

**Minutes of the Ashwell Parish Council meeting held on  
Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> July 2017 in the Parish Room**

**Present:** Mark White (Chairman), Graham Lee, Madeleine Legg, Bridget Macey, David Sims, David Short.

The Clerk (Jane Porter) was also in attendance.

Members of the public: Eleven parishioners.

*The Chairman thanked the Vice-chairman, Martin Hoffman for standing in whilst he was on holiday last month.*

**25. Apologies for absence** Cllr Martin Hoffman (long-arranged alternative commitment).

County Councillor Steve Jarvis (attending another meeting). Deputy Clerk Annie Clifford (holiday).

**26. Minutes of previous meetings**

Proposal for approval and signature of the minutes of the Council meeting 7<sup>th</sup> June 2017.

It was *resolved* that the minutes be approved and signed.

**Clerk**

**27. Matters of general report from previous meetings**

**27.1** (June Council, 18.1) 1<sup>st</sup> Ashwell Scout Group project for a Public Access Defibrillator (PAD).

The Chairman reported that an update had been received from the Scouts. Problems with the electric supply had now been sorted and the unit would be installed shortly. Public training sessions were to be scheduled.

**27.2** (June Council, 18.2) Superfast broadband. It was noted that, (i) this was now available to some parts of the village and householders had been advised to contact their supplier for information, (ii) information on 'exchange only lines' had been requested via Sir Oliver Heald, MP.

**27.3** (June Council, 18.3) Vacancy for Environmental Cleansing Officer. Cllr Madeleine Legg reported that a parishioner had now been appointed to the role.

The meeting was closed to the public for an *in camera* session on the grounds that the item included personnel matters.

*Standing Order item 62. That in view of the special nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the press and public be temporarily excluded and they are instructed to withdraw.*

**27.4** (June Council, 18.4) Rear wall of the Rose & Crown in Silver Street. No further information received from the property owner or the NHDC Conservation Officer.

**27.5** (June Council, 18.6) Proposal for new entrance signs for the village. Cllr David Short presented further information on the range of possible designs that he had circulated. The proposal was agreed in principle. It was also agreed that, (i) due to the costs, and the number of village entrances to be included, the option of rolling out the installation over several years be pursued, (ii) Cllr Short would progress more detailed information on the options.

**28. Parish management reports** (current responsibilities shown in brackets)

*(Routine matters concerning the management of parish assets and amenities are usually not discussed or reported to full council meetings; some are dealt with by the Management Committee, others directly by parish councillors and/or the Clerk/Deputy Clerk)*

**28.1 Cemetery** (Cllr Madeleine Legg) Cllr Madeleine Legg reported that the draft lease for the Chapel of Rest prepared by the Parish Council's solicitor had been reviewed. She was disappointed at the number of minor errors included and amendments required; the draft had been returned for correction.

**28.2 Recreation Ground and Pavilion** (Cllrs Mark White and Madeleine Legg) Cllr Madeleine Legg reported that following the proposal from the Cricket Club that additional fencing should be considered between the cricket pitch and the playground, a bespoke RoSPA site visit had been scheduled for Monday 10<sup>th</sup> July for a professional assessment of the situation. This would be attended by representatives of the Cricket Club and the Parish Council. This was in addition to the routine annual RoSPA site visit and assessment that was scheduled for August.

**28.3 Playground** (Cllr Madeleine Legg) Nothing to report.

**28.4 Public toilets at the pavilion** (Cllr Madeleine Legg) Cllr Madeleine Legg reported that the proposal to change the cleaning contractor to a more local supplier was being progressed.

See also 31.1 below re enhancement project/claim to NHDC from planning obligations/section 106.

**28.5 The Springs** (Cllr Martin Hoffman) Nothing to report.

**28.6 Small Gains** (Allotments, Accies sports field and shared car parking area) (Cllr David Sims)

Cllr David Sims reported that there had been fewer incidents of vandalism recently. He had progressed further repairs to the netting between the allotments and the football pitch.

**28.7 Misc amenities** (To include: The Lock Up, Merchant Taylors’ Green, Carters’ Pond)

Lock Up. Cllr David Short reported that he had sought expert opinion on whether there was any need for action and what the options for lime treatment to the walls might involve.

