

North Weald Bassett Parish Council

Parish Hall at Thornwood Common, Weald Hall Lane,
Thornwood, Essex CM16 6NB

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Clerk to the Council.
Susan De Luca

19th April 2021

TO: ALL COUNCILLORS

You are summoned to attend a Meeting of the Parish Council which will be held on Monday 26th April 2021 at 7.30pm. There will be no physical meeting in line with current government guidelines and therefore all communications will be conducted electronically via ZOOM. For details of how to join the meeting please contact the Clerk by telephoning 07572 507591 before 4pm on the day of the meeting. You will need to provide your name and an email address.

Susan De Luca
Clerk to the Council

Members of the public and press are invited to attend this meeting

AGENDA

Prior to the meeting there will be 1 minutes silence for HRH The Prince Philip Duke of Edinburgh & the Chairman will read a short Statement.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To **RECEIVE** any apologies for absence.

2. OTHER ABSENCES

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

3. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES 🖐

📄 To **APPROVE**, as a correct record the Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on the 1st March 2021 *previously circulated on Appendix 1.*

4. 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.

5. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

To **RECEIVE** questions from members of the public for a period determined by the Chairman of the Meeting. **Please NOTE the Clerk may have to note questions and respond to them after the Meeting.**

6. REPORT OF THE CLERK

Members are asked to **NOTE** that all staff have been working on all items within this Agenda. If any Councillor wishes further information on any item please do not hesitate to contact the Clerk or a Member of the Parish Council Staff for further updates. **NOTE:** Any Member wishing to have a communication

brought to the attention of the Council should give prior notification to the Clerk.

7. REPORTS & MEMBERS REPORTS

MEMBERS ARE ASKED TO SUBMIT A WRITTEN REPORT TO THE CLERK WHICH CAN BE DISTRIBUTED TO OTHER COUNCILLORS. THIS WILL ENABLE THE MEETING TO RUN EFFICIENTLY AND EFFECTIVELY. COUNCILLORS WILL THEN BE ABLE TO BRING UP ANY POINTS THAT THEY FEEL ARE RELEVANT TO THE PARISH COUNCIL AND ASK QUESTIONS OF THE COUNCILLOR WHO HAS SUBMITTED THE REPORT.

To **RECEIVE** any reports from Members who wish to give a report and/or who are representatives on Committees, Working Groups, Outside Bodies, and other meetings that Members or the Clerk have attended and which, **if available**, will be reproduced at **Appendix 2** if they have been submitted by Members for inclusion, as follows:

- a) Chairman's Report – verbal report
 - b) Vice Chairman's Report – verbal report
 - c) District & County Councillors Reports - District Councillors are invited to submit a written report if they are unable to attend the Parish Council Meeting
 - d) Parish Councillors - verbal reports will be received if no written report has been submitted
- Report Included from Cllr Irvine**
- e) Queens Hall Charity Report – verbal report
 - f) Neighbourhood Plan Report – verbal report
 - g) EFDC Local Plan Report – verbal report
 - h) Highways Report - If available – Update on Potholes – **Updated Report Included**

8. FINANCIAL REPORTS

- a) **List of Cheques & Monthly Statement of Accounts** - To **APPROVE** the lists of payments which have been made up to the 31st March 2021 and **NOTE** the account balances at the end of the month - **this list will be circulated prior to the Meeting.**
- b) **Bank Reconciliation** – To **NOTE** the bank reconciliation up to 31st March 2021 if available - - **this list will be circulated prior to the Meeting.**


9. BARRIERS AT PARISH HALL THORNWOOD

Members will recall that over the last year we have had an increase in anti-social behaviour at the Parish Hall at Thornwood. This led to agreement being reached as part of the budget for 2021/2022 to instal barriers at the entrance points to the hall, the sum of £1,500 being agreed. The anti-social behaviour has increased considerably over the last six months to include an incursion of travellers, the hall being used as a car park for people mending the road, lorries picking up vehicles i.e. recovery lifts (even though the vehicle had broken down elsewhere), plus other more unsavoury anti-social behaviour that the Police are now interested in. Following this activity, the Police further recommended that Barriers should be put in place to the front entrances to the hall, and as such a small working group met, which consisted of all three ward councillors for Thornwood, the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Council, together with the Clerk and the Principal Finance Officer, to discuss this matter at considerable length. It was agreed at this meeting to purchase barriers as soon as possible to hopefully alleviate these problems. The cost of the Barriers and installation was £5,463.56. Members are now asked to **RATIFY** this expenditure, which is deemed necessary for the safety and security of the Parish Hall.

