



MINUTES

Meeting: PARISH COUNCIL

Date: 11 July 2022 **Time:** 7.30PM

Venue: PARISH HALL, THORNWOOD COMMON

PRESENT:

Councillors (8) A Buckley (Chairman), R Spearman, A Tyler*, Cllr Mrs Hawkins, Cllr Mrs P Etherington
Cllr Mrs Grigg, Cllr Clegg. Cllr Mrs S Jackman MBE

** for part of meeting*

Officers in Attendance (2)

Susan De Luca – Parish Clerk
Adriana Jones – Principal Financial Officer

Members of the Public (1)

Members of the Press (1)

C22.048 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (5)

Apologies received from Cllr Mulliner, Cllr Bedford, Cllr Ms Wood, Cllr Irvine, and Cllr Blanks.

C22.049 OTHER ABSENCES (1)

Cllr Stroud.

C22.050 MINUTES

The Clerk advised that she had received a query via email from Cllr Irvine concerning the minute item about Speedwatch. The Clerk clarified for members that minutes should represent an accurate record of what was said at the meeting. Cllr Clegg asked if he should address the matter under this agenda item or wait until members reports, to which the Clerk advised he could address it now. Cllr Clegg advised that it had been brought to his attention that he had in fact received an email from Cllr Irvine, but that he had automatically assumed Cllr Irvine would have sent it to his personal email address, and as such he apologised for this. Cllr Clegg stated that Cllr Irvine had also mentioned new sites in his email, specifically asking what was happening with Hastingwood and what was thought to be dormant sites, to which Cllr Clegg stated they were not dormant but as yet there had been no evidence that the location by the Horn and Horseshoes pub was a speeding hotspot.

Cllr Clegg advised he had sent an email to Cllr Irvine regarding this, however summarised that the matter of Hastingwood Road was raised three years ago, but as COVID hit shortly after he had not received any further confirmation from the then contact (Mary Whiley). However, Cllr Clegg had contacted Liam Collins, his new speedwatch contact, who had now looked into this matter and has now confirmed the site has been assigned. Cllr Clegg had not been made aware of this, stating that he had initially been advised the site had not been accepted due to there being nowhere to park or stand, however thanks to the Hastingwood Village Hall this issue had been resolved.

Cllr Clegg also addressed the point raised by Cllr Irvine regarding training for Speedwatch members, confirming that new members cannot be self taught and must attend one of the official courses. The Chairman asked if somebody who has been on the course could train others, to

which Cllr Clegg stated they could not, and that it was his understanding this was something to do with insurance. Cllr Clegg had been advised there was a course the following night, however had informed Liam Collins that 24 hours notice was not enough and has requested a session in the Thornwood Hall. Cllr Clegg asked the Parish Council if they would be willing to provide the hall free of charge for this training as it would benefit the community. Council **AGREED**, and it was agreed Cllr Clegg would liaise with the Clerk for suitable dates and times. Cllr Clegg took this opportunity to advise that there would be speedwatch sessions in each of the three villages in the parish the following day, and that it was hoped there may also be a police presence.

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 13th June were **APPROVED** and duly signed.

[Cllr Tyler arrived]

C22.051 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Spearman declared a pecuniary interest in any item concerning the Local Plan. Cllrs Mrs Grigg declared a personal interest in agenda item 19 by virtue of being a previous member of the Bowls club.

C22.052 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

The Chairman welcomed the member of the public present, however there were no questions.

