

**Minutes of the Ashwell Parish Council AGM and monthly meeting  
held on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2020 online via Zoom**

**Present:** Cllrs Gemma Allan, Graham Lee (Chairman from item 2), Norton Mahy, David Sims, Mark White (Chairman for item 1).

**Apologies:** Martin Hoffman (long-standing arrangement to be away)

Also in attendance: Clerk (Jane Porter), Deputy Clerk (Laura Brooks-Payne), District Councillor Tom Tyson, County Councillor Steve Jarvis. Seven parishioners also joined 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.*

**1. Election of Chairman.** Cllr Graham Lee was proposed.

It was **resolved** that the proposal be accepted and he was elected.

Cllr Mark White was thanked for his much-valued contribution in his role as Chairman over many years.

**2. Election of Vice-Chairman.** Proposals were made for Cllr Martin Hoffman and Cllr Norton Mahy.

It was **resolved** that Cllr Norton Mahy be elected.

Cllr Martin Hoffman was thanked for his much-valued contribution in his role as Vice-Chairman over many years.

**3. Review of policies and documents held.**

The following were noted.

**3.1** Already reviewed as part of the annual audit process: Financial and Management Risk Assessment, Asset Register, Financial Regulations and Standing Orders.

**3.2** To be reviewed: Insurance cover (*see item 12.2 below*), Data Protection and Freedom of Information, Complaints procedure, Website accessibility.

**4. Roles and responsibilities.**

Those current were noted and the following amended responsibilities agreed.

**4.1 Premises.** (i) Recreation Ground including the pavilion, playground and public toilets: Cllr Gemma Allan, (ii) Parish Clock: the Clerk.

**4.2 Working Groups.** No material changes.

**4.3 Liaison with other authorities.**

(i) Herts Highways: Cllr David Sims to continue, (ii) HCC Rights of Way: Cllr Graham Lee, (iii) NHDC re street cleansing: the Clerk.

**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.

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

**5.1 Ashwell Village Trust (charity no. 294673)**

The following were noted.

(i) The terms of the trust deed were for the Chairman of the Parish Council to be the chairman of the trust and two parish councillors to be appointed as trustees (currently David Sims and one vacancy). Cllr Mark White agreed to fill the vacancy.

(ii) The 2020 AGM of the trust had been postponed due to the Covid situation (had been scheduled to be held in June).

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

It was noted that the Parish Council was the sole trustee and the 2020 AGM of the trust had been held prior to the August Council meeting.

**5.3 Moss Cottage Homes**

It was noted that the two trustee positions nominated by the Parish Council had been appointed in 2018 for a term of four years (Elizabeth Coldstream and Phillida Shaw).

**5.4 Henry Colbron Trust and liaison with the School.** Cllr Gemma Allan to continue.

**5.5 Ashwell Museum liaison.** Cllr Martin Hoffman to continue.

**5.6 Ashwell Village Hall liaison.** Cllr Martin Hoffman to continue.

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*Regular business of the monthly meeting followed from here.*

6. Declarations of Interest. None.

7. Proposal to approve and sign the minutes of the previous meeting, 5<sup>th</sup> August 2020.

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

## **8. OPEN FORUM - PARISH AFFAIRS, REPORTS FROM OTHER BODIES ETC**

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

### **8.1 Items raised by parishioners.** *Including reports received earlier and any matters raised at the meeting.*

(i) Concerns re litter/anti-social behaviour and sightings of rats at the Springs. Cllr Martin Hoffman had given a response; action had already been taken where necessary.

(ii) Concerns re speeding traffic in the High Street. The request for a letter to be sent to the bus company requesting that they remind their drivers of the 20mph limit was re-iterated. Input from County Councillor Steve Jarvis was noted; there was an expectation by bus operators that their drivers would abide by the law. The parishioner agreed to provide times and dates that could be used to reinforce the concerns.

It was agreed to write to the bus company.

