



DRAFT MINUTES

Meeting: COUNCIL

Date: 4th January 2016

Time: 7.33PM

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

PRESENT:

Councillors (13) C Hawkins (Chairman), A Buckley, T Blanks, B Clegg, R Spearman, B Bartram, G Mulliner, Mrs Grigg, Mrs S Jackman MBE, B Eldridge, D Stallan, N Bedford, A Tyler

Officers in Attendance (2)

Susan Deluca - Clerk

Adriana Jones – Principal Finance Officer

Members of the Public (0)

Members of the Press (1)

C15.133 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (2)

NOTED that apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Mrs Adams, and Mrs Godwin-Brown.

C15.134 OTHER ABSENCES (0)

No other absences were recorded.

C15.135 MINUTES

The Clerk informed Members that Cllr Blanks had contacted her regarding a number grammatical errors contained within both the Parish Council and F&GP minutes, all of which have been amended. Cllr Grigg had also contacted the Clerk regarding an amendment within the F&GP Minutes. Cllr Grigg confirmed that her amendment related to the parking spaces by Weald Common, and agreed that it should in fact read 'Cllr Grigg stated that her understanding was that the Parish Council were allocated 8 of the spaces, and the Village Hall 2'. Subject to these amendments, the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 7th December 2015, and the F&GP Meeting held on 21st December were **AGREED** and duly signed as a correct record.

The Clerk asked that following agreement regarding the F&GP Minutes, a formal resolution was made to accept a 0% increase in the precept for 2016/2017 financial Year. This was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Stallan, and **SECONDED** by Cllr Bartram. It was therefore **RESOLVED** that the Precept for 2016/2017 would be £172,034.

The Draft Minutes of the Parish Hall at Thornwood Committee Meeting held on 3rd December 2015 were duly **NOTED**.

C15.136 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Spearman declared a Pecuniary interest in any item relating to either the Local Plan or the Neighbourhood Plan.

C15.137 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions.

C15.138 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
DEC	PFO	Play Areas WEALD COMMON	Ongoing	Organisation of Removal of old equipment Padlocked at present, and removed within the next month.
DEC	Clerk & PFO	Neighbourhood Area Plan	Ongoing	Various Meetings & Actions
DEC	PFO	Budget	Various	Budget & Precept
NOV/ DEC	Clerk & PFO	Local plan	Meetings	Various Meetings Local Plan
DEC	Clerk	LHP Projects	Continuing	Submission of Projects to EFDC
DEC	Clerk	Planning Appeal	Golf Club	Appeal / Inspector
DEC	Senior Admin Officer	Various Env/ Highway Matters	Continuing	Ongoing .
DEC	Clerk	Brent House Farm	Continuing	Liaising with Senior Officers EFDC
DEC	Clerk/Cllr Buckley	Parade of Shops	Ongoing	Liaising with ECC & EFDC
DEC	Clerk	Hast Vil Hal	Grant App	Assisting with Application for Chairs
DEC	Clerk & Senior Admin Officer	Cemetery	Organising the marking up of the remaining vacant plots in Section One of the Cemetery	Confirming and Liaising with Les Hall - Parish Council's Grave Digging Contractor at Cemetery
Nov	PFO	Accounts	Ongoing	For Budget
ITEMS RECEIVED WHICH MAY BE OF INTEREST				
Various EFDC Agendas, North Weald Village Life				

Cllr Mrs Jackman asked if, as agreed, the Clerk had submitted a copy of the Highway List to Cllr Finch, Leader of ECC, to which the Clerk stated that she would check with the office staff that this has been completed. Cllr Mrs Jackman stated the Council should request a formal response from Cllr Finch.

Cllr Buckley stated that it was agreed that an article would be placed in the Village Life regarding the removal of the Shelter on Weald Common, and asked if this had been completed. The Clerk stated that this would be included within the next issue of Village Life, as the deadline for the previous issue had already passed.

C15.139 REPORTS AND MEMBERS REPORTS

- a) **Chairman's Report** – The Chairman thanked Cllr Mulliner for his assistance with the Norway House children's Christmas Party, and Cllr Buckley for attending the St Andrews School Christmas event.