C22.053 REPORT OF THE CLERK

Councillors **NOTED** the report of the Clerk as detailed within the agenda, which included the following updates:

- **Weald Common Tree Project** – Staff and Cllr Buckley continue to work on this – Cllr Buckley held a meeting with Trevor Baker regarding the start date for the proposed swale which needs to be completed to address the drainage issues on Weald Common. The Clerk confirmed she was dealing with the paperwork for this project with Tom Moat, ECC, and had just received another document which she needed to action. The Chairman confirmed he would provide a further report later in the meeting.
- **Rededication Norwegian Memorial and Parish Memorial 19th June** – The Clerk confirmed that both these Commemorative Events were very well attended, as was the Afternoon Tea at which 47 people were present. There was Norwegian Representation from Master Commander Snig Snedvig, 132 Airwing, Bodo. The Clerk advised that the Wednesday following this event, she received a phone call from the new Wing Commander who is taking command at Bodo from September asking if a visit could be arranged the following day to the Museum, the Squadron, and the Airfield, and such the Clerk had to make many arrangements in a very short period of time, which she did. Thanks were recorded for those who assisted on the day. There is an official photo of the visit which the Clerk will print and keep and also send round to Councillors. The Clerk confirmed he would be the Parish Councils new contact for Norway. He has advised that if there is anything he can do for North Weald, he would do his best. Cllr Tyler advised that he is the top man from the Norwegian Airforce, and that his official nick name is ‘Tin-Tin’.
- **External Audit** - It was **NOTED** that the appropriate Notices of Exercise of Public Rights had been placed on the Notice Boards and Parish Council website.

- **Various Planning Matters** – The Clerk advised that Quinn had withdrawn their appeal, however confirmed that the matter was still very much alive and currently sits with EFDC Planning department to make a decision. The question was raised as to why the appeal had been withdrawn, to which the Clerk stated that this seemed to be linked to the inspectors latest comments on the EFDC Local Plan that were published on 16th June. The Clerk advised that this matter would inevitably go before EFDC District Development Committee for consideration. Cllr Spearman asked what the situation was concerning the contaminated land on this site. The Clerk confirmed she had received a query from a local resident, and that she had raised this directly with the EFDC Planning Officer responsible for the Quinn application as the Parish Council did not have the necessary expertise to provide a duly qualified opinion on such matters. The Planning Officer themselves had also sought the advice of EFDC Environmental Services, and had subsequently provided the Clerk with an email report on the matter, which the Clerk had forwarded to the resident who initially raised the matter. The Clerk summarised, stating that if the land is not disturbed, and people stick to the official footpaths, any contamination does not present an issue. Cllr Spearman raised concern that there had been dumping on the site over the years, however the Clerk stated that the advice she received was that this had nothing to do with the contaminants raised in the report that were found under the ground. The Clerk advised members that in 2002 EFDC challenged all the golf clubs in the area regarding the importation of soil, some of which it is understood came from the Olympic Park, however the reality is that we do not know what the quality of this soil was. The Clerk advised there was still soil being imported as late as 2007 at Blakes Golf Course, however it is unclear where this soil came from.

The Clerk explained that this Council has to rely on the opinion of experts at EFDC to explain what the content of the report meant for residents, and that the Council would need to employ specialist consultants if it wished to understand further the content of the report. Cllr Tyler mentioned radon, advising that it comes from Granite and stating that there is a whole industry out there dedicated to dealing with these matters, and that whilst he understood the comment about it not being an issue if residents stick to the footpaths, his concern was about any contamination of the water table. Cllr Spearman stated that areas where testing takes place can be selected to maximise a negative result. Cllr Mrs Grigg asked to see a copy of the report, and it was **AGREED** that the Clerk would email Councillors both the Quinn Report and the email received from EFDC Environmental Services.

- **Cemetery Matters** – Clerk confirmed that work with the Cemetery was quite busy at this time.

C22.054 REPORTS & MEMBERS REPORTS

- a) **Chairman's Report** – The Chairman confirmed he would report on the Weald Common swale later in the meeting.
- b) **Vice Chairman's Report** – Cllr Mrs Grigg reported that a street light opposite Orchard View in Hastingwood Road, almost opposite the post box, was on all day and asked that this was reported.
- c) **District & County Councillors Reports** – The Clerk confirmed she had a highways report that she would send out to members.

