

## Minutes of the monthly Parish Council meeting

held on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> August 2021, 8.15pm at the Village Hall.

Present: Parish Cllrs Gemma Allan, Martin Hoffman, Graham Lee (Chairman), Norton Mahy (Vice-chairman) and David Sims.

Also in attendance: Clerk (Jane Porter). District Councillor Tom Tyson. County Councillor Steve Jarvis gave his apologies. Nine members of the public joined the meeting on Zoom.

**27. Apologies for absence.** Mark White (currently in France and had an alternative commitment).

**28. Declarations of Interest.** Item 34.3.2; resident of Ashwell Street re provision of the pedestrian access to the Claybush development site.

**29. Proposal to approve and sign the minutes of the Council and Planning Committee meetings held on 7<sup>th</sup> July and the Extraordinary meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2021.**

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

**Action: Graham/Clerk**

### **30. OPEN FORUM - VILLAGE AFFAIRS, REPORTS FROM OTHER BODIES, ETC**

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

#### **31.1 Items raised by members of the public.**

*Reports received earlier and matters raised at the meeting.*

**31.1.1** Planning application to NHDC for the installation of an 18metre high 5G mast at the rear of the school in Ashwell Street. Local residents expressed their concerns that the location proposed by the applicant was not suitable. It would have a very negative impact on the conservation area including views to the Grade 1 Listed St Mary's Church. There were highways safety concerns re the proximity to the school entrance and other safety issues would inevitably be raised. The proximity to the Bygrave airfield was also mentioned. The Chairman reported that the Parish Council had already been in communication with the NHDC Planning Officer to request further information including the technical constraints on finding a location. A local resident with relevant expertise had also been consulted and was thanked for his input.

*See also planning consultation item 34.1.4 below*

**31.1.2** Luton Airport flight paths. Concerns expressed re the frequency of overflying and noise levels. The view was expressed that air traffic levels had returned to pre-lockdown levels and routes appeared to be similar. It was understood that proposals to change flight paths were now not to be progressed for the moment.

**31.2 North Herts District Council (NHDC).** District Councillor Tom Tyson reported.

(i) Damage to the wall in Silver Street by the waste/recycling vehicle. He was disappointed by the response from Urbaser and would continue to pursue the matter.

(ii) Damage to the wall in Ashwell Street. It was alleged that this was also by the waste/recycling vehicle and investigations were taking place.

(iii) The NHDC Community Engagement Officer had been approached re funding for the new playground equipment project.

(iv) New development between Dixies Close and Back Street. He was investigating whether all the new trees included in the approved landscaping plans had actually been planted.

(v) Restricted parking spaces outside the pharmacy. Enforcement of these had been requested.

(vi) Claybush pedestrian access. Concerns had been raised that the works carried out did not meet the requirements stipulated in the planning condition. He had requested that this be investigated. *See also item 34.3.2 below.*

(vii) Warm Up music event at Bygrave Woods. He noted that this had not been well publicised in Ashwell, nor had the Parish Council been informed. He had spoken to the NHDC Licensing Manager and it would seem that all the requirements of the license had been met. The Chairman of Bygrave Parish Council had met with the local organiser and it was understood that this had been positive. It was agreed that the Ashwell Parish Council would be included in communications.

It was noted that some local businesses benefited from these events.

**31.3 Hertfordshire County Council (HCC).** County Councillor Steve Jarvis had given his apologies for the meeting.

(i) West End chicane. Cllr Martin Hoffman requested information on the further delay. It was understood that, at a very late stage in the process, the HCC safety audit team had raised concerns about the driveway to one of the adjacent properties and had proposed design modifications. County Councillor Steve Jarvis had expressed his disappointment that this had only been notified at such a late stage.

**31.4 Items from parish councillors.**

**31.4.1 Greening Ashwell group.**

(i) It was understood that the group was currently suspended.

(ii) The Chairman reported that the minutes of the Parish Council's Extraordinary meeting, convened following requests from several of the group's members, had been published. It had been agreed that parish councillors remained fully supportive of the objectives of the group. Also that they would use any personal contacts to try and identify an individual willing to take on a leading role in the group; any action on this would of course be entirely a matter for the group and not the Parish Council's.

(iii) Silver Street Ash tree replacement. It was reported that the founder of the Greening Ashwell group had written to local residents and convened a meeting. It was noted that he was acting totally as an individual and not as a representative of the group. His initiative was commended as was his communication with the

landowner, Herts County Council. The Parish Council had also been in communication with the HCC tree officer who had given helpful advice on practical matters including potential tree species.

