



**DRAFT MINUTES**

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

**Date:** 1 February 2018

**Time:** 7.15 PM

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

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**PRESENT: Committee Members (9)** Mrs S Hawkins (Vice Chairman), Mrs J Abbott, P Hebden, B Cooper, T Sawyer, Mrs D Shelley, Mrs L Foster, T Drane, Cllr B Clegg

**Also in Attendance (3)**

Joanna Tyler – Meeting Clerk

Susan De Luca – Clerk to the Council

Councillor Alan Buckley, Chairman, North Weald Bassett Parish Council

**Members of the Public (1)**

**PH17.064 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (2)**

*NOTED*, apologies for absence had been received from Cllr R Spearman, Mrs I Smith

**PH17.065 OTHER ABSENCES (1)**

*NOTED*, no apologies for absence had been received from Mrs E Davis

**PH17.066 MINUTES**

Members *APPROVED* as a correct record the Minutes of this Committee Meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2017.

**PH17.067 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None declared.

**PH17.068 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

There were no questions from Members of the public.

**PH17.069 HEALTH AND SAFETY UPDATE**

**a) Visual Check of Fire Exit route in extension**

The Caretaker confirmed that a visual check had been undertaken prior to the start of the meeting and that the fire exit route was found to be clear.

**b) Pest Control**

Members *NOTED* that the Pest Control contractor had attended the hall on Monday, 15<sup>th</sup> January 2018 to commence monthly internal and external checks of the premises. The Caretaker was in attendance and informed Members that there had been no evidence of rodents found during the checks.

The Meeting Clerk informed Members that the following works had been completed

by the Parish Council's contractor, as recommended in the Pest Control report:-

- Removal of fouled insulation around old water tank
- Holes filled in electric cupboard

In addition, the Meeting Clerk advised that the Parish Council's contractor had also completed the following works in the hall:-

- Repair to damaged toilet door
- Locks changed on Parish Council storage room
- Shelf repaired in cleaning cupboard
- Installation of new sink and mixer tap in kitchen

**c) Fire Exit / Electrical Testing Report**

Members **NOTED** that the Clerk to the Council had now received a quote for the works required to ensure that the hall is compliant, as per the Electrical Testing Report. A separate quote had also been received in respect of the emergency lighting. Members **NOTED** that this item would now be included on the next Parish Council Meeting Agenda for a decision to be made as to which contractor would be used.

**PH17.070 SECURITY ALARM**

Members **NOTED** that an engineer attended the hall on Thursday, 4<sup>th</sup> January 2018 to install a Wireless Receiver and PIR to replace the damaged cable. The Caretaker was in attendance.

Members **NOTED** that following the installation, the alarm was activated on two occasions, both late in the evening. The Chairman of this Committee received the calls to attend the premises. As a result of the call outs, the Chairman arranged to meet with an engineer from the alarm company on Monday, 8<sup>th</sup> January, to investigate the reasons for the alarm activations. During the visit the engineer required access to the electric cupboard, however the Chairman found that he did not have a key to unlock the door. In light of this, the Caretaker was asked to liaise direct with Baron Security to rearrange the appointment.

The Caretaker advised Members that he had met with the engineer, who had replaced a part in the alarm cupboard. All three key fobs need to be reprogrammed. As a result of this, the hall would not be alarmed during the day. The Caretaker advised that he would be arranging a further appointment once he had all three key fobs in his possession.

**PH17.071 REGULAR HALL HIRERS**

**a) Liability Insurance Certificates**

Members **NOTED** that, as at the time of the Meeting, the Parish Office staff were in receipt of all outstanding Liability Insurance Certificates.

**b) Storage Cupboards**

Members **NOTED** that at the Parish Council's Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2017, the subject of charges in relation to the storage cupboards in the extension and kitchen were discussed. Councillors had requested that Members of this Committee clarify which groups / organisations hire the cupboard space, how much is charged and to agree a clear policy as to what is charged for.