10. NATIONAL MODEL DESIGN CODES: TESTING PROGRAMME

Councillors are asked to note that Epping Forest District Council were unsuccessful in their bid for the Model Design Code pilot.

11. LETTER TO PEER GROUP - ONGAR PARK ESTATE ACCESS ROAD REPAIRING OBLIGATIONS

 Following the last meeting the Parish Council took legal advice (verbally) from the Parish Council Solicitors in relation to the letter which had been sent to the Parish Council and other parties regarding repairing obligations. The advice received was with reference to documents provided by the Clerk to the solicitors, in relation to the Parish Councils responsibilities. A copy of the email sent to Peer Group, after receiving the advice is attached for Members perusal at **Appendix 3 (previously circulated)** . Peer Group responded by saying that they would send the email to their Legal Section. The Clerk has further contacted Peer Group to see if there is any response from their legal section, or if there is any indication of when any repairs will be carried out to the roadway. No response has yet been received.

12. FOODBANK GRANTS

The Foodbank Scheme is progressing very well. The current scheme came to an end on 31st March, however Cllr Wood has applied and been awarded a number of other Grants and she will give a short report at the meeting as to her success.

13. TREE PROJECTS

Following on from the last meeting where two areas in the Parish has been planted on Weald Common and where the following had been discussed and agreed:

‘That Cllr Tyler had suggested that both areas be named after Cllr Brian Eldridge who sadly passed away in 2020 and who had been an avid supporter of more trees in the Parish. The suggestions were as follows:

- *Eldridge Wood, Eldridge Thicket, Eldridge Grove, Eldridge Coppice*

*The Chairman advised that 90 trees had been planted in the old play area, with a further 50 planted in the smaller area. Cllr Mrs Jackman MBE recommended that the two areas be named as **Eldridge Wood and Eldridge Coppice**. All Members **AGREED**.’*

The Clerk is now pleased to report that the plaques naming the two tree areas have been installed in the boulders and are now placed in situ in the areas, which is in recognition of the many years of unpaid service given by Cllr Eldridge as a Councillor for the benefit of the community. The fencing has also been put in place. The areas concerned are named as agreed at the last meeting.


- Eldridge Wood
- Eldridge Coppice

Former Councillor Eldridge’s wife has been advised and is very pleased at the decision that was made by this council and feels that her husband would have been “absolutely delighted “ by this decision.

14. FLAGS ON GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS

Following the recent government report that it would be good practice that the Union Flag should be flown permanently on Government Buildings, the Clerk has been contacted by Cllr Nigel Bedford who would like to make a request that a flagpole is purchased for the Parish Hall at Thornwood and the Union Flag is flown permanently on this flagpole. Members are asked to **CONSIDER** this request.

15. REQUEST FROM GIGACLEAR

 Members are advised that a request has been received from Gigaclear who are looking to place an access point (POT) for the Parish Council on land within their ownership. They will be placing a POT on a grass verge just next to the entrance to the recreational ground (directly abutting the highway). Attached at **Appendix 4, previously circulated**, is a Network Access Agreement showing the location of the POT and the terms of it being placed within the council's land.

Following a conversation that the Clerk has had with a representative from Gigaclear it has come to light that that this access point will not only be for the Parish Council owned Hall, but also for other facilities along Weald Hall Lane as well. Cllr Irvine has investigated the matter on behalf of the Parish Council as the Clerk had concerns over whether or not a Wayleave or Payment was necessary.

Cllr Irvine's comments are reproduced below:

"I managed to speak to Mike Robey from Gigaclear today. I have spoken to his colleague Sophie winter many times. Unfortunately, I think he is correct on the point about the wayleave. I do see this as a potential benefit to the parish council in the future. The broadband speeds available via Gigaclear are very much higher than those offered by any operator using the current BT Openreach network. So, the village hall could get higher broadband speeds and it is good to have some competition. I think he is correct within the wayleave rules.

