

**Minutes of the Ashwell Parish Council meeting
held on Wednesday 3rd June 2020 online via Zoom**

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

Also in attendance: Clerk (Jane Porter), County Councillor Steve Jarvis, District Councillor Tom Tyson.
Five parishioners also joined the meeting.

Members of the public who were signed up to the website (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.

132. Apologies for absence.

133. Declarations of Interest. Cllr Graham Lee re item 138.3 (Claybush development).

134. Proposal to approve and sign the minutes of the previous meeting, 6th May 2020.

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

135. OPEN FORUM - PARISH AFFAIRS, REPORTS FROM OTHER BODIES ETC

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

135.1 Items raised by parish councillors (not including agenda items below).

135.1.1 Ashwell Village News. The change in the editorial policy that had resulted in the rejection of the regular ‘Jottings’ report of the previous meeting submitted by Cllr Martin Hoffman was noted. His report on the May Council meeting had however, as usual, been published online and hard copies put on notice boards. The Chairman reported that he had spoken to the new editor. Following discussion Cllr Hoffman agreed to submit a ‘Jottings’ report on the current meeting and see whether this was accepted for publication or rejected.

Action: MGH

135.1.2 Water supply issues in parts of the village. Cllr Graham Lee reported on the low pressure and complete failure of the water supply to parts of the village for long periods last week. Some households that had been completely cut off had been given bottled water, albeit tardily, but others, including his own, had received nothing. Following the failure of any coherent response from Affinity Water he had contacted their CEO. He had received a report informing that the cause had been a leak in the supply along the Ashwell to Bygrave road and this had now been fixed. Posts from some local residents on social media, including much speculation/incorrect information, were noted. Responsible use of water and respect for it as a valuable, and not limitless, resource had been emphasised.

135.1.3 School. Cllr Gemma Allan reported that more children, in addition to those of key workers, had now started to return. All was going extremely well.

135.2 Reports/updates re ongoing matters.

135.2.1 New pavilion project. Nothing new to report.

135.2.2 Improved footway/cycleway to Ashwell and Morden Station (South Cambridgeshire).

Nothing new to report.

135.2.3 Village hall/transfer to the Parish Council of the holding (or custodian) trusteeship.

The Chairman reported that various documents received from the solicitor were pending review and collation of a response to them.

Action: Clerk

135.2.4 Bids to the Henry Colbron Trust/(i) by the Parish Council for the Recreation Ground, (ii) by an independent group of parishioners re new use for the redundant school netball courts off Gardiners Lane.

Cllr Gemma Allan reported that an acknowledgement of the latter bid had been received. It was understood, however, that the trustees, the Merchant Taylors’ Company, were unlikely to process any grants in the near future due to the impact of the coronavirus situation on their working practices and also the uncertainty of funding available from investments.

135.3 Reports from village groups

135.3.1 Greening Ashwell. It was noted that the Parish Council had been copied on their newsletters and also their proposed ‘Draft planting schedule for November’. Whilst the Parish Council remained very supportive in principle, the group had been requested to rectify the errors in the ‘Ashwell Parish Land’ section. Two of the three sites were not owned by the Parish Council and their proposal for a new section of hedge at the Recreation Ground was already on the Parish Council’s list.

The group's report in the June edition of the Village News was noted and they would be requested to correct the information about the new hedge planting at Small Gains. Cllr David Sims reported that this had been undertaken by the Parish Council not the group and, although part of the objective was to enhance the existing vegetation, it was also designed to enhance security by creating a barrier between the lane and the car park/sports field/allotments area. Further planting was to take place in the autumn and new post-and-rail fencing and a new gate installed. *See also further reports on Small Gains below 135.5 and 137.4.*

135.4 Matters re other authorities and organisations.

135.4.1 North Herts District Council (NHDC) District Councillor Tom Tyson reported:

(i) Proposal from the NHDC Transport Officer/support for a bid to the Rural Mobility Fund.

Proposal from the NHDC Transport Officer re support for a bid to the Rural Mobility Fund. Following discussion it was agreed to support the NHDC's bid for funding a 'dial-a-ride' type of service for the local rural area. This service could, for example, provide transport to/from Ashwell & Morden or Baldock Station when no other bus services were available or to local places where there was no other service. Concerns re any potential negative impact on the existing bus services had been raised and the reassurance that this would not be the case was noted. The need for co-ordination with the timetables of existing services would also be emphasised in the response to NHDC. Overlap with the existing services that covered peak-times to some places could be avoided by offering the additional service outside of these. **Action: Clerk**

See also item 138 below re Planning matters.

