



MINUTES

Meeting: COUNCIL

Date: 6th March 2017

Time: 7.45PM

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

PRESENT:

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

Officers in Attendance (2)

Susan De Luca, Clerk
Adriana Jones – Principal Finance Officer

Members of the Public (10)

Members of the Press (1)

C16.140 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (2)

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

C16.141 OTHER ABSENCES (0)

None.

C16.142 CO-OPTION OF COUNCILLOR

Members were aware there had been a Vacancy for a Parish Councillor for Hastingwood Ward since the middle of 2016. Due process had been followed and there had been no take up for a Councillor for that area. Matthew Harris, the Chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and a North Weald Resident, had expressed an interest in becoming a Parish Councillor, however there were no Vacancies in North Weald. A short paragraph giving brief resume of Matthew Harris was emailed to Councillors.

The Clerk advised that Councillors could discuss this co-option during the meeting, or the meeting could be closed. Cllr Stallan asked how this has been handled previously, to which the Clerk stated such discussions are normally held in private session. It was **AGREED** by way of **RESOLUTION** that that the public and the press be excluded from the meeting to allow Council to have a full and frank discussion and vote regarding the co-option of Matthew Harris onto the Parish Council. A number of members of the public present expressed their discontent at being asked to leave the meeting, stating they would not leave and would remain. After further discussion and requests, the public and press left the meeting.

[Meeting Closed. A short discussion took place regarding Mr Harris's application. The meeting was reopened and members of the public and press were invited to rejoin the meeting.]

The Clerk advised Mr Harris that the Council were happy to welcome him as Councillor for the Hastingwood Ward, however if he accepted this role he would not

be able to stand as Chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group in its present structure, or be a member of the Neighbourhood Plan in the present structure as it stands. Mr Harris confirmed his resignation from the position of Chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, and accepted the position of Councillor for the Hastingwood Ward. Cllr Harris duly signed his declaration of acceptance of office, and joined the meeting as Councillor for the Hastingwood Ward.

C16.143 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 6th February 2017 were **AGREED** and duly signed as a correct record. The Minutes of the Parish Hall at Thornwood Common Committee meeting held on the 9th February 2017 were **NOTED**.

C16.144 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Mulliner declared a interest in agenda item 12 - North Weald Village Hall. Cllr Stallan and Cllr Grigg declared an interest in agenda item 10 - Pods at Norway House.

C16.145 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

The Clerk advised that members of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group were in the public gallery and they had expressed their intention to address the Council, and that there were two options available to the Council. The first was that the speaker could address the Council under this agenda item, and the Council could respond, however the speaker would not have a right to reply. Alternatively the Chairman could put forward a motion to close the meeting under agenda item 17, which would allow a more interactive discussion to take place. Cllr Stallan asked if agenda item 17 could be brought forward, however the Clerk stated she was aware of other members of the public has expressed an interest in attending, and as such this should not take place. It was **AGREED** to close the meeting under agenda item 17 to allow for full discussion, and to give the Speaker amble time to address the Council.

The Chairman invited Mr Arthur Moreton, Local Historian, to address the Council. Mr Moreton stated that his comments were reference agenda item 11 - *Email from Winston Ramsey and research regarding ownership of Norwegian stone* - stating that over the past few months this seems to have become something of a mountain out of a molehill. Mr Moreton stated that it is important to remember that the memorial is not just about the Norwegian Stone, but about everybody who served at RAF North Weald form 1916 to 1964. It was erected in 2000, and incorporated the village sign to signify the community theme. The planning concept was passed by the Parish Council, EFDC and by the Norwegians. Mr Moreton stated that whilst it seems tempers did get frayed, things should now move on and focus on going forward for the benefit of the community, focussing on what the stone and debt of honour represent. Mr Morton confirmed he had arranged for the ATC to be available at this year's Remembrance day event in November which would alleviate the need for any members of the public to lay wreaths, as these could be passed to the ATC members to lay on their behalf. The Chairman thanked Mr Moreton for his address.

C16.146 CLERKS UPDATE AND COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

No report - This would be held over until next month.

C16.147 MEMBERS REPORTS

The following reports were **RECEIVED**:

- a) **Chairman's Report** – The Chairman stated there had been a number of difficult issues over the previous month, and that these were addressed at other points in the meeting.
- b) **Vice-Chairman's Report** – No Report
- c) **District Councillors Report** – No Report
- d) **County Councillor Report** - No Report
- e) **Environmental Report** - Cllr Mulliner reported that monthly allotment visits at Hastingwood have now started, and plot holders have begun working on their allotments.
- f) **Councillor Reports** – Cllr Eldridge reported that the fence outside Brent House Farm in Hastingwood has now been pulled down by Harlow Council, and that the presence of horses continues to be an issue in Hastingwood.

