

Minutes of the extraordinary meeting of the Parish Council called by the Chairman, Graham Lee, and held on Wednesday 21st July 2021 at 8pm on Zoom.

Present: Councillors Gemma Allan, Martin Hoffman, Graham Lee (Chairman), Norton Mahy (Vice chairman), David Sims and Mark White. The Clerk (Jane Porter) was also present.

Members of the public: None.

1. Apologies for absence. None.

2. Declarations of Interest. It was noted that Cllr Norton Mahy had a social relationship with the leader of the Greening Ashwell group.

3. Greening Ashwell group.

To discuss matters raised at the request of various parties and to agree any future actions.

(Further to item 26 from the July Council meeting, 'It was agreed that a meeting be scheduled to discuss the matter further')

Proposal to close the meeting to the public for an *in camera* session on the grounds that this item includes matters which at this stage would make disclosure prejudicial to the public interest.

[Standing order 10.i. 'to exclude the press and public from a meeting in respect of confidential or other information which is prejudicial to the public interest']

The Chairman noted that the meeting had been called following a number of informal approaches by committee members of the Greening Ashwell group. They had raised concerns and requested that the Parish Council consider taking on a closer role, particularly in the management of the group.

It was noted that the Parish Council had been fully supportive of the overall aims of Greening Ashwell since its inception in early 2020 and had regularly communicated this to the group leader. Practical support including suggestions for potential sites, contact details of landowners, some funding, and hands-on assistance with mapping had been provided.

The enthusiasm, particularly of the group leader, was commended. However, some concerns were expressed particularly the lack of a defined management plan that brought together the various objectives that had been expressed by different members of the group, eg tree planting, biodiversity enhancement, protection for existing trees, visual amenity enhancement, etc.

It was agreed to consider ways in which the Parish Council might best support the group both in the short and longer term.

It was agreed that

- The Parish Council would work with the committee of the Greening Ashwell group on an informal basis with the objective of establishing a new management structure.
- The talents and enthusiasm shown by existing committee members, including the current leader, should not be lost.
- All parish councillors would consider, and use their personal contacts, to identify an individual or individuals that might be both able and willing to step into a leadership role to take the group forward, subject to approval by the existing Greening Ashwell committee.
- If the above had not resulted in a positive outcome by the end of October another meeting would be convened to consider the next steps.