

**Minutes of the AGM and monthly Parish Council meeting
held on Wednesday 5th May 2021, 8pm online via Zoom**

Present: Gemma Allan, Martin Hoffman, Graham Lee (Chairman), Norton Mahy (Vice-chairman) and Mark White. **Apologies:** David Sims (family matters).

Also in attendance: Clerk (Jane Porter), District Councillor Tom Tyson, County Councillor Steve Jarvis. Seven members of the public also joined the meeting.

Members of the public who were signed up to the website (www.ashwell.gov.uk) were invited to join the meeting using Zoom. A link with log in details was emailed to them and any others who requested.

1. Election of Chairman. A proposal was made and seconded to elect Graham Lee. It was **resolved** that the proposal be accepted.

2. Election of Vice-Chairman. A proposal was made and seconded to elect Norton Mahy. It was **resolved** that the proposal be accepted.

3. Review of policies and documents held.

The following were noted to be reviewed as part of the annual audit process (*see item 11.2 below*): Financial and Management Risk Assessment, Asset Register, Financial Regulations and Standing Orders, insurance cover, Data Protection and Freedom of Information, Complaints procedure, Website accessibility.

4. Roles and responsibilities. Noted that there were no amendments to those current.

4.1 Premises. (i) Recreation Ground including the pavilion, playground and public toilets: Gemma Allan, (ii) The Springs: Martin Hoffman, (iii) Small Gains: David Sims, (iv) The Lock Up: Norton Mahy, (v) Carters Pond and Merchant Taylors Green: Martin Hoffman, (vi) St Mary's Churchyard grounds maintenance and PCC liaison: Martin Hoffman, (vii) Parish Clock: Clerk/Deputy, (viii) War Memorial and liaison with Ashwell Royal British Legion: Clerk/Deputy, (ix) Cemetery: Clerk/Deputy, (x) Street furniture owned by the Parish: Clerk/Deputy, (xi) grounds maintenance contracts: Clerk/Deputy.

4.2 Working Groups. (*see item 9.4 below*)

4.3 Liaison with other authorities. (i) Herts Highways: David Sims, (ii) HCC Rights of Way: Graham Lee, (iii) NHDC re street cleansing: Clerk/Deputy.

4.4 Employee recruitment, contractual matters and performance reviews.

for the Clerk, Deputy Clerk, Grounds Officer and Environmental Cleansing Officer: Chairman.

4.5 Memberships. The following were noted: HAPTC/NALC, SLCC, Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust, Woodland Trust, CPRE, GLEAM.

5. Appointments to other bodies and representatives for other bodies.

5.1 Ashwell Village Trust (charity no. 294673)

Noted that the Chairman is the chairman of the trust and two parish councillors are trustees (currently David Sims and Mark White).

Noted that the AGM of the trust scheduled to be held in June 2020 was cancelled due to the Covid situation.

5.2 Allotment for Exercise and Recreation (charity no. 245521)

Noted that the Parish Council is the sole trustee and the 2020 AGM of the trust was held prior to the August 2020 Council meeting.

5.3 Moss Cottage Homes. Noted that the two trustee positions nominated by the Parish Council were appointed in 2018 for a term of four years (Elizabeth Coldstream and Phillida Shaw).

5.4 Henry Colbron Trust and liaison with the School. Gemma Allan.

5.5 Ashwell Museum liaison. Martin Hoffman.

5.6 Ashwell Village Hall liaison. Vacant.

Regular business of the monthly meeting followed from here.

6. Declarations of Interest. (Item 10.3.4 ongoing re Cllr Mark White. See March Council item 44).

7. Proposal to approve and sign the minutes of the April Council meeting, 7th April 2021.

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

Action: Graham/Clerk

8. Proposal to approve and sign the minutes of the Extraordinary Council meeting, 29th April 2021.

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

Action: Graham/Clerk

9. OPEN FORUM - VILLAGE AFFAIRS, REPORTS FROM OTHER BODIES, ETC

Standing Orders suspended to allow members of the public to speak if they wish.

9.1 Items raised by members of the public.

9.1.1 Parking issues at the rear of the school. It was noted that safety issues should be reported to the police giving as much information as possible. It was agreed that a letter from the Parish Council would be passed on to parents by the school.

Action: Gemma

9.1.2 Yearbook. Congratulations were expressed on another excellent production and all involved thanked for their work. This was endorsed by others.

9.1.3 Elected members. Thanks were expressed for all the hard work done by parish councillors. Tom Tyson and Steve Jarvis were also thanked similarly for their work as district and county councillors respectively. Their regular attendance at parish council meetings was particularly noted.