Those Committee Members present who represented groups confirmed that they are not charged for kitchen cupboard storage, however they are charged once a year for storage cupboard space in the extension area. Following discussion, the Clerk to the Council suggested that the Parish Council, if necessary, could write a policy which stated that kitchen cupboards would be provided free of charge or could be provided for a nominal fee of say £1.00 per year. This would then be advised to the Parish Council's auditor. The Clerk to the Council stated that she would need to know which groups had been allocated a cupboard and who had responsibility for the key to that cupboard. The Vice Chairman offered to collate the information and email details to the Clerk to the Council.

#### **PH17.072 CAR PARK**

The issue of unauthorised parking was discussed at great length. Mr Sawyer informed Members that a mercedes had been parked in the car park for a few days, however it had now gone. He informed Members that he had approached one of the local companies to arrange for the car owner to remove the car as the car park and hall had been booked to host a funeral. Mr Sawyer stated that he had a conversation with the Chairman of this Committee who had suggested that if a wheel clamp could be obtained he would park one of his cars in the car park to deter others from parking there.

The Clerk to the Council stated that when she left the hall following the function for the Cemetery opening on Wednesday, 10<sup>th</sup> January, there had only been three people left in the hall, however there were a total of 18 cars in the car park. At the previous Committee Meeting, Members had asked the Clerk to investigate various options that could be used to stop unauthorised parking.

The Clerk to the Council stated that she had obtained information regarding the installation of barriers, ticket machines, engaging warden patrols, however, warned Members that these options would be very costly. A copy of a report of the Clerk to the Council's findings was tabled at the meeting.

The Clerk to the Council stated she believed that it was important that Members of this Committee look at the reasons for parking at the hall. It is not just used by hall hirers, but also by allotment users and visitors to the play area, the playing field and the nature reserve. The Clerk expressed concern that if the Committee made the decision that only hall users could use the car park, they would be encouraging extra parking in Weald Hall Lane which would be bad for public relations.

Mr Sawyer asked the Clerk if she would be able to borrow a wheel clamp. The Clerk stated that she would have to make arrangements to purchase one. Mr Drane informed the Committee that he would be able to lend a clamp. The Clerk expressed concern that issues regarding the use of the car park had been on the agenda for nearly two years and there was still no solution as to how to resolve the problem. Mr Sawyer stated that he believed the suggestion to clamp a car and leave it in the car park as a deterrent was a good idea. Mr Cooper stated that the Committee would need to provide a 'fake' penalty notice to place on the car. The Clerk to the Council stated that the Committee would need to create a warning notice to be placed on the

outside of the hall wall. The Clerk to the Council informed Members that they, as a Committee would need to decide if they wish to agree to this decision. Mr Drane asked the Clerk about the possibility of purchasing a ticket machine. The Clerk to the Council stated that a machine would cost around £8,000. There would also be the added costs of someone monitoring the tickets and collecting and banking the money from the machine.

Councillor Clegg stated that he believed that the financial burden of anything mechanical would be out of the hall's financial capabilities. He added that he believed that the Committee had not attacked the issue of illegal parking on a regular basis. Cllr Clegg informed Members that he had spoken to the Clerk to the Council regarding the matter and had offered his services, every day for a month, to complete a spreadsheet, taking a note of anybody who had not had permission to park in the allocated spaces. He stated that he believed if the Committee were persistent, they could do something about the parking. Cllr Clegg reminded Members that Cyril Hawkins had actively monitored the car park situation and had worked. He stated that if the Committee spoke to people and told them that the car park is private and that it is for hall and allotment users, the problem may be alleviated before money is spent on fake wheel clamps and tickets on screens.

Following lengthy discussion, the Vice Chairman asked Members if they were in agreement with the suggestion that Cllr Clegg monitor the parking situation on a daily basis for the next month and to report back to this Committee at the next meeting. All Members **AGREED**. Councillor Buckley asked if there was a list of registration numbers for the cars which had allocated parking spaces. The Clerk to the Council stated that a list of numbers had not been passed to the Parish Office. The Vice Chairman suggested that Cllr Clegg should visit the companies in question and obtain details, in order that these particular cars would not be included as part of the daily monitoring.