C16.148 FINANCIAL REPORTS

The cheque list for February was tabled and **AGREED**. Cllr Clegg asked if the Parish Council were out of pocket following the replacement of the bus stop at Upland Road, to which the PFO confirmed they were not.

C16.149 PROPOSED PILOT SCHEME BY EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL FOR PLACING HOUSING PODS WITHIN THE GROUNDS OF NORWAY HOUSE TO HOUSE SINGLE VULNERABLE HOMELESS ADULTS

Councillors **NOTED** the report included within Epping Forest District Council's Cabinet Agenda, a copy of which was attached to the agenda. This report was concerning the placing of housing pods within the grounds of Norway House to house single vulnerable homeless adults. The following is taken directly from the Epping Forest District Council Agenda:

By legal definition, vulnerable people are those who are "less able to fend for themselves than an ordinary person so that injury or detriment to them will result where a less vulnerable person would be able to cope without harmful effects. In reality some of the vast majority of single vulnerable people are people with serious mental health problems which can include schizophrenia, psychosis, and bipolar disorder.

Councillors noted the reported identified that staff at Norway House have expressed their strong concerns about the heightened risk to staff and other residents about increasing the number of occupants at Norway House with Single Vulnerable People - the heightened risk being something that the District Council agree, however they will be looking at this over a longer term.

Cllr Blanks stated that he was appalled, and whilst he was sure that these vulnerable people needed assistance, it was very worrying the present tenants of Norway House,

and also the wider community. Cllr Blanks continued, stating that what worried him in particular was that EFDC had identified there may be difficulties with the staff and their solution was to allot £5,000 for security for a year, available as and when needed. This was concerning in that the response time for security may not be quick enough depending on the level of mental health issues of those who would be housed in such pods.

Cllr Eldridge questioned how qualified the staff at Norway House were in terms of being able to fulfil the needs of individuals with mental health issues, and that having security as an alternative was simply not adequate.

Cllr Buckley stated he agreed with Cllr Blanks, in that it was concerning that whilst EFDC had consulted with staff, there was no mention regarding the actual security arrangements regarding the individuals themselves, and there seems to be no interest on the affect on the community.

Cllr Tyler stated that he lost a friend 10 years ago who suffered with Schizophrenia, so fully understands how awful mental health issues can be for those individuals who suffer with such problems, however Norway House also houses children, and questioned if this was the right place to house people with serious mental health problems. There seems to be no mention about the medical needs of these individuals, and simply saying you will provide security guards is not sufficient for either the individuals themselves, or the wider public.

Cllr Grigg confirmed she was consulted as a Ward Councillor for North Weald Village, and her response was based on the information available at present, and that if this does progress to a planning application addressed by the Plans East Committee, she has to remain open minded which is why she commented based on the information provided to her. Paragraph 21 does state that the pods would be provided as a temporary move to accommodation. Cllr Grigg confirmed she had no medical knowledge, but the information suggests these individuals would be low risk. With regard to the £5,000, this is provided for security should there be a problem, and the security individual would be onsite very quickly. Cllr Harris asked where the security would come from, to which Cllr Grigg stated it was her understanding it would be from Harlow.

Cllr Jackman stated she was expressing her opinion as a previous Governor of a Mental Health Trust who has knowledge of dealing with mentally ill individuals, and that she would be expressing her grave concern to Cabinet regarding this. The District Council may wish to reduce homelessness, however they are going into unfamiliar territory and that the needs of individuals with mental health problems are complex and require specialist care. The thought of a security firm, i.e, somebody in a uniform, arriving to address a potentially difficult or volatile situation could in fact make the situation far worse. Action in Mental Health is now dissolved, and the staff at Norway House are simply not trained to deal with these individuals, and it only needs to go wrong once.

Cllr Harris expressed his concern in that there were a number of youths in the village who may pick up on these vulnerable individuals, and they may become a target. Cllr

Eldridge stated he agreed with Cllr Harris and Cllr Jackman, and that what these individuals need is appropriate medical support and supervision.

Cllr Blanks stated that Paragraph 18 of EFDC's report stated that the staff on site have strong concerns, and enquired as to whether or not the safety of residents would be a valid planning matter.

The Clerk confirmed that there is DCLG funding available to social housing providers, and the wording 'vulnerable adults' may have been used to source funding. After further discussion, it was **AGREED** that the Clerk would write to Alan Hall at EFDC and express the grave concerns of this Parish Council. Cllr Jackman stated that she would be speaking at EFDC's Cabinet Meeting to express her concern, and that she would hope somebody from the Parish Council would also be in attendance.

