

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 6th July 2022, 8pm, at the Parish Room.

Present: Parish Councillors Gemma Allan, Graham Lee (Chairman) and Norton Mahy (Vice-chairman) and David Sims. Mark White joined on Zoom (other commitment).

Also in attendance: Clerk (Jane Porter). County Councillor Steve Jarvis. District Councillor Tom Tyson joined on Zoom. Five members of the public were present and one also joined on Zoom.

Following a request from a parishioner it was agreed that the meeting could be recorded.

Standing Orders were suspended for some parts of the meeting to allow members of the public to speak.

20 Apologies for absence from parish councillors. Cath Connolly (unwell), Ian Duffy (away on holiday), Martin Hoffman (hospital treatment).

21 Declarations of interest. None.

22 Proposal to approve and sign the minutes of the meeting 1st June 2022.

It was resolved that the proposal be accepted. **Action: Clerk/Graham**

23 OPEN FORUM - VILLAGE MATTERS, REPORTS FROM OTHER BODIES, ETC

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

23.1 Items from members of the public.

23.1.1 Jubilee Street Party. *See also 26.2 below.* It was noted that the event had been a success and the organisers had been thanked.

23.1.2 Voneus Broadband proposals for high-speed fibre internet. Parishioner Al Jacoutot reported that the supplier was currently focussing on other villages. With regard to the recent trenching works in Ashwell Street he believed this

was a BT/Openreach cabling update and not associated with Voneus or 5G infrastructure.

23.1.3 West End chicane. A parishioner raised her concerns that this was not effective in slowing traffic and that the Hinxworth Road junction was particularly problematic. It was noted that she had taken videos and sent these to the Parish Council. Various views were expressed and suggestions made including police speed checks, additional white lining, changes to the rights of way, etc. County councillor Steve Jarvis gave details of the background to the current situation and what might and might not be permitted by, or acceptable to, Highways. He agreed to raise the concerns and suggestions with Highways officers.

23.1.4 Partridge Hill gravel trap. A parishioner reported that he had made a request to county councillor Steve Jarvis that operatives emptying this do not spread the arisings on the adjacent verges. It was noted that following his previous request this had been noted by the Parish Council and would be included on all emptying requests placed on the Highways fault reporting system.

23.2 Items from our district councillor Tom Tyson.

23.2.1 Bygrave solar farm/planning application. *See also 25.4.1 below.*

Nothing further to report on this application. NHC were also considering two similar applications elsewhere in the district.

23.2.2 Telecoms mast/planning application. *See also 25.4.2 below*

His understanding was that there was no reason to believe that the response of NHC would be different to the previous application.

23.2.3 Bygrave Woods music events. He had monitored the noise levels using the phone app at various points over the weekend. His measurements and the views that had been expressed to him by local residents concurred that noise levels were reasonable. A request was made for Ashwell residents to be included in the publicity sent out by the organisers and that this should be as early as possible to allow people to plan ahead. He had another meeting with the landowners' representative scheduled and would continue to liaise with them.

23.2.4 Safer routes to the station. As this matter involved NHC and HCC he was working with county councillor Steve Jarvis. A meeting with the relevant officer had determined that resources were currently focussed on areas of denser population. Investigations were being made as to why Ashwell would not be included in the first iteration of the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) being consulted upon. The officer had requested local information on the number of people who did not cycle for reasons of safety. It was agreed to request parishioner Guy Reed who had represented the Parish Council for the LCWIP to look into this. **Action: Clerk**

23.2.5 New footway in Station Road as a condition of planning permission for Townsend Close. The situation had not changed, ie plans to be submitted by the developer were still awaited. He had again chased this with the NHC planning officer. It was agreed that the new residents of Townsend Close be contacted. **Action: Clerk/Graham**

23.3 Items from our county councillor Steve Jarvis.

23.3.1 20mph speed limit enforcement. *See also 23.1.3 above.* This was a police matter. It was agreed that several locations be proposed for both police and Highways checks. He commended the local actions that had included the school poster competition run by the PCSO's and the Twenty's Plenty stickers distributed by the Parish Council as effective measures that collectively did make a difference.

Action: Clerk

23.3.2 Safety improvements at the War Memorial junction and Station Road. Works were due from 22nd to 28th August. He agreed to ensure that there would be no disruption to Ashwell Show traffic.

