

**Minutes of the Ashwell Parish Council meeting
held on Wednesday 3rd July 2019 in the Parish Room**

Present: Cllrs Mark White (Chairman), Martin Hoffman (Vice-chairman), Gemma Allan, Norton Mahy, Graham Lee, David Sims.

The Clerk (Jane Porter) and the Deputy Clerk (Laura Brooks-Payne) were also in attendance.

Members of the public: Twelve parishioners and District Councillor Tom Tyson.

County Councillor Steve Jarvis had sent his apologies.

24. Apologies for absence. None.

25. Declarations of Interest. Item 35.4; Cllr Graham Lee declared an interest as a resident of Ashwell Street. Item 35.7; Cllr Martin Hoffman declared an interest as a neighbour to the site.

26. Proposal to approve and sign the minutes of the previous meeting.

It was *resolved* that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 5th June 2019 be accepted and signed.

27. PARISH AFFAIRS, REPORTS FROM OTHER BODIES AND OPEN FORUM

Standing Orders suspended (members of the public permitted to speak if they wish).

28. Village Hall. Transfer to the Parish Council of the holding (or custodian) trusteeship (*see February Council 2018, minute 98.1 for details*).

Cllr Martin Hoffman reported that a response from the solicitor was awaited.

29. Items raised by parish councillors. (*including any matters on other village groups and organisations*).

29.1 Museum. Cllr Martin Hoffman (Chairman of the Museum trustees in his own right) reported that the first phase of the building works was going well.

29.2 Arbury Banks. Cllr Martin Hoffman reported that the aerial data from the Chilterns Beacons of the Past project was expected to be published shortly.

29.3 Police. The Chairman noted the information re lead theft from local church roofs and asked all to remain vigilant and to report anything suspicious.

30. Matters re other authorities and organisations.

30.1 North Herts District Council (NHDC) District Councillor Tom Tyson reported on the following:

(i) Anthropos music festival at Bygrave woods. He had liaised with NHDC environmental health officers and, although the event was smaller and quieter than the Farrfest of previous years, the promised information letter from the organisers to local residents had not been sent out as agreed. (ii) Grants were available to local groups from the NHDC Baldock & District Committee; the next deadline for bids was the first week of August. (iii) There had been issues with waste/recycling bins in some areas. Residents wishing to renew their brown bin subscription could do this online.

30.2 Hertfordshire County Council (HCC)/Highways. (County Councillor Steve Jarvis)

The following were noted:

(i) Resurfacing works were to take place in Bacons Yard. (ii) A parishioner's request for traffic calming in Claybush Road had been forwarded. (iii) Rights of way/a parishioner had made a request to the HCC officer re potholes in Ashwell Street. (iv) Rights of way/ fly-tipping at the rear of a house in Newnham Way had been reported; the householder had now removed the building spoil that had been dumped.

(v) Parishioners' requests re overhanging vegetation in Newnham Way had been forwarded to the landowner and reported using the Herts Highways online system.

30.3 Rights of way/Parish Paths Partnership (P3) grant. The request for potential projects was noted.

31. Working Groups.

(those currently active listed; members include volunteer parishioners as well as parish councillors)

31.1 Neighbourhood Plan Group Cllr Graham Lee reported that David Short had stood down as leader of the group; he was to take over the role supported by Cllr Norton Mahy as deputy.

31.2 Yearbook Group (*see notes from the meeting held on 11th June*) Cllr Norton Mahy (leader) reported that the response from volunteers who had contributed last year had been positive and a similar team would work on the next edition. The printer was to be approached to quote for the design and page make-up again.

There were plans to encourage new volunteers to join the team especially younger people. The next meeting would be in September.

31.3 Local business support Cllr Graham Lee (group leader) reported that the new village map to include local business information was ongoing. *See 33.1 below.*

31.4 Protection of valued trees Cllr David Sims (group leader) reported that the request to NHDC for Tree Preservation Orders on trees on land at the junction of Station Road and Ashwell Street and along the Ruddy had been unsuccessful. However the amendments to the planning application included changes that would help protect some of the trees. *See also 35.3 below.*

32. Items raised by parishioners.

32.1 Request for support to get red-triangle ‘hedgehog’ signs installed by Highways in Hodwell and Springhead. It was agreed that the request be forwarded to County Councillor Steve Jarvis with the proviso that any signage be placed on existing posts.

