

## Minutes

### of the monthly Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> October 2021

Present: Parish Councillors Gemma Allan, Graham Lee (Chairman), Martin Hoffman and Mark White.

Also in attendance: Clerk (Jane Porter), Deputy Clerk (Laura Brooks-Payne). District Councillor Tom Tyson and County Councillor Steve Jarvis. Four members of the public joined on Zoom -some for parts of the meeting and some for all.

The Chairman welcomed the new vicar Chris Campbell and thanked her for joining the meeting.

**44.** Apologies for absence. Norton Mahy (away on holiday), David Sims (unwell). These were noted and approved.

**45.** Declarations of Interest. None.

**46.** Proposal to approve and sign the minutes of the Council meeting held on Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> September 2021. This was approved. **Action: Graham/Clerk**

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

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

**47.1.1 Planning matters.** It was agreed that the two planning applications for (i) the creation of off-street parking spaces at the rear of the school and (ii) two new houses off Ashwell Street (*see agenda items 50.1.1 and 50.1.2 below*) be discussed at this point to allow members of the public to contribute. The Chairman reported that a site meeting with local residents had also taken place earlier in the evening; the views expressed had been noted.

The Chairman summarised the concerns raised re the safety issues and invited comments from others; Headteacher Simon England spoke on behalf of the school. The following views were expressed. The junction of Ashwell Street and Claybush Road was already problematic. Sightlines were poor and the parking/traffic congestion that occurred during school drop-off and pick-up times created a significant safety hazard particularly for children. It was noted that the addition of yellow zig-zag lines by Herts Highways to restrict parking on Ashwell Street at the rear of the school was pending painting works. This was thought to be helpful but probably not extensive enough; it would inevitably push parking to other areas. The planning application by the school to create a space that would allow children transported by mini-bus and taxi to get on and off inside the school grounds was supported. It was felt that the planning application for two new houses with the access in close proximity to the junction and school entrance would exacerbate the existing safety issues. Options put forward were (i)

extension of the yellow line parking restrictions as far as the junction with Angells Meadow, (ii) for the proposed two new houses a new access off Claybush Road, (iii) additional footway between Angells Meadow and the school entrance.

County Cllr Steve Jarvis agreed to discuss with Highways engineers the feasibility of additional yellow line parking restrictions both along Ashwell Street and around the grass triangle at the junction with Claybush Road.

In response to concerns raised re parking and traffic at school drop-off and pick-up times, the Headteacher emphasised that the school put a great deal of effort into encouraging parents and carers to walk children to school wherever possible and for those who needed to be transported by car to park considerately and safely. Regular items in newsletters were sent, a school travel plan was in place and our local PCSO led road safety sessions with children -one was scheduled for the coming week.

The Chairman thanked all for their contributions.

A proposal was made and supported by all parish councillors that the planning application by the school (see item 50.1.2) be recommended to NHDC for approval.

**Action: Deputy Clerk**

The Chairman noted that re the proposal for two new houses off Ashwell Street (see item 50.1.1) in addition to the highway safety concerns there were objections re (i) the lack of consistency with the housing needs of the village for smaller dwellings of three or fewer bedrooms as demonstrated by the Neighbourhood Plan, (ii) the risk of the future addition of another house on the plot that would result in overdevelopment of the site, (iii) the loss of trees. Re (ii) it was agreed that a request be made to withdraw Permitted Development rights. Re (iii) it was agreed that mitigation measures be requested for either additional planting on the site (at a rate of two for one) or an agreed cash sum to be paid to the Parish Council for planting elsewhere in the village.

A proposal was made and supported by all parish councillors that the planning application for two new houses be recommended to NHDC for refusal on the grounds stated above.

**Action: Clerk**

#### **47.1.2 Items from members of the public.**

(i) Concerns were expressed at recent power cuts and the capacity of the infrastructure to accommodate more housing development.

County Cllr Steve Jarvis agreed to look into these issues.

(ii) Speeding traffic. Ongoing concerns were noted. Since the last meeting plans for further distribution of the 20's Plenty publicity had been progressed, the PCSO had arranged a date for visiting the school and the police were to schedule more speed checks in the village.

