



MINUTES

Meeting: ENVIRONMENTAL
COMMITTEE

Date: 18th January 2017

Time: 10.30 am

Venue: NORTH WEALD LIBRARY, HIGH ROAD, NORTH WEALD

PRESENT:

Councillors (6) G Mulliner (Chairman), C Hawkins, A Buckley, Mrs S Jackman MBE,
B Eldridge, B Bartram

Also in Attendance (2)

Susan De Luca, Clerk

Joanna Tyler, Senior Administrative Officer

Members of the Public (0)

E16.39 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – None received.

E16.40 OTHER ABSENCES – None recorded.

E16.41 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

NOTED there were no declarations of interest.

E16.42 MINUTES

Members *APPROVED* the minutes of the meeting held on 9 November 2016.

E16.43 PLAY AREAS

As part of the 2016/17 budget, it was agreed that a seat would be purchased for School Green Play Area. Members noted that the seat was now ready for installation and the Committee were asked to agree a suitable location. Following discussion, Members *AGREED* that the seat should be sited on the concrete paving slabs situated near to the permanently locked entrance gate. Should the entrance need to be used in the future, the location of the seat would not interfere with the opening/closing of the gate.

E16.44 WEALD COMMON BRIDGE

The Committee *NOTED* that the Clerk had received correspondence from Epping Forest Countrycare confirming that the handrail on the bridge had been repaired. Members *NOTED* the comments made by Kevin Mason, Countryside Assistant, who reported that “*one of the Councillors out walking his dog stopped to thank us and mentioned the steps which need looking at again*”. Kevin had stated that he would inspect the steps and would advise what could be done to make them safe.

The Chairman of this Committee advised Members that the steps were in a very bad state and may need to be replaced, rather than repaired. The soil had eroded, causing a trip hazard. Cllr Hawkins advised that the Parish Council paid to have the steps installed by Countrycare. The Clerk confirmed this and advised that it is the Parish Council’s responsibility to pay for any repairs/maintenance to the steps. Following discussion, the Clerk suggested that she could contact Countrycare and ask them to

have a look at the steps and advise the best course of action, ie., could the steps be repaired, or do they need to be replaced and also to ask them to quote for installing a handrail at the side of the steps. The Clerk also suggested that she could ask Kevin Mason if he would be able to meet with Committee Members at the site. All Members **AGREED**.

The Clerk advised Members that she had received an email from Epping Forest Countrycare regarding widening the gateway at the entrance to the Thornwood Common Nature Reserve, leading from the far end of the allotments. Countrycare have suggested replacing the existing gate with a 12ft one, there would need to be some construction work carried out on the fence surrounding the allotment site by the water trough, this would be carried out at no extra cost to the Parish Council. Countrycare would like to undertake this work during the Spring, as part of the normal maintenance agreement for the Nature Reserve, they have also offered to remove a small fallen tree which is near to the compost bin. The Clerk expressed a concern that if the gateway was widened, gypsies and travellers may try to access the site. Cllr Hawkins stated that they would need to gain access via the entrance from the hall, which would not be wide enough. Members **AGREED** that Epping Forest Countrycare could undertake the proposed work.

E16.45 CEMETERY

a) Increase in Cemetery Fees

The Committee discussed, at length, whether or not to increase the cemetery fees for the forthcoming year. Members noted that, last year, it had been agreed that there would be no increase in fees for 2016/17. Cllr Hawkins stated that he was concerned that if the fees were not increased for 2017/18, the cemetery may not be maintained to the standard that it is currently, adding that the contractors had not advised if they would be increasing their fees. Cllr Hawkins **PROPOSED** a 5% increase, this was **SECONDED** by Cllr Buckley, all Members **AGREED**.

Cllr Hawkins mentioned that the purchase of a storage unit to house the memorial boulders had previously been discussed. The Clerk stated that Kevin Hebden had quoted for building a storage bin and that she would discuss this in further detail with Cllr Hawkins.

