



DRAFT

MINUTES

Meeting: ENVIRONMENTAL
COMMITTEE

Date: 17 March 2014

Time: 10.00 am

Venue: NORTH WEALD LIBRARY, HIGH ROAD, NORTH WEALD

PRESENT:

Councillors (6) G Mulliner (Chairman), C Hawkins, B Eldridge, B Bartram, G McCormack,
A Buckley

Also in Attendance (1)

Joanna Tyler, Administrative Officer

Members of the Public (0)

E13.45 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (1)

NOTED apologies received from Cllr B Clegg

E13.46 OTHER ABSENCES (1)

NOTED no apologies received from Cllr R Spearman

E13.47 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

NOTED there were no declarations of interest.

E13.48 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 6 December 2013 were **CONFIRMED** and signed as a true record.

The Finance and Administrative Officer joined the meeting at this point.

E13.49 PLAY AREA INSPECTION REPORT

Members **NOTED** that the quarterly play area inspections were carried out by ARD on 10 February 2014. Councillors Hawkins, Mulliner, Bartram and McCormack met on Monday, 24 February 2014 to discuss the inspection report and any resulting actions/issues.

Members discussed the actions highlighted on the report prepared by the Finance and Administrative Officer:-

Weald Common Play Area

A decision had been taken to close the play area due to weather conditions, which had resulted in tremendous rainfall and localised flooding. The Chairman of this Committee informed Members that he had inspected the Play Area the previous day and was of the opinion that the play area could be reopened this afternoon.

With regard to the suggestion of moving the location of the gate to the other side of play area, Members **AGREED** not to move the gate until further information is

received from the North Weald Mums group with regard to the redevelopment of the play area. Councillor Hawkins asked the Finance and Administrative Officer if the plastic matting at the entrance to the gate was causing a trip hazard. The Finance and Administrative Officer stated that it was both the matting and the mud. Councillor Hawkins suggested that although the play area would be reopened, the entrance should be inspected in two weeks time.

With regard to the replacement of the bottom end chain links and 1no top 1 link to Chain Walk and Beams, Members **AGREED** not to replace the links at the present time, as it had been classed as a Priority 2 item so therefore can be looked at within the next six months, however, the links will be monitored on a regular basis to comply with Health and Safety.

School Green Lane Play Area

Councillor Bartram had inspected the play area and reported his findings to the Finance and Administrative Officer. A recommendation had been made to replace the flat swing seat which had been cut, all Members **AGREED**.

Members discussed replacement of the bin. Members **AGREED** that the existing bin should be removed and a post mounted bin, with lid, should be purchased and installed.

Members discussed, in detail, whether or not the foundations at the base of the upright to the flat seat swing should be backfilled. Councillor McCormack suggested approaching Thornwood Grounds Maintenance in order to investigate a solution to the problem. All Members **AGREED**.

Thornwood Play Area

Members **NOTED** that there were no outstanding issues at Thornwood Play Area.

E13.50 SCHOOL GREEN PLAY AREA

Members **NOTED** that a request had been received from a resident asking if a bench could be placed inside the School Green Play Area. Following discussion, Members **AGREED** that this item would be put forward for consideration at the Precept meeting to be held later in the year.

E13.51 WEALD COMMON PLAY AREA SUB-COMMITTEE

a) Terms of Reference

Following discussion, Members **AGREED** the Terms of Reference for the Weald Common Play Area Sub-Committee. Councillor Buckley asked whether the North Weald Mums would need to continue to raise money for the maintenance of the new play equipment, as mentioned in the previous Committee Meeting Minutes. The Chairman of this Committee stated that the North Weald Mums have said that they would be continuing to raise money. The Finance and Administrative Officer stated that the cost of maintenance for any new play

equipment would be covered by the Parish Council. Councillor McCormack said that he did not think that it would be fair to ask the North Weald Mums Group to continue to raise money for maintenance once the new play equipment is in place. Councillor McCormack asked if the Parish Council were able to accept donations from Members of the public, the Finance and Administrative Officer confirmed that they could.

b) Additional Funding

The Administrative Officer read out an email received from North Weald Mums Group, confirming that they had been awarded a grant of £5,000 from Epping Forest District Council. EFDC had suggested that the Parish Council may wish to consider match funding this amount. Following lengthy discussion, Members **AGREED** additional funding of £1,000.

E13.52 WEALD COMMON HEDGEROWS

A copy of the maintenance and management plan drawn up by Epping Forest Countrycare, in respect of the hedgerows at Weald Common, had been attached to the agenda for information. Members **NOTED** that this item had been included following a question that was raised at the Parish Council Meeting on 3 February 2014, regarding the ongoing management of the hedgerows. Members **NOTED** that the laying of the hedges is a long-term project that will take place over the next 2/3 years.

