



**MINUTES**

**Meeting:** ENVIRONMENTAL  
COMMITTEE

**Date:** 18<sup>th</sup> October 2017

**Time:** 10.30 am

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

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**PRESENT:**

**Councillors (3)** G Mulliner (Chairman), A Buckley, B Bartram

**Also in Attendance (2)**

Susan De Luca, Clerk\*

Joanna Tyler, Senior Administrative Officer

Adriana Jones, Principal Financial Officer\*

\*for part of meeting

**Members of the Public (0)**

**E17.17 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (3)**

**NOTED** apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Eldridge, Mrs Godwin Brown, Clegg\*

\*Apologies received too late to be reported at the meeting

**E17.18 OTHER ABSENCES (2)**

**NOTED** no apologies for absence received from Councillors Spearman and Bedford

**E17.19 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**NOTED** there were no declarations of interest.

**E17.20 MINUTES**

Members **APPROVED** the minutes of the meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2017.

**E17.21 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

There were no members of the public present at the meeting.

**E17.22 PLAY AREAS**

The Principal Financial Officer reported the following:-

Annual Play Area inspections took place at all three play areas on 16th August 2017 by a company called The Play Inspection Company.

Findings are assessed on a Risk Assessment Matrix in terms of both probability (how likely something is to happen) and the Severity (how severe something would be).

Both Scores on a scale of 1-5 Very low to Very High

**School Green Lane**

All equipment was assessed, and NO items were over Low Risk, meaning a minimal probably of occurrence and only minor injury resulting. Items that require action are:

- Access gate not closing between 4-8 seconds
- A number of loose posts in fence - monitor
- Nettle Growth underneath newly installed bench - remove and maintain
- Several plugs missing on Monsterplay unit - these require fixing. Missing fixings on spiral climber that need replacing. Minor damage to platform - monitor. Item fails the entrapment' test of BSEN1176:2008. Safety Surfacing now has gaps at joins - Monitor. Remove weeds.
- Bay Swings - some safety surface subsidence - monitor. Surface area with under each seat less than 1.75m and fails BS EN1176 part 2 - monitor.
- Flat Bay Swings - Gaps over 30mm between surface and edging - this needs to be repaired. Surface area with under each seat less than 1.75m and fails BS EN1176 part 2 - monitor. Seats too close - monitor.

### **Weald Common**

All equipment was assessed, and NO items were over Low Risk, meaning a minimal probability of occurrence and only minor injury resulting. Items that require action are:

- Entrance sign damaged - Kevin already advised to replace this sign over winter months
- Trip hazards at edges of some safety surfacing (especially going up to the main entrance gate from Weald Common) - this needs reinstating to remove trip hazard. Gate closing in excess of 8 seconds - this should be between 4-8 seconds.
- See saw - safety surface damage that needs repairing
- Small multiplay unit - Surface lifting and creating trip point - this needs repairing to remove trip hazards. Some bolt cap covers missing - these need to be replaced.
- Rotor play - some trip hazards around the edge that need repairing
- 3 bay swing - One flat seat, and one cradle seat has minor damage / wear and should be monitored.
- Large Multiplay - gaps opening between surfacing and edging and should be monitored. Some bolt/cap covers missing and need to be replaced.

### **Thornwood Common**

All equipment was assessed, and NO items were over Low Risk, meaning a minimal probability of occurrence and only minor injury resulting. Items that require action are:

- Gate not contrasting colour making it difficult for users with impaired sight - suggest painted different colour.
- Some exterior fence damage that should be monitored.
- Square litter bin - not sure - liner should be secured/locked.
- Some Bramble growth in hedge - cut back and maintain.
- Algae / moss on the surface of the picnic table - clean and treat.
- Some Algae / moss on various surfacing - clean and treat appropriately. This is also under some seats.
- Damaged paving slabs that need to be replaced.
- Round wooden litter bin - not secured - should be locked.

- Cradle Swing - Safety surface lifting - perimeter needs to be repaired to remove trip points. Width under each seat less than 1.75m which fails BS requirements - monitor. Significant gaps (30mm) between edging and safety surfacing - repair.
- Rock and Cross - Safety surfacing damaged and needs repair. Trip hazards at edges which needs reinstating to remove hazard. Gaps opening up between joints and surfacing - monitor.
- Climber - A number of fixings have worked loose and need securing. A connection bracket is damaged and needs replacing. Gaps opening up between surfacing and edge - monitor.
- Multiplay - opening in the barrier to steep elements in excess of 500mm - monitor.
- Basket ball net - backboard damaged - monitor. Replace net.
- Youth Shelter - bolt cap covers missing - need replacing. Some fire damage - monitor.
- Kick Wall - a sign is needed with wording as detailed in BS EN 15312 that the equipment is not intended for children less than 3 years old, do not climb on framework, do not hang on the ring, do not wear rings or other jewellery, number to call in case of accident.

