



MINUTES

Meeting: ENVIRONMENTAL
COMMITTEE

Date: 30th November 2021

Time: 7.30pm

Venue: PARISH HALL, THORNWOOD

PRESENT:

Councillors (7) A Buckley, Mrs S Jackman MBE, Mrs S Hawkins, Mrs A Grigg, T Blanks,
R Spearman, A Tyler

Also in Attendance (3)

Susan De Luca, Clerk to the Council
Adriana Jones, Principal Financial Officer
Joanna Tyler, Senior Administrative Officer

Members of the Press (1)

Members of the Public (0)

E21.26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (5)

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Mulliner, Bedford, Irvine, Clegg,
Mrs P Etherington

E21.27 OTHER ABSENCES (2)

No apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs Stroud and Ms Wood (not
part of this committee)

E21.28 MINUTES

Members **APPROVED** as a correct record the Minutes of the Meeting held on 19th
July 2021.

E21.29 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

NOTED there were no declarations of interest.

E21.30 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

None present.

E21.31 RESPONSE TO EFDC'S CLIMATE CHANGE CONSULTATION

The Clerk advised that it was too late to respond as a group, however information
had been emailed to all Councillors in order that they could respond individually.
The Clerk said that an email could be sent to EFDC advising that the Parish Council
had to delay this meeting and as a result could not respond in time.

Councillors **NOTED** that the Principal Finance Officer had attended a meeting on
Climate Change earlier in the day, as a representative of the Parish Council and
would be attending several of these meetings over the next 12 months. The PFO
gave a brief report and said that the Country is not quite there yet and commented
that it is frustrated by people in power not doing what they need to be doing. The
PFO said that there are things that we could be doing as a council over the next year
which will help residents understand Climate Change and raise awareness. The Clerk

read out a list of items that she had put together which the Parish Council could introduce over the next year. Members **AGREED** that the list should be included in the minutes:

- *All staff to be reminded of the particulars of the Environment Protection Act 1990: The requirement to keep waste to a minimum by doing everything you reasonably can to prevent, reuse, recycle or recover waste.*
- *Signs will be posted on the photocopier to encourage and advise whether it is necessary to use the copier and to ensure that staff only copy exactly the amount of copies necessary and whether it would be better to send the information electronically.*
- *To consider whether or not paper-free administration processes could be used more effectively, could this contribute to less waste.*
- *Staff to utilise the double-sided printing feature rather than single sided, and in black and white rather than in colour.*
- *Staff not to over order on stationery and to re-use where possible.*
- *Councillors to be asked annually whether or not they continue to receive paper documents and whether or not they wish to receive their documents electronically.*
- *Only use lighting where necessary.*

E21.32 ESSEX FOREST INITIATIVE

At the October Parish Council Meeting, the Senior Administrative Officer gave a verbal report regarding the Essex Forest Initiative webinar which she had attended on behalf of the council. Members had agreed that further enquiries should be made. Following on from this, Councillors **NOTED** that the Chairman and Senior Administrative Officer had attended a site meeting at Weald Common with Essex County Council's Officer for Forestry and Woodlands. The purpose of the visit was to assess if the Parish Council owned field (adjacent to the road which separates Weald Common and Higham View) would be suitable for a tree planting project.

The Chairman said that the Parish Council could make a large contribution to helping Climate Change by undertaking tree planting on this site. ECC's Officer for Forestry and Woodlands has estimated that the council could possibly plant in the region of between 2,000 to 4,000 trees there. Details of the Officer's suggestions were tabled. It was noted that the Officer would be investigating the availability of grant funding for the project, together with the possibility of combining this with one of the free tree offers. The Chairman shared with Members maps that he had arranged to be produced depicting several potential planting layouts, all would retain the natural pathways which have appeared over the years. The Chairman said that there would also be an opportunity to plant extra trees on the field where the play area is situated, perhaps extending Eldridge Coppice.

The Clerk commented that the project could be combined with commemorating the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. She suggested that local school and nursery children could each receive a certificate confirming a gift of a tree planted at Weald Common. Each tree could be numbered and plotted on a map so that in years to come the children would be able to identify their tree. Members agreed that this would be a

good idea. The matter was discussed at length and Councillors put forward other ideas for consideration such as, putting up bird boxes, looking at ways to encourage wildlife to the site, asking resident's if they would like to "buy a tree", an area for mental health and wellbeing, creating a place of sanctuary.

The Clerk said that if Members agreed to the project, some funding would be requested at the F&GP Meeting, to cover any costs associated with planting the trees, should the council not be successful in gaining grant funding. The Clerk said that the remaining Handyman funds could also be utilised for this project. All Members **AGREED** unanimously to support the project. The Clerk confirmed that the decision would be ratified at the next full Council Meeting.

E21.33 TREE RISK ASSESSMENT

Councillors **NOTED** that the Annual Arboricultural Assessment Report was undertaken on 28 October 2021. As a result of the tree works completed earlier in the year, the report showed that there were no issues that required remedy in the next 12 months.

E21.34 PLAY AREAS UPDATE

a) Annual Play Area Inspection

Councillors **NOTED** that the Annual Play Area Inspections were undertaken in September. The Principal Finance Officer gave a verbal report regarding the findings:

- Weald Common Play Area – very low risk
- Thornwood Common Play Area – overall low risk, it was noted that some items will need to be looked at
- School Green Lane Play Area – moderate – it was noted that this was due to the Basket Ball Court and the Youth Shelter, both of which are the responsibility of the Queens Hall Charity Committee and who have been advised accordingly. There are some additional works needed for the play area, however these have been recorded as low risk.

b) Replacement of Swing – School Green Lane Play Area

The Principal Finance Officer reported that there is an old set of flat swings which are in excess of 15/20 years old. There is a concern that during inspections the Parish Council's contractor is unable to dismantle the shackles to check them. Members **NOTED** that the swings will be included as an item on the F&GP agenda for Councillors to consider their removal and replacement.

c) RoSPA Operational Playground Inspection Course

Councillors **NOTED** that the Parish Council's contractor had attended a RoSPA Operational Playground Inspection Course in September and had received a certificate and identification badge to confirm that he is competent to carry out Operational Inspections of Children's Playgrounds. The certificate expires in September 2024.

