



MINUTES

Meeting: PARISH COUNCIL

Date: 12th March 2024

Time: 7.30PM

Venue: PARISH HALL, THORNWOOD COMMON

PRESENT:

Councillors (11) A Buckley (Chairman), B Clegg, Mrs S Jackman MBE, A Tyler, N Born, Cllr Mrs Hawkins, A Irvine, Ms D Wood, C Kinnear, Mrs P Etherington, T Blanks

* for part of meeting

Officers in Attendance (2)

Susan Deluca - Clerk

Adriana Jones – Principle Finance Officer

Members of the Public (3) – Inc PC Andy Cook*, Chris Davey* (Ride London) and Alexa Cadwallader* (Active Essex)

Members of the Press (1)

Prior to the meeting, Councillors received a briefing from Chris Davey of Ride London and Alexa Cadwallader of Active Essex on the plans in place for this years Ride London Event taking place on Sunday 26th May. ECC has agreed the event will be run for the next three years in Essex, and that this years route would be roughly the same as last years. Funding was available to Parish Councils and community groups in various forms. Contact details were exchanged, with Chris Davey advising he should be contacted directly if any Councillors had any queries. He would also ensure a full suite of information was provided to the Clerk. Alexa Cadwallader confirmed that she would liaise with the Clerk about an application for funding that was made last year.

C23.175 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (1)

Apologies from Cllr Bedford.

C23.176 OTHER ABSENCES (2)

Cllr Stroud and Cllr Spearman.

C23.177 MINUTES

Councillors **AGREED** the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 4th February 2024.

C23.178 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

C23.179 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

The Chairman welcomed PC Cook who provided Councillors with an update on the crime statistics, advising there was very little to report. There had been no burglaries and no theft of motor vehicles. There had been some crime on the airfield including theft from a light aircraft, and theft of two motor vehicles from storage companies. There had been one report of criminal damage concerning a vehicle in Queens Road, and some prolific shoplifters from Loughton had been arrested for shoplifting at the Co-Op. Cllr Born asked if there had been any reports of drug taking around the shops in North Weald, to which PC Cook advised there had not been, albeit

he had received a report just prior to the meeting about a smell of cannabis from Thornwood Common. He would keep an eye on this. Cllr Tyler advised he had seen a decrease in discarded gas cannisters, to which PC Cook advised this was because of a change in the law meaning it was now a criminal offence. PC Cook also advised that the shooting last year in North Weald was found to be gang related and 5 people had been charged.

[PC Cook Left]

C23.180 REPORT OF THE CLERK

The Clerk provided the following reports:

- a) Reminder that the Parish Council has the use of an Office at Queens Hall – Now open to the public Wednesday mornings 10am – 12 Noon.
- b) Meeting between Countryside Vistry – Developers: Meeting between Sworders – Agents on behalf of Landowners.
- c) Position Statement – 3000 copies were distributed throughout the Parish and was also placed in Village Life, and sent to Everything Epping for a Media Release together with being placed on our Website and on our Noticeboards.
- d) Sale of North Weald Methodist Church – this is a separate item on the Agenda.
- e) Vandalised Notice Board at the Talbot. Replacement received today and will be erected soon.
- f) Insurance Claim for damaged street light (RTA) Queens Road, NW.
- g) Various Cemetery Matters.
- h) Staff have attended a War Memorials Course and an Open Spaces and Village Greens Course
- i) Update on Sensory Garden – Installation of flower boxes and seats should take place week commencing 18th March – this had been delayed due to bad weather.
- j) District and County Councillors Surgery – this has now been postponed until June.
- k) Youth Club – An offer letter has been sent and a response is awaited. They have until 31st March to accept the offer.

C23.181 REPORTS & MEMBERS REPORTS

- a) **Chairman's Report** – The Chairman confirmed a new contractor had been secured to manage maintenance of the garden outside the shops in North Weald. The question was raised as to if he was an experienced gardener, to which the Chairman advised that the individual used to work in London however was now doing more of this type of work in the local area, including Epping. The Chairman also confirmed that further work would be taking place at the central focus point at the new wood area at Weald Common, just where the Copper Beach was planted, which will include the planting of flowers at the back of benches donated which would be donated by a local resident.
- b) **Vice Chairman's Report** – Cllr Mrs Hawkins advised that the first visit to allotments took place on 5th March, and that she was extremely impressed with the state of North Weald Allotments, which had significantly improved from last year.
- c) **District & County Councillors Reports** – None
- d) **Parish Councillors Reports** – Cllr Clegg advised that the first community speedwatch of 2024 took place on 1st March along Upland Road, with 10% of the 170 vehicles recorded as speeding between 36MPH and 45MPH. Cllr Clegg advised it was

disappointing to see that less than 5 minutes after putting away the CSW signs etc, almost every car that passed them was travelling at around 60MPH going past the houses at the Rugby Club. A further session will take place later this week, possibly along Weald Bridge Road.

