

**Minutes of the Ashwell Parish Council meeting
held on Wednesday 6th May 2020 online via Zoom**

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

Also in attendance were the Clerk (Jane Porter) and Deputy Clerk (Laura Brooks-Payne), County Councillor Steve Jarvis (until 8.30pm when he left for another meeting) and District Councillor Tom Tyson.

Four 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.

124. Apologies for absence. None.

125. Declarations of Interest. None.

126. Meetings.

126.1 Proposal to approve and sign the minutes of the previous meeting, 4th March 2020.

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

126.2 The ‘Notes’ published in lieu of minutes for the cancelled April meeting were acknowledged.

126.3 It was agreed that the next Parish Council AGM would be held in May 2021 or earlier if circumstances changed and it was agreed necessary.

126.4 It was agreed that all current Parish Council elections and appointments continue until the next AGM.

126.5 Charity AGM’s originally scheduled for June 2020.

126.5.1 The proposal from the trustees of the Ashwell Village Trust to postpone their AGM was noted; there were no objections.

126.5.2 It was agreed that the AGM of the ‘Allotment for Exercise and Recreation’ (Parish Council sole trustee) be postponed until June 2021 or earlier if circumstances changed and it was agreed necessary.

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

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

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

127.1.1 Museum. Cllr Martin Hoffman (Chairman of the Museum trustees in his own right) reported that the Museum was closed to the public. However, following removal and storage elsewhere during the building works, items were now slowly being returned.

127.1.2 Chalk Bank Close. Following a question from Cllr Graham Lee it was noted that the approved street name sign had still not been installed. The NHDC Street Naming Officer would be asked again to contact the developer.

127.2 Reports re ongoing matters.

127.2.1 Coronavirus/Covid-19 situation. The excellent efforts of local volunteers in supporting vulnerable residents was noted. Cllr Martin Hoffman agreed to cover this and the impact on local businesses in his ‘Jottings’ report for the next edition of the Village News. *See 131.3 below re financial impact on the Parish Council.*

127.2.2 New pavilion project/replacement of the existing pavilion at the Recreation Ground with enhanced facilities for sports and community use. It was noted that group meetings were currently suspended.

127.2.3 Ashwell and Morden Station (South Cambridgeshire)/proposals by the local landowner (Mr Jeremy Fordham of Odsey Properties Ltd) for a car park, footways and housing development near the station; this to include an improved footway/cycleway with Ashwell. Nothing further to report.

127.2.4 Village hall/transfer to the Parish Council of the holding (or custodian) trusteeship. The ongoing communications with the solicitor to change the managing trusteeship to an incorporated charity prior to the transfer were noted.

127.2.5 Henry Colbron Trust (trustees the Merchant Taylors' Company).

(i) Parish Council bid for funding to improve facilities at the Recreation Ground. The submission of this was pending a response from the trustees. (ii) Cllr Gemma Allan reported on the bid by the group of local residents of which she was a member. They had requested funding to turn the redundant school netball courts off Gardiners Lane into a children's allotment and nature area. Parish councillors had expressed their support for this.

127.3 Reports from village groups

127.3.1 Greening Ashwell. It was noted that the Parish Council was being copied on their newsletters.

127.3.2 Ashwell Climate Conversations. Nothing further received.

127.4 Matters re other authorities and organisations.

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

(i) Corona response. The Team Herts based at Welwyn, where he was volunteering personally, were busy distributing food packages and more volunteers would be welcomed.

(ii) The food waste and garden waste collection service would recommence from Monday 11th May.

(iii) Grants to businesses adversely affected were available from NHDC.

(iv) Local councillor surgeries shared between himself and County Councillor Steve Jarvis were being held using Zoom; the next scheduled was 13th May. It was agreed that the Parish Council would help publicize these.

See also item 130 below re Planning matters.

