



**MINUTES**

**Meeting:** PARISH COUNCIL

**Date:** 17<sup>th</sup> April 2023

**Time:** 7.30PM

**Venue:** PARISH HALL, THORNWOOD COMMON

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**PRESENT:**

**Councillors (11)** Cllr Buckley (Chairman), Cllr Spearman, Cllr Mrs Hawkins, Cllr Mrs S Jackman MBE, Cllr Tyler, Cllr Mrs Etherington, Cllr Irvine, Cllr Clegg, Cllr Blanks, Cllr Mrs Grigg, Cllr Bedford

**Officers in Attendance (2)**

Susan De Luca – Parish Clerk

Adriana Jones – Principal Financial Officer

**Members of the Public (1)** – EFDC Cllr Jaymey McIvor

**Members of the Press (1)**

**C22.207 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (1)**

Apologies received from Cllr Ms Wood.

**C22.208 OTHER ABSENCES (1)**

Cllr Stroud.

**C22.209 MINUTES**

Councillors **AGREED** the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2023.

**C22.210 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr Spearman declared a pecuniary interest in any item concerning the Local Plan. Cllr Mrs Grigg declared a pecuniary interest in any item concerning the Bowls Club.

**C22.211 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

None.

**C22.212 REPORT OF THE CLERK**

The Clerk provided the following report, which was **NOTED** by Councillors present:

- **Elections** – Members noted the update from the Elections Office as a result of the May Elections, with Councillors being elected unopposed. Welcome packs were distributed to those present, and to those who were not present or new Councillors they would be distributed later this week. The new Council comes into effect on 9<sup>th</sup> May. The Clerk urged all Councillors to read their election packs. The Clerk reminded all Councillors of the election return paperwork that needed to be sent to the District Council. The Clerk confirmed that Cllr Stroud had not submitted his papers, however wished to continue being a Councillor for North Weald, and subject to this co-option, it would leave one vacant position for Hastingwood Ward.
- **Coffee With Cops** – Councillors noted that the date of the next Coffee with Cops was Friday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2023, 10.30am to 12 noon, held at the Parish Hall Thornwood. The

Chairman emphasised that it was important to show support for this event and encouraged Councillors to attend. Cllr Mrs Jackman stated that if the event is not well attended this suggests there were not any issues that require police attention. The Clerk confirmed that posters would be erected next week, and placed on the Parish Council website. The Clerk suggested that perhaps this event could adapt and also be a Councillors surgery with District and County Councillors in attendance. Cllr Bedford suggested this could go one step further and include some NHS or health aspects. Cllr Mrs Etherington stated that perhaps people become complacent because when they do raise issues with the police and there is no action they don't see the point. The Clerk and Chairman confirmed they would look into adapting the sessions to include more community representatives.

- **Essex County Council Recycling Centers** – Following on from the last meeting the Clerk was asked to contact Essex County Council regarding the new booking system and changes to the Recycling Centers. A copy of the response from ECC was included within the agenda. The Clerk confirmed that the office staff were logging any fly tips that were reported to them, and that there did seem to be an increase in fly tipping since the new booking system was imposed. Cllr Tyler stated that if people were willing to dump rubbish in the cemetery bin then there was no end to what they would do. Cllr Bedford stated that he had reported a fly tip earlier that day in Canes Lane, and agreed a log should be kept so that when the formal consultation takes place later in the year as to whether or not ECC should continue with the booking system, this Council could provide tangible evidence and records providing a strong representation.
- **Kings Coronation** – The Clerk advised that due to the lack of interest, the proposed coronation event being run in Thornwood had been cancelled. Cllr Hawkins stated that this was the first time in her history of running such events that this had happened. Councillors **AGREED** that as a result, the Hastingwood event would be awarded £500 out of the £1,000 earmarked funding, and that a further £200 could go to Norway House if they were holding an event. The Chairman and Cllr Hawkins would liaise on 18<sup>th</sup> April regarding a contact for Norway House, and Cllr Hawkins would contact them directly to discuss the matter.

