



**MINUTES**

**Meeting:** PARISH COUNCIL

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

**Time:** 7.30PM

**Venue:** PARISH HALL, THORNWOOD COMMON

**PRESENT:**

**Councillors (10)** A Buckley (Chairman), Mrs S Hawkins (Vice Chairman), B Clegg, R Spearman, Mrs S Jackman MBE, A Tyler, N Born, Mrs P Etherington, Ms D Wood, C Kinnear,

***Officers in Attendance (2)***

Susan Deluca - Clerk

Joanna Tyler – Senior Administrative Officer

***Also in Attendance (0)***

**Members of the Public (2)**

**Members of the Press (1)**

**C23.145 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (2)**

Apologies received from Cllrs Blanks and Irvine

**C23.146 OTHER ABSENCES (2)**

Cllrs Bedford and Stroud

**C23.147 MINUTES**

Councillors **AGREED** the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

Councillors **NOTED** the Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

**C23.148 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr Spearman declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in any item concerning the Local Plan.

**C23.149 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

Two Members of the Public were present to speak with reference to Item 8 on the Agenda.

**C23.150 REPORT OF THE CLERK**

**a) Flooding to the Parish Office**

The Clerk reported that there had been a flood in the Parish Office between the Christmas and New Year period. It was noted that 3 metres of pipework had been replaced, walls and skirting boards repainted and the carpet had been replaced.

The Clerk confirmed that the Parish Council's insurance company had been advised and the office is now back to normal.

**b) Finance Report**

The Clerk advised that there was no finance report, however, the Principal Financial Officer had provided a list of payments made between 1<sup>st</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023 which would be circulated towards the end of the meeting.

**C23.151 REPORTS & MEMBERS REPORTS**

**a) Chairman's Report** – The Chairman stated that he did not have a report, however, he did want to ask if any members of the Royal British Legion present had received notification regarding the next meeting. Cllr Kinnear commented that he had not seen anything other than a comment on social media.

**b) Vice Chairman's Report** - The Vice Chairman reported that the lunch held in the hall on Christmas Day for people on their own in Thornwood had been successful, with 15 attending. Sponsorship had been received to cover the costs.

**c) District & County Councillors Reports** – No reports received.

**d) Parish Councillors Reports**

Cllr Clegg reported that he had been researching bodycams with Jimmy Waters and advised that to replace the current one with an upgraded model it would cost around £219.00 which is well below the £300 allocated at the F & GP meeting. It was noted that Cllr Clegg is liaising with the PFO regarding this.

**e) Queens Hall Charity Report** – nothing to report.

**e) Neighbourhood Plan Report**

Councillors **NOTED** the date of the next Committee meeting had been scheduled for Wednesday, 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024 at 7.00pm to be held in the Parish Hall.

Cllr Born asked for clarification regarding plans put forward by contractors and wanted to know how they fit with the Parish Council's plan. He commented that we have been out to talk to people, do other contractors talk to people or is it a desk top type exercise. The Chairman advised that the Parish Council have been working with Countryside and they are aware of us working on our Neighbourhood Plan.

**f) Highways Report** – no report received.

**C23.152 YOUTH PROVISION**

Councillors recalled that at the Parish Council meeting held in November 2023, a request for youth club provision in the Parish was discussed. It was suggested this was placed on the Budget/Precept meeting for consideration, as well as asking 10 questions from the requester (ECC). Attached to the agenda were the responses to the 10 questions and the proposed costs for running this service. Councillors noted that the service would be run by Zinc Arts in conjunction with Essex County Council. Cllr Stroud had previously raised a number of points, including the fact that the age range of 11-19 was too wide, and that after the age of 18 you are technically classed as an

adult, so to have 11-year-olds and 19-year-olds at the same 'youth service' did not seem correct. It was suggested that there should be two different groups, perhaps 11–15-year-olds and then 16-19 year olds at two separate sessions. It was also suggested that perhaps feedback should be sought on the success of the sessions that are run in Ongar from Ongar Town Council. Councillors agreed a provisional sum in the budget to run the service for the period up to March 2024, however this was subject to a representative attending the January meeting to answer questions about the service and the Parish Council being satisfied with those questions. It was also agreed that the Clerk would contact Ongar Town Council to see if they knew how many youths attended the provision in Ongar, and how successful it was.