- b) **Vice-Chairman's Report** – Cllr Buckley stated that following on from last month's report regarding the green area outside the shops in North Weald, he had been in contact with one of the Councils preferred contractors to obtain a quote to create this space, and it is hoped figures will be available for the next meeting. There had been one further enquiry from EFDC. Cllr Buckley confirmed that the Council would write to the owner of the shops to request the wall is fixed.
- c) **District Councillors Report** – All District Councillors had been invited to send a written report, however no reports had been submitted. Cllr Mrs Grigg gave a verbal report stating the EFDC Asset Management Committee had considered the possibility of putting on an air show in 2017, and that the Committee would likely put a recommendation to Cabinet to do so. However, for 2016 there would be a community day with as much of an aviation element as possible. These decisions had been taken following the Shoreham Air Crash Investigation Report.

Cllr Bedford stated that following his comments a few meetings back regarding the damage caused to both the pavement and road surface following a vehicle fire towards to the Talbot Roundabout, he had been in contact with Cllr Jackson who had in turn asked Cllr Bedford to obtain the registration details of the vehicle, which he had subsequently done and all details passed back to Cllr Jackson to action.

Cllr Bedford stated that he had raised concerns regarding the amount of hardcore being taken onto the site at the corner of Woodside, which he estimates is around 100 tonnes. The response from EFDC is that there is nothing they can do about it as at the appeal the relevant conditions were dropped, and as such there are no controls. Cllr Tyler asked what about the potential contamination of the site. Cllr Stallan stated that any contamination issues are the responsibility of the Environment Agency, and it would be for them to monitor where the hardcore has been imported from. Cllr Stallan stated that any conditions imposed on this site are done so by the Inspector and not EFDC. Cllr Clegg asked if the owner of the site would be obliged to remove the 100 tonnes of hardcore, and if there was any follow up from Cllr Whitbread or Clare Munday, however Councillors had no information regarding these queries.

- d) **Councillors Reports** – Cllr Eldridge reported that a fox had been reported entering a house in Hastingwood.
- e) **Environmental Issues** – Cllr Mulliner gave a brief report.

C15.140 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 December 2015. Cllr Bedford asked if the recent changes in the law also related to VAT needing to be claimed monthly, to which the Clerk stated she wasn't aware that this was the case, and that VAT is claimed on a quarterly basis.

C15.141 NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA PLAN

Members were reminded that there are two remaining Mopping Up Events to be held in January. The two dates are:

North Weald Village Hall – Saturday – 23rd January 2016 – 9.30am – 11am

Parish Hall at Thornwood - Saturday 23rd January 2016 – 11.30am – 1pm

Both dates have been advertised in Village Life, the Parish Council Notice Boards and the Parish Council website.

C15.142 100 YEARS OF NORTH WEALD AIRFIELD

Councillors noted that 2016 would be the 100 Year anniversary of North Weald Airfield, and that a celebratory Community Day would be held this year (date to be confirmed). At the F&GP Meeting, there was discussion regarding both the purchase and hire of a Marquee for the event, and that community groups could be invited to join the Parish Council in a Community Tent. The Clerk asked for suggestions as to which Community Groups should be invited to join the Parish Council in the tent, and that the number would be dependent on the size of the tent. The Chairman stated that there used to be a list of community group, and this should be the starting point.

Cllr Bedford suggested the Youth Camp of West Mersea would be willing to supply their very large marquee for the event, and that perhaps Cllr Jackson would be able to help with this. There was some conflicting understanding regarding whether or not a marquee should be hired or purchased, however after discussion it was **AGREED** that the Clerk should ascertain what groups would be interested in joining the Parish Council at this event, and that the size / hire / purchase of a marquee can be decided once numbers are known. Cllr Clegg stated that a deadline should be set for community groups to respond to enable the Parish Council time for the relevant organisation to be completed.

C15.143 QUEENS ROAD ALLOTMENTS – ACCESS FOR ALLOTMENT TENANTS DURING BUILDING WORKS BY EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL TO THE GARAGE SITE

Members **NOTED** that after advising Epping Forest District Councils Development Committee on 2nd December 2015 of the Access concerns and problems in relation to the Queens Road Garage site, the Clerk has been advised that Epping Forest District Council is unable to answer these issues at the current time. The Clerk has also contacted both Nigel Richardson, Assistant Director of Planning, and Paul Pledger, Deputy Head of Housing, following the granting of Planning approval of this site. An officer from District Council telephoned the Clerk on Christmas Eve and advised that they will not be able to advise the Parish Council until the end of January or the beginning of February at the earliest. Cllr Stallan stated that he had spoken with Paul Pledger on this issue in the week before Christmas and that Paul Pledger had stated that discussions were taking place with a resident adjacent to the allotments regarding access during this period of time, and that he would be happy to contact Paul to ascertain the current situation. The Clerk stated that she was concerned access arrangements would not be in place before works commenced. Cllr Mulliner stated that allotment holders were nearing the time of year when preparation and planting of their allotments would be taking place, and that it was important allotment holders were made aware if there was not going to be access.

