

The Annual Parish Assembly of the North Weald Bassett Parish Council, was held on Monday, 23rd March 2015, in the Parish Hall, Weald Hall Lane, Thornwood Common at 7.00pm.

ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY MINUTES

Parish Council Members Present: Councillor Cyril Hawkins – Chairman
Councillor Brian Eldridge – Vice Chairman

Councillors: B Bartram, N Bedford, T Blanks, A Buckley, B Clegg, Mrs E Godwin-Brown, G Mulliner, R Spearman, Mrs A Grigg (who is also a District Cllr), D Stallan (who is also a District Cllr)

Apologies received from: Councillor Collins, Essex County Councillor A Jackson, District Councillor R Morgan

District Councillors Present: C Whitbread, W Breare-Hall
Essex County Councillor Present: J Whitehouse

Public: Thirty Nine Members of the Public present.
Press: One
Police: None Present

In Attendance: Susan De Luca – Clerk to the Council
Adriana Jones, Jo Tyler

The Chairman welcomed Members of the Public to the Annual Parish Assembly.

1. Introduction of Councillors

The Chairman introduced all Parish and District and County Councillors who were in attendance.

2. Minutes

The Minutes of the 2014 Annual Parish Assembly were circulated. All those present **AGREED** that the minutes be approved as a true record and were duly signed by the Chairman.

3. To consider any matters arising from the last meeting.

A member of the public referred to item number 7 and asked if there had been any further developments with regard to New Hall Lane. The Clerk stated that the Parish Council had not received any updates on this matter. The Leader of Epping Forest District Council, Cllr Whitbread, stated that he would look into this and report back to the Clerk.

4. To receive a report on the Council's activities from:

The Chairman of the Council: Councillor Cyril Hawkins

The Chairman addressed those present and stated that he had decided to have a change from the usual format, whereby a written report would be circulated.

The Chairman reported:-

That he believes the Parish Council year starts when the Budget/Precept is agreed. Remembrance Sunday Events follow that and in 2014 the Norwegians were able to attend. Last year we were blessed with great weather, there were 100 people present at the church service and 400 present at the Debt of Honour. A total of 90 people attended the community luncheon in North Weald Village Hall. Also a service was held to mark the 100th Anniversary of WWI when, together with the Royal British Legion, RAFA and Parish Council, we had a great turn out at the church, followed by 60 people attending the Parish Hall for refreshments.

Parish Councillors donated money to a Christmas Party at Norway House, which was attended by Cllr Mulliner and Derek Tringham, as Father Christmas. The same day as the party, Councillors were invited to attend St Andrews Primary School for a carol concert, "A Silent Night".

When it comes to things achieved this year, it was the play area that was completed with the North Weald Mums. The car park at the Parish Hall was completed much quicker than anticipated, with donations from the Thornwood Seniors, Thornwood Festival, Elaine Davis, who organised a quiz night and grant funding from Essex County Council.

The Chairman thanked The Parish Council's Environmental Committee, which is headed up by Cllr Mulliner, who has done a great job over the past year. The Committee looks after three play areas, the cemetery, allotments and assets including bus shelters, benches, etc.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Eldridge, who is Vice-Chairman of the Parish Council and Chairman of the Planning Committee.

The Chairman thanked all of the Councillors, stating that their attendance has been second to none. He reported that there were two on-going planning issues, with members attending meetings on a regular basis.

The Chairman thanked the Clerk and stated that she had done an extremely good job gaining in excess of £300,000 in grant monies over the years. He thanked Adriana Jones, the Principal Finance and Administrative Officer for her work on planning issues and Jo Tyler for assisting members of the public when they visit the Library. He stated that the staff make a real effort with, on average, 300 visitors to the Library on a monthly basis.

The Chairman also thanked Janet Abbott, the Parish Hall's Booking Secretary and Mr and Mrs Hebden, the hall's caretakers.

The Chairman expressed his thanks to the Royal British Legion and North Weald Village Hall for all their assistance to the Parish Council this year – a spirit of cooperation always helps.

The Chairman stated that he believes that the next term will be totally different, what with the Neighbourhood Plan and threats from housing and he is very much looking forward to next year.

5. To receive a report from District Councillors

Councillor Mrs Grigg, representing North Weald thanked the Chairman and stated that it was very good to see the number of people present as, in the past, there have not been many. Cllr Mrs Grigg stated that she was a District Councillor and also Assets and Economic Development Portfolio Holder. Cllr Mrs Grigg mentioned the proposed shopping park at Langston Road in Loughton and Development that is proposed to be taking place in Chigwell Lane. With regard to North Weald Airfield, an Aviation Manager is to be appointed to manage activities there. There will be targets and the manager will have responsibility for producing a business plan. A promotional brochure is being prepared, marketing will commence shortly. In addition, the District Council would like to increase flying on the airfield. The CAA no longer require airfields to be licensed for pilots training and the CAA have agreed that that can take place at North Weald Airfield.