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

(i) Lynx Bus/new demand response service. Initial reports had been good. Users who booked earlier would be given greater priority for their route.

(ii) Bygrave solar farm. To date there had been no planning application but this was expected. He had requested that Ashwell be included in the consultation.

(iii) Bygrave Woods music festival. He had received helpful feedback from local residents and had raised concerns with the landowner. The general view held seemed to be that the noise levels were much less troublesome than previous events and the earlier finish time appreciated. Significant concerns had been raised re the failure of the transport arrangements and the landowner had conveyed his sincere apologies. The petrol situation had been a significant contributory factor. He was also in dialogue with the NHDC Licensing department and was pursuing several issues with them.

(iv) New housing at Townsend Meadow off Station Road. As one of the properties now appeared to be inhabited, he had contacted the Planning Department with a request to investigate whether the condition requiring the new footway to be completed before any occupation of the houses had been breached.

(v) Wall damage by the waste/recycling vehicle. Following the inability of the contractor to complete the repairs in Swan Street due to lack of a water supply he had contacted a local resident who had agreed to allow the use of their outside tap. The works in Ashwell Street were still pending and he would pursue these.

*See also item 50 re Planning*

#### **47.3 Hertfordshire County Council (HCC).**

County Councillor Steve Jarvis reported.

(i) West End chicane. This had been delayed due to the need for an amended design following the safety audit. Works should now be progressed.

(ii) Additional yellow lines. Proposals had been made for several locations. As it was more cost effective if several locations were progressed together, agreement was needed on these.

(iii) Footway improvements between the chicane and Sunnymead were scheduled.

(iv) Station Road pedestrian safety improvements funded by section 106 were to be progressed.

(v) New footway adjacent to the Townsend Meadow development. He had seen the drawings for this which were as requested with the hedge to be trimmed back but retained.

(vi) Lynx Bus/new demand response service. This was 'busy' with two new vehicles to be added next year. Other bus services were due to be reviewed in the longer term.

(vii) Roadworks. Patching on the Hinxworth Road and Northfields Road had been completed with surface dressing to follow probably next spring/summer.

(viii) Hodwell drainage. Works using the machine to address any tree root issues were awaiting a date to be scheduled.

#### **47.4 Any items from parish councillors (see below for premises reports)**

##### **47.4.1 Greening Ashwell group.**

The Chairman reported that this group was independent of the Parish Council but in response to complaints made by parishioners the Parish Council had been trying to encourage volunteers to offer their services in the restructuring and managing of the group and to increase communication with landowners to get their approval for planting; this had been missing. All were in favour of the objectives but there had been real gaps in the consultation with landowners and

neighbours that had caused upset. This was nothing personal just a desire to make sure things were done as they should be.

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

*[Standing order 10.i. '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:

(i) an email had been received from the leader of the group indicating that he would not be undertaking any further Greening Ashwell activities,

(ii) two parishioners had stepped forward with an offer to act as joint Chair and were contacting other members of the group.

Continuing support for the group was agreed.

**47.4.2** Cycle path to the station. The Chairman reported that thanks to the input from parishioner Guy Reed communications and discussion with the NHDC Transport Officer and with other local authorities had progressed. District Cllr Tom Tyson was also liaising on this.

**47.4.3** Dixies Meadow/advertisement for sale. The Chairman reported that dialogue was continuing but there was nothing to report at present.

**47.4.4** The Ruddery/Rights of way review with proposals to restrict the through-route for vehicles by bollards but maintain access for pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders etc. The Chairman reported that the rights of way officer had now progressed this to the stage at which a formal consultation would be undertaken by the county council. The Parish Council had already made contact with local residents and those who had responded to date were very positive to the proposals. He was confident that there would be widespread support.

**47.4.5** Conservation Area review by NHDC. The Chairman reported that NHDC had appointed a consultant to undertake this who had approached the Parish Council with a request for input from local parties with appropriate skills/background. The Parish Council had approached those known to them with a view to forming a working group to progress communications with the consultant. The Museum had agreed to be involved and local historian David Short had agreed to act as provisional group leader subject to approval by other members.

