



North Weald Bassett Parish Council

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Clerk to the Council

Susan De Luca

30th September 2024

TO: MEMBERS OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE

PLEASE NOTE THE DATE AND TIME OF THIS MEETING

This meeting is open to any other North Weald Bassett Parish Councillor who wishes to attend

You are hereby invited to attend a meeting of the **ENVIRONMENTAL AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE** which will be held on **Thursday, 10th October 2024** at **9.30am** in the **Parish Hall, Weald Hall Lane, Thornwood Common** to transact the business shown in the agenda below.

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AGENDA

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

To **PROPOSE** and **SECOND** nominations for the Office of Chairman and, if there is more than one nominee, to vote thereon.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To **RECEIVE** any apologies for absence.

3. OTHER ABSENCES

To **NOTE** any absences for which no apology has been received.

4. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

To **APPROVE** as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 18th March 2024, as attached at **APPENDIX 1**.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To **RECEIVE** any Declarations of Interest by Members

A Member with a personal interest in a matter must consider whether it is a Disclosable Pecuniary, Non-Pecuniary or Other Pecuniary Interest, and declare it accordingly. A Member who is unsure as to how to declare their interest should seek independent advice.

6. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

To **RECEIVE** questions from members of the public.

In accordance with an agreed procedure, the time allocated for public questions shall be limited to 15 minutes or such other period determined by the Chairman of the Meeting.

7. ALLOTMENTS

a) Introduction of Deposit – New Allotment Tenants

Councillors are asked to **AGREE** to the introduction of a £50 deposit for all new allotment tenants. It is suggested that the deposit would be held by the Parish Council for the duration of the tenancy. When a tenant gives up their plot, if it is left in a good, cultivated state, then the deposit will be refunded. However, if the Parish Council has to pay to have the plot cleared, the deposit will be used towards the cost of clearance.

b) Change to Allotment Rental Period

Councillors are asked to **AGREE** to a suggestion to move the allotment rental period to 1st January to 31st December. Currently the rental period runs from 1st April to 31st March. The Parish Council has to give tenants up to 30th April to pay their rent, however, if a tenant has not tended their plot and decides not to renew their tenancy, their plot will be overgrown and covered in weeds before this time. By changing the rental period to 1st January to 31st December, would mean that tenants would have until 31st January to renew and if they decide not to, the council would be able to manage the plot before it is overgrown, which would result in less costs to the council.

c) Boundary Hedge – Hastingwood Allotment (B) – Unused Site

The Clerk has received a request from PC Andy Cook asking if Councillors would consider reducing the height of the boundary hedge. Councillors are asked to recall their decision regarding this matter as per the minutes of the last meeting of this committee:

Environmental & Open Spaces Committee Meeting 18 March 2024

Minute Extract E23.33:

b) Boundary Hedge – Hastingwood B Allotment Site

*Councillors noted that the Clerk had received a complaint from a resident regarding a cyclist who hit their eye on the hedge fronting on to the road at the disused Hastingwood B Allotment site. The resident contacted the Clerk after observing the cyclist ride past the hedge and being hit in the face by overgrown vegetation. The Clerk immediately arranged for the Parish Council's contractor to cut back the vegetation encroaching on to the road. It was noted that the resident again contacted the Clerk and asked if the height of the hedge could be cut back for aesthetic reasons. The Clerk reminded Councillors that the height of the hedge had last been cut in November 2019. Following discussion, Councillors **AGREED** that the Clerk should write to the resident advising that as the site is unoccupied, a decision had been made to leave the hedge uncut at the current time for privacy and to keep the site safe from illegal encampments. Councillors **AGREED** that the exception to this would be if vegetation was encroaching on to the roadside.*

Councillors are asked to **RECONSIDER** this matter.

8. CEMETERY

a) Cemetery Visit – 31st July 2024

As Councillors may be aware, the Clerk meets with the Grounds Maintenance Contractor for the Cemetery at least once a year to inspect the cemetery and to discuss any maintenance issues. A copy of the meeting notes from the most recent visit are attached at **APPENDIX 2** for

information.

b) Garden of Remembrance

Councillors are asked to refer to one of the items mentioned in the Cemetery Visit notes which was a discussion regarding the best solution for distinguishing the boundary of the Garden of Remembrance from the Cremated Remains sections. Currently the two sections appear to blend and it is difficult for people visiting the cemetery to know where each section begins and ends, indeed, the Clerk has recently received a complaint to this affect. The Grounds Maintenance Contractor has recommended and sourced a metal Corr Edge border (rather than a permanent stone edging) which could easily be removed in the future if necessary. The cost for installation would be £1600 (this includes the supply of all materials and labour for two contractors). Councillors are asked to **AGREE** to these works being carried out.

c) Memorial Audit

Councillors are asked to **NOTE** that a Memorial Audit has recently been completed. The Register of Burials and files have been updated accordingly.

d) Cemetery Map

Councillors are advised that the original cemetery map requires updating. This not been done professionally since the initial plans drawn for the plotting out of the cemetery which was completed over 30 years ago. An up-to-date plan is necessary to comply with the legal requirements of managing a cemetery. It is therefore suggested that the Clerk, as Cemetery Registrar, sources a company to undertake this as soon as possible.

9. 📖 TREES 🖐️

a) Tree Risk Assessment

Following on from the Tree Risk Assessment carried out earlier this year, it was highlighted that works to trees at Thornwood and Wheelers Farm Gardens Allotment sites were recommended to be completed within 12 months. Councillors are asked to **NOTE** that the PFO has obtained and accepted quotes for the works to be carried out on the 7th and 8th November. Copies of the quotes are attached at **APPENDIX 3** for information.

b) Wheelers Farm Gardens Allotment Site

Councillors are asked to **CONSIDER** work to cut back and clear vegetation that is on Parish Council owned land at Wheelers Farm Gardens Allotment site, along the stretch that backs on to the rear gardens of Cyril Hawkins Close. The PFO has obtained a quote to reduce the overgrown cluster of trees to below the height of the boundary fence. A copy of the quote is attached at **APPENDIX 4**.

c) Request from Queens Hall Charity

The Clerk has received a request from the Queens Hall Charity for assistance with the cost of pollarding / cutting down a Goat Willow tree growing on the boundary of the Memorial Playing Field. The tree is overhanging a neighbouring property. The Parish Council has previously supported requests for assistance with this fast-growing tree, the last time being in July 2021, when Councillors agreed to give £600. The Queens Hall Charity have received a quote for removal of the tree which is £900 (plus vat). A letter from the resident affected is attached at **APPENDIX 5**. Councillors are asked to **CONSIDER** this request.

d) Woodland Trust – Community Tree Application

Councillors are asked to **NOTE** that this council has been successful in its application for 105 saplings from the Woodland Trust. The saplings will be planted in the play area field at Weald Common, to add

to the trees in Eldridge Coppice. Delivery is expected to take place in early March 2025. The species chosen include hawthorn, crab apple and dog rose, all of which will enhance the biodiversity in this location.

10. Sensory Garden, Weald Common

Councillors are advised that that the plants and shrubs planted in the containers in the Sensory Garden have failed, despite a maintenance programme put in place for regular watering. A verbal report will be given at the meeting.

11. Report from Chairman

a) Garden by Parade of Shops

b) Planter by Flagpole

12. Christmas

a) Purchase of New Christmas Tree for Village Green

The Clerk has been looking into purchasing a replacement living Christmas Tree for the Village Green. A verbal report regarding this matter, which will include on-going maintenance, will be given at the meeting.

b) Christmas Lights

Councillors are asked to **CONSIDER** if they would like any changes to the usual arrangements.

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