



**MINUTES**

**Meeting:** COUNCIL

**Date:** 7<sup>th</sup> October 2013

**Time:** 7.45pm

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

**PRESENT:**

**Councillors (11)** C Hawkins (Chairman), D Adams, B Bartram, T Blanks, A Buckley, B Clegg, P Collins, B Eldridge, Mrs E Godwin-Brown, G Mulliner, R Spearman

**Also in Attendance (2)**

Susan De Luca – Clerk to the Council

Adriana Jones – Finance and Administrative Officer

**Members of the Public (1)**

**Members of the Press (1)**

**P13.071 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (4)**

*NOTED* that apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Stallan, Mrs Grigg, McCormack and Bedford.

**P13.072 OTHER ABSENCES (0)**

Members *NOTED* no other absences.

**P13.073 MINUTES**

There were two requested alterations:

- P13.060b – ‘the’ should be ‘that’.
- P13.060e – 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph should be ‘area’ not ‘are’
- P13.065 – Cllr Collins confirmed that this paragraph stated that the Clerk had been informed that he would be stepping down as Chairman of the RBL at the next AGM, and that the Parish Council would be prepared to pick up the administration of the Church events should Cllr Collins be unable to. Cllr Collins stated that he had not been contacted at all regarding this, and if there was some concern he should have been contacted. Cllr Collins confirmed that the RBL would be dealing with the administration of this event, and that these comments have now ‘gone round the world’ and it’s not very savoury. The Clerk confirmed that she had been informed of these details, hence the reasons they were reported at the previous meeting.

Subject to these amendments, the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2013 were *AGREED* and signed as a true record. The minutes of the Environmental Committee Meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2013 were *AGREED* as a true record.

**P13.074 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

*NOTED* Cllr Mulliner declared an interest in Item 12 by virtue of the fact that the perpetrator of the letter is a very good friend of his. Cllr Mrs Godwin-Brown declared an interest as a member of the RBL.

### P13.075 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

One member of the press, and one member of the public were present, however no questions were forthcoming.

### P13.076 CLERKS UPDATE AND COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

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

From	Type of Document	Regarding
EALC/ECC	Magazine	<i>Making the Links - NOTED</i>
EFDC	Agenda & Minutes	<i>Various - NOTED</i>
Village Life	Magazine	<i>Various – NOTED that Councillors already had a hard copy.</i>

- Members **NOTED** that the Clerk had received a letter from D Spence confirming that the Macmillan event held in Thornwood Village Hall was extremely successful, making £1,370 for the Macmillan charity – this is a record breaking amount.
- Members **NOTED** that the Clerk had received an invitation for all Councillors to attend an event celebrating the Epping Forest Re-Use initiative.
- Members **NOTED** that the Clerk had received an email written to Councillor Richard Morgan from a young boy called Jake Jones regarding the future of North Weald Airfield. The Clerk read out the email.
- Members **NOTED** that the Clerk had received a copy of a map detailing a footpath that people in the village have been walking for many years. The footpath is over the land near the Talbot roundabout. If any members have also walked this footpath, please inform the Clerk. Doreen Lodge is already involved with this issue.

### P13.077 REPORTS & MEMBERS REPORTS

#### a) Chairman's Report

The Chairman informed members that he, Cllr Bartram, the Clerk and F&A Officer had all recently attended the AGM and conference of the EALC. This had been a very worthwhile event. The Latton Priory exhibition at Thornwood Village Hall had taken place on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> October. It is understood that around 60 people turned out, together with 6 Councillors.

#### b) Vice Chairman's Report

Councillor Eldridge reported that he continues to report the horses which are on common land in Hastingwood (around 30, of which around 25 have had youngsters). He will write to Harlow Council when he can.

#### c) District Councillors Report - No report.

#### d) Highways Reports

The Clerk confirmed that the Highway issues that were discussed at the recent Environmental Committee meeting had all been passed to ECC. ECC's computer

systems had been down for three days, however all issues have now been passed on.

**e) Councillors Reports**

Cllr Blanks informed members that he has requested that a question be put to EFDC full Council on 5<sup>th</sup> November along the lines of ‘now that the future of the Airfield is secured, what action are you taking to improve its viability?’. Cllr Mulliner stated that he had already raised with this Cllr Stellan, who had informed him that this decision now goes forward as part of the local plan process. Cllr Blanks concurred, stating that the decision has to be endorsed as part of the local plan, but the point of raising this question now is that if works begin now to improve the airfield, there will be a much better case for defending it later along the line.