**47.4.6** Liaison with the Doctor's Surgery and the Ashwell Patients Group. The Chairman reported that the new business manager was now in place. She had already held meetings with various parties including with the Pharmacy and had prepared updated protocols for communications with patients. Changes were to be made to the telephone system and face-to-face appointments at Ashwell Surgery for Ashwell based patients would be made more freely available.

He was confident that improvements would be seen and proposed that support and encouragement be extended. This was commended by others.

## **48. WORKING GROUP REPORTS**

*Offers to join or start new groups welcomed.*

**48.1** Neighbourhood Plan Group, (leader Cllr Graham Lee, deputy Cllr Norton Mahy). The Chairman reported that the Examiner had submitted his report. This was in favour of it being progressed to the next stage, ie a referendum, subject to

a few changes mostly re wording. The Chairman thanked all who had given their input over the last 6-7 years.

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

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

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

**49.1** The regular professional tree surveys for all those for which the Parish Council was responsible had been completed.

#### **50. PLANNING MATTERS**

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

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

**50.1.1 Land to the west of 35 Ashwell Street, 21/02650/FP** – erection of two detached dwellings (1x2bed & 1x4 bed) including alterations to vehicular access.

*See item 47.1.1. above.*

**50.1.2 Ashwell Primary School 21/02560/FP** – Creation of designated drop-off zone for vulnerable & special needs children.

*See item 47.1.1. above.*

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

###### **50.2.1 New application 27 Springhead (Ducklake House).**

NHDC ref. 21/02804/TCA. Various works including removal as per tree report. It was noted that comprehensive details had been supplied.

There were no objections raised and it was resolved that a response be made to the NHDC Planning Officer.

**Action: Deputy Clerk**

**50.2.2 The Three Tuns, High Street. 21/01915/TCA.** Nothing further report.

##### **50.3 Updates on previous planning applications/developments ongoing:**

**50.3.1 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. Update on the new footway.

*See item 47.2 (iv) and 47.3 (v) above.*

#### **51. FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE MATTERS.**

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

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

**51.2** Quote for the cleaning of the War Memorial. It was agreed that this be accepted. **Action: Clerk**

*Meeting closed at 22.00*

## **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) Pavilion. Vandalism has occurred at the back of the pavilion culminating in repairs to the roof and guttering having been made and 5 barrels being disposed of. The hand sanitiser has been kicked from the wall.

(ii) Small Gains sports area (Cllr David Sims). Following an approach by The Accies, a defibrillator has successfully been applied for. This will be kept locked away and be available for use during play. As agreed last year further tree planting is scheduled for this season.

(iii) 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 has been refurbished. The old telephone box housing the defibrillator has been cleaned and the external lighting problem is still being looked into.

(iv) Grounds' maintenance. Extra strimming is continuing in St Mary's Churchyard to support the 'Living Churchyards' project in the area next to Hodwell.

(v) Recreation Ground. Plans for new play equipment aimed particularly at older children, including a Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) are ongoing with some funding already ensured. Requests for funds from the Henry Colbron Trust and other grant bodies have now been submitted.

(vi) War Memorial. Cleaning has been scheduled prior to Remembrance Sunday and the centenary event.

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

i) 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)).

**Appendix D: Summary of recent NHDC Planning Application consultations and their status as of 29<sup>th</sup> Wednesday September 2021.**

Summary of consultations on recent planning and listed building applications received from NHDC up to 11th October 2021				
Address	Application Number	Brief description	Ashwell PC Comments	North Herts Decision
Land Opposite 67 Station Road	21/02803/FP	Erection of one detached 4-bed dwelling	To be discussed in the November Council Meeting	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	Pending
Ashwell Primary School, Silver Street	21/02560/FP	Creation of designated drop-off zone for vulnerable & special needs children	PC to NHDC: No objection	Pending
24-26 High Street	21/02178/FPH	Erection of detached double garage/garden room following demolition of existing detached garage/outbuilding	PC to NHDC: No objection in principle but request for condition to protect off-street parking and future use.	Pending
62 Back Street	21/02309/FPH	Single Storey rear extension and external flue	PC to NHDC: No objection	PERMISSION GRANTED
Slip End Service Station, Royston Road, Slip End	21/01582/FP	Change of use to sale of motor vehicles (sui generis - E)	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
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

