

**Minutes of the Ashwell Parish Council meeting held on
Wednesday 7th June 2017 in the Parish Room**

Present: Martin Hoffman (Vice-chairman and Chairman for this meeting), 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: Eight parishioners and County Councillor Steve Jarvis.

The Chairman welcomed recently elected County Councillor Steve Jarvis to the meeting. He noted thanks had been sent to the previous county councillor Tony Hunter for all his hard work.

16. Apologies for absence Councillor Mark White (away on holiday)

17. Minutes of previous meetings

Proposal for approval and signature of the minutes of the Council meeting 3rd May 2017.

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

Clerk

18. Matters of general report from previous meetings

18.1 (May Council, 9.1) 1st Ashwell Scout Group project for a Public Access Defibrillator (PAD).

The Chairman reported that an update had been requested from the Scouts on the installation and public training programme.

18.2 (May Council, 9.2) Superfast broadband. It was noted that this was now available to some parts of the village and that householders had been advised to contact their supplier for information.

18.3 (May Council, 9.3) Vacancy for Environmental Cleansing Officer. Regret was expressed that there had been no interest despite the role being advertised locally for some months. It was agreed that additional advertising and other enquiries be made.

Clerk

18.4 (May Council, 9.4) Rear wall of the Rose & Crown in Silver Street. It was noted that the NHDC Conservation Officer had requested action from the brewery and would monitor the situation.

18.5 (May Council, 11.3.3) Review and update of byelaws. Cllr Martin Hoffman noted that these were in need of review but the basic principles remained fit for purpose. It was agreed that this would be progressed when resources permitted.

Clerk/MGH

18.6 (May Council, 15.5) Cllr Short presented details on the proposed new entrance signs for the village. It was agreed that all would consider these for future discussion.

ALL

19. 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)

19.1 Cemetery (Cllr Madeleine Legg) Cllr Madeleine Legg reported that a draft lease for the Chapel of Rest tenancy had now been received from the solicitor. This would be reviewed; the agreement with Nevilles that they undertake the identified works in return for the extended time of the lease would be covered in a side letter.

Clerk/MFL

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

19.2.1 Cricket Club bar at the pavilion. It was noted that, following a further meeting with the Chairman, Mark White, the club representative had assured that all the requirements stipulated by the Parish Council would be met before the bar was brought into operation. It was noted that other groups including the Village Sports Day and the Accies Trophy Night organisers had temporary events licenses in place.

19.2.2 Parishioners' proposals for boundary hedge/tree planting around the Rec. Following discussion it was agreed that practical concerns including the width of the verge alongside the road and the distance from the pitch boundary made the proposals unsupportable. Parish councillors were, however, supportive in principle of additional hedge/tree planting in the village and hoped that alternative sites could be identified.

19.2.3 Accies Trophy Night Friday 9th June. It was noted that the requirements stipulated by the Parish Council had been agreed and arrangements put in place.

19.2.4 Proposal from the Cricket Club re additional fencing between the pitch and the playground area. Cllr Madeleine Legg reported that the site was the subject of a RoSPA inspection annually; she was not aware

that any concerns in relation to fencing had ever been raised in their reports. It was agreed to raise the matter specifically with the RoSPA inspector at the next visit; this was due in August. **MFL/Clerk**

Cllr Martin Hoffman proposed that the Cricket Club be requested to provide full details of the types of fencing available; this was agreed. **MGH**

19.3 Playground (Cllr Madeleine Legg) Nothing to report.

19.4 Public toilets at the pavilion (Cllr Madeleine Legg)

See 22.1 below re enhancement project/claim to NHDC from planning obligations/section 106.

19.5 The Springs (Cllr Martin Hoffman)

Cllr Martin Hoffman reported.

19.5.1 Railings repainting. Following payment of the invoice, the agreed sum would now be reclaimed from HCC. **Clerk**

19.5.2 (May Council, 10.5.2) Yoga classes. No further information was available; investigations would continue.

19.5.3 Springhead hedge. A light trim had been carried out on the roadside and top in the interests of road safety. Further works would be undertaken outside of the bird nesting season.

19.5.4 Anti-social behaviour. Reports had been received of youths drinking and smoking cannabis; the police had been requested to investigate.