### **PH17.073 CLERKS UPDATE AND COMMUNICATIONS REPORT**

The Meeting Clerk reported the following:-

**a) Data Protection Act Training**

Members **NOTED** that Data Protection Act training had been scheduled to take place on Saturday, 10<sup>th</sup> March 2018 at 10am in the Parish Hall. Members were reminded that anyone who managed a group / organisation would be welcome to attend and that the the training would be free of charge. Members were asked to confirm their attendance by no later than Monday, 26<sup>th</sup> February 2018.

**b) Allotment Holders Meeting -** Members **NOTED** that this would be held on Sunday, 18<sup>th</sup> March 2018.

**c) Annual Parish Assembly –** Members **NOTED** that this would be held on Monday, 26<sup>th</sup> March 2018.

**d) Parish Council Citizen of the Year 2017 –** Members **NOTED** that nominations for the Civic Awards should be received by no later than Monday, 5<sup>th</sup> March 2018. Details regarding the awards were included in the agenda packs.

- e) **Play in the Park** – Members **NOTED** that a session had been booked for Wednesday, 1<sup>st</sup> August 2018, to be held in playing field, use of the hall would not be required.

**PH17.074 CHAIRMAN’S REPORT** – no report received in the Chairman’s absence.

**PH17.075 OTHER REPORTS**

**a) Regular Hall Hirers**

- Mums and Tots – Mrs Foster asked if arrangements could be made to look at the internal door to the hall which appeared to be sticking and not shutting properly. The Clerk to the Council confirmed that the Parish Council’s contractor would be contacted.
- Flower Club – no report.
- Harlow Bowmen – no report.
- Thornwood Seniors – no report.

**b) Booking Secretary Report**

The Booking Secretary reported that the New Year started with regular bookings - the Spiritualists, Mums and Tots, Bowmen, Thornwood Seniors, Flower Club and social club and there have been three children’s parties in the last few weeks. There are no extra bookings for February, however we have had end of year bookings for Blossoms Nursery which is for four parties for leaving school and for Christmas.

The Booking Secretary informed Members that she had received a request from Mind Charity to hire the hall. They had asked about the possibility of local fees. Following lengthy discussion, the Clerk to the Council stated that the Committee needed to take into consideration that Mind is not a local but a national charity. It is a charity that Princes William and Harry are involved with at the moment. The charity provides help to teenagers as well as older people. Mrs Shelley asked the Clerk to the Council if the hall had a charity rate. The Clerk stated that she believed that there should be a charity rate included on the fees sheet and that it would be good for public relations. The Booking Secretary agreed and stated that she often gets a lot of enquiries following charitable events. Cllr Buckley stated that, from what the Booking Secretary had said, it sounded like the charity wanted to hold a taster day and that if they could be encouraged to use the hall and costs are covered, they may wish to hire the hall on a regular basis. The Vice Chairman asked the Clerk to the Council if the Committee could make the decision, or should it go to Parish Council. The Clerk confirmed that that the Committee could decide. The Vice Chairman asked Members of the Committee if they agreed with offering local rates for this particular booking. All Members **AGREED**.

**c) Caretakers Report**

The Caretaker reported that a drinks bottle with a screw cap containing bleach had been found in an unlocked cupboard in the kitchen. Following discussion, the Clerk to the Council stated that the booking forms would need to be checked to see if hirers are asked not to bring cleaning materials into the hall and, if not, make arrangements to issue a notice to go out with booking forms which clearly states this. The Caretaker stated that hirers need to be advised that if they believe the hall is not clean, to report the issue direct.

**d) Financial**

A copy of the Summary of Accounts, detailing income and expenditure for 2016/17 and 2017/18 (actual to 30<sup>th</sup> November) was tabled at the meeting. The Clerk to the Council explained each of the columns, confirming that it is projected that the expected final total income will be £21,664 against an expected final total expenditure of £20,596. The Clerk confirmed that the Budget income for 2018/19 is projected to be £16,576 and that expenditure is projected to be £18,732. Members **NOTED** the report.

Members **NOTED** the following extract from the Parish Council's Finance and General Purposes Meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2017, which was tabled at the meeting.

