

**Minutes of the Ashwell Parish Council meeting held on
Wednesday 2nd August 2017 in the Parish Room**

Present: Mark White (Chairman), Martin Hoffman (Vice-chairman), Graham Lee, Madeleine Legg, David Sims, David Short.

The Clerk (Jane Porter) and Deputy Clerk (Annie Clifford) were also in attendance.

Members of the public: Two parishioners.

34. Apologies for absence Cllr Bridget Macey (away on holiday).

County Councillor Steve Jarvis also sent apologies as he had another commitment.

35. Minutes of previous meetings

Proposal for approval and signature of the minutes of the Council meeting 5th July 2017.

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

Clerk

36. Matters of general report from previous meetings

36.1 (July Council, 27.1) 1st Ashwell Scout Group project for a Public Access Defibrillator (PAD).

The Chairman reported that there had been no further information from the Scouts.

36.2 (July Council, 27.2) Superfast broadband. It was noted that further information had been received following the request to Sir Oliver Heald, MP. Areas, with postcodes, that were to be upgraded by March 2018 at the latest had been supplied. It was questioned why some post codes, such as the High Street, were not included. It was agreed to request further information.

Clerk

36.3 (July Council, 27.4) Rear wall of the Rose & Crown in Silver Street. It was noted that no response had been received from the brewery; local information was that action was to be taken shortly. It was agreed to request further information from the NHDC Conservation Officer.

Clerk

36.4 (July Council, 27.5) Proposal for new entrance signs for the village. Cllr David Short presented further information. It was agreed that he would ascertain more detailed information on the costs and parish councillors would forward their comments on the proposed design.

CDS/ALL

37. 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)

37.1 Cemetery (Cllr Madeleine Legg) Chapel of Rest lease. Cllr Madeleine Legg again expressed her frustration at the tardy service from the Parish Council's solicitor. It was proposed to schedule a meeting with the tenant, Nevilles, as soon as possible. The content of the side letter that was to go with the lease would then be finalised; it would define the terms for the repairs and improvements that Nevilles were to undertake in return for the extended lease and favourable rent.

37.2 Recreation Ground and Pavilion (Cllrs Mark White and Madeleine Legg)

37.2.1 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, the Parish Council had commissioned a bespoke RoSPA site visit; this had now taken place and a report received. The report had recommended some additional fencing/netting to reduce the risk of a cricket ball hitting anyone in the playground area and the installation of warning notices. The full report had been forwarded to the Cricket Club. It was agreed that they be requested to identify suitable fencing/netting (information on possible suppliers had been given in the RoSPA report) and signage, and forward their proposals, with costings, to the Parish Council as soon as possible.

Clerk

37.2.2 It was noted that the routine annual RoSPA site visit and assessment was scheduled for August.

37.2.3 Cllr Madeleine Legg reported that complaints had been received of dogs being exercised off the lead and possible dog fouling. It was agreed to install additional signage and to monitor the situation. Further measures including CCTV would be considered if thought necessary.

Clerk

37.2.4 The Chairman reported that he continued to monitor the premises re the agreement for the running of the bar. On one occasion he had removed three cans of lager not locked away; he had disposed of them.

37.2.5 Advert for rugby sessions for two to four year-olds. See 37.5.3 re group activities.

37.3 Playground (Cllr Madeleine Legg) See 37.2.2 above re RoSPA.

37.4 Public toilets at the pavilion (Cllr Madeleine Legg) Cllr Madeleine Legg reported that the new cleaning contractor had commenced from this month.

See also 40.1 below re enhancement project/claim to NHDC from planning obligations/section 106.

37.5 The Springs (Cllr Martin Hoffman) Cllr Martin Hoffman reported.

37.5.1 Information on water shortages due to low rainfall had been publicized by Affinity Water. Flow rates supplied by the Environment Agency continued to be monitored to ensure there was no adverse impact on the SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest).

