

**Minutes of the Ashwell Parish Council meeting held on
Wednesday 6th December 2017 in the Parish Room**

Present:

Mark White (Chairman), Madeleine Legg, Bridget Macey, David Short.

The Clerk (Jane Porter) was also in attendance.

Members of the public: Four parishioners and County Councillor Steve Jarvis.

71. Apologies for absence Martin Hoffman, Vice-chairman (unwell), Graham Lee (away on business), David Sims (unwell).

72. Minutes of previous meetings

Proposal for approval and signature of the minutes of the Council meeting 1st November 2017.

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

Clerk

73. Matters of general report from previous meetings

73.1 (November Council, 64.1) Public Access Defibrillator (PAD). The Chairman reported that he continued to monitor the unit on a weekly basis and logged into the system as required. It was agreed that a training course would be arranged with the charity that provided these in the new year; this would be advertised as widely as possible including to village organisations. Cllr David Short reported that the WI had already expressed an interest. It was noted that the unit was easy to use with clear instructions given and special training was not a necessity.

MNW/Clerk

73.2 (November Council, 64.2) Superfast broadband. It was noted that works were ongoing in the village. Information received from Sir Oliver Heald, MP, was that it should be available at the latest by March 2018.

73.3 (November Council, 64.3) Rear wall of the Rose & Crown in Silver Street. It was noted that some works had been progressed. It was agreed to request an update from the NHDC Conservation Officer on the details of the works and when they would be completed.

Clerk

73.4 (November Council, 64.4) Proposals for new entrance signs for the village. Cllr David Short presented a draft design. It was agreed that this would be circulated to all parish councillors for their comments. **CDS**

73.5 Village Hall see item 70.2 below in Parish Affairs.

74. 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)

74.1 Cemetery (Cllr Madeleine Legg) Cllr Madeleine Legg reported:

Chapel of Rest tenancy/new lease. An email had been received from the solicitor earlier in the day attaching the new lease; a hard copy for signature was in the post. She again expressed her frustration at the length of time this had taken.

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

Cllr Madeleine Legg reported:

(i) following the recent break in and theft from the old pavilion, the police were investigating and an insurance claim was being progressed, (ii) a meeting of the User Group was scheduled for Wednesday 13th December, (iii) a contractor had been commissioned to investigate problems with the floodlights; in response to the request from the Accies for extension of the floodlit area, it was agreed that fuller details be ascertained before any quotes or permissions were progressed.

74.3 Playground (Cllr Madeleine Legg)

Cllr Madeleine Legg reported:

(i) the routine weekly site inspections and recording was ongoing; the volunteer parishioner was again thanked for this, (ii) minor works, including jet-washing of the safety surfacing, would be progressed in the spring, (iii) quotations for the agreed additional signage and netting to provide further protection from the cricket pitch were being progressed.

74.4 Public toilets at the pavilion (Cllr Madeleine Legg)

See also 77.1 below re enhancement project/claim to NHDC from planning obligations/section 106.

74.5 The Springs (Cllr Martin Hoffman) Cllr Martin Hoffman had provided reports on the following:

(i) he was continuing to liaise with the police following the recent incident of vandalism/anti-social behaviour; the volunteers who had cleared up had been thanked, (ii) minor tree works, following the latest survey, were to be scheduled, (iii) flow rates supplied by the Environment Agency on a monthly basis

continued to be monitored; there had also been liaison over the surveys that they were conducting on all of the sources of the River Rhee in relation to water supply.

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

Nothing to report.

74.7 The Lock Up (Cllr David Short) Cllr David Short reported that the agreed quote had been accepted and works would now progress.

74.8 Merchant Taylors' Green and Carters' Pond (Cllr Martin Hoffman) Cllr David Short requested clarification on the responsibility for the maintenance of the hedges at Merchant Taylors' Green.

74.9 Street furniture (Cllr Bridget Macey)

74.9.1 Parishioner's complaint re the replacement litter bin in the High Street to Silver Street twitchel.

(November Council, 65.8 and 70.2.1) The Chairman reported that, following the agreement at the November Council meeting, he had met with one of the parishioners on site to further discuss their concerns on 3rd November. The Parish Council had subsequently received a formal written complaint from them. As this had included a formal complaint about his behaviour he proposed that another parish councillor should chair this part of the meeting.

It was *resolved* that Cllr Madeleine Legg would chair this item.

