



**MINUTES**

**Meeting:** PARISH COUNCIL

**Date:** 8<sup>th</sup> April 2024

**Time:** 7.30PM

**Venue:** PARISH HALL, THORNWOOD COMMON

**PRESENT:**

**Councillors (10)** Mrs S Hawkins (Meeting Chairman), B Clegg, Mrs S Jackman MBE, N Born, A Irvine, Ms D Wood, C Kinnear, T Blanks, N Bedford, R Spearman

\* for part of meeting

**Officers in Attendance (2)**

Susan Deluca - Clerk

Adriana Jones – Principle Finance Officer

**Members of the Public (3)** – Inc PC Andy Cook\*, Jack Riggs, Weston Homes, 1 resident

**Members of the Press (1)**

**C23.195 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (3)**

Apologies from Cllr Buckley, Cllr Mrs Etherington, Cllr Tyler

**C23.196 OTHER ABSENCES (1)**

Cllr Stroud.

**C23.197 MINUTES**

Councillors **AGREED** the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2024, and noted the minutes of the Environmental and Open Spaces Committee of 18<sup>th</sup> March 2024.

**C23.198 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

**C23.199 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

The Chairman welcomed PC Cook who provided Councillors with an update on the crime statistics, advising there wasn't too much to report. There had been some thefts of motor vehicles – one in Church Lane, two in Blenheim Square and one in Charles's yard. One shed burglary in Bassett Gardens. There was a large fly tip of tyres in the access road to the Sewage works in off Church Lane, to which the Clerk advised there was asbestos too. PC Cook stated this was private land. There had been two road traffic collisions with no injuries reported. Regarding the incident along Weald Hall Lane on 2<sup>nd</sup> April, this was ongoing, however noted that the CCTV did not identify the registration plate. Cllr Born asked if there was any data on crime over the market, for example pickpocketing, to which PC Cook confirmed if it is reported he will be made aware of it. Cllr Ms Wood advised of a recent incident at the Queens Hall with youths climbing on the roof, confirming she had CCTV images of the individuals. PC Cook asked that this was forwarded to him. The youths had stated they were trying to get a ball, however they had balaclavas on. No damage was caused, however this was extremely dangerous for the youths, and potentially damaging for the hall. PC Cook suggested anti climb paint could be useful, however Cllr Ms Wood stated that she seemed to believe the hall could not use this, but would check. Cllr Bedford advised PC Cook that there was a incident in the Kings Head the prior week

when a member of staff was assaulted. He was unsure if the police turned up, by knows that it was reported as an incident.

[PC Cook Left]

The Chairman welcomed the member of the public and invited him to address the Council. The resident expressed his concern about the proposed 30MPH speed zone being introduced by the developer of Rosario, stating that having looked at the proposed locations on the public schematic, and they did not correspond with the original village envelope. Historically residents had asked for a 30MPH limit to be introduced along the full length of the village via a Local Highway Panel request, however this had been refused (LEPP192006), the reason stated that such a reduction in speed would not comply with ECC Speed Management Strategy. He stated that the village enveloped has already shrunk, stating that the original gateway signs were at the both the old Cross Keys, and by footpath 76, both of which were referenced in the book written by the resident. The resident wanted to understand if there was a reason by the gateway sign was where it was, and what would be the issue with placing it where the true village boundaries were.

Cllr Clegg stated that the schematic was extremely small and difficult to read, but stated there was an anomaly and aske that the wording of the Texaco garage be updated to reflect the current owners – Applegreen Services. Cllr Clegg advised there were numerous speed limit changes along a 1.9m Stretch of road, stating that it was totally illogical to put 30MPH the other side of Camfauds.

The Chairman thanked the member of the public, and advised this matter would be discussed under agenda item 10.

### **C23.200 REPORT OF THE CLERK**

The Clerk provided the following reports:

- a) Vandalised Notice Board at the Talbot – Now replaced
- b) Various Cemetery Matters – one being sensitive involving the coroner
- c) Update on Sensory Garden – Installation of Flower Boxes and seats was set to commence week commencing 18<sup>th</sup> March, however this has been delayed due to bad weather. It was hoped this would take place next week.
- d) Youth Club – Please see separate item on the Agenda
- e) Civic Awards
- f) Annual Report
- g) The relevant notices of elections will be placed on the notice boards this coming week.

### **C23.201 REPORTS & MEMBERS REPORTS**

- a) **Chairman's Report** – None
- b) **Vice Chairman's Report** – Just to confirm again that the allotments were looking very good.
- c) **District & County Councillors Reports** – None
- d) **Parish Councillors Reports** – Cllr Clegg reported on recent speedwatch activity earlier in the day between 11.30am and 12.30pm in Upland Road, with 21 out of 121 vehicles

recorded as speeding (17.3%), the highest being 47MPH. Cllr Clegg understood that the police had also been conducting speed checks by Hill Farm earlier in the day, however there were no statistics on this at present.