**31.4.2** North Herts Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan workshop/Cycle path to the station. The Chairman reported that a local parishioner had been approached to act as a representative for this as no parish councillor had been available. He was thanked for his input. Two options for an enhanced route to the station were under consideration. A shorter route using Station Road and a longer route using the Shire Balk; neither would overcome the issues of the narrow section by the county boundary. The longer route would be positive for Steeple Morden residents and the benefit of their additional support was noted. District Cllr Tom Tyson and County Cllr Steve Jarvis were also being supportive. Cllr Martin Hoffman expressed his concerns that unless the long-standing issue of funding could be overcome he was not hopeful of a positive outcome. Cllr Norton Mahy noted that in the new District Plan Ashwell was considered as a 'sustainable' community because of its good transport links; safe pedestrian/cycling access to the station should be provided to comply with this.

**31.4.3** Herts Lynx DRT (Demand Responsive Transport) bus service. The Chairman reported that he had posed a number of questions; these had been taken up with the NHDC Transport Officer by our District Cllr Tom Tyson.

**31.4.4** Playgroup plans for a dog show at the Recreation Ground. It was noted that their representative had provided further details but that plans were still being put together. She reported to the meeting that a date sometime in 2022 was now being considered. Parish councillors expressed their support in principle for events by village groups using parish facilities. However, there had recently been concerns raised again about dogs at the Rec, and the Springs, including fouling, aggressive behaviour etc. It was felt that the Rec was primarily a sports and play area for children. Cllr Gemma Allan agreed to provide contact details for local farmers who might be willing to offer use of a field for such an event.

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*End of Open Forum/Standing Orders were reinstated from here.*

## **32. Working Groups reports.**

**32.1** Neighbourhood Plan Group, (leader Cllr Graham Lee, deputy Cllr Norton Mahy). It was reported that NHDC had forwarded details of two potential inspectors for consideration.

**32.2** Yearbook Group (leader Cllr Norton Mahy). It was reported that details of the next edition were to be discussed by the group at their next meeting.

## **33. Monthly reports on premises/other responsibilities from parish councillors.**

*See appendices below for summary of actions completed, actions ongoing and premises matters.*

**33.1** The Springs. Cllr Martin Hoffman reported that the neighbouring landowner had been written to following the fallen branch report; the tree in question was not on parish land. A site visit was scheduled and would include several matters including fencing and litter bins.

### **34. Planning matters.**

*See appendix below with a summary of recent NHDC consultations and their status.*

#### **34.1 New consultations received from NHDC.**

##### **34.1.1 Ashwell End Farm, Loves Lane. NHDC Ref no. 21/02042/FPH**

Full Permission Householder: Single storey side and rear extensions following demolition of existing detached rear outbuilding.

It was noted that the neighbour had written to NHDC expressing support.

It was noted that the moat around the house was a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

It was **resolved** to respond to the NHDC consultation that there were no objections but given the archaeological importance of the site all relevant parties should be satisfied that there would be no negative impact. **Action: Clerk**

##### **34.1.2 Ducklake House, 27A Springhead. NHDC Ref nos.21/02094/FP and 21/02095/LBC**

Full Planning Permission and Listed Building application: Extension of boundary brick wall and erection of timber fence and gate following removal of existing fence and gate.

It was **resolved** to respond to the NHDC consultation that there were no objections.

**Action: Clerk**

##### **34.1.3 Village Hall, West End. NHDC Ref no. 21/02203/FP**

Full Planning Permission: Replace existing artificial grass surface with porous play surface.

It was noted that the management trustees of the Village Hall had expressed their support.

It was **resolved** to respond to the NHDC consultation that there were no objections.

**Action: Clerk**

##### **34.1.4 Land Opposite 41, Ashwell Street. NHDC Ref no. 21/02184/TD**

Telecommunications Determination: Proposed 5G telecoms installation including 18m high street pole c/w wrap-around cabinet and 3 further additional equipment cabinets.

*See item 31.1.1 above.* Further information had been requested as well as an extension to the current response deadline.

#### **34.2 Trees in the Conservation Area (TCA)/Tree Preservation Orders (TPO).**

##### **34.2.1 Consultation received from NHDC for 29 High Street/Fell one oak tree.**

NHDC ref. 21/02120/TCA

It was reported that the details had been considered and, albeit with some reluctance that this would result in the loss of a tree, it was agreed that the position was unsuitable particularly for the species.

It was **resolved** to respond to the NHDC consultation that there were no objections.

**Action: Clerk**

##### **34.2.2 Westbury House, West End. NHDC ref. 21/01915/TCA. Corsican Pine -Fell.**

The further correspondence with local residents and the NHDC Planning Officer was noted. The latter had been requested to commission a second professional report on the tree; this had been rejected on the grounds of lack of funding and potential liability. It was noted that the Parish Council had already submitted its objections but there was little further action it could take.

