



MINUTES

Meeting: PARISH COUNCIL

Date: 7th March 2022

Time: 7.30PM

Venue: PARISH HALL, THORNWOOD COMMON

PRESENT:

Councillors (10) A Buckley (Chairman), T Blanks, R Spearman, A Tyler*, Cllr Mrs Hawkins,
Cllr Mrs Grigg, Cllr Ms Wood, Cllr Clegg, Cllrs Mrs Etherington, Cllr Irvine

** for part of meeting*

Officers in Attendance (2)

Susan Deluca - Clerk

Adriana Jones – Principal Financial Officer

Members of the Public (1)*

Members of the Press (0)

C21.136 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (4)

Apologies received from Cllrs Mulliner, Bedford, Stroud, and Mrs Jackman.

C21.137 OTHER ABSENCES (0)

None.

C21.138 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held 7th February 2022 were **AGREED**.

C21.139 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

C21.140 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

The Chairman welcomed the one member of the public present and invited him to address the Council. The resident advised of the following matters:

- The resident had visited the Parish Office and spoken with the PFO regarding the possibility of Wheelie Bin stickers and parking card warnings being provided to local residents in an attempt to slow down traffic in local areas, requesting this was passed on to the Clerk and Councillors for consideration. The resident advised he had seen this in a village in the north of England, where if a car was obstructing the pavement, a card was placed on the windscreen, and if the same car did this again it was reported to the police. The Clerk confirmed she had been made aware of this and was looking into the possibility if the Parish Council could help in this matter.
- The resident had seen a planning notice erected onto the old Carpenters Arms Pub sign advising that BT want to erect a telegraph pole in the area. The Clerk advised that the Parish Council had not been advised of this matter.
- On the corner of Duck Lane and Weald Hall Lane there is a large puddle that keeps appearing. The resident had met with Cllr Chris Whitbread and two representatives from Highways in 2019, and nothing has been done since this time. The resident has chased Cllr Whitbread who advised it's a problem with the drains, however the resident states that in his opinion the issue is that the road has subsided. The resident also expressed

concern at the length of time it has taken since this issue was first raised. The Clerk confirmed she would advise Cllr Whitbread of this matter.

- During a walk, the resident noticed there were some deep lorry tracks on the ditch side of the pavement outside Camfauds, stating that this can be extremely dangerous.
- The resident enquired as to whether or not EFDC Councillor surgeries would be starting up again. The Chairman confirmed it was his understanding these were being reintroduced, and Cllr Mrs Hawkins confirmed she would find out the date. The Clerk advised the resident that it would be prudent to bring these matters up at the surgeries.
- The resident advised of a Keep Britain Tidy campaign being run between 25th March and 10th April called 'One Bag Big Difference'.

[Cllr Tyler Arrived]

C21.141 REPORT OF THE CLERK

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

- a) Parish Council Policies – These will be reviewed at the May meeting.
- b) Public Footpaths & Royal British Legion North Weald Branch – The Clerk advised that she had had a short meeting with the Parish Councils footpaths representative concerning a number of matters in relation to these two items. The footpath representative had expressed concern regarding the footbridge at the rear of Queens Road which had been broken since 2017, confirming that she had been dealing with this matter directly with ECC however no action had so far taken place. She advised that she would continue to pursue this matter and would involve the Ramblers Association, and advised that she would provide the Clerk with an update in a couple of months. In addition, she also raised concern as she was unaware if there was anything in place to take over from the poppy collection she used to manage in North Weald, as she had not heard back from the RBL. Cllr Blanks advised that he had assisted in the past with this, and it was a significant amount of work. The Chairman stated that there was a branch meeting scheduled for 4 weeks ago, however when he turned up nobody was there and he has not heard as yet if a new date has been set. The Clerk stated that she had heard the next meeting may be in April some time, but she did not have a date.
- c) Weald Common Tree Project – Staff and Cllr Buckley are working on this, and advertising of the project is now taking place. The Clerk has had an initial conversation with St Andrews School. A further update will be given at the Annual Parish Assembly.
- d) Norwegian Memorial and Parish Memorial – plans are going forward with arrangements for this on the 19th June. The Clerk had spoken with Rev Lee Batson recently. Invitations will shortly be going out, and the invitation list is expected to be widely the same as the dignitaries that are invited to the Remembrance Sunday Event at the Norwegian Memorial and the Parish Memorial.
- e) Queens Platinum Jubilee Working Group - The inaugural meeting of this group has been set for Wednesday 30th March at 6.30pm in the Parish Hall at Thornwood. Funding to a maximum of £5000 to be spent between all events organised by the group within the parish over the Jubilee Weekend (agreed at the February Parish Council Meeting). The group is

headed up by two Councillors: Cllr Ms Dawn Wood and Cllr Mrs Shirley Hawkins. The Clerk had previously been asked to contact Cllr Mark Stroud to ask if he would be interested in being involved in this project, however she has not heard back. The member of the public who attended the February meeting has advised June Peachey that he no longer wishes to be part of the group, however three residents from Hastingwood and June Peachey have advised the Clerk they are willing to be part of the working group.

