

**Minutes of the Ashwell Parish Council meeting
held on Wednesday 6th February 2019 in the Parish Room**

Present: Cllrs Mark White (Chairman), Martin Hoffman (Vice-chairman), Bridget Macey, David Short, Madeleine Legg, David Sims.

The Clerk (Jane Porter) and the Deputy Clerk (Laura Brooks-Payne) were also in attendance.

Members of the public: Eight parishioners. Two officers from Herts County Council (see item 106.1).

Agent representing Extra-Care Retirement Housing (see item 106.2). County Councillor Steve Jarvis.

103. Apologies for absence Cllr Graham Lee (away)

104. Declarations of Interest

Item 106.4 Cllr Martin Hoffman: Trustee of the Village Hall (non-pecuniary).

Item 110.1.3 Cllrs David Short and Madeleine Legg: Tenancy with the applicant to keep sheep (non-pecuniary).

Item 111.2 Cllr Mark White: Reimbursement of purchase/accounts item 236.

105. Minutes of previous meetings

Proposal for approval and signature of the minutes of the Council meeting held on 9th January 2019.

It was resolved that these be approved and signed.

Action: MNW

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

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

106.1 Briefing from John Rumble, HCC Head of Environmental Resource Planning/Lead Local Flood Authority. Mr Rumble outlined the responsibilities and remit of his department working in accordance with an agreed management strategy. They advised local planning authorities (for Ashwell this was North Herts District Council) and were a statutory consultee on development applications of more than 10 units or where there were specific concerns. He emphasised that it was up to the applicant to justify and supply the necessary evidence to support their case for water management on any proposed site. His department would give a judgement on this and advise the local planning authority accordingly. If evidence of any flooding risk was brought to their attention they would ensure that this was investigated. They did not have the resources to undertake inspection works but could require developers to do this. If necessary, planning conditions could be imposed. In response to questions re the application at Claybush Hill, he reported that he developer had provided evidence to support their claim that surface water could be managed in an appropriate manner. Design standards that were required to be met were set at an agreed level of risk, including provision for climate change. The Chairman thanked the officers for their attendance.

106.2 Briefing from Gae Parry, Barker Parry Town Planning, acting as agent for Extra-Care Retirement Housing re the proposed development on land at Donkey Meadow to the rear of the High Street. This prior to the public exhibition they had scheduled for Saturday 16th February from 11.30am to 3.00pm at the School. The Chairman welcomed Ms Parry and reiterated that parish councillors would be pleased to receive information but at this pre-application stage the Parish Council would not be expressing any specific opinion on the draft plans. Ms Parry explained that her client's proposals for sheltered housing suitable for the elderly would meet the need demonstrated by surveys carried out as part of the Ashwell Neighbourhood Plan. The draft proposals were for 40 units mostly of flats with some 2-bedroom cottages, all for private purchase. The site, close to the village shops and services, was considered to be ideal. Current drafts for the proposed layout were designed to retain the openness of the field at the front alongside the High Street. Comments on whether this area should be kept completely open or part used for community purposes, eg a village car park, would be welcomed as would the public's views on other aspects of the scheme. The Chairman thanked Ms Parry for her briefing.

106.3 Election of a new Parish Council for 2019-2023, Thursday 2nd May. Plans for publicity to encourage individuals to stand for election were noted. Drafts for posters, items for the website, for emailing to signed-up contacts and for distribution via social media channels would be circulated and progressed.

Action: Clerk/Deputy Clerk

106.4 Village Hall/letter from the Chairman of the trustees requesting that the Parish Council take over the role of trustee (*see February Council 2018, minute 98.1 for details*). The Chairman reported that further useful information had been obtained from ACRE and communications with their local Hertfordshire agent were ongoing. All parties hoped that a route to completing the transfer was now clearer and this could be completed as soon as possible.

