



DRAFT MINUTES

Meeting: COUNCIL

Date: 1st June 2015

Time: 7.30 PM

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

PRESENT:

Councillors (11) C Hawkins (Chairman), B Eldridge, T Blanks, B Clegg, Mrs D Adams
R Spearman, Mrs A Grigg, B Bartram, G Mulliner, A Tyler, D Stallan

Also in Attendance (2)

Susan De Luca – Clerk to the Council
Adriana Jones – Principal Finance Officer

Members of the Public (2)

- Cllr Mrs Sheila Jackman, EALC Representative, District Cllr Richard Morgan

Members of the Press (1)

C15.022 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (3)

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

C15.023 OTHER ABSENCES (0)

No other absences were recorded.

C15.024 CO-OPTION OF PARISH COUNCILORS

Members noted that there were three Councillor vacancies covering both the Hastingwood and North Weald Village ward. Two candidates were in attendance stating their intention to stand for co-option - one for North Weald Village ward, and the other for Hastingwood.

Mrs Deborah Adams was the candidate for Hastingwood, and was having to go through this process due to a personal problem in submitting her paperwork to the Election Office. A vote was taken and Cllr Adams was duly Co-opted as Councillor for the Hastingwood Ward.

The Chairman invited Andrew Tyler to address the Council. Mr Tyler gave a summary of his working history, stating that he had been resident in North Weald Village for many years, and would like to take on the role of Councillor to benefit the local community. The Chairman asked Mr Tyler to leave the meeting whilst discussions took place concerning his co-option.

Cllr Mulliner asked if the Council should be concerned that Mr Tyler was the husband of a member of staff, to which the Clerk stated that being part of the Parish Council should be open to everybody, and that she had taken advice regarding this matter. Cllr Stallan stated that Cllr Mulliner had raised the same question he was intending to, stating that it would have been helpful if Councillors would have known of the relationship prior to the meeting. The Clerk stated that Mr Tyler was present under his own merit and that the advice received had been not to mention any such

relationship. Councillors **AGREED** that Mr Tyler was a good candidate, and should be Co-opted onto the Council. Cllr Stallan suggested Councillors are advised of any such relationships in this context should a similar situation arise in the future, even if it was in a personal email not attached to the agenda. The Clerk noted the Cllr Stallan's comment.

C15.025 MINUTES

Subject to a number of minor grammatical amendments, the Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting held on 11th May 2015 were **AGREED** and duly signed. Cllr Clegg referred to page 7 of the minutes, asking if Epping Youth had been informed that organised football could not be conducted on Thornwood Common. The Clerk confirmed she had given a letter to the Chairman some five days ago. The Chairman confirmed he had hand delivered this to the residents father. Cllr Spearman stated that the resident involved with this had spoken to him recently stating that he hadn't received a response. It was **AGREED** the Chairman would investigate further.

C15.026 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Spearman declared a Discloseable Pecuniary interest in any item relating to the Local Plan by virtue of submitting land via the call for sites.

C15.027 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Cllr Mrs Jackman mentioned the state of a council owned property along North Weald High Road which looked run down and dishevelled, however after discussion it was noted that this was in fact a private residence, and that the Parish Council had no powers with private home owners.

C15.028 CLERKS UPDATE AND COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

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

Date	Reported By or Action Initiated By	Regarding	Date Add Action Taken	Further Action Taken
May	Clerk,	Weald Common	Ongoing	CCTV/Vandalism/Pathway
May	Clerk & PFO	Neighbourhood Area Designation	Ongoing	Various Actions – Correspondence dealing with Members of the Public & EFDC/ Green Planning Studios
May	Clerk	Queens Hall Charity	Ongoing	Liaising with Charity Commission – Letter from PC & Response Letter from Charity Commission Attached
May	PFO & Senior Admin Officer	Training	May	Cemetery & Health & Safety
May	PFO	End of Year Accounts	End of Year	Accounting – Corporate Governance
May	PFO	OMEGA	Accounts	New Accounts Package
May	Senior Admin Officer	Various Env/ Highway Matters	Continuing	Ongoing .
April & May	Clerk & PFO	Tree Risk Assessment	Continuing	Report Attached
May	Office Staff	Parish Hall Matters	Continuing	Various Matters

