

**Minutes of the Ashwell Parish Council meeting held on
Wednesday 5th April 2017 in the Parish Room**

Present: Councillors Mark White (Chairman), Graham Lee, Madeleine Legg, Bridget Macey, David Sims, David Short.

The Clerk (Jane Porter) and the Deputy Clerk (Annie Clifford) were also in attendance.

Members of the public: One parishioner.

126. Apologies for absence Cllr Martin Hoffman (family commitment).

127. Minutes of the Council meeting 1st March 2017.

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

Clerk

128. Matters of general report from previous meetings

128.1 (March Council, 114.1) 1st Ashwell Scout Group project for a Public Access Defibrillator (PAD) in the old red telephone box in the High Street. The Chairman reported that the Scouts had cleaned out the box and had now been able to source the correct red paint. The Parish Council's handyman would be repainting it in the next few weeks and the PAD could then be installed. The Scouts would then be able to register it with the ambulance service and get it commissioned. After fitting they would be arranging public training sessions with The Heartbeat Trust; these would probably be held in the school hall. It was agreed to help publicize these and to assist with organising any further training if necessary. MNW

128.2 (March Council, 114.2) Superfast broadband. It was noted that this matter had also been discussed at the recent Annual Parish Meeting. It was understood that households in some parts of the village had been offered the opportunity to sign up for an enhanced service. Also that at some point all households would be able to achieve faster speeds as part of the standard broadband service. It was noted that an email had been received from Rev Robert Evens with information on plans by Hinxworth parishioners to utilise the line of sight from Dunton to provide satellite broadband with considerably enhanced speeds and whether Ashwell might be interested in pursuing options via St Mary's. It was agreed that this might be of interest to those who were prepared to pay the cost of such an enhanced service. It might also be good for residents living further from the village centre. It was agreed to respond that the Parish Council would be supportive of any proposals by St Mary's.

Clerk

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

(Routine matters concerning the management of parish assets and facilities 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)

129.1 Cemetery (Cllr Madeleine Legg) Chapel of Rest tenancy agreement. Cllr Madeleine Legg reported that she had again been in contact with the director of Nevilles. She remained concerned that the solicitors of both parties were extremely slow.

129.2 Recreation Ground and Pavilion (Cllrs Mark White and Madeleine Legg)

The Chairman reported that new signage had been installed and the delivery date for the two new storage containers was expected to be in the next two weeks. Cllr Madeleine Legg reported that she had drafted new 'notes for users' and requested that relevant parish councillors review these and report back to her.

See also 132.3 below re upgrade project/bid to NHDC.

129.3 Playground (Cllr Madeleine Legg) Nothing to report.

129.4 Public toilets at the pavilion (Cllr Madeleine Legg) Cllr Madeleine Legg reported that a 'deep clean' had been commissioned; this would include the pavilion showers and be done between the end of the football season and the beginning of the cricket season.

See also 132.2 below re enhancement project/claim to NHDC from planning obligations.

129.5 The Springs (Cllr Martin Hoffman)

129.5.1 Concerns from parishioners re the River Rhee. It was noted that no further information had been received from the relevant agencies, ie the Environment Agency and the HCC flood management group.

129.5.2 Annual 'Duck Race'. It was noted that this had again been successful and that thanks had been sent to the organisers for leaving the site in a good state.

129.5.3 Tree survey. It was noted that the routine review was due to be commissioned from the preferred supplier during the next few months.

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

Cllr David Sims reported that the additional protection netting between the pitches and the allotments had been installed.

129.7 Miscellaneous amenities Nothing to report.

(The Lock Up - Cllr David Short. Merchant Taylors' Green and Carters' Pond - Cllr Martin Hoffman)

129.8 Street furniture (Cllr Bridget Macey)

Dog waste bins. It was noted that this matter had also been discussed at the recent Annual Parish Meeting. The recent decision by NHDC to remove many of their dog waste bins would not affect the ten bins in the village funded by the Parish Council. Cllr Bridget Macey reported a request for an additional bin at Small Gains. It was noted that this had been discussed in the past and agreed that ten bins was a high number for the size of the village and that additional bins would not be the solution to problems. It was noted that NHDC advice was to place bagged mess into dog waste bins where possible or into ordinary litter bins or into purple wheelie bins. The view was expressed that double bagging for the latter two options was preferable. It was agreed that options be publicised.