32.2 Planning application for Claybush Road. Request that the response by the Parish Council include that the Inspector had not yet concluded his investigations for the draft Local Plan and thus due diligence had not yet been completed. *See also 35.4 below.*

32.3 Development at 1 Newnham Way. Report from the neighbouring landowner that a dispute over the correct line of the boundary had been communicated to the NHDC Planning Officer who had responded that this was a matter between relevant neighbours not the planning authority.

Standing orders reinstated from here.

33. Matters of report from previous meetings.

Updates were received on the following:

33.1 New village map. Communications with the supplier re the design and sourcing of illustrations were ongoing.

33.2 New village entrance sign. This was awaiting installation by Herts Highways in Station Road by the chicane.

33.3 Letters from Year 6 children at the school to Sir Oliver Heald, MP. The report from former parish councillors David Short and Madeleine Legg following their meeting with the children was noted.

A response would now be sent to the MP.

Action: Clerk

34. Premises management reports from councillors.

(individual’s responsibilities shown in brackets)

Updates were received on the following:

34.1 Cemetery. A copy of the new lease for the Chapel of Rest, and other documents, was awaiting delivery from the solicitor.

34.2 Recreation Ground and Pavilion. (Cllrs Mark White and Gemma Allan) Cllr Gemma Allan reported that, should the Claybush development go ahead, a section 106 contribution from the developer of £75,000 towards the new pavilion project had been agreed. Other funding sources for this project were being investigated. The objective was to replace the now out-of-date facilities and to upgrade them to cater for a wider range of activities.

It was noted that practical issues such as a water leak were ongoing.

34.3 Playground. (Cllr Gemma Allan) Cllr Gemma Allan reported that she had arranged an open forum event for Friday evening to consult children, parents and any other interested parties, on how the facilities could be improved.

It was noted that minor works following the RoSPA report were in hand.

34.4 Public Toilets. (Cllr Gemma Allan)

Cllr Gemma Allan reported that a site meeting had been held to discuss the proposals for new facilities; various options were being investigated.

34.5 The Springs. (Cllr Martin Hoffman) Cllr Martin Hoffman reported that a routine site inspection was to be scheduled. The latest flow data from the Environment Agency (EA) had shown a drop in rates to below the recommended level required to sustain the flat worms and a condition of the SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest); the reasons for this had been requested from the EA.

34.6 Small Gains. (Allotments, Accies sports field and shared car parking area) (Cllr David Sims)
Cllr David Sims reported: (i) The police were patrolling regularly as incidents of vandalism, littering, drug-taking, etc continued and the proposal for the installation of a gate across Small Gains Lane to improve security was being discussed with relevant landowners. (ii) The owner of 105 Station Road was keen to get potholes in the section of track to his house repaired and had sought quotes for this. It was agreed that maintaining a rough, but accessible, surface along the section down to the allotments and sports field was a deterrent to speeding. It was agreed that Cllr David Sims would continue to liaise on behalf of the Parish Council.

34.7 The Lock Up. (Cllr Norton Mahy)

Cllr Norton Mahy reported that the information plaque was to be removed for refurbishment.

34.8 Merchant Taylors' Green. (Cllr Martin Hoffman)

Cllr Martin Hoffman reported: (i) The agreed works to the Walnut tree had now been completed.

(ii) The information plaque on the seat was to be removed for refurbishment.

34.9 Carters' Pond. (Cllr Martin Hoffman)

Cllr Martin Hoffman reported that the refurbishment of the seat was scheduled.

34.10 Street furniture. Nothing to report.

34.11 St Mary's Churchyard grounds maintenance. (Cllr Martin Hoffman) Nothing to report.

34.12 Parish Clock. (Cllr Mark White, Chairman)

The Chairman reported that the annual service and adjustment of the overnight noise reduction device had been completed.

34.13 War Memorial.

It was noted that: (i) Watering of the new hedge was continuing as required. (ii) Communications re access to the water meter was ongoing with relevant authorities.

