

## MINUTES of the ASPENDEN ANNUAL PARISH MEETING held on Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> MAY 2025 at 7.00pm in THE FOX ASPENDEN

Present                      Cllr Richard Blackburn (Chair)      Cllr Tracy Devonshire      Cllr Stuart Chambers  
                                 Cllr Tom Poulton                      Cllr Joe Murphy  
                                 County Councillor Sue Nicholls  
                                 0 members of the public

Officer attending              Denise Anderson (Clerk)

### 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Neil Cutis (ASPCC) and Steve Parlor (Aspenden Village Fund & The Fox Petanque Team)

### 2. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2023

The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2024 having been circulated previously, were before the meeting and signed as a correct record.

### 3. ASPENDEN PARISH COUNCIL CHAIR'S REPORT

#### Children's Playground Area & Village Green Flooding

The Parish Council commissioned a number of specialist surveys of the play area and surrounding green to try and determine the cause of the flooding. A proposal has been recommended by the engineers which includes the installation of a large subterranean chamber, into which the water will drain and from which it will be pumped into the nearby brook – a pumping station to be securely located near the pavilion and operated on an as needed basis. A licence to discharge into the brook will also be sought from Herts CC. The Parish Council is currently considering the proposal.

To date the surveys and design work have been funded by East Herts S106 monies, and we are hopeful of securing additional funding for the works, once approved.

#### Village Green

A new dog bin and two new salt bins have been placed on the Village Green and our thanks to Chris Newman for undertaking this on our behalf.

#### Planning

A Steering Group was set up by East Herts in respect of Countryside Partnerships Home Counties North (Vistry) planning permission to develop circa 350 dwellings on land east of the A10, allowed at Appeal in August 2024. The Steering Group comprises the developer & their advisors, East Herts planning, East Herts Council, Buntingford Town Council, local residents and Aspenden Parish Council and was formed as part of the Masterplanning consultation process as follows:

#### Policy DES1 Masterplanning

I. All 'significant' development proposals will be required to prepare a Masterplan setting out the quantum and distribution of land uses; access; sustainable high quality design and layout principles; necessary infrastructure; the relationship between the site and other adjacent and nearby land uses; landscape and heritage assets; and other relevant matters.

II. The Masterplan will be collaboratively prepared, involving site promoters, land owners, East Herts Council, town and parish councils and other relevant key stakeholders. The Masterplan will be further informed by public participation.

III. In order to ensure that sites are planned and delivered comprehensively, any application for development on part of the site will be assessed against its contribution to the Masterplan as a whole.

A Public Consultation is currently underway on the Masterplan and Design Principles document.

A planning application (3/23/1390/FUL) submitted by Wheatley Homes for the demolition of 16 London Road and the erection of 68 dwellings was refused by East Herts on 24th May 2024 but granted on Appeal on 02.05.2025.

A planning application (3/24/1360/FUL) was submitted in July 2024 by Swab Children's Homes for the use of Warringha to accommodate and provide care for children with learning disabilities aged 12 to 18 years old. Permission was granted.

A number of further large scale planning applications remain undecided by East Herts:

- A planning application (3/24/0294/OUT) submitted by Taylor Wimpey for 200 houses & a new medical centre off Hare Street in February 2024;
- A planning application (3/24/0966/OUT) was submitted in May 2024 by Hallam Land Management Ltd. for the development of up to 600 dwellings, elderly accommodation, mixed use local centre, first school, informal and formal open space, a new access from the A507 and pedestrian bridge over the A10;
- A planning application (3/24/1255/OUT) was submitted in July 2024 by Hallam Land Management Ltd for the development of employment land (uses B2, B8, Ec and Eg, informal open space, new access from A507;

### **East Herts District Council**

East Herts Council is currently updating the District Plan and as part of this preparation a 'Call for Sites' process was run over the summer. This is an opportunity for landowners, developers, agents, and site promoters to submit sites which are considered to have the potential for future development – they can also include sites that could contribute to nature enhancement and recovery. Note - the Call for Sites is a process to assess locations that could potentially be brought forward for development in the future – submission of a site does not in any way confirm that it will be selected.

The new District Plan will need to identify enough land to meet future requirements and includes sites for:

- Housing and employment
- Community facilities
- Habitat creation and enhancement
- Infrastructure

A detailed assessment of all the sites and proposed uses will be made in due course, to determine whether they are suitable, available, and achievable - this will be an ongoing process as the Council progresses the District Plan Review.