Cllr Mrs Grigg reported that the District Council is very keen to support twin centre partnerships and stated that £35,000 of funding is available again. This year they are also looking to include larger parish councils, which could include North Weald, Nazeing and Chigwell, bids will be looked for. Cllr Mrs Grigg stated that she is pleased to report that her family have been able to use the play equipment at Thornwood, adding that, unfortunately, the Weald Common play area was closed due to graffiti and vandalism.

Councillor Stallan, representing North Weald stated that he was a District Councillor and, in addition to normal ward issues that he has been asked to deal with, is also Housing Portfolio Holder. Last year he was very pleased to report that Queens Road would finally get off-street parking and that that had now been completed. A request from local residents to Cllr Mrs Grigg for off-street parking in Watermans Way has been received, however, this is subject to residents support and planning approval.

Cllr Stallan referred to the first phase of the Council House Building Programme in Waltham Abbey and advised that the first flats would be completed in 2015/16. He stated that, since then, the Cabinet had been looking at sites across the district, including two in North Weald. Due to the fact that they are receiving funding they are moving forward at a quicker pace as the funding must be spent within a certain timescale or it will have to be given back to DCLG. Sites will be subject to normal planning permission. He hoped to tell those present about that next year.

Councillor Whitbread representing Thornwood, is also Leader of Epping Forest District Council, reported that council tax had been frozen again this year. One of the most important things is the Local Plan. He explained that the reason that it has been delayed is because they want to get it right. Their objective is to end up with a Local Plan which fits in with the area/residents. New builds should be focussed across the area and not just in one area. They are currently carrying out a full Green Belt review, they will be talking to the Towns and Parishes. At the end of the day he wants to make sure they do not end up with more than one house then we have to. Cllr Whitbread thanked his officers and said that there was a lot of good work going on. They have a duty to cooperate and have to look at where is appropriate and where is not appropriate.

Councillor Breare-Hall, representing Thornwood, is also Environment Portfolio Holder, reported that BIFfA have taken over from SITA. Epping Forest is now one of the top ten in the country for recycling. In May changes are being introduced, clothes, batteries and small electrical items may be left out for doorstep recycling.

6. To receive a report from County Councillors (if available)

A copy of a report received from County Councillor Anthony Jackson was circulated.

County Councillor Whitehouse, representing Epping, Theydon Bois and Thornwood, stated that as County Councillor Anthony Jackson had given a report on County issues, he would report on local issues. He reported that he was disappointed to see that the bus shelter is still not in place, it was linked in with the planning application for Popplewell's. One of the major issues is Highways, he encouraged people to report potholes and reported that some of the roads are only inspected once a year. Education is the biggest spend area in Essex County Council. Some local primary schools have been expanded due to the number of 2/3/4 and 5 year olds and they will be looking to see where they can expand further. Councillor Whitehouse mentioned social care for the elderly and stated that he was amazed that it does not come up more often. There is a new care act which will come in to force in April, which will give new rights to carers. There are concerns with the type of care and who actually measures the quality of the care given. Councillor Whitehouse urged people to get in touch with him.

7. Neighbourhood Plan

The Chairman invited Adriana Jones to give a brief summary of what the development of a Neighbourhood Plan entails. Adriana explained that the Parish Council had taken the first step towards the creation of a Neighbourhood Plan which would allow residents of North Weald Bassett to control, to a certain degree, how their future will be. Adriana added that, the Parish Council are doing what they can to ensure that what it is doing is right for its residents. Residents will be contacted on a wide range of subjects and the Parish Council would encourage them to respond.

8. New Press Officer

The Chairman announced that David Jackman had been appointed as the Parish Council's new Press Officer. Residents can sign up to receive press releases.

9. To receive questions from the public concerning matters over which the Parish Council has control or some influence.

Mr David Lodge of the North Weald Preservation Society reported that all of the forest roads around Epping Forest, except Lower Forest (North Weald to Epping Road and Thornwood to Epping Road) have had speed reductions lowered to 40mph. He stated that he had been in touch with the Verderer, Michael Chapman, who is pursuing the matter. The speed limit has not been reduced and he understands that the problem is with Essex County Council. There are deer being killed and there are badgers being killed, there are problems with traffic coming out of the junction at Coopersale. Essex County Councillor Jon Whitehouse is to investigate the matter further.

10. Presentation of Citizen of the Year Awards:

This year the Citizen of the Year Awarding Committee decided to make some changes to the categories and create four new categories. The Chairman presented the following awards:-

'Going that Extra Mile Award'

This was jointly awarded to Stephon Brown, who is our local Road Sweeping Operative and Chester Stuart, who is a local Postman.

'Individual Award for Voluntary Services to the Community'

This was jointly awarded to Margaret Mulliner, a local North Weald Resident and Elaine Davis, a local Thornwood Common Resident.

'Group Award for Protecting the Environment'

This was presented to North Weald Bassett Preservation Society.

'Group Award for Providing a Service within the Community'

This was presented to North Weald Library Knit Lit Group.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and invited those present to join him and enjoy some refreshments.

The meeting was closed at 7.50pm