to all local outreach suppliers.

103.4 (January Council, 100) Advertisement for a deputy clerk. It was noted that five applications had been received by the deadline. It was agreed that the Chairman, Cllr Madeleine Legg and the Clerk would make arrangements for progressing the selection process. **MNW/MFL/Clerk**

103.5 (Committee meeting 12th November 2016, 12) Proposal to Ashwell Housing Association (AHA) re the use of their office at Bear Farm. Further communications with the AHA Chairman were noted. The Parish Council's proposals had been discussed at an AHA meeting; there had been no objections in principle. The rent to be charged would be agreed following the determination of utility costs. No formal tenancy could be agreed until the changes in the status of AHA currently being progressed were completed; it was noted that information on this had been publicized in the *Ashwell Village News*.

104. Parish management reports (current responsibilities shown in brackets)

(Routine matters concerning the management of parish assets and amenities are usually not discussed or reported to full council meetings; some are dealt with by the Management Committee, others directly by parish councillors and/or the Clerk)

(Draft minutes of last Management/Finance Committee Wednesday 23rd November 2016 available)

104.1 Cemetery (Cllr Madeleine Legg) Cllr Madeleine Legg reported that she had been in communication with the solicitor and Nevilles, and the new tenancy agreement was being progressed.

104.2 Recreation Ground and Pavilion (Cllrs Mark White and Madeleine Legg) Cllr Madeleine Legg reported that the replacement container to provide storage for clubs' equipment was being progressed by the User Group. Concerns had been expressed re potential damage to the pitches during delivery whilst the ground was so wet.

See also 107.1 below re upgrade project/bid to NHDC.

104.3 Playground (Cllr Madeleine Legg) Cllr Madeleine Legg reported that weekly inspection reports by the parishioner volunteer were ongoing; nothing of concern had been reported.

104.4 Public toilets at the pavilion (Cllr Madeleine Legg)

See 107.1 below re enhancement project/claim to NHDC from planning obligations.

104.5 The Springs (Cllr Martin Hoffman) Cllr Martin Hoffman reported that, following the proposal for bulb planting as part of the Ashwell 1100 celebrations, he had requested expert input from Natural England as the relevant authority re the SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest). He cautioned against publicizing this, and various alternative proposals, before a response had been received from the authority.

104.6 Small Gains (Allotments, Accies sports field and shared car parking area) (Cllr David Sims)

Cllr David Sims reported,

104.6.1 There were continuing concerns re damage to the newly installed netting protecting the allotments from the football field. The cause of this, whether vandalism or attack by rabbits, rats, or other, was

unknown. He had investigated the installation of additional reinforcement to the lower section. As the cost of this would be significant he was reluctant to propose this until the cause of the damage was determined; this was being further investigated.

104.6.2 Sheds at the allotments had been broken into but nothing stolen. The PCSO Chris Brabrook had been kept informed.

104.6.3 A vehicle(s) had been driven on the pitch and some damage done to the surface. The PCSO Chris Brabrook had been kept informed.

104.7 Miscellaneous amenities

(The Lock Up - Cllr David Short. Merchant Taylors' Green and Carters' Pond - Cllr Martin Hoffman)
Cllr David Short reported that refurbishment of the plaque adjacent to the Lock Up required professional input. It was agreed that the plaque on the Merchant Taylors' Green seat be refurbished at the same time.

104.8 Street furniture (Cllr Bridget Macey) Nothing to report.

104.9 St Mary's Churchyard grounds maintenance (Cllr Martin Hoffman) Nothing to report.

104.10 Parish Clock (Cllr Mark White). The Chairman reported that he had been in contact with Wayne Francis of Clock Restorations Ltd. The new part was due for delivery from the French supplier to its UK agent in mid-February. It would then be sent on to Clockwise Restorations who would install it as soon as possible. Attempts to shorten this lengthy delivery procedure had been tried but unfortunately had not been successful. Clockwise Restorations had warned all along that sourcing and obtaining the part could take some months.

