



MINUTES

Meeting: COUNCIL

Date: 4th November 2013

Time: 7.30pm

Venue: NORTH WEALD LIBRARY, HIGH ROAD, NORTH WEALD

PRESENT:

Councillors (12) C Hawkins (Chairman), B Bartram, N Bedford, T Blanks, A Buckley, B Clegg, P Collins, B Eldridge, Mrs E Godwin-Brown, G Mulliner, R Spearman, D Stallan

Also in Attendance (2)

Adriana Jones – Finance and Administrative Officer (meeting clerk)
Sammy Wix – Administration Assistant

Members of the Public (0)

Members of the Press (0)

P13.084 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (3)

NOTED that apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Mrs A Grigg, McCormack and Ms D Adams.

P13.085 OTHER ABSENCES (0)

Members *NOTED* no other absences.

P13.086 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 7th October 2013 were *AGREED* and signed as a true record.

P13.087 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Mrs Godwin-Brown, Cllr Collins, and Cllr Hawkins declared a non pecuniary interest in agenda item 9, Remembrance Sunday, by virtue of being members of the RBL.

Members *NOTED* that on 20th September 2013, Local Government Minister Brandon Lewis announced new rules to increase town hall transparency, by producing guidance requiring councillors to register trade union affiliations and dealings. Government guidance on openness and transparency of a councillor's personal interests has been revised to include *specifically registering union memberships*. In addition a council's own code of conduct, guided by the 7 principles of public life, should now specify a requirement to register personal trade union interests. This is intended to avoid conflicts of interest when councils consider issues directly affecting trade unions, such as reviews of taxpayer-funded subsidies given to trade unions. Within 28 days of taking office councillors must register certain financial as well as non-financial interests required by their council's code of conduct, which should include any trade union membership.

P13.088 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

No public present.

P13.089 CLERKS UPDATE AND COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

Members **NOTED** the following Communications and Correspondence:-

From	Type of Document	Regarding
EALC	Monthly Mailings	<i>Various - NOTED</i>
EALC/ECC	Magazine	<i>Making the Links - NOTED</i>
Queens Hall Charity	Letter	<i>Letter of thanks from Chairman of Charity for the Parish Council covering the cost of the Trustee Indemnity Insurance - NOTED</i>
Weald Aviation	Email	<i>Following the meeting with Weald Aviation which took place in the Summer, as agreed a further meeting has been arranged for Thursday 21st November 11am at Thornwood Village Hall - NOTED</i>
EALC	Press Release email	<i>Tour de France comes to the District on 7th July 2014, and will be going through North Weald. Cllr Stellan asked if the Parish Council would be writing to ECC and its County Councillor regarding the program of repairs to the roads and potholes. It was AGREED this should take place.</i>

P13.090 REPORTS & MEMBERS REPORTS

a) Chairman's Report

The Chairman reported that this year the Parish would have a Christmas decorated tree for the festive season, and that this will be the tree by the flag pole on the village green. A cherry picker has been arranged to erect the lights, and the office staff have been in touch with the Limes Medical Centre to establish if electricity for the lights can be sourced from their branch in North Weald. The Administrative Assistant showed members a copy of the posters that were due to be placed on the Parish notice boards. It was noted that the word 'Bassett' was missing, and that this should be amended. The poster stated that there would be a competition, and the winner would switch on the lights. Cllrs Mrs Godwin-Brown, Ms Adams, McCormack, Mulliner, and the Administrative Assistant have met to discuss the organisation and preparation for this event taking place on 4th December, the next step being the H&S in terms of electricity supply. Funds for these would come via the Environmental Committee. Wheelers Farms Gardens centre have been approached and asked if they would open up their lounge for festive refreshments (supplied by the Parish Council) after the event. All Councillors were encouraged to attend and support this event.

b) Vice Chairman's Report

Councillor Eldridge reported that there had been another car crash at Harlow Common. Numerous horses on various parts of the Common have now had foals, some of which have unfortunately died. This seems to be an ongoing issue. Cllr Eldridge continues to try and contact the person responsible at Harlow Council to address this issue, without much success. Some of the horses are un-tethered, and have got into the ditches. Fly tipping continues to be an issue.

c) District Councillors Report - No report.

d) Highways Reports – No report

e) Councillors Reports

Cllr Clegg reported that a horse has been grazing on a regular basis on the corner of duck Lane and Rowley Mead. Cllr Stallan suggested this would probably be housing land, suggesting the meeting clerk contact Paul Pledger at EFDC to ascertain the rules regarding grazing on housing land, and how this can be addressed. Cllr Clegg confirmed a horse was present on Wednesday or Thursday last week, and the same time the week before.

