

**MINUTES OF THE ICKLEFORD PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
WEDNESDAY 4 OCTOBER 2017, ICKLEFORD VILLAGE HALL AT 7.30PM**

Present: Parish Councillors M Maxwell (Chairman), R Blake (Vice-Chairman), M Barber, D Chapallaz, P Crowe, K Goldie, C Gooden and C Thurstance

Officer present: Mrs Danielle Weetman (Parish Clerk)

Also present for part of the meeting: District Cllr Harry Spencer-Smith, PCSO Heather Burrows and 13 members of the public

67. Apologies for absence

67.1 Apologies were received from County Cllr David Barnard. Cllr Crowe sent apologies for late arrival.

68. Chairman's Notice

68.1 Cllr Maxwell read out the announcement on openness and transparency.

Cllr Maxwell advised that Cllr Chapallaz had tendered his resignation immediately before the meeting for personal reasons. This resignation will take effect from the end of this meeting. It was noted that Cllr Chapallaz had been a parish councillor for 41 years and also served as Chairman for three years during this time. Councillors were unanimous in expressing their appreciation to Cllr Chapallaz for all his work on the Parish Council. Cllr Chapallaz offered his on-going support to the Parish Council.

The Clerk will advise North Hertfordshire District Council (NHDC) accordingly so they can publicise this casual vacancy. **Action: Clk**

69. Declaration of Interests

69.1 No declarations of interest relating to items on the agenda were received.

69.2 No written requests for dispensation for declarable interests relating to items on the agenda were received.

69.3 No requests for dispensation were received.

70. Minutes of the previous meeting

70.1 The following amendment to the draft minutes of the meeting held on 7 September 2017, indicated in bold text, was noted for accuracy:

Item 60.4 - 'Cllr Barber advised that he had met with Sgt Oliphant, County Cllr Barnard, Guy McCallan from Hertfordshire Police, and Jason **Ball** from Hertfordshire County Council.'

Following a proposal from Cllr Goldie which was seconded by Cllr Blake it was **resolved** that the minutes of the meeting held on 7 September 2017, including the amendment noted above, be approved and the Chairman was authorised to sign them as a true record of the meeting.

71. Public Participation Session

Cllr Crowe joined the meeting.

71.1 There were 13 members of the public present at the meeting in relation to items 74.2 (The NHDC Proposed Submission Local Plan), 76.4 (planning application 17/02175/1 at Land to the east of Bedford Road and west of Old Ramerick Manor, Bedford Road, Ickleford, also known as site LS1 from the Local Plan), and 76.5 (planning application 17/01955/1 at Ickleford Mill, Arlesey Road, Ickleford). These agenda items were therefore discussed at this point of the meeting with the members of the public and District Cllr Spencer-Smith for expedience. The information relating to these items can be found under the relevant item.

12 members of the public left the meeting after item 76.4 and 1 member of the public left the meeting after item 76.5.

72. Police Report

72.1 PCSO Burrows reported that there had been 4 crimes since the last meeting, compared with 5 for the same period last year. An overview of these crimes was given. PCSO Burrows outlined the duties she had undertaken in the village, which included advising residents about the

Neighbourhood Watch and OWL email schemes plus visits to Glebe House and Ickleford Equestrian Centre for their Macmillan Coffee mornings.

Cllr Barber enquired whether the Police would have any concerns about mobile food vans visiting the village. PCSO Burrows advised that she was unaware of any concerns but this matter could be discussed with Sgt Oliphant for clarification.

PCSO Burrows left the meeting.

73. Reports from County and District Councillors

73.1 Report from County Councillor

None received.

73.2 Report from District Councillor

District Cllr Spencer-Smith reported that the issue about an incorrect window being installed at The Cricketers had been resolved. Representations have been made to the planning officer for the three-year construction period to be reduced for The Cricketers. District Cllr Spencer-Smith will continue to press for this amendment.

