



**MINUTES**

**Meeting:** COUNCIL

**Date:** 6 October 2014

**Time:** 7.37 PM

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

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**PRESENT:**

**Councillors (9)** C Hawkins (Chairman), B Eldridge, B Clegg, T Blanks, B Bartram,  
P Collins, G Mulliner, A Buckley, 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 (0)**

**C14.074 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (6)**

*NOTED* that apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Mrs E Godwin-Brown, Ms Adams, Mrs Grigg, Stallan, Bedford and McCormack.

**C14.075 OTHER ABSENCES (0)**

No other absences were recorded.

**C14.076 MINUTES**

Members *NOTED* the following amendments:

- Cllr Collins - C14.063 (f)2 - the minutes stated that Cllr Collins had sourced the metal roof, when in fact it was the contractor who has sourced the roof.
- Cllr Eldridge - C14.066 - 'Wellington' should have two 'lls'.

Subject to these amendments, Members *APPROVED*, as a correct record, the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2014, and the Extraordinary Meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2014 together with ratifying any recommendations therein as attached at Appendix 1.

**C14.077 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillors Bartram, Mulliner, Collins, Blanks, Hawkins and Buckley all declared a non-pecuniary interest in any item relating to the Royal British Legion, by virtue of being members.

**C14.078 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

The Chairman welcomed the member of the public present, however there were no questions put to the Council.

**C14.079 CLERKS UPDATE AND COMMUNICATIONS REPORT**

Members *NOTED* the following Communications and Correspondence:-

CLERKS UPDATE

| Date         | Reported By or Action Initiated By   | Regarding  | Date Add Action Taken | Further Action Taken   |
|--------------|--------------------------------------|--|-----------------------|--|
| Sept         | Clerk                                | Play Area /Weald Common Installation of New Equipment                            | Ongoing / Sept /Oct   | Various Meetings Held Work on new Play Commenced 29 <sup>th</sup> September - <b>NOTED</b>   |
| Sept         | Parish Council Staff and Councillors | Play Area – Weald Common – Damage to Play Area Fence/ Litter and Condoms in Area | Ongoing Sept / Oct    | Various Meetings Held / Litter Picks Undertaken - / Original Play Area Closed for repairs - <b>NOTED</b>   |
| Sept         | Clerk                                | CIF Grant App – The Parish Hall at Thornwood Car park                            | Sep                   | Clerk has submitted Grant Application by hand to ECC at County Hall . Cllr Blanks asked how much had been applied for, to which the Clerk stated £19,800, however historically the CIF tend to reduce any successful applications by at least a third. The Clerk apologised for referring in the agenda to Thornwood Village Hall, when it should read 'the Parish Hall at Thornwood' - <b>NOTED</b> |
| Sept         | Parish Council Staff                 | Remembrance Sunday Events  | Sept/October          | Meeting has been held for all Councillors and RBL – It was agreed at that Meeting that the Parish Council would combine the two services and the Parish Council Staff would undertake ALL the arrangements for the Day – Details on Rem Sunday Minutes and Check List. - <b>NOTED</b>  |
| Aug/Sept     | Financial Officer                    | Annual Audit   | Ongoing               | Report Received – All in Order - <b>NOTED</b>  |
| Aug/Sept     | Clerk                                | Queens Hall Charity  | Sept /Oct             | Various Matters - <b>NOTED</b>   |
| Aug/Sept     | Clerk                                | Kinds Head Bus Shelter / Pike Way Bus Shelter/ Talbot Bus Shelter                | Sept /Oct             | New Shelter to be installed at Bus Stop at Talbot by beginning of September – Andy Robinson from Littlethorpe to arrange repair at Kings Head Bus Shelter when the Talbot Bus Shelter is installed. – Update – email received from Littlethorpe to say that they are still concerned about the dip in the road at the Kings Head Bus Shelter. - <b>NOTED</b>   |
| Aug/Sept     | Clerk                                | Personnel Matters  | October               | Ongoing - <b>NOTED</b>   |
| Aug/Sep/ Oct | Finance Officer                      | Asset List - Updating  | Ongoing               | Ongoing - <b>NOTED</b>   |
| Sept/Oct     | Parish Office Staff                  | H&S for Councillors  | Ongoing               | One course identified for Cllr Spearman (response awaited from Cllr Spearman) and 1 course is available for Cllr Bartram however the course for Cllr Bartram is not available until early 2015. - <b>NOTED</b>   |
| Sept/Oct     | Clerk                                | Cemetery – New Bench   | Ongoing               | Currently arranging location of new bench ( which plot owner is paying for) with Les Hall. – Section 1 of Cemetery. Response still awaited. - <b>NOTED</b>   |

