



DRAFT MINUTES

Meeting: COUNCIL

Date: 4th July 2016

Time: 7.35PM

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

PRESENT:

Councillors (7) C Hawkins (Chairman), B Bartram, R Spearman, B Clegg, Mrs A Grigg
B Eldridge, G Mulliner

Officers in Attendance (2)

Susan De Luca, Clerk
Adriana Jones – Principal Finance Officer

Members of the Public (3)

Members of the Press (0)

C16.034 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (7)

NOTED that apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs Bedford, Stallan, Mrs E Godwin-Brown, Mrs S Jackman, T Blanks, A Buckley, and A Tyler.

C16.035 OTHER ABSENCES (0)

None.

C16.036 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 6th June 2016 were *AGREED* and duly signed as a correct record. Councillors *NOTED* the minutes of the Environmental Meeting held on 1st June 2016.

C16.037 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations of interest were given:

- Cllr Spearman - Pecuniary interest in items referring to the Neighbourhood Plan and Local Plan.
- Cllr Eldridge - Non pecuniary interest in agenda item 11 - Hastingwood Village Hall
- Cllr Bartram - Non pecuniary interest in agenda items 11 & 12 - Hastingwood Village Hall and Queens Road Allotments.
- Cllr Mulliner - Non pecuniary interest in agenda items 15 & 16 - Car Parking at North Weald Village Hall.

C16.038 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Three members of the public were present, however there were no questions.

C16.039 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
JUNE	CLERK	Personnel / HR Issues	Ongoing/Continuing	Liaising with CARETAKER & BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN – REASSESSMENT

OF STAFFING PRIORITIES				
JUNE	Clerk/PFO	Neighbourhood Area Plan	Ongoing	Various Actions
JUNE	CLERK/PFO	HASTING VILL HALL	Ongoing	VAT/Liaising with Representative on Hall Committee
JUNE	Clerk /Cllr Buckley/Senior Admin Officer	GARDEN	Garden Opening	Various Actions
JUNE	PFO	EXTERNAL AUDIT	Ongoing	Forms Submitted
JUNE	Clerk	COMM CHURCH SERV	ONGOING	Church Service Now Postponed
JUNE	CLERK	VARIOUS CEMETERY MATTERS	ONGOING	Various Actions
JUNE	ALL STAFF	FLOODING	ONGOING	ONGOING – various actions – Contact Clerk for details
ITEMS RECEIVED WHICH MAY BE OF INTEREST				
Various EFDC Agendas, North Weald Village Life,				

Members **NOTED** that the Clerk had received correspondence from Public Health England regarding plans for a new Science Hub in Harlow. The Clerk read out the content of the letter which detailed the proposed site as Coldharbour Road, and that a public exhibition had already been held. A further extensive period of public engagement would take place, with consultation being as wide as possible. Public Health England also offered to meet with the Parish Council if so requested.

Members **NOTED** the Epping Forest Broadband Business breakfast taking place at 7am on 13th September at Mulburry house.

C16.040 MEMBERS REPORTS

The following reports were **RECEIVED**:

- a) **Chairman's Report** – The Chairman informed Members that a trial run for the Community Day event on 17th July would be taking place the following day, Tuesday 5th July, 7pm in the Parish Hall in Thornwood, and all Councillors were invited to attend to assist with the set up so they are aware of what needs to take place on the day.
- b) **Vice-Chairman's Report** – No report
- c) **District Councillors Report** – No report
- d) **County Councillor Report** - No report
- e) **Councillors Reports** – Cllr Eldridge stated that the issue of fly tipping at Brent House Farm is still a problem, despite the fact that EFDC had been notified, and

that he was still awaiting a response from Harlow Council regarding the horses and their young on Harlow Common.

- f) **Environmental Issues** – The Clerk reported that Midi Deluca had cleared all the weeds from the Garden outside the shops in North Weald the prior week, and that this was completed on a volunteer basis. Cllr Mulliner stated that his wife had also cleared some of the weeds too. Cllr Mulliner stated that at the suggestion of a local resident, himself and Cllr Spearman had installed a flower box underneath the Village Sign as you enter the village from the Talbot, and that the local resident had placed plants in the box. A letter of thanks had been received from the resident.

