



Ashwell Parish Council

Chairman: Graham Lee (☎ 743126)
Office at Bear Farm, 6A Back Street (☎ 743706)
Clerk: Jane Porter, Deputy Clerk: Laura Brooks-Payne
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**Minutes of the Ashwell Parish Council meeting
held on Wednesday 7th April 2021, 8pm online via Zoom**

Present: Gemma Allan, Martin Hoffman, Graham Lee (Chairman), Norton Mahy (Vice-chairman), David Sims and Mark White. Also in attendance: Clerk (Jane Porter), District Councillor Tom Tyson, County Councillor Steve Jarvis. Four 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.

49. Apologies for absence. None.

50. Declarations of Interest. (Item 53.3.4 ongoing re Cllr Mark White. See March Council item 44).

51. Proposal to approve and sign the minutes of the March Council meeting.

Approved for signature.

Action: Graham/Clerk

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

Standing Orders suspended to allow members of the public to speak.

52.1 Items raised by members of the public.

Including items received earlier and any matters raised at the meeting.

(i) A parishioner reported an incident she had witnessed involving four youths in the vicinity of the old telephone box where the defibrillator is located. No damage had been reported and it was acknowledged that the lack of opportunities due to the Covid situation was a factor.

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

(i) Swan Street wall. Repairs were scheduled for the 12/13th April.

(ii) Townsend Meadow development site. *See also item 53.3.1 re Planning below.*

He had been in correspondence with the Planning Dept since this application was first received. He intended to speak in support of the Parish Council's objection to the application. He believed that a Section 73 application was not an appropriate mechanism as the proposals represented a significant change to the original description of the application.

(iii) Broken waste bins at Walkdens. Following a report from a local resident he had been in contact with the relevant NHDC officer.

(iv) Land development site off Station Road. NHDC ref. 20/03070/FP *See item 53.3.3 re Planning below.*

(v) Forrester's Cottages *See item 53.3.1 re Planning below.*

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

(i) LED streetlights. As all the requests from local residents had now been dealt with the project had ended.

(ii) A505 safety improvements. He had determined that different teams were working on proposals for each junction separately. Engineers were assessing the Litlington junction for major works, at Slip End red friction surfaces were still to be added and at Odsey line markings and vegetation cut-back were planned.

(iii) Yellow lines. Agreed new lines at the junction of Gardiners Lane/High Street and in Ashwell Street at the rear of the school were held up waiting for others in the cluster, not in Ashwell, to be approved. In

Silver Street there had been objections from local residents and the request for a minor amendment was being considered.

(iv) Re-surfacing/patching. Proposed works included Newnham Way, Kingsland Way and Northfields Road.

(v) West End chicane. Works were scheduled for May; there had been a delay in sourcing the new street light columns.

Cllr Martin Hoffman wished to express his thanks to both Tom Tyson as District Councillor and Steve Jarvis as County Councillor for being so supportive. They had both attended the majority of Parish Council meetings and their input was much appreciated. This view was endorsed by other parish councillors.

52.4 Working Groups reports.

Members include volunteer parishioners as well as parish councillors. Offers to join or start new groups welcomed. Village Sports, New Pavilion, and Springs volunteers currently on hold.

52.4.1 Neighbourhood Plan Group, (leader Cllr Graham Lee, deputy Cllr Norton Mahy). Once the current consultation period had finished liaison with NHDC would take place to determine the timing of the next stages. **Action: Graham/Norton**

52.4.2 Local business support (leader Cllr Graham Lee). A suggestion had been made that Brian Deal at the Pharmacy be recommended for an award in recognition of his highly appreciated work during the Covid situation; he was a much respected and valued member of the community. It was agreed that this be investigated. **Action: Graham/Clerk**

52.4.3 Yearbook Group (leader Cllr Norton Mahy). Many favourable comments had been received. A review meeting was scheduled for next week.

52.4.4 Litter Pickers (leader Cllr Norton Mahy). No community event was planned for this spring but would be considered for the autumn. The efforts of individuals and small family groups who had done excellent work during the Covid situation was applauded. The Parish Council had purchased some litter picker tools that would be loaned out on request (*see office contacts above*).

52.5 Monthly reports from parish councillors.

See appendices below for summary of actions completed, actions ongoing and premises matters. Also reports received from other organisations.

52.5.1 Covid vaccination communications. Regular updates based on information issued by the Surgery would continue to be posted on the website, emailed to those signed-up and posted on Facebook. Favourable comments had been received about this.