**34.2.3 The Three Tuns**, High Street. 21/01915/TCA. Sycamore -Fell to ground. Cllr David Sims reported that he had undertaken a site visit. The tree was visible from the public highway and made a significant contribution to the conservation area. He was of the view that objections to its removal should be made and a request for a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) submitted to NHDC. It was **resolved** to respond to the NHDC consultation with an objection and to request that a TPO be put in place. **Action: Clerk**

**34.3 Updates on previous planning applications/developments ongoing.**

**34.3.1** Land at the junction of Station Road and Ashwell Street to be called **Townsend Meadow**. NHDC ref. nos. 19/00455/FP and 20/02599/S73.

No further information had been received re the planning condition to install a new footway whilst retaining the hedge. District Cllr Tom Tyson agreed to contact the Planning Officer.

**34.3.2** Land rear of Claybush Road development to be called **Claybush Hill Meadow**. NHDC ref. no. 16/0797/1.

Updates on the following were reported:

(i) Planning condition 24/Provision of safe pedestrian access. Works had been undertaken by the developer but these did not fulfil the requirements of the agreed plans. District Cllr Tom Tyson agreed to contact the Planning Officer.

(ii) Planning condition 19/Landscaping and Environmental Plans. The situation was being monitored to ensure that the developer complied with the relevant planning condition.

**34.3.3 Dixies Meadow** advertisement by Savills Cambridge/‘For Sale - Development opportunity’.

The Chairman reported that research was continuing into the various options that might be possible. He reiterated that the Parish Council would take no action without full consultation with the wider village.

**35. Finance and governance matters.**

**35.1** Monthly summary of accounts. Proposal for approval.

It was **resolved** that these be approved and signed. **Action: Graham/Martin/Clerk**

**35.2** Insurance review prior to renewal deadline of 1<sup>st</sup> October 2021.

It was agreed that an opinion be sought from a local resident with relevant skills and the matter considered at the September Council meeting. **Action: Clerk**

*Meeting closed at 21.45*

## APPENDICES – FOR INFORMATION

### Appendix A: Parish Council actions ongoing.

(i) Village hall. Communications with the solicitor and the Village Hall Management trustees is ongoing to change their status to an Incorporated Charitable Organisation. The transfer of the property title to the Parish Council, who will become the holding/custodian trustee, is to follow this.

### Appendix B: Reports/updates on Parish Council premises management.

(i) Small Gains Allotments (Cllr David Sims). All plots are currently let and there is no-one on the waiting list. Further new tree planting is planned for the autumn/winter season.

(ii) Small Gains sports area (Cllr David Sims). The Accies have initiated a project to improve their facilities; the Parish Council is supportive of this and has provided background documents to assist them.

(iii) Tree works have been completed at the Springs and the Cemetery. The snagging issues at the Recreation Ground are still to be completed. The annual professional tree surveys for all trees that come within the Parish Council's responsibility have been completed. No urgent issues have been identified and quotes are pending for works recommended.

(iv) Street furniture. Minor repairs to some of the parish-owned litter bins have been carried out and alternative designs for new installations researched. The Parish Council's notice board is scheduled for refurbishment later in the year. The old telephone box where the defibrillator is housed is due for a clean-up; the lighting problem in it has been resolved.

(v) Grounds' maintenance. Extra strimming is continuing in St Mary's Churchyard to support the 'Living Churchyards' project in the area next to Hodwell. The Springs boundary hedge alongside Springhead has been given a light trim to keep it clear from the road. A more significant cut is scheduled for the autumn/winter.

(vi) Recreation Ground. Plans for new play equipment aimed particularly at older children are ongoing with some funding already ensured. New doors have been fitted to the public toilets. The major plans for development of the whole pavilion are still suspended due to lack of funding.

### Appendix C: Reports/updates from other organisations.

(i) Greening Ashwell. See 31.4.1 above.

(ii) Regular local policing update 'Rural News' from our PCSO Chris Braybrook (see under News and Events on [www.ashwell.gov.uk](http://www.ashwell.gov.uk)).

(iii) Enforcement of parking restrictions. NHDC and local police are to attend following concerns particularly re outside the Pharmacy in the High Street.