## C22.213 REPORTS AND MEMBER REPORTS

The following reports were **NOTED**:

- a) **Chairman's Report** – The Chairman advised that as a result of the extremely wet weather, the decision had been taken to stop the distribution of mulch at Weald Common as the machinery needed to complete the work was causing a counter problem by creating deeps ruts on the Common. This was extremely disappointing but necessary. Now the drier weather was upon us it was hoped works would recommence soon. The Chairman confirmed he was liaising with the Councils contractor regarding this. There would also be a further meeting in the spring to organise the official opening, and to create and source the information boards and benches. The Chairman confirmed he had sourced a lovely wooden log onto which the jubilee plaque would be placed. Cllr Mrs Grigg confirmed she had recently visited site and was extremely impressed.
- b) **Vice Chairman's Report** - Cllr Mrs Grigg advised that she had no report to give. The Chairman thus took the opportunity to confirm that following Cllr Griggs decision not to stand for re-election, a farewell speech was given and the recent Parish Assembly. Cllr Grigg started as Clerk to the Parish Council in the 1980s, and was subsequently elected as Councillor for the Village Ward, also acting as both Vice Chairman and Chairman during her tenure. Cllr Grigg had been

a Councillor for over 30 years, as well as a District Councillor for many years. The Chairman presented Cllr Grigg with a small gift as a token of appreciation on behalf of residents.

Cllr Grigg thanked the Council and Chairman, and advised that her time with the Council had been very interesting, expressing that initially she became involved as a result of the threat of development on the airfield, which remained a constant during her time and is what had driven her through the years. She was pleased to see that this threat seemed to have greatly diminished with EFDC supporting the retention of flying at the Airfield, albeit she could understand the need to develop some of the airfield areas to ensure value for money for residents. A lot had changed during her time, however she felt it was now time for her to depart, confirming that she would treasure the tree presented to her as a gift of appreciation.

c) **District & County Councillors Reports** – Cllr McIvor advised he had no specific matters to report upon, and was conscious of the current purdah period, however reported on a couple of highway matters (Beaufort Close and St Andrews Close) that had now been resolved and residents were satisfied with the outcome. Cllr McIvor stated that if people don't know there is problem it cannot be resolved, stating that if Councillors or residents identified a specific safety concern this could also be reported directly to District and County Councillors to press for action. Cllr McIvor stated that the recent adoption of the Local Plan should offer some reassurance about any unwanted development. Cllr Mrs Jackson reported that the state of the roads and potholes in the area, especially between the Talbot and M11, was awful. Cllr McIvor confirmed he was aware of this and that he had raised this matter directly with the Cabinet Member, and understood that there would be action to resolve this at some point, however could not advise when. Cllr Blanks suggested that perhaps residents should withhold part of their Council Tax if ECC were not fulfilling their responsibilities, however Cllr McIvor stated that he was not the County Councillor for this Parish and that such questions should be directed to Cllr Whitbread. Cllr Etherington stated that potholes filled with water were extremely dangerous for motorbikes. Cllr McIvor confirmed that as part of the Ride London event, all roads along the route will be assessed and repaired as necessary at a cost to the Ride London organisers.

d) **Parish Councillors** – Cllr Blanks reported that on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2023 the Chief Operating Officer of EFDC left his post after almost a year of being absent. He had also left all his appointments for Qualis. In addition, a friend of the Chief Operating Officer who was Chairman of Qualis had also resigned. This was after he was asked to address EFDC directly. Cllr Mrs Jackman stated that it was her understanding he stated that he had never been invited to attend.

Cllr Clegg stated that a new volunteer had come forward as a member of the North Weald Community Speedwatch Team, and that they were hoping to get out to the newly approved location of Weald Bridge Road on Wednesday of this week.

Cllr Irvine reported that he returned from holiday this week to see lots of holes being dug in Hastingwood Road, and asked if the office staff could clarify what these works were as he was hoping it was regarding the lighting.

Cllr Bedford reported that much of the Street Lighting in North Weald was now working and had moved over to LED lighting. It was noted that these lights can be either very dull or bright, but that ECC could be contacted if the brightness needed to be altered. Cllr Clegg stated that much of the main route through Thornwood right up to Cross Keys remains without street

lighting, and whilst it was nice that North Weald now had some, he would like to see the same for Thornwood.

- e) **Queens Hall Charity Report** – No report.
- f) **Neighbourhood Plan Report** – No report.
- g) **EFDC Local Plan Report** – No report.
- h) **Highways Report** – No report.

#### **C22.214 FINANCIAL**

- a) **Payments** – Councillors formally **APPROVED** the list of Cheques & Monthly Statement of Accounts up to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023. Councillors noted the very high cost of electricity for the Thornwood Common Parish Hall.
- b) **Investments** – **NOTED** that the account had been opened and that the PFO would be liaising with Cllr Mrs Hawkins and Cllr Blanks to transfer funds.
- c) **Internal Audit** – **NOTED** the internal auditor would be in attendance on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2023.