C16.150 EMAIL FROM WINSTON RAMSEY & RESEARCH REGARDING OWNERSHIP OF NORWEGIAN STONE

Councillors **NOTED** that following the last meeting of the Parish Council the Clerk had received a further email from Mr Ramsey, a copy of which was attached to the agenda. Since the last Meeting the Clerk has undertaken considerable research regarding the 'ownership' of the Norwegian Stone, and had located a document which was a speech made at an Event held at the Stone on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the arrival of the Norwegian contingent on North Weald Airfield to take up battle stations. It also commemorates the 40th anniversary on 19th June, 1952, of Princess Astrid of Norway unveiling the monument which is inscribed in ancient Runic - "*Dedicated, in gratitude, to the Royal Air Force, RAF Station, North Weald and to the people of the District*".

The granite monument (Norwegian Stone) was flown from Norway, the unveiling ceremony being conducted in 1952 by Air Marshall Sir Basil Embry who said "*Those of us who had the privilege to serve alongside the Norwegian Fighter Command will long remember the great comradeship and the fighting qualities of those who made up that Norwegian Fighter Wing*". Also in attendance was General Helge Mehre, and the documentation states that "*North Weald meant more to the Norwegians than just a flying station. To them it was a second home. Whilst here they made friends, learned to know the English language and the British people. We know that the stone was not erected to commemorate the dead but as a symbol of Norwegian gratitude to us. We humbly appreciate this. But the people of North Weald, **through its Parish Council**, have made themselves the guardians of this monument and with the years the purpose has developed. To us in this village and the surrounding countryside it is a deep reminder of our friendship for you and an expression of gratitude for what you did for us and a remembrance of those who made the great sacrifice of their lives.*"

Cllr Stallan **PROPOSED** that in the absence of any other evidence to the contrary, it be taken from the documentation that the guardianship of the stone lies with the people of North Weald, through its Parish Council. This was **SECONDED** by Cllr Blanks.

The Clerk confirmed that she had informed Mr Ramsay that if he was unhappy with the response to date, he was able to make a formal complaint to the Council using the

Parish Councils complaint procedure which is on the Parish Council's website. Cllr Stallan requested that a copy of that last email be included with this item so there is a clear audit trail.

C16.151 NORTH WEALD VILLAGE HALL – CAR PARK

Councillors **NOTED** that the Clerk had received a complaint regarding closure of parking in the 8 Parish Council owned Parking Spaces, located adjacent to Weald Common. A copy of the email trail and a photo was attached to the agenda. The Clerk confirmed she had spoken to Cllr Mulliner and reiterated that 8 of the car parking spaces belong to the Parish Council. Cllr Mulliner stated that the picture showed the sign that was erected in 2017 when he first started doing Jazz, and that prior to this had nothing to do with him. The emails are all pre 2017, so it would be unfair of the Parish Council to compare the two. Cllr Mulliner stated that the car parking spaces are coned off for only four hours per month, and further more the spaces that are coned off are those owned by the North Weald Village Hall. There seems to be confusion or discrepancies in the content of the complaint.

Cllr Grigg stated that it was her understanding that now that new management had taken over the running of the village hall, Cllr Mulliner would be putting some form of clarification in the North Weald Village Life, which Cllr Mulliner confirmed he would be.

C16.152 FIRST REGISTRATIONS OF LAND

Members **NOTED** that documentation has been provided to the Parish Council's Solicitors who continue to deal with this matter.

C16.153 REVIEW OF STANDING ORDERS AND FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

Following the approval of the reviewed Standing Orders and Financial Regulations at the February meeting, the Clerk and Senior Admin Officer had attended a briefing on the new Quality Council Scheme at EALC, and were advised that this Council's Standing Orders & Financial Regulations are out of date and are not in line with those *recommended* by NALC. In order to be part of the Quality Scheme, which is a 'Best Practice' Scheme, the Parish Council would need to adopt the NALC Documents (albeit adapted to suit the needs of this Council). Therefore, as this matter had already had a decision made at the February Meeting, it has been necessary to obtain three signatures (in accordance with current standing orders) to rescind the last decision made, and in order to discuss whether Members wish to look at adopting the adapted NALC documents. This will be included on a future meeting agenda for consideration.