A full list of sites can be found on the East Herts website & by following the links below:

<https://democracy.eastherts.gov.uk/documents/s68431/Appendix%20A%20Map%20of%20Call%20for%20Sites%20Submissions.pdf?J=6>

<https://democracy.eastherts.gov.uk/documents/s68431/Appendix%20A%20Map%20of%20Call%20for%20Sites%20Submissions.pdf?J=6>

<https://democracy.eastherts.gov.uk/documents/s68433/Appendix%20C%20Overview%20of%20Individual%20Call%20for%20Sites%20Submissions%20including%20Location%20Plan%20Site%20Area%20a.pdf?J=6>

### **Dandara Phase 2**

The highway works relating to this new development have yet to be implemented despite it being a condition of the planning approval that they be completed before occupation. We are advised by HCC that the technical/engineering design of the works are approved, and the s278 Agreement has been finalised but not signed yet. Dandara are in discussion with Network Management in respect of the timing of the works and the traffic management measures that will be in place during the works. Aspenden Parish Council has made representations to HCC and East Herts requesting the works are undertaken overnight so to keep Aspenden Road open during the day.

### Highways

The resurfacing of Aspenden Road was completed in August, with the works taking place overnight. We would recommend residents continue to report pot holes, broken surfaces etc. through the East Herts website: <https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/highways-parking/report-street-light-or-pothole>

#### 4. REPORT FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR TERRY SMITH

Councillor Smith was not present at this meeting.

#### 5. REPORT FROM DISTRICT COUNCILLOR SUE NICHOLLS

##### UKSPF money for financial year 2025/26

A final round of UKSP funding is available for the next financial year but this time with about half of the total amount being available – about £580K.

The 2025/26 grants can be used to fund existing projects but it is worth bearing mind that this year there is a different focus on the types of funding categories available – these were agreed at the East Herts Overview and Scrutiny Committee and are set to be approved at Full Council on Wednesday 14 May.

The focus for spending this year is going to be:

Business support and infrastructure (focusing on business support programmes, town centres, skills and employment)

Arts in East Herts (continuing the legacy of the previous scheme)-

Community facilities

Sustainability (focusing on air quality, carbon reduction, active travel and energy efficiency)

You can read more about UKSPF allocation in the agenda pack for the May full council meeting this Wednesday.

It is definitely worth the parish council applying for further funding of existing or new projects that you have planned and local residents who also might be eligible for local business support.

There has been no information from central government about what sort of grant funding will be available in the future and of course there is still much uncertainty going forward in relation to how devolution will affect local town and parish councils. So, I would recommend applying for funding if you have any projects in mind.

##### Planning News

No news on the Hallam 600 homes Planning Application

The appeal for the planning application for 68 houses on land off London Road/Owles Lane Appeal was successful.

##### New East and North Herts Waste Contract

Veolia have now taken over the new waste contract in East and North Herts. Residents will have received an information leaflet in the post with their council tax bill which explains which bins there will be and how often they will be collected. The plan (subject to confirmation) is for the new waste containers – the food caddy and purple lidded residual waste bin - will be delivered to homes in East Herts in June ready for the new collection service to begin in August. More information will be sent out nearer the time and two stickers are also being sent out residents to help people get to the new collection cycle.

##### Swimming Pool update

I was at an online meeting held a couple of weeks ago in which local East Herts councillors, executive members and officers and the pool group met with Herts County Council officers to get an update on the future of the swimming pool. There has still been no decision made by Herts County Council on whether to grant the pool group a lease. County Officers are looking to make a decision soon as there are cost implications involved in moth balling the pool. Ultimately it will be the responsibility of County Council members of the resources committee to vote on whether to allow the transfer of the lease to the pool group. In the meantime, Sport England have awarded the group £15K of match funding and the pool group would be eligible to apply for a further large sum (£130K) from this year's UKSPF money that has been allocated to community projects if a lease is in place by later this year.

#### 6. REPORT FROM HERTFORDSHIRE POLICE

The police were not present but PCSO Glen Stanway had submitted the police monthly crime report the Parish Council.

**7. REPORTS FROM VILLAGE ORGANISATIONS**

The Village Organisations submitted reports which are published as an Appendix to the Minutes.

**8. OPEN SESSION**

There being no questions or further business the Annual Parish Meeting closed at 7.25pm.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_