104.11 War Memorial

(managed by the Parish Council in conjunction with the Ashwell Branch of the Royal British Legion and a parishioner volunteer)

Nothing to report.

105. Items re other authorities

105.1 Herts Highways

See www.hertsdirect.org/hertfordshire/CouncillorLocalityBudgets (County Councillor Tony Hunter) for lists of their confirmed items.

105.1.1 Cllr David Sims reported that items requested had again been chased up and a response had been received from County Councillor Tony Hunter's Highways Officer on some matters.

Cllr Sims gave details on the following,

(i) Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs). The SID in Station Road was in use, ie both the base and the top had been installed, but at the bottom of Newnham Way only a base had been installed. A second top had been requested to avoid swapping over but because of Highways budget constraints this was now unlikely at present. A suggestion was made that the Parish Council should consider funding the second device. Highways had informed that SID's had to be left in any one location for at least six months to ensure that the traffic data they collected was viable.

(ii) Station Road safety improvements. Design work on new sections of footway was to start in their next financial year. Widening of the footway on the corner by the War Memorial was on the Highways Locality Budget (HLB) list for 2017/18. The proposal for a crossing table at the junction with Ashwell Street was still pending.

(iii) A505 Odsey junction safety improvements. Cameras had been installed as part of a survey following another serious incident.

(iv) Resurfacing of the section of Station Road by the garage and a small section of Mill Street (near Fordham Close) was on the confirmed 2017/18 HLB list.

(v) LED street-lighting installation scheduled for early 2017. There had been no further information on this.

A further meeting was to be scheduled.

Clerk/DRS

105.1.2 (December Council, 84.1) Yellow line proposals made to Herts Highways.

Cllr David Sims reported that this would be chased up at the meeting to be scheduled.

It was understood that the Colbron Close residents' group was awaiting a response to their request to the Police Commissioner's Road Safety Fund.

It was noted that a report had been received of another incident of roof damage at the corner of Kingsland Way and Silver Street.

105.1.3 Proposal for restricted parking spaces outside retail outlets.

A request from a local business owner for the Parish Council's support was reported. It was noted that the recent Neighbourhood Plan survey had included questions on parking; the results would be collated shortly.

105.1.4 (January Council, 94.1.1) Pedestrian safety at West End/vehicle wing mirrors overhanging the narrow footway. Following the Parish Council's request, County Councillor Tony Hunter's Highways Officer had responded that he would undertake a site visit to investigate options.

It was noted that a letter of thanks had been received from the adjacent property owners with a request that they continue to be kept informed. It was agreed that thanks be sent to the local resident who had cut back the vegetation on the section towards Newnham Way; this had much improved safety on this part of the footway. Cllr Martin Hoffman expressed the view that in the section nearer to the junction with Back Street opposite the high wall only significant works to cut back the bank and extend the width of the footway would overcome the danger.

105.1.5 Overgrown verges. Cllr David Short expressed his concerns re the following locations, (i) Ashwell Street adjacent to the junction with Kingsland Way, (ii) corner of Ashwell Street and Claybush Road, (iii) Station Road opposite the garage. It was agreed that re the first two locations, letters be sent to property owners requesting action. The Station Road verge was the responsibility of Herts Highways; they had been requested to cut back this section on several occasions but no action had resulted. The most recent request had proposed that the vegetation be cut back when the scheduled resurfacing was undertaken; this would be reiterated. **Clerk**

See also 106.3.2 below re Herts Highways consultation re Claybush Road.

105.2 Herts County Council

The following were noted,

105.2.1 (January Council, 94.2.1) 202 Taxibus to the station/concerns that the service remains under review. Response pending from County Councillor Tony Hunter.

105.2.2 HCC consultation, 'Tell us what you think of pharmacy services in Hertfordshire'.

'We want to hear what you think of pharmacy services in Hertfordshire to help us develop services in the future. Your views will help us to develop our Pharmacy Needs Assessment (PNA) which will look at health needs in Hertfordshire, the level and accessibility of pharmacy services and how these will be maintained and developed in the future.'

Deadline 24th February 2017.