- b)** The Clerk reminded Members of the discussion that took place at the previous Committee Meeting regarding the placing of plastic flowers, ornaments, etc., on graves. The Clerk stated that she had contacted Tim Morris, Chief Executive of the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management, to ask his opinion with regard to removing items. The Clerk read out an email response, which stated that owners of the graves would need to be consulted, notices would need to be placed in the cemetery. A notice period would need to be given for the removal of items and if this was not complied with the Parish Council would have to arrange for the removal and secure storage of the items, all of which would need to be clearly labelled.

The Clerk expressed her concern that if the Committee decided to take this course of action, she would be unhappy to write to grave owners as the Clerk to the

Council as they may find it necessary to contact the newspapers. The Clerk stated that if Members of this Committee agree that letters should be sent, the letters should be signed by the Environmental Committee. The Clerk recommended that the Committee visit the cemetery to look at the specific graves that they wish to target. The Chairman of this Committee stated that there had been no other complaints regarding the items. The Clerk stated that there had been one complaint from a lady complaining about items on graves and one complaint about a metal cage in the cremated remains area. Cllr Buckley asked if it is made clear to people when they purchase a grave, what can and cannot be placed there. The Clerk advised that when a plot is purchased, a copy of the Cemetery Rules and Regulations is given to the owner, however, it is the responsibility of the owner to read the document. Cllr Buckley recommended that the Committee visit the cemetery to have a look at the graves.

The Chairman of this Committee stated that the Committee should approach the matter sensitively and not enforce people to remove items. Cllr Bartram suggested that the Committee could say that the items should be removed as they could be damaged during grass cutting. Cllr Eldridge recommended having a time limit, suggesting that items should be removed after two or three months. Cllr Hawkins stated that it was his belief that if there is a rule in place regarding these items, the owners should adhere to the rules and the Committee should enforce them. Following lengthy discussion, the Clerk recommended that the Committee visit the cemetery following the meeting and then make a decision as to what action they wish to take afterwards. All Members **AGREED**.

- c) The Clerk reminded Members of the discussion which took place at the previous Committee Meeting regarding the issue of non payment for one of the burial plots, despite numerous correspondence. The Clerk advised that she had spoken to the Parish Council's auditor regarding this matter and that she had also emailed Tim Morris, reading out his response. The Clerk stated that the auditor had said that the plot could be retained and used as a communal plot, or the Parish Council could forfeit the cost of the plot. Cllr Buckley suggested that a final letter could be sent stating that the plot in question would be converted to a communal plot if payment is not received, adding that this course of action had been taken on the advice of the Parish Council's auditor. All Members **AGREED**.

E16.46 COMPLAINT FROM MR RAMSEY AND RESPONSE FROM COUNCILLOR NIGEL BEDFORD REGARDING THE DEBT OF HONOUR MEMORIAL

Attached to the Agenda, for Members perusal, was the following:-

- Extract from the Draft Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday, 5 December 2016.
- Copy of a letter received from Mrs Ramsey, dated 28 December 2016, together with copies of emails.
- Copy of letter received from Mr Ramsey, dated January 2017, together with copies of emails.

Members **NOTED** that the Clerk was in receipt of a letter from Mr G Chipp, Chief Executive, Epping Forest District Council, confirming receipt of the Clerk's letter dated 19 December 2016, together with a copy of the original complaint letter from

Mr Ramsey, advising that the contents of which were being considered.

The Chairman of the Committee asked the Clerk to brief the Committee on the contents of the correspondence received. The Clerk advised that Members had been provided with all of the paperwork. The Clerk stated that the Parish Council had no responsibility with regard to the Memorial, the only responsibility the Parish Council has is to cut the grass surrounding it. The Chairman asked the Clerk if the Parish Council had to apply for use of the Memorial with regard to the Wreath Laying Service, to which she replied no. The Chairman asked Members of the Committee how the Parish Council should move forward with this matter, in relation to the service later in the year. Cllr Hawkins stated that we should not send out a letter inviting people to attend the Wreath Laying event, unless a structural survey report had been carried out on the memorial. Cllr Buckley asked if there was an alternative venue that could be used. Cllr Hawkins stated that the entrance to the airfield, by the plane, could be used. The Chairman stated that the Norwegians would still wish to lay a wreath at the Norwegian Memorial. Cllr Mrs Jackman MBE asked if the Parish Council had any rights to ask anyone to carry out a survey. Cllr Hawkins stated that Mr Ramsey should be organising a survey.