127.4.2 Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) County Councillor Steve Jarvis reported:

Highways matters. (i) 20mph speed limit. This would formally commence on Monday 11th May. There had been questions from residents particularly re the new 40mph sections. Some areas on the edge of the village where there was now a 40mph limit previously had a 60mph limit so, whilst some might like to see something lower, the limit had been reduced. (ii) Timed parking spaces outside retail outlets. These would also come into force on Monday 11th May. (iii) Repairs and other works had been affected by the Covid situation. Grass-cutting and gully cleansing were continuing.

Other HCC matters. (i) Effective local support had been initiated in many places resulting in less than anticipated demand for food parcels. (ii) County councillors had been allocated additional grant funding to provide support to volunteer groups where needed. (iv) Proposed changes to bus services had been postponed.

127.5 Items raised by parishioners.

Including reports received earlier and any matters raised at the meeting.

127.5.1 Cllr Martin Hoffman reported that he had received about a dozen complaints re the ornamental planting on village verges. Complainants had felt that hyacinths and tulips were inappropriate on rural verges where native flora should be encouraged to grow. It was agreed to request that those responsible make contact so that the preference expressed for native planting could be discussed with them. It was agreed that this be included in his 'Jottings' report for the next edition of the Village News.

127.6 Working Groups reports.

Members include volunteer parishioners as well as parish councillors. Offers to join or start new groups welcomed. See also New Pavilion 127.2.2 above.

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

127.6.1 Neighbourhood Plan Group Leader Cllr Graham Lee and deputy Cllr Norton Mahy reported:

(i) A response from Historic England was pending and the next stages, including further consultation, were dependent on this. Cllr Martin Hoffman requested that a timeline of the future stages be produced to clarify the process; this was agreed. (ii) Local Green Space designation. Following the despatch of letters informing landowners, some had raised their concerns. As a result of this various options had been suggested. A proposal was made to restrict designation to Foresters Allotments. This was agreed.

Parishioner and working group member David Short voiced his objections to the Parish Council making this decision without first taking the matter to the Neighbourhood Plan group. Cllr Graham Lee responded that the correspondence with landowners had been between them and the Parish Council. It was thus a matter for the Parish Council to express its view before taking it to the Neighbourhood Plan group.

127.6.2 Yearbook Group Leader Cllr Norton Mahy reported:

(i) A concern had been raised re the lack of an obituary on an individual but this had now been resolved satisfactorily. (ii) He commended the Deputy Clerk on her work re income from adverts despite the current problems for businesses.

127.6.3 Local business support (leader Cllr Graham Lee) It was agreed that Cllr Martin Hoffman include the Parish Council's support for local businesses in his 'Jottings' report for the Village News.

See also 127.4.2 above (parking spaces) and 128.1 below (village map).

127.6.4 Tree Group Leader Cllr David Sims reported:

(i) He had spoken to parishioner Ken Coyne the leader of the 'Greening Ashwell' group and stressed the importance of his group working together with the Parish Council so that there was no conflict in future.

(ii) He had been in touch with the Woodland Trust to get clarification re Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs). Second opinions were only taken into consideration for public land and TPO's were of course under the control of district not parish councils.

Standing orders reinstated from here.

128. Matters of report from previous meetings.

128.1 New village map. Cllr Graham Lee gave an update. The latest draft had just been received for review from a new originator, the previous person having been furloughed. He was encouraged that it was looking good.

129. PREMISES MANAGEMENT REPORTS

Individual parish councillor's responsibilities shown in brackets.

129.1 Cemetery. Nothing to report.

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

(Responsible: Cllrs Mark White and Gemma Allan) *See also item 127.2.5 above.*

Cllr Gemma Allan reported. (i) The playground remained closed but the grass area was open for family play.

(ii) Badger activity had been reported but was minimal at present.

129.3 The Springs. (Responsible: Cllr Martin Hoffman)

Cllr Martin Hoffman reported. (i) Flow rates remained high and it was hoped that this would erode the silt that had accumulated in the basin. (ii) Nothing significant had been noted by the tree survey. The cost for all the sites covered, not just the Springs, was £1242. (iii) Following concerns raised at the removal of vegetation, the boundary with the Hodwell Cottages was to be further established by the installation of some new fencing.

