



**MINUTES**

**Meeting:** PARISH COUNCIL

**Date:** 4<sup>th</sup> November 2019

**Time:** 7.30PM

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

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**PRESENT:**

**Councillors (10)** A Buckley (Chairman), B Clegg, G Mulliner, Mrs S Jackman MBE  
Mrs A Grigg, T Blanks, M Stroud, A Irvine, Cllr Tyler, Ms D Wood

**Officers in Attendance (2)**

Susan De Luca – Clerk to Parish Council

Adriana Jones - Principal Financial Officer (PFO)

**Members of the Public (0)**

**Members of the Press (1)**

**C19.101 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (2)**

Cllrs Eldridge and Spearman. Cllr Tyler had given his apologies for lateness. The Clerk reported that Cllr Eldridge was on the mend, however for the foreseeable future he would continue with giving his apologies. Cllr Grigg asked the Clerk to pass on the best wishes of this Council.

**C19.102 OTHER ABSENCES (1)**

Cllr Bedford.

**C19.103 MINUTES**

Cllr Grigg asked for one correction to be made, in that she wasn't at the meeting however it is recorded that she had declared an interest. Subject to this amendment, the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2019 were **AGREED**. Councillors also **NOTED** the Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Hall at Thornwood Committee held on 3rd October 2019 and the Minutes of the Queens Hall Charity held on the 12<sup>th</sup> September 2019.

**C19.104 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllrs Blanks, Mulliner, Mrs Grigg and Buckley declared non-pecuniary interests in agenda item 15 by virtue of being members of the Royal British Legion.

**C19.105 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

None.

**C19.106 CLERKS COMMUNICATIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE REPORT**

Councillors **NOTED** the Clerk's report which was attached to the agenda. Cllr Mrs Jackman asked if the temporary staff member position was still proving useful, to which the Clerk confirm it was. The Chairman asked for the current status of registering the Council owned land, to which the Clerk advised that this was almost complete.

### **C19.107 REPORTS AND MEMBERS REPORTS**

**a) Chairman's Report** – The Chairman advised that in keeping with what the previous Chairman, Cyril Hawkins, had started, he would be leaving an envelope on the desk should Councillors wish to contribute any funds towards the Norway House Children's Christmas Party, and would also be doing the same in December. The party will be taking place on 20<sup>th</sup> December. The Chairman also reported that it had been some months since both himself and the Clerk had a meeting with the Local Highway Panel, and it seems that the work is being completed using a piecemeal approach, for example the zebra crossing by the garage had been repainted, but not the roundabout. A further meeting has been scheduled for 11<sup>th</sup> November when these issues will try to be addressed. Cllr Mrs Jackman advised that the belisha beacons by the zebra crossing no longer show up at all and asked that this was raised at the meeting. Cllr Irvine asked if the list of items for LHP works were closed, to which the Clerk advised she could squeeze some more items in as the list was ongoing, and that Cllr Irvine should speak with her after the meeting.

**b) Vice Chairman's Report** - No report.

**c) District Councillor Reports** – No report.

**d) County Councillor Reports** – No report.

**e) Parish Councillors Reports** – Cllr Clegg had two issues. The first was that the lights were still shining at Esgors causing a distraction to Highway users. The Clerk asked if Cllr Clegg had forwarded the picture to EFDC, to which Cllr Clegg stated he was not aware he needed to, but he would do this. The Clerk confirmed she had sent a picture and would chase EFDC Enforcement. The Clerk advised that she was having a meeting with Cllr Chris Whitbread and Georgina Blakemore the following day and would be raising the issue of 'lack of response' from EFDC to numerous queries and issues raised by the Parish Council.

Cllr Clegg also reported that another Speedwatch session took place the prior Thursday at Upland Road, with 50% of road users recorded as speeding, however probably not to the speeds that people generally perceive. The highest recorded speed was 44mph in a 30mph zone. Details have been sent of to the Speedwatch team.

**f) Local Plan** - The PFO advised that EFDC had issued a response (ED100) to the Inspectors letter which sets out the timetable for the work needed as a result of the inspectors interim advice, which will take them through to May 2020.