d) Parish Councillors Reports – Cllr Tyler reported that he had now taken on the job of managing changing of flags in the village, and noticed that this Council did not fly nor have an LGBTQ flag, and asked Councillors if they should consider having one. Cllr Mrs Grigg stated that residents in the Parish were free to live their lives exactly how they pleased, and that a flag wasn't needed for this. Cllr Mrs Etherington stated that it is not necessary for the Parish Council to have a flag to say we are supportive of such matters. Cllr Tyler stated that other authorities such as EFDC and ECC fly a flag in support of the LGBTQ community, and just wondered why the Parish Council didn't. The Chairman asked Cllr Tyler if he was simply pointing out that this Council was not in line with ECC and EFDC, or suggesting we should fly such a flag, to which Cllr Tyler said it was both, suggesting the Parish Council was out of kilter with current community feeling. The Clerk advised Cllr Tyler that he was able to put a proposition to Council to consider this matter, to which Cllr Tyler stated that he would think it over. Councillors **NOTED** the point that he raised.

Cllr Clegg stated that he had been approached by Cllr Janet Whitehouse, Lib Dem, regarding liaising with Speedwatch for North Weald and Epping, wanting to publish some photos in the Lib Dem flyers, and he confirmed he had some good photos. Cllr Clegg stated that he just wanted to notify Council about this.

e) Queens Hall Charity Report – Cllr Wood had provided a report, however the Clerk had advised it could be reported at the next meeting.

f) Neighbourhood Plan Report – The Principal Finance Officer advised that the Council would be asked to consider whether or not it wished to continue with the Neighbourhood Plan in the not too distant future.

g) EFDC Local Plan Report – Councillors were advised that the latest report issued by the Inspector suggested that the plan would be adopted late summer / early Autumn, noting that it seemed the Inspector was pushing to get the plan adopted as soon as possible. It was noted there would be a consultation on any proposed changes.

h) Highways Report – The Clerk advised members of the ECC Members Pothole scheme, stating that she had been advised by ECC Cllr Chris Whitbread of the Scheme where District Councillors can put forward details of serious potholes that need filling, however details including location and photos are needed of these potholes. This is a limited scheme and the details of the potholes submitted are assessed as they have to fit certain criteria. This Council has two County Councillors who cover the Parish. Members were therefore asked to submit details of any potholes in their area that they feel that could benefit from this scheme as soon as possible. Cllr Tyler advised that a member of the community had contacted him to advise that the Potholes along Kiln Lane were causing problems, along with the overgrowth of bushes and hedges. The Clerk asked Cllr Tyler to send over a list of the issues and she would raise this with the Highway Rangers. Cllr Mrs Jackman asked if anybody had any evidence of work conducted by the Highway Rangers, given they were so restrained in what they were able to do. The Clerk advised she would liaise with Cllr Burrows regarding the remit of the Highway Rangers to confirm exactly what they can do. The Clerk further stated Highway Rangers would not touch any property where the Riparian owner has a responsibility. Both the Clerk, Cllr Hawkins and Cllr Tyler gave examples of work undertaken by the Highway Rangers.

Cllr Mrs Etherington advised that the brook near Wheelers Farm Garden Allotment and the Village Green was looking a bit messy and smelly, with debris in the water. Cllr Tyler asked if

Cllr Bedford had previously arranged for the Probation Service to deal with this matter, to which the Clerk advised that if the Probation Service undertake work, you need to ensure the relevant facilities are available for the workers such as toilets. The Clerk confirmed she would speak to the Probation Service representative again. Cllr Spearman advised that with regard to potholes along Silver Birch Avenue was a bad road.

C22.055 FINANCIAL

List of Cheques and Monthly statement of Accounts

Councillors **NOTED** the cheque list for June 2022, and the bank balances as at 30th June 2022. A query was asked about the cost of electricity for the Street Lights, to which the PFO confirmed that this had gone up significantly, and reminded Councillors that the Parish Councils street lights were on all night and did not form part of the ECC night lighting closures which contributed to the high cost.

