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MINUTES

**Meeting:** PARISH HALL AT  
THORNWOOD COMMON  
MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

**Date:** 9 July 2015

**Time:** 7.15 PM

**Venue:** PARISH HALL, THORNWOOD COMMON, EPPING, ESSEX

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**PRESENT: Committee Members (10)** Cllr R Spearman (Chairman), Mrs S Hawkins (Vice Chairman), Cllr C Hawkins, R Sawyer, Mrs J Abbott, P Hebden, T Drane, B Cooper, Cllr B Clegg, Mrs V Robertson\*

\*Arrived 7.20pm

**Also in Attendance (1)**

Joanna Tyler – Senior Administrative Officer

**Members of the Public (0)**

**PH.014 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (5)**

*NOTED*, apologies for absence had been received from Mrs L Foster, Mrs D Shelley, Mrs I Smith and Mrs E Davis

**PH.015 OTHER ABSENCES (0)**

**PH.016 MINUTES**

Members *APPROVED* as a correct record the Minutes of this Committee Meeting held on 14 May 2015.

**PH.017 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

*NOTED* there were no declarations of interest.

**PH.018 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

No members of the public were present at the meeting.

**PH.019 REPAIRS AND IMPROVEMENTS TO THE HALL**

a) Replacement of Double Doors, Extension

Members *NOTED* that a double set of fire escape doors have been ordered to replace the existing wooden doors in the extension, at a cost of £1,394.13 (plus VAT). Councillor Hawkins informed Members that a survey had been carried out and installation is expected within the next 3 to 4 weeks.

b) Upgrade to Mains Circuit Board

Members *NOTED* that, following approval at the Parish Council Meeting on 1 June 2015, the Clerk to the Council had instructed Epping Electrical to carry out these works. A date in August is to be agreed.

**PH.020 CLERKS UPDATE AND COMMUNICATIONS REPORT**

Following a request at the previous Committee Meeting, Members **NOTED** that the Meeting Clerk had sent a letter to the Mums and Tots group asking that they refrain from using tape on the floor. The Meeting Clerk reported that she had received a phone call from the group's representative, who apologised and stated that, in future, they will be using the tables for any arts and crafts.

**PH.021 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

The Chairman reminded Members that, at the previous Committee Meeting, Ms Toms had informed Members that she would be moving away and that she was looking to find another member of Epping Spiritualist Church to take over the management of the church. The Chairman asked the Meeting Clerk and Cllr Hawkins to inform Members of recent events that have come to light. The Meeting Clerk reported that two cheques have been returned by the Epping Spiritualist's Bank marked "Refer to Drawer", for the sum of £471.00 and £270.00 respectively, Members **NOTED** that the Parish Council had incurred charges amounting to £12.00 from Unity Bank. The Clerk to the Council had been in contact with the lady who had taken over the running of the church and had been informed that they did not have access to the funds in the bank account, the account had been 'stopped' and they had not been able to contact Ms Toms regarding this. The lady informed the Clerk to the Council that Ms Toms was, as far as she was aware, still in receipt of the cheque book and debit card. Cllr Hawkins reported that the two ladies taking over the management of the church visited the Parish Office on Wednesday, 8 July to meet with the Clerk to the Council and himself. The ladies have had to start the church again, numbers are down and they have no funds. Following lengthy discussion, it was agreed that the church would be charged half fees for the next three months. Cllr Hawkins stated that the Parish Hall could not afford to lose the booking as the income received amounts to around £4,000 per year.

**PH.022 CARETAKER HOLIDAY DATES**

Members **NOTED** that the Caretaker would be on holiday from Saturday, 12 September to Sunday, 28 September 2015. Mrs Hawkins and Mrs Abbott kindly agreed to provide caretaking cover for this period, for which the Chairman thanked them.

**PH.023 CHRISTMAS EVENT**

Members were reminded that at the Committee Meeting held on 2 April 2015, it was provisionally agreed that a Christmas event could be held on Sunday, 13 December 2015, late in the afternoon. The Meeting Clerk asked the Committee to consider whether they wished to manage the event or whether they would like it to be organised and managed by the Parish Council, bearing in mind that the suggestion would need to be put forward as an item on the next Parish Council Agenda for Full Council approval. Members **AGREED** that the Committee would take full responsibility for managing the event. The Meeting Clerk was requested to organise the purchase of the battery operated Christmas Lights. Members **AGREED** that further discussion would take place at the next Committee Meeting to be held in September.