**28.8 Street furniture** (Cllr Bridget Macey) Cllr Bridget Macey reported a proposal from a parishioner that Herts County Council be requested to install an additional bus stop sign in the High Street outside the shop. It was noted that currently there was one sign on the opposite side of the road that provided for both directions; this was also the case in other locations in the village. Cllr Macey reported that she had reservations about the space available outside the shop. This was agreed; parish councillors were of the view that the current arrangements were adequate. **Clerk**

*See also 33.4 below.*

**28.9 St Mary’s Churchyard grounds maintenance** (Cllr Martin Hoffman) Nothing to report.

**28.10 Parish Clock** (Cllr Mark White) The Chairman reported that he would contact the supplier re the agreed works to the cams. **Clerk**

**28.11 War Memorial** The Chairman reported that, following concerns some years ago about the increasingly poor state of the surrounding hedge, the Parish Council had considered, and costed, various options. The two fastigate Beech trees could also be pruned back. It was agreed that the views of the Ashwell Royal British Legion again be requested. It was suggested that any agreed works could be undertaken in conjunction with, or immediately following, the 2018 anniversary of the end of WWI. **Clerk**

**29. Items re other authorities/organisations**

**29.1 Hertfordshire Highways**

(June Council, 20.1) It was noted that a report giving updates on various matters had been received from County Councillor Steve Jarvis. The next meeting with Cllrs David Sims and Bridget Macey was scheduled for Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> July. Cllr Sims reported that the Highways contractor had cut back the overhanging vegetation in Kingsland Way; there were a few snagging issues he would pursue. Cllr Macey reported that potholes where the sides of the road had eroded had been repaired along a length of Station Road. Cllr David Short requested investigation of the overhanging hedge in Ashwell Street.

**29.2 Hertfordshire Highways/Rights of Way** Nothing to report.

**29.3 North Herts District Council**

**29.3.1** (June Council, 20.3.1) Proposals for restricted parking spaces outside retail outlets made to the NHDC Strategic Planning & Projects Manager. Cllr Graham Lee reported that he had again chased up the NHDC officer for a meeting date.

**29.3.2** (June Council, 20.3.2) Farrfest and the premises license for ‘Bygrave wood and fields’. It was noted that, (i) the license recently granted by NHDC covered a range of activities, not just the Farrfest, for various times ‘in perpetuity’, (ii) this year’s Farrfest would take place between Thursday 13th-Sunday 16th July, (iii) the NHDC contact details for parishioners to report any issues had been publicized.

<https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/home/environmental-health/pollution/noise-app>

NHDC Weekend Noise Call-Out Service 0300 777 4129

NHDC 01462 474000

The Chairman reported that in previous years the Parish Council had received complaints from only five parishioners. It was agreed that any further action by the Parish Council be considered based on the evidence of the complaints made both to the Parish Council and NHDC following this year’s event. It was noted that Police Sgt Guy Westwood had requested that the Parish Council forward to him information on any problems that they were aware of.

*See also 33.5 Open Forum item below.*

*See also 30 and 31.1 below for NHDC matters re Planning and Finance.*

**30. Planning matters**

*Details of applications are sent from NHDC as the Planning Authority to the Parish Council as a consultee. If any objections are raised either by a parishioner or a parish councillor an on-site meeting of the Parish Council’s Planning Committee may be convened to consider those items. See the website ([www.ashwell.gov.uk](http://www.ashwell.gov.uk)), notice board or contact the Clerk for an agenda.*

Chairman’s Signature.....Date.....
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### 30.1 New consultations received from NHDC.

#### 30.1.1 NHDC Case Ref No: 17/01406/1. Land Development Off, Station Road, Ashwell

Full Planning Permission: Residential development of 46 no. dwellings, children's play area, two new sports pitches, pavilion building and associated infrastructure.

It was noted that this application was to be considered at a meeting of the Planning Committee, on site, Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> July, 8pm. Meeting to convene in Small Gains Lane at the south end, ie nearest to Station Road.

#### 30.1.2 Response to NHDC with a recommendation on the following application.

##### NHDC Case Ref No: 17/01499/1. Three Tuns, 6 High Street.

Full Planning Permission: Install hard standing areas within garden.