#### **C22.215 PARISH COUNCIL POLICIES, STANDING ORDERS AND FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

Councillors **NOTED** that the Parish Council Policies, Standing Orders and Financial Regulations had been reviewed and where necessary updated and were available for all Councillors to view at the Parish Council offices. Following research and Best Practice the following new policies have been added for Members Consideration and Adoption:

- Social Media Policy
- Bullying and Harassment

Members **AGREED** to adopt the two new policies, and adopt the updated versions of the remaining policies, Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.

#### **C22.216 CODE OF CONDUCT**

North Weald Bassett Parish Council is required by law to sign up to a Code of Conduct, and the recommended code is the LGA Code of Conduct which had been updated. This would bring the Council in line with other Parish & Town Councils. The Code was first published by the Local Government Association in December 2020 as a national code which could be suitable for all local authorities in England and was subsequently adopted as policy. Previously the Parish Council had adopted the EFDC Code of Conduct which complies with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011 and the Nolan Principles of Public Life. Members were also reminded that this Council has signed the Civility and Respect Pledge to uphold good working practices within the council in the belief that civility and respect should be at the heart of public life and good governance is fundamental to ensuring an effective and well-functioning democracy at all levels. Councillors **AGREED** by way of unanimous vote to **ADOPT** the LGA Code of Conduct. It was noted that the Council as a body adopts the code, but that each individual Councillor agrees to adhere to the code when they sign their Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

#### **C22.217 AERO LEGENDS AIR SHOW**

Councillors **NOTED** that the Parish Council had been advised by EFDC Corporate Communications Manager that Aerolegends (The Squadron) were planning an air show on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> August and Monday 28<sup>th</sup> August. Epping Forest District Council have given their approval for

the event, subject to contract, and subject to satisfying the requirements of the Safety Advisory Group (SAG). The SAG is made up of reps from Essex Police, Essex Fire & Rescue, Essex Highways, East of England Ambulance Service and EFDC. This Council has been advised that traffic issues such as the traffic management plan are high on the agenda, and that further updates will be given over the next few months.

#### **C22.218 NORTH WEALD 30 MPH GATEWAY SIGNS**

Members **NOTED** that the new 30MPH gateway signs had now been installed at the top of Church Lane, North Weald. It was agreed that the Parish Council should continue to put pressure on Essex County Council to install the Gateway Sign with speed restriction indicator signage in Hastingwood Road. Cllr Tyler enquired as to the speed along Church Lane, stating that some people drive like racing drivers along this route and asked if the Community Speedwatch Team could look at this. Cllr Clegg confirmed he would visit site and assess the suitability as to if this can be included with Speedwatch. Cllr Clegg stated that the perception of speeding is not always correct, stating that they may have to remove the Mill Street agreed site as there has been only one evidenced report of speeding. Cllr Irvine asked what was happening with the Hastingwood signs, to which the Clerk advised that Cllr Whitbread had taken this on. Cllr McIvor confirmed he would liaise with Cllr Whitbread on this matter to obtain and update.

#### **C22.219 CAR BOOT SALES**

The Clerk advised that following a lot of chatter on Facebook she had become aware of Car Boot Sales to be held on premises in Duck Lane, Thornwood Common. She had also been contacted by a local resident on this matter. The Clerk had contacted EFDC Planning who advised the following:

*A car boot sale can be held under Class B of Part 4 of Schedule 2 of the GPDO, which reads:*

*Class B - temporary use of land*

*Permitted development*

*B. The use of any land for any purpose for not more than 28 days in total in any calendar year, of which not more than 14 days in total may be for the purposes of-*

*(a) the holding of a market;*

*(b) motor car and motorcycle racing including trials of speed, and practising for these activities, and the provision on the land of any moveable structure for the purposes of the permitted use.*

The Clerk further stated that she was of the understanding that the District/ County Councillor for the area will be taking up the matter in relation to possible parking and traffic problems. Councillors expressed their concern about traffic and the impact on local roads, and it was **AGREED** to monitor the situation.

#### **C22.220 RE-SITING OF DEFIBRILLATOR**

Members recalled that the Clerk had been trying to find a site along the High Road in North Weald to relocate the Defibrillator as the Council has been asked to move it from its current position at the Methodist Church. A new site has been offered by Chris Davis Homes. The Chairman advised he would visit Chris David Homes later this week to check the suitability of the site and dimensions, as it may not be possible to place the defibrillator on the front, and it may have to go on the side. Cllr Bedford advised that there is often a car parked at the side, and suggested an alternative location should be considered of the doctors surgery near the flag pole. The Chairman confirmed that if

necessary this site could also be considered. A further update would be provided at the next meeting.