9.2 North Herts District Council (NHDC). Reports/updates from our District Councillor Tom Tyson.

See also item 10 re Planning below.

(i) Swan Street wall. Scheduled works following the damage by the waste/recycling vehicle had been delayed due to the weather; these were now scheduled for 8/9th May.

(ii) Walkdens litter bins. It was understood that replacement of the damaged bins was the responsibility of the housing association Origin; this had been pursued.

9.3 Hertfordshire County Council (HCC). Reports/updates from our County Councillor Steve Jarvis.

(i) West End chicane. Works were scheduled to commence next week.

(ii) Surface dressing was scheduled for Newnham Way and Kingsland Way later in the year.

(iii) Parking restrictions. Yellow lines due to be installed at the Gardiners Lane/High Street junction and at the rear of the school were pending clearance of others in the same batch outside Ashwell. The Silver Street proposals had been slightly amended following a petition by a local resident and a re-consultation would have to take place.

(iv) Moules Yard residents had been in contact re parking at the rear of the school; options were to be considered.

(v) Station Road safety improvements. Consideration of these was ongoing by Highways.

9.4 Working Groups reports.

9.4.1 Neighbourhood Plan Group, (leader Cllr Graham Lee, deputy Cllr Norton Mahy). A meeting with the consultant had taken place following the NHDC response to the Regulation 16 consultation. The matters raised by NHDC had been largely not material and would be decided by the Inspector. Advice was pending as to how the next stages would be progressed.

9.4.2 Local business support (leader Cllr Graham Lee). Noted that good to see business returning to the local pubs.

9.4.3 Yearbook Group (leader Cllr Norton Mahy). A review meeting had been held. Feedback had generally been good; a more 'villagey and less corporate look' would be discussed for the 2022 edition and distribution niggles investigated and remedied.

9.5 Monthly reports from parish councillors.

See appendices below for summary of actions completed, actions ongoing and premises matters.

Also reports received from other organisations.

9.5.1 The Springs. Cllr Martin Hoffman reported that the flow rates were still high; this reflected the 3-4 month lag time between rainfall onto the chalk hills and water flowing out at the Springs and into the river.

End of Open Forum/Standing Orders reinstated from here.

10. Planning matters.

See appendix below with a summary of recent NHDC consultations and their status.

10.1 New consultations for response to NHDC.

10.1.1 Land Opposite 67, Station Road. NHDC Ref no. 21/01025/FP

Full Planning Permission: Erection of 2 semi-detached (1 x 4-bed and 1 x 2 bed) dwellings

It was noted that issues had been raised by others re the impact on (i) the trees and loss of biodiversity, (ii) the rural/historic nature of the Ruddery. Herts Highways had raised concerns re the access onto Ashwell Street/the Ruddery and the accessibility of the site for pedestrians to the village centre.

Parish councillors expressed the following:

- The trees on the site made a significant contribution to the street scene, were of high ecological value and should be retained wherever possible. It was noted that the only tree removal in the plans was one Silver Birch.
- The current state of the Ashwell Street/the Ruddery BOAT should be retained as it is, ie a tree-lined, narrow, single track, unmade road part of the historic Icknield Way that provided vehicular access to a few properties but was regularly used as a pedestrian access for the residents of the area to the school and amenities in the village centre.
- It was noted that some pedestrian safety improvements for Station Road were already scheduled and others under consideration by Herts Highways engineers to ensure that pedestrians from Walkdens and Station Road could access the school and village centre safely. These improvements would also apply to this new development.
- The intention to provide accommodation for a local family was commended.

A proposal that NHDC grant permission was put by Cllr Martin Hoffman.

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

Action: Clerk

10.1.2 Slip End Farm, Royston Road, Slip End NHDC Ref no. 21/01049/FP

Full Planning Permission: Formation of new vehicular access onto Ashwell Road.

No objections were noted and a proposal made that NHDC grant permission.

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

Action: Deputy Clerk

10.2 Trees in the Conservation Area (TCA)/Tree Preservation Orders (TPO).

Consultations received from NHDC.

10.2.1 No.24 West End 21/00942/TCA

The concerns raised and correspondence with the Planning Officer re the inclusion in this application to fell a Pine tree and the subsequent amendment to remove this part of the application was noted.