Cllr Legg expressed her in principle support for this local business application but voiced some reservations about the proximity of some of the proposed seating areas to the rear gardens of the Moss Cottage Homes in Hodwell that were lived in by elderly and vulnerable residents. As a trustee of the Moss Cottage Homes (nominated by the Parish Council) she had alerted the chairman of the trustees to the application.

It was **resolved** to respond to the NHDC Planning Officer that the Parish Council had no objection in principle to the proposals but requested that the applicant be asked to reconfigure the proposed seating areas to move some of them further away from the rear boundaries of the Moss Cottage Homes. **Clerk**

### 30.2 Works to Trees in the Conservation Area (TCA) or Tree Protection Orders (TPO).

#### NHDC Case Ref No: 17/01101/1TCA 73 High Street

Fell four Ash trees.

NHDC decision: No objections.

#### NHDC Case Ref No: 17/01175/1TCA 9 Woodforde Close

Hawthorn Ash -Up to 33% crown reduction.

NHDC decision: No objections.

### 30.3 Applications pending NHDC decisions.

#### 30.3.1 NHDC Case Ref No: 16/01797/1. Land rear of 4-14, Claybush Road

Full Planning Permission: 33 dwellings together with associated access, parking, amenity and open space. Applicant: Croudace Homes.

[Interest declared by Cllr Graham Lee as a resident of 59 Ashwell Street]

##### 30.3.1.1 Consultation letter received from NHDC dated 14<sup>th</sup> June 2017 on further amendments and additional documents supplied by the applicant.

It was noted that in all previous responses to NHDC (both to the draft Local Plan consultation and to the original application consultation in September 2016) the Parish Council had emphasized the need to provide pedestrian access that met Highways safety criteria, ie NPPF Section 4/32 'Safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all people...'. Objections had also been made that the proposals were contrary to landscape and heritage policies.

It was noted that the access rights over part of the route (the private section of Ashwell Street) proposed by the applicant to meet one of the NHDC site specific criteria for AS1, ie 'Provision of pedestrian access into the village', was a matter of contention with the relevant local residents. It was noted that the dispute over the access rights claimed by the applicant was a matter for the relevant local residents and not the Parish Council. Whether or not access could be provided by the route proposed in the application was, however, of fundamental significance as compliance with Highway safety policies and the NHDC site specific criteria for AS1 had to be met. A request for an independent safety audit to be commissioned had been made.

It was **resolved** to respond to the NHDC Planning Officer reiterating the previously expressed concerns re the proposed pedestrian access. Amendments and additional documents submitted by the applicant had not overcome these objections and the application still failed to meet the requirements of relevant Highway safety policies. **Clerk**

##### 30.3.1.2 NHDC Planning Control Committee. It was understood that, as there were still matters outstanding, consideration of, and a decision on, this application would again be deferred. The next scheduled date was Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> August.

It was agreed that a statement be sent to all members of the NHDC Planning Control Committee in advance of the meeting when it was on the agenda; also that the statement be read to the meeting. It was agreed that

a draft be prepared by Cllr David Short and the Clerk and distributed to all parish councillors for their comment. The draft would be reviewed, and if necessary amended, once the NHDC Planning Officer's report had been made available; this would be at the latest five working days before the meeting.

**Clerk/CDS**

**30.3.1.3** Provision of additional places at Ashwell School. It was noted that following concerns raised by Cllr David Short and a parishioner, County Councillor Steve Jarvis had scheduled meetings with relevant parties to investigate concerns.

**30.3.1.4** Further correspondence from parishioners was noted.

*See also 33.6 Open Forum item below*

**30.3.2** NHDC Case Ref No: 17/01061/1HH. 57 High Street

Full permission householder: Erection of outbuilding to provide workshop and garden store.

**30.4 NHDC decisions on applications.**

The following were noted.

NHDC Case Ref No: 17/00709/1LB 105 High Street

Listed Building: Replacement single glazed windows, external re-rendering incorporating breathable membrane and internal alterations including works to inglenook.

NHDC decision: Conditional Listed Building Consent.

NHDC Case Ref No: 17/00972/1HH. 24 West End.

Full Permission Householder: Single storey side extension following demolition of existing lean-to.

NHDC decision: Standard Conditional Permission.

**30.5 District Local Plan 2011-31**

It was noted that this was currently with the national inspector for examination following NHDC's submission in May.