Cllr Born requested that consideration be given to placing a dog bin on the other side of the main road to the village green. It was agreed he would visit the office to confirm the exact location of his proposal.

Cllr Bedford requested that a full overhaul of the Parish owned notice boards was completed, to which the Clerk confirmed this was normally completed once per year around May.

- e) **Queens Hall Charity Report** – As mentioned earlier in the meeting, Cllr Ms Wood reported on youths climbing onto the roof of the hall. In addition, somebody who was not a hall user was locked into the Queens Hall Car Park, and Cllr Wood arrived just in time to let them out before they used bolt croppers. Cllr Wood reminded Councillors that this was not a public car park.
- f) **Highways** – The Clerk confirmed she had sent out invites to all Councillors for the meeting organised by Cllr Holly Whitbread and the PFCC Roger Hirst to discuss various matters relating to Highways and Policing. Both Cllr Bedford and Cllr Clegg confirmed they attended, stating that it was essentially an update by these groups on policy and how money was spent. It did not address specific matters, such as potholes that needed to be filled. Cllr Clegg advised there was a question raised by a lady from Roydon regarding a 7.5T weight limit with access only, and the representative from ECC confirmed he would look into it. It was suggested this individual also look at Upland Road too. The Clerk advised that she was expecting to receive a report on the event. Cllr Bedford advised that that he had put forward the suggestion of providing funding to CSW to train them on how to identify overweight lorries. Cllr Bedford advised that ECC run an emergency out of hours line for extremely urgent matters, which the Clerk advised she was aware of. Cllr Blanks enquired as to the legislation that covers ECC requirements in road inspections, to which Cllr Bedford advised they have a duty to inspect the roads once per year.

Cllr Clegg advised that during the meeting he did learn that the access road to Epping Station was owned by Transport for London, who had failed to fill the extremely large pothole in the road. Cllr Born advised that there had been a lot of tarmacking works recently undertaken in North Weald, and he was concerned at the quality of workmanship, such as there being no expansion joints and differences as to where concrete or wooden upstands were used, stating he suspected there had not been any supervision. Cllr Bedford advised he was aware there had been supervision, as he was aware of at least one stretch or pavement where the work had to be completed again. Cllr Bedford suggested that if Cllr Born was still concerned he could put together a list of specific locations and make an official complaint.

## **C23.202 FINANCIAL REPORTS**

- a) Councillors agreed the list of monthly payments up to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024, and noted the status of the bank accounts, details of which had been emailed to them.
- b) Councillors noted that interest from the CCLA investment.
- c) Councillors noted that the date of the internal audit would be 5<sup>th</sup> June 2024.

- d) Councillors noted notification from the external auditors had been received concerning the 2023/2024 audit.

### **C23.203 EFDC RURAL REGENERATION STRATEGY**

Members noted that the clerk received an email from EFDC regarding the above, stating that EFDC had received some funding, post pandemic, which enabled them to look at what was hindering economic development. This funding is being used to look into Rural Regeneration and EFDC has appointed consultants Deyton Bell to do this. They have approached 6 rural areas including North Weald, Abridge, Theydon Bois, Roydon, Nazeing and Chigwell. They have sent out a survey trying to contact small businesses, and from this they hope to be able to compile how small businesses are coping during these trying times of troublesome economic development, the lack of any skilled staff, the lack of staff, access to markets, as well as understanding what issues these businesses face.

After some confusion, and the Clerk contacting Cllr Bedford, a zoom meeting was arranged with Richard Schunemann who is the Lead Officer on this project – and the person who asked if the Parish Council could reach out to Local Businesses and or Community Groups via Social Media. The Clerk was advised that Deyton Bell were the leading company in this type of market, who will go on to organise one to one meetings with business, councillors and clerks. They will be looking at barriers to growth, contacts, business owners, business groups, also details of any businesses that are seemingly struggling. The end goal would be recommendations to tackle issues on how businesses can stay afloat and a new strategy to take them forward in the coming years.

As agreed at the meeting, the Office staff publicised this on social media, with very little success, and with mainly negative comments. However the Clerk has reached out to June Peachey who is part of a group of local businesses, who has advised that she will try to assist if she can by arranging a meeting with Deyton Bell, at which the Clerk could attend. Cllr Bedford suggested Probus may be a good route to take, or a flyer to business centres. The Clerk advised that the Parish Council didn't have the resources to do this.