Councillors **NOTED** that the Clerk had subsequently contacted Ongar Town Council and was informed that they do not have any input into the service currently, therefore they do not have any statistics that they can pass on.

The Chairman invited Louisa Stirling, who is a representative from ECC Youth Services, and her associate Sonia, from Zinc Arts, to speak. They gave a brief resume of the situation told to them by the North Weald Neighbourhood Watch representative. The Clerk questioned whether or not we actually had a North Weald Neighbourhood Watch representative as she was asked to look for one and had not been advised that someone had been appointed. They discussed various hotspots (for anti-social behaviour) that they had been advised of in North Weald including behind Bookers and the Youth Shelter at the Memorial Playing Field. These were questioned by Members.

Councillors were advised that ECC Youth Services, in association with Zinc Arts, would be starting a cooking project at Queens Hall (on Wednesdays, 3.30pm to 5.30pm). Members **NOTED** the comments made by Cllr Ms Wood representing Queens Hall.

Following lengthy discussion, Cllr Clegg commented that he thought members were being too specific and said what he would like to see a decision made upon is, do we have a basic principal to provide a youth facility in North Weald and are we going to give Parish Council support to the project. Cllr Clegg said once this had been decided it would be up to the organisers to decide the curriculum. Cllr Clegg advised that he had previous experience of being a Deputy Warden of a Youth Centre in Barkingside with 1000 members, the facility had been attached to a school. Cllr Tyler said that he supported what Cllr Clegg had said and commented that, with regard to anti-social behaviour, he believed that this was a totally separate issue as you will always get anti-social behaviour regardless of whether you have a youth centre or not. Cllr Tyler referred to the future development of the village and said that he thought the Parish Council should put down foundation stones now. Cllr Clegg agreed with Cllr Tyler on this point and said that you could have the best youth centre in the County, but you will still get anti-social behaviour and this needs to be accepted and dealt with as a separate matter.

The Chairman said that he believed the general consensus is that Members do want to do something for the youth, however, also wanted to be careful of how the money is spent. The Clerk advised that going forward, with a point of clarity, it had been

agreed at the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting that a figure of £1953 from the HMRC funds and £500 from the youth club funds would be allocated to the project. The youth club would be for 11–15-year-olds and there would be an outreach service for 16-19-year-olds for children within the parish. With regard to providing evidence that the funds are being used to benefit North Weald children, the representatives confirmed that statistics could be provided, however, under GDPR, individual names and addresses could not. The Clerk said that she would suggest a codicil that the venue is a hall within the parish and said that it had been agreed at the F & GP Meeting that the monies allocated should be used by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024. However, the Clerk advised that it may be possible to push those funds forward to the next financial year with agreement from Council. Cllr Mrs Hawkins (Vice Chairman) suggested that the representatives may wish to consider what had been said, then to contact the Clerk who would be able to move ahead with the decision. Cllr Buckley (Chairman) reiterated that the Parish Council is prepared to give a contribution and agreed that the representatives should liaise with the Clerk. It was noted that details of the venue were still to be confirmed.

[The two representatives left the meeting]

#### **C23.153 BUDGET / PRECEPT 2024/2025**

At the Financial and General Purposes Committee meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2023, Members considered the budget and precept for the 24/25 financial year. It was agreed to put forward a proposal for ratification at the January 2024 Parish Council meeting that the Parish Council precept for 2024/2025 should be set at £234,852, resulting in the Parish Council element of the Council Tax being £89.37/year for a Band D Property – an annual increase of just over 88p per year per Band D property. Councillors were asked to **CONSIDER** this proposal, which was **RATIFIED** with a vote recorded as follows:

**9 For**

**0 Against**

**1 Abstention**

#### **C23.154 NORTH WEALD BASSETT STRATEGIC MASTERPLAN CONSULTATION**

Councillors recalled this site is allocated in the EFDC Local Plan (NWB.R1-R5) consisting of 5 different land ownerships, earmarked for a minimum of 1,050 new homes, 5 traveller pitches, and associated infrastructure and employment.

