

ASHMANSWORTH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council

Date: 12th March 2013 **Time:** 7.30 pm
Place: Ashmansworth Village Hall
Present: Alan Cox (Chairman) Carol O'Shaughnessy (Vice-Chairman)
Councillors: Johnnie Johnson Kieron Black
In Attendance: Maxta Thomas (Clerk)
Visitors: Hugo Haig Janey Haig
3 members of the public

Action

1. Apologies

Apologies received from Cllr Benzing

2. Minutes of Last Meeting

Minutes of the meeting of 12th February 2013 were unanimously agreed and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

3. Planning Matters

a) Hallam, Ashmansworth – BDB/77677

Note that this application was discussed in tandem with the Notice of Intent at item 3b. All planning items were discussed with the public present.

Mr Haig noted that the only change to the application since his presentation at the last meeting was the access being moved from its original intended position. This is reflected in the planning application. He will not need to take any trees out to fit the drive in. He has spoken to all direct neighbours, none of whom have raised any objections.

Cllr Cox asked about the ownership of verge – Mr Haig confirmed that the verge is Highways land, and he has been in touch with them to confirm that removing the laurels is acceptable. Cllr Cox noted the Parish Council support for removing these bushes.

Cllr Johnson asked Mr Haig if he feels that the design of the extension was vital to the overall property. Mr Haig feels that it is. He also stated that he feels the extension would not have any adverse impact on immediate neighbours or the streetscape.

Mr Sherston noted that the current access is dangerous and is happy that the new access will be safer. He also feels that extension will complete the current house, rather than detract from it. Mr Bays echoed Mr Sherston's comments.

Another concern was whether it would overlook any immediate neighbours. Mr Haig confirmed that it should not.

Cllr Johnson noted the new planning guidelines, and asked if Mr Haig felt his application was in line with these. Mr Haig feels that they are, and that the plans actually enhance the streetscape, particularly with the change in access.

At this point the public was asked to leave whilst the Council considered its response to this application and the Notice of Intent at item 3b.

The council discussed its response to this planning application. It was felt that the application does not follow the Council's planning guidelines, and two particular points were raised. Concern was expressed about the eventual size of the property, an increase of about 60%, although it was also noted that it would not represent as high a percentage of the curtilage as some other properties in the parish. It was felt that the glass connecting section does not comply with the planning guidelines and is not in keeping with the rest of the village.

After some debate, it was finally unanimously agreed to accept the planning application subject to the following amendments.

- The glass connecting section should be removed so that the extension becomes properly integrated with the existing building, thus reducing the footprint, and also reducing the use of glass
- Removal of the glass studio on the south side of the plan. This will reduce the building size, and also the excessive use of glass
- Confirmation that the bats that currently use the existing garage/shed are accommodated in the new building
- Confirmation from BDBC that the trees to be removed are not of significance to the Conservation area

Clerk

Clerk to respond to BDBC accordingly.

b) Hallam, Ashmansworth – Notice of Intent for lime trees – T/00139/13/TCA

Mr Haig acknowledged that the lime trees are a very sensitive issue in the village. He outlined some of the history of the trees. He stated that the trees have definitely been pollarded at some stage, probably very early on. He pointed out via photos where work had been done on them in more recent times, with the crowns having been raised at least twice. He also noted the effect the trees have on the immediate neighbours.

He noted that the proposal to pollard the trees was felt to be the best option from the experts that he has consulted, both in terms of letting light in for the neighbours, and in terms of health and safety. He very strongly felt that this would be the most effective solution long term.

Mr Haig said that David Hill of BDBC has stated that he is minded to reject the application, and has asked if an alternative solution of thinning the trees out and raising the crown would be considered. Mr Haig is willing to consider this, although he would like the Parish Council to reconsider their initial objections to the pollarding. He also noted that his tree expert is working with David Hill on plans to thin out the trees and raise the crown, and reduce the height by 30%.

Cllr Cox commented he and the clerk have met with David Hill on site. It has also been discussed with other tree experts, all of whom feel that pollarding is unnecessary, although some lighter work is needed. David Hill has noted that it is extremely unlikely that the limes will blow down in the wind (limes being a particularly wind sound species). It has been discussed with neighbours who were happy with the solution involving lifting the crown and reducing the lower branches. Cllr Cox finally noted that reducing

the trees drastically would look very odd compared to the neighbouring limes.

Mr Sherston gave his support for pollarding the limes, stating that there is a long term risk if they remain at their current height.

Cllr Johnson asked whether Mr Haig feels that pollarding the limes is in line with the planning guidelines. Mr Haig stated that he felt that pollarding the limes back to their original intended state (according to the history) would be in keeping with the guidelines. Cllr Johnson said that the Conservation Area document specifically notes the prominent limes in the village, and that pollarding them could drastically affect this.

Mr Haig again asked the Parish Council to reconsider their position on the limes, particularly in light of the benefit he feels this would bring to his neighbours, noting that he plans to withdraw the Notice of Intent because of council objections to pollarding. Cllr Cox responded that he has been in touch with all the neighbours, two of whom are happy to see the limes pollarded, with the rest preferring to see the trees reduced but not pollarded.

At this point the public was asked to leave whilst the Council considered its response to this Notice of Intent and the application at item 3a (which were discussed in open council at the same time).

The council discussed its response to this Notice of Intent. It was unanimously agreed to object to the proposal to pollard the limes, with preference being given to reducing the height and thinning out the trees. Clerk to respond to BDBC accordingly.

Clerk

c) St James Church – Notice of Intent for work to various trees in the Church Yard

The clerk updated the council with the intended work, and Cllr Cox gave some background. David Hill of BDBC has visited the site, and supports the intended work. Cllr Cox noted that both BDBC and the Diocesan Faculty will need to give permission for the work to be done.