It was noted that all those who had made representations, including the Parish Council, had been sent contact details for any questions they had re the progress of the examination.

**30.6** Request from a member of the public re their proposals for land in Gardiners Lane (between no.40 and Chain Cottage). It was agreed to respond referring him to the Ashwell Village Design Statement as Supplementary Planning Guidance. NHDC, as the Local Planning Authority, were in a position to give pre-application advice. It was the policy of the Parish Council not to give detailed responses to proposals at pre-application stage.

**Clerk**

**31. Reports re Finance matters**

**31.1** Planning Contributions/Section 106 claim for public toilets enhancement.

It was noted that there had been no further information from the NHDC Community Development Manager, Stuart Izzard, following his submission of the request to the relevant NHDC Planning Officers.

**31.2** Pavilion Upgrade. It was noted that costings and supporting evidence were being collated for a bid to the NHDC Communities Fund.

**31.3** Audit 2016-17. The audit timetable was noted, (i) public 'available for inspection' period from 3rd July to 11<sup>th</sup> August, (ii) publication of unaudited accounts by 30<sup>th</sup> June and audited accounts by 30<sup>th</sup> September, (iii) submission to the External Auditor by the audit date of 24<sup>th</sup> July.

**31.4** Proposal for approval of monthly Accounts and Bills for Payment.

It was *resolved* that these be approved and paid (see Appendix).

**Clerk**

**32. To receive any reports from working groups**

**32.1** Neighbourhood Plan Group (leader Cllr David Short, Cllrs Graham Lee and Madeleine Legg)

Cllr David Short reported that following his attendance at a training course he had spent some time reformatting the draft; the Ashwell Village Design Statement policies were now included in the main document rather than in an appendix. The timeline had now been revised because of this. Once the new draft had been agreed by the group and parish councillors it would be submitted to NHDC.

**32.2** Website (leader Cllr Graham Lee) Cllr Graham Lee reported that the new website had now gone live. He was commended for all the hard work he had put into achieving this. He encouraged all to review the new site and to report any issues that might need to be addressed. There were aspects, particularly the

sign-up function for email alerts, that would continue to be developed. It was agreed that councillors photos be updated.

**32.3** Yearbook Group (leader Cllr David Short) Cllr David Short reported that a meeting to begin work on the next edition was scheduled for September.

**32.4** Local business support (leader Cllr Graham Lee) Cllr Lee reported that parking proposals remained the main focus. *See 29.3.1 above.*

### **33. PARISH AFFAIRS, REPORTS FROM OTHER BODIES AND OPEN FORUM**

*Items taken at 8.30pm; Standing Orders suspended to allow public participation.*

**33.1** The following consultations were noted.

**33.1.1** Proposals re closer joint working between Herts Police and Fire & Rescue Services.

<https://www.hertscommissioner.org/2017-06-commissioner-launches-fire-governance-consultation>

**33.1.2** New rail timetable proposals from GTR.

<https://www.transformingrail.com/> Deadline for responses 5pm on Thursday 27 July 2017.

Parishioner Joan Ridley reported that she had reviewed the details and was pleased with them.

**33.2** School. Cllr David Short reported that all the new equipment on the meadow was now in use; sports day had been able to take place on the premises rather than at the Recreation Ground.

**33.3** Speeding. The Chairman reported that he had observed two vehicles on several occasions clearly breaking the speed limit within the village and driving dangerously. He encouraged all to pass registration numbers of alleged offenders to the police.

**33.4** Bus stop in the High Street. A request was made that a temporary stop be installed whilst the wall-mounted one was obscured by building works. It was agreed to pass the request to HCC.

**33.5** Farrfest. Several parishioners expressed their concerns re past, and possible future, noise disturbance. One parishioner expressed the view that alternative commercial ventures by local landowners should be supported.

*See also 29.3.2 above.*

**33.6** Claybush Road planning application. *See also 30.3.1 above.* Parishioners expressed various concerns including allegations of pressure on the Local Planning Authority, NHDC, by the applicant, allegations of compromise of a previous NHDC employee, and allegations of unsupported and inaccurate claims by the applicant in their promotional material. County Councillor Steve Jarvis was thanked for his input in setting up meetings with relevant personnel following the concerns about adequacy of places at the school.

**33.7** Ashwell 1100 celebrations. It was agreed to request clarification on the proposals for tree planting from the relevant organisers.