52.5.2 Format for future Parish Council meetings. Current central government regulations required face-to-face meetings to recommence on May 7th (this would be after the May Parish Council meeting on Wednesday 6th). Concerns were expressed, and had been by many other councils, that the premises usually used for meetings could not meet the Covid requirements re social distancing and safely accommodate the numbers attending. It was agreed that government regulations would be followed and views would continue to be canvassed on how meetings might be held in the longer term, ie the use of Zoom, part Zoom and premises such as the Parish Room.

End of Open Forum but Standing Orders continued to be suspended to allow members of the public to speak.

53. Planning matters.

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

53.1 New consultations for response to NHDC.

53.1.1 Nos. 2 And 3 Forrester's Cottages, High Street. NHDC Ref no. 21/00550/LBC

Listed Building Consent : Introduction of pargetting detail to front elevation of No. 3 Forrester's Cottages (no.18 High Street). Internal alterations to Nos. 2 & 3 Forrester's Cottages to facilitate conversion of 1 x 2 bed and 1 x 3 bed houses into 1 x 6 bed dwelling house and associated works.

The Chairman invited the applicant to explain their proposals.

The applicant stated that they would like to 'future proof' their accommodation. They had purchased the adjoining property and wished to knock through so that there was the potential for a downstairs bedroom and a self-contained unit for a live-in carer. Much of the proposals did not affect the historic fabric of the building. The alterations were such that the property could be redivided back into two in the future. The only external alteration was to add pargeting to the front elevation. The applicant advised that the two properties would each retain their respective internal staircase, and front door, and that both properties would remain separate for Council Tax purposes.

Standing Orders reinstated.

Parish councillors expressed sympathy with the intentions stated by the applicant to provide for their future needs.

The following points were made:

- Impact on the historic fabric. The professional input from the Conservation Officer should be followed with regard to the internal alterations. Assurances should be sought that any alterations would be potentially reversible.
- Pargeting to the front elevation. There were no objections in principle. A concern was expressed that the image included was not particularly relevant to Ashwell, a Lark or a Swift would be more in keeping than a Robin.
- Loss of two smaller dwellings. Advice from the Conservation Officer had been that this was not a material change of use so Planning Permission was not required. He had said, 'The alterations proposed will be considered on their own merit under the LBC application but this would not take into account the loss of two smaller housing units pursuant to the Neighbourhood Plan and local housing need.'

Concerns were expressed that the Ashwell Neighbourhood Plan, in line with identified local housing need, supported retention of smaller units suitable for downsizing. Although the re-division back into two smaller houses might be feasible concern was expressed that this could not be assured.

A proposal was made to convey the above points to the Conservation Officer.
The draft response would be circulated to parish councillors before despatch.

Action: Clerk

53.1.2 No. 67 Station Road. NHDC ref no. 21/00971/FPH

Full Permission Householder: Two storey front extension following demolition of existing single storey front elevation extension.

It was noted that no correspondence had been received and there were no responses to the public consultation posted on the NHDC website.

It was **resolved**, with no objections, that a recommendation be sent to the Planning Officer that permission be granted.

Action: Clerk

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

Consultations received from NHDC.

53.2.1 No.24 West End 21/00942/TCA

T1 Pine - Section fell near to ground level as possible. T2 Sycamore - Sever Ivy. T3 Horse Chestnut - Reduce whole crown by 25% (3-4m). T4, T5 2 x Holly - Reduce tops by 0.5 -1m. T6 Horse Chestnut - Pollard to historic pollard point at 2-5m. T7 Holly - Reduce by 1m and trim side. T8 2 x Yew - Remove dead branch, prune back laterals on lawn side by 1.5m. T9 Holly - Trim whole crown by 0.5m. T10 Mulberry - Reduce by 2m. T11 Yew - Reduce laterals towards house. T12 Holly - Reduce by 1m.

No objections.

Action: Clerk

53.3 Updates on previous planning applications/developments ongoing.

53.3.1 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 NHDC Planning Control Committee were scheduled to consider this on Wed 14th April. A registration had been confirmed for a Parish Council representative to speak in objection to the application. Cllr Norton Mahy agreed to do this.

District Councillor Tom Tyson reported his intention to speak in support of the Parish Council’s objection
See also item 52.2 above.