An update on the recent meeting between District Cllr Spencer-Smith, Cllr Maxwell and Cllr David Levett (NHDC Executive Member for Planning) was given. At that meeting, Cllr Levett advised that he was unable to give any assurances that windfall sites in Ickleford could be exchanged for one or more of the Ickleford sites included in the Local Plan. It was noted that the Inspector may be able to authorise this as part of the Examination in Public (EiP). Cllr Levett also reported that even if the Local Plan is approved by the Inspector, it does not mean that all sites in the Plan will be developed. However, the latter has been contradicted by a local resident (who is a retired planning barrister).

In relation to the process employed in identifying potential sites for the Plan, Cllr Levett acknowledged that NHDC did not take the approach suggested by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as they did not have the necessary resources. Cllr Levett also noted that the new formula proposed recently by central Government for calculating the amount of new homes to be built in each area will impact on north Hertfordshire despite the fact that the Local Plan is up for consultation. Initial figures suggest a further increase of 40%, but north Hertfordshire would have an additional 5 years to build these houses beyond the life of the current plan.

District Cllr Spencer-Smith confirmed that the NHDC Planning Control Committee had refused the Construction Management and Traffic Management Plans submitted by the developer of the site at the Holwell Turn in Pirton for the Holwell only route.

74. On-going Projects

74.1 Neighbourhood Planning

Cllr Maxwell advised that only five volunteers had come forward to assist with the project. It was agreed that councillors would try to approach residents on an individual basis about getting involved. **Action: All Cllrs**

74.2 The NHDC Proposed Submission Local Plan

Members of the public asked the Parish Council about its response to the forthcoming EiP of the NHDC Local Plan. Cllr Maxwell noted that the Parish Council would look to include information on concerns raised previously in relation to all four of the sites located in Ickleford parish. Additionally, new items such as the windfall sites at Ickleford Mill and Ickleford Manor would be considered as well as information on the impact of the Draft Local Plan recently published by Central Bedfordshire.

A member of the public noted that site LS1 was included in the NHDC Local Plan at a late stage which did not allow for any public consultation.

Councillors discussed which would be the relevant sessions to raise our concerns in, under the Matters and Issues hearings timetable at the EiP, and also whether there were any brownfield sites that could be substituted for some of the green belt sites. It was noted that the cumulative impact of housing development had not been thought through by NHDC when preparing the Local Plan.

Following discussion, it was agreed that the written statement should include a brief summary of the key points of our previous submission to the consultation on the Local Plan, more detailed information on new matters we wish to raise plus recommendations on how to make the Plan sound. The Parish Council's statement will be approved at the November meeting to meet the submission deadline.

A number of methods of collecting traffic data for use in the Parish Council's written statement were discussed. It was agreed that the possibility of using the traffic consultant for the Save Our Green Belt (SOGB) Group be investigated, along with the collection of data by parish councillors. It was also agreed that the Clerk review the documents from the recent Ickleford Mill planning application to see if there are any relevant data that can be used.

Action: MM/Cik

Following a proposal from Cllr Goldie which was seconded by Cllr Gooden, it was **resolved**:

- To write to the Inspector to request that the housing allocations and settlement boundary for Lower Stondon be included in the same session as Ickleford in the hearings timetable given that site LS1 is located in Ickleford parish. **Action: MM**
- To write to the Inspector to request the right to be heard at the Hearing for the sessions: Matter 7 – Countryside and Green Belt; the Green Belt review; Matter 11 – The housing allocation and the settlement boundaries: the Category A villages (Ickleford and Lower Stondon); and Matter 15 – Countryside and Green Belt: policy approach. **Action: MM**
- To approve Clls Maxwell, Blake, Spencer-Smith and Thurstance to prepare a draft of the written statement for approval at the November Parish Council meeting. It was agreed County Cllr Barnard be kept informed about the Parish Council's written statement too.
- To update residents about the EiP via the usual methods of communication with links to the documentation provided by the Inspector about this process, and also encourage them to attend the session scheduled for Thursday 30 November to show the strength of feeling that there is in our village. **Action: MM/Cik/RB**

Cllr Maxwell updated on the meeting held between representatives of parish councils in north Hertfordshire and our MP, Bim Afolami. It was a productive meeting and our MP showed a clear understanding of the concerns raised about housing development in this area. He has taken forward actions to raise these concerns. A follow-up meeting will take place later this year to update on progress. Bim Afolami met with Cllr Lynda Needham, leader of NHDC, during the week commencing 25 September, and an update should be provided in due course.

