



MINUTES

Meeting: PARISH COUNCIL

Date: 5th July 2021

Time: 6.30PM

Venue: PARISH HALL, THORNWOOD COMMON

PRESENT:

Councillors (10) A Buckley (Chairman), Mrs A Grigg, T Blanks, B Clegg, Mrs S Hawkins, G Mulliner, A Tyler, Ms D Wood, 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 (1)

Members of the Press (0)

C20.024 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (4)

Apologies received from Cllrs Mrs S Jackman MBE, R Spearman, M Stroud, A Irvine, N Bedford

C20.025 OTHER ABSENCES (0)

C20.026 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council Meeting held on 10th May 2021 were **APPROVED** as a correct record.

C20.027 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There was one member of the public present, however no questions were asked.

C20.028 REPORT OF THE CLERK

Councillors **NOTED** that all staff have been working on all items within the Agenda.

C20.029 REPORTS & MEMBERS REPORTS

a) Chairman's Report – The Chairman advised that Agenda Item No. 13 covered most of his report. He brought Members' attention to three items. The first being the Inland Border Facility (IBF). The Chairman said that everything seemed to be running quite smoothly and he was not aware of any complaints from residents regarding parking etc. The Chairman said that the status of the road is still officially a Clearway, however it is not policed by NEPP and there are no signs to say 'No Parking'. The Chairman referred to the 10 point plan and said that he was still trying to get extra signage; one for Weald Hall Lane, one for Wellington Road and one for the roundabout at Merlin Way. The Chairman advised that the volumes going through the IBF have reduced drastically.

The Chairman said that his second point was regarding a meeting he had attended with officers from EFDC, one of whom was the Director of Technical Services and

the second being the Principal Engineer with Environmental and Drainage responsibilities. They are looking to try and get some sort of restrictions in place for Church Lane (to stop HGVs from entering at either end) and also for certain areas in Hastingwood (with regard to speed). The Chairman said that they had come up with some proposals for traffic calming measures, for example village gateway signs, which although they cannot physically reduce the width of the road, the signs give the impression that the road is narrower than what it is. These ideas are in the proposal stage, EFDC are looking at this and the Chairman said that he hoped they would have the funds available, however, the Parish Council could look at considering match funding, if necessary.

The third point was with regard to the drainage on Weald Common. The Chairman reported that he had attended a meeting with EFDC's Principal Engineer for Environmental Protection & Drainage to look at the possibility of putting in some kind of drainage facility to come across Weald Common, north of the play area. Although trees have been planted, it will be a number of years before they have grown enough to start soaking up the water. The Chairman advised that he is waiting to receive a report for the drainage suggestions and costings and said that the matter would be brought back to a future meeting.

b) Vice Chairman's Report - The Vice Chairman reported that a member of the public had contacted her regarding the road outside North Weald Village Hall. The Vice Chairman contacted the Clerk and sent a response. She said that it was quite clear that although the person had parked in the Village Hall car park, they had been visiting the vets, not the hall. The Vice Chairman said that she had explained the situation regarding the road being owned by Peer Group and various users having some liability for its maintenance. The Vice Chairman said that she had advised the person that she had contacted the Clerk to find out the current status, and who had followed the enquiry up with Peer Group. The Vice Chairman said that she would contact the person to explain the situation.

c) District & County Councillors Reports – none received.

d) Parish Councillors Reports – Cllr Clegg gave an update regarding the Community Speed Watch. He advised that the volunteers had recently visited Hastingwood, North Weald High Road and Upland Road in Thornwood. With regard to Upland Road, Cllr Clegg reported that there had been an increased Police presence with several cars being stopped. He advised that a volunteer recently recorded speeds of 77mph, 71mph and numerous speeds at 60mph. With regard to North Weald High Road, the volunteers were present between 8am and 9am and recorded 5 cars with speeds of 36mph out of a possible 545 vehicle movements, the low number is contributed to a greater volume of traffic. The next session for North Weald will be at Skipp's Corner. With regard to Hastingwood, Cllr Clegg reported that there is no evidence to suggest that there is a real speeding problem. He said that he had visited at various times and the highest recorded speed was 51mph. Cllr Clegg said that when he visited with Cllr Irvine, it was noticeable that drivers reduced their speed as soon as they saw the Hi Vis jacket. The visits had included Mill Street. Cllr Clegg said that when they visited near to the Horn and Horseshoes, out of 450 vehicle movements, only 7 were recorded speeding. Cllr Clegg reported