23.3.3 Other Highways works scheduled. These included surface dressing to Newnham Way, repairs to broken pipes in Hodwell, and Station Road footway repairs in the section going out to Sunnymead.

23.3.4 Bus service to the station. The contractor had informed HCC that it was withdrawing from the contract. As the subsidy was some £72 per person HCC were not to retender. Additions to the Lynx service were being investigated to possibly provide an alternative.

23.4 Items on general village matters from parish councillors.

- 23.4.1 Village Hall trustees/re their proposal to change to an Incorporated Charitable Organisation and the future involvement of the Parish Council. Chairman Graham Lee reported that the latest questions from the Village Hall had been sent to the solicitor.
- 23.4.2 Community Land Trust/Community Benefit Society. Appeal for a local resident to become the third Founder Member Director. Chairman Graham Lee reported that an expression of interest had been received. Documents required by the FCA had been drafted in line with advice from the solicitor and would be circulated to all parish councillors and other interested parties before submission.
- 23.4.3 The Ruddy. Request to HCC rights of way for a change of status to improve safety. It was noted that this was pending the appointment of a new officer. A parishioner requested fuller information on the episode previously reported that had been cited as evidence of the need for safety improvements. It was noted that this was not the only incident that had prompted the request; safety concerns had been expressed by many local residents and parish councillors over many years. It was agreed that the information be supplied. **Action: Clerk**
- 23.4.4 NHC review of the Ashwell Conservation Area. It was reported that information had been received from NHC that, (i) their public consultation would run from Thursday 7th July until Monday 12th September, (ii) they were to hold a drop-in session for residents at the Village Hall on Wednesday 20th July between 3.30pm and 7.30pm. They would contact individuals and organisations registered on their database and requested help from the Parish Council to further publicise the consultation. It was agreed that the Parish Council would be pleased to do this.

A parishioner requested whether the Parish Council would consider leafletting all those households who would be directly affected. It was agreed that this would be considered. It was agreed to ask NHC whether leafletting the whole village would be possible. **Action: Clerk**

The parishioner also requested whether the Parish Council would be responding to the consultation. Chairman Graham Lee responded that time would be taken by the Parish Council to consider the draft document and consider its response.

The parishioner also requested information on the Parish Council's communications with the landowner following the inclusion of some of his land that had 'cast a shadow over the Ashwell Show'. *[Note: the suggestions made to the NHC consultant by the Parish Council's working group in November 2021 had included the land in question. However, the consultant's report now being consulted on by NHC did not include this land]*. Chairman Graham Lee responded that following concerns raised he had had a face-to-face meeting with the landowner that had included a wide-ranging and comprehensive discussion. It had been acknowledged that the inclusion of part of a working farm required special consideration. Cllr Gemma Allan reported that as a member of the Show committee and also a neighbour and friend of the landowner she was not aware of any ongoing issues.

It was noted that all the dozen or so parishioners who had made their views known to the Parish Council had received personal responses.

Parishioner David Short who had led the working group agreed to lend his assistance with publicity to residents. His initial response to the NHC consultation document was good; there were some minor factual errors to be addressed. He would be making a personal response to NHC and would copy the Parish Council.

- 23.4.5 Defibrillators/siting of two new units obtained by the Accies. Chairman Graham Lee reported that one unit had been installed on the pavilion at the Rec. There was already a unit at the Caravan Club site. A unit at Small Gains was pending an electricity supply. Cllr Mark White suggested that a solar panel power source be investigated. Cllr Gemma Allan agreed to discuss options with the neighbours. **Action: Clerk**
- 23.4.6 Farm walk at Partridge Hill on Sunday 17th July. Publicity for this was ongoing including via the school.
- 23.4.7 Electric Vehicle charging points. Chairman Graham Lee reported that dialogue had taken place with county councillor Steve Jarvis who had expressed his frustration that

HCC were slow to take up the offer of central government funding of £7,500 per charging point. Approaches had been made to potential suppliers to determine suitable sites, numbers of units and costs for Ashwell. Cllr Jarvis had agreed to continue to push on this.