74.3 Mobile street food van in Ickleford

Information from Carpe Diem was circulated prior to the meeting, including the proposal to visit Ickleford fortnightly on a Friday and set up the van on Arlesey Road by St Katharine's Church. Following discussion, it was agreed that this would be a useful amenity for the village. The Clerk will contact Carpe Diem to advise accordingly and offer to publicise via our usual methods of communication. **Action: Cik**

74.4 Installation of a Christmas Tree with lights on Upper Green and hosting a 'Lights Switch-On' evening this year

Cllr Barber gave an update on this project, advising that Alex Goldie would be the duty First Aider at the Lights Switch-On evening. The limited supply of Christmas Trees going forward was noted and it was agreed that Cllr Barber investigate alternatives. **Action: MB**

It was agreed that the date of the Lights Switch-On be communicated to residents via the Village News email, Facebook and Parish Council website. **Action: Cik**

It was agreed that Cllr Barber prepare the relevant risk assessment forms. **Action: MB**

75. **New Matters**

75.1 Appointment of one planning advisor

Councillors noted the vacancy for a planning advisor following the resignation of Clare Tagg in the summer.

Following a proposal from Cllr Crowe which was seconded by Cllr Blake, it was **resolved** to appoint Cllr Gooden as a planning advisor.

75.2 Maintenance of the flower meadow at Ickleford Burial Ground

A request was received between meetings from Ickleford Burial Ground Trust for the annual maintenance of the flower meadow at the Burial Ground. William Crosse provided a quote of £250.00 (+VAT) to cut, collect, bale and remove the grass; this is comparable with the cost of work in previous years. William Crosse advised that this would need to be carried out in September as work would begin on the fields used to access the flower meadow at the beginning of October. Approval was therefore given between meetings for the maintenance work to be carried out due to the timing restriction.

Following a proposal by Cllr Goldie which was seconded by Cllr Crowe, it was **resolved** to formally approve the maintenance work to be carried out on the flower meadow at Ickleford Burial Ground by William Crosse at a maximum cost of £250.00 (+VAT)

Councillors discussed the level of on-going financial support for maintenance work at Ickleford Burial Ground, and enquired whether the Burial Ground Trust could apply for grants to cover the cost of work on the flower meadow going forward. **Action: CT/PC**

75.3 Damage to Christmas tree support cover

Damage to the foundation cover for the Christmas Tree on Lower Green was reported to the Parish Council by a resident. Cllr Barber has installed a replacement cover for the foundation.

75.4 Ickleford Parish Council communication to District Cllr Spencer-Smith about the NHDC waste recycling survey

Councillors discussed the recent survey carried out by NHDC about waste recycling and noted concern about the proposal to charge for domestic garden waste disposal, and the negative consequences resulting from this. These include additional flytipping, additional vehicle journeys to recycling centres causing an increase in traffic and pollution, and compostable waste being added to purple bins and decomposing in landfill with the release of greenhouse gasses.

It was agreed that a letter be sent to District Cllr Spencer-Smith outlining these concerns and requesting his support for the retention of the current policy. **Action: MM**

75.5 Parking on Lower Green

Residents had contacted the Parish Council about vehicles parking regularly in the layby on Lower Green. Following discussion, it was agreed that this matter would be monitored. Should the issue persist, it will be raised at a future meeting.

75.6 Maintenance and removal of boundary hedges

Correspondence had been received from a resident about the maintenance of boundary hedges in the village and the removal of the boundary hedge to the rear of the two new houses on Wyatt Close, adjacent to Bridleway 15.

Following discussion, it was agreed that the Clerk write to the resident to confirm that North Hertfordshire Homes own the boundary hedge to the rear of the new houses on Wyatt Close, and are therefore responsible for its maintenance. Furthermore, that Ickleford Parish Council has no authority to require residents to cut back hedges on property boundaries but we include polite reminders in our village communications about cutting back hedges or shrubs to enable pedestrians to pass. **Action: Clk**

75.7 Chairman's recent communication to councillors about resource pressures on the Parish Council

Cllr Maxwell referenced the recent communication to all councillors about the increased workload due to current planning matters that the Parish Council is responding too. All councillors acknowledged receipt of this communication, with no further feedback.