37.5.2 Natural England had copied the Parish Council on their email response to NHDC re a commercial request to bottle water at the site. NHDC had been reminded that The Springs was owned by the Parish Council on behalf of the village. No further information had been received since.

37.5.3 Group activities. District-wide advertising had taken place for ‘Ashwell’ Splash’; it was believed that this was being organised by a not-for-profit group based in Letchworth. It was agreed to request that any group should contact the Parish Council in advance to ensure that proposed activities were compliant with the SSSI and there was no clash with others. This would be publicized as widely as possible. **Clerk**
See also 37.2.5.

37.6 Small Gains (Allotments, Accies sports field and shared car parking area) (Cllr David Sims)
Cllr David Sims reported that there had been no issues and all was fine.

37.7 Misc amenities (To include: The Lock Up, Merchant Taylors’ Green, Carters’ Pond)
Nothing to report.

37.8 Street furniture (Cllr Bridget Macey) Cllr Madeleine Legg reported that she had assisted in clearing up overflowing contents from the litter bin on the corner of Ashwell Street and Station Road. A large sack with what appeared to be poultry waste had been dumped into it. As she had considered this to be a health risk, urgent action had been taken. It was noted that for some time there had been a similar problem at other locations particularly the bin outside the vehicle gate at the Recreation Ground. The NHDC Enforcement Officer had been kept informed and had provided warning notices; these had been cut down shortly after being posted on the bin. It was agreed that any information received would be forwarded to NHDC for enforcement action.

Concerns were also raised as to whether the capacity of litter bins at some locations was adequate and agreed that the situation be reviewed. The anti-social dumping of large bags of household rubbish by some residents would be publicized.

It was noted that NHDC was responsible for litter bin emptying and was currently carrying out a public consultation on their contract, currently held by Veolia, for street cleansing and waste disposal/recycling. It was agreed that the details of their proposals for the new contract be determined.

See also 38.4.3 below re NHDC consultation.

Clerk

37.9 St Mary’s Churchyard grounds maintenance (Cllr Martin Hoffman) Cllr Hoffman reported.

37.9.1 A request had been made to Herts Highways re disabled access; this had been passed to the Churchwardens.

37.9.2 A routine tree survey was to take place next week.

37.10 Parish Clock (Cllr Mark White) The Chairman reported that a quotation had been received from the preferred supplier for works to the cams. It was noted that repairs were needed due to wear and tear over the last 100 years. It was noted that a significant sum had been included in the budget for the works and a proposal was made that the amount in excess of this be vired from other categories.

It was *resolved* that the quotation be accepted and the works progressed.

Clerk

37.11 War Memorial (July Council, 28.11) It was noted that a letter had been sent to the Ashwell Royal British Legion seeking their views on options for works to the surrounding hedge.

38. Items re other authorities/organisations

38.1 Hertfordshire Highways (July Council, 29.1)

38.1.1 Updates from County Councillor Steve Jarvis following the liaison meeting on 19th July were noted. These included, (i) planned resurfacing works, (ii) proposals for yellow lines, (iii) proposals for safety works in Station Road, (iv) request for second SID for Newnham Way, (v) request for safety works re narrow footway at West End, (vi) works to vegetation in Kingsland Way, (vii) parishioner request re parking space in Kingsland Way, (viii) parishioner request re St Mary’s Church disabled access -see 37.9 above, (ix) safety works at A505 Odsey junction, (x) LED streetlighting installation.

Cllr David Sims reported that the Parish Council’s request for County and District Council s106 funds to be allocated for safety improvements in Station Road following the two major housing developments were being pursued by County Councillor Steve Jarvis.

Cllr David Sims reported that he had requested costings for the installation of a second SID (Speed Indicator Device) for Newnham Way. It was agreed that County Councillor Steve Jarvis's proposal that the Parish Council contribute to this would be considered once the total cost was known.

38.1.2 Cllr David Short requested clarification on road closure notices.

Clerk

38.1.3 Cllr Martin Hoffman requested that the cost of the road closure due to the building works at Bear House be determined.