23.5 Items from working groups.

- 23.5.1 Trees and Hedges Group (leader Cllr David Sims). Cllr David Sims reported that due the current drought watering was 'a challenge'. He was commended for his efforts. He had received concerns from local residents re the overgrown hedge at the corner of Lucas Lane and Station Road. It was agreed that a letter again be put through the door requesting action. A parishioner requested similar action re a problem in Silver Street; this was agreed.

Action: Clerk

End of Open Forum/Standing Orders reinstated.

24 **MONTHLY REPORTS ON PREMISES/OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES FROM PARISH COUNCILLORS.**

- 24.1 Recreation Ground/new equipment for older children. Cllr Gemma Allan reported she was in the process of contacting suppliers of skateboarding installations for quotes. Given the likely costs she felt it unlikely that any other equipment could be afforded at this stage.
- 24.2 Pavilion upgrade project. Chairman Graham Lee reported that following consultation with representatives of the users draft designs had been worked up by the architect. Two options were now to be costed and would then be circulated to parish councillors and the users for further input. Once a target sum was agreed a business case would be put together for fundraising. It had been proposed that this be jubilee project for the village.
- 24.3 The Springs. New fencing was in place and the installation of new litter bins imminent.
- 24.4 The Cemetery. Comments on future tree works had been received and were to be considered. Comments re burials and graves had been responded to by the Clerk. **Action: Clerk/Graham**

25 **PLANNING MATTERS**

- 25.1 New consultations received from North Herts Council.

25.1.1 Land to the West of 35 Ashwell Street. NHC ref.

21/02650/FP Full Planning Permission: Erection of two detached dwellings (1 x 2-bed and 1 x 4-bed) including alterations to existing vehicular access (amended plans received 16.06.2022).

Standing orders were suspended for a parishioner to speak.

A parishioner (neighbouring resident) reported that they had responded to the NHC consultation and had forwarded a copy to the Parish Council. They had expressed concerns that the title of the amended proposals was misleading [Note: original application for 1x2-bed and 1x4-bed still stated in the title although the amendment was for 1x4-bed and 1x5-bed with separate double garages]. They commended the change in layout that moved the proposed houses further away from their property. They had expressed objections to the increased size, the height (no longer dug into the slope), overlooking of their property and density on the outskirts of the village.

Cllr Norton Mahy proposed the following objections be made, (i) size of the houses not consistent with Neighbourhood Plan policy for smaller units, (ii) adverse impact on views from the Conservation Area and the Grade 1 Listed St Mary's Church, (iii) adverse impact on views from the Character Area North Baldock Chalk Uplands - District Local Plan policy, (iv) density too high for the location on the edge of the settlement area - Neighbourhood Plan policy and District Local Plan policy.

It was resolved that the proposal be accepted and the objections sent to the NHC Planning Officer. **Action: Clerk**

25.1.2 Slip End Farm, Royston Road. NHC ref. 22/01541/FP

Full Planning Permission: Replace existing entrance gates with acoustic gates, decommission existing vehicular access and install protective landscape bund to boundary.

A proposal was made that there were no objections.

It was resolved that the proposal be accepted and a 'no objections' response be sent to the NHC Planning Officer. **Action: Clerk**

25.2 Tree consultations (Conservation Area and TPO) received from NHC.

- 25.2.1** The following 'no objections' responses already made were noted, (i) Westbury Farm House, West End. NHC ref. 22/01586/TCA *Fagus sylvatica* - 30% reduction and thin. *Juglans regia* - 30% reduction and thin. (ii) The Adelong, 63

High Street. NHC ref. 22/01568/TCA Robinia, crown reduce by 20-30%. Silver Birch, crown reduce by 20-30%.

- 25.2.2 New consultation for response. 69 Back Street. NHC ref 22/01739/TCA. Ash-Remove. It was noted that no reason for the removal had been given. Cllr David Sims reported that he had made a site visit and was of the view that although the tree required attention it would be regrettable to remove it completely without good reason. A proposal was made that the NHC planning officer be requested to liaise with the applicant to undertake work on the tree rather than removal.

Action: Clerk

- 25.3 Updates on previous planning applications, developments ongoing.

- 25.3.1 Bygrave Solar Farm. Land West of Ashwell Road, Bygrave

NHC ref. 22/00741/FP. *See 23.2.1 above*

- 25.3.2 Telecoms mast. Land Opposite 41, Ashwell Street.

