



DRAFT

MINUTES

Meeting: ENVIRONMENTAL
COMMITTEE

Date: 1st June 2016

Time: 10.30 am

Venue: NORTH WEALD LIBRARY, HIGH ROAD, NORTH WEALD

PRESENT:

Councillors (6) G Mulliner (Chairman), C Hawkins, B Bartram, A Buckley, B Eldridge
R Spearman*

Also in Attendance (3)

Susan De Luca, Clerk*

Adriana Jones, Principal Finance Officer (PFO)

*For part of meeting

Members of the Public (0)

E16.01 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Cllr Eldridge **PROPOSED** Cllr Mulliner as Chairman for this Committee. This was **SECONDED** by Cllr Hawkins. There being no other nominations Cllr Mulliner was duly elected as Chairman of the Environmental Committee for this municipal year.

E16.02 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

Cllr Hawkins **PROPOSED** Cllr Buckley as Vice Chairman for this Committee. This was **SECONDED** by Cllr Eldridge. There being no other nominations Cllr Buckley was duly elected as Vice-Chairman of the Environmental Committee for this municipal year.

E16.03 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Clegg and Cllr Godwin-Brown.

E16.04 OTHER ABSENCES

No other absences were recorded.

E16.05 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

NOTED there were no declarations of interest.

E16.06 MINUTES

Members **APPROVED** the minutes of the meeting held on 3rd February 2016. Cllr Mulliner took this opportunity to congratulate Cllr Buckley on the completion of the Garden Project outside the shops in North Weald, stating that it had taken quite some time but that Cllr Buckley had stuck with the project from start to finish.

E16.07 PLAY AREA INSPECTIONS

The PFO confirmed that weekly inspections continue to take place, unless the weather has been so poor that a weekly inspection isn't deemed necessary. The Parish Councils grounds maintenance contractor completes checks at the end of each month, and the report submitted to the Parish Council for consideration and action. Any

urgent works are completed, the latest being the repair of the Thornwood Multiplay Unit which had sustained a manufacturing fault, and as such the manufacturer had attended site to weld the equipment.

E16.08 ALLOTMENTS

a) Hastingwood B Allotment Site

Cllr Hawkins stated that there were 9 plots on the Hastingwood B site, 5 of which were leased by two allotment tenants, however neither of these were being worked. The Parish Council is aware of the reasons why two aren't being worked. Cllr Hawkins stated that there were two disused chicken coops on the site, and that the site had fallen into a relatively poor state which would only get worse over the coming year, suggesting that the two plot holders should be asked to move to the A site, with the B site being 'flattened' and made to a state that could be easily maintained. The Clerk confirmed she had spoken with one of the tenants (the allotment warden) who stated that she would be unable to work her plots this year, but that she would try and ask a family member to visit site and remove the chicken coops. The PFO reminded members that these two plot holders had paid their fees for the 2016/2017 year, and as such an suggested move should be handled sensitively. Cllr Hawkins suggested that if needed, a skip could be hired and the site cleared. Cllr Mulliner asked if there were funds available out of the Grounds Maintenance budget, to which the PFO confirmed there was, and that most of their funds were spent on rat poison. Councillors **AGREED** that the PFO should contact the tenants again, asking if they were prepared to accept the possibility of moving to site A, and to chase whether or not the chicken coops had been removed.

b) Allotment sub-committee update

Cllr Hawkins asked for clarification in terms of whether or not barbed wire could be used to replace the leaning fence at the rear of Queens Road Allotments. The PFO stated that the Clerk had looked into this, and it would not be appropriate to use Barbed Wire for a perimeter fence for an allotment site. This has been checked with the insurance company. Cllr Mulliner suggested that the fence should be removed and replaced with Palisade fencing, however this was met with some concern that this would be extremely costly, and would result in further requests being received from other tenants for other areas at both this and other sites. Cllr Mulliner stated that this could be a rolling program of replacement perhaps over a 10 year period - a maintenance plan. This PFO confirmed this would be acceptable. The PFO stated that although the fence is leaning, it has been tested and is absolutely solid in the ground with no movement being seen at all. It was suggested that rather than replace with fencing, nature's own fencing could be used in the form of either Blackberry bushes (with thorns) or Pyracantha. After discussion, it was **AGREED** that Councillors would visit the Queens Road site, measure the length of works needed, and purchase the appropriate number of blackberry bushes along the said length. Once the blackberry bushes are established (which should not take more than 1 year) the fence should be removed.