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

(Responsible: Cllr David Sims)

Cllr David Sims reported. (i) The repairs to the track were on hold due to the corona situation. (ii) the hedge planting had been partly completed and would be finished in the autumn.

129.5 The Lock Up. (Responsible: Cllr Norton Mahy)

Cllr Norton Mahy reported. The new sign was pending installation.

129.6 Merchant Taylors' Green. (Responsible: Cllr Martin Hoffman) Nothing to report.

129.7 Carters' Pond. (Responsible: Cllr Martin Hoffman)

Cllr Martin Hoffman reported that the repairs to the bench were still pending works by the supplier; an alternative was suggested.

129.8 Street furniture (litter bins, benches). Nothing to report.

129.9 St Mary's Churchyard grounds maintenance. (Responsible: Cllr Martin Hoffman)

Nothing to report.

129.10 Parish Clock. (Responsible: Cllr Mark White) Nothing to report.

129.11 War Memorial. Nothing to report.

129.12 Grounds maintenance. It was noted that all the routine tree surveys had been completed. Regular grass cutting schedules were ongoing.

130. PLANNING MATTERS

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

130.1 New consultation for response to NHDC.

Townsend House, 24 Lucas Lane. NHDC Case Ref. 20/00847/FP.

Full Planning Permission: Erection of 4 x 3 bed dwellings with creation of new vehicular access off of Lucas Lane (variation of planning permission granted under ref 19/01377/FP granted 15.08.2019). Erection of four bay cart shed to provide 8 no. covered spaces.

It was noted that the previous application had been withdrawn and had now been resubmitted to reflect the change in boundary of the end house following removal of the Chestnut tree.

The previous objections made by the Parish Council and local residents were noted. It was proposed to reiterate these and to add, (i) an objection to any further removal of the front hedge, (ii) a request for assurance that the Parish Council’s dog waste bin be relocated at the developer’s expense alongside the street light column.

It was *resolved* that the proposal be accepted.

Action: Clerk

130.2 New consultation for response to NHDC.

10 Lucas Lane. NHDC Case Ref. 20/00810/FPH.

Full Permission Householder: 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.

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

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

Section 73 application, variation of condition 8 - footway.

It was noted that no further information on alternative proposals for the new section of footway had been received. District Councillor Tom Tyson agreed to monitor this.

130.4 Land rear of 4-14 Claybush Road. NHDC Case Ref. 16/01797/1.

(i) Request from the NHDC Street Naming Officer for name suggestions. It was agreed that further consideration be given to this and suggestions made.

Action: ALL

(ii) Building Control/ request for contact details now the build process was to commence. The response from the NHDC Planning Officer was noted,

‘As far as I know this is not information in the public domain. You could try contacting Croudace directly and asking them who they normally appoint or they may even have their own in house team.’

It was agreed, (i) To establish who was the nominated Building Control agency for the development, (ii) To ascertain further information with a view to raising concerns with an appropriate body the apparent lack of independence in the system.

Action: Clerk

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

Request by the North Herts Archaeology Society for the support of the Parish Council in their appeal to Historic England following the rejection of their bid for the site to be scheduled.

Support for this was agreed.

Action: Clerk

131. FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE MATTERS

131.1 Monthly summary of accounts. Proposal for approval.

It was *resolved* that this be approved.

131.2 End of the 2019-20 financial year. The following were noted:

- (i) The employers PAYE return completed. (ii) The Local Government Pension Scheme return completed.
- (iii) The arrangements and dates for the Internal and External Audit for 2019-20.

Chairman’s Signature.....	Date.....
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131.3 The impact of the coronavirus situation on sports clubs using Parish Council facilities.

The Chairman reported that input from the sports clubs had been sought. Following discussion Cllr Martin Hoffman proposed. (i) The Football Club and the Accies be granted a 25% reduction in the rent charged for the use of the facilities; this to reflect the impact on curtailment of their playing season and income loss.

(ii) The Cricket Club be granted a one year holiday in their repayments for the roller and mower and be charged nil rent for the coming season as any play was unlikely.