With regard to the EFD Local Plan Infrastructure Delivery Topic Paper: Sports Infrastructure Addendum, members attention was drawn to a report drawn up by the PFO after consultation with the Clerk. The Clerk and the PFO have met and discussed the lack of sports provision and leisure facilities proposed for North Weald village within the EFD Local Plan Infrastructure Delivery Topic Paper, despite the fact that 1,050 new homes will be coming. Members noted that there were larger organisations and bodies that were setting the requirements in terms of where new leisure centres and other such facilities were needed, however it simply didn't seem

right that that North Weald Village were getting one of the largest housing allocations in the District but no additional sporting facilities were being provided.

The Clerk stated she felt it was essential the Council issued a press release to express their unhappiness about this. The Chairman referenced the report attached to the agenda, stating it quite clearly sets out the feelings of the Council. Cllr Blanks stated that he wondered if there was any connection with the £50k being given to the Parish Council for the HMRC works at the Airfield. He also stated that North Weald is between Epping and Ongar, both of which have had fine sports centre facilities over the years, and we were originally hopeful that, as detailed in the Local Plan North Weald, we would be receiving some sporting and leisure facilities, however this has now been removed in favour of locating it at Epping. Cllr Mrs Grigg asked what the Councils position was regarding requesting S106 monies for possible sporting facilities when the application for 1,050 homes comes through, stating that the Council may be able to put a case forward at that point, and that in the past S106 monies had been received in Hastingwood from a much smaller development. The Clerk advised that the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group were liaising with the Developers of the North Weald site and it may be that as part of those discussions some sort of leisure facilities are secured, however it is disappointing that within the Local Plan itself North Weald village has just been forgotten. Cllr Mrs Grigg stated that we have fallen between two stalls, in that we were hoping for a leisure centre on the airfield, but this has now been withdrawn, and asked if it was too late to make the case in the Local Plan. The PFO advised that the document does state that there will be ongoing discussion with Masterplanners, and there will be a main modification consultation. Cllr Grigg stated that what we want needs to be made clear as soon as possible. The Clerk advised that this issue was also on the list to discuss at the meeting with Cllr Whitbread and Georgina Blakemore the following day, and that unless herself or staff read all these documents, the Council would not find out about these things.

The Clerk advised that both herself and the PFO would be attending a meeting the following Monday regarding stewardship of land at the new Latton Priory development, however at this stage it was not clear what would come out of that meeting.

**g) Neighbourhood Plan** – Councillors **NOTED** that the Steering Group had already issued a press release concerning the lack of sporting facilities in North Weald Village, a copy of which was tabled along with a notice giving the dates of the three public events in December as follows:

- 9<sup>th</sup> December in Parish Hall Thornwood
- 14<sup>th</sup> December North Weald Village Hall
- 15<sup>th</sup> December Hastingwood Village hall.

At or prior to the December meeting, Councillors would be given a summary of the approach taken by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to these events, to ensure Councillors are kept fully informed and to ensure support from the Council. Cllr Mrs Grigg asked when the consultation would take place on the Masterplan, to which the PFO advised that she had not been informed of the date at this time however she would ask at their next meeting. Cllr Clegg stated that he is a member of the Neighbourhood Plan Sub-Committee appointed by this Council, and is involved with

the Steering Group, stating that a number of members feel overwhelmed with the works needed to create a Neighbourhood Plan. Cllr Clegg asked that thanks were recorded for the work the Steering Group do and the time they give up which is all voluntary.

**h) Queens Hall Report** - Cllr Ms Wood stated that there was nothing major to report in terms of finances, and that the hall is doing very well at the moment with some essential repairs having been completed. The Hall is looking at working alongside a green policy in terms of lighting, in that it is old and intermittent and can sometimes be on all day. There is one issue in terms of personnel matters, and guidance is being sought from an external HR company. The Chairman asked if there was any progress on the gates, to which Cllr Ms Wood advised that due to staff illness, the company had not got back to her, however she had contacted them, and a quote was expected within the next 7 days.

[Cllr Tyler arrived]

#### **C19.108 FINANCIAL REPORTS**

**a) List of Cheques & Monthly Statement of Accounts** – The list of payments, receipts and balances for October 2019 had been emailed to Councillors and had been uploaded onto the Parish Councils website. These were approved.

**b) Internal Audit** – It was **NOTED** that the internal auditor would be in attendance on 29<sup>th</sup> November to conduct the interim audit for 2019/2020.

