



DRAFT MINUTES

Meeting: COUNCIL

Date: 4th April 2016

Time: 7.30PM

Venue: NORTH WEALD LIBRARY, 138 HIGH ROAD, NORTH WEALD

PRESENT:

Councillors (10) C Hawkins (Chairman), A Buckley, T Blanks, B Bartram
G Mulliner, Mrs S Jackman MBE, Mrs Godwin-Brown
R Spearman, D Stallan, A Tyler

Officers in Attendance (2)

Susan De Luca, Clerk
Adriana Jones – Principal Finance Officer

Members of the Public (1)

Members of the Press (1)

C15.196 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (4)

NOTED that apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Bedford, Clegg, Eldridge, and Mrs Grigg. Cllr Tyler had also sent apologies as he expected to arrive later in the meeting.

C15.197 OTHER ABSENCES (1)

Other absences of Cllr Mrs Adams was recorded. The Clerk confirmed she had chased Cllr Adams on a number of occasions to ascertain whether or not she wished to continue in this role, however had not received a response.

C15.198 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 7th March 2016 were **AGREED** and duly signed as a correct record. The Clerk stated that one amendment was needed to the Parish Hall at Thornwood Committee meeting minutes as attached to the agenda, in that Mrs Abbott had declared an interest reference the Honorarium agenda item, and that she taken part in either the discussion or the vote.

C15.199 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations of interest were given:

- Cllr Stallan - Personal, Prejudicial interest in agenda item 19, and would be leaving the meeting during this item.
- Cllr Spearman - Personal, Prejudicial in any items reference the Local Plan.

C15.200 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

C15.201 CLERKS UPDATE AND COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

Councillors **NOTED** the Clerks report as attached to the agenda.

Date	Reported By or Action Initiated By	Regarding	Action Taken	Further Action Taken
MAR	CLERK	Personnel / HR	Ongoing/Contin	Liaising with EALC/NALC

		Issues	uing	
MAR	Clerk/PFO	Neighbourhood Area Plan	Ongoing	Various Meetings & Actions
MAR	Clerk/PFO	Various Meetings	Ongoing	Local Plan/Green Belt/Hastingwood VH/ECC Waste Plan
MAR	Clerk	CCTV Issues	Ongoing	Various Actions
MAR	Senior Admin Officer	Various Env/ Highway Matters	Continuing	Ongoing .
MAR	PFO	2 ND Stage Green Belt Review	Review Information	Presentation and Provide Info to EFDC
MAR	Clerk/Cllr Buckley	Parade of Shops	Ongoing	Liaising with EFDC
MAR	PFO	Transp Code	Ongoing	Sourcing Various Information
MAR	PFO/Clerk	Weald Common	Ongoing	Various Matters
ITEMS RECEIVED WHICH MAY BE OF INTEREST				
Various EFDC Agendas, North Weald Village Life, Epping Forest Youth Conference Magazine, Essex Air Ambulance Afternoon Tea Events, Confirmation of Move of North Weald Post Office, Institute of Cemetery Management Journal.				

Councillors **NOTED** that the Clerk had received a letter from Pinnacle, the Parish Council's contractors for the grass and hedge cutting at Thornwood Common, stating that due to the introduction of the National Living Wage, their quote for the cutting of Thornwood Common for 2016 period had needed to be increased by over £100. The quote agreed at the Finance and General Purposes meeting was £688.50. The Clerk had spoken with the Chairman regarding this, who agreed that for this year we would have to continue with Pinnacle, however for 2017 alternative quotes would need to be sourced. Cllr Stallan enquired as to how many hours it takes to cut the grass at Thornwood Common, and whether or not this was accurately reflected in the increase which seemed rather high being as the National Living Wage Increase is only 50p/hour. The Clerk stated that the quote wasn't for the number of hours cut, but to do the work, i.e. a specific number of cuts per year, and as such it's difficult to equate per hour. Cllr Blanks expressed his concern, stating that after doing the calculations, the increase seems to be double that of the National Living Wage increase. The Chairman stated that he understood these concerns, however the grass cutting season was underway and it had historically proved difficult to find contractors able to cut the Common. The Chairman confirmed that for 2017 alternative quotes would be sourced, however the Council needed a contractor to cut the grass and at this stage Pinnacle are the only people able to do so.

[Cllr Tyler arrived]

Members **NOTED** that the Clerk had received confirmation of the Post Office move to the Local Newsagents, and posters regarding afternoon tea events for Essex Ambulance which had been placed on the Parish Notice boards.

C15.202 REPORTS AND MEMBERS REPORTS

- a) **Chairman's Report** – The Chairman thanked the office staff for their work with the Green Belt Review, and for the work organising the Annual Parish Assembly on 22nd March.