E16.09 WEALD COMMON - REQUEST FROM MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC TO INSTALL OUTDOOR GYM EQUIPMENT ON OLD PLAY AREA SITE

Attached to the agenda was a copy of the draft minute of the 9th May Parish Council meeting relating to the address given by Mr McDaniels regarding the possibility of outdoor gym equipment being installed at a location in the Parish. It was agreed by the Parish Council to accept this possibility in principal, but that it should be passed to the Environmental Committee to consider in more detail. The Clerk stated that she was expecting the local resident to have come back to her before this meeting, however nothing had been received as yet. In terms of suitable locations, the Clerk suggested that the Weald Common location may not be appropriate due to the extremely wet ground for around 6 months of the year, and that a more suitable location could be the open space being considered as part of the EFDC Hub application on Blenheim Way. The Clerk stated that obviously as the Parish Council had objected to this application, this is not something that could be pursued as yet, and also reminded Councillors that she had specifically stated that no section 106 had been suggested as part of any permission granted, and that perhaps this could be an option. Cllr Hawkins stated that he too felt the Weald Common site was not appropriate, as people from both within and outside the Parish may want to use the equipment, and would end up parking at the North Weald Village Hall location, and that this would cause even more congestion at an already overloaded area. Councillors **AGREED** that the Clerk should pursue the Blenheim Way possibility as a suitable location, if the planning application is passed by EFDC, and contact Mr McDaniels asking if he had any further information he would like to be considered at this stage.

Cllr Bartram confirmed that any application for such equipment to be located on the Queens Hall land would need to be directed to the Queens Hall Charity for consideration.

E16.10 NORTH WEALD SIGN

Members noted that a resident has stated that if the Parish Council were willing to provide a wooden planter at the base of the North Weald Sign in the High Road as you enter from the Talbot roundabout, she would be willing to arrange for planting of flowering shrubs and the maintenance of this planter. Councillors asked for clarification as to what sign this relates to in terms of the exact location, however **AGREED** in principal to fund the creation of a wooden planter up to the cost of £100. It was **NOTED** that permission would need to be sought from Essex County Council highways for this work.

E16.11 ANNUAL VISIT TO CEMETERY

a) Markers

The Clerk confirmed to Councillors that the new Section and Row markers had been created, showing Councillors an example of each. It was **NOTED** these would be installed in the cemetery later this month. The Section markers would be placed in two of the older boulders, and the row markers simply inserted into the ground.

b) Grave paraphernalia

The Clerk stated that a complaint had been received from the owner of a Cremated Remains plot stating that the small cage he has over the plot keeps being removed by the grounds maintenance staff, requesting this is being replaced after cutting. The grounds maintenance staff stated that it is not removed by them, however a further phone call was received by another grave owner complaining about the cage, and as such Members considered whether the other grave owner could be responsible. The Clerk had advised the grave owner that although the Parish Council has to date been flexible in terms of what is allowed to remain on graves, there are clear rules within the cemetery rules and regulations which state what is / is not permitted. It is accepted this is quite a sensitive issue, however it was made clear to the grave owner that the Parish Council can invoke the rules at any time. This was understood by the owner. The Clerk also confirmed to up to date Cemetery rules and regulations were displayed on the Cemetery notice board.

c) Storage Box for Boulders

Members **NOTED** that the plastic box used to house the cemetery boulders has collapsed, and a suggestion has been made that a more appropriate flat storage unit should be created. It was **AGREED** that Councillors would visit the Cemetery and review what was needed.

d) General Cemetery

The question was raised as to if there were any plans for the area to the rear of the cemetery where it was originally suggested a bridge should be placed. The Clerk confirmed there were no current plans, however that's not to say something couldn't be decided in the future.

The Clerk stated that in the near future a decision would need to be made in terms of whether or not a central focal point would be created in Section 2 of the burial area. Members recalled that at a previous Budget/Precept meeting it was decided not to move forward with a stone memorial tree.

E16.12 CONSULTATION PROGRAM - PROPOSED GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE FRAMEWORK FOR THE EPPING FOREST DISTRICT

Councillors **NOTED** the correspondence that had been received from Mr C Neilan, Landscape Officer & Arboriculturist, EFDC, as attached to the agenda regarding the above consultation program. Councillors were not entirely clear in terms of what this would entail, and it was **AGREED** that as the PFO was attending on behalf of another Council, she would attend to establish what it was regarding and report back. Councillors **NOTED** they should contact the Clerk if they would also like to attend.

Meeting closed: 11.10am

Signed

Date