35. Planning matters.

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

35.1 The new applications considered by the Planning Committee (Wed 3rd July, 7.00pm) were noted.

35.2 Townsend House, 24 Lucas Lane. Consultation on new application.

NHDC Case Ref. 19/01377/FP.

The differences to the previous application (granted permission in 2017) were noted, ie,

(i) Double gable end to the rear elevation. (ii) The height of the dwellings approximately 0.5 metres lower. (iii) New windows in the side elevations. (iv) The footprint altered slightly. (v) The removal and replacement of the front hedgerow.

The communications received from parishioners and local residents were noted.

Standing orders were suspended for parishioners present to state their views.

It was noted that parishioners raised no concerns re the points (i) and (ii) above.

The following objections were made: (a) New windows in the side elevations were not of frosted glass and overlooked the neighbours. (b) The new buildings would be spaced 900mm from the boundary of 32 Lucas Lane; it was understood that the distance should be at least 1 metre. (c) The design of the existing streetlight should be retained. It was noted that if the bank and hedge were retained, removal and replacement would probably be unnecessary. (d) Adequate storage for waste and recycling bins should be provided to discourage residents from leaving them on the footway. (e) The hedge, and the bank on which it grew, should be retained as it is. It was of aesthetic and ecological value and provided a practical high barrier to the adjacent Recreation Ground and cricket pitch. The proposal to cut access paths through it should be rejected.

Standing orders reinstated.

It was noted that permission for the previous application had included:

Report by the NHDC Planning Officer;

'4.3.14 ...The existing hedgerow is a fine specimen and well established therefore I have recommended a number of conditions to protect the hedgerow during and following construction of the dwellings if permission is granted.'

'4.3.16 I have recommended a number of conditions which include the submission of a full landscaping management plan and conditions to protect the tree and hedgerows during construction and for the life time of the development.'

NHDC Decision notice January 2018.

'Condition 5. The trees and hedgerows to be retained on the application site shall never be

felled, lopped, topped, uprooted, removed or otherwise destroyed or killed, without the prior written agreement of the Local Planning Authority.'

'Reason: To safeguard and enhance the appearance of the completed development and the visual amenity of the locality.'

'Condition 6. A detailed site specific Arboricultural Method Statement regarding protection of the existing hedgerows and tree on the site, shall be submitted to and approved...'

'Reason: In order to safeguard the existing tree and hedgerows on the site and, in order that the agreed works are undertaken by a suitably qualified contractor.'

A proposal was made including, (i) the Parish Council's objections to the previous planning application were still valid and should be reiterated to the Planning Officer, (ii) the objections of parishioners to the amendments proposed in this application should be supported and forwarded to the Planning Officer, (iii) a recommendation be made to the Planning Officer that the application be refused on the additional grounds that removal of the existing hedge, or any access paths through it, was contrary to national and district policy; retention had clearly been a key factor in the granting of the previous permission and the conditions imposed. It was **resolved** that the proposal be accepted. **Action: Clerk/Deputy Clerk**

35.3 Land at junction of Ashwell Street and Station Rd. Consultation on amended application.

NHDC Case Ref. 19/00455/FP.

It was noted that the NHDC Planning Officer had supplied a summary list of the amendments to the previous application for which permission was pending.

'(i) Three of the dwellings (Plots 1, 3 and 9) have been removed from the RPA's of their nearest respective trees. The layout and design of the Plot 1 dwelling has been switched/reversed so that the driveway and garage are on the other side of that plot. (ii) Two of the dwellings have been joined to form a pair of semis. (iii) The turning head in front of Plot 2 has been reduced. (iv) Parking and turning space for some of the dwellings have been increased to meet minimum standards of 2 spaces per dwelling. (v) The Plot 1, 2, 8 and 9 dwellings will be completely rendered. (vi) A 1.8m high fence and hedge to the boundary with No. 54 Station Road to provide privacy and additional wildlife habitats, and also on the south boundary of the site. (vii) More planting is shown within the site, primarily in the front gardens of the dwellings.'

The comments made by parishioners were noted.