C22.056 NORTH WEALD AIRFIELD ALTERNATIVE MASTERPLAN

The Clerk reminded councillors that at the last meeting, it was agreed that the Relight Group could present to Councillors, the date for which had been set for 20th July, 6.30pm. Council was reminded that this was a presentation to Councillors, not to the Parish Council, and were asked if they felt that District Councillors should be able to attend. Cllr Mrs Jackman also asked if the press could attend. Cllr Tyler stated that he felt members of the public should also be invited to attend. Cllr Mrs Grigg stated that Councillors should be given the opportunity to form a view in the first instance. The Clerk stated that this was Relight Groups meeting, and as such the Parish Council could not pick and choose who attended and that this was up to the Relight Group. Cllr Mrs Etherington agreed, stating it is not within the Parish Councils gift to invite other people. Cllr Clegg stated that he was reluctant for members of the public to attend at this stage as this is the first presentation, and Councillors need an opportunity to receive the information provided, go away and digest it and formulate a sensible response. If members of the public are present, this will cloud the opportunity to do this. The Chairman advised he had discussed this matter with the Clerk, and from what has been said so far with Relight Group they are trying to keep in touch with the District Council as to what decisions EFDC is making for their own masterplan, and we too have not received a response from EFDC to our submission. This Parish Council has only seen EFDCs plan, so it does no harm to see an alternative situation if it brings it to attention of EFDC. Cllr Clegg suggested that only those District Councillors who represent this Parish should be invited to attend. It was therefore **AGREED** that the Clerk should contact Relight Group asking if they would be willing to invite the following District Councillors to the presentation: Cllr C Whitbread, Cllr H Whitbread, Cllr Burrows, Cllr Morgan, Cllr Bolton, Cllr McIvor. It was also **AGREED** the Parish Councils press officer should attend should the Council wish to make any statement. Cllr Clegg asked if there would be a Q&A session, to which the Clerk advised it was a two hour session with a Q&A session at the end. Cllr Mrs Grigg asked if the Relight Group have liaised with EFDC regarding leases on the airfield, to which the Clerk stated she was not aware.

C22.057 INVESTMENTS

The Clerk advised that together with the PFO and Cllr Blanks, they will continue to look for investment and banking options for this Council. Cllr Clegg stated that the major banks were disappearing very quickly from Epping, and expressed caution regarding dormant accounts and the ability of banks to effectively hide or take money in such circumstances. Metro bank was put forward as a possible solution, however it was noted they were not a clearing bank which could make things difficult.

C22.058 PLAY IN THE PARK

Members were advised of the following dates for Play in the Park – Tuesday, 9 August Queens Hall (10am to 12pm) and Friday, 12 August Parish Hall (10am to 12pm). Cllr Clegg asked if the Parish Councils supported these events, to which the Clerk advised this Council precepts funds each year for them.

C22.059 LOCAL GOVERNMENT REVIEW OF ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES

At the previous meeting Members were advised that there is to be a review of Electoral Boundaries. This will affect the Epping Forest District in some way and will mean that District Councillors will probably represent approximate 15,000 residents in each area which will include various Parishes. The Clerk advised she was still awaiting further documentation, however had been advised it was expected this review would result in the loss of at least two District Council places at EFDC.

C22.060 COFFEE WITH COPS

The Clerk advised that the recent Coffee with Cops was a great success with a good number of residents attending. The Police had advised that they would like to hold another event this one being in Thornwood. The date of this will be Wednesday 20th July between 10am and 12 noon at the Parish Hall. The relative notices have been placed on the Notice Boards and will be advertised on Social Media nearer the time.

C22.061 WEALD COMMON

The Chairman advised that he had attended a meeting with Trevor Baker, Land Drainage Engineer EFDC, and a Drainage Contractor on Wednesday 29th June. A full report was attached to the agenda for members information, along with a map. The Chairman reminded Councillors that the reason for this meeting was to try and find a suitable solution to address the very wet ground which restricted the use of the play area and field during the winter months as it becomes fairly inaccessible. In conjunction with the large planting, it is hoped to utilise the EFDC Nature Reserve and change the location and direction of the swale from the footpath by the field, past the play area and into the nature reserve which was marked 'flood relief plain' on the map. The Chairman continued, stating that the issue with Weald Common is that it is slightly lower than the EFDC Nature reserve, however after discussing it with contractor a drainage system can be created that will take much of the surface rain water running down the hill. The Chairman stated that he would like to move ahead with this solution as quickly as possible as the trees project is expected to start in November, along with some other tree planting. The cost was originally quite high, however this revised scheme has been costed at £2,790, mainly as a result of changing the direction of the water flow now towards the nature reserve.