As you know there are wayleaves that offer a payment especially when they are crossing land to benefit many customers, but this is quite a small part of a bigger project with fewer or no other people benefitting from this POT. The bigger issue here is that it is good news that the residents of Thornwood will have access to a much better broadband service. The network Gigaclear are building will offer substantially better speeds than any service based on the current BT Openreach network.

I did say that I thought the flow of information between the Parish Council and Gigaclear could be improved. I said that they should offer a briefing on their plans for the area so that I could see if the Chairman, fellow Counsellors plus our much-valued team and The Staff would be interested in adding this to the agenda. What new services will they provide, where, when how many homes and business would benefit, what are the costs and speeds against current offerings, where next? What are the implications for the current BT network? I also said that whilst I understood that Gigaclear had many demands on their time I was finding it difficult to get answers to the questions I had raised about other parts of the Parish. Mike asked me to reiterate my questions to him and to facilitate getting an answer. There are various parts of the Parish that would benefit if we can get a bit more assistance from them. To be fair Gigaclear are not great on the communication front but Openreach are even more opaque. "

Based on the details that Members have, are they now **CONTENT** to allow Gigaclear have this access and place this POT on the Parish Council land.

16. PLAY IN THE PARK 2021

The Parish Council has received a request to provide funding for EFDC Play in the Park 2021. The Parish Council has been providing funding for two events for a number of years. Last year's events were not as successful due to children not being able to attend a face to face event and ended up attending and picking up packs to take away. The details received so far are as follows:

"We are hoping to resume a face to face summer programme with a move more towards what we used to deliver for Play in the Park, pre Covid. We wondered what you would be planning for this summer, whether you are interested in Play in the Park sessions and if so, if there were any particular dates you had in mind. We would be

looking to programme sessions geographically close together on the same days to minimise staff travel between sites."

The recommendation is that the Council provide funding for only one session this year to be held on the Memorial Playing Fields as this has had the largest footfall over the years. Members are asked to **CONFIRM** that they wish to go ahead with this.

17. PARISH HALL AT THORNWOOD – COVID TESTING CENTRE


Members are advised that the testing facility continues to operate 4 days a week. Following a number of conversations with the NHS/MCHLC who were the initial contact for the site, the Clerk has been advised that they are not willing to pay any fees whatsoever for this site, not even a contribution to the Caretakers salary or cleaning costs. Members decided at the last meeting that the Council should *'continue to offer the site up until such time as Government Guidance says that Community Halls would be able to reopen, however we should look for some reimbursement for the Hall Running Costs.'*

Members are now advised that the Hall will re-open in its 'usual' manner on the 21st June 2021, subject to there being no changes to Government Guidance. Therefore, the Clerk intends to write formally and **CONFIRM** that the hall will be unavailable after Thursday 17th June, **or earlier if Members feel that this is appropriate**, this will give the Caretaker enough time to ensure that everything is available for re-opening.

18. GOING FORWARD – PARISH HALL AT THORNWOOD

Following on from the Prime Ministers revised Roadmap out of Lockdown, a **REVISED** date for opening of the Hall had to be organised. The expected date that the Parish Hall will re-open is now **Monday 21st June**, subject to there being no other changes in Government Guidance. The Parish Council office and staff will operate from the hall from this date. The opening hours for the Parish Office will be 10am to 1.00pm on a Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. The Clerk will write to all regular users to advise that the hall will re-open from this date. Notices will also be placed on the Website and on the Noticeboards advising of the same. It should be **NOTED** that the Clerk has had confirmation from the Epping Spiritualists that they no longer wish to hire the hall. The Mums and Tots have advised that they feel that they will be able to open from September, therefore the Parish Council may need to adjust its hours to facilitate this, either to an afternoon or possibly use the Queens Hall Community Centre on a Wednesday morning. We are still awaiting confirmation of returnees or new hiring's to the Hall. The Clerk will ensure that an advertising campaign goes ahead during late April / early May.

