

**Minutes of the Ashwell Parish Council meeting held on
Wednesday 6th September 2017 in the Parish Room**

Present:

Mark White (Chairman), Graham Lee, Madeleine Legg, Bridget Macey, David Sims, David Short. The Clerk (Jane Porter) and Deputy Clerk (Annie Clifford) were also in attendance. Members of the public: Two parishioners and County Councillor Steve Jarvis.

43. Apologies for absence Cllr Martin Hoffman (away).

44. Minutes of previous meetings

Proposal for approval and signature of the minutes of the Council meeting 2nd August 2017.

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

Clerk

45. Matters of general report from previous meetings

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

The Chairman reported that an update had been received from the Scouts. The unit had now been installed and training sessions, although not a prerequisite for use, were to be scheduled. The access code had been given to the local shops, pubs etc and would be forwarded to others on request.

45.2 (August Council, 36.2) Superfast broadband. It was noted that County Councillor Steve Jarvis had investigated why some Ashwell postcodes were missing from the list; these addresses would be included but for commercial reasons had different funding arrangements.

45.3 (August Council, 36.3) Rear wall of the Rose & Crown in Silver Street. It was reported that further information had been received from the NHDC Conservation Officer. The brewery's surveyor had informed him of delays in commissioning a supplier with the necessary specialist flint-working skills; in the interim a scaffold would be installed to support the wall.

45.4 (August Council, 36.4) Proposals for new entrance signs for the village. It was noted that Cllr David Short was progressing this; he appealed for comments on the proposed wording.

ALL

45.5 Village Hall (August Council, 42.5) see item 51.3 in Parish Affairs.

45.6 Environmental Cleansing Officer (ECO). The Chairman reported that numerous positive comments had been received re the good work being done by the new ECO.

46. 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)

46.1 Cemetery (Cllr Madeleine Legg) Cllr Madeleine Legg reported,

(i) Chapel of Rest tenancy. There had been further communication with the tenant and the solicitor; a side letter to the lease was being drafted. (ii) Ashes area. Concerns had been received from a parishioner and the quality of the grass cutting raised with the contractor. The quantity and type of memorial items placed on and around memorial plaques had been identified as a problem. Cllr Legg had drafted a letter to families requesting limits on these items and asking for their comments; she would review the memorial regulations to make them clearer. (iii) Cllr David Short noted a previous proposal re the grounds maintenance of the Cemetery and the possible involvement of a volunteer group. It was agreed that this be investigated.

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

The following were noted,

(i) Cricket pitch and playground/Report following bespoke RoSPA site visit. A response from the Cricket Club was pending, (ii) the routine annual RoSPA visit was scheduled and a report awaited, (iii) the routine tree survey report had been received and no significant issues identified.

46.3 Playground (Cllr Madeleine Legg) See above re RoSPA.

46.4 Public toilets at the pavilion (Cllr Madeleine Legg)

See also 49.1 below re enhancement project/claim to NHDC from planning obligations/section 106.

Cllr Madeleine Legg reported that the new cleaning contractor had commenced work from August.

46.5 The Springs (Cllr Martin Hoffman) It was noted that the routine update of the tree survey report had been received; there were no significant issues.

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

Cllr David Sims reported a problem with the chain link fencing; means of preventing youths from mistreating it were discussed.

46.7 Misc amenities (To include: The Lock Up, Merchant Taylors' Green, Carters' Pond)

The tree report for the Walnut on Merchant Taylors Green was noted; no works were required.

46.8 Street furniture (Cllr Bridget Macey) It was noted that several litter bins were very full; the four-weekly emptying cycle by the NHDC contractor struggled to cope over the summer months. Replacement bins had been ordered for outside the shop and opposite the dentist in the High Street.

See also 47.3.3 below re the NHDC contract.

46.9 St Mary's Churchyard grounds maintenance (Cllr Martin Hoffman)

The following were noted, (i) Disabled access. A request had been passed to the Churchwardens, (ii) Routine tree survey and report. The cost of works identified had been discussed with the PCC representative; there was sufficient in the budget.

46.10 Parish Clock (Cllr Mark White) The Chairman reported the completion of works to the cams; the supplier had informed that they would now 'last another 100 years'.

46.11 War Memorial (July Council, 28.1) The Chairman reported an email from a parishioner with concerns that the fastigate Beech trees might snag the ensign installed to commemorate the Merchant Navy in WWI. It was noted that the request to the Ashwell Royal British Legion was still pending; they had been asked for their views on proposals to address the poor state of the surrounding hedge and the pruning of the Beech trees. It was agreed that the request be reiterated and that a quote for the tree pruning be obtained.