C16.041 FLOODING IN THE OFFICE

It was **AGREED** this item would be moved to the closed section of the meeting, the Council believing that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be discussed.

C16.042 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 30th June 2016.

C16.043 QUEENS HALL CHARITY

Councillors were reminded by Cllr Bartram that around two years ago the Parish Council budgeted for the cost of a minute secretary for the Queens Hall Charity for a 1 year period, and that a Jean Juniper, a local resident, had been secured for this task. Cllr Bartram reported that Jean had not taken a penny for the works she has completed, and agreed to do this work free of charge for the benefit of the local community. Cllr Bartram had approached Jean asking if she would like to get involved with the decision making for the Charity, and as such become a Trustee, to which Jean confirmed she would be. As such, Cllr Bartram asked Councillors if they would be happy to nominate Jean Juniper as a Parish Council appointed Trustee to the Queens Hall Charity, to which Councillors **AGREED** they would.

C16.044 HASTINGWOOD VILLAGE HALL

Councillors **NOTED** that the Project to commence building works at the Hastingwood Village Hall has begun. It can be completed in either one or two stages, however two stages would cost more. With regard to the Section 106 monies, the Clerk confirmed that the first payment of £50,000 had been received, however the 2nd stage payment of the Section 106 (from Brent House Farm) has still not been paid. This is chased monthly by the Clerk. Hastingwood Village is short of approximately £18,750 to complete the whole of the project. The project had to be commenced due to the length of time of the Planning Application was granted, three years ago, together with the changes in Planning which meant the developer could have challenged the Parish Council for the return of the £50,000 held £50,000 by the Parish Council. The Parish Council had been liaising with the VAT Office and the VAT Office had at first advised that VAT could be reclaimed, which would have meant that the whole of the project could have been completed with very little VAT

liability, however because the Hall had received a £20,000 grant from the Community Initiative Fund, this would have compromised this option and also taken the Parish Council over the 'de minimus' level for VAT. As such, the Parish Council were advised not to proceed to reclaim the VAT. This has led the Hastingwood Village Hall to be caught between a 'rock and a hard place'.

If the Project is carried out in two stages, the overall cost of the project will be more, and obviously the builders will stop work half way through. The Hastingwood Village Hall can try to look for Emergency Funding but it may take 3 – 6 months for this funding to come through, if it is successful.

There were two issues to be discussed:

1. Section 106 monies due from EFDC

The Clerk confirmed that she chased EFDC on a monthly basis to establish the latest situation with regard to these funds, and that the second tranche of funds still awaited was secured by way of a unilateral undertaking between EFDC and two companies. It is understood that the current owners have just sold the site, and one of the companies with which the unilateral undertaking has gone into liquidation, and there is concern that if EFDC legal were to pursue the matter, a judge may find it unreasonable to ask for the money if the company states they have none. On Friday of last week, the Clerk and Cllr Bedford checked the company records which stated that the remaining company has filed as 'discharging' its liabilities as far as the unilateral undertaking is concerned. Cllr Bedford had contacted Glen Chipp at EFDC stating that these were events that happened over the Christmas period, to establish why the District Council has not been chasing to secure the funds.

2. How to progress the building works

The Clerk confirmed that due to recent legislation meaning S106 monies could be claimed back by the developer if unused, the Hastingwood Village Hall had no option but to start works, and as such needed to ensure the £50,000 was spent. The Hastingwood Village Hall also had £20,000 of funding received via the ECC Community Initiatives Fund, and £20,000 secured from the Parish Council. Whilst the Village Hall could stop works and wait for further funds to be received, this would mean the works would be more expensive and the hall would be left in a state where it would be very difficult to hire out (temporary portaloos). A member of the Hastingwood Village hall confirmed that they pay £130/month for this hire. She also confirmed that she had applied for grant funding from EFDC for us to £5,000, and has also applied for emergency funding of £15,000 via the ECC Community Initiatives Emergency fund. This means that at present, the hall is just under £19,000 short to complete the works. The Hall representative stated that they are looking to see if the Parish Council could fund the remaining amount needed until these grants are received, at which time the funds could be returned to the Parish Council. The Chairman confirmed the hall were effectively looking for something similar to a bridging loan.