NHC ref. 22/01395/TD. *See 23.2.1 above*

26 FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE MATTERS.

- 26.1 Monthly summary of accounts.

It was proposed that these be accepted.

Action: Clerk

- 26.2 Jubilee Street party. Proposal to approve payment of the costs claim from the organisers [*Note: Support already agreed in principle to come from the Community Support/Section 137 allocation in the 2022-23 budget*].

It was resolved that the proposal be accepted.

Action: Clerk

- 26.3 Co-options. Proposal for further new councillor co-options.

It was agreed that due to the sensitive nature of the matter, ie personal information, that further discussion would be held in camera, ie with the public excluded from the meeting.

[*Standing order 10 'to exclude the press and public from a meeting in respect of confidential or other information which is prejudicial to the public interest'*]

The Chairman reported that minutes of the *in camera* part would be made public after the meeting.

[*Minute in camera session*]

The meeting was closed to the public at 9.40pm.

It was proposed that Vinny Hall, in line with the process now adopted, be co-opted to the Parish Council with effect from the next meeting.

It was resolved that the proposal be accepted (unanimous). **Action: Clerk**

The meeting was closed at 9.50pm

Forthcoming meeting dates: Next monthly Council meeting - Wed 3rd August 2022

APPENDIX A: Accounts Summary

ACCOUNTS - Summary for 1st to 30th June 2022					
RECEIPTS					£
25	Nevilles Funeral Services	Rent for Chapel of Rest (June)			68.75
26	Martin Sheds	Advert for Yearbook 2022			80.00
27	Dignity Funerals	CW 22.13 Ashes Burial			150.00
28	SJS Plumbing & Heating	Advert for Yearbook 2022			140.00
29	Steve Brown Builders	Advert for Yearbook 2022			230.00
30	HMRC	Vat Reclaim for 2021-2022			5356.49
31	Santander	Reserve Account Interest			1.76
				Total	£6,027.00
PAYMENTS			£ less VAT	VAT	£ inc VAT
49	Duo Creative Services Ltd	Website monthly fee (June)	25.00	5.00	30.00
50	Cllr David Sims (reimbursement)	Supplies for Hedge planting at the Recreation Grou	22.30		22.30
51	Edwards Cleaning & Maintenance	Toilets cleaning and consumables Inv No 2390	206.28		206.28
52	D J Granger Grounds Maintenance Ltd	Grounds Maintenance Worksheet no8, inv no 22543	419.00	83.80	502.80
53	D J Granger Grounds Maintenance Ltd	Grounds Maintenance Worksheet no7, inv no 22526	424.00	84.80	508.80
54	D J Granger Grounds Maintenance Ltd	Grounds Maintenance Worksheet no6, inv no 22507	70.00	14.00	84.00
55	Brilliant Lawns	Grass Cutting on Rec 13/05/2022 Inv No 10063	127.50		127.50
56	GLEAM	Annual Membership	15.00		15.00
57	Good Directions Ltd	Memorial Bench & Plaque for the Recreation Groun	665.00	133.00	798.00
58	Castle Water	Cemetery Water	1,612.06		1,612.06
59	Brilliant Lawns	Grass Cutting on Rec 02/06/2022 Inv No 10116	127.50		127.50
60	Castle Water	Water for Small gains	89.77		89.77
61	Cllr David Sims (reimbursement)	Hose for hedge watering - Recreation Ground	40.98		40.98
62	Brilliant Lawns	Grass Cutting on Rec 17/06/2022 Inv No 10119	127.50		127.50
63	D J Granger Grounds Maintenance Ltd	Grounds Maintenance Worksheet no10, inv no 2266	1,257.00	251.40	1,508.40
64	D J Granger Grounds Maintenance Ltd	Grounds Maintenance Worksheet no9, inv no 22594	424.00	84.80	508.80
65	The Bluetree Company	St Marys Churchyard Tree PICUS report	1,000.00	200.00	1,200.00
66	Deputy Clerk - Reimbursement	Office supplies	8.95		8.95
67	EON Next	Electricity for Public Toilets inv 01/04 -30/04	13.79	0.69	14.48
68	Clerk	Clerk salary	1,428.16		1,428.16
69	HCC Pensions-LGPS Account	Clerk & Deputy Clerk Pension to LGPS	775.47		775.47
70	ECO	Environmental Cleansing Officer salary	244		244.00
71	HMRC accounts ref 321PF00003624	tax&NI to Inland Revenue	575.5		575.50
72	Grounds Officer	Grounds Officer salary	156.40		156.40
73	Deputy Clerk	Deputy Clerk Salary	899.33		899.33
				Total	£11,611.98
MONEY AT BANK					
		Current Account 30/06/2022	£63,353.15		
		Reserve Account 30/06/2022	£20,707.77		