105.3 North Herts District Council

105.3.1 (January Council, 94.4.1) Request for further information on the future of Area Committees.

The response received from District Councillor Janine Paterson was noted, ie proposals in relation to cost savings had not been progressed for the present.

106. Planning matters

Details of applications are sent from NHDC as the Planning Authority to the Parish Council as a consultee. If any objections are raised either by a parishioner or a parish councillor an on-site meeting of the Parish Council's Planning Committee is convened to consider those items. See the notice board or contact the Clerk for the agenda.

106.1. New applications.

106.1.1 Planning Committee meeting scheduled for Sunday 5th February to include,

NHDC Case Ref No: 16/02863/1. Land rear of 39 - 59 Station Road.

Outline Application: Outline Planning Application (all matters reserved, except for access) residential development comprising of 9 dwellings with associated access off Green Lane.

Applicant: Tingdene Homes Ltd.

It was noted that the meeting would convene at the site entrance in Green Lane.

106.1.2 It was noted that a response had been made to the NHDC Planning Officer that parish councillors had raised no objections re the following,

NHDC Case Ref No:16/03047/1HH 15 Kingsland Way

Full Planning Permission Householder: Conversion and associated works to return existing 3-bed dwelling to 2x2-bed dwellings.

It was noted that some parish councillors had commended the creation of smaller units, this being consistent with determined village housing needs.

106.1.3 Proposals for recommendations to NHDC for the following,

NHDC Case Ref No:16/03213/1HH The Laurels, 1 Broadchalke Close

Full Planning Permission Householder : Detached garden studio.

Applicant: Mr and Mrs Bymolen.

It was noted that no concerns or objections had been received either from parish councillors or members of the public.

It was **resolved** that a recommendation be made to the Planning Officer to grant approval. **Clerk**

106.2 Works to Trees in Conservation Area (TCA) or Tree Protection Orders (TPO).

The following applications to NHDC were considered.

NHDC Case Ref No: 17/00132/1TCA Westbury Farm House, West End.

Beech -Crown reduce by 25%. Walnut -Crown reduce by 25%.

It was **resolved** that there were no objections. **Clerk**

See also 106.6 below re planning conditions for trees at 18 Newnham Way.

106.3 Applications pending NHDC decisions.

106.3.1 NHDC Case Ref No: 16/02154/1 J Cooke Engineering, Ashwell Street.

Full Planning Permission: Erection of 6 x 4 bedroom dwellings and 1 x 3-bedroom dwelling with detached double garage; associated car parking and ancillary works following the demolition of existing factory building.

It was reported that Planning Permission had now been granted. It was noted that there had been further correspondence with the developer and the NHDC Planning Officer prior to this in response to the Parish Council's requests for minor amendments to the proposals. The Planning Officer had assured that the Parish Council would continue to be kept informed re the conditions imposed.

It was agreed to write to the Planning Officer to commend the way in which the Parish Council's comments and requests had been considered and his efforts to achieve an outcome that took local views into account. The merits of maintaining good communications with both the Planning Officer and the developer during the build process were agreed. **Clerk**

106.3.2 NHDC Case Ref No: 16/01797/1 Land rear of 4-14, Claybush Road.

106.3.2.1 Full Planning Permission: 33 dwellings together with associated access, parking, amenity and open space.

It was noted that no further information had been received from NHDC; it was understood that the application was pending further progress of the Local Plan.

(See also 106.7 below re the draft Local Plan)

106.3.2.2 Letter to the NHDC Planning Officer, copied to the Parish Council, from local resident John Hare with information re a 'paeleo-channel' running beneath the site and his view of the likely flood risk implications for properties at West End due to run-off from the proposed new development.

Further information was provided by Mr Hare during the Open Forum session. He wished the Parish Council to be aware that his response from the authorities had informed that, as the necessary expertise was not available in the local flood team, the matter had been referred to a higher level. He requested the Parish Council's support in pursuing this matter and would keep it informed.

