

Minutes
of the monthly Parish Council meeting held on
Wednesday 2nd March 2022

Present: Parish Councillors Graham Lee (Chairman), Norton Mahy (Vice-chairman) and Gemma Allan. Mark White joined on Zoom.

Also in attendance: Clerk (Jane Porter), Deputy Clerk (Laura Brooks-Payne). County Councillor Steve Jarvis and District Councillor Tom Tyson joined on Zoom. Two representatives of the Village Hall, Michael Pearch, Chairman, and Rosemary Pearch, Clerk (see item 85.4.3 below). Three other members of the public also joined on Zoom.

- 82 Apologies for absence from parish councillors were noted and approved. David Sims (unwell), Martin Hoffman (technical issues with connecting on Zoom).
- 83 Declarations of Interest. None.
- 84 Proposal to approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd February 2022. These were approved. **Action: Clerk/Graham**

85 OPEN FORUM - VILLAGE MATTERS, REPORTS FROM OTHER BODIES, ETC

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

85.1 Items from members of the public.

85.1.1 Drug paraphernalia at the Springs. A parishioner reported that she had informed the police who had investigated and agreed to increase their monitoring of the site.

85.1.2 Village Sports Day Sunday 15th May on the Rec. As in previous years the lead organiser, Guy Reed, was to supply a full risk assessment and ensure all other matters met the insurance requirements.

85.1.3 Concerns re dog control and request for an additional dog waste bin. Consultation with residents was ongoing. There had been a proposal for an extra bin in Ashwell Street. The costs had been determined; these and the precise location were to be agreed.

Action: Clerk/Graham

85.2 Items from our district councillor Tom Tyson. He reported:

85.2.1 Bygrave solar farm proposal. A leaflet had been distributed to Ashwell households by the Bygrave action group. It was clarified that the site was visible from Arbury Banks.

85.2.2 Music festivals at Bygrave. As promised the landowner had now supplied dates for planned and proposed events this summer. The NHC licensing officer had been approached with a request to place a cap on the number of events; the current license had no maximum.

85.3 Items from our county councillor Steve Jarvis. He reported:

85.3.1 New chicane at West End. Works were scheduled to start on Monday and should take about 2 weeks. He had responded to queries from local residents.

85.3.2 Yellow lines. Painting of additional lines as agreed, and repainting of some others, was pending better weather. It was hoped that the issue of parked cars blocking access for this could be resolved locally without formal procedures.

85.3.3 New footway in Station Road adjacent Townsend Meadow. Following the letter sent by the Parish Council the NHC officer had informed that the enforcement team were responsible for ensuring completion and adherence to the planning condition. However, it was understood that the developer had yet to supply Herts Highways with the required paperwork so that they could grant their approval. This was not a matter where building control would take action. The new residents had obviously taken on board the potential risk of purchasing their houses prior to the certificate of completion from NHC.

85.4 Items on general village matters from parish councillors.

85.4.1 Annual Parish Meeting, Wed 23rd March, 8pm at the school. As in previous years this had been advertised via the Yearbook delivered to all households and businesses.

85.4.2 Footway route to the station. Nothing to report and pending further communication from the landowner.

85.4.3 Village Hall trustees/re their change to an Incorporated Charitable Organisation and the future involvement of the Parish Council. The Chairman reported that the questions put by the Village Hall had been passed on to the solicitor following the February Council meeting and a response awaited. Rosemary Pearch, Clerk to the Village Hall, reported her view that, despite the clause that would be

in the constitution of the new Incorporated Charitable Trust giving the trustees the power to dispose of the assets, the Charity Commission would require village consultation before the hall could be sold and also that any cash assets be allocated for a purpose in line with the trust deed.

The Chairman, Graham Lee, reported that the Parish Council wished to see the draft constitution before it made any decisions re its future role. He expressed the view that hopefully this matter was now drawing to a conclusion.

85.4.4 Dixies Meadow. The Chairman, Graham Lee, reported that communications with the landowner and investigation into the options available for community benefit including a Community Land Trust were ongoing. The advice from the solicitor was being considered but in principle it looked a good way forward.

