



**MINUTES**

**Meeting:** PARISH COUNCIL

**Date:** 7<sup>th</sup> December 2020

**Time:** 7.30PM

**Venue:** IN LINE WITH CURRENT GOVERNMENT GUIDELINES, THE MEETING WAS CONDUCTED ELECTRONICALLY VIA VIDEO CONFERENCING

**PRESENT:**

**Councillors (14)** A Buckley (Chairman), Mrs A Grigg, T Blanks, Mrs S Jackman MBE, A Tyler, B Clegg, R Spearman, Mrs S Hawkins, M Stroud, Ms D Wood, G Mulliner, A Irvine, Ms C Coop-Rodia, Mrs P Etherington

**Officers in Attendance (3)**

Susan Deluca - Clerk

Adriana Jones – Principal Financial Officer

Joanna Tyler – Senior Administrative Officer

**Members of the Public (5)**

**Members of the Press (1)**

**C20.161 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (1)**

Apologies received from Cllr Bedford

**C20.162 OTHER ABSENCES (0)**

None.

**C20.163 CO-OPTION OF COUNCILLOR FOR HASTINGWOOD WARD**

Councillors **NOTED** that there had been no changes to Government Guidance with regard to Co-Options. An application had been received from a local resident for the position of Councillor for Hastingwood Ward. A copy of the resident's CV had been attached to the Agenda for Members perusal. The Chairman advised that the applicant, Mrs Paula Etherington, was present and requested that she, together with Members of the Public and Press, leave the meeting whilst Council discussed her application. Following discussion, Councillors **AGREED** that Mrs Etherington be Co-Opted to the position of Councillor for Hastingwood Ward. Mrs Etherington re-joined the meeting and the Chairman advised her of the decision. The Chairman thanked her for her application and welcomed her to the Council. The Clerk asked Mrs Etherington to read out the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and requested that she sign and date it. Cllr Mrs Etherington was asked to return the signed Declaration direct to the Parish Office based in the Parish Hall at Thornwood.

The Clerk invited Cllr Irvine to share any comments that he had made regarding the Co-Option for Hastingwood Ward with the new Ward Councillor. Cllr Irvine stated that although other Councillors co-opted for Hastingwood may live in North Weald, he hoped that they would visit Hastingwood occasionally and ask him about local issues. He said that North Weald, Thornwood and Hastingwood share many common problems, however Hastingwood has its own set of problems which they (the Hastingwood Ward Councillors) need to focus on. Cllr Irvine welcomed Cllr Mrs Etherington to the Parish Council. Cllr Mrs Etherington thanked Cllr Irvine

and said that she wished to reassure him that she had been lived in the Parish for many years. Cllr Mrs Etherington advised that her daughter lives in Hastingwood. She is very familiar with the whole Parish and is a member of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. Cllr Mrs Etherington said that although she was not aware of all of the problems in Hastingwood, she hoped that what she had said would put Cllr Irvine's mind at rest. Cllr Irvine thanked Cllr Mrs Etherington for her comments.

#### **C20.164 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2020 were **APPROVED** as a correct record.

#### **C20.165 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr Spearman declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in any agenda item concerning the Local Plan. Cllr Stroud declared a non pecuniary interest in any agenda item concerning the Scouts and the Scouts Association and the Scouts Hut.

#### **C20.166 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

There were no questions from members of the public.

The Clerk asked, with Councillors permission, for agenda items numbered 12 and 13 to be brought forward after item number 9 as the Members of the Public present may wish to speak regarding those items. All Members **AGREED**.

#### **C20.167 REPORT OF THE CLERK**

Councillors **NOTED** that during Covid-19 Virus Outbreak, all Staff have been working on the items within the Agenda.

The Chairman asked if the Clerk had received any additional reports from Councillors. The Clerk confirmed that she had received a report from Cllr Blanks which he would be speaking about under Parish Councillors Reports.