**c) General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)** - Due to Remembrance Sunday preparation, there has been slow progress on the GDPR filing during October, however it was hoped this would pick up towards the latter part of the month.

#### **C19.109 NORTH WEALD AIRFIELD – TEMPORARY PLANNING PERMISSON**

Members **NOTED** that following last month's meeting, the Clerk had written to EFDC Chief Executive and Leader asking for details surrounding the allocation of the £50,000 to North Weald Bassett Parish Council, however no response had been received. This would be raised at the meeting with Cllr Whitbread and Georgina Blakemore the following day. Councillors **NOTED** that a list had started to be compiled following requests from residents of items that they would like to see monies from the £50,000 spent on, a copy of which was attached to the agenda. Members had also been asked to come back to this meeting with further ideas and therefore it is expected that further items will be placed on this list. It had also been suggested that an item could be published in the Press once the list had been compiled, asking for other suggestions and comments from residents on any major proposals that had been received.

Cllr Clegg stated it was essential to understand exactly why the Parish Council had been given the money and what it was for. Cllr Irvine asked how guaranteed the money was, to which the Clerk advised she had received an email to confirm the Parish Council would definitely be receiving the funds. Cllr Irvine asked how any suggestions could be added to the list, to which the Clerk advised he just needed to advise the Clerk.

With regard to putting the list to members of the public, the Chairman stated that this could be done once the list was complete and clarification had been received from EFDC as to exactly why the money had been received. Cllr Tyler advised that it was essential EFDC were transparent so that the Council could be too. Cllr Clegg agreed, stating it was vital the Parish Council understood exactly why they had received the money.

#### **C19.110 EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL ACCOMODATION PROPOSAL**

Councillors **NOTED** the EFDC report from their Cabinet Agenda of 31<sup>st</sup> October attached to the agenda where the above matter was being discussed. Members attention was brought to the matters highlighted which refer to the following:

- The New Build Offices on North Weald Airfield are no longer planned to go ahead
- The Civic Offices in Epping are planned to be refurbished
- The Epping Library is provisionally planned to be housed in the Civic Offices

Members therefore gleaned from this proposal the ‘offer’ of accommodation for the Parish Council within the New Offices on North Weald Airfield is no longer going to be available. The Clerk advised that the decision made on 31<sup>st</sup> October was that EFDC would be refurbishing their existing Civic Offices. The Clerk advised that the Parish Council had seen rough drawings of the original suggested move to North Weald, and it was suggested at that time that perhaps the Parish Council could have an office there, however this was no longer an option, and it was unfortunate that EFDC hadn’t formally advised the Parish Council of this. Cllr Blanks drew members attention to page 90 of the report, under heading ‘Refurbishment of Civic Offices’, reading out the second paragraph which was written in such a way that laymen simply would not be able to understand what it meant. Cllr Irvine suggested the paragraph implied that EFDC officers would be able to work from home. Cllr Mrs Grigg asked that the Clerk raise this at her meeting the following day with Cllr Whitbread and Georgina Blakemore, and also raise the possibility of the Control Tower on the Airfield being used as potential accommodation for the Parish Council offices. Cllrs Mrs Grigg advised that this was in light of there being a new control tower proposed for the western side of the airfield, and that open discussion considering all options would be a good idea.

Cllr Blanks raised the issue of EFDC creating three companies, one of which was specific to assets, meaning the Council could possibly purchase assets without their being full control and transparency, and expressed his concern that this would be a concentration of power without proper accountability. Cllr Tyler advised that the cost of the new build on the Airfield was £8.5m, however to renovate the existing Civic Offices was £6.5m, so this would be seen as a way of saving money.

Councillors also **NOTED** that there was a proposal to relocate Epping Library to the newly refurbished Civic Offices, and drew members attention to para 5.15 of the Essex County Council future Library Services Strategy, stating this was a clear example of Essex County Councils preference for community run libraries to be run from other community premises.

#### **C19.111 ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL LIBRARY**

Members **NOTED** that the Clerk had had a further meeting with Senior Library Staff on the 23<sup>rd</sup> October regarding the Expression of Interest (EOI), Essex County Council’s

own Valuation of the Library Building and Volunteers. Volunteers also had a meeting with the Clerk and the Senior Administrative Officer on the 24<sup>th</sup> October. The EOI has been delayed until the middle of November and the details of the content of this pack is necessary before we go ahead with a further meeting. Once the EOI Pack has been received a further meeting will be arranged with the Parish Council Library Working Group. Cllr Mrs Grigg suggested that the Clerk should advise ECC of the valuation amount obtained by North Weald Bassett Parish Council and ask them to explain why there was such a difference.