that the Police are very interested in Upland Road and they have said that speeding is a major problem and it is one of the most serious problems that they have speed-wise in percentages. Cllr Clegg attributed this to the volunteer who had undertaken the speed checks and passed the recorded information on to the Police. Cllr Clegg said that they were awaiting the stats from a box which has been used to record the speed and volume of traffic. The Clerk advised that Cllr Whitbread is looking to meet with Hastingwood residents on the 20th July in the evening at Hastingwood Village Hall and asked if Cllr Clegg would be able to provide the stats in a table format for Hastingwood in order for the Clerk to pass them on to Cllr Whitbread. The Clerk also asked if the Speed Gun could be made available for that meeting. Cllr Clegg referred back to North Weald and mentioned that when the volunteers had visited Weald Bridge Road, 30% of vehicles had been recorded speeding, despite there being temporary traffic lights in operation.

Cllr Blanks mentioned two items regarding Epping Forest District Council which he thought would be of interest to Members. The first related to the filing of the annual accounts and the second being a report regarding housing which was an item on the agenda for the next Cabinet Meeting.

e) Queens Hall Report – Cllr Ms Wood reported that she hoped the hall would be fully open on 19th July, however, the date coincided with the end of term when a number of regular users stop sessions until September. The hall has some Summer School bookings.

f) Neighbourhood Plan Report – The PFO reported that she had received some responses from Councillors and a copy of the draft report had now been sent to EFDC for screening. The PFO advised that EFDC will now look at the report and check that it is in compliance with the Local Plan. Once the report comes back (this is expected by the end of July) any necessary changes will be made, and the report will be redrafted and redesigned. The report will then be sent out to Councillors for final approval before it goes to consultation.

g) EFDC Local Plan – The PFO reported that starting on 8th July there is to be a 10 week consultation period on the main modifications to EFDC's Local Plan. It is thought that this will be the final stage before the plan is adopted. The PFO confirmed that this would be an item on the September agenda for Council to make a formal response.

C20.030 FINANCIAL REPORTS

a) List of Cheque & Monthly Statement of Accounts

Cllr Mrs Grigg advised that she had not appeared to have received a copy of the statements. The Clerk provided a printed copy.

Members **APPROVED** the list of payments for April, May and June 2021 (circulated prior to the meeting) which Members **NOTED** the account balances at the end of the month.

C20.031 LETTER FROM CLLR C WHITBREAD REGARDING THE PROPOSED RELOCATION OF THE POLICE HELICOPTERS FROM NORTH WEALD

AIRFIELD TO LIPPITTS HILL

Councillors *NOTED* the contents of the email and letter attached to the agenda.

C20.032 REQUEST FROM REV LEE BATSON FOR PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE TO MEET UP WITH THE NEW REVEREND OF ST ANDREWS CHURCH

Councillors *NOTED* that the Clerk had received an email advising that the new Reverend hoped to attend the Parish Hall on a Wednesday morning, date to be confirmed.

C20.033 THORNWOOD ALLOTMENT HOLDERS

Councillors *NOTED* that following the installation of Barriers at the Parish Hall and the departure of the Covid 19 MTU Centre, this Council undertook, on a trial basis, opening and shutting the barriers from 8am until 5pm for approximately 6 weeks. It was noted that this had not been a successful exercise. Anti-social behaviour and unauthorised parking still continued. Therefore, the Clerk and the Thornwood Ward Councillors made the decision under Delegated Powers to keep the barriers locked whilst the hall was not being used. Unfortunately, this caused a major concern to Thornwood Allotment Holders who were unable to access the Allotments by car during the busy spring/summer months when it is often necessary to bring in tools etc.

Councillors *NOTED* that it was therefore agreed, under the same Delegated Powers, to allow Allotment Holders who entered into a signed agreement with the Parish Council access via the locked barrier, by giving them the number of the padlock, after attending a meeting with the Ward Councillors and the Clerk and the PFO. It was noted that currently eleven allotment holders have decided to sign the agreement.

C20.034 WHEELERS FARM GARDENS ALLOTMENTS

a) Moving of fence and Gate to create larger space for Car Park at Wheelers Farm Gardens Site

Members recalled that the car park has been subject to many concerns due its size and The inability of many of the users of the car park who have not be able to use it this year due to the inclement weather. It was noted that both the Chairman of the Environmental Committee and the Chairman of the Council had met on site and agreed that the car park could be increased by taking half of Allotment Number 44, removing the old entrance gate and fence. All of this is well within the Parish Council's Boundary. This decision would not harm the security of the adjacent neighbour and would make it easier for vehicles to utilise the car park.