Clerk

38.2 Hertfordshire Highways/Rights of Way Nothing to report.

38.3 Hertfordshire County Council

The publication of a new corporate plan was noted. See www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/corporateplan

38.4 North Herts District Council

38.4.1 (July Council, 29.3.1) Proposals for restricted parking spaces outside retail outlets made to the NHDC Strategic Planning & Projects Manager. Nothing further to report.

38.4.2 (July Council, 29.3.2) Farrfest and the premises license for 'Bygrave wood and fields'.

It was noted that contact details and procedures for complaints to NHDC had been publicized in advance of this year's Farrfest.

It was noted that further correspondence had been received from four parishioners, one local business and one resident of South Cambridgeshire. The Chairman of Bygrave Parish Council had also corresponded on behalf of residents in his parish. It was noted that all of these had communicated their complaints direct to NHDC; they had also been put in touch with each other.

Parish councillors reported that they had received fewer negative verbal comments than in previous years and some expressed their personal view that noise levels had been considerably lower this year. Comments received re the organisation of the event had been positive.

It was agreed that, in the light of so few complaints to the Parish Council, that no further action would be taken.

38.4.3 NHDC new contract for waste and recycling, and street cleansing services.

'Help shape the future of your waste and recycling services'; deadline 31st August 2017.

<https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/help-shape-future-your-waste-and-recycling-service>

See 37.8 above.

It was agreed that details be determined.

Clerk

See also 39 and 40.1 below for NHDC matters re Planning and Finance.

39. 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), notice board or contact the office for an agenda.

39.1 New consultations received from NHDC.

It was noted that the two following applications were considered at a meeting of the Planning Committee, on site, Wednesday 2nd August, 7.30pm. See the minutes of that meeting for details.

39.1.1 NHDC Case Ref No: 17/01515/1. 8 Green Lane.

Full Planning Permission: Erection of four bed dwelling with detached double garage/gym/store following demolition of existing dwelling.

39.1.2 NHDC Case Ref No: 17/01634/1. 1 Newnham Way.

Full Planning Permission: Erection of 1 x 4 bed detached dwelling including attached double garage following demolition of existing dwelling and garage.

Widening of existing vehicular access.

39.1.3 NHDC Case Ref No: 17/01563/1HH. 77 High Street (Bear House).

Full Permission Householder: Erection of garden room following demolition of sun room. Internal and external alterations. Installation of satellite dish to rear (south) elevation. Erection of shed and woodstore following demolition of existing shed. Take down and rebuild section of south boundary wall.

It was **resolved** to respond to the NHDC Planning Officer with a recommendation that permission be granted.

Clerk

39.1.4 NHDC Case Ref No: 17/01766/1HH. 8 The Rickyard.

Full Permission Householder: Single storey front extension.

It was noted that the NHDC Planning Officer had given advice re the Planning Authority’s policy on parking spaces. This required two off street spaces per dwelling for houses with 2 or more bedrooms. Each space should be fully off street and whether the road was adopted or not was irrelevant.

It was noted that the Parish Council policy was, in such cases, to object on the grounds that failure to comply would exacerbate existing on-street parking problems.

It was **resolved** to respond to the NHDC Planning Officer with a recommendation that permission be refused.

Clerk

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

No applications made to NHDC.

39.3 Applications pending NHDC decisions.

It was noted that the next meetings of the NHDC Planning Control Committee were scheduled for Thursday 17th August and Thursday 14th September, both 7.30pm at the Spirella Ballroom, Icknield Way, Letchworth. No Ashwell applications were to be considered at the August meeting.

39.3.1 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.

Cllr Graham Lee declared an interest as a resident of Ashwell Street.

It was noted that a letter had been received from CPRE re the Station Road application (see 39.3.2 below) citing recent court rulings. It was agreed that CPRE be requested to review, and update, its response to NHDC re the Claybush Road application in the light of these.

Clerk

39.3.2 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.

The response to NHDC from CPRE was noted (see 39.3.1 above).