- f) Annual Allotment Committee Meeting – This meeting will be held on Sunday 13th March at 10am at Parish Hall Thornwood Common - all documentation relating to this has been sent out to tenants, and Cllr Mrs Hawkins will chair the meeting. Hard copies have also been given to all Councillors who are also invited to attend.

C21.142 REPORTS & MEMBERS REPORTS

- a) **Chairman's Report** – The Chairman provided a brief update on Cllr Mulliner, as well as an update on the tree project at Weald Common, advising that a date has been set to meet with ECC's Woodland Officer. The Chairman tabled for members aerial views of the Weald common site which detailed proposed locations of where the trees may be planted, stating that these suggestions will be passed to ECC's Woodland Officer for consideration in terms of suitability. The Clerk confirmed these would also be on the display boards at the Annual Parish Assembly. The Chairman also reminded members that work was ongoing regarding the possibility of creating a drainage ditch on Weald Common to deal with the excess water. The Chairman advised that a list of action points was being created regarding the tree planting project to ensure all actions are recorded, including the installation of a bench with funding from the North Weald Preservation Society and providing bird feeders to attract wildlife. Councillors were asked to contact the Chairman if they had any other ideas which would make the project successful.
- b) **Vice Chairman's Report** – Cllr Mrs Grigg informed Council that following the recent heavy winds the signage at the Rayley Lane Roundabout had fallen and needed replacing.
- c) **District & County Councillors Reports** – none
- d) **Parish Councillors Reports** – Cllr Tyler reminded members that there were three names missing from the Parish War memorial, however as part of his investigation into this it had been established that two of the missing have actually been laid to rest in France, with only one still to be determined. It was not guaranteed that this would be resolved before the rededication events in June, however he would do his best.

Cllr Tyler updated Councillors on his work supporting the Ukraine aid effort being conducted by EFDC, together with Cllr Bedford and other members of the community, resulting in a number of vans being filled with supplies ready to be transported to Europe to support the refugees of the crisis. Cllr Tyler advised that EFDC has a website page specifically regarding this crisis advising people where they are able to donate items or money. Cllr Tyler stated he was so impressed with the support that had been shown, and that it restored your faith in humanity.

Cllr Blanks asked if there had been any response from EFDC to the Masterplan response this Council submitted to EFDC, to which the Clerk advised there had not been, however she had received an email from a local resident concerning the number of movements on of the Airfield.

- e) **Queens Hall Charity Report** – Cllr Ms Wood reminded Councillors that the hall needed to be closed recently so that essential health and safety checks could take place, which included the 5 year Annual Electrical Inspection and the Fire Safety inspection. The Fire Safety Inspection raised a number of issues, the most important of which was the need to install a fire warning system. This doesn't need to be anything too complicated, and Cllr Ms Wood confirmed she was looking into the options. With regard to the Electrical Inspection, it has raised a number of matters, specifically regarding the building wiring that has been adapted over the many years the hall has been in existence, resulting in power surges, however it could not be determined why this was occurring. A more detailed and thorough inspection is needed to establish this, which will unfortunately necessitate the hall being closed again possibly for two days. Cllr Mrs Etherington asked if the reports raised anything so concerning that the hall would need to be closed with immediate effect for Health and Safety reasons, to which Cllr Ms Wood advised that as the inspection has been completed and work is ongoing to resolve the problem, the hall is covered in terms of insurance. Cllr Tyler stated that the person who completed the Electrical Inspection would have been legally obliged to report the hall if there was a serious safety risk to the public or anything life threatening.

Cllr Ms Wood stated that with regard to the recent issue about a hall user, the individual has been issued with a final warning from the trustees concerning his behaviour, and placed onto a rolling monthly contract with the hall. With regard to the hall bookings, the hall is almost fully booked and doing well.

- f) **Neighbourhood Plan Report** – No update.
- g) **EFDC Local Plan Report** – The EFDC website still states that the inspector will make a decision on the Local Plan in the first quarter of 2022.
- h) **Highways Report** – None

C21.143 FINANCIAL REPORT

a) **List of Cheque & Monthly Statement of Accounts**

Members **APPROVED** the list of payments made up to 28th February 2022 (circulated prior to the meeting and tabled during the meeting) and **NOTED** the account balances at the end of the month.