Councillors *NOTED* that the Clerk had received a letter of complaint from the adjacent neighbour regarding the removal of the gate and the fence. Members *NOTED* that the gate which is in situ is old and has not been locked in a number of years. The extension to the car park would be an improvement. It would be difficult to put down 'type one media' or concrete on the existing car park as the gate to the front of the site which was installed by the adjacent neighbour is too small to allow a builder's van through with a large amount of building materials on it to place on the current surface of the car park. Therefore, any building materials would have to be brought in by smaller vans which will involve more expense.

Members were asked to confirm that they wished to go ahead with the expansion of the car park which would benefit the majority of Wheelers Farm Gardens Allotment Tenants who do use the car park. Councillors **NOTED** that Allotment Number 44 had already been divided and had been rented out and cultivated. Following lengthy discussion, Cllr Mrs Grigg said that she wished to abstain from any decision. Cllr Mrs Etherington proposed that the Council make an offer to provide additional security fencing to the adjacent neighbour. The Clerk advised that this had been offered previously and she would be more than happy to put that suggestion to the adjacent neighbour again to try and stop this issue from escalating. Cllr Blanks said that he would be wary of this and proposed that no offer is made. A vote was taken as follows:

- 4 Members voted in favour of offering additional security fencing.
- 3 Members voted in favour of making no offer
- 2 Members abstained

It was therefore **AGREED** that the Clerk would write to the adjacent neighbour to offer additional security fencing.

b) Fences, Trees, Hedges, Vermin

Councillors **NOTED** that the Clerk had met with Cllr Holly Whitbread and Ms D Fenton Director of Housing & Property at EFDC, on Thursday 10th June, to discuss the concerns of both Allotment Holders on Wheelers Farm Gardens and Residents in Cyril Hawkins Close in relation to fences, trees, hedges and vermin. The Clerk had explained that the Allotments had been there since 1972 and that Members of the Parish Council had already discussed this site on numerous occasions and felt that the developers of the properties really should have undertaken more ‘homework’ into what concerns the residents of the new development may encounter living in such close proximity to a well established allotment site. The Clerk had explained that some work to Parish Council owned trees on the Parish Council side of the boundary would shortly be undertaken. It had been agreed that Ms D Fenton would come back to the Clerk regarding work to fences and trees on the other side of the boundary. Cllr Holly Whitbread had advised that she was extremely impressed with the allotments and how well used they were and what an inspiration for those experiencing social isolation they must have been over lockdown. Cllr Ms Whitbread had commented that she was especially impressed that there was only one vacancy and that there was now a Community Allotment in place which had been achieved with funding from EALC and ECC Locality Funding, also help from the EFDC Community Officer. She spoke of the work of the Allotment Warden who helped to achieve this. Members **NOTED** that the Clerk was awaiting a report from EFDC which was expected in the next few weeks. The PFO had visited the site and arrangements had been made to have some of the trees cut back. The Clerk referred to the Community Allotment and advised Councillors that they would be receiving an invitation to an opening event being held on 29th July.

C20.035 MEETING WITH COUNCILLOR CHRIS WHITBREAD ON VARIOUS MATTERS

Councillors **NOTED** that the Chairman and Cllr Irvine had met with Cllr Whitbread

during June in relation to the HMRC site and Hastingwood traffic issues. The Chairman first met with Cllr Whitbread and Nick Dawe, Chief Operating Officer at EFDC. The Chairman then attended a meeting with Cllr Irvine and Cllr Whitbread. Notes from both of these meetings were attached to the agenda. Councillors also noted that the Chairman had also attended an informal meeting with Arthur Moreton regarding Heritage Matters on North Weald Airfield.

The Chairman referred to the meeting notes and said that a walk had been organised with some of the residents from Vicarage Lane West and commented that it had been quite an eye opener. The Chairman advised that EFDC had agreed to install bike restrictors in at either end of the footpath adjacent to St Clements to stop motorbikes from accessing. EFDC have also agreed to install CCTV near to the gate to the bridleway which runs adjacent to the Cemetery. The Chairman advised that there had been a meeting over the phone between Cllr Whitbread, EFDC's Director of Technical Services and the owner of the golf course who has promised to fence off the area near to Shooters to prevent access to the golf course. The Chairman advised that the portacabins have now been removed from the golf course car park, which now may be used by the IBF for parking cars.

The Chairman advised that the second meeting was regarding items raised by Cllr Irvine in relation to Hastingwood. Members noted that a copy of the points raised at this meeting was attached to the agenda.