**Action: Clerk**

(iii) Proposal to re-start a DriveSafe group in the village. Concerns were expressed that the 20mph zone was not being enforced by the police. County Councillor Steve Jarvis informed that in Hertfordshire, although not in other counties, the Police & Crime Commissioner, did not permit DriveSafe groups to operate within 20mph zones; he noted that the police were generally not in favour of 20mph zones.

It was agreed that local promotion of the 20mph zone would be progressed; the cost of publicity material from the Twenty's Plenty organisation would be identified and agreed if acceptable prior to purchasing and distribution.

**Action: Clerk/Deputy Clerk**

(iv) Proposal for additional Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs). County Councillor Steve Jarvis informed that there were restrictions on where these could be placed.

(v) Request for speed monitoring. County Councillor Steve Jarvis agreed to investigate this.

(vi) Concerns re speeding cyclists. It was agreed to write to the Cycle Club Ashwell requesting that they remind their members of the 20mph zone and relay the message to other cycling groups. **Action: Clerk**

### **8.2 Items raised by parish councillors (not including agenda items below).**

(i) Walking routes. Cllr Norton Mahy reported that he had compiled a list of walks and proposed that he add these to the website. This was agreed. He invited others to review and comment.

(ii) Verge in bear Lane adjacent to the school grounds. Cllr Gemma Allan reported the school's concerns re overgrown vegetation. It was agreed that she and County Councillor Steve Jarvis liaise over who was responsible and progress a practical solution to the problem.

### **8.3 Reports/updates re ongoing village matters.**

**8.3.1** Village hall/transfer to the Parish Council of the holding (or custodian) trusteeship. The Chairman reported that the Management Committee was to make decisions re their trusteeship. Once this was settled the transfer of the holding/custodian trusteeship of the property could be progressed.

**8.3.2** Improved cycleway and carparking at the station/proposals by Cambridgeshire landowner as part of development. Nothing further to report.

**8.3.3** Meetings/use of Zoom vs. the Parish Room. It was noted that as meetings were open to the public, adherence to the Covid requirements when using the Parish Room could not be easily achieved. It was agreed that at present meetings would continue to be held using Zoom.

### **8.4 Reports from village groups**

**8.4.1** Greening Ashwell. Newsletters published by the group were noted.

**8.4.2** Ashwell Climate Conversations Group. Nothing received.

## **8.5 Matters re other authorities and organisations.**

### **8.5.1 North Herts District Council (NHDC)**

District Councillor Tom Tyson reported:

**8.5.1.1** Street cleansing and litter bins. The new NHDC officer had made a site visit to the village and had met with the Clerk. (i) The request for an additional bin adjacent to the Springs to be added to the list of those emptied by NHDC had been received; they were to monitor the capacity of the existing bin before a decision was made. (ii) Trade waste. The problems at the Springs, ie weekly collections missed and side bags not collected, had been noted. (iii) Street cleaning. The sweeping lorry that attended on a four-weekly cycle was now a smaller unit more suited to gaining access; this had been commended. A request had been made for manual cleaning in locations where the vehicle could not access particularly at leaf-fall time. The issue of accumulated debris washing into, and blocking, drains had been reiterated.

**8.5.1.2** Licensing review consultation. This was a routine review and the public had been invited to respond. Concerns were expressed re the Farrfest and a request made that NHDC consult Ashwell on any matters relating to this. The key decision points when licence requests were considered would be determined. *See also item 11 below re Planning matters including submissions re Trees in the Conservation Area.*

### **8.5.2 Hertfordshire County Council (HCC)**

County Councillor Steve Jarvis reported:

(i) Drainage and flooding concerns. The gully clearing programme would cover Ashwell by the end of next week. Recent exceptionally heavy rain had caused many gullies to be blocked; those that could not be cleared by the sucking machine would be marked for manual digging out at a later stage. Areas where there was a threat of flooding to properties, eg West End, Hodwell, were being investigated by the Flood Management Team and he would chase progress on this. The situation re the ditch/land drain between the Churchyard and the Old Rectory was being looked into. (ii) West End chicane. Consultation with local residents had taken place and questions answered. The scheme would now go ahead towards the end of this year. (iii) Street lighting. Replacement LED units, with lanterns of a suitable design, would be installed on all the heritage columns in the next three months. (iv) Additional yellow lines. Proposals for the junction of High Street and Gardiners Lane, and at the rear and front entrances of the school were being progressed. There would be a formal consultation on the proposals for Silver Street.