- b) **Internal Audit** - Members **NOTED** the final Internal Audit for 2021/2022 would now take place on 18th May 2022.

C21.144 ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY

Members **NOED** that the Annual Parish Assembly would be held on 4th April 2022 at 7.00pm at the Thornwood Common Parish Hall. The Annual Civic Awards will also be held at this event. Agenda will be distributed next week as Chairman signed today.

C21.145 CIVIC AWARDS

Details of the Annual Civic Awards have been placed on Social Media and on the Parish Council Notice Boards. Councillors noted there were 8 nominations at present, the closing date for nominations being 12th March. It was **AGREED** that a small working group consisting of the Chairman, Cllrs Mrs Hawkins and Cllr Mrs Grigg (if available) would meet to discuss the winners of the awards on 21st March at 10.30am at the Parish Hall in Thornwood.

C21.146 MEMORIAL TREE AT HAMPDEN CLOSE

It was noted that the Clerk had received a further quote for £450 for the necessary works to be carried out to this tree, which is substantially less than the original quote received in 2019. The Clerk is currently in correspondence with Robin Hellier at EFDC to confirm he is happy with these works and if planning permission for works to a TPO is needed.

C21.147 RIDE LONDON EVENT – 29TH MAY 2022

Members were advised of the event which will be taking place in the Parish of North Weald Bassett on the 29th May, and noted that on Sunday 29th May the roads in North Weald would be closed to all traffic, and that there would also be some road restrictions on the 28th May throughout the Parish, so any residents will need to be within North Weald Village or be able to access it other than via a vehicle on these days. The Clerk has sent an email to Cllr Jaymey McIvor who has advertised that he will be holding a meeting in Ongar in relation to businesses and residents who wish to take part in organising events. At the time of typing the Agenda a response was yet to be received. The Councils Press Officer David Jackman had given the Parish Council permission to share his article which is reproduced below:

Roads through Epping, North Weald, Ongar, Fyfield, Stanford Rivers and Stapleford Abbots are on the route of the RideLondon-Essex cycle ride which is set to feature 25,000 cyclists on Sunday, May 29. Full details of the route at <https://bit.ly/RideLondon-Essexroute>

RideLondon, described as “the world’s greatest festival of cycling”, will be in Essex for the first time for the RideLondon-Essex 100, 60 and 30 mass participation rides. In total there will be 65 miles of Essex roads included in the event routes. Essex will also host two stages of the RideLondon Classique, a three-day UCI Women’s WorldTour stage race for the best female riders in the world. The start and finish of the first stage on Friday, May 27, will be in Maldon while the second stage will start in Chelmsford and finish in Epping. The full 100-mile route will see the cyclists head out of London, and reach the local area via Woodford New Road, Buckhurst Hill and Epping New Road. The route will then go through Epping High Street before turning onto The Plain to head through North Weald turning right at the Talbot roundabout onto the A414 to Ongar, then heading left at the Four Wantz roundabout through Fyfield. After heading out towards Dunmow and Chelmsford, the cyclists will head back to the Four Wantz and turn left through Ongar High Street and Stanford Rivers to Passingford Bridge, then turning right into Hook Lane in Stapleford Abbots to Lambourne Road and Chigwell Road back into London for a finish on Tower Bridge. As a result of the new partnership between RideLondon and Essex County Council, communities across Essex will benefit from funding from The London Marathon Charitable Trust – funding that will inspire activity and support people of all ages and abilities to participate in sport and physical activity. During the first seven years of RideLondon communities hosting the event were supported with more than £4.9m of funding to local people and projects. RideLondon-Essex 60 follows the same route as the 100-mile event, until it reaches Ongar where it will then turn back towards central London again. The RideLondon-Essex 30 reaches as far as Woodford before heading back to central London. For more information on the routes, visit ridelondon.co.uk For a GPS link to the full route, visit <https://ridewithgps.com/routes/38539436>

Councillors noted that Epping Forest District Council had also sent a communication to the Parish Council as below regarding ‘**Fan Zones**’:

We are certain you’re now aware the Epping Forest district will be the focus for the routes of both the RideLondon Classique women’s tour Race (Sat 28 May) and RideLondon Essex100 mass participation ride (Sun 29 May). As EFDC understand it, this is Year 1 of a 5 Year

arrangement that Essex County Council has agreed with the organisers, London Marathon Events. Whilst we would stress that Epping Forest District Council is not the organiser of these events, we are keen to support the “activation” aspects locally and, as the route passes directly through your parish, we would like to work with you to create Fan Zones in your area on both days, and encourage celebrations along the route, particularly on the Sunday with the mass ride.