Clerk

47. Items re other authorities/organisations

47.1 Hertfordshire Highways

(August Council, 38.1) County Councillor Steve Jarvis gave updates on the following, (i) the 2018-19 Highways Locality Budget (HLB) included resurfacing works to parts of Mill Street and Station Road, and the yellow lines proposals at all the identified locations, (ii) section 106 funding for safety works in Station Road was being pursued, (iii) he had requested information re a second SID for Newnham Way and also moving the current unit, (iv) discussions with relevant parties re safety works at the A505 Odsey junction were ongoing; lighting of signage had been agreed, (v) in response to residents' concerns re fault reporting he had questioned the contractor's poor wording and timing of responses.

Cllr Jarvis was asked to address issues re overhanging vegetation and signage associated with highways works. The ongoing conversion of street lighting throughout the county to LED was again noted.

See 48.3.1 below re Claybush planning application.

47.2 Hertfordshire Highways/Rights of Way Nothing to report.

47.3 North Herts District Council

47.3.1 (August Council, 38.4.1) Proposals for restricted parking spaces outside retail outlets made to the NHDC Strategic Planning & Projects Manager. Cllr Graham Lee reported that the meeting agreed since June was still pending a date from NHDC.

47.3.3 NHDC new contract for waste and recycling, and street cleansing services. Public consultation '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>

The response from the NHDC Contracts Manager was noted, 'currently reviewing the bids from contractors and once the contract is awarded, most likely towards the end October, we will be in a position to understand in more detail what scheduling for both refuse/recycling collections and street cleansing will look like...the siting and location of all litter bins will be reviewed as part of the new contract.'

It was noted that the ownership, by the Parish Council, of the litter bins throughout the village had been reiterated to him. Litter bins on Parish land were owned and emptied by the Parish Council, and those on the public highway were owned by the Parish Council but emptied by the NHDC contractor.

See also 48 and 49 below for NHDC matters re Planning and Finance.

48. 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 is convened to consider those items. See the notice board, website or contact the office for the agenda.

48.1 New consultations received from NHDC.

It was noted that the three following applications had been considered at a meeting of the Planning Committee, on site prior to this meeting (see minutes Planning Committee, 6th September 2017).

48.1.1 NHDC Case Ref No: 17/002047/1HH. 6 Fordham Close

Full Permission Householder: Single storey rear side extension and garage following demolition of existing conservatory. First floor side extension

48.1.2 NHDC Case Ref No: 17/001807/1HH. Land rear of Townsend House, 24 Lucas Lane

Full Planning Permission: Erection of 4 x 3 bed terraced dwellings with creation of new vehicular access off of Lucas Lane.

48.1.3 NHDC Case Ref No: 17/001958/1HH. 1 Church Lane

Full Permission Householder: Demolish existing outbuilding, and replace with a single storey building to be used as non-commercial ceramics studio.

48.1.4 NHDC Case Ref No: 17/001909/1HH. Bluegates Farm, Loves Lane

Full Planning Permission: Erection of grain store with drying facilities.

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

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

Cllr David Sims expressed his concerns re the level of protection for valued trees in the village. Only a few trees had the protection of Tree Protection Orders (TPO's). Although trees within the conservation area had a degree of protection this was not as strong as a TPO. Recent experience had shown that trees identified for retention and protection as part of a planning application was not always effective; NHDC planning officers had admitted that these were 'difficult to enforce'. There had been recent cases where the Parish Council had requested that trees be given a TPO, this had been refused and the trees subsequently been removed. Following discussion it was agreed that a village-wide survey should be undertaken to identify trees of heritage, amenity and/or ecological value. The full report could be appended to the Neighbourhood Plan and would thus have to be considered by the Local Planning Authority as Supplementary Planning Guidance. A plea for anyone with the suitable skills and time to undertake this work would be made. **Clerk**
See also 48.5 below.

48.3 Applications pending NHDC decisions.

The next scheduled meetings of the NHDC Planning Control Committee were noted; Thursday 14th September, Thursday 28th September, Thursday 12th October, Thursday 9th November, all 7.30pm at the Spirella Ballroom, Icknield Way, Letchworth.