#### **C20.168 REPORTS AND MEMBERS REPORTS**

**a) Chairman's Report** – The Chairman reported that £180.00 had been raised from Councillors donations for the Children's Christmas Party at Norway House. The Management Team have confirmed that they will be holding the party on 22<sup>nd</sup> December. The Chairman will be delivering the donation in person on Tuesday, 9<sup>th</sup> December.

The Chairman reported that he had met with Alex Burghart MP who had been keen to be kept up to speed with the issues regarding HMRC and the Airfield.

**b) Vice Chairman's Report** – The Vice Chairman reported that a road sign on the A414 between Hastingwood and Rayley Lane Roundabout needs to be replaced.

The Vice Chairman reported that following the recent grass and hedge cutting at the Hastingwood Allotment site, plastic sheeting had been shredded and a large amount of debris had been exposed. The Vice Chairman advised that she had managed to pick up and dispose of some of the plastic and said that she would clear the remainder, once the water in the ditch had receded.

c) **District Councillors Reports** – No report.

d) **County Councillor Reports** – The Clerk reported that there had been a meeting in relation to the North Weald Airfield Strategic Masterplan on Thursday of the previous week and confirmed that the meeting notes would be distributed to Councillors.

e) **Parish Councillors Reports** – Cllr Blanks reported that Members may be interested to view Epping Forest District Council's Audit Report with particular regard to their Corporate Objectives (ambitions and achievements). Cllr Blanks offered to forward extracts from the accounts.

Cllr Tyler referred Members to the impending HMRC Border Facility on North Weald Airfield and reported that a juggernaut had got stuck trying to navigate Wellington Road. Cllr Tyler stated that directing lorries away from Church Lane should be a number one concern. The Chairman advised that this matter had been taken up with the HMRC consultants and is one of the top items on the list and it would be expanded on under Agenda item number 13.

f) **Queens Hall Report** – Cllr Ms Wood reported that the hall was open again this week. She advised that there had been some issues with one of the hall users wanting to open prior to lock down being released. Moving forward, the Committee have agreed that they will look at making the nursery their priority, as it is an education setting, should lock down happen again at any time.

g) **Neighbourhood Plan** – The Principal Financial Officer reminded Members that Navigus had been employed to start putting together the framework for the Neighbourhood Plan. The first draft had been received, to which some significant changes were made. A member of the Steering Group is reviewing the draft and they hope to get that back to Navigus within the next week. Navigus will then re-draft it and send it back to the Steering Group for a final review. Before the plan is sent out for public consultation, it will go to Parish Council for Councillors to have the opportunity to make comments. The plan will also be sent District Council for review to ensure there are no compliance issues with regard to the Local Plan and the National Planning Policy.

h) **Local Plan** – The Principal Financial Officer reported that all of the responses to the Inspector's query with regard to the 2018 population projections have been uploaded on to the EFDC website. It was noted that there is also an updated version of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan which is on the website. The PFO stated that as far as she is aware, the Inspector has been quite busy and has not yet indicated as to when she intends to continue with further work on the Local Plan.

i) **Highways Report** – The Clerk said that she would like to pass on thanks to Cllr Chris Whitbread who has been active on Highways matters in North Weald.

The Clerk reported that on Thursday, 3 December, a ZOOM meeting had been organised for three Hastingwood residents to discuss Highways issues and said that

Cllr Irvine had been instrumental in putting this together. The Clerk advised that there were some long-standing issues going back to 2016 and before. The residents were happy that a number of the items discussed could be put forward to the Local Highways Panel and also raised at Cllr Whitbread's next Surgery in the Parish Hall. The meeting had highlighted problems with issues that had previously been reported to ECC Highways. The Clerk said that when Government Guidance allows, she is hoping to organise a community event in Hastingwood Village Hall. Cllr Irvine thanked the Clerk for her help in organising the meeting and said that it was good that the residents felt that they had a 'voice' and said that he thought we now had a co-ordinated group and a co-ordinated approach for the future as a result.

