

## Minutes

**April Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> April 2022 at the Village Hall.**

***Present: Parish Councillors Gemma Allan, Graham Lee (Chairman) and Norton Mahy (Vice-chairman). Cath Connolly, Martin Hoffman, David Sims and Mark White joined on Zoom.***

**Also in attendance:** Clerk (Jane Porter), County Councillor Steve Jarvis. District Councillor Tom Tyson joined on Zoom. Four members of the public were present and six also joined on Zoom.

***Following a request from a Parishioner it was agreed that the meeting could be recorded.***

89 Apologies for absence from parish councillors. None.

90 Declarations of Interest. None.

91 Proposal to approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2022. It was resolved that this be accepted. **Action:**  
**Clerk/Graham**

The draft minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> March were noted. Chairman Graham Lee reported that these had been posted on the website and a newsletter covering the key issues delivered to all households.

<https://www.ashwell.gov.uk/parish-council/meetings/>

92 **OPEN FORUM - VILLAGE MATTERS, REPORTS FROM OTHER BODIES, ETC**  
*Standing Orders were suspended to allow members of the public to speak.*

92.1 Items from members of the public.

92.1.1 Ukraine refugee hosting. Parishioner Simon Blake had requested the opportunity to give an update on behalf of those involved. Ashwell volunteers had joined up with those in Baldock and other villages to form a local group. They were focussing on identifying hosts and those who were able to contribute in other ways. It was hoped that up to 20 families could be accommodated. A key aim was to establish a network

of hosts and of helpers with a strong community bond that would help to support all parties. Existing contacts in the area were providing input on assessment, language, legal matters, etc. Individuals had been nominated to co-ordinate fundraising and group communications. The efforts of all involved were applauded.

92.1.2 Co-options. An update was requested. Chairman Graham Lee reported that following the recent newsletter further expressions of interest had been received.

92.2 Items from our county councillor Steve Jarvis and his response to questions.

92.2.1 New chicane at West End. The original scheme had included a second raised area closer to Back Street but this had been excluded following the Highways safety analysis. As was the usual procedure Highways would carry out a post -installation safety review. Some signage works were still to be completed. Ways to further protect pedestrians on the narrow section of footway were being looked into.

92.2.2 20mph and 30mph speed limits and signage. Concerns were raised re Kingsland Way signage and the current limits for the section of Ashwell Street from Station Road going east. He agreed that these would be looked into.

92.2.3 Jubilee street party. He was still working with Highways on getting the street closure sorted; diversion routes were the main issue.

92.2.4 Station Road safety improvements. There was still no date confirmed for this.

92.2.5 Request by the Ashwell British legion for a new entrance to the Rec off Lucas Lane. Highways had no issues in principle but the works on the Rec side would be up to the Parish Council.

*See also item 93.4.1 below.*

92.3 Items from our district councillor Tom Tyson and his response to questions.

92.3.1 Bygrave solar farm proposal. No planning application had yet been submitted to NHC. The Bygrave action group was continuing to distribute publicity.

92.3.2 Bygrave Woods festivals. The NHC Licensing Officer had informed that the license could only be reviewed if there was

a breach of the conditions. It was felt by some that the transport issues last year did constitute a breach.

92.3.3 Baldock & District area grants. Ashwell pre-school and the planned new facility at the Tennis & Sports Club had benefitted.

92.4 Items on general village matters from parish councillors. Chairman Graham Lee reported:

92.4.1 Safer routes to the station for pedestrians and cyclists. Mr Christopher Fordham was scheduled to attend the May Council meeting to provide clarification on land ownership.

92.4.2 Village Hall trustees/their change to an Incorporated Charitable Organisation and the future involvement of the Parish Council. Nothing further to report.

92.4.3 Community Land Trust. A good meeting with the solicitors had taken place. They had responded to the detailed list of questions put to them and had advised that the best approach would be to create a Community Benefit Society (CBS).