10.2.2 The Maltings and land Adjacent to The Maltings, Mill Street 21/01261/TCA & 21/01261/TCA Coppice – Sycamore x 2. No objections. **Action: Deputy Clerk**

10.3 Updates on previous planning applications/developments ongoing.

10.3.1 Land at the junction of Station Road and Ashwell Street to be called Townsend Meadow. (permission granted for x9 houses of 3 and 4 bedrooms NHDC ref. no. 19/00455/FP).

Section 73 application (NHDC ref. no. 20/02599/S73) by the developer for a variation of the agreed plans to extend into the roof-space and insert Velux windows, ie to increase the sizes to 4 and 5 bedrooms.

(i) The decision by the NHDC Planning Control Committee to grant permission was noted. District Cllr Tom Tyson had informed that he had held a follow-up meeting with the head of NHDC Planning.

(ii) No further information re the condition to install a new footway whilst retaining the hedge had been received.

10.3.2 Land rear of Claybush Road development to be called Claybush Hill Meadow.

NHDC ref. no. 16/0797/1. To include:

The issues raised by local residents re the ongoing road closure were noted.

10.3.3 Land development site off Station Road. NHDC ref. no. 20/03070/FP

Residential development of 28 no. dwellings and landscaping including pond, wildflower meadow and woodland and associated infrastructure.

District Cllr Tom Tyson reported that the NHDC Planning Control Committee was likely to consider this application at their 27th May meeting.

Action: Graham/Norton/Clerk

10.3.4 Dixies Meadow advertisement by Savills Cambridge/‘For Sale -Development opportunity’.

The Chairman reported that the minutes of the Extraordinary meeting held on 29th April had been published and emailed to those signed up on the website. See

<https://www.ashwell.gov.uk/parish-council/meetings/full-council/2021-meeting-minutes/>

He urged anyone with questions to get in touch. Parish councillors were keen to ensure that residents were aware of how the matter was being progressed by the Parish Council and that no significant decisions would be made without full consultation with the village.

11. Finance and governance matters.

11.1 Monthly summary of accounts. Proposal for approval.

It was **resolved** that these be approved.

Action: Clerk/Graham/Martin

11.2 Annual Audit for the financial year 2020-21. The schedule for submission of documents to the Internal Auditor and hence to the June Parish Council meeting for approval was noted.

11.3 High Court Judgement on face-to-face council meetings from 7th May. Venue options for future meetings were discussed and it was agreed to continue to monitor the situation re the availability of premises. The benefits of holding hybrid meetings, ie face-to-face in conjunction with Zoom, were noted and this would be investigated for the future.

Action: Clerk

11.4 St Mary’s PCC enquiry re possible section 106 funding for path improvements in the Churchyard.

It was noted that section 106 funds for Ashwell held by NHDC had been allocated to go towards the planned new pavilion. Any agreement for expenditure on other projects would impact negatively on this. It was agreed that estimated costs be requested from St Mary’s PCC.

Action: Clerk

Meeting closed at 21.10

Forthcoming meeting dates:

Next monthly Council meeting - Wednesday 2nd June 2021, 8pm.

APPENDICES – FOR INFORMATION

Appendix A: Parish Council advice /notices.

- (i) 'Twenty's Plenty' wheelie bin stickers/posters available free from the Parish Council office. The police speed awareness training to pupils at the school was postponed last year but is to be rescheduled. The Parish Council is to fund the production of posters made by pupils to advertise/help enforce the scheme.
- (ii) Police notices/Yellow cards 'Be aware parking here is dangerous or not allowed'. The Police Royston Rural Neighbourhood Team have set guidelines for the use of these in the village.
- (iii) Green cards with contacts for fault reports to Herts Highways re roads, footways, drains etc and to others re litter bins, dog waste bins etc. All residents are encouraged to report problems themselves but to let the Parish Council know if there are any outstanding issues.

Appendix B: Parish Council projects – pending actions by others

- (i) Village hall/transfer to the Parish Council of the holding/custodian trusteeship. Nothing further to report. A form was completed by the Management Committee and passed to the solicitor to inform the drafting of their new trust deed. Pending response from the solicitor.
- (ii) Improved cycleway and carparking at the station/proposals by Cambridgeshire landowner as part of development plans in Odsey. No further communications with the landowner.

Appendix C: Reports/updates on Parish Council premises management.