*A **Fan Zone** is essentially a public area where refreshments and entertainment are provided to fans and spectators before and during a nearby event, and on the Saturday this could include for example market stalls (community, local clubs, RideLondon sponsors), exhibitions, cycle displays, music. On the Sunday the focus is to encourage local groups and businesses to provide celebrations and an atmosphere along the route using for example music, food, and drink stalls. Both days are a fantastic opportunity to showcase what our district and your towns have to offer. The Community Culture and Wellbeing team at EFDC would be delighted to work with you on this and to explore any ideas you may have for your local communities.*

The Clerk advised that that the timings she had been advised of in terms of the road closure through North Weald on 29th May was between 6am to 7pm, and that the A414 would also be closed, as would roads through Epping. It was understood that more specific details of road closures would be made available in the coming weeks. With regard to the fan zones, it was understood that this would be focused on Epping and Ongar, however further updates were expected from Cllr McIvor in this regard. The Chairman advised that both he and the Clerk had attended an online meeting regarding this event and had been advised that this was an ideal opportunity for organisations and charities to put on things like burger bars or food stands. Councillors **AGREED** that the village of North Weald was not particularly suited to Fan Zones, other than perhaps if the shops wished to create something themselves, and that the Clerk should raise awareness of the event on social media and the notice boards.

One Councillor advised that he had already seen on social media there may be plans to disrupt the event, with comments suggesting ball bearings would be thrown on the ground, however there may be no substance to these threats.

C21.148 PARISH HALL AT THORNWOOD - INCREASE IN FEES

Members were asked to consider the hall fees for the Thornwood Common Parish Hall, noting that due the COVID there had not been an increase in two years. The Clerk provided Councillors with a list of halls in the local area with details of their hall hire charges to allow for an informed comparison, together with examples of what percentage increases would look like. The Clerk provided further details, confirming that the office staff were looking at the hall hirers liability insurance for which a 10% hire fee was charged, and that income was raised from storage units in the extension and from the Thornwood Common, although at present there was no income from the common. Cllr Mrs Etherington advised that a 5% increase seemed more than reasonable, to which Cllr Ms Wood advised that the Queens Hall had increased their fees by this percentage. Cllr Ms Wood stated that she felt the hall storage should be increased to £10/month. Cllr Tyler stated that he felt 5% was not enough, and proposed that the fees should be increased by 10%, given the exponential rise in utility bills and cost to run the hall. Councillors discussed the increase in electricity costs for the hall, noting that the cost per month was around £450/£500. Cllr Ms Wood suggested the hall should get a smart meter installed, however Cllr Blanks stated that this would enable the energy company to increase the monthly payments at will. The Clerk briefly talked through the hires for the coming week to give Councillors an idea of how often the hall is used. Cllr Clegg asked what amount of damage deposit was asked for, to which the Clerk advised this depends

on the type of event being held and if the user has hired the hall before, for example a child's party will often only require a £50 deposit, whereas an evening or adult party may require a £150 deposit, however this was agreed dependant on a number of factors. Cllr Clegg stated he thought this was quite low, and Cllr Mrs Wood advised that the Queens Hall obtains a higher deposit for their events, as they were finding silly things were adding a cost to hires such a not cleaning up afterwards. The Clerk stated that this Councils really hasn't had any issues with damage or not cleaning up. After further discussion it was **AGREED** that due to the increase in electricity bills the hall hire fees for both parishioners and non parishioners should go up by 10%, and that storage fees should be increased to £10/month. It was also **AGREED** that this should be considered again in 6 months time in light of the expected further increase in electricity bills.

C21.149 GOING FORWARD – NORTH WEALD LIBRARY

As Members were aware the Clerk has been in communication with Cllr Chris Whitbread and Cllr Louise McKinley, the ECC portfolio holder for Library Services, regarding returning to North Weald Library. The Clerk had subsequently received notification that the Parish Council will not be able to return to its former premises in the library due to the Registrar from Epping Library now having a permanent office there for 'the foreseeable future'. Therefore the search for premises continues in North Weald with a number of objectives and alternatives, details of which were referred to in the closed part of this meeting.

C21.150 ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR MEETING

Members recalled that it was agreed that a further meeting regarding this matter would be facilitated, however it would be organised by local residents rather than the Parish Council. It has now been agreed that this even will be held on Friday 25th March at North Weald Village Hall, at 6.15pm. This has been arranged and is being organised by June from North Weald Village Life.

C21.151 GOING FORWARD PARISH COUNCIL PREMISES

Councillors discussed a number of possible options which may be suitable for a premises to house the Parish Council, however these discussions were in the very early days and there is no guarantee at this time if the sites would be suitable.

Meeting closed 20.55

Signed

Date