106.3.2.3 Email from Herts County Council, 'Extension to Existing 30mph Limit on Claybush Road, Ashwell'

'...informal consultation letter and plan of the proposed restrictions being posted to the affected residents/businesses.' 'These measures are being proposed to improve safety for all road users as a result of a new development providing vehicular and pedestrian access joining Claybush Road.'

Deadline for responses 6th February.

It was noted that the covering letter was on HCC headed notepaper but the accompanying sketch plan was by Croudace Homes Ltd.

It was noted that it included the assumption that the development off Claybush Road was to be progressed, ie it had been granted planning approval; this was not the case.

It was **resolved** that a response be given, (i) irrespective of any approval for development in the vicinity, relocation of the 30mph signs further up the hill would be welcomed to improve the safety of the existing dwellings, (ii) the Parish Council was of the view that if the signs were to be relocated they should be sited much further up the hill than was being proposed, (iii) the consultation document incorrectly assumed that permission for development had been granted, (iii) the Parish Council had voted against proposals for development off Claybush Road. **Clerk**

106.4 NHDC decisions on applications.

None received other than Cooke Engineering site -see 106.3.1 above.

106.5 (January Council, 95.5) NHDC Case Ref No: 16/02826/1PRE Land Off Station Road

Pre-Application Advice: Residential Development.

It was noted that the NHDC Planning Officer's pre-application report had now been seen by the Parish Council. This had stated that he,

'...would be unlikely to conclude, even with the best case for *social* and *economic* benefits being made, that these positives would be so telling in the planning balance such that they would not be significantly and demonstrably outweighed by the identified and substantial *environmental* harm - harm associated with extending the village with an estate style scheme in-depth off a road out of the village which is effectively only one dwelling deep at its southern extremity.'

It was noted that further correspondence had been received from JWPC on behalf of the developer, 'We are intending to revise the proposals in the next few weeks, which we can circulate to the Parish Council, and would like to extend our request for a meeting to discuss the proposals. As you requested previously, we feel that once more detail has been added to the revised plans a public session can be held to hear the views of residents of the village as part of our consultation prior to submitting a planning application.'

It was noted that a revised layout had been received.

Following discussion it was agreed that the Parish Council's position had not changed from that expressed in the letter to NHDC dated 14th December 2016. This had stated,

'On the basis of all the points made above, if an application were to come forward that did not meet the Parish Council's agreed criteria then it would be difficult to envisage it gaining their support.' It was noted that the criteria included had been based on the information collated as part of the emerging Neighbourhood Plan. The Parish Council had also said that it wished to listen to the views of parishioners before commenting further. To that end it had requested that JWPC provide the information obtained by its public consultation. It was agreed that this request should be reiterated.

It was **resolved** to respond to JWPC that (i) the Parish Council's position had not changed, (ii) it had noted that the NHDC Planning Officer would be unlikely to support a planning application, (iii) it wished to reiterate the request for details of the public consultation undertaken by JWPC so that it could see the responses from parishioners, (iv) it was thus declining the offer of a meeting at this stage. **Clerk**

The article published by the SLCC giving advice on how parish councils might engage in pre-application discussions was noted.

106.6 (Planning Committee, 6th August 2015)

NHDC Case Ref No: 15/01712/1. 18 Newnham Way

Full Planning Permission: Erection of 1 no. four bedroom detached dwelling with associated parking and amenity space at the rear of 18 Newnham Way (Arbury House) including alterations to existing access drive. Applicant: Mr and Mrs William Skelding.

It was noted that the Parish Council had recommended refusal of the application; one of its concerns had been, '...Removal of any of the screening trees would have an adverse impact on the landscape/views towards the village.'

It was noted that NHDC had refused the application. However, on appeal to the National Inspector, the NHDC refusal had been overturned and permission granted. The National Inspector's report had included, 'Views from the adjacent open countryside towards the appeal site would still largely continue to be dominated by the existing, dense rows of substantial mature trees along the north and west boundaries, which would also largely screen the dwelling from the surrounding countryside, even during the winter.' The National Inspector had imposed conditions including, 'After seeking the views of both parties, I have also imposed conditions requiring the development to be carried out in accordance with the submitted Arboricultural Impact Assessment, to ensure that the existing trees on site are adequately protected during construction and requiring the submission, implementation and maintenance of a scheme of landscaping to ensure a visually satisfactory setting for the new dwelling.'