*It was agreed that due to the sensitive nature of the matter, ie legal and financial matters, that further discussion would be held in camera, ie with the public excluded from the meeting.*

*[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 reported that minutes of the *in camera* part would be made public after the meeting.

*[Minute in camera session]*

Chairman Graham Lee reported.

An open and informative conversation had taken place with the solicitors and their recommendation had been to set up a CBS. This was a fairly 'well-trodden route' for them. They had a draft set of objectives and legal structure in place that they could tailor to an individual council's needs. A quote for this had been provided. A CBS had a board-like structure with directors and members and would be covered by the FCA for financial risks. The Parish Council would have involvement but it would be set up to operate for the village as a whole. It would be beneficial to have a CBS in place prior to any particular venture being progressed. NHC already had a mechanism in place that would recognise a CBS when it came to their assessment of community involvement and village need in any development proposal.

It was proposed that a draft CBS be prepared by the solicitors for consideration by the Parish Council so that the practical upsides and downsides of the legal structure could be considered.

It was resolved that the proposal be accepted.

**Action:**

**Graham/Norton**

*[End of in camera session]*

- 92.4.4 Assets of Community Value. Following the submission to NHC for registration of the three pubs in the village more detailed information on community use had been requested. This was being compiled. A parishioner reiterated the earlier request re the URC hall; a submission for this was also to be made.
- 92.4.5 The Ruddy/request to HCC rights of way for a change of status to improve safety. HCC was about to commence the preliminary consultation with local landowners/residents. This would be followed by a wider public consultation. The objective was to prevent through traffic by physical barriers but permit full access for local landowners/residents. So far the Parish Council had received positive feedback for the proposals principle and the details were now a matter for HCC to consult on. In response to question it was thought that merely changing the status, ie without physical measures, any restriction would be difficult to enforce.
- 92.4.6 NHC review of the Ashwell Conservation Area. The matter had been covered in the recent newsletter delivered to all households and this had included a request for comments to be submitted. The Parish Council was awaiting feedback from this and the views expressed would be forwarded to NHC. The date for the NHC public consultation given at the Annual Parish Meeting (*see minute 1.7.4 APM/23 March 2022*) had since been updated; this was now not likely to be until July.

A member of the public present requested the opportunity to express their views on this matter. The documents supplied by the Parish Council following the Freedom of Information request from a parishioner had been reviewed. This had raised concerns at the approach taken by the Parish Council, ie identification of locations to be included followed by justifications rather than a process based on NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework) guidance. An example was given re the nationally significant cherry plum trees that are found

Signed	Date
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in the Parish. It was felt that this approach had damaged the credibility of the work. Concerns were also expressed at the way the working group members had been identified. A request was made that the Parish Council take a pause and think carefully about their actions.

Chairman Graham Lee responded. The brief that the Parish Council had received from the NHC consultant had included requests to involve members of the community with relevant knowledge and/or associations, as well as specific questions. The Parish Council was of the view that they had followed the brief.

Since the Annual Parish Meeting Chairman Graham Lee and Vice-chairman Norton Mahy had met with NHC officers to discuss future actions re the Neighbourhood Plan. They had also requested some further information about the Conservation Area Review. Three villages had been identified where reviews were needed and NHC had employed a specialist consultant to carry these out. The Parish Council had, as requested, provided information and thoughts for the consultant to consider alongside his own input. The matter would be discussed further at the next Parish Council meeting once any feedback from parishioners had been considered.

