



North Weald Bassett Parish Council

Parish Hall at Thornwood Common, Weald Hall Lane,
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Clerk to the Council.
Susan De Luca

27th October 2024

TO: ALL COUNCILLORS

NOTICE OF MEETING

You are summoned to attend a Meeting of the Parish Council which will be held on **MONDAY 4th November at 7.30 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.**

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 **NOTE** any apologies which have been received.

2. OTHER ABSENCES

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

3. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES 🖐️ 📄

To **AGREE** the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 2nd October 2024 together with **NOTING** the Minutes of the Environmental and Open Spaces Committee both 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 Chairperson 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

To **RECEIVE** a report or update from the Clerk on Parish Council matters that staff have been working on.

- a) Planning Matters
 - b) Consultations for Developments in the Parish
 - c) Cemetery Matters
 - d) Remembrance Sunday – covered in Agenda
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7. REPORTS & MEMBERS REPORTS

Councillors are reminded that, if possible, members reports should be submitted in written form for noting only, this enables the meeting to flow smoothly and allows adequate time for discussion of matters appertaining to the Parish. Written reports, **if available**, will be reproduced at *Appendix 2* .

a) Chairman's 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 Reports

e) Queens Hall Charity Report

f) Highways - Pavements in North Weald

8. FINANCIAL REPORTS

a) **List of Cheques & Monthly Statement of Accounts** – Up to 31st October 2024

b) Investments

9. REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY COMMEMORATIVE EVENTS 2024

Members are advised that an update will be given in relation to the commemorative events. Currently the following actions have been taken:

- Two adverts have been placed in Village Life regarding the Lunch & Service
- Advertising has been carried out on social media since early September
- Posters were placed on the Noticeboards
- Royal British Legion have been informed
- Invitations have gone out, together with reminders
- Lunch has been arranged – in excess of 50 have confirmed
- Vicar has been booked
- Bugler has been booked
- Royal Norwegian Embassy & Royal Norwegian Airforce have been contacted regarding attendance at the event or laying a wreath
- All other arrangements are in hand

An update on Lunch attendee numbers will be given at the Meeting.

10. COUNCILLORS SURGERY

The Parish Council facilitated a Surgery on behalf of District and County Councillors (Conservative Party) on the 18th & 25th October at the Parish Hall in Thornwood. Appointments for local residents were arranged with relatively good attendance. The Chairman of the Parish Council attended and put forward a number of concerns he had which were outstanding. District and County Councillors of other different political affiliations are reminded that the hall is available to facilitate Surgeries if they wish to hold them, free of charge. They just need to contact the parish council staff to arrange this.

11. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

At the October Parish Council meeting, it was agreed that a cost benefit analysis would be completed to enable councillors to make a decision about whether or not to restart its Neighbourhood Plan. This has now been completed, and Councillors will be provided with a summary at the meeting, after which they will be asked to **CONSIDER** if they wish to restart the Neighbourhood Plan.

12. DEVELOPER WORKING GROUP MEETING

Councillors are asked to note that a number of Councillors attended a meeting of the Developer Working Group meeting on Thursday 17th October 2024 in the Thornwood Common Parish Hall. Copies of these *NOTES* are attached at *Appendix 3*. Councillors are asked to **CONSIDER** if there is any action they wish to take.

13. BUDGET / PRECEPT MEETING

This years Budget and Precept meeting will take place on **Monday 16th December**. Councillors are asked to advise the Clerk if they would like any matter included for consideration under the budget / precept, and if so to provide full details of the subject including costings. So far, the PFO has a list of items agreed throughout the year, and the Clerk has one item from the Hastingwood Councillors for inclusion. **Items for inclusion are needed at least Two Full weeks prior to this meeting.**

14. INTERIM INTERNAL AUDIT 2024/2025

Councillors are asked to *NOTE* that this years Interim Internal Audit will take place on 4th and 5th December, and will be conducted remotely. The Clerk will provide an update.

15. PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY – JOINING UP OF TWO FOOTPATHS WEALD COMMON

Members will recall they had been previously advised that the Clerk was still awaiting a formal response from ECC on this matter. No further update has been available from ECC. Unfortunately, due to the Clerk being unwell she was unable to meet with Councillor Chris Whitbread to speak about this matter so she will be contacting him separately.