**PH.024 OTHER REPORTS**

**a) Regular Hall Hirers**

- Epping Spiritualist Church – see Chairman’s Report.
- Mums and Tots – no report.
- Flower Club – no report.
- Harlow Bowmen – Mr Cooper informed Members that the club had booked from September to April 2016.
- Thornwood Seniors – no report.

**b) Booking Secretary Report**

The Booking Secretary reported that July had started with Circle and Swing, there were bookings every day starting the 6<sup>th</sup>, with a child’s party on the Saturday and Bridge Club on the Sunday. There are bookings for a Silver Wedding for a couple from North Weald and a surprise 30<sup>th</sup> Birthday party. The last week of July is quiet. In August there is a child’s party, the National Child Birth Trust have three weeks Break and then start back on 1<sup>st</sup> August for 5 weeks. The Booking Secretary informed Members that she had received an enquiry from a lady who wanted to hire the hall to roller blade in, the Booking Secretary contact the Parish Office regarding the request and was asked to decline it due to the newly refurbished floor surface.

The Booking Secretary reported that she had been told by several prospective hirers that the hourly rates were too expensive. Members requested that the Meeting Clerk investigate the rates charged for halls in the locality and include as an item on the next agenda.

**c) Caretakers Report**

The Caretaker reported that the tea and coffee machine had not been working. The Chairman had, this evening, suggested pressing the reset button and now it is working.

The Caretaker mentioned the stacking of the chairs and asked what Members thoughts were to the suggestion of stacking them around the hall, rather than having them all stacked in one corner. If the chairs were stacked around the hall, users would have easier access to them and it would help prevent the surface of the floor from being scratched. Cllr Hawkins stated that the only regular users who may have concerns with this was the Mother and Toddler Group. Cllr Clegg stated that the suggestion should be trialled and that laminated signs be placed around the hall requesting that chairs are stacked no more than four high. All Members **AGREED** that the chairs should be stacked no more than four high and that this arrangement would be trialled for a couple of months, with regular users being asked to report back at a future Committee Meeting. Members **AGREED** that the Meeting Clerk should email those Members not present this evening, notifying them of the trial.

**d) Financial – see Chairman’s Report.**

**PH.025 OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

a) Epping in Bloom

The Chairman asked Mrs Robertson if she would like to brief Members about her involvement with Epping in Bloom. Mrs Robertson stated that she had been approached by Epping Town Council back in March and was invited to participate in the Epping in Bloom project. A team of volunteers (of which Mrs Robertson is chair) planted up the flower bed designs (these were the winning designs by local school children who had entered a competition) and can be seen at the top of Tower Road, Epping (Mrs Robertson thanked the Chairman for his assistance with the supplies). In Winter, the volunteers will be approaching local businesses for sponsorship. They are hoping to do something with the area behind M&S, Mrs Robertson stated that little areas will change in Epping over the next few weeks. The volunteers give up their time to water the sites every day. Mrs Robertson added that if anyone would like to join them, they would be more than welcome.

Cllr Hawkins stated that Members of the Parish Council's Environmental Committee may seek advice from Mrs Robertson, if permission is granted to design and plant a garden on the green area in front of the parade of shops in North Weald. Mrs Robertson said that she would be more than happy to assist.

b) Fund Raiser

Cllr Hawkins reported that Mrs Davis had asked him to mention the possibility of holding a Barn Dance to raise funds for the hall. Members discussed whether or not the suggestion would be viable, bearing in mind the cost of hiring a 'caller'. Cllr Clegg suggested that as Mrs Davis had made some enquiries, it would be useful for her to brief the committee at a future meeting.

c) Thornwood Festival

Mr Cooper asked about the Thornwood Festival and the monies raised. Mrs Hawkins stated that an update would be given at the next meeting.

d) Epping Spiritualist Church

Mr Drane mentioned the earlier report from the Chairman regarding the returned cheques and stated that he was very upset and did not think that the matter should be left. Cllr Clegg suggested that the cheque signatory should be traced, starting with Epping Forest District Council, to see if there is a forwarding address. A further update would be given at the next meeting.

Meeting closed: 8.10pm

Signed .....

Chairman

Date .....