**33.8** Street Party Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> July. Event organiser Liz Kiernan briefly outlined the plans; responses from parishioners indicated that many hundreds were likely to attend. In response to her question re residents who wished to bring their BBQ's onto the street, the view was expressed that it was not the role or the responsibility of the organisers to 'police' the event; individuals should be responsible for their own 'health & safety' judgements. It was agreed that people should be able to sensibly assess the appropriateness of things such as BBQ's on the day. It was noted that all would be encouraged to take their litter home; this had been stated on the invitations. Liz Kiernan and her colleague Barbara Lohar were thanked for all the hard work they had put into organising the event.

**Meeting closed at 10.00pm**

**Forthcoming meeting dates:**

**Planning Committee Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> July, 8pm.**

Meeting to convene in Small Gains Lane at the south end, ie nearest to Station Road. *See 30.1.1 above.*

**Monthly Council meeting Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> August, 8pm in the Parish Room.**

## Appendix 1 – General material received

- North Herts District Council -weekly 'Members Information'
- HAPTC -Briefings and Bulletins.
- SLCC -updates and newsletters.
- Police OWL/Rural News/Neighbourhood Watch bulletins.
- Ashwell Rail User group (RUG) updates.

## Appendix 2

ACCOUNTS AND BILLS FOR PAYMENT -July 2017			05 July 2017		
Proposed (i) Cllr Graham Lee		(ii) Cllr Bridget Macey	Declarations: Cllr Legg re item 93		
		£	£	£	
		Precept	Grants	Other	
				Total	
<b>Receipts</b>					
41	Neville Funeral Service	chapel rent		68.75	68.75
42	Santander	bank interest		2.59	2.59
43-49	various	allotment rents		67.50	67.50
50-55	various	yearbook adverts		720.00	720.00
56	Ms SA Ward	Carters Pond land rent (2014-18)		1.25	1.25
<b>Total</b>			0.00	860.09	860.09
<b>Payments</b>		Admin, office costs & Other Misc	Management of Parish Assets & Amenities	VAT	Total
<b>By Direct Debit</b>					
77	E.ON (03/07/2017)	chapel electricity	11.00		11.00
78	E.ON (13/06/2017)	toilets electricity	4.58		4.58
79	E.ON (13/06/2017)	pavilion electricity	24.68	1.23	25.91
<b>By cheque</b>					
80	J C M Porter	Clerk's salary	1181.05		1181.05
81	HCC Pensions-LGPS Account,	clerk's pension	401.57		401.57
82	J C M Porter	reimbursement office expenses	93.38	14.37	107.75
83	Mrs Annie Clifford	Deputy clerk's salary	260.00		260.00
84	M Chandler	Duties at Pavilion and Rec (inc overtime)		157.20	157.20
85	Post Office	tax&NI to Inland Revenue	331.46	17.80	349.26
86	Mr K Clifford	premises duties		30.00	30.00
87	Blue Tree Company	hedgework at the Springs		135.00	162.00
88	Brilliant Lawns	Grasscutting pitches at the Rec		330.00	330.00
89	Brilliant Lawns	Weed treatments at Rec		261.00	261.00
90	D J Granger Grounds Maint. Ltd	grounds maintenance worksheet 09		1392.00	1670.40
91	D J Granger Grounds Maint. Ltd	grounds maintenance worksheet 10		370.00	444.00
92	D J Granger Grounds Maint. Ltd	grounds maintenance worksheet 11		550.00	660.00
93	Ms M Legg	reimbursement ECO first aid kit		26.75	26.75
94	T&J Fire Ltd	annual premises fire assessment and supply		366.39	439.66
<b>Total</b>			2267.46	578.27	6,511.13
<b>Outstanding Accounts</b>					
allotment rent				15.00	
yearbook adverts 2017 edition				520.00	
<b>Total</b>					535.00
<b>Money at bank</b>					
Current Account		26 June 2017		42,868.81	
Deposit Account		01 June 2017		30,463.64	
<b>Total</b>					73,332.45
Cheques banked after/BACS transfers after					-
Cheques drawn but not cleared/DD's outstanding					150.00
<b>Total</b>					73,182.45
Total after paying this months cheques					66,671.32
Total in current a/c after paying this months cheques					36,207.68