#### **C22.221 MEETING WITH PEER GROUP – REQUEST FROM CLLR BEDFORD**

Members noted that the Clerk had received a request from Cllr Bedford for this item to be placed on the agenda, and the Chairman was in agreement that it should. This matter is in relation to the top part of the Access Road by North Weald Village Hall and the severe deterioration of the road. The Parish Council owns 8 Parking Spaces and Cllr Bedford is concerned at the road safety for the users of those visiting Weald Common, especially with the new Parish Wood on Weald Common now having been planted. Cllr Bedford stated that he felt this Council should initiate a meeting between Peer Group, the Village Hall, other road users (official and non-official) and the Parish Council and that this should happen as soon as possible. Cllr Mrs Grigg advised that the poor state of the road was part of the reason the Bowls club closed, as they could not invite other groups to visit site due to how dangerous this road was, especially when it is wet as you cannot see the potholes. The Clerk confirmed this was a private road. Cllr Bedford confirmed he had spoken to the Clerk about reviewing the legal paperwork to try and establish everybody's responsibilities. Cllr Mrs Grigg stated that she would be surprised if the houses at the top don't have the same conditions. After further discussion it was **AGREED** that the Clerk should contact Peer Group, the North Weald Village Hall, the Vets, and possibly others with an interest to arrange a meeting about the state of the road. Cllr Bedford suggested the phone companies who manage the masts further up the common may also have an obligation.

#### **C22.222 RIDE LONDON**

Members were reminded that details of Ride London could be accessed by typing in RideLondon2023 into an internet browser and that this would give information regarding timings etc.

#### **C22.223 FLY TIPPING AT THE CEMETERY**

Members noted that fly tipping has been continuing at the Parish Council Cemetery despite putting new locks on the bins. In order to combat this the Clerk met with EFDC Safer Communities Officer on site, and EFDC has agreed to loan the Parish Council a CCTV camera for a three month period. The cost of this is £250. Councillors noted that this does mean that the Parish Council should look to place permanent CCTV at the cemetery in the future. The CCTV would come off the Parish Council owned street lighting column. The reason EFDC agreed to a temporary three month loan was that they deemed the dumping of waste at the cemetery antisocial behaviour.

#### **C22.224 QUESTION FROM ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY**

Village Field at Thornwood – Question from Local Resident - The Village Field was given to Thornwood in the 1861 Enclosure Commission Confirmation, '*for Exercise and recreation for the inhabitants*' by Commissioner Chapman. It did not account for Metal Detecting or Dog Fouling. Is the Field now protected with a modern Public Space Protection Order? If not, can the Parish Council apply for one?

The Clerk advised that she had reviewed the lengthy Local Government Public Space Protection Order to investigate this matter. Councillors reviewed the position and agreed that the main problem within the order was that that everything needs to be enforced, and that the Parish Council has no facilities to enforce dog fouling on land it owns or metal detecting on land it owns. As a bare minimum if Councillors wanted to act in this capacity on behalf of the council and enforce this then we would need to contact the Parish Councils Insurance Company to see if they could act in this

capacity, however it would be quite likely that this would increase the Councils insurance liability. In addition, monitoring could not take place 24 hours a day. Cllr Mrs Hawkins confirmed that a poster regarding no metal detecting was in the field notice board. No further action was agreed.

#### **C22.225 NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH IN NORTH WEALD**

Members noted that the Clerk had been contacted by a Member of the Thornwood Neighbourhood Watch who enquired as to what was happening regarding North Weald Neighbourhood Watch. The Clerk advised that Neighbourhood Watch was run by local residents and not the Parish Council. She was advised that the two local residents who had run it had either moved away or were no longer able to undertake running it. The Clerk confirmed that she had spoken with PC Andy Cook who had confirmed that it is down to local people to organise, and it is not something that the Parish Council should be involved in. PC Andy Cook advised that local Neighbourhood Watch Schemes only really work if you get enthusiastic local Co-ordinators who take ownership of the scheme. Cllr Bedford stated that PC Cook should be contacted to establish who the main NHW central contact was for Essex, which the Clerk confirmed she would do at the next Coffee with Cops event. Cllr Bedford also suggested the Parish Council should fund an advert in Village Life asking for people to get involved. Cllr Tyler suggested that the prevalence of Ring Door Bells means people are more likely to manage security themselves. The Clerk advised that if necessary she would also speak with EFDC Safer Communities teams, however she was not happy to signpost prospective residents to a contact where they don't get a response.