Clerk

Criticism was again expressed re those who did not clear up their dogs' mess and those who bagged it and threw it onto verges and into hedges.

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

129.10 Parish Clock (Cllr Mark White) Nothing to report.

129.11 War Memorial It was noted that the volunteer who maintained the planting had been commended for keeping the area looking so good at the recent Annual Parish Meeting.

130. Items re other authorities

130.1 Herts County Council/Herts Highways

See www.hertsdirect.org/hertfordshire/CouncillorLocalityBudgets (County Councillor Tony Hunter)

It was noted that Highways matters had also been discussed at the recent Annual Parish Meeting. There would be no further additions to the Herts Highways agreed items list until after the May County Council elections.

130.1.1 The following matters were noted.

- (i) Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs). A second device requested for Newnham Way was pending.
- (ii) Resurfacing works in Station Road had been agreed by Highways for the financial year 2017-18.
- (iii) Overhanging vegetation in Kingsland Way. Works had been carried out by the Highways contractor; it was felt to be very inadequate and agreed to request further action.
- (iv) Station Road safety improvement requests. Further works were pending.
- (v) A505 Odsey junction. Further agreed safety improvements were pending.
- (vi) Pedestrian safety at West End. Agreed proposals were pending input from the Highways Safety Officer.
- (vii) Verge erosion in the High Street adjacent to Dixies Barns. Highways were to install hard surfacing.
- (viii) LED street-lighting installation. Concerns were again expressed at the inappropriate design of the new lamps that had been fitted to the existing swan-neck columns. It was agreed to investigate what options were available for conservation areas that would be of a more acceptable 'heritage' design.

DRS/Clerk

It was noted that the request made for refurbishment of the columns was pending completion of the LED project.

Clerk

130.1.2 (March Council, 116.1.1) Yellow line installation proposals. It was noted that this matter had also been discussed at the recent Annual Parish Meeting. County Councillor Tony Hunter had agreed to progress proposals at three locations (junction adjacent to the school, junction of Silver St and Kingsland Way, junction of Colbron Close and West End). The additional request made to Herts Highways by the school bus operator for yellow lines at the junction of Kingsland Way and High Street would also be progressed. Cllr David Sims reported that parking on the corner of Lucas Lane and Station Road during Accies matches remained a concern.

130.2 North Herts District Council (NHDC)

130.2.1 (March Council, 116.1.3) Proposal for restricted parking spaces outside retail outlets.

It was noted that this matter had also been discussed at the recent Annual Parish Meeting. Detailed proposals had been put to NHDC by the Parish Council. A response had been received that this would be discussed with the Portfolio Holder for Transport.

130.2.2 Code of Conduct/Register of Interests. It was noted that all parish councillors had responded to the request to review these and necessary amendments had been forwarded to the Monitoring Officer at NHDC; all information was available on the NHDC website.

See also 131, 132.1, 132.2 below.

131. 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 agenda.

131.1 New consultations.

The following recommendations were made to the NHDC Planning Officer.

NHDC Case Ref No: 17/00461/1. 85 Back Street.

Full Permission Householder: First floor extension.

It was noted that no concerns or objections had been received from members of the public. One parish councillor objected on the grounds that conversion from a three-bedroom to a five-bedroom dwelling was not consistent with the identified housing needs of the village as evidenced by the recent Neighbourhood Plan housing survey.

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

Clerk

NHDC Case Ref No: 17/003565/1. Lane Head, Partridge Hill.

Full Permission Householder: Single storey side and rear extension and ancillary works.

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

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

The following applications made to NHDC were reviewed and no concerns raised.

NHDC Case Ref No 17/00699/1TCA - United Reformed Church, High Street.

T1 Holly - Lift by up to 5 metres, T2 Yew - Crown reduce by 1 - 2 metres and lift by 1.5 - 2 metres, T3 Lime - Fell to ground level, T4 and T8 Lime - Re-pollard, T9 Ash - Re-pollard, T10 and T11 Yew - Crown reduce by 1 - 2 metres and lift by 1.5 - 2 metres

NHDC Case Ref No 17/00692/1TCA - 36 Lucas Lane

T1 Pear - crown reduce by 1 metre, T2 Apple - crown reduce by 1 metre, T3 Apple - crown reduce by up 2 metre, T4 Apple - crown reduce by 1 metre, T5 Fir - fell to ground level, T6 Ivy covered tree - fell to ground level, T7 Maple - reduce back by 1.5 - 2 metres, T8 Elm - fell to ground level, T9 Lilac - crown reduce by 1 metre.