|          |                       |  |  |  |
|----------|-----------------------|--|--|--|
| Sept/Oct | Parish Office Staff   | Neighbourhood Plan                             | Ongoing                                | Letter Submitted to EFDC and acknowledged– Enquiry received from Latton Priory Developers who wish to have another meeting with Parish Council. - <b>NOTED</b>   |
| Oct      | Correspondence        | Young Citizen of the Year                      | Closing Date 28 <sup>th</sup> Nov      | EFDC Young Citizen of the Year Nomination - <b>NOTED</b> no nominations were received.   |
| Oct      | Training              | Budget & Precept Training                      | During the first two weeks of November | Adriana will be offering Councillors training regarding Budget and Precept Matters, prior to the Budget and Precept Meeting. Members are asked to advise the Office if they wish to attend a training session – if so a session will be organised. - <b>NOTED</b> Cllrs Mulliner, Buckley, Eldridge, Collins and Clegg stated they would be interested in attending. |
|          | EALC Training Courses | Various Training Courses Available during 2015 | 2015                                   | Please advise the Clerk to obtain details. - <b>NOTED</b>  |

Councillors **NOTED** that a letter had been hand delivered to the Parish Office today reference the Highway works that are taking place throughout the High Road, stating that these were resurfacing works due to take place between 13th and 17th October, 8pm to 5.30am, and that the road would be closed. Access for residents would however be maintained.

Councillors **NOTED** that the official opening of the new play area at Weald Common would be taking place this Sunday 12th October. Councillors who wanted to attend were asked to arrive by 10.45am. The Chairman would be completing the official cutting of the ribbon. Cllr Mulliner asked if the tape from the old play area should be removed, to which the Chairman stated that the repair works should have been completed by then.

Councillors **NOTED** that the Citizen Advice Bureau AGM would be taking place on 22nd October, and that Councillors should contact the Clerk if they would like to attend.

Councillors **NOTED** that the EALC had published details of the latest training events they are offering. Member should contact the Clerk for details.

#### **C14.080 REPORTS AND MEMBERS REPORTS**

- a) **Chairman's Report** – The Chairman reported that a meeting had taken place between Councillors and the Royal British Legion to ensure appropriate arrangements were in place for this years Remembrance Sunday Events. A meeting had taken place at Pike Way recreational space regarding the height of 12 trees at the bottom of one of the gardens, which will be discussed later in the meeting. Thornwood Seniors held a race night on Friday 3rd October raising £760 towards the car park fund. The next quiz is on 13th December.

b) **Vice-Chairman's Report** – The Vice Chairman reported that thefts had taken place on Hastingwood A allotments, however this seems to have died down now. In terms of Brent House Farm, he had looked around the site and saw no evidence of any brick being laid. He had received a response from John Pretty (Safety Office and Community Ranger, Harlow Council) regarding the excess of horses grazing on common land. There are three different organisations that are involved, and need to be contacted. There was no information as to what is done with the horses. Some progress had been made in that a lock had been placed on the gate, and a notice had been erected asking users to shut the gate behind them which they are now doing. Cllr Collins asked who owned the horses, to which Cllr Eldridge stated that he had been informed it was the travelling community. In terms of the recent concerns regarding the laying of a pipe at Mill House Farm, this has now been resolved as it has been confirmed they are permitted to lay such a pipe.

c) **District Councillors Report** – none

d) **Councillors Reports**

Cllr Bartram referred to the update attached to the agenda regarding the Code of Conducts, where they stress the importance of Councillors regularly checking their declarations of interest.