Cllr Stallan confirmed that there is no formal agreement in place between EFDC and the Parish Council regarding access to this land, to which the Clerk stated that allotment holders have been using this access for many years. Cllr Stallan stated that he had been informed by Paul Pledger that EFDC are looking get a proper agreement regarding access drawn up. It was **AGREED** Cllr Stallan would contact Paul Pledger asking him to provide the Clerk with an update on this situation.

**C15.144 POLICY DECISION NORTH WEALD BASSETT PARISH COUNCIL
LIBRARY SERVICES AND OFFICE**

Members **NOTED** that the Parish Council has a 10 year agreement with Essex County Council regarding the occupation of the offices at North Weald Library. Contained within this agreement is a 7.5 year break clause on both sides. Whilst the majority of the time the relationship between the Essex County Council and the Parish Council has been a fairly ‘harmonious’ one there have been a number of trying and problematic concerns for all the staff. The main one being that of a ‘Front Line’ Reception for Essex County Council Issues, such as Highways, Social Matters, Education, and Libraries. Whilst we realise that we opted to undertake a partnership working with Essex County Council it does seem to be somewhat ‘one sided’ especially in terms of:

Library – ECC will not give access to their computers, therefore we can only offer a part service, and Mitie who are the Maintenance Company for Essex Council are often making it very difficult in other ways for us to operate within the office, ie – with no heating in the actual office.

Highways – are in a seemingly dreadful state over the last couple of years and they do not seem to be getting any better with Jo spending between 4 – 5 hours a week, on average on Highway Issues.

Members were reminded that the office staff also undertake ‘Front Line’ Reception for Epping Forest District Council. This is mainly due to the fact that we are in the Library, we are very visual, easy to access, and Residents see the Parish Council as the Front Line and the only way of communicating to anyone in authority – especially if those in authority will not communicate with them, as could be seen in the recent case with the Police who the residents perceived (and to some extent quite correctly) had not been listened to in relation to Halloween and Fireworks Night. Added to this, the Parish Council has always had a very good record of acting on, and actioning residents concerns.

It was the Clerks understanding that the Parish Council were now within the 7.5 year break clause period, and wanted members to be aware that in the near future decisions would need to be made in terms of how to move forward. After the 7.5 year break clause, either party need only give the other respective party 3 months notice to terminate the agreement, and as such the Clerk wanted to provide members with notice that this could be a possibility.

Cllr Stallan asked if there had been any indication from ECC that they wanted to give the Parish Council 3 months notice or intended to terminate the agreement, to which

the Clerk stated there had not been. Cllr Mulliner stated that the Parish Council pay ECC for the hire of the Office, and asked how this, and the funding of a premises in the future, would be paid for, to which the Clerk confirmed it would be by way of the precept. Cllr Eldridge mentioned that the working conditions for the staff are very cramped and there are problems with the heating in the Parish Office, and this needed to be considered. The Chairman stated that in the first instance the Council should establish what the current situation is in terms of the future of the library and consider approaching ECC stating we would like to renew the lease.

Cllr Blanks asked if ECC had given any indication that they may / may not close the library, to which the Clerk stated they had not, and suggested perhaps the Council should contact ECC Cllr Jackson asking if he is aware of what the future holds.

Cllr Bedford suggested that perhaps the library should be registered as an asset of community value, so that if the library ever gets sold, the Parish Council has a right to put in a bid to purchase it. Cllr Stallan stated that even if the Parish Council puts in a bid to purchase the library, ECC would be under no obligation to sell to the Parish Council, and whilst this was a reasonable suggestion he supported the Chairman's idea of contacting ECC regarding the possibility of renewing the lease.

Cllr Tyler declared an interest in this item as his wife is an employee of the Parish Council, stating that in his opinion the building doesn't really work any longer and is not fit for purpose, namely because there is no heating in the staff office, meaning the office is normally freezing cold, and its full of asbestos. Cllr Tyler suggested the Parish Council should look into the possibility of sourcing an alternative location at which to base the Parish Office.

Cllr Mrs Grigg stated she supported a hybrid of all the mooted scenarios, suggesting that in the first instance the Parish Council should contact ECC about the possibility of extending the lease, and that in the meantime any possible other viable locations within the Parish are explored.