- (i) Small Gains (Cllr David Sims). Two plots have been re-let for this season. There is one half-plot vacant and currently there is no-one on the waiting list.
- (ii) Cemetery. After the end of June numbers attending funeral services at the Chapel will no longer be restricted. See <https://www.ashwell.gov.uk/places/ashwell-cemetery/>
- (iii) Annual tree survey. These are scheduled for the first week of June for all trees that are the responsibility of the Parish Council; this includes the St Mary's Churchyard.
- (iv) Street furniture. Recent dry weather has allowed the refurbishment of the seat on Carters Pond to be completed. The Parish Council's notice board and the open access 'community' board by the old telephone box in the High Street are scheduled for refurbishment later in the year.
- (v) Grounds maintenance. Grass cutting at all Parish managed premises and pitches is now ongoing.
- (vi) St Mary's Churchyard (Cllr Martin Hoffman). The 'rewilding' project in the area next to Hodwell is going well thanks to the volunteer group who have now planted plugs of appropriate wildflower species.
- (vii) Parish Clock. The annual maintenance service has been scheduled.

Appendix D: Reports/updates from others.

- (i) Greening Ashwell. The Parish Council has asked for details of the locations where the group is planning to plant trees to avoid overlap with other organisations (including the Parish Council's planting plans) and to provide support if needed.
- (ii) Regular local policing update 'Rural News' from our PCSO Chris Braybrook (see under News and Events on www.ashwell.gov.uk).
- (iii) Full Fibre Broadband from County Broadband. Coverage for Ashwell would require a threshold number of residents to sign up for the service.

**Appendix E: Summary of recent NHDC Planning Application consultations and their status
-as of 5th May 2021**

Details of applications are sent from North Herts District Council (NHDC) to the Parish Council as a consultee.
Full details of applications are available on the NHDC website www.north-herts.gov.uk

Address	Application Number	Brief description	Ashwell PC Comments	North Herts Decision
Slip End Farm, Royston Road, Slip End	21/01049/FP	Formation of new vehicular access onto Ashwell Road	PC to NHDC: No Objection	Pending
Land OPPOSITE 67 Station Road	21/01025/FP	Erection of 2 semi-detached (1 x 4-bed and 1 x 2 bed) dwellings	PC to NHDC: No Objection but comments re (i) tree retention, (ii) impact on the Ruddy, (iii) Highways comments. See minute 10.1.1 May Council meeting.	Pending
67 Station Road	21/00971/FPH	Full Permission Householder: Two storey front extension following demolition of existing single storey front elevation extension.	PC to NHDC: No Objection	Pending
2 And 3 Forresters Cottages, High Street,	21/00550/LBC	Listed Building Consent : Introduction of pargetting detail to front elevation of No. 3 Forresters Cottages (no.18 High Street). Internal alterations to Nos. 2 & 3 Forresters Cottages to facilitate conversion of 1 x 2 bed and 1 x 3 bed houses into 1 x 6 bed dwellinghouse and associated works.	PC to NHDC: Concerns expressed to NHDC	Pending
5 Ashwell Street	21/00594/FPH	Erection of front elevation storm porch, single storey rear extension and alterations to existing vehicular access following demolition of existing rear conservatory	PC to NHDC: No Objection	NHDC Permission Granted on 24/02/2021
Westbury Farm House	20/00734/FPH & 20/00735/LBC	(APPEAL against the refused application) Extension, alterations and internal alterations to garden room between Westbury Moat House and Westbury Farm House.	PC nothing to add (no objections to original application)	NHDC refused the application. The applicant has appealed to the Planning Inspector -decision pending.
43 High Street	21/00163/FPH	First floor side extension, canopy over existing door, repoint existing chimney, replace existing side elevation garage roof & replace/widen rear elevation doors, re-render garage. Replace existing rear elevation window on ground & first floor, & first floor side elevation window, re-render rear & side elevation. Replace existing front elevation beech hedge with black metal railings & gates. Widen existing front elevation drive & repave. Widen existing dropped kerb onto High Street.	PC to NHDC: No Objection	Pending
Land off Station Road	20/03070/FP	Residential development of 28 no. dwellings and landscaping including pond, wildflower meadow and woodland and associated infrastructure.	PC to NHDC: Objection	Pending decision by NHDC Planning Committee on 27th May 2021
Land at Jct of Ashwell Street & Station Road	20/02599/S73	Erection of 9 (6 No. Three Bedroom, 3 No. Four bedroom)dwellings with associated parking, amenity space and associated ancillary works, following demolition of existing redundant structures. Creation of new access from Station Road (Section 73 Application: Variation of Condition 2 of Planning Permission 19/00455/FP granted 11.08.2020 amendments to design improvements and provision of loft accommodation with rooflights	PC to NHDC: Objection	NHDC Permission Granted on 15/04/2021

Appendix F: Monthly accounts summary for April 2021.