Cllr Blanks confirmed that the question he asked of EFDC regarding the future of the airfield was addressed at the recent meeting of the North Weald Airfield and Asset Management Committee; however he had not had a chance to review the webcast nor received a formal response. Cllr Stallan confirmed this was the case, and stated that under the Terms of Reference for this committee, he had asked for a report to be available at the next meeting detailing what EFDC are doing in terms of increasing revenue for the Airfield, although he accepted that some elements of this report would be confidential. This was agreed. Cllr Blanks stated that he believes he may be entitled to ask a supplementary question, asking if anybody had any suggestions, however Cllr Stallan stated that you can only ask a supplementary question pertaining to the answer you receive to your original question.

f) Environmental Issues

Cllr Mulliner reported that a tree had fallen down at the North Weald allotments during the recent storm, and that the office has dealt with it. The hedge at Hastingwood allotments has been cut.

g) Neighbourhood Action Panel - None

h) County Councillors Reports - None

P13.091 FINANCIAL REPORTS

a) List of Cheques & Monthly Statement of Accounts

Members **APPROVED** the list of cheques, which were signed up to 31st October 2013 and **NOTED** the summary of income received and the account balances.

- Cllr Bedford suggested that perhaps a cost analysis should be completed of the photocopier as it may be more cost effective to purchase a photocopier. Cllr Clegg and Blanks stated they would not recommend this as repair costs are high, and the photocopier is well used.
- The question was asked as to why it was necessary to pay a monthly cost for Legionella testing at the hall, to which the meeting clerk stated that the legislation and guidance detailed what actions were required in order to ensure the Parish Council fulfil their obligations in terms of H&S.
- It was noted that the cost was missing from cheque number 601537.

b) Budget Items – Request Form

Members **NOTED** that the budget and precept meeting would be held on 18th November, and that any suggested budget items and associated paperwork should be with the Finance and Administrative Officer by today.

c) Parish Support Grant

Members recalled from 2013 that council tax support for Local Authorities took the form of reductions within the council tax system, replacing national council tax benefit. Making reductions part of the council tax system had the effect of reducing a billing authority's council tax base. For 2013/2014, billing and major precepting authorities received funding which reduced their council tax requirement. This included funding attributable in respect of parish council areas, however billing and local precepting authorities were left to come to their own agreements on the arrangements for passing down the funding attributable to the local precepting authority. The Government made it clear that the funding attributable to the parish precept had been provided to the billing authority and expects them to work with local parish and town councils to provide certainty over their funding.

On the 19th September, EFDCs Finance Cabinet Committee considered a report submitted by Bob Palmer, Director of Finance and ICT EFDC, included in which were details of the possible grant reductions for Local Authorities for 2014/2015 and 2015/2016 (part of a current DCLG consultation). The committee felt that any reduction in the EFDC grant should be reflected in the grant paid to local councils. This would mean a reduction of 13.6% for 2014/2015 and a further reduction of 14.1% in 2015/2016. These reductions are subject to change dependent on the outcome of the consultation.

Members **NOTED** that this is likely to have a significant effect on this Parish Councils precept, full details of which will be made available at the Budget/Precept meeting on 18th November.

Cllr Stallan stated that this hadn't been formally agreed at this time, to which the Chairman asked when an update would be available. The Finance and Administrative Officer stated that this was an agenda item at the Local Council Liaison Committee meeting on 7th November, and it was hoped an update would be made available to that meeting.

P13.092 REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY 2013

Members **NOTED** that arrangements were continuing and on track for this year's event, with 78 confirmed attendees at the luncheon. The set up of the hall would be taking place at 7pm on Saturday 9th November, and both Nicky Dorras and Cllr Bedford were organising the PA system. Cllr Stallan stated there was an event in the hall on the Saturday evening, and that the set up therefore could not take place. It was **AGREED** that the meeting clerk would contact Nicky Dorras at the North Weald Village Hall to ascertain if this was the case, and to email members to update them as to if there assistance was required.

P13.093 EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL CITIZEN & YOUNG CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

Members **NOTED** the deadline for nominations for the above was 29th November 2013.

P13.094 TRUSTEES – QUEENS HALL CHARITY

Councillors duly **APPOINTED** Cllr Hawkins and Cllr McCormack as Parish Council appointed trustees onto the Queens Hall Charity. This was **AGREED** by all present. It was **NOTED** there was one further vacancy to fill.

P13.095 PRESS REPORT / LETTER

Councillors **NOTED** that following the publication of an article in Village Life regarding questions being asked of the Parish Council, as agreed the Clerk had drafted a response which was attached to the agenda. Members reviewed this response. Cllr Clegg stated he was unsure as to what relevance the last sentence had, in that would members of the public appreciate the band D property comment, asking if it would make any difference. It was **AGREED** to remove this sentence. Cllr Clegg stated that he was not suggesting it was not relevant, but perhaps this is not the correct time to use it. Following a number of further minor amendments, the response was agreed.

Meeting closed: 9.05pm

Signed

Date