The third meeting was an informal one with Arthur Moreton regarding Heritage matters on North Weald Airfield. The Chairman reported that Mr Moreton had expressed his concern at the latest plans and wants to ensure that all the Heritage items were going to be preserved. The Chairman said that he is waiting for a list of the items from Mr Moreton in order that they can be raised with EFDC. The Clerk advised that Mr Moreton has asked that the list does not go forward yet.

C20.036 EPPING & ONGAR RAILWAY – TEMPORARY PARKING RESTRICTIONS STATION ROAD AND TEMPEST MEAD

Councillors **NOTED** that the Clerk had received the following enquiry from Dean Walton, Manager of Epping Ongar Railway, regarding their Christmas Season.

“As part of the planning for our Christmas season when we expect to see more visitors to the Railway, I am enquiring about the possibility of introducing temporary parking restrictions in Station Road between the entrance to Tempest Mead and the High Road. My suggestion would be to have this in place on weekends in December, and some evenings in November/December/January.

Can you let me know how I go about making a formal application? My understanding is that I need to ultimately approach the North Essex Parking Partnership for a formal/permanent solution, but I am really looking for temporary solution that will help us all in the busy Christmas season. Also a formal application to the NEPP would require support from local authorities/councillors. As there are no residents actually on Station Road (there is a small cul de sac at the start of Station Road) then there is limited scope for consulting them.”

The Clerk has advised Mr Walton to attend on of NEPPs regular Workshops to get advice from them as they are ECC's Parking Authority. Members noted that it is understood that the advice Mr Walton was given was to liaise with EFDC Environmental Services in the first instance. It was noted that this item may be included on the September or October agenda.

C20.037 FLAGPOLES

Councillors **NOTED** that the Clerk is still sourcing additional quotations for supply and fitting of flagpoles for Thornwood and Hastingwood Halls. The Queens Hall have indicated that they would also like a flagpole, however North Weald Village Hall have advised that they do not wish to have one. The Clerk advised that she had received a number of quotes ranging from approximately £300 to £800 per flagpole. The Clerk said that she is awaiting one quote from the Hampshire Flag Company and advised that she would send this to Councillors as soon as it is received. Cllr Mrs Grigg expressed surprise at the cost. Cllr Blanks said that he thought it was a waste of time and money. The Clerk said that the matter cannot be put back on the agenda for 6 months after Council had made a decision. The Clerk said that, together with the PFO, she is investigating whether there could be any funding available from EFDC's Town Centre Regeneration Officer. Cllr Blanks suggested that if the purchase is approved, it should not be without the appointment of someone to raise the flags up and down. The Clerk advised that Cllr Bedford is the person responsible for the flags in North Weald who was appointed by this Council and advised that Cllr Tyler had recently acted as deputy in the absence of Cllr Bedford. The Chairman reiterated that the Clerk would investigate the matter further and report back to Council at a later date.

C20.038 NORTH WEALD MASTERPLAN MEETING WITH COUNTRYSIDE

The PFO reported that all Councillors had been invited to attend a ZOOM session with the master planners for North Weald Bassett Housing Site, to catch up in terms of where they are in their proposals. The PFO reported that they have a draft Masterplan which the master planners are hoping to provide to Councillors within the next few weeks. It was noted that the Clerk is planning to have a session in the Parish Hall to go through the Masterplan in detail. The PFO commented that Members may not think that this is of particular importance now, however warned that as soon as the houses start to be built, there will be questions and challenges potentially from residents. Lengthy discussion ensued, in particular with regard to infrastructure and also the locations of Gypsy and Traveller sites.

C20.039 PARISH HALL AT THORNWOOD

Councillors **NOTED** that following Government Guidance on the 14th June, the full opening of the Parish Hall had been delayed. Two parties were postponed and the Parish Council's Face 2 Face Administrative Centre is only operating on a Wednesday morning. The guidance is for dates between 21st June and 19th July. It was noted that the Clerk had updated all the relevant guidance, Risk Assessment, Posters and Signage. Councillors **NOTED** that this would change following the announcement made by the Prime Minister that evening.

C20.040 REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY 2021

Councillors **NOTED** that the date for this year's Remembrance Sunday is Sunday,

14th November. Members agreed to set up a small Parish Council committee to meet during the day, to discuss all matters relating to this year's event. The following Councillors volunteered to be members of the committee:

- Chairman, Cllr Alan Buckley, Cllr Mrs Grigg, Cllr Mulliner, Cllr Mrs Hawkins
Cllr Ms Wood

Members **AGREED** that they would like enquiries to be made regarding lunch. The Clerk advised that Cllr Mulliner had confirmed that North Weald Village Hall is available and the Parish Hall has also been booked as a reserve venue. It was noted that a Save The Date Invitation would be sent out.