85.4.5 Assets of Community Value. The Chairman, Graham Lee, reported that an application had been made to NHC to register the three pubs in the village.

85.4.6 The Ruddery/request to HCC rights of way for a change of status to improve safety. Nothing further to report.

85.4.7 Co-options to the Parish Council. The Chairman, Graham Lee, reported that local resident Cath Connolly had expressed an interest and had supplied a short bio.

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]

It was proposed, subject to the agreement of the two parish councillors not present, ie all in favour, that Cath Connolly be co-opted to the Parish Council with effect from the next meeting.

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

Action: Clerk/Graham

[End of in camera session]

85.4.8 Broadband supply to the village. The Chairman, Graham Lee, reported that information had come via our MP, Sir Oliver Heald, on plans by a supplier, Voneus, to install fibre to the premises (FTTP) to

Ashwell. The Parish Council had again been grateful for the input of parishioner Al Jacoutot on this. Communications with the supplier and investigation into the experiences of other villages were ongoing.

85.5 Items from working groups.

85.5.1 Neighbourhood Plan group (leader Cllr Graham Lee, deputy Cllr Norton Mahy). The Chairman, Graham Lee, reported that the village wide referendum would be held tomorrow (Thurs 3rd March). He encouraged all to vote and to encourage others to do so. Following the Localism Act in 2011 this was the first referendum for Ashwell and of great significance.

85.5.2 Trees and Hedges Group (leader Cllr David Sims). Further hedge planting at the Rec was scheduled for next week.

85.5.3 Yearbook Group (leader Cllr Norton Mahy). The Chairman, Graham Lee, reported the many positive comments received on this year's edition that had been delivered to all households and businesses last weekend. This was another excellent issue and a tribute to the team.

End of Open Forum/Standing Orders reinstated from here.

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

86.1 Recreation Ground/proposals for new equipment for older children. Cllr Gemma Allan reported. Funding had been secured from the Henry Colbron Trust and local authority sources. The consultation had been launched today via social media and posters with the school giving flyers to all children; responses could be made online. She emphasised that this was far wider reaching than previous consultations with the views of children paramount. She thanked the volunteers involved in setting this up. The consultation would end on 16th March and responses used to guide the plans. Some concerns had been expressed by local residents and there would be engagement to address these. Once finalised plans would be put out to tender with works progressing at the end of the year.

86.2 Pavilion and public toilets upgrade project. The Chairman, Graham Lee, reported that a brief had been supplied to the architects and a site meeting was to be scheduled.

86.3 The Springs (Cllr Martin Hoffman). The formal visit by Natural England to assess the SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) had taken place last week. The input of Chris James in this had been much appreciated. Various works would now be progressed including fencing repairs, new fencing to protect vulnerable areas and re-siting of litter bins. The Management Plan was to be refreshed and would

include some significant tree works to be scheduled for next winter. Routine tree works were already scheduled for Monday 28th March.

See appendices at the end for other actions ongoing and premises matters.

87 PLANNING MATTERS *See summary table below.*

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

No. 5 Woodforde Close. NHC ref. 22/00430/TPO

Trees (Tree Preservation Order): T1 Sycamore - Crown reduce to previous points to approx 3m. T2 Lawson cypress - Reduce in height by approx 1m.

It was noted that this was for pruning and no felling was included.

It was **resolved** that a response be sent to NHC 'no objections'.

Action: Deputy Clerk

87.2 Updates on previous planning applications/developments ongoing.

87.2.1 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. *See 85.3.3 above.*

87.2.2 Two new houses on land west of 35 Ashwell Street/Request from the NHC street-naming officer. 'Scarp Close' had been proposed.

88 FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE MATTERS.

88.1 Monthly summary of accounts. These were approved for signature.

Action: Graham/Martin/Clerk

88.2 Budget 2021-22 review and audit procedures.

88.2.1 Review of Internal Audit procedures. The Chairman, Graham Lee, reported that these complied with relevant guidance and there had been no changes since these were discussed at the budget-setting meeting in October of last year. He proposed that they be signed off.