The Chairman reported that he had been in touch with Cllr Whitbread over the past couple of months and thanked him for his efforts in getting some of the work on the Highways List for North Weald completed. The Chairman reported that there is still one Zebra Crossing which requires re-painting and also the white lines between the roundabout at Emberson Way up to the Talbot. The Chairman referred to the list of potholes that had been identified and commented that he had not seen any action on these.

Councillor Mulliner reported that the road surface in Kiln Road had been damaged by heavy machinery used to undertake drainage works in one of the fields and asked if it could be reported to ECC Highways,

#### **C20.169 FINANCIAL REPORTS**

##### **a) List of Cheques & Monthly Statement of Accounts**

Members **APPROVED** the list of payments (these were emailed to Councillors prior to the Meeting) which were made up to the 30<sup>th</sup> November 2020. Members **NOTED** the account balances at the end of the month.

Cllr Mrs Jackman MBE, queried the payment of £1758 for the Cemetery software. The PFO advised that earlier in the year Council had agreed that the Parish Council's records would be moved from paper-based to being stored electronically. It was noted that the payment also included the management of allotments and hall bookings.

#### **C20.170 EFDC NORTH WEALD AIRFIELD CONSULTATION**

The Chairman advised Members that we had two Officers with us from EFDC and they were invited to speak. Lydia Grainger advised that she was attending the meeting to answer any questions that the Parish Council may have on Planning Policy in relation to the North Weald Airfield Masterplan.

Cllr Blanks asked that it be confirmed that Epping Forest District Council were the owners and therefore they were the ones who would be developing the Airfield, Nick Dawe advised yes they were the owners but the Airfield may be offered up to other people to develop. It was via this consultation and the following consultation in the Summer when all things had been considered that EFDC would be in a position to then go forward further, that is why Consultants had been brought to handle the consultation. There were two firms of consultants, one who would be handling the initial public consultation process and another who would be handling the Planning

Process.

Members were further advised that Soundings have been distributing various consultation documentation throughout the Parish in relation to the North Weald Airfield Strategic Masterplan. Two meetings were organised by the consultants which members of the Parish Council were invited to. One set of minutes from the first meeting has already been circulated to Members and a further set is expected shortly. It was reiterated that this is the initial informal consultation, with the more formal consultation expected to be held late spring / early summer 2021. Since the last meeting, the Clerk has received an email advising that *'the website was launched on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> and the following consultation documents are available:*

- *Flyer being hand delivered to all Parish residences and businesses over the next few days*
- *Website: <https://www.nwairfieldconsultation.co.uk>*
- *Consultation [digital exhibition boards](#)*
- *Feedback form ([print](#) and [web](#))*
- *Online [FAQs](#)*

The email further advised that the meeting on the 25<sup>th</sup> was not a consultation, but rather an opportunity to give the Parish Council a preview of the consultation materials and responses to questions that were raised in the first meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> November.

Members were advised by the Clerk that the Soundings would like to meet before the end of the year for an open session with an agenda set by the Parish Council, with an appropriate length of time to enable a good conversation. Soundings are not proposing to make any presentations, but have material on hand for reference and they would take recorded notes which will inform the development of the strategic masterplan in early 2021, before it is presented to Cabinet in March 2021. Member agreed some dates going forward and it was felt until we had some answers to the questions put forward by the Parish Council no meeting would be possible. However, a meeting would be pencilled in for the week commencing 11<sup>th</sup> January 2021 subject the responses being revied by the end of the year.

#### **C20.171 HMRC INLAND BORDER FACILITY**

The Chairman advised that two Officers of the District Council were in attendance and would be speaking - Nick Dawe and Andrew Marx. He also advised that District Cllr Chris Whitbread was also in attendance. The Chairman advised that had met with Alex Burghart MP on 4<sup>th</sup> December to express the concerns of the Council regarding the traffic and parking, as well as stating that the Council were still awaiting responses from Mott MacDonald to questions that were posed. Members were advised that the Secretary of State Robert Jenrick MP had approved this facility and the arrangements were now going forward for this Inland Border Facility at North Weald Airfield. The Chairman, Vice Chairman, Clerk and PFO met with the EFDC Chief Executive and both Members and Officers of the District Council on 23<sup>rd</sup> November to discuss how the facility will operate as well as raising a number of Parish Council concerns. Andrew Marx advised members that he had attended numerous meetings recently, including regular meetings with Essex Resilience Forum every two weeks at which all

relevant parties were present, and would try to allay the fears that both EFDC and the Parish Council had. He advised on the following:

- He had received a list of the Parish Councils concerns and was fully aware of each of them, specifically the Church Lane issue.
- He has seen a copy of the Operational Management Plan, but this was an HMRC restricted document.
- He was pushing for a complaints and feedback procedure so any issues could be quickly addressed.
- Signage - there will be temporary signs in place for 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021, after which time ECC will at some point erect permanent signage.
- Operation of the site – This will go live on the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021
- Number of Vehicles – 53 at any one time on the site, not 53 per day
- He would report back to the Council after the next Essex resilience Forum meeting.

**Questions were then forthcoming:**

- Cllr Irvine asked about concerns in relation to comparisons with a site in Kent – Who St Werburgh – the site being adjacent to an Amazon facility, which is now being turned into a 24/7 public lavatory by truckers parking waiting to access the facility. Cllr Stated that he wanted assurance North Weald would not be turned into the same. Nick Daw stated that there will be booked slots, with vehicles going straight to site, stating that HMRC were keen trucks would enter and exit as fast as possible. Andrew Marx concurred, stating that EFDC has been liaising with EFDC regarding this.
- Are Vehicles / HGV's going to be able to park outside the site if so who is going to police them – Response it will be designated an Urban Clearway (double red lines). Cllr Irvine expressed his concern regarding this.
- Is the site going to be Marshalled – It was not believed the site would be marshalled.
- Concern at where the Drivers will be able to use 'comfort facilities' – ie lavatories'
- What would happen to the broadband that would be installed as part of the facility – Response was it had been agreed in lease agreement that when they leave, EFDC could ask for the improved broadband links would remain, thus securing a benefit no their departure.
- Had the site expanded and would be it be used for five years – Response from Nick Dawe was HMRC had asked for extra tarmacked area to be used nearer to the control tower (pan handle) and that this would be used for staff car parking, and that the SDO lasted five year but the current situation was it would only be used for two years. Andrew run through where the specific buildings and areas would be on the site. There are 53 bays, and a further 3 bays inside the inspection building.
- What happens if the site is full and the roads are gridlock – Response is North Weald is one of the smaller peripheral sites, and if the site becomes 80% full there

will be indicator signs on the Motorway / matrix signalling, and drivers will be advised to continue on to Ebbsfleet or Manston rather than getting off at North Weald.

- Cllr Irvine said that some of the questions he is being asked by Hastingwood Residents is (not only in relation to HMRC but also the Police Helicopters) “Did EFDC bid for this facility - did they put forward the site or was it imposed” , and the reason that is important is that the accusation, true or false (it would be better if it was false) is that it may imply that the monetisation of the site is more important than local residents concerns. Andrew Marx responded stating that he could not answer this, but as a Local Planning Authority they would not bid for any land for this. The SDO covers the whole of 2. Nick Dawe stated that his recollection from the first time round, because obviously these things have been done in a particular way, is that EFDC was approached to establish if (whether it is because of the sites proximity and its location to the road network) the site could be used by HMRC, and as such EFDC did not put together a bid. Since this time, EFDC has simply been responding to this position with HMRC. Nick stated that as Andrew had alluded to the basic idea of the site has come from HMRC, and the Ministry of Housing Community and Local Government are the Planning Authority in respect of the proposal.
- Cllr Blanks thanked them for their explanations, asking who would be responsible if we get total gridlock or rather more lorries than are expected arrive, to whom do the Paris Council approach? Is it EFDC, HMRC, Mott MacDonald? Who is responsible and to whom should we speak? Andrew Marx confirmed that this is one of things we have asked Mott MacDonald and HMRC to clarify to us, so that we can have a single channel for all of these types of complaints. Unfortunately, one of the issues that we have is because we are a District Council we have the Highways Authority involved, it’s not just Highways England, Essex County Council, so it makes it more complicated as to where complaints should go. The obvious place in our opinion for that is the site operator, which is a sub contractor, who have been given a contract by HMRC, so we are looking for a specific person who will be identifiable on site for complaints. EFDC has asked for that review mechanism so that we can make sure that that happens. As a local Planning Authority we do not have any authority to place marshals on the public highway, we do not have any authority to write tickets for those vehicles so that is the problem for EFDC. However that is one of the reasons why the Essex Resilience Forum is meeting to address issues such as this.
- Cllr Stroud stated that he felt this was going to be a controlled mess, and that HMRC should be asked to front load the operation as it won’t all be fixed on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021.
- A number of other Councillors voiced their concerns about the way that the Consultation had been managed and also how it had taken place. Cllr Mrs Jackman MBE, advised the problem is that we no longer know who is responsible for anything anymore at EFDC, there have been so many changes. Nick Dawe advised that he would provide the Parish Council with an Organisation and Responsibility Chart for the new people at EFDC.