May	Clerk	Election/ democratic	Ongoing	Notices & Administrative
May	PFO	Health & Safety	Ongoing	Various Issues
ITEMS RECEIVED WHICH MAY BE OF INTEREST				
Various EFDC Agendas, North Weald Village Life, Hastingwood Village Hall AGM – 6 th June @ 10.15am.				

The Clerk stated that with regard to the issue of the Queens Hall Charity, she had received a communication for Cllr Blanks in which he stated that the hall and the field from which the Charity operates is Parish Council owned, and as such the Parish Council are Custodian Trustees of the Charity. This means the Parish Council would be in a position of responsibility should the Charity fail, and there are grounds to suspect it may, it could come into the management of the Parish Council. Cllr Blanks continued stating that five Councillors resigned over the finances being incorrectly addressed, and hire fees not being sufficient to cover the costs of running the hall.

The Clerk confirmed she had been in contact with the Charity Commission who seemed not to be concerned stating that this is a problem for the Trustees to deal with, advising the Clerk to review some booklets. Cllr Blanks stated he was unsure exactly what would happen if the Charity fails, however suspects that at the very least the Parish Council should ensure it is acquainted with what's happening, and request a copy of the accounts are sent to both the Parish Council and the Charity Commission on a monthly basis.

Cllr Blanks stated that he only recently became aware that the Public Works Loan paid by the Parish Council was for the building of the Pavilion at the Queens Hall. In his view, the Capital Repayment is of benefit to the Parish Council, however he feels the interest should be charged to the Charity. He continued stating that this may seem an odd thing to suggest being as they are struggling, however feels it is a legitimate expenses and one which the Parish Council should consider. Cllr Stallan stated that he was glad Cllr Blanks was supporting what he had asked for at a previous meeting, stating that it was going to be on the May agenda. The Clerk stated that she hadn't received a response from the Charity Commission until the day after. Cllr Stallan stated that in his view there should be a meeting arranged, whether it be a Parish Council meeting that goes into private session, or a meeting on its own, but the Parish Council should be preparing for the eventuality that the Queens Hall may come back to the Parish Council to manage. A plan needs to be in place.

Cllr Bartram stated that he was Chairman of the charity, and as this item was on the Clerks update, no decisions could made and it was not correct to go into the detail of the Charity at this time. Cllr Bartram suggested it be put onto a pink for the July meeting, however it was noted that the July meeting would be the last one before recess, and as such a separate meeting may be more appropriate.

The Clerk stated that she felt the Charity Commission had not fully read or understood both her letter nor the Business Continuity plan she had drawn up,

stating these do need to be discussed fully. It was **AGREED** that the Clerk would arrange for an extraordinary meeting to be held to discuss this issue.

Members noted that the Annual Report from Countrycare had also been received, in which the Parish Council owned land was mentioned on numerous occasions.

C15.029 REPORTS AND MEMBERS REPORTS

- a) **Chairman's Report** – The Chairman reported that there had been discussion for a large marquee to be used for the 12th July Community Day at North Weald Airfield in which any sections of the North Weald Community could have a stall. This would be a joint venture with other locally interested groups, and would be discussed further by the Environmental Committee. Councillors agreed this was a good idea in principle.

The Chairman took this opportunity to thank Cllr Eldridge for being his Vice Chairman for so many years.

