



Ashwell Parish Council

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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 3<sup>rd</sup> March 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. Thirty members of the public also joined part or all of the meeting.

*Members of the public who were signed up to the website ([www.ashwell.gov.uk](http://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.*

**43.** Apologies for absence. None.

**44.** Declarations of Interest. Cllr Mark White declared an interest for item 47.3.4. (he rents storage space from the landowner and has a 'good acquaintance' with members of the Farr family).

**45.** Proposal to approve and sign the minutes.

**45.1** Monthly Council meeting, 03 February 2021.

Cllr Martin Hoffman requested an amendment to item 41.3.1 to include the specific views he expressed.

This was agreed.

Approved for signature subject to the amendment.

**Action: Graham/Clerk**

**45.2** Planning Committee meeting, 10 February 2021.

Approved for signature.

**Action: Graham/Clerk**

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

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

**46.1 Items raised by members of the public.**

**Public contributions re agenda item 47.3.4 Dixies Meadow advertisement by Savills Cambridge/'For Sale -Development opportunity'.**

The many members of the public present and the high number of emails and letters that the Parish Council had received were noted.

Cllr Martin Hoffman contributed information on the background.

Some thirty years ago a planning application for housing on this site had been refused by NHDC and an appeal rejected by the national inspector. More recently a developer had held a pre-application consultation on plans for retirement housing but this had progressed no further. He also wished the following points to be noted, (i) the site would be outside of the settlement boundary under the new District Local Plan, (ii) the landowner was not obliged to accept any bids made to Savills under the informal tender, (iii) the Ashwell Neighbourhood Plan was not yet in place, neither was the new Local Plan, (iv) there had been a lot of development recently in the village.

The Chairman added that for any development outside of the settlement boundary there would be a requirement to demonstrate local need and support for the proposals. The new District Local Plan had now been with the Inspector for some time and carried significant weight. Under this new plan the whole of the site would be outside the settlement boundary. The Ashwell Neighbourhood Plan was now well advanced and under the control of NHDC; their consultation period had just commenced. It was now at a stage where it carried more weight and greater consideration should be given to the views of the village.

Chairman's Signature.....Date.....
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The site was, however, in private ownership. It had been bought some years ago with a view to its development potential and the owner would be looking for a significant sum. If the landowner was willing to consider an agreement with the Parish Council, it might be possible for the village to have greater control over the future of the site.

Some had already expressed their view that the whole site should be protected as a green space for the benefit of the community. Others were supportive of selective development for the benefit of Ashwell residents; perhaps retirement accommodation as an alternative for those unable to access Wolverley House.

The Chairman invited comments from members of the public present. He specifically wanted to determine parishioner's views on whether the Parish Council should express an interest with the landowner to see if common ground could be found with a view to gaining control over the site?

Members of the public contributed the following:

- The village would like to have control of what happens to the site; a developer would seek to build what gained the most profit.
- Previous planning applications for the site had been rejected and it should continue to be preserved as open space.
- The village had seen a lot of building recently but this had not been in line with identified needs particularly for the elderly who wished to down-size.
- This was a suitable site for retirement accommodation. The ID products site was perhaps the only other alternative site in the village that might become available.
- The value of the site was difficult to determine and hence the landowner's action to enter into an informal tender process. Depending on the development potential it might be valued at anything from £75,000 to £3 million.
- Fundraising by the village should be considered.
- Other funding options should be explored.
- The Parish Council should pursue ways of gaining control over the site, ie public ownership, and then options for what might be progressed should be decided through a democratic process involving the whole community.

The Chairman requested a show of hands on the views held for (i) preserving the whole site as green space, (ii) considering some development, of an agreed suitable type, on the rear part of the site. Views were split about 50:50 on this.

The Chairman requested a show of hands on whether the Parish Council should pursue a dialogue with the landowner with a view to seeking common ground. This was universally endorsed.

The Chairman thanked all for their contributions.

*See item 47.3.4 below for the Parish Council discussion and decision on further action.*

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

(i) Wall in Swan Street. He had again chased up the relevant party re the insurance claim on Urbaser. He had also now involved others to try and get some progress.

*See also item 47 below re Planning matters.*

#### **46.3 Hertfordshire County Council (HCC).** Reports/updates from our County Councillor Steve Jarvis.

(i) LED street lighting installation. There were still some issues that were being addressed; some were due to the poor network coverage.

(ii) Station Road pedestrian safety improvements. Discussion re the use of Section 106 funding was ongoing.

(iii) A505 safety improvements. He had been invited to attend a meeting and would report back.

(iv) Bus services. The proposal to link the 90/91 service with the 127 South Cambridgeshire service would not progress due to contractual issues with the latter.

