



North Weald Bassett Parish Council

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Clerk to the Council.
Susan De Luca

8th June 2022

TO: ALL COUNCILLORS

PLEASE NOTE TIME AND DATE OF MEETING

NOTICE OF MEETING

You are summoned to attend a Meeting of the Parish Council which will be held on **MONDAY 13TH JUNE 2022 at 7.00 pm** to transact the business shown in the Agenda below.

This meeting will be held in the Thornwood Common Parish Hall, Weald Hall Lane, Thornwood, with any necessary measures put in place by the Government at the time.

Susan De Luca
Clerk to the Council

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

AGENDA

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 Monday 9th May 2022 as attached at **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 if the Clerk has not been previously notified of the Question Council 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 the 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 try to give prior notification to the Clerk.

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- a) **Queens Platinum Jubilee** – Verbal Reports to be given, however the Parish Council wishes to offer its wholehearted thanks to all the people who have organised the very successful events in North Weald, Thornwood and Hastingwood, namely Dawn Wood, Colin Kinnear, June Peachey for events at the Queens Hall & Memorial Playing Field - Shirley Hawkins, Elaine Davis and their team at the Parish Hall at Thornwood - George and Margaret Mulliner at North Weald Village Hall - Jacky Kelly, Lynn Austin, Sue Rolfe, and Jacky Blayney and their team at Hastingwood.
All those involved in the Events for Jubilee with the halls are reminded to let the Senior Finance Officer have all your receipted Invoices to cover any funds transferred to you or paid by the Parish Council as soon as possible.
- b) **Public Footpaths** – EFDC Airfield Masterplan – details of footpaths to link up between networks are still being sought. The Clerk will give a verbal report at the meeting.
- c) **Weald Common Tree Project** – Staff and Cllr Buckley are working on this – Documentation has now been submitted and Tom Moat from Essex County Council has been liaising with the Clerk with regard to the Grant Funding.
- d) **Rededication Norwegian Memorial and Parish Memorial 19th June** – The Clerk and Senior Administrative Officer have undertaken a considerable amount of admin regarding this matter following the receipt of the emails from the Chairman of the Royal British Legion, North Weald Branch on the 6th June, RBL, (NWB). Members are further advised that all the plans are in place and arrangements made for this event. Revd Jaimee Summers is undertaking the Service at both the Parish War Memorial and Norwegian Memorial. Invitations have been sent out and reminders also, and the invitation list is expected to be widely the same as the dignitaries that are invited to the Remembrance Sunday Events. Wreaths will be laid at the Parish War Memorial and flowers at the Norwegian Memorial, as agreed by Councillors as the Service at the Norwegian Memorial is a service of Thanksgiving. Afternoon Tea for 70 has been arranged in the Parish Hall at Thornwood following both services. The Clerk has had two queries in regard to laying Wreaths at the Norwegian Memorial. Members had previously agreed that it would be more appropriate for flowers to be laid at the Norwegian Memorial, however Members are asked whether or not those wishing to lay a wreath should be directed to lay them at the Debt of Honour instead of the Norwegian Memorial. Members are asked to **CONSIDER** if they feel this is appropriate.

The Council has received notification from the Chairman of the Royal British Legion (North Weald Branch) regarding various matters which he feels somewhat unhappy with. Members will be able to establish the extent of these via the emails as attached at **Appendix 2**, which detail the various concerns and subsequent explanations, however the Clerk will be happy to talk Members through this documentation.

The Chairman of the RBL (NWB) is concerned at the late notification of the event, however Members agreed that a Save the Date would be issued at the Remembrance Sunday Event last year, and would be placed in the service sheets for those attending at the Norwegian Memorial. In addition to this Save the Dates were published at the Parish Council Community Day, the Annual Assembly and within the Annual Report.

Members are asked to **NOTE** that an Invitation was sent to the Chairman of the Royal British Legion on the 20th May at the same time as all other invites were sent. Members are asked to **NOTE** the Council was unable to send formal confirmation prior to that date as we were awaiting confirmed times of the Services from the Vicar, which were not received until the morning of the day that the Invitations were sent out.

