



MINUTES

Meeting: ENVIRONMENTAL
COMMITTEE

Date: 18 March 2015

Time: 10.30 am

Venue: NORTH WEALD LIBRARY, HIGH ROAD, NORTH WEALD

PRESENT:

Councillors (6) G Mulliner (Chairman), C Hawkins, B Eldridge, B Bartram, B Clegg,
Mrs E Godwin-Brown

Also in Attendance (3)

Susan De Luca, Clerk to the Council
Joanna Tyler, Senior Administrative Officer

Members of the Public (0)

E14.48 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (1)

NOTED apologies received from Cllr A Buckley

E14.49 OTHER ABSENCES (0)

E14.50 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Mulliner declared an interest in item no. 6.

E14.51 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 21 January 2015 were **CONFIRMED** and signed as a true record.

E14.52 PLAY AREAS

The Chairman of this Committee reported that the field surrounding the two play areas at Weald Common was still muddy and the problem had been made worse by quad bikes being driven on to the field. Members **NOTED** that the new play area was currently closed to the public following a second spate of vandalism. The Parish Council's maintenance contractor had removed the shattered glass from the safer surfacing and the grass areas within the play area. Following discussion, Members **AGREED** that the play area should be re-opened as soon as possible and the Chairman confirmed that he would inspect the play area on a daily basis.

E14.53 PATHWAY AT WEALD COMMON WORKING GROUP

At the Parish Council Meeting on Monday, 2 March 2015, Councillors agreed that a Working Group should be set up to discuss the pathway at Weald Common. It was suggested that the Working Group comprise of three Members of the Parish Council and three members of North Weald Village Hall Committee, together with a member of staff from the Parish Council to assist with administration. The Chairman asked why a member of the Parish Council's staff was required to carry out the administration and whether the Village Hall should also have a member present to assist with administration. The Clerk stated that this was a Parish Council Working

Group and not a Village Hall Working Group, therefore minutes of meetings would need to be taken. The Clerk distributed a copy of the Terms of Reference for the Working Group. The Chairman referred to item no. 3 “*The 3 Members of the Parish Council should have no affiliation to the Village Hall, and the 3 Members of the Village Hall should have no affiliation to the Parish Council, thereby keeping an impartiality*”. He asked the Clerk why it would not be possible for him to sit on the Working Group if the Village Hall Members do not have an issue with him being part of it. The Clerk stated that there should be no conflict of interest. The Chairman stated that the Working Group would not take place if he is unable to sit on the working group. He felt that if the Village Hall trustees are not worried about him sitting on the Working Group he should be allowed to. The Clerk stated that she would write to the Epping Forest District Council Monitoring Officer regarding the correct procedure and whether it would be appropriate for someone to sit on the Working Group “wearing two hats”. The Chairman stated that he had already written to the Monitoring Officer regarding this and was awaiting a reply. The Clerk stated that she wanted to ensure that this was the correct way of doing it.

Councillor Hawkins stated that he was of the opinion that the path should be taken up and the money that has been put aside used to put the path on the Parish Council’s land only to the two play areas.

The Chairman stated that the reason the Village Hall trustees wanted the path removed is because the willow tree is fragile and they do not want members of the public walking underneath it. The Clerk showed Members a photograph which depicted the willow tree and a clearly drawn line (with hand written comments) showing where the footpath would be. This had been drawn by Cllr Collins when he was Chairman of the Parish Council’s Open Spaces Committee. The Clerk informed Members that she had also spoken to the Chairman of North Weald Village Hall at that time.

Following lengthy discussion, Members **AGREED** that the path would be removed, due to Health and Safety issues, as soon as possible. If a Working Group is established in the future, then Members of the Parish Council would be able to make a request for funding for a path at the precept meeting for 2016/17.

E14.54 ALLOTMENT SUB-COMMITTEE

Members **NOTED** that the cable work had now been carried out at Queens Road Allotment site, however, there is further work to be completed. Four plots require cultivation. Possible compensation was discussed.

- a) Allotment Wardens
 - i) Hastingwood A

Members **AGREED** that the Allotment Sub-Committee would continue to carry out the role of warden for the forthcoming year.

- ii) Thornwood
Members **NOTED** that the Parish Council had been advised that Mr Montgomery would not be carrying out the role of allotment warden for the forthcoming year. Members **AGREED** that nominations for the role of warden should be asked for at the Annual Allotment Meeting. If no nominations are received, then the Allotment Sub-Committee would take on the role for 2015/16.
- b) Allotment Fees
Following discussion, Members **AGREED** that allotment fees for 2016/17 should be increased by 10%, rounded up to the nearest £1. Members **NOTED** that the Parish Council is required to give 12 months notice of any increase.
- c) Annual Allotment Meeting
Members **NOTED** that the Annual Meeting of Allotment Holders is scheduled to take place on Sunday, 22nd March 2015, 9.30am for 10am start, at the Parish Hall, Thornwood Common.
- d) Bonfires
Members **NOTED** that a request had been received from an allotment tenant on Hastingwood A site regarding extending the period currently granted for the lighting of bonfires. The Code of Practice currently states that "*bonfires may not be lit, under any circumstances, during the period 1st April to 31st October inclusive, out of consideration for other tenants and nearby residents*". Following discussion, Members **AGREED** that there would be no change to extending the period currently granted for the lighting of bonfires.

E14.55 CEMETERY

- a) Increase in Cemetery Fees
Following discussion, Members **AGREED** that cemetery fees for 2015/16 should be increased by 10%, rounded up to the nearest £1. Members **NOTED** that the Clerk had received notification from Granart Memorials of an increase in their prices with effect from 1 April 2015.
- b) Installation of Sleeper Bridge
The Clerk advised that she had spoken to Kevin Mason of Epping Forest Countrycare regarding the possibility of installing a sleeper bridge to link the cemetery to the plot of land adjacent to St Andrews Churchyard. Kevin had visited the site and reported that he would not be able to install a two sleeper bridge with handrail, a metal or concrete bridge would be necessary. The Clerk would contact the two companies that she had been given details of to see if they had anything that might be suitable. It was noted that permission may be needed from the Environment Agency – the Clerk would speak to Chris Camp with regard to this.
Kevin Mason from Countrycare had advised that he would be able to clear the area of land that the Parish Council has which is designated as additional land for

burials adjacent to St Andrews Churchyard. The Clerk advised Members that this area was cleared about 4 years ago and does need clearing again.

E14.56 GREEN OUTSIDE PARADE OF SHOPS

The Clerk read out a report received from Cllr Buckley and distributed photographs depicting how the green could look. The Clerk advised that she would now be able to send the photographs to Essex County Council Highways, however, it was noted that BT had still not responded to a previous enquiry. The Clerk advised that this matter would now be given Priority 1 status and that, once approval has been received, the Parish Council may be able to apply for grant funding under the Essex County Council's Community Initiatives Fund.

E14.57 OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

The Chairman reported that bags containing dog faeces had been discarded along the footpath behind the allotments at Wheelers Farm Gardens and said he recalled that arrangements had been made previously to have the bags picked up. The Clerk advised that she would contact TBS Hygiene regarding this.

Meeting closed: 11.45am

Signed
Date