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

Full Planning Permission: Install hard standing areas within garden.

Nothing further to report.

39.4 NHDC decisions on applications. The following was noted.

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

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

NHDC decision: Standard Conditional Permission.

39.5 NHDC Case Ref No: 16/02154/1. Cooke Engineering

Cllr Graham Lee declared an interest as a resident of Ashwell Street.

It was noted that local residents had conveyed their concerns to NHDC and the Parish Council following receipt of information that an amendment to the original permission had been signed off by the NHDC Planning Officer. This had granted permission for the removal of several mature trees that had originally been identified for retention. The Planning Officer in question had since left NHDC. The Parish Council had communicated its concerns to the NHDC Area Planning Officer and had reiterated its view that the trees should be retained and protected by Tree Protection Orders. It was understood that he had agreed to review the matter.

It was noted that the NHDC Planning Officer had also signed off the condition re the Biodiversity Plan. This included detailed references to bats, a protected species, that used the site and had specifically identified the importance of the trees in question. It was noted that this was incompatible with their removal.

It was agreed to ensure that the NHDC Area Planning Officer was kept fully aware of the Parish Council’s views and concerns.

Clerk

39.6 District Local Plan 2011-31 (May Council, 12.8)

It was noted that no further updates on the draft Local Plan had been received.

The proposal from Pirton Parish Council for a meeting of local parish councils to discuss how best to respond to applications for significant developments in villages was noted. It was agreed to respond expressing support and requesting the proposed date(s). **Clerk**

40. Reports re Finance matters

40.1 Planning Contributions/Section 106 claim for public toilets enhancement.

It was noted that no further communication had been received from NHDC Community Development Manager, Stuart Izzard.

40.2 Pavilion Upgrade. It was noted that collation of costings and supporting evidence for a bid to the NHDC Communities Fund was pending.

40.3 Audit 2016-17. It was noted that no matters of concern had been raised by the Internal Auditor and all required documents had been submitted to the External Auditor for the audit date of 24th July.

40.4 Proposal for approval of monthly Accounts and Bills for Payment.

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

41. Reports from working groups

41.1 Neighbourhood Plan Group (leader Cllr David Short, Cllrs Graham Lee and Madeleine Legg) Cllr David Short reported that the next meeting of the group was scheduled. The latest draft would incorporate the Ashwell Village Design Statement.

41.2 Website (leader Cllr Graham Lee) Cllr Graham Lee reported that he had been in contact with the supplier to request that the outstanding items agreed be completed; the final invoice for creating the site would not be paid pending this. The site was designed to be amended/updated on an ongoing basis; contributions both from the Parish Council and others would be incorporated.

41.3 Local business support (leader Cllr Graham Lee) See 38.4.1 above.

42. PARISH AFFAIRS, REPORTS FROM OTHER BODIES AND OPEN FORUM

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

42.1 The following consultations were noted.

42.1.1 Proposals by the Police & Crime Commissioner re closer joint working between Herts Police and Fire & Rescue Services. <http://www.hertscommissioner.org/fire>

42.1.2 NHDC 'Help shape the future of your waste and recycling services'; deadline 31st August 2017.

<https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/help-shape-future-your-waste-and-recycling-service>

See also 38.4.3 above.

42.2 Museum. Cllr Martin Hoffman (Chairman of the trustees in his own right) reported that a quotation had been accepted for works to address the damp problems.

42.3 Ashwell 1100 celebrations.

42.3.1 Street Party Sunday 9th July. The Chairman noted the success of this event and how well it had been organised.

42.3.2 Further events. Cllr David Short reported that a concert in St Mary's Church and a jazz event were planned. Details of tree planting events had been received.

42.4 Hollyhocks around the village. Cllr Graham Lee expressed his concerns that there were fewer this year particularly in Gardiners Lane. It was reported that a couple of parishioners had also raised concerns and were planning to re-seed some locations at the end of the summer with locally collected supplies.