No adverse comments were made by parish councillors with regard to the details of the proposed amendments. The view was expressed that the amended layout would potentially be of benefit to the trees for which the Parish Council had requested Tree Preservation Orders. *See 31.4 above.*

A proposal was made to include, (i) the Parish Council's objections to the previous planning application were still valid and should be reiterated to the Planning Officer, (ii) the Parish Council's previous request, should the application be granted permission, for additional footway along the boundary to link the site to the existing footway system and provide safe pedestrian access to the village centre should be reiterated, (iii) should the application be granted permission, Permitted Development Rights should be withdrawn to retain the size of the dwellings and prevent adverse impact on neighbours.

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

Action: Clerk/Deputy Clerk

35.4 Land rear of 4-14 Claybush Road.

NHDC Case Ref. 16/01797/1.

The following were noted: (i) The Chairman's rejection of the request from the developer, Croudace Homes, for a closed meeting with the Parish Council. (ii) The information from NHDC that, following the Land Tribunal decision in favour of the applicant, the application would now be determined by the Planning Control Committee (next scheduled meeting Thursday 18th July). (iii)

It was agreed that Cllrs Graham Lee and Norton Mahy would review and update the draft summary statement to be sent to members of the NHDC Planning Control Committee prior to their meeting. It was agreed that the advice of the Neighbourhood Plan consultant be sought on this. It was noted that the Inspector had not yet concluded his investigations for the draft Local Plan and whether or not NHDC should even be considering this application should be questioned.

It was agreed that an application be made to NHDC for a representative of the Parish Council to speak in the public session of the meeting.

See 34.2 above re the section 106 submission to NHDC.

35.5 Former Cooke Engineering site.

NHDC Case Ref. 16/02154/1.

It was agreed to write again to the developer (with copies to NHDC and HCC) requesting that the planting removed during the build process from the verge and bank adjacent to the right of way be replaced with suitable native planting.

Action: Clerk/Deputy Clerk

35.6 Land off Station Road. NHDC Case Ref. 17/01406/1.

No further information had been received. The comments from the NHDC Planning Officer were noted.

35.7 1 Newnham Way. NHDC Case Ref. 19/00424/FPH.

The following were noted: (i) The concerns raised by local residents including the precise location of the boundaries to the site, the extent of the area excavated, and the damage to the adjacent highways verge on the Partridge Hill track. (ii) The further communications with the NHDC Planning Officer and the HCC rights of way officer. *See also 32.3 above.*

35.8 Odsey Properties Ltd/request for the support of the Parish Council.

The further information received from landowner Jeremy Fordham was noted. His proposals included (i) a new car park for the station, (ii) measures to prevent verge parking in Odsey, (iii) footways and housing development in Odsey, (iv) a new footpath linking up with the existing footway system along Station Road from Ashwell.

It was noted that the station and the proposed development site were in South Cambridgeshire.

Cllr Martin Hoffman noted that the Parish Council had discussed ways of improving access to the station for at least 25 years and welcomed the proposal. Various views were expressed at the likely loss of free parking and possible increases in traffic. It was agreed to communicate with Steeple Morden Parish Council and if they had no significant objections, to respond to the landowner that the Parish Council was supportive of his proposals.

Action: Clerk/Deputy Clerk

36. Finance

36.1 Proposal for approval of the monthly summary of accounts (see appendix below).

It was *resolved* that this be approved.

37. Employment matters (Chair & Cllr Graham Lee)

The Chairman reported that new contracts had been drafted for the Clerk and Deputy Clerk to bring them in line with the current NALC models.

It was *resolved* that they be signed by the Chairman.

Meeting closed 9.25pm.

Forthcoming meeting dates:

August Council meeting, Wednesday 7th August 2019, 8pm in the Parish Room.

Appendix 1 – General material received

NHDC weekly ‘Members Information’; HAPTC briefings and bulletins; SLCC updates and newsletters; Police OWL/Rural News/Neighbourhood Watch bulletins, Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust newsletters.

Appendix 2 - Summary of consultations on recent planning and listed building applications

Details of applications are sent from North Herts District Council (NHDC) to the Parish Council as a consultee. These are available on www.north-herts.gov.uk. If any concerns are raised either by a parishioner or a parish councillor on an application, an on-site meeting of the Parish Council’s Planning Committee may be convened to consider those items. See the notice board, website or contact the office for the agenda. A summary is available on the website (www.ashwell.gov.uk) Full details of applications are available on the NHDC website.