Cllr Grigg asked if the current lettings covering the cost of the hire of portaloos, to which the hall representatives stated they were just about breaking even, but confirmed that they had lost bookings due to this. Cllr Grigg asked if the hall had

approached Stansted Airport, who have a community fund, to which the hall representative stated that the hall was outside the 10mile radius. Cllr Grigg suggested this was double checked this as both the Queens Hall and Village Hall in North Weald have both received funding via this medium, stating that perhaps Cllr Richard Morgan should also be contacted.

Cllrs were given a copy of the current status of earmarked reserves, and discussed possible means of sourcing the funds on a temporary basis.

Cllr Clegg suggested a two pronged approach should be taken:

1. Lean on EFDC to extract funds expended to be received, and request they legally chase the reasons why monies have not been paid; and
2. Negotiate what happens next in terms of funding works to the Village Hall, and how the funding it obtained.

The Clerk confirmed that the Parish Council is able to make payments via the Section 137 power open to the Local Authority, which is set at a specific amount per member of the electorate. Cllr Spearman confirmed he would be happy to provide a short term loan to the Hastingwood Village Hall to cover the short term costs. Cllr Bartram confirmed he too was happy, however it would need to be with a guarantee that the funds would be paid back to the Parish Council.

After further discussion, it was **AGREED** that the Clerk would arrange to meet with EFDC to establish how the remaining £50,000 would be acquired, and whether or not any of these funds could be provided prior to actual receipt by the developer.

C16.045 QUEENS ROAD ALLOTMENTS ACCESS

Members **NOTED** that following the last meeting, she had now received written confirmation from Paul Pledger – Assistant Director of Housing at Epping Forest District Council - that pedestrian access will be maintained to the Queens Road Allotments during building works.

C16.046 COMMUNITY AGENTS

Members **NOTED** that the Clerk has received confirmation that June Bevan the Local Community Agent will attend the October Parish Council Meeting and give a short 15 minute presentation of the work that Community Agents undertake in Essex to this Council. Members **AGREED** that Ms Bevan should give her presentation at 6.45pm prior to the Planning Meeting if the number of plans to be discussed was not too great.

C16.047 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

There being Exempt (pink) pages on the agenda, the Chairman proposed 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. This was **AGREED**.

C16.048 PARISH OWNED CAR PARKING SPACES ADJACENT TO WEALD COMMON

Members **NOTED** that complaints had been received of local businesses using the Parish Owned car parking spaces adjacent to Weald Common for staff parking throughout the day. The Clerk confirmed that no office staff have given permission for local businesses to use this as staff parking. There was some discussion regarding the possible identification of the Parish Council owned parking spaces

C16.049 PARKING AT NORTH WEALD VILLAGE HALL

The Chairman stated that North Weald Village Hall has only 29 car parking spaces available to use for hall functions, and that there are often functions in the hall with over 100 people and parking can be an issue. The Chairman stated that he had briefly spoken with the Chairman of the Village Hall, and would like to explore the possibility supporting the release of a small piece of green belt adjacent to the hall so that a parking space can be created for a further 40 cars. The Chairman explained that parking in this area is important for the village of North Weald as whole, as it supports local businesses by providing people with a place to park so they can visit local shops, etc. The Chairman stated that the Chairman of the Village Hall had suggested that he could apply for funding of up to £15,000 and that the project in total would cost around £48,000. Cllr Grigg expressed her concern at the location of the suggested car park area with Dukes Close, stating that she felt residents there, would not support the release of Green Belt in this area. In addition, this was an issue for the Village Hall to deal with and not the Parish Council. The Chairman stated that this was simply an idea at present, and he was not asking the Parish Council to financially support any such project - it was simply to ascertain the Parish Councils views.

After some discussion, the following comments were noted:

Cllr Grigg expressed her concern stating that with the information she had at present, she would be unable to support such a proposal. Cllr Eldridge and Cllr Clegg abstained. Cllrs Mulliner, Spearman and Bartram supported the idea in principal.

C16.050 FLOODING AT THE OFFICE

Members **NOTED** that the Clerk had been liaising with ECC Cllr Anthony Jackson with regard to the clear up following the flood and the provision of carpet for the Parish Office. Cllr Jackson had in turn been liaising with ECC.

Meeting closed 21.02

Date

Sign:.....