Cllr Madeleine Legg reported that the letter received from the parishioners had covered two aspects,

(i) a complaint about the behaviour of the Chairman and how he had handled their concerns, and (ii) matters relating to the litter bin itself, ie offensive smells, moving of public property, the need for a replacement bin and alternative locations.

Cllr Madeleine Legg reported that the parishioners had requested a copy of the Parish Council's formal complaints procedure; this had been supplied. In accordance with this procedure the matter was being discussed by the Parish Council, the complainants had been invited to attend, and an opportunity would be given for them to present their views.

It was *resolved* that Standing Orders be suspended for members of the public to participate.

It was noted that neither of the two complainants was able to be present due to other commitments but three family members were present as their representatives. Cllr Madeleine Legg invited them to contribute. The representative reported that he was unable to comment on the part of the complaint relating to the behaviour of the Chairman as he had not been present at the site meeting. They did, however, wish to reiterate the concerns about the litter bin itself and request information as to how the Parish Council intended to proceed. Cllr Madeleine Legg reiterated that the new bin had been installed as a replacement for the smaller bin that had been on the lamp post by the end of the twitchel for many years. This had been too small for the increasing amount of litter. The new larger bin had been positioned on the opposite side of the twitchel to the previous bin. The position had been carefully considered. Since the complaint had been received, parish councillors had considered whether a compromise that might satisfy some of the issues could be reached; a bin with a tight-fitting lid and/or one of a medium size had been suggested. The District Council was responsible for the emptying of the litter bins and their contractor did so on a four-weekly cycle; there was concern that a medium sized bin might not be adequate. It was noted that the Parish Council had agreed some years ago, in response to the increasing amount of litter and problems of overflowing bins, to adopt a policy of installing larger bins where needed. Also that these should be of a consistent design and constructed of wood.

It was noted that the Chairman had agreed to monitor the new bin particularly for any odour problems but also for capacity. He, and another volunteer, had been doing this on a regular basis and had reported no issues. It was agreed that this monitoring would continue. The Parish Council was aware that dog waste might be put into the litter bin and, in the summer months, this might have the potential to cause an odour. To that end they had posted a notice on the litter bin requesting that dog waste be put into the dedicated dog waste bin located some 10 metres further along the twitchel; a permanent notice to replace the temporary one was being commissioned.

Cllr Madeleine Legg reported that the Parish Council was aware of capacity problems with litter bins at several locations in the village. The current situation was almost certainly exacerbated due to the significant amount of construction works underway at the moment. Any problems with overflowing bins were being reported to the District Council's contractor who was carrying out additional emptying. It was noted that the District Council had recently appointed a new contractor from May 2018; the details of the new contract had been requested but as yet the Parish Council had not been informed. It was agreed that the litter bin situation would continue to be monitored but that until the situation was clearer no further action would be taken.

In response to a question from the complainant's representative, they were assured that the Parish Council would continue to specifically monitor the litter bin adjacent to the High Street twitchel and this would be reported to every Parish Council meeting until the overall situation was clearer. If at any stage, the complainants would like any information on this, they were welcome to contact the Clerk, Chairman or a parish councillor or attend a meeting of the Parish Council.

With regard to the complaint about the behaviour of the Chairman, it was noted that as only the Chairman and one of the complainants had been present at the site meeting it was not possible for the Parish Council to comment on exactly what was alleged. Cllr Madeleine Legg reported that should the complainants wish to take the matter further the appropriate route would be to contact the Monitoring Officer at the District Council who was responsible for the Code of Conduct and Standards in Public Life; contact details were available from the Clerk.

Standing Orders were reinstated and Cllr Mark White retook the chair.

74.9.2 Bus shelter opposite the War Memorial owned by NHDC. The Chairman reported that following minor damage to the roof, contact had been made with the relevant officer at NHDC. It had been ascertained that due to budget constraints it was unlikely that any repairs could be progressed in the foreseeable future. It was agreed that the Parish Council obtain a quote for any necessary repairs; these would then be considered and the matter discussed again with NHDC. **Clerk**

74.10 St Mary's Churchyard grounds maintenance (Cllr Martin Hoffman) Cllr Martin Hoffman had provided reports on the following:

(i) the scheduled tree works had been completed, (ii) any works required to the boundary wall were to be discussed further with the PCC; a photographic record had been made.