- Andrew Marx concluded with the fact that he had a further meeting on Wednesday, with HMRC and Mott MacDonald, and that he would report back on this meeting to the Parish Council. The Chairman asked that he also ask Mott Mac Donald if they would provide this Parish Council with answers to the outstanding questions submitted by the Parish Council.

The PFO had drawn up a draft timeline of all the Meetings and major events which had been held recently between the Parish Council and EFDC and other interested parties, and the Clerk asked if she would circulate this to Members. The Clerk asked Cllr Chris Whitbread to confirm that the Questions and Comments that had been sent over to all Members and Officers in the Transition Document were being looked at. He advised that they were, and Andrew Marx advised that each question had all been allocated a reference number and were being worked upon.

The Chairman thanked the Officers and Cllr Whitbread for giving up their time and attending and advised them that he looked forward to seeing them at the next meeting on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> December.

#### **C20.172 ‘GOING FORWARD’ – ELECTRONIC RECORDS**

Councillors *NOTED* that all the cemetery ownership and interment records have been input on to the Rialtas software. Details of Allotment Tenancies and plot holders have also been input. It was noted that a survey will be carried out in the Cemetery in the new year of the Memorials and these will also be added.

#### **C20.173 BUDGET / PRECEPT 2021/2022**

Councillors *NOTED* that the Budget and Precept Meeting is to be held on Monday, 21<sup>st</sup> December at 7.00pm via ZOOM. Members were reminded to let the Clerk have full details of any items that they wish to be placed on the List of Items to be considered for this meeting by Friday, 11<sup>th</sup> December.

#### **C20.174 EFDC SUSTAINABLE AND HEALTHY LIVING CONSULTATION**

Councillors *NOTED* that the Clerk and PFO took part in the Sustainable and Healthy Living Consultation which was held virtually on the 25<sup>th</sup> November. Documents had previously been sent to Councillors for their perusal. It was noted that full details could be found on the EFDC website. Members noted that these documents have been created to support EFDC’s commitment to production net zero carbon emissions by 2030. The documents and the information within them supports Planning & Environmental Policy going forward. Members were asked to email the Clerk with any comments they may have if they would like the Parish Council to respond to this consultation. The deadline for responses was noted. The Clerk advised that she had received an email prior to the meeting from a resident who had made some very good points which she would pass on to the PFO.

#### **C20.175 CEMETERY**

Councillors *NOTED* that there had been one Burial at the Cemetery. Members were advised that the new planting had been completed in the Gardens of Remembrance.



**C20.176 GDPR FILING**

Councillors **NOTED** that a small amount of GDPR filing had been undertaken during November.

**C20.177 INTERNAL AUDIT**

Councillors **NOTED** that the Internal Auditor had completed his Audit remotely during November. A copy of the full report was attached to the Agenda.