Disappointment was expressed that the Planning Officer’s report for the committee recommended that permission should be granted. The view was expressed that a Section 73 application was not the appropriate mechanism for considering such a significant change, a new planning application should have been required by NHDC. The NHDC Planning Control Committee would be asked to request that this be handled through a proper process or this would risk repeated abuse of the system.

(ii)The planning condition to install a new footway whilst retaining the hedge. No further information received.

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

NHDC ref. no. 16/0797/1.

Nothing new to report. Adherence to the agreed landscaping and planting plans would be assessed and queried if necessary.

53.3.3 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.

No further information received. The date of the NHDC Planning Control Committee when this application would be decided was still pending.

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

The Chairman reported that a summary of the first meeting with the landowners, the FARRS, had been issued via the website and Facebook. A second meeting was scheduled for tomorrow at which the FARRS were to present some proposals. Further briefings would follow.

54. Finance and governance matters.

54.1 Monthly summary of accounts. Proposal for approval.

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

Action: Clerk/Graham/Martin

54.2 Annual Audit for the financial year 2020-21. The schedule to be followed, ie the Annual Return to be approved by the Parish Council, signed off by the Internal Auditor, and submitted to the External Auditor by 30th June, was noted.

54.3 Annual General Meeting of the Parish Council. This was scheduled for Wednesday 5th May and would include the annual elections for a Chairman and a Vice-chairman for the year 2021-22.

Forthcoming meeting dates:

Next monthly Council meeting including the AGM- Wednesday 5th May 2021, 8pm on Zoom.

APPENDICES – FOR INFORMATION

Appendix A: Parish Council actions ongoing.

- (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.
- (iii) '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.
- (iv) 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.
- (v) 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.
- (vi) Highways liaison. Cllr David Sims and the Clerk met with the local Highways officer to receive updates on ongoing and agreed future items.

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

- (i) Small Gains (Cllr David Sims). Allotment rents are due from 1st April. Two plots have been re-let for this season so currently there is no-one on the waiting list.
- (ii) Pavilion and toilets at the Rec (Cllr Gemma Allan) The pavilion and the toilets were closed due to ongoing plumbing and electrical problems. Works are underway and re-opening is scheduled for Saturday 10th April at the latest.
- (iii) Tree works. These are scheduled for the first week of May at the Springs, the Recreation Ground and the Cemetery in line with the recommendations from the last professional tree survey.
- (iv) Street furniture. 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; this is weather-dependent so later in the year.
- (v) Grounds maintenance. Grass cutting at all Parish managed premises commences from the beginning of April. The pitches at the Rec have already been treated with fertiliser.
- (vi) St Mary's Churchyard (Cllr Martin Hoffman). The 'rewilding' project in the area next to Hodwell is continuing this season. The Parish Council's contractor is scheduled to carry out extra grass strimming. The working group will rake this up and is to plant plugs of appropriate wildflower species.
- (vii) War Memorial. The Parish Council's contractor cuts the grass but the ornamental planting is entirely thanks to a British Legion volunteer. From this season he is also to tend the new Yew hedge; the Parish Council will continue to water it as needed.

Appendix C: Reports/updates from other organisations.

- (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).

**Appendix D: Summary of recent NHDC Planning Application consultations and their status
-as of 30th March 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
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 Forrester's Cottages, High Street,	21/00550/LBC	Listed Building Consent : Introduction of pargetting detail to front elevation of No. 3 Forrester's Cottages (no.18 High Street). Internal alterations to Nos. 2 & 3 Forrester's Cottages to facilitate conversion of 1 x 2 bed and 1 x 3 bed houses into 1 x 6 bed dwellinghouse and associated	PC to NHDC: Concerns expressed to NHDC	Pending
7 Swan Street	21/00483/FPH	Single storey rear extension	PC to NHDC: No Objection	Permission Granted 13th April 2021
40 Kingsland Way	21/00282/FP	Erection of one detached 3-bed dwelling following demolition of existing bungalow.	PC to NHDC: No Objection	Permission Granted 31st March 2021
Ducklake House, 27 Springhead	21/00200/FPH and 21/00201/LBC	Single storey rear extension following demolition of existing rear conservatory and porch.	PC to NHDC: No Objection	Permission Granted 8th April 2021
Westbury Farm House	20/00734/FPH and 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 refusal of application. Appeal to the Inspector 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	PC to NHDC: No Objection	Pending
Sunnymead Bungalow	21/00123/FP	Erection of a part two storey part single storey five bedroom detached dwelling with associated car parking, access and landscaping	PC to NHDC: No Objection	Permission Granted 26 March 2021
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
6 John Sale Close	21/00064/FPH	single storey rear extension	PC to NHDC: No Objection	Permission Granted 8th April 2021
Land at Jct of Ashwell Street & Station Road	20/02599/S73	Erection of 9 dwellings, application already granted (19/00455/FP) this is an application for a change in design to utilise roof space for additional bedrooms and insert	PC to NHDC: Objection	Pending decision by NHDC Planning Committee

Appendix E: Monthly accounts summary for March 2021.