131.3 Applications pending NHDC decisions.

The following, pending a decision by NHDC, were noted.

NHDC Case Ref No: 17/00322/1. Land rear of 22, High Street.

Full Planning Permission: One 2 x bedroom bungalow with new access off Hodwell following levelling of site.

Applicant: Mr B Deal.

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

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

Applicant: Croudace Homes.

It was noted that the applicant had submitted further amendments to NHDC and the Planning Officer had requested comments from the Parish Council on these. It was agreed that the amendments proposed were unclear, and it was unreasonable to expect consultees to select the relevant documents from the many dozens on the NHDC website, many of which could not be downloaded. Local residents had expressed their concerns at proposals to extend the width of the road and the possible encroachment on their properties.

It was agreed that a request be made to the NHDC Planning Officer that, (i) the developer be requested to supply precise details of the proposed amendments including a simple drawing summarising the changes, (ii) a time extension for the Parish Council's response be given.

Clerk

It was noted that Croudace Homes had applied to HCC for permission to undertake sewerage works in Claybush Road.

131.4 NHDC decisions on applications. The following were noted.

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.

NHDC decision: Standard Conditional Permission.

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 dwelling with associated access off Green Lane.

Applicant: Tingdene Homes Ltd.

NHDC decision: Refused.

131.5 (March Council, 118.5) Pre-Application Advice: Residential Development.

NHDC Case Ref No: 16/02826/1PRE Land Off Station Road

It was noted that information had been received from the developer. There would be further publicity of their plans to local residents, 'Beck Homes and their development team will be available to discuss the proposals on Thursday 30th March, with additional plans available in the Parish Room from 4.30pm-7.30pm.' It was reported that a number of residents had attended.

It was again noted that the pre-application comments by the NHDC Planning Officer had not been supportive of the proposals.

131.6 NHDC Case Ref No: 16/01784/1LB 77 High Street (Bear House)

It was noted that a number of parishioners had raised their concerns for highway safety during the approved building works; the hoardings erected had significantly reduced the sightlines when exiting short Bear Lane. The Parish Council had requested investigation by the NHDC Planning Officer and for it to be referred to the Herts Highways Officer. The Parish Council had also requested input from the local police; they had responded rapidly and had recommended the closure of the road for the duration of the works. It was reported that a road closure application had now been submitted to Herts Highways and their officer was in communication with the developer to resolve the issue as rapidly as possible. It was agreed that the details be requested. Also that 'footpath closed' notices be put in place to give out a stronger message than the current signs with arrows; pedestrians were currently walking in the road rather than crossing to the opposite side.

Clerk

131.7 District Local Plan 2011-31 (March Council, 118.7)

It was noted that the following were now available on the NHDC website.

(i) All the responses to the latest consultation,

'...we will provide all the details of all representations submitted. It will then be for the Inspector to decide whether any additional material is required as part of the examination process.'

(ii) The agenda and reports for the NHDC Council meeting on 11th April,

'... at this meeting Members will be asked to approve submission of the Local Plan to the Secretary of State for examination.'

'It is intended to submit the Plan to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) by the end of May 2017 at the very latest.'

'The examination sessions will be held in public. This means that anyone can attend to listen to the debate. Only those invited by the Inspector to participate in each session are allowed to speak.'

'Until such time as a new Local Plan is adopted, the saved policies of the Local Plan No 2 with Alterations remain the starting point for the determination of planning applications.'

(iii) Documents for the NHDC meeting on April 11th included the Statement of Consultation; the summary for Ashwell was on page 37.

132. Reports re Finance matters

132.1 Planning Contributions/Section 106 claims.

It was noted that clarification requested from NHDC on the new procedures for Planning Contributions/Section 106 claims was pending (see also 132.2 below).

It was noted that an update on the funds held for Ashwell by NHDC had been received.

132.2 Public Toilets Enhancement. It was noted that a Planning Contributions/Section 106 claim had been made to NHDC to fund the proposed refurbishment of the public toilets at the Recreation Ground.

