



North Weald Bassett

PARISH COUNCIL

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Clerk to the Council
Susan De Luca

29th October 2014

TO: ALL COUNCILLORS

You are hereby summoned to attend A **Meeting** of the **Parish Council** which will be held on **MONDAY, 3rd NOVEMBER**, in the **North Weald Library**, High Road, North Weald Bassett at **7.30pm** to transact the business shown in the Agenda below.

Susan De Luca
Clerk to the Council

Members of the public and press are invited to attend this meeting

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE 🖐

To **RECEIVE** any apologies for absence.

2. OTHER ABSENCES

To **NOTE** any absences for which no apology has been received.

3. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES 🖐

📄 To **APPROVE**, as a correct record, the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 6th October 2014 and of The Parish Hall and Playing Field Management Committee of Thornwood Common as attached at **Appendix 1**.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To **RECEIVE** any Declarations of Interest by Members.

A Member with a personal interest in a matter must consider whether it is a Disclosable Pecuniary, Non Pecuniary or Other Pecuniary Interest, and declare it accordingly. A Member who is unsure as to how to declare their interest should seek independent advice.

5. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

To **RECEIVE** questions from members of the public.

In accordance with an agreed procedure, the time allocated for public questions shall be limited to 15 minutes or such other period determined by the Chairman of the Meeting.

6. CLERKS COMMUNICATIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE REPORT

 To **RECEIVE** the oral report of the Clerk on matters which may be of current interest to Members and which require a formal update, and to **RECEIVE** such correspondence and communication as the Clerk may place before the Council, details of which are shown on **Appendix 2**.

NOTE: Any Member wishing to have a communication brought to the attention of the Council should give prior notification to the Clerk.

7. REPORTS & MEMBERS REPORTS

 **Further to a recent letter to Members from the Clerk**, Members are reminded that in order to ensure smooth and **prompt running of the meeting** it would be **prudent to provide the Clerk with a written copy of their report** in order that this can **be circulated** to all Members **with the Agenda**.

To **RECEIVE** any questions emanating from any reports from Members who wish to give a report and/or who are representatives on Committees, Working Groups, Outside Bodies and other meetings that Members or the Clerk have attended and which, **if available**, will be reproduced at **Appendix 3: if they have been submitted by Members for inclusion**

a) Chairman's Report

b) Vice Chairman's Report

c) District Councillors Reports

d) Councillors Reports – If Submitted as Attached at **Appendix 3**

e) Highways Reports – No response is yet to be received from Cllr Johnson for a meeting with Members of this Council.

f) Environmental Issues – to include Allotment Issues – Cllr Mulliner to Report 

g) Neighbourhood Action Panel Minutes – If these are available

8. FINANCIAL REPORTS

a) **List of Cheques & Monthly Statement of Accounts**

To **APPROVE** the lists of cheques which were signed up to 31st October 2014 and **NOTE** the summary of income received and the account balances at the end of the month. **(to be tabled)**

b) **CHANGE OF BANKING ARRANGEMENTS**

In 2011, Parish Council were given the freedom to make use of modern banking methods such as electronic banking, providing safeguards were put into place to made to ensure this is no misuse of the system. Earlier this year, section 150(5) of the Local Government Act 1972 (which governed the stewardship of money by Local Councils by requiring that two members of the Council are required to sign a cheque) was repealed, meaning this is no longer a legal requirement. This does however remain a requirement within the Councils Financial Regulations, as it is deemed good practice.

The Council must regularly review the effectiveness of its arrangements to protect public money, and to ensure safe and efficient arrangements are in place to do so.

In light of these recent legislative changes, together with historical issues experienced with the Councils current Bank, the Clerk and Finance and Admin Officer have looked at how other Parish Councils deal with their banking arrangements. After these investigations, Unity Bank seem to offer the most appropriate service, specifically tailored to Parish Councils.

The Principal Finance and Admin Officer has met with Unity Bank and discussed the arrangements that this Councils requires. Attached to the Agenda and **Appendix 4**, is a proposal put forward by Unity for the provision of such Services.

Council are asked to **CONSIDER** moving bank to Unity under the terms explained in the proposal.

c) BUDGET / PRECEPT

📄 Council are reminded that the Budget and Precept Meeting will take place on 17th November at 8pm. Councillors are asked to confirm any issues / projects that they would like considered, as well as providing any associated financial documentation.

9. ELECTRONIC MAIL 🖱️

📄 At the Meeting of the Parish Council on Monday 6th October the Clerk was tasked with asking the Auditor to confirm whether or not Councillors could receive documentation by electronic mail, at the request of Cllr Collins.

Members would have received emails from both the Clerk and Cllr Collins in relation to electronic mail. As the Clerk stated in her previous email she would be providing Members with copies of the correspondence between herself and Cllr Collins and also the internal auditors comments.