E13.53 ALLOTMENTS

a) Site Visits

Members **NOTED** that the Allotment Sub-Committee commenced site visits on the 5 March 2014.

b) Hastingwood A

The Chairman of this Committee informed Members that an allotment holder had approached the Sub-Committee during their site visit to ask whether the Parish Council would be continuing to carry out the role of warden at Hastingwood A for the forthcoming year. Following discussion, Members **AGREED** that the Allotment Sub-Committee would continue to carry out the role of warden and would review the situation in a year's time.

c) Allotment Fees

Members of this Committee were asked to **CONSIDER** a possible increase in allotment fees for 2015/16. An increase of 10% was agreed in March 2013 for the forthcoming year. Members were **REMINDED** that the Parish Council is required to give 12 months notice of any increase. Following discussion, Members **AGREED** to an increase of 10% for 2015/16.

d) Annual Allotment Meeting

Members **NOTED** that the Annual Allotment Meeting of Allotment Holders is to take place on Sunday, 30 March 2014, 9.30am for 10am start, at Thornwood Common Village Hall.

e) 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*”. The Chairman of this Committee informed Members that this request was no longer applicable as the waste had been burnt.

The Finance and Administrative Officer left the meeting at this point.

E13.54 CEMETERY FEES

Members were asked to **CONSIDER** a possible increase in cemetery fees for 2014/15. The Administrative Officer informed Members that a letter had been received from Granart Memorials this morning, advising that they would be increasing their prices as of 1 April 2014. In light of this, Members were advised that the Clerk had recommended that an increase of £5.00 be applied to the Rose Plaques, Memorial Plaques to go in Boulder and Plaques on Spikes. Following discussion, Members **AGREED** to a 10% increase, rounded up to the nearest pound.

E.13.55 BULB PLANTING

Following discussion, Members **AGREED** that bulb planting should take place towards the end of April. Councillor McCormack suggested that the North Weald pre-schools could be invited to join in the bulb planting, together with North Weald Cubs/Beavers and the residents of Blenheim Square. The Parish Office staff would contact the relevant groups and arrange a suitable date(s). Councillor Hawkins stated that he would arrange for the purchase of crocus bulbs.

Members discussed the purchase of poppies in commemoration of the 100th Anniversary of World War I. Councillor Hawkins confirmed that he would speak to the Chairman of North Weald Village Hall regarding this matter.

E.13.56 TALBOT ROUNDABOUT

Councillor McCormack informed Members that he had requested that this item be placed on the agenda, following comments made by residents in the local press, suggesting that the roundabout should be tidied and planted with flowers. Councillor Hawkins stated that if the Parish Council were to consider maintaining the roundabout, costs would need to be closely looked at and it would depend on how much money is available from the precept. The Parish Council would need to pay for a contractor to maintain the roundabout on a weekly basis. Councillor Eldridge asked if sponsorship could be sought from the local businesses located near to the roundabout. Members **AGREED** that further information needs to be sought with regard to costs and requested that the Administrative Officer contact Ongar Town Council to establish whether or not they are involved with

the maintenance costs related to the Four Wantz roundabout.

E13.57 GREEN LANE, KILN ROAD, NORTH WEALD

The Chairman of the Committee stated that although the byway is not in the parish of North Weald it does border it and he is concerned about the off-roaders who are using the byway extensively at night. The off-roaders have made the byway very difficult for walkers/horse-riders to use. The Chairman of this Committee would like to see the byway downgraded to a bridleway. The Clerk joined the meeting at this point and stated that as the byway is in Stanford Rivers she would pass on the relevant information to the Chairman. In addition, the Clerk suggested that the Administrative Officer could contact the relevant Essex Highways Public Rights of Way Inspector.

E13.58 ANY OTHER MATTERS RELATING TO ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE

The Administrative Officer informed Members that the residents of Beaufort Close, North Weald had received a response from Epping Forest District Council in relation to their "Save our Trees" petition. Members recalled that this petition had been mentioned at the Parish Council Meeting on 3 February 2014 by Councillor Bedford who had been contacted by residents. Members were advised that residents were not satisfied with the response received and had met over the weekend to send a reply, a copy of which was circulated at the meeting. The Administrative Officer informed Members that residents had requested that the Parish Council contact Essex County Councillor Anthony Jackson on their behalf regarding this matter. Members **AGREED** that a letter would be sent to Councillor Jackson.

Meeting closed: 11.20 am

Signed

Date