



MINUTES

Meeting: PARISH COUNCIL

Date: 10th June 2024

Time: 7.30PM

Venue: PARISH HALL, THORNWOOD COMMON

PRESENT:

Councillors (11) A Buckley (Chairman), Mrs S Hawkins, B Clegg, Mrs S Jackman MBE, N Born, A Irvine, R Spearman, A Tyler, Ms D Wood, K Kinnear, Cllr Bedford
* for part of meeting

Officers in Attendance (2)

Susan Deluca - Clerk

Adriana Jones – Principle Finance Officer

Members of the Public (4) – EFDC Cllr Bromwich, EFDC Cllr Burrows, plus two members of the public

Members of the Press (1)

C24.028 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (2)

Apologies from Cllrs Etherington and Blanks.

C24.029 OTHER ABSENCES (1)

Cllr Stroud.

C24.030 MINUTES

Councillors **AGREED** the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 13th May 2024.

C24.031 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Spearman declared an interest in the Local Plan.

C24.032 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

The Chairman advised that PC Cook was present just before the start of the meeting, however was called out to a job, but did briefly advise that there were no particular issues crime wise this month.

C24.033 REPORT OF THE CLERK

The Clerk provided the following reports:

- Sensory Garden – Covered in separate item in this Agenda
- Cemetery – Dealing with a request for a headstone, however this was for a common grave and as such this is not permitted. A couple of purchase in reserves.
- Stolen bench – in main part of the agenda
- D-Day commemorative events – The Clerk advised she was pleased to see a number of Councillors and residents at the 6th June event, with around 90 people in attendance.
- Enforcement – dealing with an enforcement matter in Weald Bridge Road
- Rosario development and speed limit – Clerk had contacted Cllr Holly Whitbread, and her response was included in the main body of the agenda.
- Tudor House – Conversations have taken place with Developer, but this will be covered later under the Development Working Group Terms of Reference item.

- Reminder for Councillors who were interested in undertaking training, a copy of the EALC training calendar was sent out to Councillors earlier in the day. Councillors were asked to contact the Clerk if they wished to attend any training.
- Internal Audit report now received.
- Clerk circulated notification of the North Weald Village Hall AGM which was taking place on 12th June. The Clerk reminded Councillors that this matter had been brought up earlier in the year following issues with the car park, with a number of members of the public stating they wished to attend the AG which is a meeting open to the public.

C24.034 REPORTS & MEMBERS REPORTS

- a) **Chairman's Report** – The Chairman advised that Cllr Tyler had written a report about the market meeting, however he would cover this under item 12 in the agenda. The Chairman reminded Councillors that he was looking at improving the central focus point of the Weald Common wood, where the Copper Beach tree was located, and that a number of ideas had been received to make the area more pleasant. The idea was to have low maintenance items, and bug houses had been suggested to him, with the idea that these could be located by the children's area and the St Andrews Eco-Warriors could be tasked with naming the area. There was concern that if a bug house consisted of piled up old pieces of wood, this could in turn cause an issue with the Adders that were on the Common, providing a dark space for them to hide in and bask in the sun. A suggestion of putting these on a platform was made which would solve that issue, or locating a bug house on the North Weald Village Green instead. The Chairman asked Councillors to put forward any suggestions or ideas so these could be considered. The Clerk confirmed this would be on the next agenda for consideration. The Chairman also advised that the Weald Common tree project had featured on the EALC County Update.
- b) **Vice Chairman's Report** – Cllr Mrs Hawkins advised that herself and Cllr Spearman had conducted their monthly Allotment inspections on 4th June, and that an advert had been placed on social media to see if anybody was interested in taking on a plot. She would provide a further update next month.
- c) **District & County Councillors Reports** – Cllr Burrows advised on the launch of the EFDC Community Lottery, full details of which were on EFDC's website, but included a £25,000 jackpot each week, with 60% of the funds raised goes to projects in Epping Forest.

Cllr Bromwich advised that on 18th May he met with Thornwood Action Group and had a tour of the village. The group raised concerns around speeding, pavement widths, signage, street cleaning, issues along Upland Road, outdated road closures signs and bus stops. Since then, a broken drain that was reported had been fixed, and the outdated signs removed. He will be catching up with them on 29th June, and will be speaking with them about setting up speed awareness groups around the Parish. Cllr Bromwich advised he was pleased to see Cllr Holly Whitbread's response regarding the Rosario site included within the agenda. Cllr Bromwich advised that he too had met with the Chairman at the market on 8th June, and is aware of the issues being faced. He also reported that he had been working with the organisers of Ride London after being made aware of two particular issues in North Weald, one involving an ambulance being unable to reach a child in need and another being a veterinary emergency. He had spoken with Chris Davey from Ride London who advised an investigation had been opened into these

matters. Cllr Tyler advised that this was the third year of Ride London closing the village down, and that we had been given assurances that if there was a medical emergency this would take precedence over the race. Cllr Bromwich stated that the event brings a lot of benefit to the village and the County and by fostering engagement with people in the village hopefully they won't feel the event was being imposed on them. Cllr Tyler disagreed, stating that he could not see any benefit to the village at all.