The Clerk has reiterated her that her concerns have always been many and varied at circulating documentation to Members relying solely on electronic means. Whilst she has received confirmation from the auditor that this is now permitted under legislation passed a short while ago, she is still not convinced that it is wholly the most efficient and effective means of passing information on to all Members of **this Council** and she still does have concerns for Members. She details, once again, these concerns below:

- 1 What if the Members Internet /Broadband is not working or is not of sufficient speed to download the documents
- 2 What if the link provided in the document does not work – how will the Member access the relevant document especially if it is over the weekend or in the evening and they cannot get in touch with someone to get the details
- 3 What happens in the case of large documents that need to be printed off – and need to be referred to at Parish Council Meetings – will the Members print these off and bring them along some documents can have 50 – 100 pages in total – which is a substantial amount of paper and printer ink for individual members to consider.
- 4 In the case of Agendas these are hand delivered – once they are put through the

letterbox how do we know that this is an actual delivery – if the Agendas are sent out electronically it would mean that the office would need individual councillors to confirm receipt of every agenda/document, and each Member would need to print off the agenda and bring the printed copy along with them to each meeting, agendas and associated documents could not be printed immediately prior to the meeting – there is simply not enough time for this action to be carried out.

- 5 If the Clerk did not have an acknowledged receipt of delivery it would mean having to chase individual Members to confirm receipt.

The Clerk has detailed below the extract from the Internal Auditors email. The Principal Financial Officer also has some other concerns and will bring these to Members attention at the meeting.

“With regard to your and your member’s query, as far as I am aware, legislation has now been passed permitting the electronic provision of agendas and relevant papers (Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014). Having said that, it is obviously important that any Council ensures that all or part of its members are prepared to accept detail in electronic rather than hard copy format, also that an appropriate means of ensuring that such documentation is actually received and acknowledged by members.” Stuart Pollard.

However, if after you have taken all the above into consideration and you would still like to receive documentation electronically, the Clerk will be sending ALL MEMBERS a document to sign to say that you have read and understood the possible pitfalls but you are still wishing to receive the documentation electronically.

The Clerk recently sent Members an email which was a response to a request by Cllr Collins, and also as a result of comments received from the Auditor which she is investigating further. It is understand that Members have received the email from Cllr Collins, and the Clerk advised all Members that she did not wish to engage in a ‘to and fro’ disagreement about this on email, therefore she would reproduce all previous 6 emails in full for Members with the next Agenda as detailed on **Appendix 5** and would place this matter on the Agenda for further discussion at the next Parish Council meeting, and for Members decision

Therefore as previously stated this matter in now being placed on the Agenda with a recommendation that all Councillors are asked to make a declaration as to whether or not they wish to receive ALL items in an electronic format if so they will then be asked to sign a document indicating this.

Members are asked to **NOTE** that it cannot be the Clerks responsibility as to the method of delivery for each item, ie what is electronic and what is hard copy as this is purely subjective – ie the Clerk makes the decision it can go out electronically and the Councillors disagree.

10. COMMITTEE STRUCTURES

Following on from the last meeting, the Clerk had circulated a Report with the last Agenda and documentation on the evening at the meeting in relation to a review of Committee

Structures. Members were asked to **REVIEW** the new structure as a New Structure and to bring back any comments that they may have to this meeting. Copies of the New Structure were sent out to those Members who were not in attendance following the meeting, and again with this Agenda showing them that this matter would be discussed at this meeting. Members are therefore asked to **CONSIDER** the previously circulated Report and New Structure in consideration of changes to this Councils Committee Structures. If Members wish further copies please advise the office.

11. REVIEW OF STANDING ORDERS

At the last Meeting Members were asked to review **Standing Orders**, the Clerk had circulated a number of amendments at the meeting, Members were asked to look at these amendments and advise the Clerk at the next meeting if they were happy with these, and bring any comments that they had to the next meeting. Copies of the Revision to Standing Orders were sent out to those Members who were not in attendance following the meeting, and again with this Agenda showing them that this matter would be discussed at this meeting. Members are therefore asked to **CONSIDER** the previously circulated item. If Members wish further copies please advise the office.

12. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN NORTH WEALD BASSETT AREA DESIGNATION

To **CONFIRM** the date for the forthcoming meeting to discuss the setting up of a Neighbourhood Plan Area Designation Committee.

13. PARISH HALL AT THORNWOOD COMMON

As the Responsible Person for Health and Safety at the Parish Hall has not yet been agreed or trained, the Portable Appliance Testing is due to be carried out. Members are asked to **CONFIRM** their agreement for this action to be taken.

14. REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY UPDATE

The Clerk will give a verbal update on the Events.

15. EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL CITIZEN OF THE YEAR AWARD

Members are asked if they wish to make nominations to the EFDC Citizen of the Year Scheme. Nominations should be for someone who has shown outstanding courage, done something of outstanding benefit to the community, shown extraordinary commitment in their field or towards achieving a particular goal. The recipient must be a resident of Epping Forest.

16. NORWAY HOUSE

a)  **Request for support for Lottery Funding bid **

b) **Invitation to Members to attend Mural Unveiling Event on 20th November**
Extract from email Invitation below

Over recent months we have been working with the Arts team at EFDC to create a mural for our dining room. On 20th November between 3.30pm – 5pm we will be having a mural unveiling followed by a tour of the building. I would like to invite the member of North Weald Parish Council to this event.

17. EFDC COMMUNITY TREE STRATEGY

Following on from a meeting with Chris Neilhan – EFDC Tree Officer who met with the Environmental Committee and who explained the EFDC Community Tree Strategy to

Members. Cllr Mulliner will give a verbal report to Members at the meeting as to whether or not this Council would like to take part.

18. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS 

In the event that the Agenda contains Exempt (pink) pages, or an item needs to be discussed confidentially, to **CONSIDER** the following motion to be proposed by the Chairman:

“That the public and the press be excluded from the meeting, the Council believing that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business about to be discussed.”

There are currently **NO** confidential items to be considered