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

Vandalism. Cllr David Sims reported further incidents of cars driving on the pitches. There had also been further damage to the netting and the allotments caused by groups playing football. Car registration numbers had been forwarded to the police who were investigating. He proposed that, (i) an item be placed in the Ashwell Village News requesting parents to ensure their children were not responsible for the damage, (ii) it be made clear that those causing damage would be reported to the police, (iii) the Accies be requested to relocate or block the goal nearest to the allotments when not in use by them; any ad hoc use would then be much less likely to result in damage to the allotments, (iv) the police be requested to install a camera to identify those responsible.

It was agreed that the proposals be progressed.

19.7 Misc amenities (To include: The Lock Up, Merchant Taylors' Green, Carters' Pond)

Nothing to report.

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

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

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

19.11 War Memorial Nothing to report.

20. Items re other authorities/organisations

20.1 Hertfordshire Highways

(April Council, 130.1.1 and 130.1.2) The meeting held with new County Councillor Steve Jarvis on 31st May to brief him on various highways matters was noted. This had included, (i) request for an additional Speed Indicator Device (SID) for Newnham Way or transfer of current SID to Newnham Way; either option to include data retrieval from the current device, (ii) yellow line requests, (iii) safety proposals for Station Road including additional pavement, crossing table and extension of pavement at Lucas Lane corner, (iv) overhanging vegetation in Kingsland Way and Station Road, (v) verge erosion and proposal for 'grasscrete' outside Dixies Barns in High Street, (vi) resurfacing in Station Road and Mill Street, (vii) LED streetlighting, (viii) A505 safety improvements.

See item 24.11 below for report from the County Councillor.

Cllr David Short requested information on 20mph speed limits in villages.

20.2 Hertfordshire Highways/Rights of Way Nothing to report.

20.3 North Herts District Council

20.3.1 (May Council, 11.3.1) Proposals for restricted parking spaces outside retail outlets. Cllr Graham Lee reported that he was awaiting further contact from the NHDC Strategic Planning & Projects Manager. A meeting date in June had been promised.

20.3.2 (May Council, 11.3.2) Farrfest and the application for a premises license for 'Bygrave wood and fields adjacent to 1 Caldecote Road, Newnham, SG7 5JX.'

The contact details for reporting any issues to NHDC were noted; these had been publicized.
<https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/home/environmental-health/pollution/noise-app>
NHDC Weekend Noise Call-Out Service 0300 777 4129

It was noted that an email had been received from the NHDC Licensing Officer informing that the application for Bygrave wood and fields had been processed and a license granted. The license had been granted 'in perpetuity' for a range of activities including live music, films, plays and sale of alcohol. Detailed timings for each activity had been stated and covered all days of the week and night-time hours. Parish councillors again expressed their displeasure that the Parish Council had not been informed by NHDC about the application and the consultation period despite having made representations on previous occasions. Parish councillors expressed their concerns re the potential problems for parishioners and local businesses particularly due to noise.

It was agreed that further details of the decision-making process would be requested via District Councillor Janine Paterson. **Clerk**

See also 21 and 22 below for NHDC matters re Planning and Finance.

21. 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.

21.1 New consultations.

NHDC Case Ref No: 17/01061/1HH. 57 High Street

Full permission householder: Erection of outbuilding to provide workshop and garden store. Response to NHDC with a recommendation on the following application.

Cllrs David Short and Madeleine Legg declared an interest and did not participate in the discussion or vote (contiguous neighbours).

It was proposed that a recommendation to grant permission be sent to the NHDC Planning Officer.

It was **resolved** that the proposal be accepted (unanimous). **Clerk**

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

The following notifications made to NHDC were noted; there were no objections.

NHDC Case Ref No: 17/01101/1TCA 73 High Street

Fell four Ash trees.

NHDC Case Ref No: 17/01175/1TCA 9 Woodforde Close

Hawthorn Ash -Up to 33% crown reduction.

21.3 Application pending NHDC decision.

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.

21.3.1 The additional consultation letter received from NHDC dated 22nd May 2017 on further amendments and additional documents supplied by the applicant was noted.

(i) The applicant had supplied a new drawing relating to the Claybush Road entrance; this had followed concerns from the Highways Officer re the required distances for access by large vehicles such as the waste/recycling lorry. Local residents had raised issues that land now identified to be part of the access road was their property and not Herts Highways or the applicant's land.