#### **C22.226 EV CHARGING POINTS**

The Parish Council has been consulting with EFDC regarding the Parish Council providing EV Charging Points. One site that was suggested was the Parish Hall at Thornwood. The Clerk had advised that the Hall is normally accessed via locked gates unless there is a hiring and the problems that this would cause with regard to access. The Clerk had received an email and it does now seem that this would be quite a problem to overcome, so at the current time this does not seem as if it could go forward. There are new sites in Ongar at Benson's Lane Car Park and other sites can be viewed via the public EV charging sites map [www.zap-map.com](http://www.zap-map.com). It was also noted that there were sites at the Nursery at Junction 7 Roundabout and also at the Nursery near the M11 roundabout.

#### **C22.227 EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL EMERGENCY PLANNING LIVE REST CENTRE EXERCISE - EXPRESSION OF INTEREST – VOLUNTEERS**

Councillors noted that further details of this event were still awaited. Cllr McIvor advised that if this Council could not get enough volunteers then he believed Lambourne Parish Council may wish to help, as they too had an airfield which potentially could be the cause of an emergency situation. The Clerk was asked to contact Cllr McIvor if any further assistance was needed. Cllr Bedford reminded those present of the national alert test taking place Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> April.

#### **C22.228 COMMITTEE CHANGE OF NAME**

Members **AGREED** to the change of name for the Environmental Committee, which will now be known as the Environmental & Open Spaces Committee.

#### **C22.229 HATE CRIME**

Members **NOTED** that the Clerk was invited to take part in the Essex Police Hate Crime Seminar, a 2 hour session which involved all aspects of hate crime and Safeguarding Issues. A Certificate and the subsequent ability for the 'Use of the Logo' has now been issued which means that the Parish Council can now sign post residents to various organisations who will assist in reporting and

assisting in matters such as: Hate Crime, Racism, Bullying, Hate Against Disability, Gender Orientation, Transgender, Ageism, Religion, etc.

The Clerks certification has enabled her to be a Hate Crime Ambassador, which means that the Parish Council will hold a book of information where people can contact the Parish Council if feel they are a target of any of the above and can be signposted to the various services. A poster advising of this will be placed on the Parish Council Website and on our Noticeboards.

#### **C22.230 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS**

The public and press were excluded from the meeting, the Council believing that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business about to be discussed.

#### **C22.231 METHODIST CHURCH**

Councillors **NOTED** that the Clerk was awaiting a response to an email she had sent to HAEBEA, and that Cllr Bedford had provided another contact number.

#### **C22.232 NORTH WEALD RADIO STATION BOWLS CLUB**

Councillors **NOTED** this matter was with the solicitors and was being progressed. Cllr Mrs Grigg stated that the Bowls club had seen some evidence of vandalism in recent weeks, and that the Council needed to be mindful of this.

#### **C22.233 PARISH COUNCIL OFFICES**

**NOTED** the Parish Council remains without an office, and there is no progress with returning to the library despite repeated requests for support from this Councils County Councillors. Cllr Tyler suggested a public campaign to drum up support should be staged. Cllr Mrs Jackman suggested the press should be involved. It was **NOTED** that the Uttlesford District Council Registrar was housed in the North Weald Library in the old office space occupied by the Parish Council. Cllr McIvor had suggested to the Clerk that the Council should ask a question at County at a meeting, and Councillors felt this was not the way forward as it should come from the County Councillors who represent the area. Cllr Blanks confirmed he would be happy to ask a question of District Councillors asking why they have not done what the Parish Council asked them to do. It was **AGREED** the Clerk in conjunction with the Chairman would look at the most suitable way forward, including approaching District, County and the press.

#### **C22.234 LAND AT REAR OF ST ANDREWS CHURCH**

Members were reminded that the Parish Council owns land at the rear of St Andrews Church and that this land was purchased via a Consistory Court meaning it was subject to diocesan law, for a Cemetery, however it was not used at this time due to the Parish purchasing the current land which is currently used for a cemetery. This land borders Rayley Lane Golf Course as well as the Church. Members **AGREED** that it would be prudent to arrange to get this land plotted out and fenced off as it may be a useful asset for the future. Cllr Mrs Grigg confirmed the bridge seems to have gone so this needs to be looked at too.

Meeting closed 21.07

Signed .....

Date .....