The Chairman advised that Ride London had made it clear the event was a great opportunity for local business and residents to make the most out of the event and raise funds themselves, however it seemed that people in North Weald were simply not interested in the event. Cllr Born advised that the co-op was unable to provide fresh bread on the day of the event, and that there was a lot of disruption to the village and this should be addressed. Cllr Bedford advised that North Weald get away quite lightly, as compared to Ongar who are affected the entire day, but that he really felt as though ECC should be listening to this important feedback from residents, and perhaps it was time to change the route and spread the event around other areas of Essex.

- d) **Parish Councillors Reports** – Cllr Bedford stated how disappointed he was to see that a newly installed bench on the Common had been stolen, and there was some discussion as to how this took place. The Chairman advised that himself and the Clerk were looking into how best to ensure the security of the other benches on the common. Cllr Tyler suggested having something Parish Council specific carved into the wood of a bench would make it less attractive to steel as it would be harder to sell. Consideration was also being given to installing AirTags in the assets, however it was unclear how often these needed to be charged up. Cllr Bedford suggested the Parish Council should apply to the new Qualis Community Fund explaining about the theft and looking for funding to replace the bench.

Cllr Bedford provided an update on the meeting with Darren Goodey regarding the problems with North Weald Market, stating they had been looking at different ideas to try and resolve the problems. One idea was to open another gate on Saturday through which staff and Airfield users could use, which had been trialled and was felt to have gone very well. The idea of having accredited police officers to marshal the market had also been suggested, however a full report on the matter was awaited. Discussion had also taken place with the Market operators, who run 7 markets across the Country, stating that it was in their interest to resolve these problems. The Market operators had also commissioned a traffic management team to monitor the area. Cllr Irvine suggested perhaps a time-based ticket system of operation for access to the market could be a way forward. The Chairman advised that during the meeting it was explained to the market operators where the pinch points were, and he would update Councillors once the report had been received with its findings.

Cllr Clegg provided an update on Community Speedwatch, advising that a session was run last week in Upland Road, and over the 1 hour session 126 vehicles went past, a fifth of which were doing over 36MPH, and 12 doing more than 40MPH. A session was due to take place in North Weald on 12th June in conjunction with surrounding towns.

Cllr Clegg also advised that there had been serious congestion issues around Upland Road and at Randalls Scrapyard at the weekend, with vehicles being double parked and traffic

causing blockages. In addition, he was sure there was a condition about the height of sleepers not being more than 3m and at no time would there be sight of cars. Cllr Tyler advised that earlier in the day he too had issues on the road in this location with Total Waste management lorries delivering containers. The Clerk confirmed she would look into this and come back to Cllr Clegg, and if necessary make a formal complaint.

- e) **Queens Hall Charity Report** – Cllr Ms Wood confirmed things were going well, and that all the Trustees had agreed to continue except for one.
- f) **Highways** – Ride London event discussed earlier in the meeting
- g) **Development Working Group** – Councillors **AGREED** the Terms of Reference for the Developers working group as attached to the agenda. Councillors were reminded that if they wanted to be part of this group they needed to contact the Clerk by Friday 14th June. Cllr Born asked if there was going to be a meeting with Google and was it right that Councillors were unable to attend, two which the Clerk confirmed this was correct but that she had secured agreement from the event organisers that they would bring their diaries so a date could be agreed for a meeting with Councillors when at which time Councillors could raise their questions directly. Cllr Born stated that he believed the meeting was being organised by consultants as nobody at Google knows who North Weald are. Cllr Born asked Cllr Bedford if there were any formal meetings taking place between Google and EFDC, to which Cllr Bedford advised that he was unable to comment, but that at present he was no more aware of any plans than the Parish Council. It was noted that there may be some sensitivities due to competition between infrastructure providers, and the Clerk advised that any planning application would come before the Parish Council for consideration in any case.

C24.035 FINANCIAL REPORTS

- a) Councillors **AGREED** the monthly cheque lists for April and May, and noted the bank balances as at 31st May 2024.
- b) The Clerk advised that interest from the CCLA investment was around £400 per month on a variable interest rate.