## Appendix E: Summary of recent NHDC Planning Application consultations and their status as of 10<sup>th</sup> August 2021

Details of applications are sent from North Herts District Council (NHDC) to the Parish Council as a consultee. Full details of applications are available on the NHDC website [www.north-herts.gov.uk](http://www.north-herts.gov.uk)

Address	Application Number	Brief description	Ashwell PC Comments	North Herts Decision
Land opposite 41 Ashwell Street	21/02184/TD	Proposed 5G telecoms installation including 18m high street pole c/w wrap-around cabinet and 3 further additional equipment cabinets.	Discussed at the PC meeting on 4th August; response by PC to NHDC to be agreed at the 1st September meeting	Pending
20 West End (Village hall)	21/02203/FP	Replace existing artificial grass surface with porous play surface.	PC to NHDC: No objection	Pending
Ducklake House, 27a Springhead	21/02095/FPH & LBC	Extension of boundary brick wall and erection of timber fence and gate following removal of existing fence and gate	PC to NHDC: No objection	Pending
Ashwell End Farm, Loves Lane	21/02042/FPH	Single Storey side & rear extensions following demolition of existing detached rear outbuilding	PC to NHDC: No objection	Pending
40 High Street	21/01835/FPH	Repairs to chimney stack and gable end (see also Listed Building Consent 21/01836/LBC)	PC to NHDC: No objection	Pending
Land east of 35 Ashwell Street	21/01825/FP	Erection of one 4 bed dwelling (revision of previously approved planning application, 20/01712/FP granted on 28/9/2020)	PC to NHDC: Objection	Pending
Meadow View, Loves Lane	21/01745/FP	Erection of one detached 2-bed dwelling including creation of new vehicular access off Loves Lane, landscaping and ancillary works.	PC to NHDC: Objection	NHDC -Refused

## Appendix D: Accounts summary for 01 -31 July 2021

	RECEIPTS				£
44	Nevilles Funeral Services	Rent for Chapel of Rest (July)			68.75
45	Bury Lane Graden Centre & Fun Barn	2021 Yearbook Advert			125.00
46	Arrington Garden Centre	2021 Yearbook Advert			70.00
47	Dignity Funerals	Payment for CW21.07			140.00
48	Steve Brown	2021 Yearbook Advert			200.00
49	Tenant	Allotment Rent 2021 for Plot 8b			10.00
50	Parishioner	Plot Rights Reservation CW21.14			680.00
51	Santander	Account interest			0.17
				<b>Total</b>	<b>1,293.92</b>
	PAYMENTS		£ less VAT	VAT	£ inc VAT
72	Brilliant Lawns	Grass Cutting on Rec, Inv no 8980	120.00		120.00
73	Duo Creative Services Ltd	Website monthly fee (July)	25.00	5.00	30.00
74	D J Granger Grounds Maintenance Ltd	Grounds Maintenance Worksheet number 11, inv no 21633	368.00	73.60	441.60
75	D J Granger Grounds Maintenance Ltd	Grounds Maintenance Worksheet number 10, inv no 21607	823.00	164.60	987.60
76	North Herts District Council	Litter Picker sets x 10	104.16	20.84	125.00
77	North Herts District Council	Recreation ground trade waste bin	106.34		106.34
78	North Herts District Council	Springs trade waste bin	119.73		119.73
79	North Herts District Council	Streets Support trade waste bin	119.73		119.73
80	Legal & General	Pension Ill Health Insurance	540.49		540.49
81	HCC Pensions-LGPS Account	Clerk & Deputy Clerk Pension to LGPS	740.66		740.66
82	D Home Builders	New Public Toilet Doors	600.00		600.00
83	HMRC accounts ref 321PF00003624	tax&NI to Inland Revenue	505.79		505.79
84	D J Granger Grounds Maintenance Ltd	Grounds Maintenance Worksheet number 13, inv no 21719	606.00	121.20	727.20
85	D J Granger Grounds Maintenance Ltd	Grounds Maintenance Worksheet number 12, inv no 21688	676.00	135.20	811.20
86	Brilliant Lawns	Grass Cutting on Rec, Inv no 9147	120.00		120.00
87	Clerk Reimbursements	Postage & grounds maintenance supplies	59.91	8.59	68.50
88	D J Granger Grounds Maintenance Ltd	Grounds Maintenance Worksheet number 14, inv no 21731	388.00	77.60	465.60
89	EON	Electricity for Public Toilets, Inv no	12.81	0.64	13.45
90	Clerk	Salary	1,395.70		1,395.70
91	ECO	Environmental Cleansing Officer salary	236.80		236.80
92	Deputy Clerk	Deputy Clerk Salary	850.91		850.91
93	Grounds Officer	Grounds Officer salary	171.00		171.00
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8,690.03</b>	<b>607.27</b>	<b>9,297.30</b>
	<b>MONEY AT BANK</b>				
		Current Account 31/07/2021	32,664.76		
		Reserve Account 31/07/2021	20,703.04		

Signed

Date