The Clerk stated that the Parish Council is not saying that the memorial is unsafe, salt was put down to prevent people from slipping on the verdigris on the paving slabs, adding that it was Mr Ramsey who had stated that the memorial was unsafe in his correspondence. The Clerk advised that she had sent a copy of all of the correspondence, other than the letter from Mrs Ramsey, to Glenn Chipp. The Clerk had advised Mr Ramsey to contact Glenn Chipp. Cllr Buckley stated that he believed the Committee should seriously consider looking at changing the venue until it is confirmed that the memorial is safe.

The Clerk stated that she did not believe that this was the right way forward and that her advice would be to write to Glenn Chipp, thanking him for his acknowledgement and asking him to advise the Parish Council what action would be taken going forward. The Clerk stated that she would mention that the Remembrance Sunday Service was held at the memorial every year and that unless the matter was resolved quickly, the Parish Council would have to look at another venue. Cllr Mrs Jackman MBE stated that there are two separate issues, the maintenance of the memorial and the tree, adding that the verdigris is the responsibility of the trustees. Cllr Hawkins stated that an event cannot take place at the memorial if the verdigris is not cleaned up.

Cllr Buckley recommended that the Clerk write to Epping Forest District Council stating that unless the issue is resolved the Parish Council would be unable to hold the wreath laying event at the memorial later in the year and would have to find an alternative venue. Cllr Buckley stated that the trustee should also be copied in to the same letter. The Clerk confirmed that she would write to Glenn Chipp following the meeting. All Members **AGREED**.

E16.47 ALLOTMENTS

a) Annual Meeting of Allotment Holders

Members **NOTED** that the Annual Meeting of Allotment Holders is to be held on Sunday, 19th March 2017, the date of which had been confirmed by the Chairman of this Committee. Members **AGREED** that the meeting will commence at 10am, with allotment holders permitted to attend from 9.30am to pay fees. Cllr Hawkins confirmed that he would make arrangements for refreshments to be provided.

b) Allotment Fees

Members **NOTED** that in March 2016 an increase of 10% had been agreed for 2017/18 and were reminded that the Parish Council is required to give 12 months notice of any increase. Following discussion, Members of this Committee **AGREED** that an increase of 10% (rounded to the nearest £1) would be made for 2018/19. The **AGREED** allotment fees for 2018/19 are:-

- Under 50sqm = Extra Small £23.00
- Between 51sqm & 100sqm = Small £25.00
- Between 101sqm & 150sqm = Average £26.00
- Between 151sqm & 200sqm = Large £30.00
- Over 201sqm = Extra Large £32.00

c) Allotment Warden – Hastingwood A

Following discussion, Members of the Committee **AGREED** that the Allotment Sub-Committee would continue to carry out the role of allotment warden at Hastingwood A for the forthcoming year, visiting the site on a monthly basis.

The Clerk reminded Members that works were shortly due to commence at the Queens Road garages site and that allotment holders would only be able to access the Queens Road allotment site via the footpath. No parking facilities would be made available to them. The Clerk advised that letters would be sent to Queens Road allotment holders later in the week.

Councillor Buckley reported that 150 winter pansies had been planted in the garden area outside the parade of shops in North Weald. He asked that his thanks be recorded to Cllr Mulliner and Mrs Mulliner and to Mrs Buckley for volunteering to assist with the planting. He also asked for thanks to be recorded to Cllr Spearman for arranging delivery of the plants to the garden and for clearing away the rubbish. Cllr Buckley advised that he had no further news as to when the wall at the shops would be repaired. The Clerk advised that there was no update with regard to the phone box or the installation of railings.

The Clerk reminded Members that nominations were being sought for the Civic Awards and that this Committee may wish to consider putting forward nominations.

Meeting closed: 11.40am

Signed

Date