- b) **Vice-Chairman's Report** – Cllr Buckley reported that within the latest edition of Village Life was a letter, a copy of which the Clerk read out for Members, concerning the Parish Councils objection to the McDonalds at the M11 roundabout being open 24/7. The Clerk had asked if Cllr Buckley would respond to the letter as Vice Chairman for the Parish Council, and a copy of this proposed response was also read out. Members **AGREED** with the Vice Chairman's response. Cllrs expressed their concern in the that the objection wasn't purely based on litter, but on HGV Movements and noise this would create throughout the night for the local residents in that area. Councillors requested a further sentence was sensitively included which details the work of the litter operative in the area.
- c) **District Councillors Report** – No report.
- d) **Highways** – No update.
- e) **Councillors Reports** – Cllr Eldridge thanked Councillors for the very kind letter he received via the Clerk thanking him for his service as the Vice Chairman.
- f) **Environmental Issues** – Cllr Mulliner reported that a group of allotment tenants at North Weald had set up a group who will manage chickens on a plot, however each will take it in turns to feed and clean them. The Allotment Warden had been advised to ensure that the group was aware that produce from the chicken could not be sold, and that the keeping of chickens could not be run as a business.

Cllr Mulliner reported that the litter at the new Weald Common Play Area remains as issue on a daily basis.

C15.030 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 noted the bank balances to 31st May 2015.

b) Approval of Year End Accounts for 2014/2015

A copy of the Accounts for 2014/2015 were attached to the agenda. These were **AGREED** by Council.

c) To approve the Annual Governance Statement

The PFO read out the Annual Governance Statement, to which Councillors duly responded and accepted all proper practices had taken place for 2014/2015. The Annual Return for 2014/2015 was **AGREED** and duly signed by the Chairman.

C15.031 NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA DESIGNATION

The Clerk reported that as Councillors were aware, a report containing advice from a Barrister concerning EFDC's proposal to designate an alternative area was awaited, however the Barrister had been very ill which had delayed receipt of the report. The Clerk read out an email from the Planning Consultant which detailed that a full report would be available by midday on 8th June. The Clerk stated that the EFDC Cabinet meeting at which the decision will be taken is on 11th June, and as such she had spoken with Democratic Services at EFDC who had advised her that details of any correspondence the Parish Council would like Cabinet Members to consider should be with them, delivered by hand, by 3pm Tuesday 9th June. To this end, an Extraordinary Meeting of the Parish Council will need to be held on Monday 8th June for Councillors to decide how they wished to respond to the advice given. This will be tabled for 6.30pm to allow Councillors time to read and digest the advice.

Councillors expressed concern that with such a tight deadline this could cause problems for the Parish Council. The Clerk stated that the Parish Council had engaged the Planning Consultants, and that if the Barrister was unavailable, perhaps a reserve Barrister would be instructed to look at the case. In addition, an email received from the Planning Consultant earlier did not indicate there were any significant issues.

The Clerk informed members that included within the Cabinet agenda was a report concerning progress of the District Councils Local Plan, stating that there had been a delay of approximately a year. Cllr Blanks asked if there was a specific reason for this delay, to which the PFO stated that it was her understanding that the District Council were learning from other Councils who were going through the examination process with their plans being found 'unsound'. Cllr Stallan stated that this was correct, and that the goal posts for Local Planning were being constantly moved as the District Council goes through the process. The advice given to the District Council was to do it once, and do it right.

Councillors **AGREED** to an extraordinary meeting on Monday 8th June at which the advice from the Barrister would be tabled and a decision made by council as to how to proceed.

C15.032 PARISH HALL THORNWOOD COMMON

a) Painting of the exterior of the hall

Members **NOTED** that members of the Management Committee had painted the external facade of the Village Hall. The Chairman confirmed that works were not quite finished yet as the process has been a little more difficult than first thought, and they had run out of paint. The Chairman confirmed that on Tuesday, a member of the public who wished to remain anonymous donated £100 towards the paint, and would like his thanks recorded to that individual in the minutes of this meeting. Cllr Stellan asked if the receipt of the £100 would be detailed on a later set of accounts as it was not on the May list, to which the Clerk confirmed it would be.

b) Upgrade the Mains Circuit Board

Members were reminded that on a number of occasions the electricity supply had failed when functions had been taking place at the Parish Hall. A survey of the Electrical Supply system had been undertaken, and it was discovered that it's necessary to have upgrade works completed to the mains circuit board, due mainly to all appliances in the hall being electric and the old circuit board should have been upgraded to the more sensitive circuit breakers which are associated with the more contemporary boards. These were classed as essential works and should be carried out to ensure that the supply does not fail when the hall is booked and events held there. Such failures would leave the hall open to action and claims being taken by those hiring the hall for events if the electricity supply fails and the event could not continue. The cost of such works had not been included in the Budget for 2015/2016.