106.5 Items raised by parish councillors

(including any matters on other village groups and organisations)

106.5.1 Henry Colbron Trust. Cllr David Short reported that contact would be made with the trustees, the Merchant Taylors' Company, re the next round of funding. As in previous years the Parish Council would offer to assist with publicity of this. Following publication of the accounts for 2017 on the Charity Commission website he was mindful to seek information as to how the trust deed criteria had been met for one particular grant made.

106.5.2 School. Cllr David Short reported that Highways matters, including proposals for safety improvements at the rear entrance, were being discussed by the Head and County Councillor Steve Jarvis. *See also 106.6.6 below.*

106.5.3 Museum. Cllr Martin Hoffman reported that the fundraising for necessary building works was going well. Contributors and the volunteers who organised village events in support of this were applauded.

106.5.4 Moss Cottage Homes. Cllr Madeleine Legg reported that the refurbished cottage would be available for occupancy shortly.

106.5.5 Police. Cllr Martin Hoffman expressed his concern at recent break-ins in the village. He encouraged all to communicate with their neighbours over security as well as signing up for the Neighbourhood Watch/OWL reporting scheme operated by the police. Cllr David Short reported that he had spoken to two PCSO's patrolling in the village re parking on the pavement at the corner of Back Street and Bear Lane opposite the school; he understood that action had been taken against one individual. It was noted that this location was due to have yellow line restrictions imposed shortly; some concern was expressed re the enforcement of these.

106.5.6 Pedestrian safety in Ashwell Street/The Ruddy. Cllr Madeleine Legg expressed concern at the speed of some traffic using the track between Woodforde Close and Station Road. County Councillor Steve Jarvis responded that he would enquire re possibilities for signage.

106.6 Items from other organisations/bodies.

106.6.1 Parish Tree Warden scheme operated by South Cambridgeshire. Nothing further to report.

106.6.2 At Home 2019/Creative Ashwell theme. Cllr Madeleine Legg reported that she had completed the Parish Council's section for the village quilt.

106.6.3 Arbury Banks/Beacons of the Past -Hillforts project. Cllr Martin Hoffman reported that further information had been received; the LIDAR surveys were ongoing and various events planned. Cllr David Short reported that he had attended some of the training courses as had Sarah Talks from the Ashwell Archaeology group.

106.6.4 Recreation Ground charity (Allotment for Exercise and Recreation). It was noted that the annual return had been submitted to the Charity Commission.

106.6.5 Taxibus service to the station. The update from County Councillor Steve Jarvis was noted; a new permanent contract had been agreed. He encouraged residents to use the service to ensure it was retained. The Chairman thanked him for his work on this.

106.6.6 County Councillor Steve Jarvis gave updates on Highways matters following the liaison meeting with Parish Council representatives on Wednesday 30th January. (i) Parking restrictions: All the consultations had been completed; there were some resident's objections to be dealt with. (ii) 20mph zone: The speed and volume data had met the requirements and the public consultation would now follow. (iii) West End safety: Design proposals would be progressed in the budget for 2019-20. (iv) Silver Street pinch point: Following the Parish Council's consultation with local residents detailed drawings of proposals would be progressed. (v) School safety: Discussions with the Head continued. The feasibility of yellow zig-zags at the rear entrance was being investigated. Additional footways in Ashwell Street had been discussed but there were boundary and funding issues to be overcome.

106.7 To receive any items from parishioners.

106.7.1 Overgrown hedges. It was clarified that landowners were responsible for ensuring that hedges etc did not overhang footways and highways. Problems should be reported to Herts County Council as the responsible authority. The Parish Council did in some instances send a letter to individuals requesting action.

106.7.2 Parking on the corner of Gardiners Lane and High Street. It was noted that this location was on the list of sites for a possible additional tranche of requests to Herts Highways to install yellow lines.

106.7.3 Development concerns. A parishioner expressed her view that additional housing would exacerbate existing issues with sewers and appointments at the doctors' surgery. It was noted that infrastructure issues were raised by the Parish Council in relation to planning applications.

Standing orders reinstated from this point.