42.5 Village Hall. Cllr Martin Hoffman declared an interest as a trustee.

The Chairman reported a letter from the Chairman of the trustees with a request that the Parish Council take over the role of trustee of the Village Hall. It was agreed that all parish councillors would consider the 'pros and cons' of this; fuller details of the roles and responsibilities involved would be forwarded to facilitate this. All contributions would be collated and the matter discussed at the next meeting. The proposal that a public meeting be called would also be considered. **MNW**

42.6 Items raised by parishioners. Re draft Local Plan (see 39.6 above). A parishioner reported that other communities in Hertfordshire had raised concerns with the ombudsman re the lack of response from their local planning authorities. He proposed that concerns re NHDC be taken up with the ombudsman. It was noted that specific cases with full details would be required for this; general accusations would not be sufficient. It was also noted that part of the Local Plan submission was a document that detailed how NHDC had complied with the statutory requirements for consultation; this was available on their website

(see Statement of Consultation at www.north-herts.gov.uk/home/planning/planning-policy/local-plan/proposed-submission-local-plan-2011-2031).

Meeting closed at 9.35pm

Forthcoming meeting dates:

Monthly Council meeting Wednesday 6th September, 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 -August 2017			02 August 2017		
Proposed (i) Cllr Lee		(ii) Cllr Hoffman	Declarations: None.		
			£	£	£
			Precept	Grants	Other
					Total
Receipts					
57	S D Brown Builder	yearbook advert			200.00
58	Herts County Council	reimbursement Springs painting			1950.00
59	K and D Coyne	Allotment rent			15.00
60	Neville Funeral Service	chapel rent			68.75
61	QED Recruitment	yearbook advert			125.00
	Total		0.00	0.00	2,358.75
Payments					
			Admin, office costs & Other Misc	Management of Parish Assets & Amenities	VAT
					Total
By Direct Debit					
95	NHDC (20/07/2017)	trade refuse bin (Rec charity)		90.48	90.48
96	NHDC (20/07/2017)	trade refuse bin (Springs)		100.49	100.49
97	E.ON (01/08/2017)	chapel electricity		11.00	11.00
98	E.ON (31/07/2017)	toilets electricity		9.80	0.49
99	E.ON (31/07/2017)	pavilion electricity		25.82	1.29
By cheque					
100	J C M Porter	Clerk's salary	1181.25		1181.25
101	HCC Pensions-LGPS Account,	clerk's pension	401.57		401.57
102	J C M Porter	reimbursement office expenses	29.40		5.88
103	Mrs Annie Clifford	Deputy clerk's salary	260.00		260.00
104	M Chandler	Duties at Pavilion and Rec (inc overtime)		141.40	141.40
105	A Beddall	ECO salary		219.20	219.20
106	Post Office	tax&NI to Inland Revenue	331.26	68.40	399.66
107	Mr K Clifford	premises duties		30.00	30.00
108	Mrs B Lohoar	reimbursement street party	409.72		409.72
109	The Liberty Co Ltd	toilets cleaning (29/05-02/07)		160.00	32.00
110	CDA for Herts	annual subscription	35.00		35.00
111	F T Gearing Landscape Services	small gains fencing repairs		260.00	52.00
112	Play Inspection Co Ltd	site inspection re cricket fencing		395.00	79.00
113	Brilliant Lawns	Grasscutting pitches at the Rec		220.00	220.00
114	D J Granger Grounds Maint. Ltd	grounds maintenance worksheet 12		370.00	74.00
	Total		2648.20	2011.11	244.66
Outstanding Accounts					
	yearbook adverts 2017 edition				125.00
	Total				125.00
Money at bank					
	Current Account		26 July 2017		42,868.81
	Deposit Account		03 July 2017		30,466.14
	Total				73,334.95
	Cheques banked after/BACS transfers after				-
	Cheques drawn but not cleared/DD's outstanding				401.57
	Total				72,933.38
	Total after paying this months cheques				68,029.41
	Total in current a/c after paying this months cheques				37,563.27