- b) **Vice-Chairman's Report** – Cllr Buckley confirmed that he had been in touch with the contractor appointed to complete the new garden by the shops, and that work was expected to begin Friday of this week or early next week. Cllr Mulliner and the Vice-Chairman would be meeting the Foreman on site when works are about to begin to ensure everybody is clear about exactly what needs doing. The contractor has confirmed they will be reducing the quote by approximately £1,750 due to no longer needing sleepers at the rear of the garden, as the wall would be used as the backdrop instead. Sponsorship is still a possibility, with different ideas being welcome as to how this could be implemented. A number of Councillors had expressed concern about sponsorship plaques being stolen from the sleepers, however these could be screwed into the boulders and it would be unlikely they would be stolen. Cllr Mulliner stated that it would be easier to get interest in sponsorship once the garden is up and people can see it.

Cllr Mulliner stated that there are two A-boards on the triangle that the Parish Council own, and that they should be written to and asked to be removed. The Clerk confirmed that the Parish Council do not own this area, and that it is owned by Essex County Council however the Council has an agreed Wayleave over the land. The Parish Council can write to these organisations, however ultimately it is up to EFDC to enforce this. The Chairman confirmed that the rules on A-boards had recently changed. It was **AGREED** that out of courtesy, the Clerk would write to these organisations and ask them to remove the boards, however mention about sponsorship in the letter.

The Vice-Chairman confirmed he would be liaising with the relevant parties regarding planting of shrubs etc once the garden is in place. Cllr Tyler asked that thanks be recorded for the work the Vice-Chairman has done with this project, which will greatly enhance a blank spot in the village.

- c) **District Councillors Report** – Cllr Stallan confirmed that as of the next Council meeting in May, he will be standing down as Housing Portfolio Holder for Epping Forest District Council. Cllr Stallan stated that he had spoken with Paul Pledger, EFDC, regarding access to the allotments and works at Queens Road, asking that as Portfolio Holder this is signed off before he steps down.
- d) **Councillors Reports** – Cllr Mrs Jackman stated after a number of years pushing for Parish and Town Councils to have a representative on the Local Highway Panel, she was approached by Cllr John Knapman, Chairman of the LHP, at the last Local Liaison meeting, who stated that he would provide her with a list of the meeting dates, and that hopefully this was a move in the right direction.
- e) **Environmental Issues** – Cllr Mulliner stated that the Daffodils planted late last year have now blossomed and look beautiful, and that he will recommend to the Environmental Committee the same is done this year. Unfortunately, a couple of daffodil sites within the Parish were vandalised, however the majority of sites were untouched.
- f) **Garden at the Parade of Shops** - Cllr Buckley reported earlier.

C15.203 FINANCIAL REPORTS

a) List of Cheques & Monthly Statement of Accounts

The Clerk tabled a copy of the monthly accounts list, and Councillors **APPROVED** the payments made and income received and noted the bank balances for the period ending 31st March 2016.

Cllr Tyler stated that in Northumberland, the street lights are no longer being turned off after one Council was sued which cost more than the savings made. The Clerk confirmed that the Parish Council pays a flat rate for the electricity for its street lighting, and that none of the Parish Councils street lights are turned off at night, however Essex County Council owned lights are.

b) Approve the increase in fees for the 2016/2017 year for the Parish Hall at Thornwood.

Members **NOTED** that the Parish Hall Committee had agreed to increase the hall hire fees £1.00 per hour 'across the board', however the Terms of Reference for the Management Committee state that the setting of the budget allocation for both expenditure and income must be referred to a meeting of the Parish Council for determination. Cllr Stallan asked how the halls fees compare with other Village Halls in the area, and does the increase mean the hall expenditure is fully covered. The Clerk stated that historically the Parish Hall has always run at a loss, however the final figures for this year were not available at this time, and that she did not have details regarding how these fees compared to other halls. Cllr Stallan stated that when he was treasurer of the Parish Hall, this comparison would have taken place, and that although he believed this should not delay the decision of the Council tonight, this is something that should be considered next year. Cllr Spearman, Chairman of the Parish Hall Committee, confirmed that last year's fees were very representative of other halls, and assumed this year's would be too.

Cllr Mulliner stated that he thought the new fees would be around 20-30% higher than North Weald Village Halls fees, and expressed concern that such an increase could lead to a reduction in hirers. The Clerk stated although the final figures were not available, she felt the hall was doing very well financially this year, and may well break even, and that she did not feel this would lead to a loss in hire income. Councillors **AGREED** to this increase of £1.00 in hire fees, stating that next year a comparison with other halls in the location should take place.