**C20.178 NOTICE OF CONCLUSION OF EXTERNAL AUDIT**

Councillors **NOTED** that the Clerk had received the final report from the External Auditor with no matters arising or having been brought to Members attention. Copies of the Notice of Conclusion of Audit have been posted on the parish noticeboards and on the Council's website.

**C20.179 REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY & DEBT OF HONOUR**

Councillors **NOTED** that no formal events were able to take place this year, in line with Government Guidance due to Covid-19. However, arrangements were made to facilitate the following:

- 25 Wreaths laid at the Norwegian Stone / Debt of Honour
- Parish War Memorial cleaned
- Debt of Honour cleared of leaves and grass cut
- Plaque at the Queens Hall cleaned
- Commemorative Remembering at Home Brochure was organised
- Colouring Pictures on Social Media

Whilst this was not in line with the usual events on the day, it went some way in marking the occasion. The Chairman laid wreaths on behalf of the Royal Norwegian Airforce, 56 Squadron and the Parish Council at the Debt of Honour / Norwegian Stone. The Vice Chairman laid wreaths on behalf of the Norwegian Defence Attaché and all the North Weald Community who had been unable to attend in person this year. The Chairman also laid wreaths at the Parish War Memorial in St Andrews Church. The Chairman commented that he had thought the event had gone extremely well.

**C20.180 SOCIAL MEDIA**

Councillors **NOTED** that the Parish Council Facebook page continues to be updated on a regular basis, as does Twitter. Cllr Irvine stated that we (the Parish Council) wanted to showcase what the Parish Council is doing in a positive way. The Facebook page started off with zero members and now has 175. Cllr Irvine said that this was a significant step forward in a short space of time. He said that the PFO had done a very good job of posting interesting items. He urged Councillors to post any items or photos that may be of interest. Cllr Irvine said that people do pick up on what is commented and things get re-posted onto Village Life and items posted by Everything Epping Forest are picked up too. Cllr Irvine said that people are 'liking' what the Council is doing and commenting favourably.

**C20.181 NORTH WEALD VILLAGE BEST FESTIVE CHRISTMAS DISPLAY**

Councillors **NOTED** that a second poster had been put up on North Weald Noticeboards and also placed on Social Media and the Parish Council website.

The Clerk advised that to date only 5 people had contacted David Jackman at Everything Epping Forest to register their houses for the competition. Following discussion, it was suggested that a certificate could be given for the ‘best road’ and displayed on the notice board. A number of Councillors offered to put a copy of the poster through residents doors.

**C20.182 PARKING AROUND ST ANDREWS SCHOOL**

Councillors **NOTED** that the Clerk had been asked to place the matter of parking in roads around St Andrews School for discussion on the Agenda by Cllr Ms Coop-Rodia. Cllr Ms Coop-Rodia reported that she had been approached by the Head Teacher and a school governor to see if the Parish Council would be able to offer any ideas or suggestions with regard to the problems being experienced with the volume of cars being parked at school drop off and pick-up times. Cllr Tyler mentioned that he had been a school governor at another local school several years ago and that the school had also experienced similar problems. He said that assistance had been sought from the school Community Liaison Officer at that time and the Police had attended the school (at drop off and pick up times) and spoke directly to drivers who were parking inconsiderately. Cllr Tyler asked if there was any money available to possibly support a warden. The Clerk advised that there was £1,000 left over from a budget which had been put aside for a community policeman. Cllr Tyler said that he would be in support of that money being used for that purpose. The Clerk said confirmed that she would ask the PFO to include the matter for discussion at the Precept Meeting.

**C20.183 NORTH ESSEX PARKING PARTNERSHIP (NEPP)**

Councillors **NOTED** that the Essex County Council based NEPP had advised that they are offering their services of a one to one meeting with Councillors via Microsoft Teams to discuss parking issues in parishes. Cllr Ms Coop-Rodia and Cllr Mulliner have agreed a meeting to discuss various parking issues in their particular ‘wards’. It was noted that these one to one meetings are being offered on the 1<sup>st</sup> Monday of the month. Cllr Mulliner advised that he would be discussing issues relating to parking in the Village Hall Car Park, which is a private car park. Cllr Ms Coop-Rodia said that she had discussed the idea of a Foot Bus with the Head Teacher at St Andrews School, however one of the issues that they have is where would the children get dropped off to join the Foot Bus. Cllr Stroud stated that there is always going to be the problem of commuters who drop off their child by car and then carry on to work, he suggested that Cllr Ms Coop-Rodia should speak to the Harvester to see if they would give permission for parents to park in their car park and also the Kings Head.