## **8.6 Working Groups reports.**

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

**8.6.1 Neighbourhood Plan Group** (leader Cllr Graham Lee, deputy Cllr Norton Mahy) Cllr Norton Mahy reported that the consultation period had been extended; this would not affect the expected date for the referendum. The recent additional publicity had resulted in an increased number of responses; he thanked those who had assisted with this.

**8.6.2 Local business support** (leader Cllr Graham Lee). Cllr Graham Lee reported that the new village map including details of local retailers was proving popular.

**8.6.3 Tree Group** (leader Cllr David Sims) *See 11.2 and 11.3 below.*

**8.6.4 Yearbook Group** (leader Norton Mahy) Cllr Norton Mahy reported that a brainstorming session had produced some useful ideas. A further meeting had been scheduled.

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*Standing orders reinstated from here.*

**9. Matters of report from previous meetings.** None not covered elsewhere.

## **10. Premises management reports.**

(i) Recreation Ground and playground. Cllr Gemma Allan reported that cricket had re-started and general use of the open area had been positive with people acting in a responsible way. Proposals for the playground were still awaiting a response from the Henry Colbron Trust.

(ii) St Mary's Churchyard grounds maintenance and PCC liaison. Cllr Martin Hoffman had reported on his meetings to progress the proposals for enhancement of part of the area to increase biodiversity.

(iii) Small Gains. Cllr David Sims reported that the rabbit problem affecting the whole area was being addressed.

The Springs. *See 8.1 above.*

There was nothing particular to report re the Lock Up, Carters Pond and Merchant Taylors Green, the Parish Clock, the War Memorial and liaison with Ashwell Royal British Legion, the Cemetery, street furniture owned by the Parish, grounds maintenance contracts.

## **11. Planning matters.**

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

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

**11.1.1** Valentine House, Partridge Hill. NHDC case ref. 20/01426/S73.

Section 73 Application: To remove condition 3 which restricts the exercise of permitted development rights, as imposed on the original planning permission issued under reference 94/00713/1.

The concerns received from a neighbour were noted. A view was expressed that (i) the reasons for the condition being imposed had not changed, (ii) the condition had not prevented the householder from applying to NHDC for development permission on at least two occasions and this being granted.

A proposal was made that a recommendation be made to the Planning Officer that permission be refused on the grounds that the reasons the condition had been applied had not materially changed and there was no justification for withdrawing the condition.

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

**Action: Clerk**

**11.1.2** Land East Of 35, Ashwell Street. NHDC case ref. 20/01712/FP.

Full Planning Permission: Erection of 1 x 2 bed detached single storey dwelling including creation of new vehicular access off Ashwell Street (renewal of planning permission 17/02200/1 granted 02.03.2018).

A proposal was made that a recommendation be made to the Planning Officer that permission be granted.

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

**Action: Clerk**

**11.1.3** Land (known as Hunts Close) north of Ashwell Street and south of Lucas Lane between Hunts Ridge and East Lodge, 22 Lucas Lane. NHDC case ref. 20/00126/FP.

Full Planning Permission: Erection of 24 dwellings including creation of vehicular access off Ashwell Street, footpath link to Lucas Lane, associated public open space and landscaping (as amended by plans received 17.08.20).

It was agreed that this item be considered at an on-site meeting of the Planning Committee to be held on Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> September at 9.30am.