No objections.

4. Local Roads

a) A343

Cllr Cox has now received the information on double white line regulations, which Cllr Johnson has summarised and distributed. It was noted that the regulations would seem to support extending the double white lines from Three Legged Cross, although the width of the road at the point of the Ashmansworth junction may not be wide enough. Cllr Johnson suggested contacting Highways to find out which section of the regulations is contravened by extending the white lines, and that it may be worth suggesting a single solid white line on the junction side of the road. Cllr Cox to follow up with Highways, and also investigate obtaining police support for the Scheme

Cllr Cox

b) Crux Easton signpost

No progress. Cllr Cox to chase closer to the date of the next Council meeting.

Cllr Cox

c) Ditch Clearance

No further progress. Cllr O'Shaughnessy to follow up.

Cllr O'Shaughnessy

d) Potholes

Cllr Cox updated the Council. There is a particularly deep pothole outside Old Cottage, which is causing problems and has damaged

several vehicles. This has been reported repeatedly, with increasing urgency. A bollard has now been placed beside it to serve as a warning. Cllr Cox will continue to chase.

Cllr Cox

The road edges near The Yew Tree and on Zell Hill are also in very bad condition. Cllr Cox noted that these have recently been marked up, so some action on these seems imminent.

Cllr O'Shaughnessy noted a bad pothole in Crux Easton. Clerk to send her details of the Highways website so she can report this.

Clerk

5. Telephones/Broadband

The clerk updated the council. The base station near Lower Manor Farm is being considered for upgrade to 4G, although no planning application has been submitted as yet. This has been reported to Dan Fearnley to examine a possible link share.

6. Neighbourhood Watch

No report.

7. Council Business

a) Clerk's Report

Nothing to report.

b) Grass Cutting

The clerk updated the council. Three tenders have been received (see appendix B). These were considered by the council, and tender b. was unanimously accepted. Clerk to contact the successful company, AA Wolfenden, with details of formal contract, and to verify costs for years two and three

Clerk

Cllr Cox noted the Council's thanks to Cllr Black for his work on this matter.

c) Hedge for Recreation Ground

Cllr Cox updated the Council. He has been in touch with the Faccombe estate, and is awaiting a final reply. The hedge will comprise of 70% hawthorn, and 30% mixed species. If final permission is given, then funding will need to be considered. It was unanimously agreed that this will be via donations from the village residents. The Flower Show organisers may also be approached. Cllr Cox to progress with the Faccombe estate.

Cllr Cox

d) Parish co-operation

No further progress.

e) Planning Guidelines

The planning guidelines have now been published on the council website, and have been announced in the village calendar.

It was discussed whether details of planning applications should be published via email to local residents. It was suggested that a list of planning applications and reference numbers could be added to the village calendar, which is published monthly and goes to all households in the parish. This was unanimously agreed.

It was also discussed whether residents of the parish should be offered free entries to the local directory on the website.

Cllr Cox suggested offering free trade adverts on the council website to businesses resident in the Parish. This was unanimously agreed.

8. BDAPTC, HALC

Nothing to report. Next BDAPTC meeting is on 21st March 2013. Cllr Cox is unable to attend.

9. Finance Matters

a) Payments Approval

Please see appendix A for the financial statement. Unanimously approved. The clerk noted that the final VAT claim will go in at the end of the month, and that this will be for just over £100. Other than that, the clerk does not expect any other payments or receipts before the financial year end.

Cllr Cox noted that the Council finances will finish the year below the reserve level. Therefore he proposed that the Council should not make any further donations or grants to local organisations for the remainder of the financial year. This was unanimously agreed.

10. Date of Next Meetings

AGM - Tuesday 14th May 2013 at 7.30 pm, Ashmansworth Village Hall

The meeting closed at 10.30pm. Cllr Cox thanked the councillors for a productive, busy meeting.

Appendix A – Financial Statement

Financial statement : Ashmansworth Parish Council

Meeting date : 12/03/2013

Balances:

Bank Statement 331 - 28/02/2013	Balance after reconciliation - 12/02/2013
669.13	320.48

Payments since last meeting date :

Cheque No	Payee	Details	TOTAL COST
100506	Mrs M J Thomas	Clerk Salary - January 2013	92.09
100509	Mrs M J Thomas	Clerk Expenses	85.32
100510	Mrs M J Thomas	Clerk Salary - February 2013	92.09
TOTAL			269.50

New Items for payment

Cheque No	Payee	Details	TOTAL COST
100512	Mrs M J Thomas	Clerk Expenses Feb-Mar 2013	30.06
100513	HMRC	Tax/NICS	69.00
100514	Ashmansworth Village Hall	Hall Hire 2012/13	122.50
TOTAL			221.56

Receipts since last meeting date :

Receipt Date	Payer	Details	TOTAL AMOUNT

TOTAL			0.00

Payments not yet presented

Cheque No	Payee	Details	TOTAL COST
100499	Crux Easton Church	Hire for Meetings	35.00
100511	Mrs M J Thomas	Clerk Salary - March 2013	92.09
TOTAL			127.09

Appendix B - Grass Cutting Tenders

Company	Quote	Yearly increase	Public Liability
a.	£48 per cut, irrespective of which cut	Guaranteed fixed price for three years	£1,000,000
b.	£39 per cut, irrespective of which cut	Years 2 & 3 not mentioned	£2,500,000
c.	£60 first cut £46 per cut for further cuts £46 for additional cuts	Possible small increases in years 2 & 3 to cover fuel and inflation	£1,000,000

Note: Company b's. price includes VAT, which is reclaimable, whereas a. and c. are not registered for VAT.