Members are asked therefore to **CONFIRM** if they wish the Clerk to advertise the events on the Noticeboards, Website and Parish Council Facebook page without the Reception This can be done by noon on TUESDAY 14th JUNE, if Members wish.

- e) **Audit** – The Financial Officer has been dealing with Internal & External Audit including submission of documentation electronically and getting all other documentation ready for the Internal Auditor who was in attendance for one day on Wednesday 18th May at the Parish Hall in Thornwood. Details of the Internal Auditors visit, and External Auditor Matters are shown under the various Items within this Agenda.

- f) **From last Meeting - Question to John Philip Regarding EFDC Accounts – To Cllr Phillip / Cllr Hadley**

Q. I have been instructed to contact you on behalf of North Weald Bassett Parish Council, with regard to the situation concerning the failure of the EFDC Accounts to be audited for YE 31 March 2021. Councillors understand that the reason for this delay lies with Deloitte and is not necessarily a failure on EFDCs part, however Councillors have asked if you can explain what EFDC is doing to put pressure on Deloitte to push this matter forward. I would be grateful if you could contact me to advise so I can formally report back to Council.

Response Received from John Philip

The Council has been working closely with it's Auditors (Deloitte), the PSAA, (Public Sector Audit Appointment), the Government and CIPFA, (the professional institute for local government finance) to address what amounts to a crisis in local government audit. The result of this crisis has manifested in significant delays to the sign-off of Final Accounts across all of Local Government. As of today, fewer than half of councils have had their Accounts signed-off by their respective auditors for 2020/21. There are a number of root causes, including increasing complexity and greater requirement on the Auditors in the wake of highly publicised Accounting failures within the sector but the main cause is a lack of qualified and experienced staff within the sector. All of those in the sector are aware that there are no quick fixes to these problems but we are collectively working to identify solutions, including reducing the complexity of the Accounts and the Auditing process. However, the underlying issue, shortage of qualified staff, is harder to resolve. The PSAA are in the process of re-tendering the Audit contracts and as part of this exercise aim to increase the number of Audit Companies permitted to carry out the work. This may ease the situation in the short term, but will not solve it. At a local level, we have met with the PSAA to discuss our concerns and through them we have agreed an approach with the Audit Partner at Deloitte. This entails our Auditors effectively carrying out two audits (2020/21 and 2021/22) back to back (an approach now being adopted by a number of councils). We expect the process to start in July 2022.

We are hopeful that this will bring us back up to date with Audit, but we remain reliant on our Auditors to deliver this. We will continue to keep the Audit Committee updated and we encourage you to follow these meetings to understand progress.

Cllr John Philip

Cabinet Member for Finance and Economic Development

- g) **From Last Meeting: Subject: Re: North Weald Airfield Masterplan sent to Cllr Bedford and Nick Dawe, EFDC**

Q. At our Parish Council meeting last night, Councillors asked that I write to you to establish the current situation regarding the North Weald Airfield Masterplan (Sue, our Clerk, is currently off sick, hence the reason I am writing). Within the consultation paperwork for the last Airfield

Consultation it stated that the Masterplan would be put before Cabinet in the early part of 2022, however we are now into May and there has been no update and as far as we can tell it has not been put before Cabinet. Could you therefore please provide me with update on the current situation with the Airfield Masterplan as well as the next steps so I can pass this on to Council.

Response from Cristina Norton – Soundings

I hope you are well and thank you for requesting an update, as you rightly say we indicated the masterplan going to cabinet in the early part of 2022. You may have received a reply to the below that I was not copied in. In any case, I thought I would let you know we have posted an update on the website (as below) and sent an e bulletin to our database. I hope this clarifies. And we will further update when we have a more precise date and when we can share the consultation findings from the drop-in in January and the final masterplan and how it has responded to feedback.

From December 2021 until February 2022, the community was consulted on the draft Strategic Masterplan. We received a large number of responses and it was great to see many attendees to the online and in-person events held during this period. The masterplan is currently being revised in response to the consultation, and it is hoped that the final Strategic Masterplan and Statement of Community Involvement will be submitted to Cabinet in Summer 2022.