**C20.184 CHRISTMAS TREE IN NORTH WEALD**

Councillors **NOTED** that the Clerk had received a request from a resident for a Christmas Tree to be placed along the Parade of Shops in North Weald. The local resident has said:

*“Hi – I am not sure how to go about this so here goes. Would it be possible to have a Christmas tree or some form of Christmas lights outside the shops in the village. I have lived in the village for the last six years and have often wondered why there are no lights or trees to welcome you. As this has been such a hard year because of the*

*coronavirus I thought it would be good for the children and brighten everyone up”.*

It was noted that the Clerk had responded and advised that each year a Tree is placed on the small green by the flagpole. However, the resident request that this matter still went forward as she felt that this tree was too far back and not noticeable enough.

Following discussion, Councillors were asked to decide if they wished to place a Christmas tree in the garden at the Parade of Shops this year. Councillors were asked for a show of hands. The decision was recorded as follows:

- 2 For
- 12 Against

Councillors **AGREED** that the matter would be discussed at the September 2021 Parish Council Meeting for consideration for Christmas 2021.

#### **C20.185 VANDALISM AT THORNWOOD**

Councillors **NOTED** that the Graffiti Report had now been sent to the Police and the Insurance Company. At the time of the meeting, comments were still awaited from both.

#### **C20.186 COMMUNITY ALLOTMENT**

Councillors **NOTED** that the North Weald Community Allotment works would be commencing early in the New Year. The EFDC Community Officer and Cllr Ms Coop-Rodia met with the Clerk and have drawn up an Action Plan. Councillors were asked to contact the Clerk should they wish to request a copy of the plan.

#### **C20.187 CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR OPENING TIMES**

Councillors **NOTED** that the Parish Council will close for business at 12 noon on Wednesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> December and re-open at the Parish Hall on Monday, 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021 at 10am. The Parish Office will re-open in the Parish Hall (subject to the relevant Government Guidance) on that Monday.

#### **C20.188 JANUARY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**

Councillors **NOTED** that the January Parish Council Meeting is to be held on Monday, 11<sup>th</sup> January 2021 at 7.00pm. Councillors were asked to agree to this change in Standing Orders (for the meeting to start at 7pm). It was noted that the meeting would be held to confirm the precept figure only, unless there are any other urgent matters to discuss, which would be added to the Agenda. All Members **AGREED**.

#### **C20.189 SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA ITEM ACCESS TO QUEENS ROAD ALLOTMENTS**

Councillors **NOTED** the following background information regarding Queens Road Allotments:

Members recalled that the Parish Council has a 99-year lease with EFDC for the Queens Road Allotments.

Works to the new housing development which will be known as Cyril Hawkins Close is nearing completion. The access road to the development also serves as the access road to the Queens Road Allotment Site.

The planning permission for the site includes a shared pedestrian/vehicular access to both the housing development and the allotments, with no delineating line along the access road for pedestrians.

Concern has been raised by Parish Council staff, Allotment Wardens and some tenants regarding the safety aspect of this. Negotiations have been ongoing with EFDC but to no avail, and we are told that shared access is quite normal on such sites.