107. Matters of general report from previous meetings None to report that not included in other items.

108. Parish management reports (current responsibilities shown in brackets)

108.1 Cemetery (Cllr Madeleine Legg)

Cllr Madeleine Legg reported:

(i) Chapel of Rest/update on the new tenancy agreement with Neville Funeral Services. Documents had been returned to the Parish Council's solicitor some time ago and a response still awaited. (ii) Boundary fencing works had been completed.

108.2 Recreation Ground including the Pavilion and Public Toilets

(Cllrs Mark White and Madeleine Legg)

Cllr Madeleine Legg reported:

(i) There had been several further incidents of bagged dog waste left on the cricket square. The police and the NHDC Enforcement Officer were being kept informed and the use of CCTV would be discussed. Publicity had resulted in additional reporting from the public. (ii) Rubbish left at the rear of the pavilion had been removed by a contractor. The Cricket Club would be requested to remove the beer barrels. (iii) Possible designs for new toilet facilities were in hand; further examples were being sought.

Action: Clerk/Deputy Clerk

108.3 Playground (Cllr Madeleine Legg)

Cllr Madeleine Legg reported:

(i) Minor works agreed would be progressed. (ii) Design proposals to revamp the skateboard area and provide new equipment for older youngsters had been received from a potential supplier; these would be distributed for comments. Further options and funding sources were being investigated.

Action: Clerk/Deputy Clerk

108.4 The Springs (Cllr Martin Hoffman)

Cllr Martin Hoffman reported:

(i) A quote for the agreed minor works had been received; these would now be progressed.

Action: Clerk/Deputy Clerk

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

Cllr David Sims reported:

(i) A bag containing a quantity of 'legal highs' had been found on the sports field and passed to the police.

108.6 The Lock Up (Cllr David Short) Nothing to report.

108.7 Merchant Taylors' Green and Carters' Pond (Cllr Martin Hoffman) Nothing to report.

108.8 Street furniture (Cllr Bridget Macey) Nothing to report.

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

Cllr Martin Hoffman reported:

(i) Works to the gate from Church Path had been completed, part funded by donations from two parishioners.

(ii) The report on the Mill Street boundary wall had been requested from the PCC.

108.10 Parish Clock (Cllr Mark White) Nothing to report.

108.11 War Memorial It was noted that some amendments to the specification had been requested; works were due to commence as soon as possible.

Action: Clerk/Deputy Clerk

109. Items re other authorities/organisations;

109.1 Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) See 106 above re Taxibus service and Herts Highways.

109.2 North Herts District Council (NHDC) See below re Local Planning Authority matters.

110. Planning matters

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. If any concerns are raised either by a parishioner or a parish councillor on an application, an on-site meeting of the Parish Council's Planning Committee may be convened to consider those items. See the notice board, website or contact the office for the agenda. A summary is available on the website (www.ashwell.gov.uk) Full details of applications are available on the NHDC website.

110.1 New consultations on applications received from NHDC

(See appendix with summary table below for details).

110.1.1 NHDC Case Ref. No. 19/00146/LBC. 11 Swan Street (Ashwell Museum).

It was *resolved* that a recommendation for permission to be granted be sent to the Planning Officer.

Action: Clerk/Deputy Clerk

110.1.2 NHDC Case Ref. No. 19/00077/LBC. 40 High Street.

It was *resolved* that a recommendation for permission to be granted be sent to the Planning Officer.

Action: Clerk/Deputy Clerk

110.1.3 NHDC Case Ref. No. 19/00079/FP. Westbury Farm House, West End.

See item 104 above/Declarations of Interest.

Action: Clerk/Deputy Clerk

110.1.4 NHDC Case Ref. No. 18/03329/FP. 26 Silver Street.

It was *resolved* that a recommendation for permission to be granted be sent to the Planning Officer.

Action: Clerk/Deputy Clerk

110.1.5 NHDC Case Ref. No. 18/03343/FP. 32 West End.

It was *resolved* that a recommendation for permission to be granted be sent to the Planning Officer.