#### **C19.112 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS**

Members discussed the summary statement in the body of the agenda, and the suggested public information sheet attached to the agenda. The summary statement within the agenda was as follows:

*Parish Councils are local authorities that make all kinds of decisions on behalf of local people on issues that affect the local community, most commonly planning matters, managing open spaces, cemeteries and delivering better services and facilities. Parish Councillors are unpaid volunteers who give their time and service freely to assist the local community. North Weald Bassett Parish Council is made up of 15 Councillor seats, over 3 wards, North Weald Village, Thornwood Common and Hastingwood. Meetings of the Parish Council are not public meetings, but meetings held in public. Members of the public have a statutory right to attend meetings of the council as observers. They have no legal right to speak unless the Parish Council Chairman authorises them to do so. However, as part of its community engagement, North Weald Bassett Parish Council sets out a time for public participation at an agreed time when members of the public are invited to speak.*

*The law does not allow members of the public to take part in the debates. However, as Councillors are aware this Council allows members of the public the opportunity to speak following a temporary adjournment which is at the beginning of the meeting. Public participation is an opportunity for members of the public to*

- (a) make representations*
- (b) answer questions or*
- (c) give evidence relating to the business to be transacted.*

*The discussion of the point brought forward might have to be delayed until a subsequent meeting if a response is needed.*

*Members of the Council are always willing to discuss topics put forward by the public. The agenda is prepared during the week prior to the next council meeting so it would be prudent for Residents to inform the Clerk of an item that they would like to see discussed by Council. Although this might seem a long time in advance, the Council is required by law to publicise its agenda at least three clear days before each meeting. Only business contained within the agenda can be considered at the meeting.*

*When the meeting reaches the agenda item of 'public participation', the Chairman will suspend the meeting and members of the public will be allowed to speak. At this point Councillors should not interrupt or debate issues with the public, but sometimes, if it is counter-productive not to, they may respond, but debate or long discussions should not take place between the public and the Council as this is the 'public' section.*

*The time for the public to speak is limited to 15 minutes. If more than one member of the public wishes to speak on the same topic then they should nominate one person to speak on their behalf. This will avoid duplication and make the best use of the public participation period. A question raised by a member of the public during a public speaking session shall not require a response and there should be no debate or discussion between the Council and the public. The Chairman has the right to say that any question or statement is inappropriate and will not be accepted.*

*Neither Councillors nor the Clerk should be put under pressure to respond immediately to comments made under public participation. Members of the public do not have a right to force items onto the council agenda nor to insist on how matters are recorded in the minutes. A brief record of topics raised at public participation will be included in the minutes of that meeting.*

*When all the members of the public have spoken in the public participation section, the Chairman will resume the meeting. Members of the public are welcome to stay for the Council meeting after the public session as observers but will not be able to join in the discussion unless invited to do so by the Chairman. Members of the public may be excluded by a resolution of the meeting for specific items which need to be discussed in confidence (e.g. staffing matters, tenders for contracts, some legal issues).*

***What about 'bad behaviour' at a Council meeting***

*All persons present will act respectfully towards every other person present and will not act in a manner that demeans, insults, threatens or intimidates him or her. All statements, questions and responses, challenges to statements, complaints or criticisms must be related to the facts of the matter and not personal in nature. Members of the public disturbing a Council meeting will be asked by the Chairperson to desist in any behaviour considered to be disrupting the meeting. If the behaviour continues Council can resolve, without discussion, that the person(s) withdraw from the meeting or be removed. If a meeting becomes unmanageable because of interruption, or impossible to be continued due to disturbance or disregard for the Chairpersons instructions the Council can and will resolve to either close the meeting for a period of time or have the meeting recalled for another date.*

Subject to one minor amendment, Councillors **AGREED** the public information statement as attached to the agenda, and that this should be use going forward.

**C19.113 PARISH COUNCIL TRAINING**

Members **NOTED** that bespoke Model Code of Conduct Training has been organised for Monday 18<sup>th</sup> November 2019 at 7.00pm, and the training will be conducted by Ian Willett. Members were asked to provide any specific questions they would like answered as soon as possible to the Clerk.