(ii) The applicant had supplied a new drawing relating to the proposed pedestrian access via Ashwell Street. It was noted that a key objection previously made by the Parish Council and many parishioners had been safety hazards for pedestrians at this already complex junction. The road widths claimed by the applicant in the new drawing were disputed. An example cited was the road width outside no. 47 Ashwell Street claimed to be some 4.7 metres (using the scale provided) whereas in reality the surfaced road width was just 2.54 metres. It was agreed that this was inadequate for both a vehicle and a pedestrian at the same time and was contrary to highways safety regulations.

(iii) It was noted that the proposed pedestrian access was via the un-adopted, private section of Ashwell Street. The very poor quality of the surface had not been mentioned in the application. It was also noted

that local residents had disputed the access rights for potential residents of the proposed new houses and had taken legal advice. This advice had been that the current owner of the field had only 'restricted easement for occasional use' and that this would not be applicable, or appropriate, following the change from agricultural to residential use. There would thus be no access rights for the potential new residents. There were also concerns re the potential conflict with the vehicular access to one of the houses in Ashwell Street.

(iv) It was noted that the provision of a safe pedestrian access had been stipulated in the details for the AS1 site in the draft Local Plan documents.

Local Plan Preferred Options 2014, page 80.

Section 12. Communities/Ashwell

'1.10 Currently there is no pedestrian access along Claybush Road, therefore the development should deliver a pedestrian access route into the village to enable access to services and facilities.

1.11 The footpath network in Ashwell currently extends to the junction of Bear Lane and Ashwell Street and there may be opportunities to connect from here to the north of the allocated site.'

http://www.north-herts.gov.uk/sites/northherts-cms/files/local_plan_preferred_options_december_2014_0.pdf

Local Plan Proposed Submission October 2016, page 135.

Section 4 -Communities/Ashwell. Site specific criteria.

'Provision of pedestrian access into the village.'

'13.10 Currently there is no pedestrian access along Claybush Road, therefore the development should deliver a pedestrian access route into the village to enable access to services and facilities.

13.11 The footpath network in Ashwell currently extends to the junction of Bear Lane and Ashwell Street and there may be opportunities to connect to here from the north of the allocated site.'

<https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/sites/northherts-cms/files/Proposed%20Submission%20Local%20Plan.pdf>

(v) It was noted that the problems with providing safe pedestrian access to the site had been made clear to NHDC in previous consultations but no response had been received.

It was proposed that all these concerns be communicated to the NHDC Planning Officer and that a request be made that NHDC commission a professional safety audit to determine whether the legal obligations to provide safe pedestrian access would be met by the application.

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

Clerk

21.3.2 Information from the NHDC Planning Officer was noted, (i) the application was likely to be considered at the next meeting of the NHDC Planning Control Committee scheduled for Thursday 29th June, 7.30pm at the Main Hall, Icknield Centre, Icknield Way, Letchworth, (ii) her report would be available to the public at the latest five working days before the meeting.

It was agreed that any further written representations to NHDC and any request to speak at the NHDC meeting on 29th June be considered once the Planning Officer's report had been reviewed. If necessary, an emergency meeting would be convened to consider this.

21.3.3 Further correspondence from a parishioner to the NHDC Planning Officer was noted.

21.4 NHDC decisions on applications.

The following were noted.

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

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

NHDC decision: Refused.

21.5 (April Council, 131.5) NHDC Case Ref No: 16/02826/1PRE Land Off Station Road

Pre-Application Advice: Residential Development.

It was noted that no further information had been received.

21.6 District Local Plan 2011-31 (May Council, 12.8)

It was noted that no further information had been received. The draft Local Plan was now in the hands of the national inspector; acknowledgement of the Parish Council's representations had been received.

22. Reports re Finance matters

22.1 Planning Contributions/Section 106 claim for public toilets enhancement.

The response from the NHDC Community Development Manager, Stuart Izzard, was noted; he had submitted the Parish Council's claim and supporting documentation to the relevant NHDC Planning Officers.

22.2 Pavilion Upgrade. It was noted that costings and supporting evidence were being collated for a bid to the NHDC Communities Fund. **Clerk/MFL**

22.3 Audit 2016-17.

22.3.1 The audit timetable was noted, (i) public 'available for inspection' period from 3rd July to 11th August, (ii) publication of unaudited accounts by 30th June and audited accounts by 30th September, (iii) submission to the External Auditor by the audit date of 24th July.