135.4.2 Hertfordshire County Council (HCC)/**Highways** County Councillor Steve Jarvis reported:

(i) 20mph limits. Most of the signage had now been installed; he had received some comments about specific signs and these were being looked into.

(ii) Restricted parking outside retailers. Signage for this was currently being installed with the white-lining to follow; schedules had been affected by the coronavirus situation.

(iii) Speed Management Strategy changes were currently being discussed by the county council; this could enable the 20mph zone to be extended to include Station Road.

(iv) West End chicane proposal; this was being progressed by Highways engineers and included discussion about the requirements for enhanced/additional street lighting.

Parishioners concerns about speeding traffic and questions re the enforcement of the 20mph zone were noted. County Councillor Steve Jarvis reported that other communities had also reported increased speeding as a result of reduced traffic during the lockdown. He encouraged the publicity of the 20mph zone and actions by community Speedwatch groups. Cllr Martin Hoffman, who had led the Ashwell group in the past, was supportive of the latter. Cllr Gemma Allan proposed the distribution of stickers etc such as were available from the 'Twenty's Plenty' organisation; Cllr Steve Jarvis reported that funding from a locality budget might be available. It was reported that the police had recently carried out speed checks but it was acknowledged that their resources were limited.

135.5 Items raised by parishioners.

(i) Alms Lane/on-going issue of fallen vegetation. It was noted that confusion had existed re the responsibility for this since November. Information had now been received that Herts Highways were to carry out the required works but their schedules were uncertain because of the coronavirus situation. A report was received from a representative of local residents who had communicated with the householder and were to arrange a working party to clear the fallen vegetation.

(ii) Ashwell Street/concerns re clearance of land and felling of trees during the bird nesting season. NHDC planning officers had informed that no planning application had been received for the site.

(iii) Night-time vehicle noise disturbance from the hard-standings in Northfields Road and Kingsland Way. The Chairman reported that the police were undertaking night patrols; he encouraged local residents to call the police using 101 if needed. Cllr Gemma Allan agreed to speak to the landowner.

(iv) Anti-social behaviour/littering at Small Gains. Cllr David Sims reported that the police were making additional patrols to the area and had on at least one occasion moved on groups of youths. Those who had cleared litter had been thanked. *See also 135.3.1 above re increases security measures.*

See 137.3 below re The Springs.

135.6 Working Groups reports.

Members include volunteer parishioners as well as parish councillors. Offers to join or start new groups welcomed. See also New Pavilion 135.2.1 above.

Village Sports, Litter Pickers and Springs volunteers currently cancelled/on hold.

135.6.1 Neighbourhood Plan Group Leader Cllr Graham Lee and deputy Cllr Norton Mahy reported: (i) Historic England had responded that a strategic assessment would not be required so the timetable for the consultation could now proceed. (ii) Documents for the consultation including a leaflet to go to all households were being prepared; this would be publicised on social media, notice boards, Village News etc. (iii) The working group had met. (iv) Following the consultation, and any subsequent minor amendments, the final draft would then come back to the Parish Council.

Cllr Martin Hoffman thanked them for the summary documents they had provided following his earlier questions; these had been ‘excellent’.

Working party member David Short commended the two parish councillors who were leading the initiative.

135.6.2 Yearbook Group Leader Cllr Norton Mahy reported that the group would meet in September to commence the production of the 2021 edition.

135.6.3 Local business support (leader Cllr Graham Lee) *See 135.4.2 above re parking spaces and 136.1 below re new map.*

135.6.4 Tree Group (leader Cllr David Sims) *See 135.3.1 above re new planting initiatives.*

Standing orders reinstated from here.

136. Matters of report from previous meetings.

136.1 New village map. Cllr Graham Lee reported that the latest draft had received positive comments. Some minor corrections/amendments would be made and details for printing agreed.

137. PREMISES MANAGEMENT REPORTS

137.1 Recreation Ground including the pavilion, public toilets and the playground.

Cllr Gemma Allan reported that the skateboard area remained taped off but some youths had been reported using it.

See also item 135.2.1 above.

137.2 The Springs.

Cllr Martin Hoffman reported that following reports of overcrowding/problems with social distancing the police were regularly patrolling the site. Littering and overflowing rubbish bins was continuing to be a problem. Even if it was felt necessary, it would not be possible for the Parish Council to close the site because of the rights of way that ran through it.

137.3 Small Gains. Allotments, Accies sports field and shared car parking area.

Cllr David Sims reported that repairs to the surface of the track were to commence this week.

See also 135.3.1 above re increases in security measures.

