

Newsletter following Annual Parish Meeting held on 23 March 2022

This is for the whole Ashwell Community many of whom may have been unaware of the Meeting or who joined by Zoom and had difficulty hearing the discussions. For more information about each topic or on the meeting Agenda please follow the links shown.

Main activities being actioned currently by your Parish Council (PC) are as follows:

Co-options to the PC

Cath Connolly has recently joined. We need more villagers on the team, especially 18 - 60 year olds, to achieve a more representative mix of ages. Please contact any of us.

Litter picking/Great British Spring Clean

Parish councillor Cath Connolly is arranging a village litter pick on Saturday 9th April meeting at 2pm by the pavilion on the Rec. Please contact her for more details: cath.connolly@ashwell.gov.uk.

Broadband and FTTP -fibre to the property

A company called Voneus has approached the Parish Council about providing an enhanced broadband service to the village based on fibre to the property. For more details, see: <https://www.voneus.com/>.

Safer routes to the station for pedestrians and cyclists

The PC (with input from a parishioner) has been liaising with the NHC and HCC Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan group, in order to provide a safer walking & cycling route to Ashwell & Morden Station. For more details www.ashwell.gov.uk/news2/safer-routes-to-the/

The Ruddery

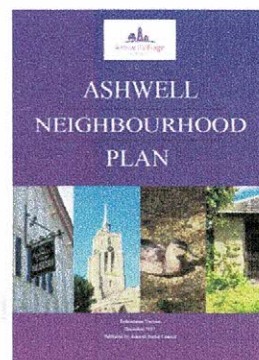
The PC has asked the Rights of Way Officer at Herts CC to consult over a proposal for a Permanent Traffic Regulation Order, (PTRO) to prohibit all public motor-vehicles, (except motor-cycles, permit holders, and those with private access / resident rights) from using Ashwell Public Byway Open to All Traffic 16, also known locally as The Ruddery. This consultation is about to take place.



Neighbourhood Plan - 'where we go from here'

The following actions are being taken to deliver tangible benefits for the village:

- *Assets of Community Value*: the PC has nominated all 3 Pubs for protection, and the URC hall will also be added following a request received at the meeting.
- *Community Land Trust (CLT)*: the PC is taking solicitor's advice on setting up a CLT to give the Ashwell Community more powers to buy land which is put up for sale to allow the Village to decide how that land is used for the benefit of the Village.



- *NHC's conservation area review:* as part of its review NHC asked the PC to get people with relevant local knowledge to look at the current conservation area and come up with suggested changes. Go to <https://www.ashwell.gov.uk/planning/north-herts-council/> and follow the link at the bottom to see the suggestions. Please also see the accompanying leaflet for more detail.

Improved facilities at the Recreation Ground

- *Pavilion upgrade:* the PC has briefed an architect have to advise how the pavilion could be renovated to bring its facilities up to current standards.
- *Play equipment:* The PC has recently consulted with Village children & teenagers over what improvements they would like to see for play facilities at the Rec. The results of this survey will be published shortly.

Management at The Springs, Natural England input

Natural England has recently undertaken their regular site inspection to assess the SSSI and has given approval for us to carry out fencing works to prevent erosion and protect vegetation, replacement of 3 litter bins and various tree works. An update of the Management Plan is to be prepared to guide long term maintenance. The long-term good relationship we have with the Environment Agency, who monitor the water flows, continues.

New tree and hedge planting on parish owned premises

There are now two yew trees and hedge planting along two sides of the Rec with more planned for the autumn / winter. Funding was secured from the Queen's Green Canopy initiative, mitigation paid by the developer for the loss of the chestnut tree in Lucas Lane and the PC's reserve fund.



G. Lee

Graham Lee, Chairman. 30th March 2022

Ashwell Parish Council - representing the whole Village community

Please sign up now for latest email updates on <https://www.ashwell.gov.uk/contact/> and have a look at the web page <https://www.ashwell.gov.uk/news2/>

Dear Resident

Ashwell Conservation Area review

As you may be aware by now, North Herts Council (NHC) is reviewing Ashwell's Conservation Area.

Last September it asked Ashwell Parish Council to get local people with knowledge of the village's history, design and character to make suggestions for possible revisions based on those criteria. See the link below for what was asked:

<https://www.ashwell.gov.uk/planning/north-herts-council/>

The Parish Council set up a working group of individuals with the required skills. This group produced a report suggesting an extension to the Conservation Area, consistent with NHC's brief, NHC's Local Plan and Ashwell's Neighbourhood Plan. You can read it on this link:

https://www.ashwell.gov.uk/downloads/planning/north_herts_council_review_of_ashwellll_conservation_area/suggested_changes_to_the_conservation_area_22_nov2021.pdf

What are the implications for householders that might be affected?

If NHC decides to adopt the suggestions, residents in the extension areas may have to apply for planning permission to carry out small developments rather than being able to do them without it under 'Permitted Development Rights'.

But before making any changes NHC must by law carry out a village wide consultation.

Some residents are understandably concerned about what might happen. They also feel that, rather than just seeing it as a technical exercise, the Parish Council should have recognised there may be concern about possible impacts. They feel that it should have communicated the implications more pro-actively, rather than relying on announcements in the Village News, on notice boards, the website, etc. - and to have got their views. We apologise if you feel this was inconsiderate.

What happens next?

It is not too late for potentially affected residents to raise concerns because NHC has not yet carried out the legally required public consultation and cannot decide until it has.

In addition to the NHC led consultation the Parish Council will highlight to NHC concerns already voiced and those that you personally would like to add now. So please send us your comments on the Conservation Area suggestions and any impact on yourself that concerns you so that we can present a persuasive case to NHC and our District Councillor. See over for contact details.

Thank you



Graham Lee, chairman Ashwell Parish Council, 30th March 2022..

Contacts

Ashwell Parish Council: www.ashwell.gov.uk/contact/ (as well as leaving a message on the website, please sign up for the email feed)

North Herts Council: www.north-herts.gov.uk/contact-us

District Councillor: Tom Tyson, tom.tyson@north-herts.gov.uk

Further information

Historic England: what is a conservation area? historicengland.org.uk/listing/what-is-designation/local/conservation-areas/

NHC Existing Conservation Areas in villages (including Ashwell): www.north-herts.gov.uk/conservation-areas-villages

Permitted Development Rights: www.planningportal.co.uk/permission/responsibilities/planning-permission/permitted-development-rights