It was also noted that there would be no income from the funfair this year. The total financial loss to the Parish Council would be £1540; this would be covered by reserves.

It was *resolved* that the proposal be accepted.

Action: Clerk

Meeting closed at 9.50pm

Forthcoming meeting dates:

June Council - Wednesday 3rd June 2020, 8pm. Currently scheduled to be online using Zoom.

Appendix: Summary of recent planning consultations as of 6th May 2020.

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.

Address	Application Number	Brief description	Ashwell PC Comments	North Herts Decision
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	Pending

Appendix: Monthly accounts summary

ACCOUNTS - Summary for 01/04/2020 - 30/04/2020			
RECEIPTS			£
1	Nevilles Funeral Services	Rent for Chapel of Rest (April)	68.75
2	Berry Accounting	Payment for Yearbook 2020 Advert	70.00
3	Sigma Office	Payment for Yearbook 2020 Advert	125.00
4	Allotment Tenant	Payment for Allotment plot number 1	20.00
5	Amber Osteopathy	Payment for Yearbook 2020 Advert	200.00
6	North Herts District Council	Half of Yearly Precept	40,500.00
7	Allotment Tenant	Payment for Allotment plot number 1	10.00
8	Edwards Cleaning & Maintenance	Payment for Yearbook 2020 Advert	70.00
9	Ashwell Pharmacy	Payment for Yearbook 2020 Advert	70.00
10	Bugs'n'things	Payment for Yearbook 2020 Advert	70.00
11	Parishioner	Cemetery reference CW 20.03	600.00
12	Bugs'n'things DUPLICATE PAYMENT	Payment for Yearbook 2020 Advert	70.00
13	S Poulson - The Cooker Buddy	Payment for Yearbook 2020 Advert	70.00
14	EW Pepper - Bury Lane Fun Barn & Shop	Payment for Yearbook 2020 Advert	125.00
15	Yearbook advert	Payment for Yearbook 2020 Advert	70.00
16	Mick Huggins	Payment for Yearbook 2020 Advert	125.00
17	Crumps Butchers	Payment for Yearbook 2020 Advert	125.00
18	Stewart Redman Ltd - Country Properties	Payment for Yearbook 2020 Advert	350.00
19	Santander interest account	Interest 01/04/2020	6.13
		TOTAL	42,744.88
PAYMENTS			
1	Duo Creative Services Ltd	Website monthly fee (April)	30.00
2	D J Granger Grounds Maintenance Ltd	Grounds Maintenance Worksheet 67	168.00
3	Groundwork UK	Returned unused grant payment	2,000.00
4	D J Granger Grounds Maintenance Ltd	Grounds Maintenance Worksheet 66	537.60
5	The Blue Tree Company	Tree Inspections at 4 locations	1,242.00
6	Alison Eardley Consulting	Neighbourhood Plan -amendments for re-submission	4,320.00
7	SLCC	Annual membership	180.00
8	ECO	Environmental Cleansing Officer salary (March 2020)	225.60
9	Legal & General Insurance	Ill Health Liability Insurance for clerk & Deputy.	481.63
10	CPRE	Annual membership	36.00
11	EON	Electricity for Public Toilets (05/04/2020)	8.85
12	D J Granger grounds Maintenance Ltd	Grounds Maintenance Worksheet 68	462.00
13	HMRC accounts ref 321PF00003624	Tax&NI to Inland Revenue	446.39
14	HCC Pensions-LGPS Account,	Clerk & Deputy Clerk Pension to LGPS	701.40
15	Edwards Cleaning & Maintenance	Public Toilet Cleaning	188.00
16	EON	Electricity for Pavilion (12/04/2020)	63.23
17	Clerk	Clerk's salary	1,323.10
18	Deputy Clerk	Deputy Clerk's Salary	822.06
19	ECO	Environmental Cleansing Officer salary (April 2020)	230.40
20	Grounds Officer	Grounds Officer salary	149.95
		TOTAL	13,616.21
MONEY AT BANK			
		Current Account	£48,429.09
		Reserve Account	£20,681.59