Address	Application Number	Brief description	Ashwell PC Comments	North Herts Decision
10 High Street	19/01489/FPH	First floor rear extension and ancillary works.	Planning Committee Wed 3rd July PC Decision sent to NHDC: recommendation that permission be GRANTED	Pending
80 Ashwell Street	19/01379/FPH	Two storey side extension, single storey rear extension, demolition of existing garage and front porch extension, with ancillary works.	Planning Committee Wed 3rd July PC Decision sent to NHDC: recommendation that permission be REFUSED	Pending
Land rear 1-11 Back Street	19/01515/FP	Erection of two 3-bed detached bungalows with associated gardens and parking (as variation of permission approved under ref 15/00962/1)	Planning Committee Wed 3rd July PC Decision sent to NHDC: recommendation that permission be GRANTED	Pending
Townsend House 24 Lucas Lane	19/01377/FP	Erection of 4 x 3 bed dwellings with creation of new vehicular access off of Lucas Lane (variation of planning permission granted under ref 17/01807/1).	See minutes July Council meeting. PC Decision sent to NHDC: recommendation that permission be REFUSED	Pending
Land Jct of Ashwell St & Station Rd	19/00455/FP	Amendments to previous application -see below	Previous objections to NHDC were reiterated. See minutes July Council meeting.	Pending
Land Jct of Ashwell St & Station Rd	19/00455/FP	Erection of 9 (6 No. Three Bedroom, 3 No. Four bedroom) dwellings with associated parking, amenity space and associated ancillary works, following demolition of existing redundant structures. Creation of new access from Station Road.	Planning Committee Wed 3rd April. PC Decision sent to NHDC: recommendation that permission be REFUSED	Pending
Land rear of 4-14 Claybush Road	16/01797/1	30 proposed dwellings with associated access, parking, amenity & open space.	PC Decision sent to NHDC: recommendation that permission be REFUSED	Pending

Appendix 3 - Monthly accounts summary

36	Nevilles Funeral Services	Rent for Chapel of Rest (May)	68.75
37	Tenant	Allotment payment plot number 7b	10.00
38	Martin Sheds	Advert fee payment for 2019 yearbook advert	125.00
39	Nevilles Funeral Services	payment for interment of cremated remains CW19.11	220.00
40	Mills&Son Chimney Sweeps	Advert fee payment for 2019 yearbook advert	40.00
41	Beauty Barn	Advert fee payment for 2019 yearbook advert	70.00
42	Ashwell Pharmacy	Advert fee payment for 2019 yearbook advert	70.00
43	Cemetery Works Number CW 19.04	Payment for memorial plaque Ref CW19.04	75.00
44	HMRC	vat Reclaim for 2018-19	8,366.27
45	Santander interest account	Interest 01/06/2019	6.13
		TOTAL	9,051.15
	PAYMENTS		
50	EON	Electricity for Pavilion Toilets (5/6/19)	8.85
51	EON	Electricity to sports pavilion (11/6/19)	20.95
52	Clerk	Clerk's salary	1,279.89
53	Deputy Clerk	Deputy Clerk's Salary	785.88
54	HCC Pensions-LGPS Account,	Clerk & Deputy Clerk Pension	708.74
55	Grounds Officer	Grounds Officer salary	149.20
56	ECO	Environmental Cleansing Officer salary	237.60
57	HMRC accounts ref 321PF00003624	tax&NI to Inland Revenue	398.77
58	Edwards Cleaning & Maintenance	Public Toilet Cleaning - May	240.00
59	Allotment Deposit Refund, tenant	Allotment deposit return	40.00
60	Brilliant Lawns	Rec Grass Cutting - May	330.00
61	Duo Creative Services Ltd	Website monthly fee (June)	30.00
62	Ashwell at Home	Donation re rent from funfair	100.00
		TOTAL	4,329.88
	MONEY AT BANK		
		Current Account 30/6/2019	£37,110.60
		Reserve Account 30/6/2019	£20,621.25