#### 92.5 Items from working groups.

- 92.5.1 Neighbourhood Plan group (leader Cllr Graham Lee, deputy Cllr Norton Mahy). Norton Mahy reported that the recent meeting with NHC officers had been informative. The plan would be formally 'made' at the next NHC meeting and would then become part of planning policy.
- 92.5.2 Litter picking group (leader Cllr Cath Connolly). Cath Connolly reported that this was to be held on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> April meeting at the Pavilion at 2pm. She encouraged volunteers to contact her in advance if possible but those turning up would also be welcomed.
- 92.5.3 Trees and Hedges Group (leader Cllr David Sims). David Sims reported that all planting at Small Gains and the Rec had now been completed for this season. Further hedge planting was planned for the Rec next autumn/winter. Suggestions for any other locations would be welcomed.
- 92.5.4 Village Sports Day (leader Guy Reed). This was to take place on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> May. The risk assessment had been submitted

to the insurer and a response was pending. No issues were anticipated.

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

**93 MONTHLY REPORTS ON PREMISES/OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES FROM PARISH COUNCILLORS.**

**93.1** Recreation Ground/consultation on new equipment for older children. Cllr Gemma Allan reported that over 180 children had responded. Results were being analysed but it was clear that there was widespread support for a revamped skateboard area. The needs of younger children on scooters as well as older children using skateboards would be taken into account. Issues of the space available and funding were to be clarified before the project was put out to tender.

**93.2** Pavilion and public toilets upgrade project. Chairman Graham Lee reported that a site meeting with an architect was scheduled for the following day. The current condition of the building was to be assessed and would inform the options that might be possible.

**93.3** The Springs/actions following the Natural England approval re fencing, litter bins, information board and future tree works. An approved supplier had been briefed and had submitted a quote for the fencing works. This had been circulated to all parish councillors. Cllr Martin Hoffman proposed that it be accepted.

It was resolved that the proposal be accepted.

**Action:**

**Clerk**

**94 PLANNING MATTERS**

**94.1** New consultations received from North Herts Council.

**94.1.1 No. 4 The Rickyard.** NHC ref. 22/00735/FPH.

Full Permission Householder: Installation of external metal flue to existing side elevation chimney stack.

No objections from the public had, to date, been posted on the NHC website. A proposal was made that the NHC planning officer be recommended to grant permission.

It was resolved that the proposal be accepted.

**Action:**

**Clerk**

**94.1.2 No. 11 Lucas Lane.** NHC ref. 22/00608/FPH.

Full Permission Householder: Single storey rear extension, raise existing side elevation roof ridge height and insertion of dormer to rear roof slope.

No objections from the public had, to date, been posted on the NHC website. A proposal was made that the NHC planning officer be recommended to grant permission.

It was resolved that the proposal be accepted.

**Action:**

**Clerk**

94.1.3 Quarry Hills Barn, Loves Lane. NHC ref. 22/00641/FPH.

Full Permission Householder: Addition of ground mounted solar panels in garden, to exceed area of 9m<sup>2</sup> that could be added under permitted development. Addition of 16 panels 1m x 1.5m along the hedgerow to east, occupying 4x10m area, max height 1.5m. Electrical connection to existing fusebox via trench under garden. Not visible from property entrance.

No objections from the public had, to date, been posted on the NHC website. A proposal was made that the NHC planning officer be recommended to grant permission.

It was resolved that the proposal be accepted.

**Action:**

**Clerk**

94.1.4 Land Adjacent To 4, Ashwell Street. NHC ref. 22/00880/FP.

Full Planning Permission: Erection of a detached 3-bedroom dwelling, and detached car port; ancillary works and new vehicular access onto Ashwell Street.

It was agreed that a site meeting be held prior to a decision at the May Council meeting (Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> May, 6pm).

**Action:**

**Clerk**

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

Westbury Farm House, West End. NHC ref. 22/00940/TCA.

6 x Lime - Remove any dead wood to prevent any dead branches falling onto the drive.

It was resolved that no objections be made to the NHC Planning Officer.

**Action: Clerk**

94.3 Updates on previous planning applications/developments ongoing.

94.3.1 Townsend Meadow (Land at the junction of Station Road and Ashwell Street, NHC refs. 19/00455/FP and 20/02599/S73).

New section of footway to be installed as a condition of the planning permission. Nothing further to report.