132.3 Pavilion Upgrade. It was noted that costings and supporting evidence were being collated for a bid to the NHDC Communities Fund.

132.4 Audit 2016-17. It was noted that details for the submission had been received from the External Auditor, BDO LLP.

132.5 Pension scheme. It was noted that details following the triennial assessment, and notification of the year end submission requirements, had been received from the pension provider, the Local Government Pension Scheme.

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

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

Clerk

133. Reports re HR matters and the new office premises.

133.1 Deputy Clerk. It was noted that her employment had commenced from 1st April.

133.2 Environmental Cleansing Officer vacancy. It was noted that the advert would appear in the April *Ashwell Village News*; there had been no interest to date.

133.3 Office at Bear Farm. It was noted that preparations for the new office shared with Ashwell Housing Association (AHA) were in hand.

134. To receive any reports from working groups.

134.1 Ashwell Neighbourhood Plan Group (leader Cllr David Short) It was noted that an update had been given at the recent Annual Parish Meeting; there was nothing further to report.

134.2 Website Group (leader Cllr Graham Lee) Cllr Graham Lee reported that a considerable number of enhancements had been made following the first draft. There were two significant tasks still to be completed, (i) local business information, (ii) a facility for users to register for automatic updates on particular topics.

134.3 Yearbook Group (leader Cllr David Short) Cllr David Short reported that expenditure for the 2017 edition had been c£4,000 and income expected was c£3,500; there would thus be a slight loss this year. Income vs expenditure had fluctuated, but generally evened out, over the years. It was noted that a sum was held in the Allocated Reserve to cover any shortfall if required.

134.4 Village Sports Day (leaders Parishioners Ed Strickland and Martin Talks) It was reported that communications were ongoing with the insurance broker and the event organisers. The new insurer had different stipulations/exclusion criteria than the previous supplier.

Clerk

The Chairman reported that his request for a meeting with representatives of the Cricket Club to discuss the bar that they wished to operate in the pavilion was pending a response; it was agreed that this be reiterated.

MNW/Clerk

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

These items taken at 8.30pm; Standing Orders suspended to allow public participation.

135.1 Ashwell 1100 celebrations. Cllr David Short, one of the organisers, reported. The list of events was increasing and updates regularly publicized. There had been various proposals for new planting around the village; a request had been made for the Parish Council's views on a new hedge around the Recreation Ground. It was agreed that Cllrs Madeleine Legg and Mark White would consider the options, and implications, and report back.

135.2 Village litter pick event, Saturday 22nd April. Cllr Madeleine Legg reported that this would be publicized on notice boards and on social media. NHDC were to provide litter pickers, bags, etc and would remove rubbish collected following the event.

135.3 Arbury Banks. It was noted that a request had been received to support 'Beacons of the Past – Hillforts in the Chilterns Landscape an important Chilterns-wide heritage project led by the Chilterns Conservation Board.' The support requested included 'Engaging with your community' and 'Supporting our project financially'.

It was agreed that a positive response be given, including the contribution of £150 requested, on the grounds that Arbury Banks was an important local feature and greater knowledge of it would be good.

It was agreed to request whether there was an opportunity, when the aerial survey part of the project was undertaken, to extend this to cover the whole of Ashwell.

It was agreed to pass the information onto the Ashwell Archaeology group and to encourage them to be involved. **Clerk**

135.4 Henry Colbron Trust. Cllr David Short reported that the annual notice had been published by the trustees, the Merchant Taylors' Company, inviting applications to the trust. It would be determined whether the trustees would be visiting the village; they had visited the school earlier in the year. **Clerk**

135.5 Local business support. Cllr Graham Lee reported that the proposals for restricted parking spaces (see item 130.2.1 above) were the current priority; proposals for signage would be progressed at a later date.

135.6 Verge erosion. Cllr David Short reported concerns re (i) the bank adjacent to the school in Silver Street, (ii) the grass triangle at West End. It was agreed that these be added to the list of items for discussion with the County Councillor and his Highways Officer at the next meeting.

135.7 Police matters. Cllr Bridget Macey reported that concerns re the apparently abandoned vehicle in Hodwell had been passed on to the PCSO; he had identified the registered owner and would pay a visit to determine the situation.