The Principal Financial Officer stated that although the issues identified were low risk, there were some issues that should be rectified in the near future. The PFO recommended that the Committee give consideration to this work being undertaken by the Parish Council's contractor, as part of the Winter work schedule. All Members **AGREED** with this recommendation. The PFO stated that a full copy of the report was available for Members perusal.

*\*The Principal Financial Officer left the meeting.*

#### **E17.23 WEALD COMMON PLAY AREA – BENCH**

Members **NOTED** that the Clerk had been contacted by Epping Ongar Railway who had advised that the bench which had kindly been donated by them and subsequently vandalised earlier in the year, had now been repaired and was ready for collection. In the time elapsed since the bench was removed, safety surfacing had been laid in the play area, including the location where the bench was originally sited. The Chairman stated that he would prefer the bench to be placed inside the boundary of the play area, as it had originally been donated for parents/carers to sit on whilst watching their children use the play area equipment. All Members **AGREED** and requested that the Parish Council's contractor look at the best way of anchoring the bench to the safety surfacing, bearing in mind that an area may need to cut away and paving slabs set flush to the surfacing to prevent a trip hazard.

*\*The Clerk to the Council joined the meeting.*

#### **E17.24 ASSET CHECKS**

The Clerk **REMINDED** Members that the majority of Asset Checks had been carried out during July, however, the Cemetery still required checking along with

a number of assets in North Weald. The Clerk recommended that arrangements be made for the Parish Council's contractor to undertake the remainder of the checks as part of the Winter work schedule. Cllr Bartram stated that he and Cllr Hawkins had looked at the Cemetery in July and asked if the gate posts had been replaced. The Clerk confirmed that they had been and advised that Councillors Bartram and Hawkins had visited the Cemetery to look specifically at the gate posts, no other checks were undertaken during that visit. The Clerk stated that she had recently visited the Cemetery and did not think that there would be much work which would need to be carried out as a result of the Asset Checks. The Chairman asked if it was necessary to carry out the checks on an annual basis, to which the Clerk confirmed that it was. All Members **AGREED** that the Parish Council's contractor should be asked to carry out the remainder of the Asset Checks.

#### **E17.25 CEMETERY**

##### **a) Increase in Grave Digging Charges**

Members **NOTED** that, earlier in the Summer, the Parish Council's Grave Digger had notified the Clerk of an increase in costs with regard to digging a new grave or re-opening an existing plot. Rather than charging two separate prices, the cost would now be the same. In light of this, the Chairman of the Parish Council had agreed that the Cemetery Fees should be altered accordingly, with immediate effect. The Clerk confirmed that this had been actioned.

##### **b) Enquiry – Lawn Cemetery**

Members **NOTED** that the Clerk had received an enquiry from the owner of a plot in the Lawn Cemetery who was seeking permission to place a 9 inch high border around the plot. The owner had mentioned that other plot owners had erected borders. The Clerk stated that she had asked the grave owner to put the request in writing, however she had not received a letter. The Clerk confirmed that she had explained that it was not allowed and had referred the owner to the Cemetery Regulations. The Chairman referred Members back to the previous Committee Meeting whereby a decision had been agreed to place notices on each plot which did not comply with the Cemetery Regulations regarding excessive ornaments adorning plots. The Clerk advised that the notices had been produced, however, she had expressed her concern to the Parish Council Chairman that if Members were to place the notices on the graves, it would look very messy. The Clerk suggested that Members may wish to display a notice in the Cemetery Notice Board as an alternative and wait to see if there is an improvement.

The Chairman stated that he personally thought the Committee had to take a strong stance with regard to this issue. The Clerk stated that everyone who visits the Cemetery always comment on how lovely it is. The Clerk commented that there are over 200 plots in use and only 3 people have complained, reiterating the fact that there are 197 plot owners who are happy and only 3 who are not. The Clerk reminded Members of her concerns with regard to bad publicity.