***Notes and agreements from the Finance and General Purposes meeting 18th December 2017***

*Chairs for the Parish Hall at Thornwood*

*Members recalled that for this financial year it was agreed to replace 20 of the Parish Hall's chairs with 20 new padded chairs at a cost of £880, and that a rolling programme of replacement would take place. However, at the Parish Hall at Thornwood Committee's meeting the prior week, the Caretaker gave an example of the three different types of chairs current in situ at the hall, and how they cause stacking problems. The general consensus at the Parish Hall meeting was that adding a further 'fourth' type of chair to the mix would cause even more problems, and it was suggested by the Committee that a full replacement of the chairs would be the best way forward. The Committee had also agreed that the old chairs should be sold on EBay if this was felt appropriate. A total of 100 chairs (80 in addition to the 20 already agreed) were needed. Councillors **NOTED** that the structural fund for the hall stood at £28,735. Cllr Stallan advised that he would be putting forward a further suggested additional item later in the meeting, and as such this item was deferred until later in the meeting. After further discussion (throughout the meeting) it was **AGREED** that the cost of these additional 80 chairs should come directly from the Parish Halls Earmarked Reserve.*

*Front Doors, Parish Hall*

*Cllr Spearman, Chairman of the Parish Hall at Thornwood Committee, advised Councillors that the current doors on the hall were in fact domestic doors, and that they have been damaged previously. In terms of security, more suitable doors are required. At this stage, only one quote had been obtained. After further discussion (throughout the meeting) it was **AGREED** that the cost of these works should come directly from the Parish Hall Earmarked Reserve.*

*Electrical Works, Parish Hall*

*Councillors **NOTED** that these works were urgently needed, and it was **AGREED** that these funds should be specifically precepted for. **£4,000***

*Portacabins to replace Garages at Parish Hall*

*The Clerk advised that the two garages at the rear of the Parish Hall had gone past their useful life, and were no longer fit for purpose. The Clerk advised that she was hoping to source funding, possibly via the ECC CIF fund, for these works. Any such portacabins would be purchased and not hired. The Garages were used to house Parish Council equipment, as well as a small amount of Festival equipment, however this would not be continuing. Dependent on the size of each portacabin, it may be that only one would be required. Cllr Clegg expressed his concern that if portacabins were purchased, disposal of such items were extremely difficult, and suggested perhaps a pre-fabricated garage could be a useful alternative. Cllr Stallan asked if this extra storage was definitely needed, to which the Clerk confirmed it was. The Chairman advised that he would be happy to look at the capacity of the two garages at the moment, compare this with the different sizes of containers available, and that he would be happy to visit a supplier of such containers and look at durability to see if they were suitable. Cllr Clegg advised he would like to complete this task with the Chairman. This was **AGREED**.*

*Committee members should note that it was also agreed that an amount of £10,000 should be precepted for possible legal advice concerning the Local Plan, and that if this money was not spent, the cost of the chairs and doors for the Parish Hall could be refunded out this money.*

***Estimated Earmarked Reserves as at 31st March 2018 - £28,735***

The Clerk to the Council stated that with regard to the replacement of the garages, she would be looking at the possibility of gaining some Grant Funding to assist with the purchase. Cllr Buckley stated that there was a need to assess whether all of the garage space is required, adding that a portacabin could be placed there, however there were the logistics of getting a cabin on site that would need to be considered. Cllr Buckley stated that, along with Cllr Clegg, he would be looking at what would be best solution to put on site. The Clerk informed Members that Cllr Buckley had confirmed that the garages were not made of asbestos therefore they could be easily removed.

The Clerk to the Council highlighted the final paragraph of the report and asked Members to bear this in mind for the future. The Clerk stated that two more quotes needed to be obtained for the doors. Discussion ensued regarding the replacement of the chairs, which had been difficult to source. Cllr Clegg informed Members that he may be able to source a supplier and that he would contact the Clerk following the meeting.

**PH17.076 OTHER URGENT BUSINESS** – none reported.

Meeting closed: 8.20pm

Signed .....

Chairman

Date .....