(v) Parking problems in the High Street. In response to a question he noted that congestion caused by on-street parking continued to be an issue and any suggestions for alleviating this would be welcomed. The yellow lines agreed for the corner with Gardiners Lane were due for installation in April. He encouraged all

to use their influence to make those with off-street parking to use it rather than park on the road. Resident's permits was suggested but this would not create spaces.

*End of Open Forum/Standing Orders reinstated from here.*

#### **46.4 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.*

##### **46.4.1 Neighbourhood Plan Group (leader Cllr Graham Lee, deputy Cllr Norton Mahy).**

The Chairman reported that NHDC had now opened their consultation. It would then go to the Inspector.

##### **46.4.2 Trees and Hedges Group (leader Cllr David Sims).** Cllr David Sims reported that progress with more planting at Small Gains and the Recreation Ground was still pending quotes from suppliers.

##### **46.4.3 Yearbook Group (leader Cllr Norton Mahy).** Cllr Norton Mahy reported that distribution would commence on the weekend after next. There was no Parish Meeting scheduled.

##### **46.4.4 Litter Pickers (leader Cllr Norton Mahy).** Cllr Norton Mahy reported his hope that group efforts could recommence later in the year. In the meantime he commended the work of individuals. Litter pickers were available to borrow from the Parish Office if wanted.

#### **46.5 Monthly reports from parish councillors.**

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

##### **46.5.1 Covid vaccination communications.** The Parish Council continued to post updates on the website and facebook. Local progress was good and those involved should be commended.

##### **46.5.2 Parking restrictions enforcement.** The local police had now endorsed the cards for placing on vehicles badly or illegally parked and copies would be produced.

##### **46.5.3 St Mary's Churchyard biodiversity project.** Cllr Martin Hoffman reported that this was ongoing.

#### **47. Planning matters.**

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

##### **47.1 New consultations for response to NHDC.**

###### **47.1.1 No.7 Swan Street.** NHDC ref. no. 21/00483/FPH

Full Permission Householder: Single storey rear 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**

###### **47.1.2 No.5 Ashwell Street.** NHDC ref. no. 21/00594/FPH

Full Permission Householder: Erection of front elevation storm porch, single storey rear extension and alterations to existing vehicular access following demolition of existing rear conservatory.

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**

##### **47.2 Trees in the Conservation Area (TCA)/Tree Preservation Orders (TPO)**

No consultations received from NHDC.

##### **47.3 Updates on previous planning applications/developments ongoing.**

###### **47.3.1 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.

The response from the Chair of the NHDC Planning Control Committee to the Parish Council's letter was noted, '...This is the first I have heard about the concerns regarding this development. I can assure you that I take such matters very seriously...'. She was to take the matter up with the Head of Planning.

The response from Sir Oliver Heald, MP, to the Parish Council's letter and the Chairman's email was noted, 'it will obviously be up to NHDC Planning Committee and Cllr Tyson to pursue this. Please do keep me informed.'

District Councillor Tom Tyson reported that the date of the NHDC Planning Control Committee at which the section 73 variation was to be considered would probably be 14th April.

**47.3.2 Land rear of Claybush Road development.** NHDC ref. no. 16/0797/1

Nothing further to report. The approved planting would continue be monitored as the build process progressed.

**47.3.3 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.

Nothing further to report

*(the date of the NHDC Planning Control Committee at which this will be decided is pending).*

**47.3.4 Dixies Meadow advertisement by Savills Cambridge/ 'For Sale -Development opportunity'.**

*See also Open Forum item 46.1 above.*

A proposal was made, in consideration of the views expressed by parishioners, that the Parish Council should engage with the landowners to further its involvement in the future of the site for the benefit of the village.

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

**Action: Clerk/Graham**

**48. Finance and governance matters.**

**48.1** Monthly summary of accounts.

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

**Action: Clerk/Graham/Martin**

**48.2** Annual Audit for the financial year 2020-21.

**48.2.1** Review of the Effectiveness of Internal Audit. Proposal to approve.

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

**Action: Clerk/Graham**

**48.2.2** Review of the Risk Assessment Policy. Proposal to approve.

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

**Action: Clerk/Graham**

**48.3** Code of Conduct/Request from NHDC to consider adopting their model document.

It was noted that the Code adopted by the Parish Council differed from the model in relation to the requirement for members who had declared a pecuniary Interest to leave the room. It was agreed that this difference should be retained. When meetings were held in the Parish Room it was unreasonable to expect people to stand in the street to be out of earshot.

A response would be sent to NHDC.