75.8 Damaged metal post at the recreation ground car park

Councillors were advised that one of the metal posts had been damaged at the recreation ground car park which has made it difficult to lock the top metal gate. Cllr Crowe has asked William Crosse for a quote to repair the damage.

76. Planning Applications**76.1 17/01964/1HH at Abbis Cottage, Lower Green, Ickleford, Hitchin, SG5 3TW**

Full Permission Householder: Single storey porch extension following removal of existing porch, insertion of side first floor window and insertion of french doors to rear elevation

At the September meeting, the Parish Council's response to this planning application was delegated to the Clerk in consultation with the planning advisors. The Parish Council noted **no objections**, but requested that a condition be placed on the planning application for the first floor window identified as number 16 in the documentation to have obscured glass. This was due to the window being located in the upstairs bathroom and overlooking rear gardens in Abbis Orchard, and in order to maintain privacy for all parties.

Following a proposal from Cllr Goldie which was seconded by Cllr Blake, it was **resolved** to formally approve the Parish Council's response to this planning application as detailed above.

76.2 17/01965/1LB at Abbis Cottage, Lower Green, Ickleford, Hitchin, SG5 3TW

Listed Building: Single storey porch extension following removal of existing porch, insertion of side first floor window, insertion of french doors to rear elevation, insertion of roof lights to south elevation, and internal and external alterations

At the September meeting, the Parish Council's response to this planning application was delegated to the Clerk in consultation with the planning advisors. The Parish Council noted **no objections**, but requested that a condition be placed on the planning application for the first floor window identified as number 16 in the documentation to have obscured glass. This was due to the window being located in the upstairs bathroom and overlooking rear gardens in Abbis Orchard, and in order to maintain privacy for all parties.

Following a proposal from Cllr Goldie which was seconded by Cllr Blake, it was **resolved** to formally approve the Parish Council's response to this planning application as detailed above.

76.3 17/02271/1HH at 12 Abbis Orchard, Ickleford, Hitchin, SG5 3TN

Full permission householder: Two storey side extension following demolition of existing side conservatory and ancillary works

Due to the response deadline, the Clerk and planning advisors responded between meetings, noting **no objections**.

Following a proposal from Cllr Goldie which was seconded by Cllr Blake, it was **resolved** to formally approve that the Parish Council had **no objections** to this planning application.

76.4 17/02175/1 at Land to the east of Bedford Road and west of Old Ramerick Manor, Bedford Road, Ickleford

Full planning permission: Residential development of 185 dwellings comprising 27 x 1 bedroom apartments; 19 x 2 bedroom apartments; 18 x 2 bedroom houses; 56 x 3 bedroom houses; 61 x 4 bedroom houses; and 4 x 5 bedroom houses; new vehicular access onto Bedford Road, associated garages and car parking space, public open space, landscaping and ancillary works

Members of the public enquired about the Parish Council's response to the planning application for site LS1. Cllr Maxwell noted that NHDC had granted an extension to the deadline to November so the response would be approved at the November meeting. Councillors have started to review the documentation and collate information for this response.

Concerns were raised by members of the public about the lack of provision for education and other essential services in relation to this planning application. Cllr Maxwell confirmed that Hertfordshire County Council would be legally responsible for providing education to future residents of this site as it is located in Hertfordshire. The location of non-heritage sites close to the boundary of site LS1 was noted as was the discrepancy between the buffer zone on the eastern boundary of this site in the Local Plan compared with the proposed planning application.

Members of the public enquired whether the Parish Council had any information about the capacity for both foul and clean water in this area of the village. Cllr Maxwell advised that the Parish Council had tried to engage with Anglian Water on this matter with minimal success.

Furthermore, he reported that sewage pipe capacity concerns are not currently covered by the Local Plan.