C24.036 APPROVAL OF ACCOUNTS 2023/2024

Councillors **AGREED** the Accounts for 2023/2024 as attached to the agenda. **PROPOSED** Cllr Born, and **SECONDED** Cllr Clegg. All agreed.

C24.037 INTERNAL AUDIT 2023/2024

Councillors **NOTED** that the final Internal Audit had been completed on 5th June 2024, and a copy had been emailed to Councillors. The Clerk read out the recommendations included within the report, advising that it was a good report overall.

C24.038 EXTERNAL AUDIT (AGAR) 2023/2024 🙌

Each year the Councils Accounts and Practices (known as the Annual Governance and Accountability Return - AGAR) are reviewed by an external auditor appointed by the Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments Ltd. The following dates apply for this Council:

- The requirement for the public inspection period (to include the first 10 working days of July) will start 17th June and will end 26th July.
- The AGAR must be approved by 30th June 2024 and submitted to PKF Littlejohn by 1st July 2024.

This Council is subject to an Intermediate Review as part of the limited assurance review. The Council:

- a) Noted the reviewed the effectiveness of the system of internal control of this Council which took place at the prior meeting.
- b) Considered the findings of this review
- c) Prepared the Annual Governance Statement (Section 1)
- d) Approved the Annual Governance Statement by way of **RESOLUTION. PROPOSED** Cllr Tyler, **SECONDED** Cllr Hawkins.
- e) Considered the Accounting Statements (Section 2)
- f) Approved the Accounting Statements by way of **RESOLUTION. PROPOSED** Cllr Tyler, **SECONDED** Cllr Hawkins.
- g) Ensured that both the Annual Governance Statement and Accounting Statements were signed and dated by the person presiding at the meeting.

C24.039 MEETING BETWEEN EFDC, MARKET OPERATOR AND CHAIRMAN OF PARISH COUNCIL

On 18th May a meeting took place between the above-named parties to discuss the traffic problems associated with the market. This matter was briefly discussed earlier in the meeting, and the Chairman stated that Cllr Bedford had provided a good summary, and that a formal report was awaited. He stated that EFDC was keen to resolve the problem. Cllr Bedford advised that ECC was also involved with this matter, and would be looking at the report and making suggestions.

C24.040 OPENING OF SENSORY GARDEN

Members noted that the Sensory Garden situated on Weald Common was formally opened by the Parish Council Chairman on Wednesday 29th May, with several invited guests attending. The Sensory Garden had been made possible with funding from the Rural Prosperity Fund. Around 20 people were in attendance, including the Leader of the Council and Cllr Mccredie from Epping, with the opening ceremony lasting around half an hour. Cllr Tyler stated he was pleased that the garden was already being well used. Cllr Bedford suggested that there could be a wall in Thornwood Parish Hall that could be used for pictures of all such events.

C24.041 THEFT OF BENCH

Whilst briefly discussed earlier in the meeting, members were formally advised that a bench had been stolen from children's area on Weald Common in the area where the parish council planted 2500 trees. It was believed it was stolen during the week commencing 23rd May. Unfortunately, the stolen bench was the one that was placed in the children's area to commemorate the trees planted by the St Andrews School Eco Warriors. There was further discussion about how to keep assets safe on the Common, and Cllr Ms Wood suggested that Epping Forest Burial Park be contacted as they have specific carved wooden benches from trees, and perhaps this was something the Parish should consider in place of the bench. There was also discussion about marking or engraving the bench in some way. It was **AGREED** the Clerk would contact Epping Forest Burial Park and bring back to council some alternative proposals.

C24.042 TOUR NORTH WEALD AIRFIELD

The Chairman advised that three Members of the parish council were recently given a tour of the Airfield by Darren Goodey, which was extremely interesting. This included a visit to the Police helicopter area. The Airfield Manager had advised he would be happy to arrange a

further trip to the Ambulance Park on site, to showcase how the building can be turned into an 'incident' used to train staff. The Clerk confirmed she would liaise with the Airfield Manager and secure some dates. Cllr Irvine advised the trip was very worthwhile.

C24.043 PATH FROM CAR PARK IN NORHT WEALD VILLAGE HALL CAR PARK TO WEALD COMMON

Members were advised that the Clerk had spoken to a representative from the Insurance Company regarding the council providing a stable more permeable pathway in the position suggested, and that the representative had suggested that the council not continue with the proposal due to the location of the Willow Tree and any liability that may come with it. It was noted that this pathway had been walked for well in excess of 30 years, and as such ECC should make this a formal public right of way. It was **AGREED** the Parish Council would not pursue the creation of a more fixed footpath at this location due to the liability issues, but that the Clerk would write to ECC regarding formalising this route. Cllr Born asked if there was a TPO on the willow tree, however this was not clear.