139.8 Community Assets. Cllr David Short reported that he had identified an interested parishioner who was willing to progress with preparing some proposals.

139.9 Wall at the rear of the Rose & Crown in Silver Street. It was reported that no response had been received, or action resulted from, the letter sent to the brewery in January. The poor state of the wall was increasingly hazardous for users of the adjacent public right of way particularly children accessing the school opposite. It was agreed, as this was a Listed Building, to request the input of the NHDC Conservation Officer. **Clerk**

Meeting closed at 9.35pm

Forthcoming meeting dates:

Next monthly Council meeting and the Annual General Meeting of the Parish Council, Wednesday 3rd May, 8pm in the Parish Room.

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 -April 2017				5th April 2017	
		Declarations: None.			
Receipts		£ Precept	£ Grants	£ Other	£ Total
74 Rhubarb & Mustard	yearbook sales			9.00	9.00
75 Santander	bank interest			2.34	2.34
Total		0.00	0.00	11.34	11.34
Payments		Admin, office costs & Other Misc	Management of Parish Assets & Amenities	VAT	Total
By cheque					
240 Cleveland Containers	x2 storage units for Recreation Ground		4505.00	901.00	5406.00
By Direct Debit					
241 NHDC (06/03/2017)	trade refuse bin (The Springs)		89.88		89.88
242 E.ON (28/03/17)	toilets electricity		5.23		5.23
243 E.ON (29/03/17)	pavilion electricity		31.49	1.57	33.06
By Direct Debit					
1 E.ON (03/04/17)	chapel electricity		11.00		11.00
By cheque					
2 J C M Porter	Clerk's salary	1162.39			1162.39
3 HCC Pensions-LGPS Account,	clerk's pension	402.70			402.70
4 HCC Pensions-LGPS Account,	replacement uncashed cheques nos.2593, 2617	805.40			805.40
5 M Chandler	Duties at Pavilion and Rec (inc overtime)		153.00		153.00
6 Post Office	tax&NI to Inland Revenue	165.60	22.00		187.60
7 Mr K Clifford	premises duties		30.00		30.00
8 Mrs Annie Clifford	office duties	200.00			200.00
9 HAPTC	HAPTC membership	779.25			779.25
10 SLCC	SLCC membership	157.00			157.00
11 Filcris Ltd	x2 signs for Recreation Ground		215.00	43.00	258.00
12 FT Gearing Landscape Services	I Fencing at Small Gains		873.00	174.60	1047.60
13 The Liberty Co Ltd	toilets cleaning (30/01-05/03)		160.00	32.00	192.00
14 D J Granger Grounds Maint. Ltd	grounds maintenance worksheet 01		370.00	74.00	444.00
15 Tyler Arielle Moncrieffe	Neighbourhood Plan survey admin	302.00			302.00
16 T Hodson	Neighbourhood Plan survey admin	130.00			130.00
17 Cdenza ltd	Yearbook design and production	1000.00		200.00	1200.00
18 Parkes Print & Design	Yearbook print	2799.97			2799.97
19 Ashwell Primary School	Hall hire for Annual Parish Meeting 2017	45.00			45.00
20 Mr K Clifford	Bear Farm office/cleaning,painting	139.84			139.84
21 Mr K Clifford	Bear Farm office/laying carpet tiles	90.78			90.78
22 JCM Porter	Bear Farm office/telephone, x2 laptops, printer	964.17		192.84	1157.01
23 Ms H Doran	allotment deposit refund		30.00		30.00
24 The Liberty Co Ltd	toilets cleaning (06/03-02/04)		128.00	25.60	153.60
25 D J Granger Grounds Maint. Ltd	grounds maintenance worksheet 02		370.00	74.00	444.00
Total		9144.10	2351.00	816.04	12,311.14
Outstanding Accounts					
Total					-
Money at bank					
Current Account		03 April 2017		23,539.43	
Deposit Account		03 March 2017		30,455.96	
Total					53,995.39
<i>Cheques banked after/BACS transfers after</i>					
<i>Cheques drawn but not cleared/DD's outstanding</i>					
<i>Total</i>					193.60
<i>Total after paying this months cheques</i>					
<i>Total in current a/c after paying this months cheques</i>					
					53,801.79
					41,490.65
					11,034.69