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

74.12 War Memorial (November Council, 65.11) Proposed works to the hedge and beech trees. Following the receipt of expert advice and consideration of the options, it was agreed that, (i) pruning of the fastigate Beech trees to be progressed this winter, (ii) replacement of the surrounding hedge to be progressed in the autumn/winter of 2018/19, ie after Remembrance Day 2018. The Ashwell British Legion would be updated and requested to respond with any further comments in time for the January Council meeting. **Clerk**

75. Items re other authorities/organisations

75.1 Hertfordshire County Council

Standing Orders suspended for updates from County Councillor Steve Jarvis.

75.1.1 Highways. (i) resurfacing works had taken place in Mill Street, further works were scheduled in Station Road up to the county boundary, (ii) the second SID for Newnham Way, part-funded by the Parish Council, was being progressed, (iii) yellow lines at identified locations would be progressed with funding in next year's budget (see 75.3.1 below re parking restrictions outside retail outlets,), (iv) access problems in Silver Street (see 79.2.1 below for parishioner's report).

It was noted that a highways meeting with Cllrs David Sims and Bridget Macey was to be scheduled.

It was agreed that two further items be discussed at that meeting, (i) the parishioner request for a speed limit in Springhead, (ii) concerns re erosion of the grass triangle at West End.

75.1.2 Bus services. County Councillor Steve Jarvis reported that he had attended a meeting of the Bus Users Group (BUG). There had been representations from users of the 90/91 service; these were being considered by the relevant officers. Usage numbers remained an issue.

75.1.3 Sewage Farm. The previous concerns re highway damage by sewage tankers were noted. It was understood that the high number of movements was due to failure at the works. It was agreed to request information from the relevant authority. **Clerk**

75.2 Hertfordshire Highways/Rights of Way

Concerns from parishioners re the footpath adjacent to the Cooke Engineering development site. It was agreed that information be requested. **Clerk**

75.3 North Herts District Council

75.3.1 (February Council, 116.1.3 and October Council, 56.3.1) Proposals to NHDC for restricted parking spaces outside retail outlets. Nothing further to report.

75.3.2 (October Council, 56.3.2) NHDC new contract for waste and recycling, and street cleansing services from May 2018. Nothing further to report. (see also 74.9 above)

See also 76 and 77 below for NHDC matters re Planning and Finance.

76. 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, website or contact the office for the agenda.

76.1 New consultations received from NHDC.

None received.

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

None notified.

76.3 Applications pending NHDC decisions. The following were noted.

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

Full Planning Permission: 30 dwellings together with associated access, parking, amenity and open space (site layout amended by amended plans received 29/01/17, 23/03/17 and 22/08/17).

Applicant: Croudace Homes.

It was noted that the statement of the Parish Council's objections had been drafted in preparation for the NHDC meeting at which it would be considered. A request for a representative to speak at that NHDC Planning Control Committee meeting would be made.

76.3.2 NHDC Case Ref No: 17/01807/1HH. Land adjacent to Townsend House, 24 Lucas Lane.

Full Planning Permission: Erection of 4 x 3 bed terraced dwellings with creation of new vehicular access off of Lucas Lane.

It was noted that the amended application had been considered by the Parish Council Planning Committee, 12th November; previous objections had been reiterated and a recommendation for refusal again sent to the Planning Officer.

76.3.3 NHDC Case Ref No: 17/02200/1. Land East Of 35, Ashwell Street.

Full Planning Permission: Erection of 1 x 2 bed detached single storey dwelling including creation of new vehicular access off Ashwell Street.

It was noted that amended plans had been submitted to NHDC by the applicant; there would be no re-consultation.

76.4 NHDC decisions on applications. The following were noted.

NHDC Case Ref No: 17/01515/1. 8 Green Lane.

Full Planning Permission: Erection of four bed dwelling with detached double garage/gym/store following demolition of existing dwelling.

NHDC decision: Conditional Permission.

NHDC Case Ref No: 17/01766/1HH. 8 The Rickyard.

Full Permission Householder: Single storey front extension (amended 26/09/2017).

NHDC decision: Conditional Permission.

76.5 District Local Plan 2011-31

The following were noted, (i) the timetable for the Public Examination; Matter 11, including Ashwell, to be heard Thursday 8th February, afternoon session, (ii) the acknowledgement from the Inspector of the Parish Council's request to participate, (iii) the submission to the Inspector of the Parish Council's statement.