Action: Clerk/Deputy Clerk

110.2 NHDC Case Ref No: 16/01797/1. Land rear of Claybush Road.

See 106.1 above.

110.3 Trees in the Conservation Area (Section 211) and Tree Protection Orders (TPOs).

Two submissions made to NHDC by residents were noted (Westbury Spring House, West End and The Gables, High Street).

See also item 106.6.1 above.

110.4 Development at the Cooke Engineering site.

Parish councillors reiterated their concerns at the poor state of the site, the adjacent Highways verge and the Right of Way; also that works appeared to have again been halted. It was noted that relevant officers at NHDC and HCC were monitoring the situation. The letter sent before Christmas by the Parish Council to the developer had not resulted in any action. The information from County Councillor Steve Jarvis that the Right of Way closure notice had been extended to 6th August was noted.

110.5 Proposed development land at Station Road. NHDC Case Ref No: 17/01406/1

It was noted that a response to the letter sent to the agent acting for Beck Homes Ltd. proposing a meeting was awaited.

110.6 Local Plan Examination.

It was noted that the NHDC public consultation following the request by the Inspector for modifications had been extended to 4th March. The response from the Parish Council was being drafted.

Details on www.north-herts.gov.uk/localplan

Action: Clerk/CDS

110.7 The invitation from NHDC to attend a 'Parish Council Planning Briefing' on Wednesday 27th February was noted.

111. Reports re Finance matters

111.1 Request from Royston & District Community Transport for grant funding. Following discussion a proposal was made that a grant of £200 be made to acknowledge the excellent work, mostly by volunteers, that this charity carried out and particularly the valuable service provided to Ashwell residents.

It was **resolved** that the proposal be accepted.

Action: Clerk/Deputy Clerk

111.2 Proposal for approval of monthly summary of accounts and bills for payment.

It was **resolved** that the proposal be accepted.

Action: Clerk/Deputy Clerk

See appendix below.

112. To receive any reports re employment matters (Cllrs responsible, the Chairman and Madeleine Legg)
Nothing to report.

113. To receive any reports from working groups

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

Cllr David Short reported: (i) Meetings with the consultant, Alison Eardley, and the NHDC Strategic Planning Officer, Clare Skeels, had been very helpful. (ii) Comments on the draft had been received from other authorities; the detailed responses from Historic England and Herts County Council had been particularly detailed and very helpful. (iii) The grant application had been successful and would fully cover the consultancy costs for the rest of this financial year. The outlook for further funding was good and would be applied for.

113.2 Website (leader Cllr Graham Lee) Nothing to report.

113.3 Yearbook Group (leader Cllr David Short) Cllr David Short reported that publication in March was on schedule. He would be seeking volunteers for delivery rounds.

113.4 Local business support (leader Cllr Graham Lee) (*See 106.6.6 above re proposals for restricted time parking spaces outside retail premises*)

113.5 Litter Pick Group (leader Cllr Madeleine Legg) Village Spring Clean on Saturday 23rd March (meet 2pm at the Pavilion).

Cllr Madeleine Legg reported that the event was being publicised. The offer of community input from McDonalds at the Radwell Services was noted. Cllr Legg agreed to contact them to discuss their possible involvement.

Meeting closed 9.40pm

Forthcoming meeting dates:

March Council meeting, Wednesday 6th March 2019, 8pm in the Parish Room.

Annual Parish Meeting. Wednesday 27th March, 8pm at the School.

Appendix 1 – General material received

NHDC weekly ‘Members Information’; HAPTC briefings and bulletins; SLCC updates and newsletters; Police OWL/Rural News/Neighbourhood Watch bulletins.

Chairman’s Signature.....Date.....