## 95 FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE MATTERS.

95.1 Monthly summary of accounts.

It was resolved that this be accepted and signed.

**Action:**

**Clerk/Graham/Martin.**

95.2 Audit 2021-22. The information received from the External Auditor was noted.

**Meeting closed at 9.40pm**

***Forthcoming meeting dates:***

***Next monthly Council meeting - Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> May 2022***

**APPENDIX A.: Summary of consultations on recent planning and listed building applications received from NHC up to 31st March 2022.**

Address	Application Number	Brief description	Ashwell PC Comments	North Herts Decision
4 The Rickyard	22/00735/FPH	Installation of external metal flue to existing side elevation chimney stack.	PC to NHDC: No objection	Pending
Land Adjacent To 4, Ashwell Street	22/00880/FP	Erection of a detached 3-bedroom dwelling, and detached car port; ancillary works and new vehicular access onto Ashwell Street.	To be discussed at the May Council meeting	Pending
Quarry Hills Barn, Loves Lane	22/00641/FPH	Addition of ground mounted solar panels in garden, to exceed area of 9m <sup>2</sup> that could be added under permitted development. Addition of 16 panels 1x1.5m along hedgerow to the East, occupying 4x10m area, max height 1.5m. Electrical connection to existing fusebox via trench under garden. Not visible from property entrance.	PC to NHDC: No objection	Pending
11 Lucas Lane	22/00608/FPH	Single storey rear extension, raise existing side elevation roof ridge height and insertion of dormer to rear roof slope.	PC to NHDC: No objection	Pending
Land Adj to Ashridge Farmhouse, Ashwell Street	22/00027/FP	Erection of wooden structure with a veranda for use as a clubhouse and storage for the tennis club and erection of additional fencing	PC to NHDC: No objection	Permission Granted 15/03/2022
Ashwell End Farm, Loves Lane	22/00013/FP	Change of Use of land to equestrian and erection of detached building comprising of a stable, tackroom and storage. Installation of concrete base for parking	PC to NHDC: No objection	Pending
39 Station Road	21/03540/FPH	extend existing dropped kerb along part of the front of 39 Station Road onto the highway (and amended application 11/2 - technical wording only)	PC to NHDC: No objection	Permission Granted 14/03/2022
Land Opposite 67 Station Road	21/02803/FP	Erection of one detached 4-bed dwelling	PC to NHDC: No objection	Permission Granted 04/04/2022
Land to the West of 35 Ashwell Street	21/02650/FP	Erection of 2 detached dwellings (1 x 2 bed & 1 x 4 bed) including alterations to existing vehicular access	PC to NHDC: Objection	Pending
Ashwell End Farm, Loves Lane	21/02042/FPH	Single Storey side & rear extensions following demolition of existing detached rear outbuilding	PC to NHDC: No objection	Pending