76.6 NHDC Case Ref No:15/00962/1. Land to the rear of 1-11 Back Street, Dixies Close.

Full Planning Permission: Erection of two detached three bed dwellings with access off Dixies Close. (Planning Committee 6th May 2015). NHDC permission granted 30th July 2015.

It was noted that a letter had been received from North Herts Homes informing of their decision to sell the land with planning permission. It was noted that the Parish Council had previously raised objections to this. It was agreed to thank them for the information.

Clerk

77. Reports re Finance matters

77.1 Planning Contributions/Section 106 claims/response from the NHDC Community Development Manager pending. Nothing further to report.

77.2 Budget.

77.2.1 The review and updates following the Joint Finance and Management Committee meeting on 11th October were noted, (i) Budget tracking 2017-18, (ii) Allocated reserves, (iii) Budget proposals for 2018-19. It was noted that the budget for 2017-18 had included one-off expenditure on two significant items, ie the

repairs to the Parish Clock (budget £5,000) and the setting up of the Parish Council's office at Bear Farm (budget £3,500). The draft Financial Report for the 2018 Yearbook was also noted.

Re Wages: The meeting was closed to the public for an *in camera* session on the grounds that the item included personnel matters.

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.

77.2.2 A proposal was made to approve the budget for 2018-19.

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

Clerk

77.2.3 A proposal was made to set the Parish Precept for 2018-19 at £65,000.

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

Clerk

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

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

Clerk

It was noted that the invoice for half of the cost of the new website was still held pending the suppliers fulfilment of the work agreed. See also 78.2 below.

78. Reports from working groups

78.1 Neighbourhood Plan Group (leader Cllr David Short, Cllrs Graham Lee and Madeleine Legg)
Nothing to report.

78.2 Website (leader Cllr Graham Lee) See 77.3 above.

78.3 Yearbook Group (leader Cllr David Short) Parish councillors with reports outstanding were reminded that they should be submitted as soon as possible.

78.4 Local business support (leader Cllr Graham Lee) See 75.3.1 above.

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

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

79.1 Items from parish councillors.

79.1.1 School. Cllr David Short reported that Eleanor Northern had been appointed as the new chairman of the governors.

79.1.2 Moss Cottage Homes. Cllr Madeleine Legg (Parish Council nominated trustee) reported a request from the trustee chairman to advertise the recent trustee vacancy. This was agreed.

79.1.3 Ashwell 1100 celebrations. Cllr David Short reported that a film show had been held in November. The last scheduled event of the year was to be a tree planting on land at Angells Meadow followed by another film showing. Local jeweller Keith Gordon had made a silver token to mark the year's celebrations and had donated this to the museum. It was agreed to write and commend him for this.

Clerk

79.1.4 (October Council, 61.9) Village Hall/letter from the chairman of the trustees requesting that the Parish Council take over the role of trustee. The Chairman reported that the date of the next trustees meeting had been requested.

79.1.5 Proposals re volunteers and recruitment. Cllr David Short reported that, following earlier discussions on ways to interest more people in becoming involved in the Parish Council, two suggestions had been made. (i) Current volunteers, and partners, be invited to a social occasion to thank them for their input, (ii) a focus group be set up to consider matters such as what barriers were there to people volunteering, becoming parish councillors, etc. It was agreed that these ideas be circulated to all for comment.

CDS

79.1.6 Vacancy of deputy for the clerk. It was agreed that the Chairman and Cllr Madeleine Legg discuss the matter further and put forward proposals.

MFL/MNW

79.2 Items raised by parishioners.

79.2.1 Parishioner Jackie Embury reported her concerns re parking in Silver Street. This followed an incident where an ambulance had been unable to pass through the pinch-point at the school end of the street. She was also aware of other incidents. She proposed that parking restrictions be implemented; the emergency services could be contacted to identify the problematic locations throughout the village. It was noted that the Parish Council had proposed several locations for yellow line restrictions to be installed (see 75.1.1 above) and County Councillor Steve Jarvis had allocated funding from his Highways Locality Budget for 2018-19 to progress these. It was agreed that the Silver Street pinch-point be looked into further. Some were of the view that bollards or similar would be preferable as yellow lines would be ignored; this was a frequent occurrence outside the school.

See also 74.9.1, 75.1 and 75.2 above.