The Clerk advised that she would contact the North Weald Village Hall and the Queens Hall and ask for their Hire Fees for Members as soon as possible for information only for this year, however it should be noted that she was not usually successful in getting 'exact' fees from North Weald Village Hall, so she would look to get one other comparison as well.

c) Internal Audit

Members **NOTED** that the internal auditor will be in attendance at the Parish Council Office Wednesday 11th May. The Clerk invited all Councillors to view the full years accounts and/or any paperwork should they so wish. Councillors

were also invited to attend on 11th May and speak with the Auditor should they so wish. Cllr Stallan asked if any residents ever attend or queried the finances, to which the Clerk stated not for some time.

C15.204 PARISH HALL AT THORNWOOD COMMON – USE OF BOUNCY CASTLES

Following the recent tragic accident involving a bouncy castle, the Clerk has investigated whether or not the Parish Councils insurance company wishes this Council to take any further measures to ensure the safety in the use of Bouncy Castles at events either at the Parish Hall or on the field at Thornwood Common. The Clerk confirmed she had approached the Insurance company to establish if there were any specific safety measures the Council needed to take at this time, other than what is currently normal practice to ask for the public liability insurance certification for the supplier of the bouncy castle. Cllr Stallan asked for clarification as to who's liability it is if a bouncy castle was placed on the Common in Thornwood, to which the Clerk confirmed that public liability insurance certificates are always obtained, however the Parish Council would need to show it acted appropriately in all cases.

Cllr Buckley asked how often Bouncy Castles are used, to which the Clerk stated approximately 3/4 times per year. Cllr Buckley stated that if the public liability certificates are obtained, then there should be no reason why the use of bouncy castles should not continue. Cllr Stallan stated that although he understood what Cllr Buckley was saying, he would like to **PROPOSED** that a decision in term of whether or not our procedure should be altered should be deferred until such time as the investigation into the Harlow accident is completed. Cllr Spearman **SECONDED** this proposal. A vote was taken with unanimous support for this decision.

C15.205 NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA PLAN

The Clerk confirmed that following a period of public engagement completed by a number of local residents, the current number of residents who supported a Neighbourhood Plan stood at 240. This item will be on the May agenda for a decision as to how to move forward.

C15.206 100 YEARS OF NORTH WEALD AIRFIELD

a) Airfield Event

Members agreed at the last Meeting that the Parish Council would not go ahead with the Marquee as local organisations had not showed enough interest in taking part. Therefore the Clerk has advised Darren Goodey - Airfield Manager - of this and had advised him of the contact details of the organisations who had expressed their interest.

b) Presentation by Cllr Tyler – Councillor Tyler gave Members a short presentation of ideas that have been put forward regarding the Airfield Centenary Event. Cllr Tyler summarised EFDCs thinking on the celebration, and detailed some of the possible options currently being considered, which included merchandise, stickers, topiary of service men, etc. Cllr Tyler also mentioned that the centenary celebrations covered WWI and WWII, a re-enactment of the Battle of the Somme, different beers, and static aircraft displays. There would be no air displays. Councillors we encouraged by the plans and ideas, thanked Cllr Tyler for his

involvement, and requested they were kept informed of decisions by EFDC. There was some concern that the Parish Council were being asked to contribute to the cost of these ideas and arrangements, however Cllr Tyler confirmed this was not what was being asked.

The Chairman asked when a working group meeting would be set up to discuss the pictures needed for the 100yr history of the village. The Clerk stated that this still needed to be arranged. Cllr Stallan asked if the Essex Records Office had been written to asking for pictures, to which the Clerk stated that you needed to visit and arrange to physically go through the records to find such pictures, however there may be information held at the Parish Hall Thornwood and that the Office Staff would be arranging a visit to obtain any relevant information. The Clerk confirmed she would arrange a date, and ensure both Arthur Moreton and Quentin Fuller were advised.

C15.207 CIVIC SERVICE

Councillors **NOTED** that Father Rodley, Vicar of St Andrews Church, has contacted the Parish Council and advised that he is looking to hold a Civic service in the Church to Celebrate the life and work of the Community and the Parish Council. The time and date to be confirmed after discussion and agreement by the Parish Council. Cllr Stallan stated there is a specific process to be followed with Civic Services, and asked if this would be followed. The Clerk stated that perhaps Father Rodley had used incorrect wording, and that her understanding was that this should be more of a community service. It was suggested that any such service should be held the Sunday prior to the EFDC Airfield Community Day event. Councillors **AGREED** that they supported the idea in principal, however requested that more detailed information was obtained by the Clerk and an update given at the next meeting.

C15.208 PARISH COUNCIL CITIZEN OF THE YEAR AWARDS

Members **NOTED** that the Citizen of the Year working group were pleased to announce this year's winners as follows:

Retiring postmaster Roy Sudra received the Citizen of the Year award. Mr Sudra is about to retire after 25-plus years' service to the local community. His nomination described him as "highly regarded, extremely knowledgeable, polite and courteous - who will be missed by all".

