



Ashwell Parish Council

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'Catch-Up Notes' from the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 7th July 2022 (full minutes on www.ashwell.gov.uk)

The following highlights key actions taking place in Ashwell during August and decisions taken at July's Council meeting:

- **Update on The Springs**

As well as being a lovely place to visit **The Springs** is a SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) so the management of the area has to be formally agreed with Natural England. A site assessment by Natural England was carried out earlier this year and works agreed with them are now being progressed.

The increased footfall from the many visitors during the Covid pandemic caused some damage to the vegetation particularly on the banks of the river. The new fencing is intended to protect areas of vegetation, allow re-growth and stop further soil erosion into the river. This is important for the protection of the rare ice-age worms that need a clear gravel bed in the river and are the main reason for the SSSI status. The vegetation and wildlife make the Springs the special place that it is and this needs to be respected.



The Parish Council regularly commissions a professional tree survey to advise on any works needed and a management plan sets out the longer-term objectives for the site and any actions required. This is due for a review shortly and among other matters that will be looked into are some new tree planting and whether any of the very large trees need to be reduced or removed. Overshadowing of the river and the banks, particularly by the very large Sycamore trees, causes the undergrowth vegetation to die back and the soil more easily washed away. So far we have not had any issues with Ash die-back disease but the site is regularly checked for this.

Some new litter bins are to be installed at the entrances away from the river.

You may already know that the village group 'Greening Ashwell' has agreed to take on a role leading volunteer working parties; these will mostly take place in the autumn/winter months and will be publicised later in the year.

If you have any questions or comments please do get in touch.

- **NHC Consultation on their 'draft Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan' Review for Ashwell**

North Herts Council are currently consulting with Ashwell residents on their draft Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (CAAMP) for Ashwell from 7th July to 12th September.

The Plan sets out the background information about the legislative and policy context for designating conservation areas, includes a description of the history of each settlement, explains the proposed revisions to the conservation area boundaries and describes the assessment of significance for the conservation areas. There is also a section in each CAAMP which sets out the potential opportunities for enhancement and proposals for the management of the conservation area.

The draft CAAMPs include proposals to amend the conservation area boundary for Ashwell.

The consultation documents are available to view on the NHC [website](#) and you can make your comments through the online consultation software or send them by email to Local.Plans@north-herts.gov.uk

- **Parish Council Co-options. The July meeting unanimously voted to appoint Vince Hall as a Parish Councillor with effect from the August meeting. Vince lives in the historic centre of Ashwell and has professional expertise in fibre optic civil engineering projects. He brings diversity of experience and interests to the Parish Council and we welcome his addition to the Council.**

- **Planning:**

- One application for revisions to a previous application for construction of 2 houses was considered by the Parish Council with the unanimous decision to object.
- There was one householder application for removal of an ash tree. The Parish Council's view was that the tree should be preserved by pruning if at all possible.

- **Next Parish Council Meeting – Wednesday 3rd August 2022**

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