Cllr Blanks reported that the Parish Council had been successful in obtaining a refund of the rates paid by the Parish Hall in Thornwood for the last 6 years. A fee of 35% had to be paid. Cllr Blanks asked if other halls, such as the Queens Hall, could do the same, and should the Parish Council encourage the trustees to look into this. Cllr Bartram stated that the Queens Hall already receive an 80% reduction. The Clerk stated that perhaps they would be eligible for small business relief, but that the Queens Hall trustees would need to contact EFDC rates department to ascertain if they were eligible.

Cllr Collins gave an update on the shelter, stating that as per the advice of Colleen O'Boyle, Monitoring Officer EFDC, a meeting of the Bassett Community Acting Group had taken place, with the arrangements for the funds for the Youth Shelter being agreed and signed, however there is currently no date for installation. An update would be given when available.

e) **Highways**

Councillors **NOTED** that the Clerk had sent two invitations to Councillors Eddie Johnson, ECC Portfolio Holder for Highway Matters (small schemes and maintenance) asking him to attend a Parish Council meeting, however no formal response had been received. Cllr Blanks suggested he was not alone in feeling slighted by ECC, and suggested perhaps the Clerk could place some pressure on ECC. The Clerk confirmed she would contact Cllr Jackson.

f) **Environmental Issues**

Cllr Mulliner reported that the Allotment Sub-Committee continue to conduct monthly allotment visits. Most are clean and tidy and are regularly worked, however there is some work to be completed at Queens Road. There has been reports of scrumping and vandalism at Hastingwood Allotments, as well as North Weald.

The new play area at Weald Common is almost complete, with the wetpour being completed today. In terms of litter picking, one was completed by the Preservation Society Saturday before last, and one completed by Cllr Mulliner this weeks. Bulbs need to be planted this year, and time is running short. It was agreed to discuss this on Wednesday.

Cllr Mulliner also stated that his inspections of the play area for any unwanted items of rubbish continued.

**g) Neighbourhood Action Panel Minutes**

The Clerk stated that she had not received any minutes this month. Cllr Collins asked if the NAP would be continuing, to which the Clerk stated she was not sure.

**C14.081 FINANCIAL REPORTS**

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

Members **APPROVED** the list of cheques, which were signed up to 30th September 2014 and noted the income received and the account balances.

The Finance and Admin Officer confirmed that ARD have been informed that their Play Area inspection contract will end from 31st March 2015.

**b) External Audit / Annual Return**

Members **NOTED** that the completed Annual Return from the external auditor had been received with no qualifying statements.

**C14.082 STAFFING MATTER**

Members recalled that at the last meeting a proposal had been put forward to employ a Member of staff on a permanent contract. The Clerk had provided Members with various documentation which had been considered by the Personnel Committee and there had been a recommendation from the Personnel Committee to ratify this decision. After a lengthy discussion in closed session at the last meeting, the decision was amended to offer the position on a temporary contract. The Clerk has now received a request signed by three Members asking the following:

*We the undersigned Members of North Weald Bassett Parish Council confirm that we wish the following item to be reconsidered by Members of the Parish Council at the 6<sup>th</sup> October Parish Council Meeting - **C14.073 STAFFING MATTER***

The Clerk stated that further supporting documentation was attached to the agenda. Cllr Collins stated that at the previous meeting when this decision was made,

considerable time was spend discussing this issue, including the for's and against, resulting in there being 9 for and 2 against, and that he could not see any new reason why this Council needed to go back over something that has already been discussed. Initially, it looks as though the decision of the Council doesn't fit the applicants, and that he was not comfortable with that.

Cllr Clegg stated that a considerable amount of time was also spent on this issue by the Personnel Committee, who are tasked with dealing with such issues, and that perhaps in the first instance this Council should trust the decisions of their sub-committees. These Committees consist of Councillors who give up a great deal of their own time to deal with such matters, and many Councillors are getting frustrated that Council continue to overturn decisions made by Committees, which also takes a great deal of time. Secondly, the question is do the Council need a further member of staff, and the answer is yes, and therefore why should this member not be permanent.