**Action: Clerk**

**Meeting closed: 21.30**

**Forthcoming meeting dates:**

Next monthly Council meeting - Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> April 2021, 8pm on Zoom.

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## **APPENDICES – FOR INFORMATION**

### **Appendix A: Parish Council actions completed since last meeting.**

- (i) LED street-lighting installation. Liaison with local residents and County Councillor Steve Jarvis to resolve any individual issues particularly re brightness of the new lighting. *See agenda item 46.3 above.*
- (ii) Herts Highways. Information received on flooding issues forwarded to local residents known to have been affected.

### **Appendix B: Parish Council actions ongoing.**

- (i) Village hall/transfer to the Parish Council of the holding/custodian trusteeship. 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. Our local police are to give speed awareness training to pupils at the school. The Parish Council is to fund the production of posters made by pupils to advertise/help enforce the scheme.
- (iv) Police notices 'Be aware parking here is dangerous or not allowed'. Liaison with the Police Royston Rural Neighbourhood Team for use in the village.

### **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](http://www.ashwell.gov.uk)).

### **Appendix D: Reports/updates on Parish Council premises management.**

- (i) Small Gains (Cllr David Sims). Further tree planting funded by the developer's mitigation for the loss of the Chestnut tree in Lucas Lane is planned as well as hedge works.
- (ii) Recreation Ground (Cllr Gemma Allan) The toilets were closed during the freezing weather. They will be re-opened once various plumbing issues have been resolved.
- (iii) Tree works. These are scheduled 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 has been given an interim clean with varnishing planned for later in the year. The old telephone box that houses the defibrillator has also been cleaned.

**Appendix E: Summary of recent NHDC Planning Application consultations and their status  
-as of 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2021**

Address	Application Number	Brief description	Ashwell PC Comments	North Herts Decision
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	Pending
7 Swan Street	21/00483/FPH	Single storey rear extension	PC to NHDC: No Objection	Pending
40 Kingsland Way	21/00282/FP	Erection of one detached 3-bed dwelling following demolition of existing bungalow.	PC to NHDC: No Objection	Pending
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	Pending
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 existing dropped kerb onto High Street.	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	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
130 Ashwell Street	20/03079/FPH	Single Storey Rear Extension	To be discussed on 3rd February at the Parish Council Meeting	Permission Granted
6 John Sale Close	21/00064/FPH	single storey rear extension	To be discussed on 3rd February at the Parish Council Meeting	Pending
95 High Street	20/02752/FPH	Replacement of existing cladding, fascias / soffits, windows / doors	PC to NHDC: No Objection	Permission Granted 13/01/2021
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 rooflights	PC to NHDC: Objection	Pending decision by NHDC Planning Committee
4 Springhead	20/01594/FPH	Insertion of dormer to existing rear roof slope.	PC August meeting PC to NHDC: recommendation for permission to be GRANTED	Permission Granted to amended plans 23/02/2021

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](http://www.north-herts.gov.uk)

## Appendix F: Monthly accounts summary -February 2021

	<b>RECEIPTS</b>		£
72	Nevilles Funeral Services	Rent for Chapel of Rest (Feb)	68.75
73	Parishioner	Cemetery reservation CW 20.02	625.00
74	Groundwork UK	Neighbourhood Plan grant	3000.00
75	HMRC	Job Retention Scheme grant -for Deputy Clerk furlough Feb 2021	704.31
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,398.06</b>
	<b>PAYMENTS</b>		£ inc VAT
212	Grounds Officer	Salary January	166.55
213	Duo Creative Services Ltd	Website monthly fee (Feb) Inv 9677	30.00
214	Edward's Cleaning and Maintenance Services	Work at Toilets and notice board, phone box cleaning Inv no 2187	240.00
215	D J Granger Grounds Maintenance Ltd	Grounds Maintenance Worksheet 01, Inv 21187	685.20
216	BT for Business	line rental and broadband	125.37
217	NHDC	dog waste bin emptying 01/04/20 to 31/03/21	1,188.11
218	EON	Electricity for Public Toilets	15.41
219	Home Builders	Pavilion repairs in to gents toilets	250.00
220	HCC Pensions-LGPS Account,	Clerk & Deputy Clerk Pension to LGPS	691.75
221	GLEAM	membership re rights of way	15.00
222	Clerk	Salary February	1,497.67
223	Deputy Clerk	Salary February	743.22
224	ECO	Salary February	230.40
225	Grounds Officer	Salary February	149.95
226	HMRC accounts ref 321PF00003624	tax&NI to Inland Revenue	312.28
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6,340.91</b>
	<b>MONEY AT BANK</b>		
		Current Account 28/02/2021	27,046.86
		Reserve Account 28/02/2021	20,702.18