137.4 Carters’ Pond. (Responsible: Cllr Martin Hoffman)

Cllr Martin Hoffman reported that the seat repairs were still pending.

There was nothing new to report on the following: Cemetery, street furniture (litter bins, dog waste bins, benches, notice boards), St Mary’s Churchyard grounds maintenance, Parish Clock, the Lock Up, Merchant Taylors’ Green, War Memorial.

138. PLANNING MATTERS

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

138.1 New consultation for response to NHDC.

Baldwins Corner, Green Lane. NHDC Case Ref. 20/00921/FPH

Full Permission Householder: Part two storey and part single storey side extension (West elevation). Single storey rear extension with link to existing garage. Single storey side extension and side conservatory (East elevation). Raising of roof of garage including insertion of two dormer windows to facilitate addition of

first floor to garage and conversion of garage into habitable accommodation following removal of single storey side element, existing conservatory and basement below.

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**

138.2 New consultation for response to NHDC.

24 Swan Street. NHDC Case Ref. 20/01047/FP and 20/01048/LBC

Full Planning Permission: Retention of replacement roof including roof light of existing rear extension.

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**

138.3 Consultation on Discharge of Condition for response to NHDC.

Land rear of 4-14 Claybush Road. Discharge of Condition 24 (Ashwell St pedestrian safety) as attached to Planning Application 16/01797/1 granted on 25.09.2019.

Cllr Graham Lee expressed the view that in general the proposals were consistent with the NHDC commissioned report. His main concern was the width of the area to be tarmacked in the section leading from Ashwell Street to the existing field entrance. Others had also expressed their concerns that this could encourage the area to be used for parking. A narrower width, ie with less tarmac, would also be more sympathetic to the area by allowing more vegetation, perhaps a native hedge. There was no need for a wide path as it was only for pedestrian use and would be blocked at one end by a chicane.

A proposal was made that a response be made to the Planning Officer in line with this.

It was *resolved* that the proposal be accepted. **Action: Clerk**

138.4 New consultation Listed Building Consent

The Rose & Crown, 69 High Street. Case ref. 20/01067/LBC

Removal of 3no. internal doors, installing 4no. internal doors, new hard floor finishes and new back fitting. Cllr Martin Hoffman reported that he had reviewed the proposals and was thoroughly in favour of supporting this application by Greene King. They had stated in their application, 'All of the interventions are cosmetic and will have no impact on the historic fabric.... Publicans struggle in an ever dwindling market and it can only be to the benefit of the building to improve the internal circulation, make more targeted use of the spaces and encourage new clients.'

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

It was *resolved* that the proposal be accepted. **Action: Clerk**

138.5 Land between Lucas Lane and Ashwell Street known as Hunts Close. Case Ref. 20/00126/FP.

Bid by the North Herts Archaeological Society for scheduling. Information had been received that the appeal against the decision not to schedule the site had been reconsidered by the relevant authority on the basis that new evidence had been submitted. Local historian David Short had encouraged the Parish Council to write in support of this new investigation. This was agreed.

139. FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE MATTERS

139.1 Monthly summary of accounts. Proposal for approval.

It was *resolved* that this be approved.

139.2 Annual Audit for 2019-20. The timetable for this was noted.

Meeting closed at 9.30pm

Forthcoming meeting dates:

July Council - Wednesday 1st July 2020, 8pm, online using Zoom.

Appendix: Summary of recent planning consultations

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.

Consultations on recent planning and listed building applications received from NHDC as of 3rd June 2020				
Address	Application Number	Brief description	Ashwell PC Comments	North Herts Decision
24 Swan Street	20/01047/FP and 20/01048/LBC	Retention of replacement roof including roof light of existing rear extension	PC June meeting PC to NHDC: no objections and recommendation for GRANT of permission	Pending
Baldwins Corner Green Lane	20/00921/FPH	Part two storey and part single storey side extension (West elevation). Single storey rear extension with link to existing garage. Single storey side extension and side conservatory (East elevation). Raising of roof of garage including insertion of two dormer windows to facilitate addition of first floor to garage and conversion of garage into habitable accommodation following removal of single storey side element, existing conservatory and basement below.	PC June meeting PC to NHDC: no objections and recommendation for GRANT of permission	Pending
The Rose & Crown, 69 High Street	20/01067/LBC	Removal of 3no. internal doors, installing 4no. internal doors, new hard floor finishes and new back fitting.	PC June meeting PC to NHDC: no objections and recommendation for GRANT of permission	Pending
Townsend House, 24 Lucas Lane	20/00847/FP (previous application withdrawn)	Erection of 4 bay cart shed to provide 8 covered spaces and slight changes to end house and landscaping	PC May meeting PC to NHDC: objections and recommendation for REFUSAL of permission	Pending
10 Lucas Lane	20/00810/FPH	Part two storey and part single storey rear extension and insertion of two front dormer windows and two rear roof lights in existing roof slopes to facilitate addition of first floor to existing bungalow following demolition of existing single storey rear extension.	PC May meeting PC to NHDC: no objections and recommendation for GRANT of permission	Pending
Land between Huntsridge and East Lodge, 22 Lucas Lane (known as Hunts Close)	20/00126/FP	24 new dwellings	Planning meeting 16/2/2020 PC to NHDC: objections and request for further information	Pending
Land Jct of Ashwell St & Station Rd (known as Townsend Close)	19/02691/S73	Variation of condition 8 -footway (permission granted for x9 dwellings 19/09/2019)	PC to NHDC: objections and proposals for alternatives	Withdrawn by applicant