Cllr Mrs Jackman stated she felt this was a very good idea. Cllr Tyler also supported this project, however did state that you would never solve the problem as Weald Common is naturally a flood plain. The Clerk advised that it was possible that the cost may slightly increase as there were still a couple of queries. Cllr Mrs Grigg stated that if it improves the area, then the area can be used by residents more frequently. Cllr Mrs Jackman **PROPOSED** this quote be accepted and the works completed. This was **SECONDED** by Cllr Clegg. A vote was taken, the result of which was unanimous.

C22.062 HASTINGWOOD B ALLOTMENTS

At the last meeting Members agreed that they would like to reconsider the sale or renting of Hastingwood B allotment site. Section 8 of the Allotments Act 1925 states "Where a local

authority has purchased or appropriated land for use as allotments the local authority shall not sell, appropriate, use or dispose of the land for any purpose other than use for allotments without the consent of the Secretary of State". The Clerk confirmed she had researched the updated information on the Disposal of Allotment land, however further work was needed to clearly understand the implications and work involved. What was clear is that it would likely be a lengthy process. Councillors were reminded that an enquiry had been received for the renting of the land for horses to graze on. Cllr Mrs Grigg asked if this would help with the de-allotmentisation of the land, however the Clerk advised she was unsure at this time and would need to look into it. It was noted that there was an issue with Marestail on the neighbouring allotment site, so this is potentially a problem on Site B, and Marestail was thought to be deadly for horses. The Chairman mentioned the state of the land, saying it was extremely overgrown with bramble and foliage, and to clear it would be extremely expensive for what would be 12 months of rental income. Furthermore, the suitability of the site after clearance for the grazing of horses was unclear. It was **AGREED** the Clerk would look more into the legislation and place this matter on the September agenda for further consideration.

C22.063 REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

Members noted that arrangements will soon begin for Remembrance Day Events which are held in November each year, and were asked whether or not they wish the arrangements to remain the same as in previous years, or if they wish to change any of the details, as well as if they wish to continue with the full lunch menu or would they prefer a hot buffet and soup. The Clerk explained that she had been advised that a number of RBL and RAFA members would not be attending events this year, which would lower the numbers for lunch, possibly down to only 50 attendees. Cllr Mrs Jackman stated that she would like to see the full lunch menu continue. The Clerk explained that 56 Squadron would be exercising their right to walk through Epping this year with their military contingent, with the Epping service starting at 3pm. The North Weald service starts at 12.15, lunch at 1.15, so it would be very challenging to get everybody fed to enable some to get to Epping for 3pm. The Clerk stated that she does not know at this stage if anybody or everybody from the 56 Squadron will be at North Weald for the service and/or lunch, however an email has been sent today. Cllr Tyler said if they do come and there are a lot of people, then a police presence may be needed. The Chairman suggested a cost for the buffet should be sought. It was **AGREED** to place this on the September agenda for further discussion. It was noted that the attendance of the Bugler had been confirmed.

C22.064 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

The public and press were excluded from the meeting, the Council believing that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business about to be discussed.

C22.065 NORTH WEALD METHODIST CHURCH

Due to the confidential nature of this subject, these minutes are not available for public inspection as they contain or relate to exempt information within the meaning of the Paragraphs indicated of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

C22.066 NORTH WEALD RADIO STATION BOWLS CLUB

Due to the confidential nature of this subject, these minutes are not available for public inspection as they contain or relate to exempt information within the meaning of the Paragraphs indicated of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.



Meeting closed 21:36

Signed

Date