Cllr Clegg asked if there was any feedback from the Administration Officer following the 4<sup>th</sup> Member workshop run by EFDC that she recently attended regarding the Local Plan process. The Clerk confirmed that the Administration Officer did have notes, however the Clerk had not been in the office today to be debriefed, however invited Cllr Clegg in to the office to discuss these details if he wanted to.

Cllr Adams reported that after much time and effort, Harlow Council has begun work on the Memorial in London Road, Hastingwood, and have applied for funding for further works.

Cllr Bartram stated that he understood from EFDC that under Declarations of Interest, Trade Union Memberships and Affiliations should now be declared. The Clerk confirmed we had not received any formal notification of this, and that she would contact EFDC to confirm.

**f) Environmental Issues**

Cllr Mulliner reported that a meeting of the Environmental Committee had taken place and the latest minutes were attached to the agenda. Blackberry bushes had now been planted on the North Weald allotments. Monthly visit to Hastingwood Allotments have taken place, and there are currently no issues. Fly tipping on the Queens Road site has taken place, and the Allotment Committee have agreed to erect signs to try and discourage such fly tipping. Cllr Eldridge suggested Mr Thompson at EFDC is contacted as he may be able to help with fly tipping.

**g) Neighbourhood Action Panel - None**

**h) County Councillors Reports - None**

**P13.078 FINANCIAL REPORTS**

**a) List of Cheques & Monthly Statement of Accounts**

Members **APPROVED** the list of cheques, which were signed up to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2013 and **NOTED** the summary of income received and the account balances.

Cllr Blanks asked why a new lawnmower was purchased for Thornwood Allotments. The Chairman explained that each allotment site had a grounds maintenance budget which they were free to spend as they wished for the benefit of the allotment (providing the allotments are kept clean and tidy), and that Thornwood had saved for a lawnmower.

Cllr Blanks asked if the Loan Payment altered each year, to which the F&A Officer stated it remained constant.

**b) Notice of completion of Audit**

Members **NOTED** that the Notice of Completion of Audit had been received from the external auditors, and that the Auditors has confirmed all proper accounting practices had been carried out and no matters had come to their attention. Therefore, the Auditors had signed off the accounts for the financial year 2012-2013. The appropriate notices have been affixed to the relevant noticeboards.

**P13.079 REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY 2013**

Members **NOTED** that arrangements were well underway for this years events to commemorate Remembrance Sunday. The Clerk confirmed details of the wreath layers list as at today's date according to those people/organisations that had responded. The Clerk confirmed she had not heard from RBL, RAFA, EFDC, Essex Police, the Spitfire Society (to which the Chairman confirmed they would be laying a wreath), NWAUG, WI, Squadron, Weald Aviation and the British Owners Club. Cllr Collins stated that he understood from the RBL Secretary that she had been in contact with Jo Tyler. The Clerk stated that she had not received any confirmation from the RBL. Cllr Collins confirmed that they would be laying a wreath, and that he would ascertain exactly what had happened at the following nights meeting. The Clerk confirmed that she had resent the forms to the RBL Secretary, however had still not received confirmation. The Clerk confirmed she would record the RBL as attending. Cllr Collins stated he would ensure the RBL secretary responds. Cllr Eldridge stated he would chase RAFA.

The Clerk confirmed details of the attendance list for this year's luncheon. Cllr Collins stated that the RBL members were directed to liaise with the Parish Council directly if they wished to attend, and that monies and booking would not be collected by the RBL as they were last year. This left only RAFA and Councillors. Current attendee list stood at 63 people. Cllr Mulliner asked if any refreshments were required from the bar, to which the Chairman stated all attendees will be responsible for purchasing their own beverages.

**P13.080 BUS SHELTERS**

Members **NOTED** that the three replacement bush shelters had now been installed in the High Road, North Weald, and that the Clerk will now write to Essex County

Council and ask if they will release the remaining Section 106 funds in order that the Bus Shelter by the Talbot Roundabout can be replaced. Cllr Collins stated that he had received a report that the Kings Head shelter already had graffiti. The Clerk stated that she visited the bus shelter today and did not see any graffiti. Cllr Collins stated he was informed of this today. Cllr Collins asked what had happened to the old bus shelters that were in these locations. The Clerk confirmed these had been removed and disposed of. Cllr Collins asked if this should have been done, and that perhaps one of these shelters could have been used on Weald Common as a youth shelter. The Clerk stated that it would have probably cost more to erect and make good a bus shelter rather than purchase a youth shelter.

Cllr Buckley enquired as to how long it would be before the funds for the Talbot bus stop would be available. The Clerk confirmed that as soon as the current bill was paid, she will write to ECC and request the funds.

#### **P13.081 OFFICE OPENING OVER THE CHRISTMAS/NEW YEAR PERIOD**

Members **NOTED** that following discussion with the Chairman and Vice Chairman, the Parish Council Office will be closed over Christmas and New Year on the following dates.

- Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> December Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> December, Friday 27<sup>th</sup> December
- Monday 30<sup>th</sup> December, Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> December, Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> January, Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> January
- The Parish Council Offices will Re-Open on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2014

The Staff will of course be taking Annual Leave during this time

This was broadly in line with EFDC, however EFDC will be opening on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> unlike the Parish Council.

#### **P13.082 PRESS REPORT / LETTER**

Councillors **NOTED** that an article had been placed in the local Magazine – Village Life - regarding questions which were being asked of the Parish Council. The Clerk stated that she wouldn't normally response to a letter via the press, however the Parish Office staff were all extremely upset by this letter. All Councillors and staff work extremely hard for the benefit of the Parish, and are extremely approachable and helpful. The individual in question could have quite easily attended the parish office to ask these questions, or attended a Parish Council meeting (at which there is always a section for public questions), however had taken the decision to use the medium of the press. Cllr Mulliner stated that the individual who had posted the article had visited the parish office and spoken with the F&A Officer. The F&A Officer confirmed that she had been visited by a resident, and that she had answered his questions and given him a copy of the accounts. At no time did this individual query any of the figures, nor ask for clarification on any issue.

Cllr Clegg asked that it be pointed out that it's not just 'Thornwood Village Hall', but the village hall for the entire parish. This hall is available for all residents in North Weald, Hastingwood and Thornwood at Parishioners rate. Cllr Clegg stated that this individual would of course be very welcome to come and live in Thornwood.

Cllr Mulliner asked out of all the people in North Weald, how many would have actually read the Chairman's report? If somebody wants to get a point across, they put it in the press and the village life.

Cllr Mrs Godwin-Brown stated that it had been some time since she had visited Weald Common Play Area, and enquired as to how bad it was, suggesting that if it was bad perhaps the Parish Council could look at doing something. The Chairman reported that there were a group of young mothers who were actively involved in fundraising to get equipment for the Weald Common play area. The Clerk reported that a suggested amount of £5,000 towards improvement works at Weald Common play area would be included in the Budget & Precept meeting for discussion, however articles such as this are neither supportive nor encouraging. It was suggested that Cllr Mulliner could invite the resident who has written the article to become involved with the mums fundraising group.

Cllr Adams commented that she found the article rather cheeky. Cllr Collins stated that for many, many years, the only play area in the parish was at School Green Lane. The Parish Council consulted publicly on Weald Common play area and came up against much objection. The only design acceptable to the local people was that which is currently in place at Weald Common. Apart from the financial side of this issue, if we are looking to upgrade the play area, we may well need to consult with the public again, looking at cost and viability against what was agreed in the first place. Cllr Mulliner suggested these comments should be included in any response letter.

Cllr Clegg stated that there has been quite a lot of vandalism at Weald Common Play area, and that this will need to be considered as part of any upgrade. To upgrade the play area was likely to be tens of thousands of pounds.

Cllr Collins commented that if a group of individuals are putting effort in to raise money then the PC should support them, however he would not support a colossal amount of money being put on the precept. Cllr Mrs Adams agreed with this statement.

Cllr Clegg proposed that the Clerk draft a letter in response to this article, and that this is forwarded to Parish Councillors for comment / approval, before being submitted to Village Life. Cllr Blanks requested that a question is also included as to how the resident would like to see the pie chart altered. This was **AGREED** by all present.

The Chairman stated that if Councillors felt there was a possibility that any new equipment at Weald Common play area would be a problem, then the Parish Council could not continue to allow a group of very busy young mothers putting time and effort into fund raising.

### **P13.083 CHRISTMAS EVENTS**

The Clerk commented that unlike North Weald Bassett, many of the Parish Councils in Epping Forest undertake Christmas events (such as carol services, lighting of

Christmas trees, etc) and that these events are always for parishioners to come together and celebrate the festive season, which often enhances social inclusion. Cllr Mulliner stated that every year, he and a friend decorate a Christmas tree voluntarily within the grounds of the Methodist Church. This did used to be done in the village, however it would normally be vandalised within 24 hours. The Clerk suggested that perhaps a tree on the village green with battery powered lights would be an option. Cllr Collins stated that serious consideration should be given to any expenditure on this as he has personally witnesses the lights being vandalised. After discussion, it was **AGREED** that Cllrs Mrs Adams and Mrs Godwin-Brown would meet with Cllr Mulliner and his friends to try and agree a way forward. Cllr Edridge stated he would also attend if possible. Cllr Spearman confirmed that Happy Grow Nursery would be happy to donate a Christmas Tree.

Meeting closed: 20.43

Signed .....  
Date .....