The Principal Finance Officer reminded Members that the Parish Council's contractor undertakes weekly inspection checks, however does not always send the

reports to the PFO. In order to resolve this issue, there is an opportunity to purchase some software on a 'pay as you go' scheme which would allow the contractor to send the results of the inspection to the PFO via a mobile phone. The cost of this is £9.00 per month. The Clerk said that it would be beneficial to the council and suggested that it be trialled for 3 months. All Members **AGREED**.

E21.35 ALLOTMENTS

a) Allotment Warden and Deputy – Wheelers Farm Gardens & Queens Road
Councillors **NOTED** that two long-term tenants of Wheelers Farm Gardens site had agreed to take on the role of Allotment Warden on a temporary basis. Paul Dines is acting as Warden and Dave Evans is acting as deputy. The role(s) will be reviewed at the Annual Allotment Holders Meeting.

The Clerk reminded Members that she had been successful in obtaining grant funding for £2,000 from Cllr Chris Whitbread's Locality Fund and advised that she had received permission to use £984.00 from the funding to be put towards the car park, rather than using it to purchase a compostable toilet. The Clerk said that the two new wardens were very enthusiastic and said that she had met with them recently to discuss funding a new lawn mower, hard standing for the car park, combining the community allotment plot and purchasing a BBQ or a Pizza Oven. It was noted that the Clerk had arranged for 3 loads of compost to be delivered to the site at the warden's request.

b) Annual Allotment Holders Meeting – Provisional Date

Councillors **NOTED** that the morning of Sunday, 13th March 2022 had been booked as a provisional date for the Annual Allotment Holders Meeting.

E21.36 CEMETERY

a) Garden of Remembrance

Councillors **NOTED** that the Clerk and the Senior Administrative Officer had recently attended an EALC / ICCM course regarding Gardens of Remembrance. The Clerk gave a verbal report. Members noted that arrangements had been made for the Garden of Remembrance to be grass seeded.

b) New Environmental Regulations

The Clerk referred to the Supplementary Agenda regarding New Environmental Regulations for Cemeteries. The Clerk advised that she is currently looking at this and said that the regulations relate to cemeteries that are near to a stream or river. There is a possibility that sizes of burial plots may need to be changed which could affect those already sold as pre-purchase in the Hedges section which is adjacent to a stream. Meadow Brook section would not be affected. It was noted that the Environment Agency has said that the new Law will be passed in August / September 2022.

c) Memorial Garden

The Clerk suggested Councillors may wish to consider a revamp of the Memorial Garden next year in commemoration of the Queen's Jubilee. The Clerk suggested moving the round tree seat and putting it in the centre of Meadow Brook Section, a

new bench could be put in the Memorial Garden as a replacement. If Members were in agreement, the Norwegian Memorial bench would be moved to another area of Meadow Brook.

d) Price Increase for 2022

Councillors *NOTED* that the Clerk had received notification of price increases from the supplier of plaques, boulders and spikes for 2022. Members *AGREED* that the increases should be taken into account when reviewing the Cemetery Fees for 2022.

Councillors *NOTED* that the Clerk had been notified that the cost for Grave Digging was also to be increased for 2022, however, she was still awaiting confirmation in writing. Members *AGREED* that any increase should be taken into account when reviewing the Cemetery Fees for 2022.

E21.37 EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL CONSULTATION ON PROPOSED MARKET POLICY

Councillors *NOTED* that details regarding EFDC's consultation on Proposed Market Policy had been circulated via email to Members on the 5th November 2021. No comments were put forward regarding the consultation. Members noted that the Clerk had been advised that Epping Town Council did not believe that this would affect the Epping Market.

E21.38 BULB PLANTING – VILLAGE GREEN, NORTH WEALD

Councillors *NOTED* that Cllr Bedford had put forward a suggestion that the Village Green could benefit from bulb planting. The Chairman confirmed that some bulb planting had taken place there already and additional planting could be arranged. All Members *AGREED*.

E21.39 DAMAGED GATE – CROSS OF SACRIFICE, ST ANDREW'S CHURCHYARD

Councillors recalled that enquiries are taking place regarding the possibility of holding a Rededication Ceremony for the Parish War Memorial in St Andrew's Churchyard, to coincide with the Rededication of the Norwegian Stone. It was brought to Members attention that the gate to the Cross of Sacrifice and War Graves had been damaged. It was noted that although the gate is not the responsibility of the Parish Council, it would not look good if the gate is not repaired prior to the date of the proposed Rededication which it is hoped will take place on Sunday, 19th June 2022. The Chairman advised that when he had placed a wreath at the Cross of Sacrifice in September, there was a groundsman present who had said that the repairs to the gate were in hand. The Chairman suggested that the Clerk may wish to make further enquiries regarding this as the Parish Council may not need to get involved.

Cllr Tyler referred to the Rededication of the Parish War Memorial and offered to contact the War Graves Commission to establish if there are any names missing.

E21.40 GARDEN BY PARADE OF SHOPS, NORTH WEALD

The Chairman advised that two Christmas Trees had been purchased for the garden. Grant funding had been received from Epping Forest District Council to cover half

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the purchase costs for new Christmas Lights.

Meeting closed: 8.35pm

Signed

Date