22.3.2 Annual Return/Section 4.

It was noted that the annual return and accompanying documents had been prepared and would now be sent to the Internal Auditor for review and completion. **Clerk**

22.3.3 Annual Return/Sections 1 (Governance Statement) and 2 (Statement of Accounts).

A proposal was made that these be approved and signed.

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

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

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

23. Reports from working groups

23.1 Neighbourhood Plan Group (leader Cllr David Short, Cllrs Graham Lee and Madeleine Legg)

Cllr David Short reported that the results of the latest survey had been collated.

23.2 Website (leader Cllr Graham Lee) Cllr Graham Lee reported that the new site was nearing completion; he had requested a date for it going live from the supplier.

23.3 Yearbook Group (leader Cllr David Short) Cllr David Short reported that a meeting was scheduled for next week to review the 2017 edition.

23.4 Ashwell Village Sports (leader Parishioner Martin Talks) It was noted that the organisers had supplied details of their temporary events license.

23.5 Local business support (leader Cllr Graham Lee) *See 20.3.1 above re parking.*

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

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

24.1 Henry Colbron Trust. Cllr David Short reported that, in response to the notice published by the trustees, the Merchant Taylors' Company, the school was to submit a bid. The notice had been advertised to other potential beneficiaries but he was not aware of any other bids. There had been no requests from youth groups for the Parish Council to organise a visit by the trustees to the village this year.

24.2 Village Hall. Cllr Martin Hoffman (a trustee in his own right) reported that a meeting of the trustees was scheduled. There had been some new hall users and the reserve funds held by the management committee were in a good state.

24.3 School Governing Body. Cllr David Short reported that building works planned included a new roof and window replacement.

24.4 Museum. Cllr Martin Hoffman (Chairman of the trustees in his own right) reported that investigation of the damp problems was ongoing.

24.5 Moss Cottage Homes. Cllr Madeleine Legg (parish councillor trustee) reported that an emergency meeting had been convened to address problems with the heating.

24.6 Book Swap. Cllr David Sims reported that this was still going well.

24.7 Ashwell 1100 celebrations. Cllr David Short reported that plans for the street party had been publicized; the High Street would be closed from Kingsland Way to Gardiners Lane. Other events were planned for later in the year. *See also 24.10.1 and 24.10.2 below.*

24.8 (May Council, 15.9) Channel 4 TV 'Village of the Year' programme hosted by Penelope Keith. It was reported that the Ashwell bid to be included had been submitted and some filming for the short-listing had

taken place. The Rev'd Robert Evens was thanked for sorting out arrangements to film in St Mary's Church.

24.9 Arbury Banks (April Council, 135.3). Beacons of the Past – Hillforts in the Chilterns Landscape project. No further information received.

24.10 Items raised by parishioners.

24.10.1 Cottage Garden leader Liz Moynihan reported that the 'snake of 1100 pennies' held during the At Home had attracted many children and had raised nearly £50.

24.10.2 The tree planting group that was part of the 1100 celebrations had a list of tree planting proposals; it was suggested that the Parish Council might provide funding for this. It was agreed that any request re tree planting would be considered. It was noted that funding had already been provided for the tree plaque at the doctor's surgery and agreed for minor items needed for the street party.

24.10.3 In response to a question it was reported that a fallen tree in Cow Lane had been promptly removed by the adjacent landowner. It was noted that any problems re the highway could be reported to the appropriate authority using the contact details on the 'green cards'.

24.11 Report from County Councillor Steve Jarvis (*see also 20.1 above*). Cllr Jarvis noted that although Highways was a very visible aspect of the county council's responsibilities, in budgetary terms other areas, particularly social care, were far greater. Each county councillor had a Highways Locality Budget of £90,000 for their area. It was his objective to ensure that this funding was spent on improvements and identified items additional to the general maintenance and repairs that were the responsibility of the highways contractor. Cllr Jarvis reported that he was pursuing the items discussed at the recent meeting with parish council representatives. The data from the Station Road SID had now been supplied. It was agreed that this device should now be relocated to the second base in Newnham Way. Cllr Jarvis agreed to investigate the proposals for an additional SID.

Cllr David Short emphasized the need to address overhanging vegetation, drainage problems caused by poor maintenance of gullies and glitches, and the long-standing issue of the bank erosion in Silver Street.

Cllr Martin Hoffman queried what progress had been made on the request made many months ago for yellow lines in identified problem locations.