**Action: Clerk**

### **11.2 Trees in the Conservation Area/submissions to NHDC for approval of works.**

**11.2.1** Willowbank, Springhead. NHDC case ref. 20/01831/TCA.

Willow -Fell.

It was agreed to respond that there were no objections. It was noted that a replacement tree was proposed however pollarding of the tree would likely result in it re-sprouting in a satisfactory manner. **Action: Clerk**

The following submissions and 'no objection' decisions made by NHDC were noted:

**11.2.2** Chantry House, 31 West End. NHDC case ref. 20/01821/TCA.

Norway Maple – Crown reduce by up to 3m to viable growth points. Remove lowest limb.

**11.2.3** No.24-26 High Street. NHDC case ref. 20/01528/TCA.

Ash – Reduction of up to 2m back to good viable growth points (description of works amended 13/08/2020). The amendments made following objections by the Parish Council to the previous proposal to fell the tree were noted.

### **11.3 Townsend House, 24 Lucas Lane.**

NHDC Case Ref. 19/01377/FP granted 15.08.2019 and variations submitted since.

The Chairman reported that following discussions with the NHDC Planning Officer, Cllr David Sims had requested funding to support tree planting at Small Gains as mitigation for the loss of the Chestnut tree on this site. This had been agreed and the developer had now paid the Parish Council £1300. Planting of new trees (and completion of the hedge planting) would commence in the autumn.

#### 11.4 Land at the junction of Ashwell Street and Station Road. NHDC Case Ref.19/02691/S73.

Section 73 application, variation of condition 8 – footway/Parish Council’s request for the hedge to be retained and the new footway to be constructed inside the site.

District Councillor Tom Tyson reported that he had spoken to the Planning Manager. It was understood that the location of the footpath was being negotiated between Herts Highways and the developer. He noted that the Planning Officer’s report and the section 73 application had both noted the importance of retaining the hedge; it was also NHDC policy that hedges should be retained. County Councillor Steve Jarvis agreed to determine the situation and would try to influence the decision in favour of retaining the hedge.

In response to a question from Cllr David Sims, County Councillor Steve Jarvis reported that funding from the developer to support a crossing point and other road safety measures in Station Road and at the Lucas Lane junction had been sought.

### 12. FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE MATTERS

#### 12.1 Monthly summary of accounts and year-to-date budget summary.

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

**12.2** Insurance renewal from 1<sup>st</sup> October. The Chairman reported that information had been received from the broker and had been reviewed. No material changes had been noted and he proposed that the broker’s recommendations be followed. If any need arose updates would be circulated to all.

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

**Action: Clerk**

#### Meeting closed at 10.15

#### Forthcoming meeting dates:

Planning Committee Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> September at 9.30am.

October Council - Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> October 2020, 8pm.

#### Appendix: Summary of recent planning consultations as of 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2020

*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)*

Address	Application Number	Brief description	Ashwell PC Comments	North Herts Decision
Land (known as Hunts Close) north of Ashwell Street and south of Lucas Lane between Hunts Ridge and East Lodge, 22 Lucas Lane.	20/00126/FP	Erection of 24 dwellings including creation of vehicular access off Ashwell Street, footpath link to Lucas Lane, associated public open space and landscaping (as amended by plans received 17.08.20).	PC on-site Planning C'ttee meeting Date: 06 Sept 2020	Pending
Land East of 35, Ashwell Street	20/01712/FP	Erection of 1 x 2 bed detached single storey dwelling including creation of new vehicular access off Ashwell Street (renewal of planning permission 17/02200/1 granted 02.03.2018).	PC September meeting PC to NHDC: recommendation for permission to be GRANTED	Pending
Valentine House Partridge Hill	20/01426/S73	Section 73 Application: To remove condition 3 which restricts the exercise of permitted development rights, as imposed on the original planning permission issued under reference 94/00713/1.	PC September meeting PC to NHDC: recommendation for permission to be REFUSED	Pending
43 West End	20/01488/FPH	Erection of detached carport/garage to the side elevation following demolition of existing detached single garage	PC August meeting PC to NHDC: recommendation for permission to be GRANTED	Granted
52 Back Street	20/01469/FPH	Rooflight and roof repairs.	PC August meeting PC to NHDC: recommendation for permission to be GRANTED	Pending
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	Pending
Townsend House, 24 Lucas lane	20/00847/FP (previous application withdrawn)	Erection of 4 x 3 bed dwellings with creation of new vehicular access off Lucas Lane (variation of planning permission granted under ref 19/01377/FP granted 15.08.2019). Variations include additional 2 visitor parking spaces and reduction to plot 4 rear garden (as amended by plans received 9 July 2020)	PC August meeting PC to NHDC: recommendation for permission to be GRANTED	Granted (with conditions re trees and hedges)