ACCOUNTS - Summary for 01/3/2021 - 31/3/2021					
RECEIPTS					£
76	Nevilles Funeral Services	Rent for Chapel of Rest (March)			68.75
77	Allotment tenants	Allotment rent for 2021-22, plots 2 and 13a			20.00
78	Jane Buxton	Yearbook 2021 Advert Payment			70.00
79	Rhubarb & Mustard	sales of yearbook			33.00
80	Kate Cumins	Yearbook 2021 Advert Payment			40.00
81	Karen Perry Footcare Plus	Yearbook 2021 Advert Payment			70.00
82	Amber Health	Yearbook 2021 Advert Payment			200.00
83	Gillian George	Yearbook 2021 Advert Payment			40.00
84	Opsica	Yearbook 2021 Advert Payment			125.00
85	Bugs'n'things	Yearbook 2021 Advert Payment			70.00
86	R & A Transport	Yearbook 2021 Advert Payment			70.00
87	Johnstruct	Yearbook 2021 Advert Payment			70.00
88	HMRC	Job Retention Scheme (furlough payment deputy clerk)			292.16
89	Vanessa Jenkinson	Yearbook 2021 Advert Payment			40.00
90	EH Crouch	Yearbook 2021 Advert Payment			70.00
91	Kip McGrath	Yearbook 2021 Advert Payment			125.00
92	Berry Accounting	Yearbook 2021 Advert Payment			70.00
93	CPJ Fields Funeral Director	Double Depth Plot & Interment Fee CW 21.06			1,250.00
94	Bickerdikes	Yearbook 2021 Advert Payment			125.00
		TOTAL			2,848.91
PAYMENTS			£ less VAT	VAT	£ inc VAT
227	Edward's Cleaning and Maintenance Services	Works at Public Toilets February Inv no 02200	230.00		230.00
228	Alision Eardley	Neighbourhood Plan work	1,800.00	360.00	2,160.00
229	Duo Creative Services Ltd	Website monthly fee (Mar)	25.00	5.00	30.00
230	Abacus Cleaning & Maintenance	Stationery Supplies	148.13	29.63	177.76
231	Brilliant Lawns	Annual Fertiliser application	452.50		452.50
232	Parkes Printers	Printing of the yearbook	3,517.97	4.60	3,522.57
233	Mick Higgins	Repair of Litter Bin in High Street	50.00		50.00
234	Abacus Cleaning & Maintenance	Stationery Supplies	118.00	23.60	141.60
235	Deputy Clerk	Reimbursement for postage (yearbook mailing)	75.35		75.35
236	SLCC	Annual Membership	185.00		185.00
237	Clerk	Reimbursement - office heater, postage, printer cartridge, wipes	132.32	19.99	152.31
238	HCC Pensions-LGPS Account,	Clerk & Deputy Clerk Pension to LGPS	700.13		700.13
239	HMRC accounts ref 321PF00003624	tax&NI to Inland Revenue	459.69		459.69
240	Jamie Hamilton	Design work on the Yearbook 2021	500.00		500.00
241	Eon	Electricity toilets 05Feb to 05Mar2021	12.64	0.63	13.27
242	Edward's Cleaning and Maintenance Services	Works at the Rec Inv no 02214	188.00		188.00
243	Ruggles Plumbing and Heating	Install x4 immersion heaters and check system	270.00	54.00	324.00
244	Ace of Waste Skip Hire Ltd	removal of rubbish from Small Gains allotments	144.00		144.00
245	Kendals Restoration Ltd	deposit for mounting of new Lock Up sign	16.00		16.00
246	Clerk	Salary March	1,364.07		1,364.07
247	Deputy Clerk	Salary March	762.41		762.41
248	Grounds Officer	Salary March	149.75		149.75
		TOTAL	11,300.96	497.45	11,798.41
MONEY AT BANK					
		Current Account 31/03/2021	18,097.36		
		Reserve Account 31/03/2021	20,702.34		