7. REPORTS & MEMBERS REPORTS

MEMBERS ARE REMINDED THAT THEY 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 3** if they have been submitted by Members for inclusion, as follows:

- a) Chairman's Report – verbal report
- b) Vice Chairman's 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
- 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

8. FINANCIAL REPORTS

- a) **List of Cheques & Monthly Statement of Accounts** – Up to 31st May 2022

- b) **Internal Audit**

This was carried out on Wednesday 18th May, and a copy of the final conclusion of internal audit 2021-2022 is attached for members perusal at Appendix 4.

c) External Audit (AGAR) 2021/2022

Each year the Councils Accounts and Practices (known as the Annual Governance and Accountability Return - AGAR) are reviewed by an external auditor appointed by the Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments Ltd. The following dates apply for this Council:

- The requirement for the public inspection period (to include the first 10 working days of July) will start 15th June and will end 26th July.
- The AGAR must be approved by 30th June 2022 and submitted to PKF Littlejohn by 1st July 2022.

This Council is subject to an Intermediate Review as part of the limited assurance review. Council is asked to:

- a) Review the effectiveness of the system of internal control of this Council (This was completed at the May Meeting)
- b) Consider the findings of this review (This was completed at the May Meeting)
- c) Prepare the Annual Governance Statement (Section 1)
- d) Approve the Annual Governance Statement by way of **RESOLUTION**
- e) Consider the Accounting Statements (Section 2)
- f) Approve the Accounting Statements by way of **RESOLUTION**
- g) Ensure that both the Annual Governance Statement and Accounting Statements is signed and dated by the person presiding at the meeting.

The relevant Documentation is attached at **Appendix 5**

9. MEMORIAL TREE AT HAMPDEN CLOSE

The Clerk has been advised that it is necessary to submit a Planning Application for this tree as it is subject to a TPO. The Planning Officer has at last contacted the Parish Council and has now confirmed that he would not allow any works to be carried out whatsoever, not even minor works, without a full planning application being submitted. Therefore the relevant application is now in the process of being submitted by the Tree Surgeon. We are awaiting confirmation of the application to undertake these works which are: 'To cut back from over the neighbours garden only. And also remove dead wood'.

10. RIDE LONDON EVENT – 28th and 29th MAY 2022

Members will recall the event which took place in the Parish of North Weald Bassett on the 28th & 29th May. As at the date of compiling the Agenda the Clerk has not received any negative reports or comments from residents. It is the Clerks understanding that there is a Survey on EFDC/ECC Website which is open to residents to complete regarding feedback from the events. Members are asked to **CONFIRM** that they feel they best way forward would be to direct Residents to this Website to log their comments.

11. PARISH WAR MEMORIAL

The Clerk has received a call from David Lodge asking for his thanks to be expressed to the Parish Council for the refurbishment of the war memorial.

12. NORTH WEALD AIRFIELD ALTERNATIVE MASTERPLAN

Members are advised that the Parish Council has received correspondence via the North Weald Neighbourhood Plan Group from a company called Relight Group regarding a possible alternative plan for North Weald Airfield. The Clerk will provide a further update at the meeting. Members will be asked to **CONSIDER** if the Parish Council is the appropriate body to undertake any further work on this matter bearing in mind this is an EFDC Strategic Plan, and this Parish Council has already made its comments known, together with the fact that this Council is still awaiting a response to the Masterplan. Members may actually feel that those who have written in will be contacted in due course, in light of Christina Norton's comments above. The Parish Council is not really the correct body to undertake a review of a third party's alternative plan, and perhaps the Relight Group should be directed to seek an opinion from a Company with

‘Expert Aviation’ knowledge in this field of work.

13. INVESTMENTS

Cllr Terry Blanks, the Councils Senior Finance Officer, The Clerk, and the Auditor have been discussing the best way to move forward with Investing the Councils finances. Cllr Terry Blanks will give Members a short verbal report of Investment Banks that could be a viable way of doing this. Members may be asked to make a decision on this matter.