C16.154 ALLOTMENTS – SEWERAGE LEAK AT QUEEN ROAD SITE

Members **NOTED** that a serious sewerage leak had occurred at the Queens Road allotment site on Friday 24th February. Thames Water were called, and had undertaken a cleanup of the site, however there are concerns over the health and safety of the site at this stage due to contamination by raw sewerage. A letter has been sent to Thames Water together with photos, copies of which were attached to the agenda.. Allotment Tenants have been advised of this, as has EFDC whose Contractor was due to start construction ground works close to the site imminently. A

formal response was expected from Thames Water on 7th March including how tenants are able to claim for any losses they have incurred.

C16.155 CEMETERY ADORNMENTS ON PLOTS

Members **NOTED** that the Clerk had written twice to Tim Morris during February and once to the Office at ICCM requesting the following:

“Could you advise if there are any Suggested Survey Letters that you could let us have that we could send out to Grave Owners asking for their views before we do anything. Could you let us have a Couple of suggested sensitive letters that we could send to Grave Owners if we did have to write to ask them to move the items off the graves and the blocks and items kerbing the graves.”

The Clerk has been advised by Julie Callender at ICCM that Tim has been away on Annual Leave during February and will contact this Council with his response on his return.

C16.156 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Councillors recalled that over the past 6 months, a Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has been managing the Neighbourhood Plan process. As the ‘Relevant Body’ entitled to create a Neighbourhood Plan, it is the Parish Councils responsibility to agree the best way forward. This Parish Council had previously agreed that a Steering Group should be formed to manage the process on behalf of the Parish Council and local residents in the hope that a real community focused project would ensue. The commitment and input from the Steering Group has been invaluable, however it has become apparent that progress has halted with a failure of the Steering Group to fully understand and agree on the most appropriate process to be followed, with a clear split in the group being recognised and communication issues occurring within the group itself. Whilst it is clear that all the Steering Group volunteers have the benefit of local residents at heart, it is thought that an alternative approach would result in swifter progress and an increase in action, and as such it was recommended that an alternate structure to manage the Neighbourhood Plan process be agreed – a structure that will allow current Steering Group members to focus on their particular strengths whilst ensuring a more structured approach so that compliance with the relevant regulations are attained. It was hoped that all Steering Group members would agree to continue with their involvement, and form a pivotal part of the process.

As agreed at the start of the meeting, the Chairman closed to meeting to allow a more interactive discussion between Steering Group Members and the Parish Council to take place. The public and press remained during this closure.

[Meeting closed 20.35. During this time, a statement was given by the Steering Group expressing their concerns. This was followed by discussion between the Parish Council and members of the Steering Group. The meeting was reopened at 21.27].

Cllr Jackman stated that this Parish Council had submitted its response to the Local Plan which had covered many of the issues concerning the Parish, and that if the Parish Council chose not to proceed with a Neighbourhood Plan, the views of the Parish Council would still be considered as part of the local plan process. Cllr Grigg stated that Neighbourhood Plans looked at different things to those of a Local Plan, and that a Neighbourhood Plan did not need to follow the timetable of a Local Plan.

Cllr Mulliner asked if somebody else was able to take on the role that the PFO fulfilled. Cllr Grigg stated she would find it difficult to agree to move forward without the PFO on board, and she would be prepared to look at an alternative format where the PFO was happy to be involved continuing to give guidance to the Steering Group. Cllr Stallan stated that now that the Chair and Vice Chair of the group had resigned, there was a chance perhaps a mediation meeting could happen to try and thrash out any issues and find a way forward.

After further discussion and comment, Members **AGREED** that the way forward was to hold a mediation meeting between the Parish Council and Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (which Cllr Stallan agreed to Chair) and that if issues can be resolved, then the Neighbourhood Plan should progress forward with Option 3 - *Ask the Steering Group to Provide a Written Report to the Parish Council Clearly Setting Out Their Project Plan & Timeline So This Can Be Approved By the Parish Council.*

C16.157 DOG BINS BLENHEIM SQUARE

Councillors **NOTED** that the Clerk had been in communication with Crest Nicholson who have advised that they do not have a Community Fund or any other such fund for the installation of dog bins, especially now that the development has finished. However the Clerk has now spoken to a very helpful person at the Company who has tentatively agreed that the company will pay for two dog bins if they can have a say on their location. It will therefore be necessary to let them have a map of the development with the suggested locations, and to take it from there.

C16.158 AIRFIELD OPEN DAY 2017

Councillors **NOTED** that the Clerk had been advised that the Open Day on the Airfield will be held on Sunday 16th July 2017.

C16.159 ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Councillors **NOTED** that the Annual Parish Meeting, together with the 2016 Civic Awards will be held on Monday 20th March.

Meeting closed 21.35

Date

Sign:.....