Cllr Short proposed that a letter be sent to BT requesting that repairs to the damaged wall on the corner opposite the school be progressed.

Clerk

Meeting closed at 9.40pm

Forthcoming meeting dates:

Monthly Council meeting Wednesday 5th July, 8pm in the Parish Room.

Appendix 1 – General material received

- North Herts District Council -weekly 'Members Information'
- HAPTC -Briefings and Bulletins.
- SLCC -updates and newsletters.
- Police OWL/Rural News/Neighbourhood Watch bulletins.
- Icknield Way Association newsletters.
- Ashwell Rail User group (RUG) updates.

Appendix 2

ACCOUNTS AND BILLS FOR PAYMENT -June 2017			07 June 2017		
			Declarations: None.		
Proposed (i) Cllr Sims		(ii) Cllr Macey			
		£	£	£	£
Receipts		Precept	Grants	Other	Total
16	Personal cheque	memorial (cemetery works 17.14)		130.00	130.00
17	Jeremy Rule Funeral Service	memorial (cemetery works 17.16)		130.00	130.00
18	Santander	bank interest		2.50	2.50
19	Neville Funeral Service	chapel rent		68.75	68.75
20-34	various	yearbook adverts		1810.00	1810.00
35	HMRC	(vat reclaim for 2016-17)		8843.65	8843.65
36	Henry Harris Funfair	rent		400.00	400.00
37	W T Drage and sons	memorial (cemetery works 17.18)		240.00	240.00
38	Neville Funeral Service	chapel rent		68.75	68.75
39	G Lambert	allotment rent		15.00	15.00
40	Dignity Funerals Ltd	Crouch burial (cemetery works 17.15)		445.00	445.00
Total			0.00	0.00	12,153.65
		Admin, office costs & Other Misc	Management of Parish Assets & Amenities	VAT	Total
Payments					
By Direct Debit					
54	Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust	annual membership	40.00		40.00
55	BT (01/03 -31/07)	phone and broadband x2	451.48	90.29	541.77
56	EON (29/05/17)	pavilion electricity		22.29	23.40
57	E.ON (01/06/17)	chapel electricity		11.00	11.00
By cheque					
58	J C M Porter	Clerk's salary	1181.25		1181.25
59	HCC Pensions-LGPS Account,	clerk's pension	401.57		401.57
60	J C M Porter	reimbursement office expenses	10.62		10.62
61	Mrs Annie Clifford	Deputy clerk's salary	260.00		260.00
62	M Chandler	Duties at Pavilion and Rec (inc overtime)		141.40	141.40
63	Post Office	tax&NI to Inland Revenue	331.26	13.60	344.86
64	Mr K Clifford	premises duties		30.00	30.00
65	Phil Kirk Landscaping	repainting Springs railings		1950.00	1950.00
66	MCL Communications	website hosting	120.00	24.00	144.00
67	D J Granger Grounds Maint. Ltd	grounds maintenance worksheet 05		70.00	84.00
68	D J Granger Grounds Maint. Ltd	grounds maintenance worksheet 06		370.00	444.00
69	D J Granger Grounds Maint. Ltd	grounds maintenance worksheet 07		180.00	216.00
70	D J Granger Grounds Maint. Ltd	grounds maintenance worksheet 08		854.00	1024.80
71	Brilliant Lawns	pitch cutting at rec x2		220.00	220.00
72	Ashwell Village Museum	donation re fair At Home	100.00		100.00
73	Alison Eardley Consulting	Neighbourhood Plan survey analysis	350.00		350.00
74	HAPTC	training course (Cllr Short)	95.00		95.00
75	The Liberty Co Ltd	toilets cleaning (03/04-30/04)		128.00	153.60
76	The Liberty Co Ltd	toilets cleaning (01/05-28/05)		128.00	153.60
Total			3301.18	4118.29	7,880.87
Outstanding Accounts					
yearbook adverts 2017 edition				1,175.00	
Total					1,175.00
Money at bank					
Current Account		02 June 2017			48,866.01
Deposit Account		01 May 2017			30,461.05
Total					79,327.06
Cheques banked after/BACS transfers after					700.00
Cheques drawn but not cleared/DD's outstanding					150.00
Total					79,877.06
Total after paying this months cheques					71,996.19
Total in current a/c after paying this months cheques					41,535.14