14. ENFORCEMENT MATTERS AT EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

The Clerk was asked to contact a number of Councillors at EFDC with regard to the problems being experienced in relation to various enforcement matters. The main concern which was discussed was the problems at Chase Farm and the Taxis, and the length of time between the application for Planning Approval being turned down and when the subsequent Enforcement Notice was issued - a time lapse of approximately 6 months between the two. The Clerk has been advised that this was due to Staffing Resources.

15. QUEENS HALL – NEW TRUSTEES

The Queens Hall had a number of Parish Council appointed Trustees resign this year. However, we have one Trustee who is willing to sit on the Board of Trustees as a Parish Council appointed Trustee - Mrs June Peachey. Most Councillors and Members know June as a very hard working and well-respected member of the North Weald Community. Members are asked to **CONFIRM** that they are willing to appoint Mrs June Peachey.

16. LOCAL GOVERNMENT REVIEW OF ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES

The Parish Council has been advised that there will be a review of Electoral Boundaries. It is understood that this will affect the Epping Forest District in some way and that it will mean that District Councillors will probably represent approximate 15,000 resident in each area which will include various Parishes. The Clerk is waiting for further documentation and will give a further update at the next meeting.

17. COFFEE WITH COPS

The Coffee with Cops session was a success with a good number of residents attending. It was held on a Tuesday Morning in the Methodist Hall between 10 and 12 and a number of local residents were in attendance along with two Members of the Police. One District Councillor, two Parish Councillors and 8 Residents in total. The Police have indicated they would like to hold another event in North Weald and one in Thornwood during the Summer.

18. TO DIVERT THE TOTALITY OF (FPs 26, 27) OR SECTIONS THEREOF (FPs 20, 24, 25) OF FOOTPATHS 20, 24, 25, 26 & 27 NORTH WEALD BASSETT

Essex County Council would welcome the Parish Councils thoughts on the above diversion proposal. This is an informal consultation only and no Order has yet been made and as such this informal consultation is not a statutory requirement on the Highway Authority. Its aim is to enable the principal stakeholders to comment on the proposed changes; feedback which is then considered by the Highway Authority and provided to the applicant. It is not intended as a public consultation. The public are informed and invited to respond if they so wish at the formal, Made Order consultation stage via on-site notices and plans, and the newspaper advertisement for the order. For ECC to continue this discretionary service they would appreciate it if informal consultations were not shared with the public beyond any council meetings as no order has yet been made and public comments on the proposals are not at this stage being sought.

Highways Act 1980 Section 119, Essex County Council intend to make the following orders: To divert Footpaths 20, 24, 25, 26 and 27 in the parish of North Weald Bassett the District of Epping Forest under section 119 of the Highways Act as shown on the attached plan.

It is proposed to divert the totality (FPs 26, 27) or sections thereof (FPs 20, 24, 25) of Footpaths 20, 24, 25, 26 and 27 North Weald Bassett away from their current routes, as indicated.

Members are asked if they wish to make any **COMMENT** on these proposals. Map attached at **Appendix 6**.

19. HASTINGWOOD SPEEDWATCH

The Clerk has been advised by Cllr Irvine that a number of Residents who originally had their name recorded to assist with residents Speedwatch are no longer able to assist. Cllr Irvine has advised Cllr Clegg.

20. HASTINGWOOD ALLOTMENTS

Members will recall that Hastingwood allotments and the possible de-allotmentisation has been discussed at two previous meetings. It was agreed by Members that they would prefer the Allotment to remain as an Open Space. The Clerk has received a number of enquiries once again regarding the possibility of renting or buying the Allotments. As six months has now passed since the decision was taken, we are able to place this matter on to an Agenda and ask if Member would like to re-consider the decision or for the status quo to remain. Members are therefore asked to **CONSIDER** if they wish to look at this matter again,

21. JULY MEETING

Members are reminded that the date for the Parish Council Meeting to be held in July is **MONDAY 11th JULY**, to be held in the Parish Hall, Thornwood Common.

22. 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 TWO confidential items to be considered