The Individual Award for Voluntary Services to the Community was jointly awarded to Thornwood Seniors Association secretary Iris Smith and Lisa Harman, Allotment Warden for the Wheelers Farm Gardens and Queens Road sites in North Weald.

The Group Award was jointly awarded to Hastingwood Village Hall Committee secretary Jacky Kelly, bookings secretary Lynn Austin and treasurer Jackie Blaney for their involvement with the refurbishment and building the extension to the hall and to the Parish Hall at Thornwood Common Management Committee which has been active over last year raising money to ensure that the hall goes some way towards being self-funding. Events such as quiz nights, Sunday ploughman's lunches and a carol service have been held.

C15.209 CCTV PARADE OF SHOPS, NORTH WEALD

Cllr Buckley confirmed he had attended a meeting with Adrian Petty, EFDC, and the Clerk, and a Service Level Agreement had been agreed which had also been looked over by Cllr Blanks. A meeting was now needed to arrange for the formal signing of this agreement. Councillors *NOTED* that the CCTV would not be erected until funds had been received.

C15.210 WEALD COMMON

The Chairman confirmed that he had recently met with Nick Dorras, Chairman of the North Weald Village Hall, regarding the possibility of having new car parking spaces for the Village Hall, all of which would be specifically marked out. The Chairman confirmed this was an informal meeting and was to consider this possibility, and to establish whether or not this would make a difference to the parking problems in this area. Cllr Stellan asked the Chairman if he was proposing the Parish Council contributed to the cost of paying for this car park or the lining, considering the Parish Council do not own most of the land. The Chairman stated that no discussions about cost or contributors was discussed, and that it was simply a meeting to establish what could be done in this area to alleviate some of the parking issues, especially during busy events at the hall. This would also benefit users of the shops and local services as it would free up the Parish owned spaces. Cllr Mulliner reported that during busy events at the hall, the Village Hall Chairman often received verbal abuse from members of the public about the parking concerns, however he was concerned as to how you would mark lines on the current car park surface as it is gravel. Cllr Buckley stated that this is something that needs consideration, as if there isn't sufficient spaces for members of the public to park and use local facilities, such as the shops, they will simply drive somewhere else and as such the village would be losing valued business. Cllr Buckley suggested that any car parking area should be tarmaced.

C15.211 HIGHWAYS

Members recalled that a letter was written in January to Cllr Johnson, ECC, regarding concerns surrounding various highway issues. As no response had been forthcoming, the Clerk tried to hand deliver a further communication at the Larger Local Council Forum to Councillor Bass, however Councillor Bass left the event before she could get this to him. Angie Balcombe, the Parish Council Co-ordinator at Essex County Council, advised that she would deliver this on the Councils behalf. No response has been received from either communication at the current time. The Clerk confirmed she had raised this issue with ECC Cllr Jackson who suggested the letter be sent again. Cllr Mrs Jackman suggested the Clerk go straight to ECC Cllr Finch, Leader of the Council, with a covering letter stating that Cllr Mrs Jackman, as Chairman of the Epping branch of the EALC, had requested the Clerk write again, stating how inefficient and rude that the letter has not even been acknowledged. Cllr Stellan suggested that a letter should also state that unless a response is received, a public question will be asked at the next County meeting.

C15.212 QUEENS 90TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Cllr Tyler reported that despite his efforts, he had found it extremely difficult to secure any support for this project, and suggested that as the Airfield celebrations were taking up much of his available time, this project should not be progressed.

C15.213 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

As the Agenda contained Exempt (pink) pages, or an item needs to be discussed confidentially, the following motion was 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." All public and press left the meeting.

C15.214 QUEENS ROAD ALLOTMENTS – ACCESS FOR ALLOTMENT TENANTS DURING BUILDING WORKS BY EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL TO THE GARAGE SITE

[Cllr Stallan left the meeting]

The Clerk explained that one piece of information had been omitted from the report given at the previous Parish Council meeting, in that EFDC would **NOT** be providing the money for laying out or providing any car parking, and that all EFDC would do is to de-allotmentise a small part of the Queens Road Allotments which would allow the Parish Council to create parking should they so wish, and at the Parish Councils expense. The Clerk confirmed that at present the decision taken at the March Parish Council meeting still stands, however it was important Councillors were given all the correct information. The Chairman asked Councillors if, in light of this information, they would like the decision to be reconsidered, to which the Clerk confirmed that if this was the case, and in accordance with standing orders, the required 3 signatures would be needed. Cllr Mulliner **PROPOSED** the decision be reconsidered, confirming he would be one of the signatories. Cllr Mrs Godwin-Brown **SECONDED** this proposal, confirming she too would be one of the signatories. Cllr Buckley confirmed he would also sign. The Clerk confirmed that as three signatories had been confirmed, the decision would be reconsidered at a later meeting, and that she would inform EFDC of this.

Meeting Closed 21.16

Signed
Date