48.3.1 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]

Receipt of a further consultation letter from NHDC dated 23rd August (deadline for response 13th September) was noted. The amended documents supplied had included (i) a revised site layout for 30 houses, ie reduced from 33, (ii) Road Safety Audits commissioned by the developer, Croudace, re the proposed vehicular access from Claybush Road and the proposed pedestrian access via Ashwell Street. Following discussion it was agreed that the response to the NHDC Planning Officer would reiterate the Parish Council's previous objections to the application, ie failure to comply with NHDC Heritage, Landscape and Highway Safety policies, both current and emerging, and failure to take into account the emerging Ashwell Neighbourhood Plan. The response would again reiterate, despite the claims made in the developer's highway reports, that the application failed to meet Highways safety requirements and the Site Specific Criteria stated in the emerging Local Plan, ie 'the development should deliver a pedestrian access route into the village to enable access to services and facilities.' Parish councillors had also been made aware that professional highway reports had been commissioned by local residents that contradicted the developer's claims; it was understood these had been forwarded to the NHDC Planning Officer. A request was made to County Councillor Steve Jarvis to investigate the lack of a safety audit from the County Council's highways officer. **Clerk**

It was noted that the NHDC Planning Officer had informed that the application would be considered by the Planning Control Committee on Thursday 12th October 2017.

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

Full Planning Permission: Install hard standing areas within garden.

It was noted that, following the Parish Council's and the trustees concerns that the proposed seating areas were too close to the rear walls of the Moss Cottage Homes, the Planning Officer had requested a revised layout. This had been supplied by the applicant and planning permission had now been granted.

48.3.3 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.

48.3.4 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.

48.3.5 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.

48.3.6 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.

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

Full Permission Householder: Single storey front extension.

48.4 **NHDC decisions on applications.** See 48.3.2 above.

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

It was noted that a grant of variation had been signed off by NHDC to permit removal of conditioned trees following a request from the developer. The Parish Council and local residents had objected that no consultation on this had taken place despite the specific request from the Parish Council that mature trees on the site be protected. The request that Tree Protection Orders (TPOs) be placed on them had been refused on the grounds that they would be adequately protected under the conditions of the planning permission granted. It was noted that the Planning Officer in question had since left NHDC. The NHDC Area Planning Officer had informed that the decision to grant an amendment, and allow the removal of the trees, could not be reversed; he had recommended negotiation with the developer. Cllr Graham Lee reported that the trees had now been felled.

See also 48.2 above.

Cllr David Short raised his concerns re the levels and questioned whether the agreement re the lowering of the new dwellings to reduce their dominance was being adhered to. It was agreed that this question be put to the NHDC Area Planning Officer.

Clerk

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

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

49. Reports re Finance matters

49.1 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 and agreed that this be chased.

Clerk

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

49.3 Audit 2016-17. The submission to the External Auditor and the audit timetable, ie publication of audited accounts by 30th September, were noted.

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

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

Clerk

It was noted that the invoice for half of the cost of the new website was still held pending the suppliers fulfilment of the work agreed. See also 50.2 below.

The request for funding for the Ashwell 1100 celebration tree planting was noted; this was agreed.

50. Reports from working groups

50.1 Neighbourhood Plan Group (leader Cllr David Short, Cllrs Graham Lee and Madeleine Legg)
Cllr David Short reported that the draft was being edited and would then be sent for external review.

50.2 Website (leader Cllr Graham Lee) Cllr Graham Lee reported that there were a number of issues that were being pursued with the supplier. See also 49.4 above.

50.3 Yearbook Group (leader Cllr David Short) Cllr David Short reported that the group was scheduled to meet shortly to progress the next edition. There were a couple of member changes and a new person to manage advert sales was being sought.

50.4 Local business support (leader Cllr Graham Lee) see 47.3.1 above.

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

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

51.1 School Governing Body. Cllr David Short reported that works were to the roof and windows were in progress.

51.2 Ashwell 1100 celebrations. Cllr David Short reported that future events included concerts in St Mary's Church and a history evening at the Museum. Further tree planting was also planned (see also 49.4 above).

51.3 (August Council, 42.5) Village Hall/letter from the Chairman of the trustees requesting that the Parish Council take over the role of trustee. It was noted that a list of 'pros and cons' had been started and agreed that this be publicised for parishioners to add their views. It was agreed that fuller details of the roles and responsibilities and the current management arrangements be determined. **MNW**

51.4 Other items raised.

51.4.1 Advertising hoarding outside Walkdens/concern that no longer needed. It was agreed to request Origin Housing to remove it. **Clerk**

51.4.2 Moss fallen from roofs onto the footway in the High Street/concern re unsightliness and possible hazard. It was agreed to investigate and request action from either Veolia, the NHDC street cleansing contractor, or the Environmental Cleansing Officer. **Clerk**

51.4.3 Works at Bear House. In response to a question as to how long the hoardings and road closure would be in place, Cllr David Short reported his understanding that the new residents hoped to move in by next Easter.