**APPENDIX B: Monthly summary of accounts 01/03/22 to 31/03/2022.**

	RECEIPTS			£	
86	Nevilles Funeral Services	Rent for Chapel of Rest (March)		68.75	
87	Meridian Lawncare	Advert for Yearbook 2022		40.00	
88	Kate Cumins	Advert for Yearbook 2022		40.00	
89	Redman Stewart (Country Properties)	Advert for Yearbook 2022		400.00	
90	The Wright Accounts	Advert for Yearbook 2022		40.00	
91	Resident	Yearbook Copies payment		6.00	
92	Bugs'n'things	Advert for Yearbook 2022		80.00	
93	Liric Accountants	Advert for Yearbook 2022		140.00	
94	Holmes Marketing (Granary Cottage)	Advert for Yearbook 2022		40.00	
95	Resident	Yearbook Copies payment		25.00	
96	EH Crouch	Advert for Yearbook 2022		80.00	
97	Neville Funeral Service	Advert for Yearbook 2022		230.00	
98	Kip McGrath	Advert for Yearbook 2022		140.00	
99	Arrington Garden Centre	Advert for Yearbook 2022		80.00	
100	EW Pepper (Bury Lane Fun Barn & Far	Advert for Yearbook 2022		140.00	
101	Vanessa Jenkinson	Advert for Yearbook 2022		40.00	
102	Dignity Funerals	CW 22.07 - Burial		770.00	
103	Jane Buxton	Advert for Yearbook 2022		80.00	
104	R & A Transport	Advert for Yearbook 2022		80.00	
105	James Pepper	CW22.09 Ashes plot		140.00	
106	Johnstruct	Advert for Yearbook 2022		80.00	
107	Allotment Tenant	Allotment Rental for 2022 Season, Plot 2		10.00	
108	Allotment Tenant	Allotment Rental for 2022 Season, Plot 12b		10.00	
109	Allotment Tenant	Allotment Rental for 2022 Season, Plot 13a		10.00	
110	Mick Huggins	Advert for Yearbook 2022		80.00	
111	Collings Electrical	Advert for Yearbook 2022		140.00	
112	Sigma Office	Advert for Yearbook 2022		140.00	
113	Amber Osteopathy	Advert for Yearbook 2022		230.00	
114	Edwards Cleaning & Maintenance	Advert for Yearbook 2022		80.00	
115	Bickerdikes	Advert for Yearbook 2022		140.00	
116	Santander	Reserve Account interest		0.16	
			<b>Total</b>	<b>£3,579.91</b>	
	PAYMENTS		£ less VAT	VAT	£ inc VAT
226	Duo Creative Services Ltd	Website monthly fee (Mar)	25.00	5.00	30.00
227	Edward's Cleaning & Maintenance Ser	Toilet Cleaning February & Consumables Inv no 2361	180.00		180.00
228	The Blue Tree Company	Cutting of Springs Hedge	400.00	80.00	480.00
229	Parkes Dispay & Expo	Printing of the 2022 yearbook	3729.97	7.00	3,736.97
230	The Blue Tree Company	Removing fallen tree at the Springs	400.00	80.00	480.00
231	Laura Brooks-Payne	Reimbursement for postage for Yearbook posting	54.94		54.94
232	Austin Tree Care	Planting hedges at the Recreation Ground & wooden tree	1576.00	315.20	1,891.20
233	Wrigleys Solicitors	Advice regarding Community Land Trusts	1500.00	300.00	1,800.00
234	Abacus Cleaning & Printing Supplies	Stationery Supplies for office	89.05	17.81	106.86
235	Royston & District Community Transp	Donation	200.00		200.00
236	Jamie Hamilton	Design of Yearbook 2022	500.00		500.00
237	EON Next	Electricity for Public Toilets for February	12.28	0.61	12.89
238	Castle Water	Water Charges for Pavilion Jan to June 2022	36.36		36.36
239	Edward's Cleaning & Maintenance Ser	Toilet Cleaning March & Consumables Inv no 2370	220.00		220.00
240	The Blue Tree Company	Tree Work at Cemetery	925.00	185.00	1,110.00
241	Brilliant Lawns	Fertiliser Application at the Recreation Ground	359.65		359.65
242	Ashwell Primary School	Use of school hall for the Annual Parish Meeting	45.00		45.00
243	Clerk	Clerk salary	1371.50		1,371.50
244	HCC Pensions-LGPS Account	Clerk & Deputy Clerk Pension to LGPS	740.66		740.66
245	HMRC accounts ref 321PF00003624	tax&NI to Inland Revenue	525.59		525.59
246	ECO	Environmental Cleansing Officer salary	236.80		236.80
247	Deputy Clerk	Deputy Clerk salary	850.71		850.71
248	Grounds Officer	Grounds Officer salary	153.60		153.60
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£14,132.11</b>	<b>£990.62</b>	<b>£15,122.73</b>
MONEY AT BANK					
		Current Account 31/03/2022	<b>£47,922.57</b>		
		Reserve Account 31/03/2022	<b>£20,704.44</b>		