**C19.114 INVITATION TO DISTRICT COUNCIL EVENTS**

Members **NOTED** that following events to which they have been invited to attend:

- a) ***A Garden Town Stewardship Stakeholder Workshop being run by the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Team on Monday 11 November 2019 at Harlow Resource Centre***

The new Garden Town is seeking to deliver significant new growth in and around Harlow in accordance with the Local Plan allocations. An important element to ensure high quality development in the Garden Town is to ensure that the most appropriate arrangements are put in place to ensure the long term management and maintenance of the community assets including green space, the public realm and other community facilities. This event will consider the range of assets that could be included in future arrangements and the potential Models for taking this work forward. There will be a Guest Speaker from Letchworth Garden City to talk to us about their experience of these issues. There will also be opportunities for Councillors to share thoughts on these matters.

Venue: Harlow Resource Centre (found on the first floor of Harlow Leisure Zone), Second Avenue, Harlow, CM20 3DT.

Date: Monday 11 November 2019

Time: Refreshments available from 6pm, Start at 6.30pm

**b) The Epping Forest Economic Strategy Stakeholder Event on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> November 2019, 9am – 12.30pm at Theydon Bois Village Hall.**

Local businesses and other partners are being offered the opportunity to have their say on the new long-term economic plan for the Epping Forest district as outlined in the discussion paper 'Nurturing Growth'. This event provides an opportunity for businesses, local groups and other interested parties to discuss some of the ideas and approaches in theme-based workshops looking at issues such as skills, transport infrastructure, innovation and entrepreneurship, and town centres. If you are interested and would like to attend, please click advise the Clerk who will book your free space. For further information please view the *Economic Strategy discussion paper*

<https://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/consultation-of-new-economic-plan/>

**C19.115 REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY EVENTS**

Members were reminded of the Remembrance Sunday Events that would be taking Place on Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> November. Invitations have been dispatched, acceptances have been received and plans are well in hand. Members were advised that the Chairman of the Parish Council would like agreement from Members to dedicate a Bench to '75 Years Friendship with the Royal Norwegian Airforce' within the Cemetery, this also taking place on that day. This was **AGREED**. The Clerk advised that the Parish Council had been asked by the RBL to print a list which contained the names of the fallen, however it was in such poor quality that the Senior Administrative Officer has had to retype this. This will be erected onto the Parish Notice Boards. The memorial at St Andrew's Church will be cleaned, and agreement had been received from EFDC to use the Debt of Honour. Greenacres had agreed to sponsor the event for £100 which pays for the printing of the orders of service.

Cllr Clegg asked if appropriate security measures were in place for the event, to which the Clerk confirmed they were, and that the appropriate Risk Assessments will be completed. Cllr Mulliner advised that all was well with the Microphone for the lunch, and the PA system for the event, both of which had been tested the prior day.

With regard to the dedication of the bench, the Clerk read out what would be written on the plaque, stating that the dedication would take place between the timings of the St Andrews Service and that at the Debt of Honour.



**C19.116 CHRISTMAS EVENTS THORNWOOD AND HASTINGWOOD**

North Weald Village will switch on its Christmas Tree lights on the 1<sup>st</sup> December. Both Thornwood and Hastingwood will be having events to Celebrate Christmas at the beginning of December. Historically the Parish Council has provided funds towards Christmas Trees in both Villages and some funding towards refreshments for any Christmas events held. Members **AGREED** that they wished to give £50 towards the Hastingwood Village Hall festivities.

**C19.117 PARISH COUNCILS APPROACH TO SOCIAL MEDIA**

Cllr Irvine advised that he had become increasingly concerned with a number of comments he had seen on social media concerning the Parish Council staff. He stated that there are both positive and negative comments on the various platforms, however many of the negative comments were not about the Council itself, but about the staff, or were giving incorrect information. He also noted that the Parish Council wasn't particularly active on social media, even when the comments were offensive, malicious or false, and that perhaps it was time to address this and look at alternative structures. After further discussion regarding the pitfalls and benefits of social media, as well as the possible legal issues in terms of defamation of character for staff, it was **AGREED** Cllr Irvine would take on this task, in conjunction with the Clerk.

Meeting closed 9.22pm

Signed .....

Date .....