APPENDIX B: Planning Summary

Summary of consultations on recent planning and listed building applications received from NHDC up to 12th July 2022				
Address	Application ref. Number	Brief description	Ashwell PC response to NHC consultation	North Herts Decision
Land to the west of 35 Ashwell Street.	21/02650/FP (amendments to original -see below)	Erection of two detached dwellings (1 x 2-bed and 1 x 4-bed) including alterations to existing vehicular access (amended plans received 16.06.2022).	PC to NHDC: Objection July council, 25.1.1	Pending
Slip End Farm, Royston Road	22/01541/FP	Replace existing entrance gates with acoustic gates, decommission existing vehicular access and install protective landscape bund to boundary.	PC to NHDC: No Objection July council, 25.1.2	Pending
91 High Street	22/01326/FPH and	Single storey rear extension, erection of detached store and erection of rear garden boundary wall following demolition of existing detached outhouses.	PC to NHDC: No Objection June council, 18.1.1	Pending
Land east of 35 Ashwell Street.	22/01191/S7	Variation of Condition 2 (layout and external alterations) of planning permission 20/02309/FP granted 08.12.2020	PC to NHDC: No Objection June council, 18.1.2	Pending
Land Opposite 41, Ashwell Street.	22/01395/TD	Telecommunications Determination: Proposed 5G telecoms installation including H3G high street pole c/w wrap-around cabinet and 3 further additional equipment cabinets.	PC to NHDC: Objection June council, 18.1.3	Refused 12/07/22
Land West of Ashwell Road, Bygrave SG7 5EB.	22/00741/FP	Full Planning Permission: Ground mounted solar photovoltaic (PV) farm including battery energy storage; continued agricultural use, ancillary infrastructure, security fencing, landscaping provision, ecological enhancements and associated works.	PC to NHDC: Objection June Council, 18.1.4	Pending
87 Back Street	22/01126/FP & 22/001127/LBC	Replace existing garage doors with a window to facilitate conversion of garage into habitable accommodation and refurbish existing front elevation door.	PC to NHDC: Objection May council, 11.5	Pending
Valentine House, Partridge Hill	22/00934/S73	Section 73 application to remove condition 3 which restricts permitted development rights (Class E), as imposed on the original planning permission reference 94/00713/1 granted on 21.06.1994 for detached 4 bedroom dwelling with double garage.	PC to NHDC: neutral, insufficient information supplied for the PC to make comment May council, 11.3	Permission Granted 15/6/2022
Land Adj to 4 Ashwell Street	22/00880/FP	Erection of a detached 3 bedroom dwelling, and detached car port; ancillary works and new vehicular access onto Ashwell Street	PC to NHDC: No objection May Council, 11.1	Pending
Land Adjacent To 4, Ashwell Street	22/00880/FP	Erection of a detached 3-bedroom dwelling, and detached car port; ancillary works and new vehicular access onto Ashwell Street.	PC to NHDC: No objection April Council, 94.1.4	Pending
Quarry Hills Barn, Loves Lane	22/00641/FPH	Addition of ground mounted solar panels in garden, to exceed area of 9m2 that could be added under permitted development. Addition of 16 panels 1x1.5m along hedgerow to the East, occupying 4x10m area, max height 1.5m. Electrical connection to existing fusebox via trench under garden. Not visible from property entrance.	PC to NHDC: No objection April Council, 94.1.3	Pending
Land to the West of 35 Ashwell Street	21/02650/FP	Erection of 2 detached dwellings (1 x 2 bed & 1 x 4 bed) including alterations to existing vehicular access	PC to NHDC: Objection October council 2021, 50.1.1	Pending