It was noted that, following concerns from a number of parishioners that very significant reduction of some of the row of Lime trees had been undertaken, the NHDC Planning Officer had been requested to investigate. It was understood that the Planning Officer, (i) had contacted the applicant and works had been halted, (ii) had reminded the applicant of the conditions imposed, (iii) had informed the applicant that any works to trees subject to such planning conditions required permission to be sought from the planning authority prior to works in the same way that Tree Protection Orders operated.

Parish councillors expressed their view that the substantial works carried out to the trees were in direct contravention of the planning condition imposed by the National Inspector. It was also noted that contractors' vehicles were using the adjacent Restricted Byway to access the site; it was understood that access was to be from the road, ie Newnham Way.

It was *resolved* (i) to write to the NHDC Planning Officer requesting that appropriate action be taken against the applicant and that the Parish Council be kept fully informed, (ii) to write to the National Inspector informing him of the situation and expressing the Parish Council's concerns. **Clerk**

106.7 District Local Plan 2011-31

(December Council. 85.8.1) Letter to Mr David Scholes, CEO NHDC, dated 1st September 2016, expressing concerns at the decision to progress the draft Local Plan 2011-31 without amendment.

The apology received from Mr Ian Fullstone, Head of Development and Building Control, that his response to the Parish Council had not been received was noted, 'My original response referred to the Cabinet meeting of 26 September 2017 where approval would be sought to put the Draft Submission Local Plan out to consultation. I suggested that this was the appropriate forum for concerns to be raised.'

107. Reports re Finance matters

107.1 (January Council, 96.1) Section 106 claims and grant proposals to NHDC.

107.1.1 Public toilets/proposals for enhancement of the facilities at the Recreation Ground.

Cllr Madeleine Legg reported that the plans and costings were being collated by the Clerk and would be submitted to NHDC shortly for a claim from planning obligations/section 106 funds held by NHDC. **Clerk**

107.1.2 Pavilion Upgrade/bid to the new NHDC Community Facilities Capital Projects Funding Scheme. Cllr Madeleine Legg reported that the plans and costings were being collated by the Clerk. The application form and required additional project documentation to meet the criteria were being progressed. These would be submitted to NHDC shortly. **Clerk**

107.2 Proposal for approval of monthly Accounts and Bills for Payment.

It was *resolved* that these be approved and paid (see Appendix 2). **Clerk**

108. To receive any reports from working groups

108.1 Ashwell Neighbourhood Plan Group (leader Cllr David Short) Cllr David Short reported that the second survey was currently out for consultation; the report was due by the end of February.

108.2 Website Group (leader Cllr Graham Lee) It was noted that collation of material and photos for the new site was ongoing. A target date of the end of the month had been set.

108.3 Yearbook Group (leader Cllr David Short) Cllr David Short reported that the 2017 edition was now at the proof-reading stage. It would be published in early March as usual. The Parish Council's 'green card' of contact details and the Music Festival leaflet would again be inserted.

109. PARISH AFFAIRS, REPORTS FROM OTHER BODIES AND OPEN FORUM

These items taken at 8.30pm. Standing orders suspended.

109.1 Village Hall. The Chairman reported that he had attended a meeting; the management group were planning some renovations to the building.

109.2 Ashwell 1100 celebrations. Cllr David Short reported that the organising group, of which he was a member, had a schedule of events planned. A tree planting in the grounds of the Doctors' surgery was to take place on Saturday 18th February. (See also 104.5 above)

109.3 Great British Spring Clean, 3-5th March/village litter pick event. Cllr Madeleine Legg reported that an advert for volunteers to help with this event had been posted.