## Appendix E: Monthly accounts summary 01/009/2021 -30/09/2021

ACCOUNTS - Summary for 1st to 30th September 2021					
RECEIPTS					£
56	Nevilles Funeral Services	Rent for Chapel of Rest (Sept)			68.75
57	Co-operative Funeral Care	Payment for CW 21.19			230.00
58	Dignity Funerals	CW 21.18 - Interment of Ashes			140.00
59	Shires Funeral Directors (CPJ Field)	CW 21.13 - Interment of Ashes			280.00
60	North Herts District Council	Second half of Precept			40,500.00
61	Shires Funeral Directors (CPJ Field)	CW 21.13a - memorial plaque			140.00
62	North Herts District Council	Locality grant for Playground			1,000.00
63	Santander	Account interest			0.18
				<b>Total</b>	<b>£42,358.93</b>
PAYMENTS			£ less VAT	VAT	£ inc VAT
109	D J Granger Grounds Maintenance Ltd	Grounds Maintenance Worksheet number 17, inv no 21887	315.00	63.00	378.00
110	D J Granger Grounds Maintenance Ltd	Grounds Maintenance Worksheet number 16, inv no 21829	395.00	79.00	474.00
111	Duo Creative Services Ltd	Website monthly fee (Aug)	25.00	5.00	30.00
112	The Blue tree Company	Cutting Springs roadside hedge INV 3065	145.00	29.00	174.00
113	Abacus Cleaning Supplies	Signs for Public Toilet Doors	13.00	2.60	15.60
114	Ashwell Youth & Community Centre (Village)	Use of room for PC meeting	17.30		17.30
115	Brilliant Lawns	Grass Cutting on Rec, Inv no 9174	120.00		120.00
116	Edward's Cleaning and Maintenance Services	Cleaning Telephone box	50.00		50.00
117	Brilliant Lawns	Grass Cutting & Autumn Fertiliser	692.50		692.50
118	Came & Company	Annual Insurance	3,031.11		3,031.11
119	D J Granger Grounds Maintenance Ltd	Grounds Maintenance Worksheet number 18, inv no 21899	388.00	77.60	465.60
120	Cllr David Sims Reimbursement	New padlock for Small gains	14.98		14.98
121	Edward's Cleaning and Maintenance Services	Toilet Cleaning & Consumables August Inv 2301	235.00		235.00
122	HMRC accounts ref 321PF00003624	tax&NI to Inland Revenue	501.39		501.39
123	HCC Pensions-LGPS Account	Clerk & Deputy Clerk Pension to LGPS	740.66		740.66
124	Ashwell Housing Association	Office rent from Oct 2021 to March 2022	450.00		450.00
125	Dan Home	Repairs to Pavilion Roof & disposal of barrels	120.00		120.00
126	D J Granger Grounds Maintenance Ltd	Grounds Maintenance Worksheet number 19, inv no 21930	441.00	88.20	529.20
127	EON Next	Electricity for Public Toilets in August	14.38	0.72	15.10
128	EON Next	Electricity for the Pavilion	108.12		108.12
129	CDA Herts	Annual subscription	36.00		36.00
130	Brilliant Lawns	Grass Cutting for September	120.00		120.00
131	Edward's Cleaning and Maintenance Services	Refurbishment of Parish Council Noticeboard	140.00		140.00
132	D J Granger Grounds Maintenance Ltd	Grounds Maintenance Worksheet number 20, inv no 21975	66.00	13.20	79.20
133	Clerk	Salary	1,395.70		1,395.70
134	ECO	Environmental Cleansing Officer salary	236.80		236.80
135	Deputy Clerk	Deputy Clerk Salary	850.91		850.91
136	Grounds Officer	Grounds Officer salary	153.40		153.40
			<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10,816.25</b>	<b>358.32</b>
					<b>£11,174.57</b>
	<b>MONEY AT BANK</b>				
		Current Account 30/09/2021	£58,812.37		
		Reserve Account 30/09/2021	£20,703.40		