Two quotes were attached to the agenda for Members perusal. The Chairman stated that he had received a donation from Epping Electrical to support the Thornwood Festival Village Day and confirmed he would not take part in discussions or decision making on this matter. Cllr Tyler reported that as a lighting and design engineer, he understood the content of the quotes and works required, and would like to raise a few points as follows:

- The VAT charged by Epping Electrical can be claimed back
- Sheppard's are not registered for VAT, so no VAT is added
- Epping Electrical may be looking at out of hours working, which could be costly
- Concern as to whether or not both quotes include the changing of the Exit boxes
- Inconsistencies between the quotes in terms of items to be covered, which required clarification

Taking the above into account, Cllr Tyler stated that at this point in time Sheppard's looked like the better quote. Cllr Clegg proposed that Cllr Tyler take some time to look further into the issues he raised, together with the quotes, and come back to the Clerk with his recommendation. This was **SECONDED** by Cllr Grigg, and subsequently **AGREED** by Council.

C15.033 WEALD COMMON

a) Pathway - £3,860

Members **NOTED** that following a meeting between the Chairman of the Parish Council and the Chairman of the Village Hall Committee, written confirmation had

now been received giving approval for a Contractors vehicle to go across the Village Hall field, and the Parish Council were awaiting a start date from the Contractor. Cllr Blanks stated that he would like it recorded that an alternative location for a path across the Village Hall land is a total waste of money, as people will simply use the shortest route. It was explained that the path agreed started from the Millennium Stone and went over the Parish Council owned land of Weald Common, and not the Village Hall land. Cllr Blanks confirmed that he felt this too would be a waste of money.

b) CCTV for Weald Common Play Area

It was *NOTED* there was no further progress with this matter.

C15.034 HEALTH & SAFETY (H&S)

Following the PFO's recent attendance at a H&S training session, Members *NOTED* that attached to the agenda was a full report from the PFO setting out the Parish Council's Health and Safety obligations as a public body. It was accepted that the extent to which work was required to ensure the H&S obligations of the Council were met was immense, but that some of this work had already started or was already in place, for example the Tree Survey and play area checks. The Clerk stated that all Councillors had been invited to attend the H&S Course, however no councillor put themselves forward to do this, and as such the PFO had attended and was now the Appointed H&S Representative for the Parish Council. The PFO would ensure any H&S issues were reported to the Clerk, who would in turn ensure they were either dealt with or passed to Council to make a formal decision. The Clerk stated that she hoped the Office Staff could rely on the support of the Council to ensure these works were undertaken.

Whilst Councillors expressed concern at the level of bureaucracy, financial and staffing resources which were involved with what seemed like trivial matters, they fully understood the report, and also understood their Health & Safety obligations as a Council, and agreed to support the Office Staff with this task.

C15.035 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

It was *RESOLVED* 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."

C15.036 LETTER FROM RESIDENT REGARDING WHEELERS FARM GARDENS ALLOTMENTS AND ASSOCIATED ACCESS

Councillors *NOTED* a copy of the letter from the resident that was attached to the agenda, and that the issue concerning the planting of a hedge between Wheelers Farm Gardens and Queens Road allotments had been completed. After discussion, it was *AGREED* that a letter should be written to the resident confirming that the Parish Council had considered the content of the letter and would not be making any changes to rules and regulations of tenancy or details of access, suggesting the residents source their own legal advice on this matter.

Meeting closed: 10.15 pm

MINUTES

Signed

Date