### **C23.204 HIGH ROAD THORNWOOD – 30MPH**

Councillors noted that the Parish Council had been made aware that the Reserved Matters planning application for Rosario had been approved, and as such the progressing of a detailed design was being tendered for, with the aim of commencing in the summer. Within this application will be the introduction of a 30mph zone within Thornwood along the High Road as part of the development. The company involved have produced the attached signage plan for the TRO application. In attendance at the meeting was Jack Riggs of Weston Homes to speak on the matter. Jack had previously advised that he was aware some Councillors had expressed an interest in the extent of the 30mph zone but not provided comment to date, and he was therefore asking if the Parish Council had any comments prior to them submitting their application for the 30mph zone.

The PFO had completed a short presentation to explain in visual terms what was being proposed, but in essence this was positioning the north boundary of the 30mph zone just after you pass Camfaud and reach the section of the High Road with Rosario and development opposite. This is so it is not in conflict with access arrangements shown on the planning application for the opposite development. There is already a northern gateway feature to the village just as you pass Applegreens. They didn't want to take this down to erect a new gateway feature further south

because this would give the impression the extent of the village has shrunk, and they considered the Parish Council and residents might not appreciate that. They therefore propose the signage to the northern extent of the zone is a simple 30mph speed sign.

The south boundary of the 30mph zone has been positioned so it is approximately 60m south of the Woodside junction, stating they felt this was a sensible position encouraging traffic to slow down as they enter the main built up area of Thornwood. There is no gateway feature indicating you enter Thornwood from the south, so they propose a 'Thornwood Common - Please drive carefully' sign in that location with the speed limit displayed on it. A schematic was attached to the agenda.

Further to the points raised earlier in the meeting, Cllr Clegg advised that there were an error on the plans in that the speed limit on the B1393 adjacent to the lower forest was in fact 50MPH, and not 40MPH as stated. There was much discussion regarding the appropriateness of what the speed limit should be, and where it should be place. The PFO expressed some caution in that reducing a speed limit to 30MPH on a road where the average road user would perceive it be 40MPH could have unintended consequences, such as issues with overtaking. After further discussion, it was **AGREED** that the suggestion put forward by this Council is that that the speed limit should be 40MPH coming from the M11 roundabout until the old Cross Keys (the historic village envelope), where it should then drop down to 30MPH until south of the Woodside Junction, and then raise again to 40MPH all the way to Wintry Wood. The PFO would create a plan to show this, and send this to Jack Riggs for further review and assessment.

### **C23.205 NORTH WEALD YOUTH CLUB**

Members recalled there had been a number of meetings and numerous correspondence has taken place with representatives from North Weald Youth Club following agreement from Members of funding agreed by the Parish Council to offer the Youth Club. An offer letter was therefore sent, full details of which were included within the body of the agenda, including details of the actions the Clerk had taken to date. Councillors **NOTED** that following these communications, notification had been received from Essex County Council that they will not be going forward with a Youth Club/Hub in North Weald, and the offer rejected.

### **C23.206 PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT**

A full copy of the final annual report was tabled for members information. Members were extremely impressed with the report, stating it was full and factual. Cllr Bedford stated it was nice to see the section on the Norway House Christmas Party and suggested perhaps next year Councillors may also wish to contribute towards Easter Eggs for the children. This was generally supported. The report will be available for distribution initially at the Annual Parish Assembly, and then for distribution throughout the Parish following this meeting. The Chairman reminded members that it had previously been agreed that Councillors would fold the magazine and no cost, however two of these Councillors were no longer able to do this. 3000 copies needed to be printed and folded before 22<sup>nd</sup> April. As such, Councillors **AGREED** to pay up to £150 to get these items folded prior to this date.

### **C23.207 PARISH COUNCIL CIVIC AWARDS**

Members advised that a meeting had taken place to agree the winners of the Citizen of the Year awards which would be presented at the Annual Parish Meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> April. The Clerk read out the categories, which were detailed on the rear of the leaflet. She also advised there would

a special award for a long standing allotment tenant who had given up his plot after having one in the village for 55 years.

**C23.208 TOUR OF NORTH WEALD AIRFIELD**

Due to the unavailability of Members for previous tour dates the Clerk has contacted Darren Goodey who has advised that he would be available to provide a tour of the Airfield for those Members who would like to have this and familiarise themselves with its new layout. The dates that he currently has available are on a Thursday evening starting at 6pm. Members were asked to check their diaries and advise the Clerk if they have any dates in May or June which could be suitable, and she would liaise with Darren.

Meeting closed: 9.10pm

Signed .....

Date .....