Appendix 2 - Planning Applications summary

Consulations on planning and listed building applications received from NHDC - as at 06 February 2019				
Address	Application Number	Brief description	Ashwell PC Comments	North Herts Decision
40 High Street	19/00077/LBC	Listed Building Consent: Various works including installation of wood fibre insulation to west gable, internal timber panelling and lead drip flashing above plinth to south elevation together with various repairs.	PC Decision sent to NHDC: recommendation that permission be GRANTED	Pending
11 Swan Street (Ashwell Museum)	19/00146/LBC	Listed Building Consent: Repair of oak frame, replacement of concrete infill panels with lime plaster and lath, re-tiling roof and other associated repairs.	PC Decision sent to NHDC: recommendation that permission be GRANTED	Pending
Westbury Farm House, West End	19/00079/FP	Single storey rear extension to existing garage and workshop outbuilding.	PC Decision sent to NHDC: recommendation that permission be GRANTED	Pending
26 Silver Street	18/03329/FPH	Part single storey, part two storey extension with roof alterations.	PC Decision sent to NHDC: recommendation that permission be GRANTED	Pending
32 West End	18/03343/FPH	Installation of 4 front rooflights, 3 rear pitched roof dormers to covert loft into habitable space.	PC Decision sent to NHDC: recommendation that permission be GRANTED	Pending
35 Ashwell Street	18/03132/FPH	Two storey side and rear extension. Changes to fenestration including removal of existing front dormer windows and replaced with rooflight windows, removal of front bay window and replaced with flat glazed screen. External wall finish to be changed from brickwork to render.	PC Decision sent to NHDC: recommendation that permission be GRANTED	Permission granted 23/1/19
11 Fordham Close	18/03208/FPH	Single storey rear infill extension and single storey side extension.	PC Decision sent to NHDC: recommendation that permission be GRANTED	Permission granted 14/1/19
Land rear of 4-14 Claybush Road	16/01797/1	30 proposed dwellings with associated access, parking, amenity & open space.	PC Decision sent to NHDC: recommendation that permission be REFUSED	Pending

Appendix 3 - Monthly accounts summary

ACCOUNTS & BILLS FOR PAYMENT - summary for February Council 2019			
RECEIPTS			£
74	Neville Funeral Services	Cemetery Chapel Rent (Feb)	68.75
			Total receipts
			68.75
PAYMENTS			
Items paid by Direct Debit and by bank transfer to employees and regular suppliers/agreed quotes			
222	EON	electricity public toilets	8.88
223	EON	Electricity to the Pavilion	8.78
224	NHDC	Trade waste (Recreation Ground) 21/01/2019	91.39
225	NHDC	Trade waste (Springs) 21/01/2019	104.91
226	ICO	Yearly Subscription	35.00
227	Clerk	Clerk's salary	1,266.23
228	Clerk	Clerk Reimbursements - postage etc	62.84
229	Clerk	Clerk Reimbursements - cemetery fencing	210.42
230	Deputy Clerk	Deputy Clerk's Salary	726.77
231	Deputy Clerk	Deputy Clerk Reimbursements, blinds, litter pickers	64.00
232	HCC Pensions-LGPS Account	Clerk & Deputy Clerk Pension	653.80
233	Grounds Officer	Grounds Officer salary	142.80
234	ECO	Environmental Cleansing Officer salary	297.60
235	HMRC accounts ref 321PF00003624	tax&NI to Inland Revenue	412.22
236	Chairman reimbursements	Refreshments for volunteer evening	42.50
237	C E Metcalfe	Public toilets cleaning and consumables	190.00
238	Ashwell United Reformed Church Hall	Hire of Hall for evening function	25.00
239	Ashwell Parochial Church Council	Hire for PC meetings for 2019	192.00
240	D J Granger Grounds Maint. Ltd	Grounds maintenance worksheet 43	675.60
241	Rubbish Clearance Herts	rubbish clearance behind pavilion	156.00
242	Arena Stationers	Stationery for office	173.44
243	Herts Computer Services	Remote IT support	20.00
244	NHDC	Trade waste (Office) 05/02/2019	104.91
Items to be paid by bank transfer following Parish Council's approval			0.00
None			
			Total payments
			5,665.09
MONEY AT BANK			
			Current Account (05/02/19)
			9,667.27
			Reserve Account (03/01/19)
			30,583.08