Cllr Collins stated that at this point, Council hadn't actually agreed to reconsider this item. Cllr Clegg **PROPOSED** the item is reconsidered, which was **SECONDED** by Cllr Eldridge. The Chairman stated that whether or not a job is permanent attracts different types of candidates, for example those out of work would apply for any job, but those already in employment may not apply. We want to do what's best for this council, and that means attracting the right candidates. Cllr Clegg stated that the applicants who applied for the position were highly professional, qualified and capable, but were employed full time, and it would be unlikely they would give up a full time position for a fixed term contract. He continued stating that on Parish Council days, the library attracts a high number of residents, and that what struck him recently was that a resident who visited the library to use the computers had to be turned away as all the computers were already being used. It may be that in the future, there are other facilities that the Library / Parish Council can offer residents, and we need to have the right staff to support such a service. Cllr Clegg stated that his concern when listening to the District Councils is that their intent behind the decision is to satisfy the electorate, however why cut down on a facility when we could raise the flag and promote the service we offer. Yes, it may cost 100th of a penny more per head of electorate per annum, but surely it was worth it for the service we offer. Cllr Clegg stated in his opinion it was right the issue was aired again. In addition, he would suggest that the Council takes a serious look at how and why there are Committees and Sub-Committees, as at present they seem pointless.

Cllr Blanks stated that he wasn't present at the last meeting, but in general it seems odd to single one position out to be a temporary contract, when the remaining staff members are on permanent contracts. He continued stating that he would support the position being a permanent position, with no time limit being put on it, which seems to have stupidly been fixed at the redundancy point.

Cllr Eldridge **PROPOSED** the position should be on a permanent basis. This was **SECONDED** by Cllr Bartram. Cllr Collins asked for a recorded vote:

For: 8  
Against: 1 - Cllr Collins

#### **C14.083 COMMITTEE STRUCTURES**

Attached to the agenda was a report regarding changes to this Council's Committee structure. In addition, the Clerk tabled a document which contained further details regarding Committee structures, stating that members should take this home to review, and that it would be considered at the next Parish Council meeting. The tabled document contained suggested alterations to the current Terms of Reference for the Committees, which would make full Parish Council meetings much more efficient, by delegating power to Committees and Sub-Committees. Cllr Blanks asked if this was the current situation, to which the Clerk stated it wasn't, and that these were suggested amendments. Cllr Blanks suggested a date should be put on the document. The Clerk noted this, but stated the document was only finished that day. The Clerk continued stating that on the last page there were also some suggested amendments to Standing Orders. Cllr Collins stated that it was unclear what the changes were from the old Terms of Reference to the new ones tabled.

The Clerk asked that the document be looked at as a new document, and not a revised one.

Cllr Mulliner asked if a member of staff would be present at each of the Committee / Sub-Committee meetings, to which the Clerk stated there would be. The Chairman stated that in time past, the matters in hand list for Parish Council meetings was very large, and that the only way to have an efficient, well run Council is to have Committees. The Clerk confirmed that all Committees are open to the public to attend.

It was **AGREED** this issue should be on the next agenda.

#### **C14.084 REVIEW OF STANDING ORDERS**

Members **NOTED** that it was good practice to review this Council's Standing Orders on an annual basis. The clerk confirmed that the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) had recently updated their model Standing Orders in light of recent legislative changes, and that the Finance and Administrative Officer had reviewed these and created new Standing Orders for this Council, a copy of which was emailed to all members. In light of the discussion on the previous agenda item, it was **AGREED** to defer this item until next month's Parish Council meeting.

#### **C14.085 REVIEW OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

Members **NOTED** that it was good practice to review this Council's Financial Regulations on an annual basis, and that copies of current financial regulations were attached to the agenda. Councillors **APPROVED** the Financial Regulations as attached to the Agenda. Cllr Mulliner stated that any financial issues that may arise throughout the year should be brought to Parish Council at that time for consideration.

Cllr Collins stated that for those Councillors who have access to email, sending documents via email would save both time and cost to the Parish Office. The Clerk stated that the Parish Council has a legal obligation to send everything by post. Cllr Collins stated that EFDC have now moved to an electronic method for Planning, stating that perhaps those Councillors who are happy to receive documents via email could sign something to confirm they would be happy to receive items electronically in the future. The Clerk stated that if Cllr Collins could email something to this effect to her, she would liaise with the Auditor.