C24.044 REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY COMMEORATIVE EVENTS 2024

The date for Remembrance Sunday this year will be Sunday 10th November, and members were advised that whilst the Parish Council always receives a large number of attendees at the Commemorative Event at the Norwegian Memorial/Debt of Honour (there were in excess of 350 people last year) the Sunday Luncheon attendees had dwindled. In its heyday the numbers attending the lunch were in excess of 80, however in 2022 there were 72 attending, but in 2023 there were only 48. Out of these 48 16 were either staff members or non paying guests of the Parish Council. Mrs Walker's costs were expected to increase from the £18 that she normally charges, as that had been kept to that figure for the last 3 years. Members were asked to consider what type of event to hold this year, and if they would like to change the venue to Thornwood to spread the venue around the Parish.

Cllr Tyler stated that it had been a struggle to get the 48, but stated that the perception was this was a private luncheon and not open to the public, and suggested it was advertised more. He also stated that members of the RBL should be involved, and that he could not see a representation from Norway for the next few years given the issues in Europe. Cllr Bedford suggested the Council should try something different such as a buffet, but that he didn't feel Thornwood was the right location given the Remembrance service was in North Weald. There was a great deal of discussion about different options and the logistics of establishing numbers, along with what cost should be associated with it or if it should be free of charge. There was concern as to if you had an influx of people and not enough food. There was also the suggestion of a free buffet with a suggested donation to the RBL. A budget of £500 was initially suggested. After lengthy discussion, Cllr Clegg **PROPOSED** a budget of £1,000 be agreed as a starting point and to see what could be obtained for this figure. Cllr Tyler started to put forward a suggestion, however Cllr Clegg stated he had made a proposal and wanted to know if there was a seconder. Cllr Bedford **SECONDED** the proposal, after which a vote was taken, the result of which was 5 for, 2 against, and 4 abstentions. It was therefore **AGREED** that the Clerk should investigate what options were available for the sum of £1,000. Cllr Hawkins stated she would be happy to supply a buffet if Councillors wanted to go this route.

C24.045 BATTLE OF BRITAIN SUNDAY

Members were advised that last year the Parish Council undertook the arrangements for Battle of Britain Sunday, in the absence of RAFA or the RBL organising the event. This year the date

for the Commemorative Event was Sunday, 15th September at 3.00pm. The event is held at the Cross of Sacrifice in the Churchyard at St Andrews. Members confirmed that they wish the Parish Council staff to organise this event this year.

C24.046 MILESTONE REPLACEMENT

Members were advised that the Milestone along the B1393 had now been replaced thanks to the continuing efforts of Mr Jimmy Walters, who had been in contact with ECC Highways. Whilst ECC Highways had actually repositioned the Milestone, Mr Waters and his wife had very kindly repainted it and had done a sterling job. Mr Walters had provided Members with some photos which were attached to the agenda. Thanks were formally recorded for Jimmy Walters.

C24.047 COUNCILLORS SURGERY

As Members were aware, some District and County councillors run their Surgery for Local Residents out of Thornwood Parsh Hall. This Surgery was due to be held in June, however due to the forthcoming General Election this has now been postponed until after the election. We are advised that they will advise residents of the new date as soon as it is available.

C24.048 DOG FOULING NOTICES

Members noted that due to the increase in dog fouling on the pavements in the Parish, Notices had been requested from Epping Forest District Council to be erected in the following locations:

- CCTV Notice at parade of shops
- Harrison Drive
- High Road on Post between Chemist and Vets
- Kiln Road
- High Road on Pathway to Cinnamon
- Dukes Close
- School Green Lane
- Beamish Close
- Oak Piece
- Queens Road
- School Green Lane the Alley from school gates to Blackhorse Lane
- Memorial Playing Fields
- Rowley Mead Thornwood
- Duck Lane Thornwood
- Upland Road Thornwood
- Weald Hall Lane Thornwood
- High Road Thornwood

As soon as the Notices are received the Parish Councils' contractor will put them up. The Clerk advised Councillors to contact her if there were any additional notices needed. Cllr Born asked if an additional Dog Bin could be located at the entrance to Elm Gardens, and it was agreed this would be placed on the 2025/2026 budget and precept meeting for consideration.

Meeting closed 9.05pm:

Signed

Date