After the last email querying this access way this is what the Clerk has been advised by EFDC Housing Officer:

- *Planning was approved for the Queens Road development on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2015. The application number is EPF/ 1771/ 15. The scheme drawings are fully accessible on the Planning section of the EFDC website should you wish to view.*
- *The Planning approval clearly shows the new accessway as being a shared vehicle/ cycle/ pedestrian surface.*
- *There are two conditions within the Planning approval that have a direct influence on the accessway. These are: Condition 9 and Condition 17.*
- *Condition 9 refers to the details relating to soft and hard landscaping. This condition was approved on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2018. This approval clearly indicates the accessway being finished in 'vehicular asphalt concrete'. There is no mixing of materials to indicate different uses (ie. vehicles/ pedestrians) upon the accessway and there is no provision for painted road marking to indicate or promote division.*
- *Condition 17 has/ will be dealt with by the Planners in a less formal manner. All that is required is for the works to be carried out to the accessway in accordance with the approved details. As we near completion of the works on site this will be done.*
- *The current version (and previous) of the Essex Design Guide, whilst being flexible, allows for the use of shared surface (pedestrian and vehicle) accessways. Indeed, there are many current highway/ development guidance publications that allow and promote the use of shared surfaces.*
- *The width of the accessway is 4.9m.*
- *It was intended and remains so, that the new access road would not be adopted by the Highway Authority (ECC).*

- *ECC Highways were consulted as part of the Planning process. Road safety is a key concern. They did not object to the shared surface proposal nor the fact that different materials or markings were not proposed.*
- *Since the EFDC Council House Building Programme commenced there have been at least 5no. schemes developed with shared surfaces of this type. A further 5no. are on site using the same design philosophy and numerous others for future phases. There will be many more instances of similar private design elsewhere in the district and elsewhere in the county. It is a common, acceptable approach for small developments.*
- *The shared surface is as described. There is no priority for vehicles nor pedestrians. Both users are deemed equal. The layout makes motorists feel they are guests in a pedestrian environment and they should drive accordingly. The accessway turns a residential street into a public space and not just a place for movement. Vehicle speeds will reduce and the accessway will benefit from this process.*
- *As long as all design considerations are processed together with all necessary care and due diligence assessed and approved; including all statutory processes, EFDC as a developer are happy with this approach and development will continue on this basis.*
- *The new development at Elizabeth (Cyril Hawkins) Close will be delivered as designed.*

Councillors **NOTED** that concern had also been expressed at the loss of some fencing / trees around the development as well as a possible trip hazard between the kerbstone of the tarmacked road surface and the allotment gate.

The Clerk referred to the new multi-use pathway and said that she had asked EFDC if they could put some kind of delineating marking there for pedestrians, however EFDC are adamant that they are not going to do that and have said that they do not have to, as per their planning application. The Clerk stated that EFDC have also been asked if they could ensure that they renew any of the fencing and planting. The Clerk asked Councillors if they would like her to take the matter further. The Clerk said that her next step would be to write to the Housing Portfolio Holder. All Councillors **AGREED**.

Councillor Mulliner referred to the original planning application and asked the Clerk if there was supposed to be extra parking allocation for allotment holders as well. The Clerk said that the allotment holders will be allowed to park where the visitors parking is. Cllr Mulliner asked if this should be emphasised to EFDC and the spaces marked accordingly. The Clerk advised that EFDC have said that the spaces will be multi-use, ie., available on a first come, first served basis. The Chairman confirmed that the Clerk should write to the Housing Portfolio Holder. Cllr Ms Coop-Rodia referred back to the issue regarding the fencing and said that there was a lot of hedgerow planted there originally. She said that now the hedgerow

/ bushes have been removed, there is now a security issue as people are able to climb over quite easily and access the allotments. Cllr Mrs Grigg suggested that the Clerk should also copy in Cllr Chris Whitbread into any correspondence. Cllr Spearman advised that a few year's ago a number of pyracantha were planted at the allotments and suggested that these could be planted again as they are a good deterrent. The Clerk said that she believed these had been planted on a different part of the allotment, however would look into the suggestion.

**C20.190 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS**

Due to the nature of the item to be discussed, the press and public were asked to leave the meeting and were excluded, 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.

Councillors **NOTED** the contents of the correspondence attached to the agenda. Councillors **AGREED** that a response would be sent advising that the matter was now closed. A vote was taken as follows:

10 For  
3 Abstentions

Meeting closed: 10.00pm

Signed .....

Date .....