**C14.086 QUEENS HALL CHARITY TRAINING FOR TRUSTEES**

The Clerk confirmed that Governance Training was available at an approximate cost of £25 per Trustee, and asked Councillors to consider if they would pay for any Parish Council appointed Trustees on the Queens Hall charity to attend. The Clerk stated this training was not compulsory, but optional. Cllr Mulliner stated that a document entitled 'The Essential Trustee' can be downloaded from the internet, which details everything you need to know to be a trustee, making the cost for such training a waste of money. Cllr Blanks disagreed, as did Cllr Collins who stated that these trustees are nominated and appointed by the Parish Council and as such should be provided with adequate training to do the job. Councillors **AGREED** that this training should be made available to Councillors, and that cost should come out of the training budget.

**C.14.087 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

Councillors **NOTED** that EFDC had officially begun the six week consultation period on the Neighbourhood Area Designation, a copy of which was attached to the agenda. The Clerk stated that a working group needs to be set up to establish how the Parish Council should approach the Neighbourhood Plan process, and asked for volunteers to sit on this working group. Cllr Hawkins suggested a day time meeting would be appropriate. The following Councillors agreed to be part of the working group: Cllrs Bartram, Hawkins, Buckley, Blanks, Collins, Spearman, Eldridge. It was **AGREED** the Clerk would set up a date for the meeting.

**C14.088 PIKE WAY RECREATION AREA**

Members **NOTED** that the Clerk had received an email requesting the Conifer Hedge be cut adjacent to No. 2 Pike Way. The Chairman confirmed he had completed a site visit, and that the conifer trees were around 60ft high. Cllr Collins asked if the properties belong to housing, and if so if it was their issue to deal with. The Clerk stated that the Parish Council lease this land on Pike Way, and as such it would fall to the Parish Council to deal with. The Clerk stated that Chris Neilan (EFDC) had visited site at the request of the Parish Council. The Chairman stated that it would appear that a number of trees are on the bank which falls within the remit of the Parish Council. Cllr Clegg asked who requested the trees were cut, to which the Clerk stated the new residents who had moved into the property. The Clerk read out a section of the lease which detailed about the land referred to in the lease being kept in good condition. Cllr Clegg asked if the resident had stated how much they wanted lopped, to which the Chairman confirmed this had not been specified. The Chairman read out an email from Chris Neilan following his visit.



Cllr Spearman asked if there was a law that meant the Parish Council had to do this, to which the Clerk referred to Chris Neilan's email. It was **AGREED** that a quote should be obtained to completely remove the conifers.

**C14.089 REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY - CONFIRMATION OF DETAILS**

Members **NOTED** the minutes of the Remembrance Sunday meeting which were attached to the agenda, together with copies of the list of actions. The Royal British Legion have asked if the Parish Council would help undertake the administration of events both at the Parish Memorial in St Andrews Churchyard, and within St Andrews Church, which had been agreed. It was noted that organisation was well underway, with invites having been sent out. At present, confirmation had not been received as to whether or not a representative from the Norwegian Embassy would be attending. Cllr Mulliner asked why the caterers have asked for glasses to be on the table for water. The Clerk reminded Cllr Mulliner that he had confirmed he would supply these glasses, however Cllr Mulliner stated that he would not have enough. It was **AGREED** that plastic glasses could be used for the water on the tables.

**C14.090 NORTH WEALD BASSETT MASTER PLANNING STUDY**

A copy of the full North Weald Bassett Master Planning Study had been reproduced and distributed to each councillor. The Clerk stated that this was an item of the EFDC Cabinet meeting that evening, asking that the document be accepted as evidence for the Local Plan. The Clerk talked through a number of points in the study. Cllr Collins asked if the Clerk has seen any evidence in the Master planning study that they had taken into account the work completed by this council on this issue, to which the Clerk stated she hadn't. Councillors **NOTED** this document.

Meeting closed: 9.10 pm

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