District Cllr Spencer-Smith reported that the planning application for site LS1 would be referred to the NHDC Planning Control Committee given the scale of proposed development.

In response to a request by members of the public, Cllr Maxwell noted that there had been no further developments in the Freedom of Information (FoI) request to NHDC about LS1 since the recent update circulated to residents, however the reasons noted in the letters for refusing the request were contradictory. Councillors noted disappointment at the lack of transparency from NHDC in relation to the FoI request.

76.5 17/01955/1 at Ickleford Mill, Arlesey Road, Ickleford

Outline application: Outline planning application for up to 71 dwellings and associated access, car parking, garages, landscaping and open space including demolition and removal of all existing structures, buildings and hardstanding (all matters reserved except means of access)

Following a proposal from Cllr Blake which was seconded by Cllr Goldie, it was **resolved** that the Parish Council has **no objections** to this planning application, but would like the following matters to be taken into consideration:

- There is a significant need for affordable housing from residents of Ickleford or their immediate family members (usually adult offspring). To assist in meeting this local demand, we would request that 5 (five) of the 'Affordable Housing' or 'Shared Ownership' dwellings built on this site be 'ring-fenced' for those with a connection to Ickleford.
- We would hope to receive monies needed for (a) St. Katharine's Church 'Room for All' Build, £400,000 (b) Playground Equipment, £20,000 and (c) Sports Club Facilities and Equipment, £20,000. This is in line with item 70 of the NPPF (to deliver the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs).
- We would like assurances that Green Belt area designated for Open Spaces would be adhered to and not used for 'overspill' building. We ask that these Open Spaces be gifted to the Parish Council in perpetuity and to maintain its availability in the public realm and for the common good. This is in accordance with NPPF items 79 and 80 (Protecting Green Belt land).
- There appears to be a total lack of understanding with regard to safety access for pedestrians from the development and the location of bus stops and pedestrian crossings (as per NPPF 32 – safe and suitable access to the site for all people).
 - One proposed bus stop in the Hitchin direction is situated just before the narrow bridge on a bend and where there is insufficient space to accommodate a bus shelter; the second, in the direction of the Village Centre, is situated close to a very busy and narrow triangle junction. We are concerned about road congestion, passing traffic and pedestrian visibility whilst the buses are stationary at the stops.
 - The zebra crossing located beyond the main road access from the development is on a narrow bend, which we consider to be inappropriate and dangerous. We are concerned about pedestrian safety when crossing Arlesey Road from the 'Emergency Access' exit.
 - The present narrow bridge already constitutes a measure to slow traffic and we would resist any suggestion of widening the bridge to accommodate the proposals noted above.
- Anglian Water acknowledges that Ickleford's sewage/surface water systems are a high priority so we would like assurances that all current issues are resolved before any new housing is considered. If Anglian Water cannot reach this expectation, then a new pumping station must be installed on this site to take sewage/surface water into Hitchin. In addition, we ask that consideration be given to redirecting the sewerage/drainage from Laurel Way and Duncots Close towards Hitchin at the same time to resolve the on-going issues here.

- We would like confirmation that the new houses will have soak-aways installed to ensure that surplus rainwater does not flow into the river and create flooding further downstream where a weir is encountered before the river Oughton converges with the river Hiz.
- We note that a building is to be demolished which adjoins the old Mill wall. We would appreciate confirmation that the wall will be protected as it is part of the boundary wall to the neighbouring houses
- No mention was made in the Hertfordshire Ecology report of the Canada Geese which frequent this site and have become part of the Village's ecological scene. We would like confirmation that care will be taken to protect these, as well as all the other wildlife mentioned, during construction.
- There is also mention of tree removal in certain areas. We would like assurances that this will be a constructed felling of those trees found to be diseased and not just a random lopping of trees that do not suit the scene.
- It is imperative that the hours of operation and deliveries are adhered to throughout this build and that the privacy and noise levels, for local residents to this site, are maintained at all times.
- Although this development is not part of the Local Plan, it is felt by the Parish Council that it is more in keeping and appropriate for the Village than sites included in the Plan, and therefore should be seriously considered as a fair exchange for one or more sites.