19. MEETINGS FROM 7TH MAY

 Whilst the guidance is that Local Government Meetings can resume in person from the 7th May due to legislation not being renewed by the government, attached at Appendix 5 is documentation for Members perusal to **CONSIDER** as to whether they may wish to wait until September 2021 to resume meeting in Public. Members are asked to make a **DECISION** on extending meeting electronically for a further 3 months, when the risk of the virus would be less and then go back to public Meetings in September 2021. The Meetings will be held in the Parish Hall at Thornwood. The Hall will be open by this time and will be Covid-19 secure. As Members are aware the Hall and Car Park will still be used as a Covid-19 Mobile Testing Unit and the Hall does take a minimum of 3 hours to clean after the MTU has been in situ. Therefore the earliest we would really be able to return to face to face public meetings if we wanted to continue with the MTU Testing Unit would be for the July Meeting, and then the Parish Council Standing Orders state that there are no meetings in August (due to Summer recess). Therefore the next meeting would be held in September in any regard. Members are now asked to **CONSIDER** the report and make their decision.

20. ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY

This is the Annual Meeting of the electorate, not a meeting of the Parish Council. Parish & Town Council's simply facilitate this meeting each year. **Under the current government legislation this meeting is able to be cancelled this year.** As Members are aware every year the Parish Council holds an Annual Allotment Meeting and also an Annual Civic Awards Event. Due to Covid-19 restrictions the Clerk is recommending that this Annual Parish meeting is not held this year as it must be held between 1st March and 1st June and it may not be safe to do so. The Clerk is suggesting to Councillors that the Parish Council could hold a specific meeting to cater for these items, and that it be held later in the year, after September when it is safe to do so. Whilst it would not be called the Annual Parish Meeting, all electors in the Parish. would be invited to attend and we could ensure that they would then be in a safe environment. This could include the Allotment Meeting and the Civic Awards and any other items that Members feel are relevant. It could even be held in conjunction with the next item if one of the Community Days was an evening event.

Some initial work has already been carried out for a short presentation as to what the Parish Council has achieved, and the activities of the Parish Council, since March 2021, and this would be shown as a rolling Power Point presentation during the Community Days with hard copies for residents to take home with them, together with an extra-large copy of the Annual Report which would cover two years.

21. COMMUNITY DAYS

If at all possible, the Clerk would like to arrange a series of short Community Days. Maybe for a couple of hours in each of the Villages in the Parish as a way to bring people together and let them know what has been going on over the last year, and what the councils aims are for the next year. Dates to be decided. Members are asked if they would **AGREE** to this and attend.

22. PURCHASE OF IT EQUIPMENT & COUNCILLOR EMAIL ADDRESSES

Following on from the last meeting IT Equipment has now been ordered, however there is an eight to ten week order/lead in time delay o this. Councillors will be contacted when this is available, and those Councillors who are not already using their Councillor email address, will be given this once their equipment is available. A suitable time and date will be available for Members to come to the Hall and collect the equipment.

23. CCTV – WEALD COMMON

Members are asked to **NOTE** that the CCTV at the Weald Common Playground has now been placed under the control of the Parish Council's contractors and no longer EFDC managed or maintained.

24. GRANT FUNDING – UP TO 31ST MARCH 2021

Members are asked to **NOTE** that all grant funding which was applied for and due to be completed by this date has now been carried out this includes the following:

- £2,260 - Winter Covid & Foodbank Grant
- £1,000 - Community Garden NW
- £3,000 - Community Garden Thornwood (Grass seed is still growing)
- £2,000 - Renovating various Items & Basketball Post in Play Area
- £500 - Reflection Bench NW & Rainbow Stones (Plaques due to be installed)

25. KICKSTART ESSEX


The government is offering companies the opportunity to take part in a new scheme called 'Kickstart'. This is being offered to companies and Local Authorities in Essex as well as other counties. The scheme is for an unemployed person to be given the opportunity of training by a 'well established company' for 6 months. The scheme actually lasts for a period of 2 years, and trainees are with the company for a 6 month

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period. During the 2 year period companies can take on other trainees once the training has finished. There is no cost to the company involved. The start up grant is £1500 this would cover initial costs such as training being given by the Kickstart Organisation and mentoring and monitoring. The government will pay the living wage for the employee, so the company is only investing 'its time' in the training. This seems like a very good scheme for this Parish Council to be involved in over the next two years. We could look for a local person between the age of 18 and 24, Members are asked if they would **AGREE** to joining the scheme and offer this opportunity. It is for approximately 25 hours a week which includes the mentoring and monitoring.