*EFDC is currently consulting on the Strategic Masterplan Framework document for North Weald Bassett. This the purpose of this document is to provide a framework from which developers are able to shape their proposals which will come forward through subsequent planning applications for each of the allocated sites. The creation of this Strategic Masterplan Framework comes following a public consultation conducted by Vistry Group in June 2023, and since this time the Masterplan has evolved further and been submitted to the District council for consultation before it is finalised and endorsed by the District council.*

*The developer for the largest parcel of land in the Masterplan, held a briefing for Councillors on 20<sup>th</sup> November, at which they set out the changes in the Strategic*

Masterplan document since their consultation in June, and provided an opportunity for Councillors to ask questions or raise any queries. A full copy of the Strategic Masterplan documents can be found at [https://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/SMF\\_North-Weald-Bassett.pdf](https://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/SMF_North-Weald-Bassett.pdf).

The Masterplan includes:

- A minimum of 1,050 new homes
- New community facilities and land for healthcare facilities
- Improved access to St Andrew's Primary School and commitment to additional education provision either through a new primary school or the expansion of St Andrew's
- New and improved, fully equipped children's play spaces
- Better sports facilities including an additional junior / mini pitch and improvements to the Memorial Playing Fields as the central sporting hub, making it more of a focal point in the village
- Public open space for recreation and biodiversity
- Additional planting throughout the masterplan area, including a new community orchard
- New retail units to complement existing shops and services in the village
- A new roundabout on the A414 providing direct access to the masterplan area

EFDC held two public events in December at which any member of the public could attend. This matter was also briefly considered at the December Parish Council meeting.

A copy of the formal response had been sent via email to Councillors for review prior to the meeting. All Councillors confirmed that they **AGREED** with the contents of the formal response, which was then duly signed by the Chairman.

Cllr Born asked if a copy of the formal response would be sent to parishioners. The Clerk advised that a copy of the response would be placed on the website and that parishioners would be given the opportunity to make their own comments. The Clerk reiterated that this was the formal response from the Parish Council only.

### **C23.155 POSITION STATEMENT**

Councillors recalled that at the December Parish Council meeting it was agreed the Parish Council would compile a 'Position Statement' which would be printed and delivered to every home in the parish. A copy of the draft Statement (excluding the colour map of the parish which will be printed on the reverse of the Position Statement) was attached to the agenda. Cllr Tyler praised the contents of the Statement and asked if a copy could be placed on each of the Parish Noticeboards. The Chairman asked Councillors if they were happy, all Members **AGREED**. Cllr Born asked if the council had a strategy to deliver the Statement. The Clerk confirmed that plans were in place to hand-deliver a copy to every home in the parish.

### **C23.156 DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

A schedule of meeting dates for 2024 was attached to the Agenda. Councillors

**NOTED** that dates for other meetings would be sent either electronically or by letter as they become available. The Chairman highlighted meetings scheduled for the remainder of January which included Monday, 22<sup>nd</sup> (Meeting with Vistry) and Wednesday, 24<sup>th</sup> (Environment & Open Spaces Committee to be held in the new Parish Office at Queens Hall).

Cllr Born referred to the Vistry Meeting and asked whether or not Qualis was involved in the development of the North Weald Masterplan. The Clerk advised that it is her understanding there are 5 developers, and they are all private developers. The Clerk stated that, as far as she is aware, Qualis are not involved with any development on that site.

**C23.157 EXPENDITURE & INCOME**

Councillors **APPROVED** the list of Cheques & Monthly Statement of Accounts for 1<sup>st</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023, as circulated during the meeting.

**C23.158 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS**

There were no confidential items for discussion.

Meeting closed: 8.28pm

Signed .....

Date .....