District Councillor Spencer-Smith left the meeting.

76.6 17/02210/1LB at 5 Church Path, Ickleford, Hitchin, SG5 3YJ

Listed Building: Single storey rear extension

Following a proposal from Cllr Crowe which was seconded by Cllr Goldie, it was **resolved** that the Parish Council had no objections to this planning application. **Action: Cllr**

76.7 Proposed base statin installation at site (CS) 236801 - (O2) 81312 – Bedford Road SW, 110m north of 33 Bedford Road, Bedford Road, Ickleford, Hertfordshire, SG5 3XH

The developers for this proposed application invited the Parish Council to send comments or request information prior to a formal planning application being submitted to NHDC.

Following discussion, it was agreed that the Parish Council would provide comments once this proposal has been submitted to NHDC as a planning application.

76.8 Planning applications received between 28 September and 4 October 2017

None received

77. Planning Decisions

77.1 Planning decisions received between 28 September and 4 October 2017

77.1.1 17/01484/1 at Garage block adjacent to 32, Greenfield Avenue, Ickleford

Full Planning Permission: Erection of 4 x 1 bed flats with provision of associated parking following demolition of existing garage blocks (as amended by plan no. 12568/01J)

NHDC granted Conditional Permission on 22 September 2017

78. Finance

78.1 To consider that under Section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 that the public and press should be excluded from item 12.2 of this agenda in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted

There were no member of the public and press present.

78.2 Clerk's annual appraisal, review of contracted hours and salary review

Councillors discussed the Clerk's appraisal and current contracted hours.

Following a proposal by Cllr Gooden which was seconded by Cllr Blake it was **resolved** to increase the Clerk's salary from SCP 26 to SCP 27 with immediate effect and to pay overtime from September 2016 to September 2017 as per the Clerk's timesheet. The overtime payment will be included in the Clerk's November wages. It was also agreed that there would be no

change to the Clerk's contracted hours and a record of hours worked would continue to be maintained.

The Clerk returned to the room.

Cllr Maxwell noted thanks to the Clerk for her work with the Parish Council and the wider village community.

78.3 Quarter 2 financial summary and bank reconciliations

A summary showing payments and receipts to the end of the second quarter was circulated prior to the meeting. This included information on the main areas of expenditure for the financial year to date. The second quarter bank reconciliations will be reported on at the November meeting.

Councillors discussed the current precept consultation from central Government which raises the possibility of precept referendums for local councils. All councils are potentially affected by the outcome of this consultation as there is no mention of Government limiting this consideration to a particular size of council.

Following a proposal from Cllr Crowe which was seconded by Cllr Blake, it was **resolved** to authorise Cllr Maxwell to respond to the consultation on behalf of the Parish Council due to the possible impact on our financial arrangements. **Action: MM**

78.4 Notification of receipts since the last meeting and payments made between meetings

The Clerk noted receipts and payments between meetings as detailed in Appendix A which was circulated prior to the meeting.

78.5 Approve payments for October 2017 and any payments made between meetings

Following a proposal from Cllr Thurstance which was seconded by Cllr Goldie **approval** was given for the accounts as listed in Appendix A, including the payments made between meetings, to be paid. **Action: Clk**

79. Any Other Business

The Clerk advised that letters about the annual grant application process for local organisations have been sent out, and information will be circulated to residents via our usual methods of communication. A tenant at Little Park has given notice to leave by the end of this year; there is a new tenant ready to take over the plot.

The Parish Council has received a letter from The Pensions Regulator to advise that the minimum contribution levels will increase from April 2018. This will be built into the budget calculations for the 2018/19 financial year.

The Ickleford School Fireworks evening will take place on Saturday 4 November. Two PCSOs will be in attendance on the night, and the PTA has taken advice from PCSO Burrows with regard to parking arrangements for this event.

An item on the co-option process will be added to the agenda for the November meeting.

80. Date for Next Meeting

80.1 The next Parish Council meeting will be held on **Thursday 2 November 2017** at 7.30pm

The meeting closed at 10.20pm

Signed by Chairman _____ **Date** _____

Print name of Chairman _____