26. SCHOOL GOVERNOR POSITION – ST ANDREWS SCHOOL

 The Clerk has received an invitation from the Head Teacher of St Andrews School for the Parish Council in relation to a Vacancy for a School Governor. A copy of a letter that has been sent to the Parish Council is attached at **Appendix 6 (previously circulated)** for Members perusal. Councillors are now asked to **CONSIDER** this invitation.

27. MEETINGS WITH EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL (EFDC)

Members are advised that the Chairman and the Clerk have had meetings with EFDC & Cllr Chris Whitbread over the last 6 weeks regarding the following:


- HMRC Site
- Illegal Bikers

The Clerk and the Chairman will give Members a verbal report on this matter, the substance of which Councillors are asked to **NOTE**.

28. THORNWOOD OPEN GARDENS

The Parish Council has received a request for the use of the Parish Hall at Thornwood's Car Park to be used for Thornwood's Annual Open Garden's Event. This is to be held on 11th July 2021. Members are asked to **CONFIRM** their agreement for this use.


29. HASTINGWOOD B ALLOTMENT SITE

 The Clerk has received a request from a property development search company in relation to whether or not Hastingwood B Allotment Site may be available for sale. The Clerk has advised the enquirer of the decisions made at a previous meeting by the Parish Council. However the enquirer asked that the Clerk pass the documents on to Parish Council for **CONSIDERATION**, even if this may be at a later date. Members are asked if they have any **COMMENTS** to make on this matter. A copy of documentation that the Clerk has been asked to submit to Councillors is attached at **Appendix 7, (previously circulated)**.

30. WHEELERS FARM GARDENS ALLOTMENTS

Members are advised that the relevant letter has been sent from the Solicitor and no further action is necessary at this time.

31. POLICIES

 Once per year, Council is asked to review the Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Risk Assessments, and Policies and Procedures in place for this Council. Councillors will recall that it was agreed at the April 2019 meeting that the procedure for all future reviews of Policy Documents would be that 1 copy would be printed off and retained in the Parish Council Office, and that after reviewing these Parish Councillors would be asked to sign a cover sheet stating that they have appraised themselves of the current policy papers. As a result of lockdown measures, this is not possible. As such, Councillors are directed to the

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Parish Council's website to review the current policy documents contained on the website. Councillors are advised that the only changes since the date they were last approved (April 2020) are as follows:

- **Parish Council CCTV Policy** – new policy, created June 2020, amended September 2020
- **Parish Hall at Thornwood Management Committee** - Suggested that this Committee is now changed to THE PARISH HALL AT THORNWOOD LIAISON COMMITTEE and the Terms of Reference are changed accordingly. This suggested change is due to the fact that over the last year it has been the Clerk, the Vice Chairman of the Parish Hall and the Chairman of the Council who have been undertaking all the Management of the Parish Hall, and Operating Decisions, with the assistance of the Ward Councillors, when necessary. Going Forward, it has been felt that all the decisions and functions of the Parish Hall would be best managed in this manner, at the current time, and this can be reviewed annually.
- **Data Retention Policy** – new policy. Report from Principal Financial Officer

A copy of the above stated Policies are attached at **Appendix 8, (previously circulated)**. The remainder can be found on the Parish Council's website. Council is asked to **CONSIDER** and **APPROVE** the Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Risk Assessments, and Policies and Procedures in place for this Council.

32. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

In the event that the Agenda contains Exempt (pink) pages, or an item needs to be discussed confidentially, to **CONSIDER** the following motion to be proposed by the Chairman:

“That the public and the press be 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. However an item may be placed in the Confidential part of the meeting so long as it is accordance with the Statutory Guidance.

There are NO confidential items to be considered