109.4 Asheteria. The Chairman reported a request from the youth group leader re their proposal for their community art project. The views of parish councillors had been sought re installing something at the Recreation Ground, perhaps adjacent to the skateboard area. It was agreed that there were no objections in principle and that further details as to size/materials etc would be requested. **Clerk**

109.5 Other items raised by parishioners. See item 106.3.2.2 above.

Items 110 and 111. Meeting closed to the public at 9.40pm for two *in camera* items

Standing Order item 62. That in view of the special nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the press and public be temporarily excluded and they are instructed to withdraw.

To be considered at an *in camera* session on the grounds that included personnel matters.

Meeting closed at 9.50pm

Forthcoming meeting dates:

Planning Committee meeting Sunday 5th February (see 106.1.1 above)

Next monthly Council meeting Wednesday 1st March.

The Annual Parish Meeting will be held on Wednesday 29th March 2017.

Appendix 1 – General material received

Items routinely forwarded to parish councillors by email

- North Herts District Council -weekly ‘Members Information’
- HAPTC -Briefings and Bulletins.
- SLCC -updates and newsletters.
- Police OWL/Rural News/Neighbourhood Watch bulletins.

Appendix 2

ACCOUNTS AND BILLS FOR PAYMENT -February 2017			1st February 2017			
Proposed (i) Cllr Legg (ii) Cllr Sims			Declarations: None.			
			£	£	£	
Receipts			Precept	Grants	Other	
					Total	
63	Dignity Funerals Ltd	Crouch burial (cemetery works 17.01)			120.00	120.00
64	Andy Free Ltd (Attleborough)	burial (cemetery works 17.02)			200.00	200.00
65	Geere & Pepper Memorials Ltd	memorial (cemetery works 17.05)			240.00	240.00
66	Geere & Pepper Memorials Ltd	memorial (cemetery works 17.06)			440.00	440.00
67	A J Mills Mason	memorial (cemetery works 17.09)			120.00	120.00
68	Santander	bank interest			2.58	2.58
69	Neville Funeral Service	chapel rent			68.75	68.75
70	personal payment	reservation (cemetery works 17.03)			600.00	600.00
Total			0.00	0.00	1,791.33	1,791.33
Payments			Admin, office costs & Other Misc	Management of Parish Assets & Amenities	VAT	Total
By Direct Debit						
203	E.ON (01/02/17)	chapel electricity		11.00		11.00
204	E.ON (30/01/17)	toilets electricity		20.52	1.03	21.55
205	E.ON (30/01/17)	pavilion electricity		32.37	1.62	33.99
206	NHDC (20/01/2017)	trade refuse bin (Rec charity)		87.62		87.62
207	NHDC (01/02/2017)	trade refuse bin (Alms Lane)		97.37		97.37
208	Affinity Water (01/02/17)	cemetery water		16.29		16.29
209	Affinity Water (01/02/17)	small gains allotments water		32.04		32.04
By cheque						
210	J C M Porter	Clerk's salary	1162.39			1162.39
211	J C M Porter	reimbursement office expenses	49.18		6.98	56.16
212	HCC Pensions-LGPS Account,	clerk's pension	402.70			402.70
213	M Barden	Environmental Cleansing		271.63		271.63
214	M Chandler	Duties at Pavilion and Rec		73.20		73.20
215	Post Office	tax&NI to Inland Revenue	165.60	46.40		212.00
216	K Clifford	Premises duties		30.00		30.00
217	D J Granger Grounds Maint. Ltd	cemetery lime avenue and path		538.00	107.60	645.60
218	Alison Eardley Consulting	Neighbourhood Plan survey creation	200.00			200.00
219	Mr D P Covington	Springs- base for trade waste bin		120.00		120.00
Total			1979.87	1079.23	114.58	3,173.68
Outstanding Accounts						
Yearbook 2016 adverts (x1)					65.00	
Total						65.00
Money at bank						
Current Account			01 February 2017		36,537.18	
Deposit Account			03 January 2017		30,451.04	
Total						66,988.22
<i>Cheques banked after/BACS transfers after</i>						-
<i>Cheques drawn but not cleared/DD's outstanding</i>						838.98
Total						66,149.24
<i>Total after paying this months cheques</i>						62,975.56
<i>Total in current a/c after paying this months cheques</i>						32,524.52