16. MEETING WITH CHAIRMAN OF QUALIS

Unfortunately, due to the re-organisation of Qualis, Simon Rutter is no longer in post, and after liaising with Cllr Whitbread, it is understood that the Clerk will now have to contact Jen Gould. Thanks should be passed on to Cllr Blanks for advising at a previous meeting that this may be the resultant case.

17. CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR CLOSURE

Members are advised that the Parish Council Office will close at 12 noon on Friday 20th December 2024 and re-open 9.15am on Monday 6th January 2025. Staff will be taking any appropriate annual leave on necessary days. The Clerk will provide emergency cover during the Christmas and New Year closure, and the office mobile phone will be on to cover Emergency and Cemetery Matters. Notices will be placed on Noticeboards and information on Social media. There will be a short Parish Council meeting on the evening of the 6th January 2025 to ratify the Precept.

18. FUTURE OF EFD/EALC LOCAL LIAISON COMMITTEE

On Monday 21st October a number of Clerks from Parish and Town Councils in the EFDC district met to discuss the current situation regarding both the EFDC Local Council Liaison Committee (LCLC) meetings, and the future of the EALC Epping Forest Branch Meetings. Councillors may recall that the local Branch meetings started again a couple of years ago, however its secretary stepped down after the 21st September 2023, mainly due to frustration with EFDC and their failure to value the sector.

This led to many clerks agreeing that for some time now the LCLC meetings have been questionable in terms of their benefit to Parish and Town Councils, with many Clerks who represent councils becoming frustrated and disenfranchised with the outcomes. As such, Clerks from Epping, North Weald Bassett, Ongar, Chigwell, Loughton, Epping Upland, Moreton Bobbingworth and the Lavers, and Stanford Rivers, met on the 27th to discuss if we could see a better way forward.

All present felt that there was definitely a ‘space’ for Clerks to meet and discuss matters of common interest or concern, and that perhaps a better way forward rather than the EALC Branch Meetings would be to hold 3 Clerks meetings a year (or meet at short notice if there is an urgent matter that needs addressing), and any collectively agreed outcomes, issues or queries to be put directly to EFDC via one or two of our District Councillors (the District Councillors agreed between clerk based on the subject matter or issue). EFDC has historically stated that as clerks no longer have access to individual officers at EFDC, we should raise our issues with our district Councillors.

It was suggesting that the LCLC is perhaps a forum where Councillors meet with EFDC, and not necessarily Clerks. Therefore, Councils would appoint a Councillor to attend and not a Clerk. For some time it has been noted that very few Parish and Town councillors ever attended the LCLC Meetings, and that whilst you can bring matters to the attention of District Council via the LCLC platform, action rarely got taken. Clerks in attendance felt that the LCLC was not the suitable forum that they were missing to assist them with day to day functions.

Adriana Jones, this councils PFO, is the appointed clerk who will will be writing to Gary Woodall, Team Manager EFDC Democratic & Electoral Services, in the next few days on behalf of the Clerks in the Epping Forest District to put a proposal on the agenda for the 21st November 2024 LCLC meeting.

It is worth noting that the above meeting of Clerks and subsequent proposal was borne out of the absolute frustration and anger that many Clerks felt regarding the change in relationship between EFDC and Parish and Town Councils. Historically, as a sector we felt valued and respected, being a vital part of ensuring the residents of the District were adequately represented and informed, however this relationship has for some time been broken (possibly partly due to EFDC budget cuts and resources), with many of us now feeling simply ‘tolerated’ or in some cases completely disregarded. For those of you who would like to see this in action, please do have a look at the LCLC meeting of [21 September 2023 Local Liaison Committee - YouTube](#).

The PFO spoke to Cllr Chris Whitbread at the Surgery on Friday 25th October and explained the above, and it is understood that Cllr Chris Whitbread agreed he would be happy to be a ‘designated’ Councillor who would be willing to meet with Clerks at these forums. Therefore Councillors are asked for any comments they may have on this matter.

19. 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 currently NO confidential items to be considered