51.4.4 United Reformed Church. Cllr David Short reported that a fundraising campaign for works to the Chapel was ongoing; he commended the effort and noted the heritage value of the building.

51.4.5 CPRE Planning Skills Seminar, Thursday 5th October 2017, 10am to 3.15pm, Knebworth Village Hall. Cllr David Short reported that he was unable to attend due to another commitment.

51.4.6 Orchards East. Hertfordshire launch at Tewin Village Memorial Hall and Tewin Orchard on Saturday September 09th from 10.00am - 3.30pm.

Meeting closed 9.50pm.

Forthcoming meeting dates:

Monthly Council meeting Wednesday 4th October, 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.

Appendix 2

ACCOUNTS AND BILLS FOR PAYMENT -September 2017					06 September 2017	
			Declarations: None.			
Proposed (i) Cllr David Short		(ii) Cllr David Sims				
			£	£	£	£
62	Neville Funeral Service	chapel rent			68.75	68.75
63	Santander	bank interest			2.50	2.50
64	Santander	bank interest			2.59	2.59
65	J Cox	allotment rent			15.00	15.00
66	Ashwell Jewellery	yearbook advert			125.00	125.00
67	Dignity Funerals Ltd	Crouch burial (cemetery works 17.26)			445.00	445.00
68	Neville Funeral Service	chapel rent			68.75	68.75
Total			0.00	0.00	727.59	727.59
			Admin, office costs & Other Misc	Management of Parish Assets & Amenities	VAT	Total
Payments						
By Direct Debit						
115	BT (04/08/2017)	phone and broadband x2	272.20		54.44	326.64
116	E.ON (01/09/2017)	chapel electricity		11.00		11.00
117	E.ON (15/08/2017)	toilets electricity		1.25	0.06	1.31
118	E.ON (13/08/2017)	pavilion electricity		8.94	0.45	9.37
119	Affinity for business	allotments water		30.52		30.52
120	Affinity for business	Cemetery water		17.73		17.73
121	Affinity for business	Pavilion water		34.79		34.79
122	NHDC (07/09/2017)	trade refuse bin (6A Back Street)		100.49		100.49
By cheque						
123	J C M Porter	Clerk's salary	1181.05			1181.05
124	HCC Pensions-LGPS Account,	clerk's pension	401.57			401.57
125	J C M Porter	reimbursement office expenses	74.99		15.00	89.99
126	Mrs Annie Clifford	Deputy clerk's salary	260.00			260.00
127	M Chandler	Duties at Pavilion and Rec (inc overtime)		141.20		141.20
128	A Beddall	ECO salary		219.00		219.00
129	Post Office	tax&NI to Inland Revenue	331.46	68.60		400.06
130	Mr K Clifford	premises duties		30.00		30.00
131	D J Granger Grounds Maint. Ltd	Works to grave plot		80.00	16.00	96.00
132	Brilliant Lawns (inv4455)	Grasscutting pitches at the Rec		220.00		220.00
133	W N Francis	Parish clock works to cams		6568.00		6,568.00
134	Blue Tree Company	Tree surveys at Springs, Rec and Merchant Taylors Green		900.00	180.00	1080.00
135	The Liberty Co Ltd	toilets cleaning (02/07-30/07)		128.00	25.60	153.60
136	Mr R J Thompson	Service strimmer and leaf blower		54.00		54.00
137	D J Granger Grounds Maint. Ltd	grounds maintenance worksheet 13		370.00	74.00	444.00
138	D J Granger Grounds Maint. Ltd	grounds maintenance worksheet 14		188.00	37.60	225.60
139	Edwards Cleaning & Maintenance	public toilets at the recreation ground		242.00		242.00
Total			2249.07	9413.52	348.71	12,000.28
Outstanding Accounts						
None					-	
Total						-
Money at bank						
Current Account			24 August 2017		34,065.92	
Deposit Account			03 August 2017		30,468.73	
Total						64,534.65
<i>Cheques banked after/BACS transfers after</i>						-
<i>Cheques drawn but not cleared/DD's outstanding</i>						192.00
<i>Total</i>						64,342.65
<i>Total after paying this months cheques</i>						52,342.37
<i>Total in current a/c after paying this months cheques</i>						21,873.64