## Appendix: Monthly accounts summary

ACCOUNTS - Summary for 01/08/2020 - 31/08/2020 AUGUST					
RECEIPTS			£ less VAT	VAT	£ inc VAT
43	Santander interest account	Interest 01/08/2020			1.53
44	Nevilles Funeral Services	Rent for Chapel of Rest (July)			68.75
45	E H Crouch (Stotfold)	Cemetery Payment CW 20.13			230.00
46	HMRC	JRS Grant re LBS furlough 01/08 to 31/08			711.20
					<b>1,011.48</b>
PAYMENTS					
92	Castle Water	cemetery water 01/04/2020 to 30/09/2020	18.58		18.58
93	NHDC	recreation ground trade waste bin inv 1896119	104.00		104.00
94	NHDC	streets support trade waste bin inv 1896122	117.00		117.00
95	NHDC	springs trade waste bin inv 1896505	117.00		117.00
96	Brilliant Lawns	Rec Grass Cutting on 2/07/2020 INV 7815	115.00		115.00
97	Alison Eardley Consulting	Neighbourhood Plan re tasks 1-3 inv0169	1,200.00	240.00	1,440.00
98	Edward's Cleaning and Maintenance Services	toilets cleaning x2 per week and consumables 21/07 to 31/07	135.00		135.00
99	Duo Creative Services Ltd	Website monthly fee (August) INV 9410	25.00	5.00	30.00
100	D Sims	reimbursement padlock new gate at Small Gains	24.48		24.48
101	BT for Business	line rental and broadband Aug-Oct 2020 (04/08/2020)	167.86	33.57	201.43
102	EON	Electricity for Public Toilets (05/08/2020)	8.43	0.42	8.85
103	Arena Business Supplies Ltd	office consumables inv15088	124.25	24.85	149.10
104	D J Granger Grounds Maintenance Ltd	Grounds Maintenance Worksheet 76 INV 020656	385.00	77.00	462.00
105	D J Granger Grounds Maintenance Ltd	Grounds Maintenance Worksheet 76 INV 020716	588.00	117.60	705.60
106	Brilliant Lawns	Rec Grass Cutting on 21/08/2020 INV 78174	115.00		115.00
107	Castle Water	pavilion water 01/08/2020 to 13/12/2020	95.29		95.29
108	Clerk (J C M Porter)	Clerk's salary August	1,322.90		1,322.90
109	Deputy Clerk (L Brooks-Payne)	Deputy Clerk's Salary	672.84		672.84
110	Grounds Officer (M Chandler)	Grounds Officer salary and overtime	169.95		169.95
111	ECO (A Beddall)	Environmental Cleansing Officer salary	230.40		230.40
112	HMRC accounts ref 321PF00003624	tax&NI to Inland Revenue	411.88		411.88
113	HCC Pensions-LGPS Account,	Clerk & Deputy Clerk Pension to LGPS	652.45		652.45
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6800.31</b>	<b>498.44</b>	<b>7,298.75</b>
MONEY AT BANK					
		Current Account			<b>£22,508.63</b>
		Reserve Account			<b>£20,701.12</b>