Cllr Eldridge expressed the importance of any location being central within the village. Cllr Mrs Jackman expressed concern in that if the Parish Council decide to move to a different location, this would reduce the viability of the Library staying open which would be detrimental to residents.

The Chairman stated that if the Parish get more houses, the workload will increase which will mean the need for larger office space.

Cllr Mulliner suggested that the soon to be vacated post office in the High Street may be a suitable option and should be considered. Cllr Buckley and Cllr Spearman agreed this was a good idea. Cllr Mrs Grigg stated that parking would be an issue at the post office.

Cllr Clegg stated that the timing of contact with ECC was critical. After discussion, it was **AGREED** that the Clerk would inform the Council when she felt the time was right to approach ECC regarding this issue, and that she should also look into any

other suitable options within the parish. Cllr Stallan stated it was only right that the Clerk had the backing of the Council with any decision, and suggested this item should be placed on the agenda in 6 months time. Cllr Clegg suggested it should be a regular monthly item on the agenda. After discussion, it was **AGREED** that this would be placed on the agenda in 6 months time.

C15.145 F&GP MEETING 21 DECEMBER - CLARIFICATION OF POINTS

The Clerk stated that following the F&GP Meeting of 21st December 2015, there were a couple of points that required clarification.

Weald Common

This relates to Cllr Mulliner's request that clarification be obtained regarding ownership of the car park spaces near Weald Common. The Clerk asked Cllr Mulliner to confirm what his understanding was. Cllr Mulliner stated that it was his understanding that nobody had ownership of that land, and as such no right to give it away as it was under a covenant. The Clerk stated that the Parish Council has a document which proves the Parish Council owns 8 car parking spaces and that these were transferred on 31st July 1999. Cllr Mulliner stated that was all we needed to know. The Clerk stated that these were transferred via Pier Group. A document signed by Cllr Stallan and Bob Wood was given to Cllr Stallan asking if he recalled signing the document, to which Cllr Stallan stated that after seeing the document he did recall this. The Clerk stated that she had contacted both EFDC and Pier Group asking for further confirmation of these facts. Cllr Stallan suggested that perhaps the Village Hall would also have a copy of the signed document, to which it was suggested that either Charlie Adams or Graeme Moore may have had a copy. Cllr Mulliner stated that as long as all parties were aware of who owned what.

Cllr Bartram asked how many car parking spaces were included within the Village Hall Rateable Value, as it is £15.00 per car parking space. Cllr Mulliner stated he was unsure. Cllr Bedford stated that the Parish Council could be given a bill for the tarmac that was completed there, to which the Clerk stated this would not be acceptable as the Parish Council had not authorised any works to their 8 spaces.

Queens Hall

The Clerk stated that she was asked to write to the Queens Hall Charity asking for a contribution to the Public Works Loan payments that are made twice a year, suggesting that she should also ask for a copy of their accounts. Cllr Stallan stated that the Queens Hall should be asked first to contribute, and if they failed to do so then the Council should ask for a copy of their accounts. Cllr Bartram stated that it was not many months ago that several Parish Council appointed trustees resigned from the Queens Hall Charity believing that the Charity would not be in a viable financial position at the end of this financial year, yet the Parish Council are asking them for money. The Chairman stated that when he, as a Trustee, resigned from the Charity it was because the Charity had taken the conscious decision to run at a loss, and not because it may not be in a viable financial position.

CCTV

The Clerk stated that with regard to the query as to why the CCTV figures for the shops in North Weald changed from £3,600 to £5,000, this was because the initial figure of £3,600 was a rough estimate, however after further investigation Adrian Petty, EFDC, suggested a more appropriate revised figure would be £5,000.

Cllr Tyler stated he would like to raise two issues, the first being that each month the same two gentlemen complete a litter pick in the Village, and suggested that as 2016 is the Queens 90th Birthday which is being marked by a national anti-litter campaign, the Parish Council may want to try and gain some addition support and enthusiasm. The Chairman stated that the litter picks have been advertised many times, and people are simply not interested. Cllr Tyler raised his second issue, stating that following the recent Neighbourhood Watch meeting, and the increase in support for the Neighbourhood Watch programme, a joint partnership working arrangement could benefit both parties, especially when it comes to the delivery of leaflets. Cllr Stallan stated a point of order in that this item was not on the agenda.

Meeting closed 20.53

Signed
Date