ACCOUNTS - Summary for 1st to 30th April 2021					
RECEIPTS					£
1	Nevilles Funeral Services	Rent for Chapel of Rest (April)			68.75
2	Crumps Butchers	2021 Yearbook Advert			125.00
3	Nevilles Funeral Services	2021 Yearbook Advert			200.00
4	Gary Hares - Hares Clinic	2021 Yearbook Advert			125.00
5	North Herts Council	Half Precept			40,500.00
6	The Cooker Buddy (Steve Poulsen)	2021 Yearbook Advert			70.00
7	Collings Electrical	2021 Yearbook Advert			125.00
8	Allotment Tenant	Allotment rent for 2021 plot 6			20.00
9	Allotment Tenant	Allotment rent for 2021 plot 4b			10.00
10	Allotment Tenant	Allotment rent for 2021 plot 3			20.00
11	Allotment Tenant	Allotment rent for 2021 plot 13b			10.00
12	Paul Norman	2021 Yearbook Advert			40.00
13	Dignity Funeral Services	Memorial Payment for Cemetery CW21.01			140.00
14	Radleys Optician	2021 Yearbook Advert			200.00
15	Allotment Tenant	Allotment rent for 2021 plot 7a			10.00
16	Allotment Tenant	Allotment rent for 2021 plot 1			20.00
17	Edwards Cleaning & Maintenance	2021 Yearbook Advert			70.00
18	Allotment Tenant	Allotment rent for 2021 plot 8a			10.00
19	Mantles	2021 Yearbook Advert			300.00
20	Mick Huggins	2021 Yearbook Advert			70.00
21	Allotment Tenant	Allotment rent for 2021 plot 11			20.00
22	Ashwell Garage	2021 Yearbook Advert			70.00
23	Allotment Tenant	Allotment rent for 2021 plot 7b			10.00
24	E H Crouch	Memorial Payment for Cemetery CW21.07			140.00
25	Allotment Tenant	Allotment rent for 2021 plot 12a			10.00
26	Santander	Account interest			0.18
				Total	42,383.93
PAYMENTS			£ less VAT	VAT	£ inc VAT
1	ECO	Environmental Cleansing Officer salary	230.40		230.40
2	D J Granger Grounds Maintenance Ltd	Grounds Maintenance Worksheet number 1, Inv no 21223	66.00	13.20	79.20
3	Edward's Cleaning and Maintenance Services	Toilets cleaning on 31/3 and 3 x new hand sanitisers	183.00		183.00
4	Gillian George	Two new LED lights in Gents toilets Inv Number 2011	140.00		140.00
5	Brilliant Lawns	Rec Grass Cutting on INV 8565	120.00		120.00
6	Brilliant Lawns	Rec Grass Cutting on INV 8581	120.00		120.00
7	Abacus Cleaning & Stationery	Stationery for office, Inv Number 20204360	56.43	11.29	67.72
8	Duo Creative Services Ltd	Website monthly fee (Mar)	25.00	5.00	30.00
9	D J Granger Grounds Maintenance Ltd	Grounds Maintenance Worksheet number 2 , Inv no 021291	378.00	75.60	453.60
10	Ashwell Parochial Church Council	Donation re Post Office Services in Parish Room	1,000.00		1,000.00
11	HAPTC	Annual Subscription	793.63		793.63
12	North Herts DC	Recreation Ground trade waste bin	106.34		106.34
13	North Herts DC	Streets support trade waste bin (at office)	119.73		119.73
14	North Herts DC	Springs trade waste bin	119.73		119.73
15	EON	Electricity for Public Toilets	12.00	0.60	12.60
16	Anne Fletcher	Reimbursement for purchase re Churchyard biodiversity project	206.25	41.25	247.50
17	HCC Pensions-LGPS Account	Clerk & Deputy Clerk Pension to LGPS	740.66		740.66
18	HMRC accounts ref 321PF00003624	Tax&NI to Inland Revenue	505.39		505.39
19	Clerk	Clerk salary	1,395.90		1,395.90
20	Deputy Clerk	Deputy Clerk Salary	850.91		850.91
21	ECO	Environmental Cleansing Officer salary	236.80		236.80
22	Grounds Officer	Grounds Officer salary	171.20		171.20
		TOTAL	7,577.37	146.94	7,724.31
	MONEY AT BANK				
		Current Account 30/04/2021			52,756.80
		Reserve Account 30/04/2021			20,702.52