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

88.2.2 End of the financial year/annual audit. The budget would continue to be kept under review and arrangements for the audit communicated to parish councillors.

Meeting ended 9.30pm

Forthcoming meeting dates:

Next monthly Council meeting - Wednesday 6th April 2022

Annual Parish Meeting -Wednesday 23rd March, 8pm, at the school

APPENDICES - FOR INFORMATION

Appendix A: Parish Council actions ongoing.

- (i) Liaison with HCC/Herts Highways through our County Cllr Steve Jarvis including
 - proposals for safety improvements at the War Memorial junction
 - refurbishment of street bollards and street lighting columns
- (ii) Liaison with our PCSO's including
 - Speeding concerns/Twenty's Plenty campaign
 - Dog control concerns
- (iii) Liaison with NHC through our District Cllr Tom Tyson including
 - Dog fouling concerns
 - Enforcement of restricted parking spaces and yellow lines
 - Section 106 funding
- (iv) Liaison with the Ashwell Royal British Legion re pedestrian access to the War Memorial

Appendix B: Reports/updates on Parish Council Premises Management.

- (i) Tree works recommended in the surveys for the Springs and the Cemetery scheduled (removal of the fallen tree at the Springs prioritized). Date for works in St Mary's Churchyard still pending.
- (ii) Children's playground. Works following the annual safety survey pending a date from the supplier.

Appendix C: Summary of recent planning consultations from NHC up to 7th March 2022

Address	Application Number	Brief description	Ashwell PC Comments	North Herts Decision
4 Philosophers Gate	22/00118/FPH	Erection of front elevation porch canopy, replace existing front elevation window with a bay window and single storey rear extension.	PC to NHDC: No objection	Permission Granted on 28th February 2022
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	Pending
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	Pending
Land Opposite 67 Station Road	21/02803/FP	Erection of one detached 4-bed dwelling	PC to NHDC: No objection	Pending
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 D: Monthly accounts summary 01/02/2022 to 28/02/2022

ACCOUNTS - Summary for 1st to 28th February 2022						
RECEIPTS					£	
83	Nevilles Funeral Services	Rent for Chapel of Rest (February)			68.75	
84	Dignity Funerals	Payment for CW22.04			765.00	
85	Santander	Reserve Account interest			0.18	
				Total	£833.93	
PAYMENTS			£ less VAT	VAT	£ inc VAT	
210	D J Granger Grounds Maintenance Ltd	Grounds Maintenance w/s No 24, Inv No 22166	600.00	120.00	720.00	
211	Edward's Cleaning and Maintenance Servi	Toilet Cleaning & Consumables Inv No 2353	190.00		190.00	
212	Dan Horne	Repairs to Public Toilet	75.00		75.00	
213	BT	Landline & Internet Inv for Feb-Apr22	128.85	25.77	154.62	
214	EON Next	Electricity for Public Toilets for January 2022	13.62	0.68	14.30	
215	Clerk	Emergency Box Supplies, Postage & Title Plans	78.04	2.50	80.54	
216	Duo Creative Services Ltd	Website Monthly Fee (Feb)	25.00	5.00	30.00	
217	HMRC accounts ref 321PF00003624	tax&NI to Inland Revenue	525.59		525.59	
218	HCC Pensions-LGPS Account	Clerk & Deputy Clerk Pension to LGPS	740.66		740.66	
219	Abacus Cleaning & Printing Supplies Ltd	Stationery Supplies for Office	131.00	26.20	157.20	
220	Abacus Cleaning & Printing Supplies Ltd	Stationery Supplies for Office	132.05	26.41	158.46	
221	Oxford Cartographers	Printing of Village Map	1047.70		1,047.70	
222	Clerk	Salary	1371.50		1,371.50	
223	Deputy Clerk	Deputy Clerk Salary	850.91		850.91	
224	ECO	Environmental Cleansing Officer Salary	236.80		236.80	
225	Grounds Officer	Grounds Officer Salary	153.40		153.40	
			TOTAL	£6,300.12	£206.56	£6,506.68
	MONEY AT BANK	Current Account 28/02/2022	£59,465.55			
		Reserve Account 28/02/2022	£20,704.28			