Appendix: Monthly accounts summary

ACCOUNTS - Summary for 01/05/2020 - 31/05/2020					
	RECEIPTS		£ less VAT	VAT	£ inc VAT
20	Kip McGrath	Payment for Yearbook 2020 Advert			125.00
21	Nevilles Funeral Services	Rent for Chapel of Rest (April)			68.75
22	Allotment Tenant	Payment for Allotment plot number 11			20.00
23	Allotment Tenant	Payment for Allotment plot number 4b			10.00
24	Allotment Tenant	Payment for Allotment plot number 4b			10.00
25	Bickerdikes garden Centre	Payment for Yearbook 2020 Advert			125.00
26	Allotment Tenant	Payment for Allotment plot number 3			20.00
27	Allotment Tenant	Payment for Allotment plot number 7b			10.00
28	E H Crouch	Cemetery Payment CW 20.06			230.00
29	personal cheque	Grave Reservation payment			1,020.00
30	Santander interest account	Interest 01/05/2020			5.93
		TOTAL			1,644.68
	PAYMENTS				
21	Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust	Annual Subscription	40.00		40.00
22	Affinity for Business	Water for Small gains (Inv date 26/3/2020)	6.47		6.47
23	Duo Creative Services Ltd	Website monthly fee (May)	25.00	5.00	30.00
24	Brilliant Lawns	Rec Grass Cutting on 2/5/2020 INV 7458	115.00		115.00
25	Ashwell Housing Association	Rent for PC Office from May-Oct 2020	450.00		450.00
26	D J Granger grounds Maintenance Ltd	Grounds Maintenance Worksheet 69	322.00	64.40	386.40
27	Clerk	Clerk reimbursement for Zoom annual payment	59.95	11.99	71.94
28	D J Granger grounds Maintenance Ltd	Grounds Maintenance Worksheet 70	496.00	99.20	595.20
29	Brilliant Lawns	Rec Grass Cutting on 11/5/2020 INV 7496	115.00		115.00
30	Affinity for Business	Water for Pavilion (Inv date 26/3/2020)	73.75		73.75
31	BT for Business	Line rental & Broadband from Apr-Jul 2020 (4/5/2020)	167.80	33.56	201.36
32	Brilliant Lawns	Rec Grass Cutting on 18/5/2020 INV 7538	115.00		115.00
33	MCL Powerscribe	Yearly Website Hosting Fee	120.00	24.00	144.00
34	HAPTC	Annual membership	787.25		787.25
35	EON	Electricity for Public Toilets (05/05/2020)	7.96	0.40	8.36
36	Bugs'n'Things	Refund paid back as paid twice in error for yearbook	70.00		70.00
37	HCC Pensions -LGPS Account,	Clerk & Deputy Clerk Pension to LGPS	701.40		701.40
38	HMRC accounts ref 321PF00003624	tax&NI to Inland Revenue	451.19		451.19
39	D J Granger grounds Maintenance Ltd	Grounds Maintenance Worksheet 71	123.00	24.60	147.60
40	D J Granger grounds Maintenance Ltd	Grounds Maintenance Worksheet 72	353.00	70.60	423.60
41	EON	Electricity for Pavilion (12/05/2020)	35.95	1.80	37.75
42	Clerk	Clerk's salary	1,322.90		1,322.90
43	Deputy Clerk	Deputy Clerk's Salary	821.86		821.86
44	ECO	Environmental Cleansing Officer salary (April 2020)	230.40		230.40
45	Grounds Officer	Grounds Officer salary	166.55		166.55
		TOTAL	7177.43	335.55	7,512.98
	MONEY AT BANK				
		Current Account			£42,554.86
		Reserve Account			£20,687.52