Meeting closed 10.05pm

Forthcoming meeting dates:

Monthly Council Meeting Wednesday 3rd January 2018, 8pm in The Parish Room.

Annual Parish Meeting Wednesday 28th March 2018 at the school.

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.

Appendix 2

ACCOUNTS AND BILLS FOR PAYMENT -December 2017			06 December 2017			
Proposed (i)	Cllr David Short	(ii) Cllr Bridget Macey	Declarations: None			
			£	£	£	
			Precept	Grants	Other	
					Total	
81	Neville Funeral Service	chapel rent			68.75	68.75
82	HCC	grant re SID		250.00		250.00
83	personal credit	cemetery interment (CW17.27)			210.00	210.00
84	Santander	bank interest			2.59	2.59
85	Dignity Funerals Ltd	Crouch burial (cemetery works 17.32)			445.00	445.00
86	Ashwell Cricket Club	rent pavilion and mower charge			1200.00	1200.00
87	personal cheque	cemetery reservation (CW17.24)			945.00	945.00
				250.00	2,871.34	3,121.34
Payments			Admin, office costs & Other Misc	Management of Parish Assets & Amenities	VAT	Total
By Direct Debit						
178	E.ON (30/10/2017)	pavilion electricity		28.84	1.44	30.28
179	E.ON (30/10/2017)	toilets electricity		10.03		10.03
180	E.ON (01/11/2017)	chapel electricity		11.00		11.00
181	NHDC (06/11/2017)	trade refuse bin (The Springs)		100.49		100.49
182	BT (20/11/2017)	phone and broadband x2	276.14		55.22	331.36
183	E.ON (27/11/2017)	pavilion electricity		1.43		1.43
184	E.ON (27/11/2017)	toilets electricity		7.03	0.35	7.38
185	E.ON (01/12/2017)	chapel electricity		11.00		11.00
By cheque						
186	J C M Porter	Clerk's salary	1181.05			1181.05
187	HCC Pensions-LGPS Account,	clerk's pension	401.57			401.57
188	J C M Porter	reimbursement office expenses	52.14		7.74	59.88
189	J C M Porter	reimbursement Microsoft/Office 365 subscription	79.99			79.99
190	J C M Porter	reimbursement Norton 360 subscription	79.99			79.99
191	Mrs Annie Clifford	Deputy clerk's salary	260.00			260.00
192	M Chandler	Duties at Pavilion and Rec (inc overtime)		141.20		141.20
193	A Beddall	ECO salary		219.20		219.20
194	Post Office	tax&NI to Inland Revenue	331.46	68.60		400.06
195	Mr K Clifford	premises duties		30.00		30.00
196	Powerscribe/MCL Communications	domain name renewal	68.00		13.60	81.60
197	Hertfordshire County Council	grant contribution SID	3260.00			3260.00
198	Brilliant Lawns (inv4758)	Grasscutting pitches at the Rec		220.00		220.00
199	Gearing Locksmiths	works at the recreation ground		50.00	10.00	60.00
200	C E Metcalfe	Public toilets cleaning (October)		180.00		180.00
201	C E Metcalfe	Public toilets cleaning (November)		225.00		225.00
202	D J Granger Grounds Maint. Ltd	grounds maintenance worksheet 18		370.00	74.00	444.00
203	D J Granger Grounds Maint. Ltd	grounds maintenance worksheet 19		60.00	12.00	72.00
204	D J Granger Grounds Maint. Ltd	cemetery works CW 17.31a		80.00	16.00	96.00
205	D J Granger Grounds Maint. Ltd	cemetery works CW 17.31b		160.00	32.00	192.00
206	The Liberty Co Ltd	replacement cheque 135/toilets cleaning		128.00	25.60	153.60
207	The Liberty Co Ltd	replacement cheque 109/toilets cleaning		160.00	32.00	192.00
208	PJG Computers	IT (3 hours)	96.00			96.00
			5810.20	2092.00	222.94	8,125.14
Outstanding Accounts						
None						
Total						
Money at bank						
Current Account			01 December 2017		45,725.56	
Deposit Account			01 November 2017		30,476.41	
Total						76,201.97
Cheques banked after/BACS transfers after						-
Cheques drawn but not cleared/DD's outstanding						1024.06
Total						75,177.91
Total after paying this months cheques						67,052.77
Total in current a/c after paying this months cheques						36,576.36