The Chairman mentioned Burial Section Two and asked if it would be possible to open this area sooner rather than later and sell the plots on the strict

understanding that this area is a Lawn Cemetery, adding that if people did not like that, they would still have a choice of a plot in Section One. Cllr Buckley mentioned that the Woodland Burial Park does not allow any ornaments at all. The Clerk suggested that, should Members agree to open Section Two, the Cemetery Regulations could include a front sheet stating that this area will be strictly controlled. Members would need to look in detail at the area, and consideration would need to be given to naming the rows and numbering the graves. The Clerk suggested that enquiries could be made as to the cost of a picket fence to segregate Section Two.

Following lengthy discussion, the Clerk recommended that the Committee visit the Cemetery to view Section Two. All Members **AGREED** to visit the Cemetery.

## E17.26 ALLOTMENTS

### a) Community Orchard – North Weald Allotments

Members **NOTED** that the Parish Office submitted the formal Grant request for a Community Orchard at the North Weald Allotments. The grant request is for a total of £1,350 with the Parish Council putting £300 towards the project. The Clerk informed the Committee that she was still awaiting confirmation from Epping Forest District Council to say that the allotments can be used for this purpose.

The Clerk informed Members that she would be visiting the solicitors to sign off on Hastingwood A and B Allotment Sites, which will confirm that both sites belong to the Parish Council and that they are registered. Members **NOTED** that the document will be signed in front of a Commissioner of Oaths.

### b) North Weald Allotments

Members **NOTED** that a STIHL FS55 strimmer has been purchased for the North Weald Allotments, using its 2017/2018 budget. The strimmer has been passed to the Allotment Warden, along with a copy of the instruction manual. Allotments Tenants are able to use this strimmer, however, they will need to have read the instruction manual and sign a disclaimer, copies of which are held at the Parish Council offices. Members also **NOTED** that the North Weald Allotments Lawnmower had been serviced in September.

### c) Allotment Sub Committee

The Chairman reported that the Sub Committee continue to visit the Hastingwood Allotment site on a monthly basis, adding that all plots appear to be neat and tidy.

The Clerk informed Members that she would be visiting the solicitors to sign off on Hastingwood A and B Allotment Sites, which will confirm that both sites belong to the Parish Council and that they are registered. Members **NOTED** that the document will be signed in front of a Commissioner of Oaths.

Councillor Bartram asked the Chairman about a request received from a plot

holder for a poly-tunnel. The Chairman stated that he had replied, confirming that he did not have any concerns with regard to the plot holder erecting a poly tunnel.

**E17.27 ALLOTMENT TENANCY AGREEMENT – PROPOSED CHANGES**

Members of the Committee **RATIFIED** the changes to the Allotment Tenancy Agreement Rules, Regulations and Codes of Practice, as agreed at the Annual Allotment Meeting held on Sunday, 19<sup>th</sup> March 2017.

**E17.28 TREE WORKS**

Members **NOTED** that the tree works identified as ‘High Priority’ in the Tree Survey conducted by Hallwood Associates in April of this year, had now been completed. The Clerk confirmed that the tree by the flagpole on the Village Green had also been trimmed.

**E17.29 CHRISTMAS LIGHTS, VILLAGE GREEN, NORTH WEALD**

Following discussion, Members **AGREED** that the same arrangements as previous years, would be put in place. The Clerk informed the Committee that new battery packs may need to be purchased and that the Parish Council’s contractor would be checking these.

**E17.30 SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA – CEMETERY**

The Clerk informed Members that the Parish Council’s Cemetery Groundsman had reported that there was a willow tree located on the footpath between St Andrew’s Church and the Parish Council’s Cemetery which had fallen over and is now resting Cemetery boundary hedge. Members **AGREED** that they would visit the Cemetery following the Committee Meeting to assess the matter and report back to the Clerk.

Councillor Buckley asked the Chairman if he could update the Committee with regard to the following:-

- a) Railings for zebra crossing – Members **NOTED** that the Clerk has been informed of a definite date for installation for October this year.
- b) Wall repair in front of parade of shops, North Weald High Road – Members **NOTED** that work would begin in two weeks time.
- c) Phone box – Members **NOTED** that there was no update with regard to when it will be removed.
- d) Bulb Planting – Members **NOTED** that the bulbs were ready for collection. Sites for planting needed to be identified in Hastingwood and Thornwood. Date for planting to be agreed.
- e) Damaged Lamp Column – Harrison Drive, North Weald – Members **NOTED** Cllr Buckley’s concerns with regard to the length of time being taken to replace the damaged lamp column. Cllr Buckley informed Members that this had been the site of two fatalities. The Clerk asked the Senior Administrative Officer to email ECC Councillor Anthony Jackson with regard to this matter.

Meeting closed: 11.15am

Signed .....

Date .....