C20.041 FLAG

Councillors **NOTED** that the flag was changed to the Armed Forces Flag for 5 days by Cllr Tyler (as Cllr Bedford was indisposed). Details were placed on Facebook.

C20.042 REFLECTION BENCH

Councillors **NOTED** that Essex Radio had picked up information from one of the Parish Council's Press Releases regarding the Reflection Benches and Rainbow Stones. As the Reflection Benches Project had been initiated by Cllr Tyler, the Clerk had suggested to Essex Radio that he be interviewed by them. Cllr Tyler confirmed that he had taken part in an interview early on a Saturday morning and said that he commented that the project would not have taken place without the dedication of the Clerk who had been successful in obtaining grant funding from EALC.

C20.043 OPEN GARDENS

Councillors **NOTED** the Thornwood Open Gardens are being held on the 11th July. The Allotments would be open and the use of the Car Park at the Parish Hall at Thornwood had been made available.

C20.044 PARISH COUNCIL OPEN DAY EVENTS

Councillors **NOTED** that it had been suggested that the Open Day events go ahead over 3 sessions in September, for 2 hours per session, details as follows:

| LOCATION | SUGGESTED DATES | TIME |
|--------------------------|---|--|
| Hastingwood Village Hall | Tuesday or Friday Evening in September | 6.00pm to 8.00pm |
| Parish Hall, Thornwood | Friday, 17 th September or Tuesday, 21 st September | 6.00pm to 8.00pm 6.00pm to 8.00pm |
| North Weald Village Hall | To be confirmed | |

We are planning to showcase what the Parish Council has been doing over the past 18 months, by having a rolling presentation. Work will begin on putting this together during August. Adriana will give an update on the status of the Neighbourhood Plan. It is hoped that Parish Councillors will be available to attend the event being held in their particular Ward to answer any questions that residents may have. A 'Question Box' will be made available for residents to 'post' any

questions. It is suggested that Councillors may also wish to look at the possibility of whether we can also fit in the Civic Awards and the Allotment Meetings at these events.

A list of ideas for the presentation had been tabled at the meeting.

Cllr Mrs Hawkins advised Members that the District Councillors Surgery had been scheduled for Friday, 23 July in the Parish Hall.

C20.045 EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL HIGHWAY RANGERS

Councillors were advised of a large number of concerns received from residents in relation to the alarming differences in the service which is advertised on the EFDC Website to that which is actually offered. Councillors **NOTED** the contents of a report attached to the agenda, a copy of which the Clerk had also sent to Cllrs Whitbread and Bedford. The Clerk asked the Senior Admin Officer to give a brief report regarding an email that she had sent to the Clerk earlier in the day. The email described the service received when the Senior Admin Officer had called EFDC (as a resident) to ask who she should report overgrown vegetation to as she had been unable to report it on either EFDC's or ECC's websites. The Clerk said that she would send the email on to Cllrs Whitbread and Bedford for information. Cllr Blanks commented that many of the things EFDC have responsibility for have been outsourced to other councils.

C20.046 SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA ITEM ACOUSTIC PROBLEMS IN THE VILLAGE HALL

Due to Council Meetings and other Meetings now being held in the Parish Hall at Thornwood, some Councillors had expressed their concern at the problems with Acoustics and their inability to hear comprehensively all items on the Agenda.

The Clerk had been tasked to look for solutions. Councillors noted that, unfortunately, Hearing Loops would only benefit those with Hearing Aids and may not help those who are unable to hear because of the acoustic problems. Attached to the Supplementary Agenda were details regarding a couple of options that may offer a solution.

Councillors **NOTED** that changes may be made to the layout of the hall after 19th July, where people may be able to be seated closer together at meetings. It was noted that funds are available in the Office Fund, should Members decide to pursue this matter. Following discussion, Councillors suggested alternative venues which may be available for meetings in the parish. Cllr Clegg suggested that matter is included as an item on the September Agenda for further discussion, as Members will be able to see if there is any difference with a change in layout. All Members **AGREED**.

C20.047 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.

DEBT OF HONOUR & AIRFIELD MEMORIAL

Councillors *NOTED* the contents of the report attached to the Agenda and *AGREED* that the Clerk would make further enquiries.

PEER GROUP – ACCESS ROAD – POTHLES AND REPAIRS

Councillors Mrs Grigg and Mulliner declared a Non Pecuniary interest in this item. Councillors *NOTED* the contents of the report attached to the Agenda.

Meeting closed: 9.05pm

Signed

Date