Cllr Tyler advised that he had attended the recent RBL Quiz Night which was a great success, and that he had made arrangements for Mark Smith to do a talk for the RBL later in the year, and hopefully generate some funds.

- e) **Queens Hall Charity Report** – Cllr Ms Wood reported all was going well with the hall, with the new cooking club doing very well, with mostly girls attending but one boy also. It was hoped this would morph into the Youth Club. Cllr Ms Wood advised that she had attended a meeting with representatives from Vistry for an update on plans for the Memorial Playing Field and Queens Hall as part of the NWB development. This is a long-term project, and it will take some time to finalise any agreed actions, but she would provide any updates.
- f) **Neighbourhood Plan Report** – Separate agenda item.
- g) **Highways** – The Clerk advised that she had recently seen there was a new way to report potholes, however she was still awaiting information as to how this would be managed and how potholes could now be reported. The Clerk asked that in the meantime Councillors should contact the Clerk directly with details of any large potholes so these can be reported with ECC. The Chairman reported about missing barrier posts where children could get their feet stuck.

C23.182 FINANCIAL REPORTS

- a) Councillors agreed the list of monthly payments up to 29th February 2024, and noted the status of the bank accounts, details of which had been emailed to them.
- b) Councillors noted that interest from the CCLA investment yielded roughly £430-450 per month at this time.
- c) Councillors noted that the date of the internal audit would be 5th June 2024.

C23.183 PATHWAY ACROSS VILLAGE HALL LAND

Councillors noted that the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Clerk recently met with seven Members of North Weald Village Hall Committee to discuss the reinstatement of a pathway across the Village Hall Land to Weald Common. Lengthy discussions ensued at the meeting and a copy of their letter to the Parish Council was attached to the Agenda. Members recalled that historically there has been a path across this area, both man-made and by people walking it for many, many years. The man-made path was made of plastic material. Members considered the content of the letter. Cllr Irvine asked if there was any idea of cost regarding this, to which the Clerk advised she wanted to bring it to Council first. Cllr Clegg expressed concern at some of the points in the letter that the Parish Council may be asked to take control of, stating that the Council should look in detail at each one of these points and what they may mean in reality, not just from a financial perspective but also a legal perspective. Cllr Clegg suggested this wasn't as straightforward as members may think.

Cllr Mrs Etherington advised that people had walked the route for well over 20 years, and that there would probably be evidence to support this. Cllr Tyler agreed stating he had walked this route personally for well over 20 years also. There was concern raised that perhaps the reputation

of the North Weald Village Hall with the public had changed recently, and that this shouldn't reflect on the Council. After further discussion, it was **AGREED** that the Clerk would look into any legal ramifications of the proposal, together with obtaining costings, as well as contacting the Parish Councils insurance company, and that it should come before Council again for further consideration.

C23.184 D DAY COMMEMORATIONS 6TH JUNE 2024

Members noted that the D- Day Commemoration – Lamp of Peace - had now been received, and were reminded that the lighting of the lamp would take place at 9.30pm on 6th June at the Debt of Honour, and that the Lamp must stay alight for one Hour. Members also noted that an official D Day 80 Flag could now be purchased at a cost of approximately £30, and could be hoisted on one of the flag poles at the Debt of Honour. It was **AGREED** to purchase this flag.

Members discussed if there should be an official event held at the Debt of Honour to mark this occasion, perhaps with refreshments and a gazebo. Cllr Tyler suggested a better option would be to publicise the lighting of the lamp, stating that Parish Council members will be in the Kings Head from 8.30pm for drinks, and then would walk up to the Debt of Honour to light the lamp at 9.30pm. Members of the public were welcome to join in. This was **AGREED**.

C23.185 INVITE TO ATTEND THE SQUADRON D DAY COMMEMORATIONS – NORTH WEALD AIRFIELD – 31ST MAY, 1ST JUNE & 2ND JUNE

The Clerk advised that the Parish Council had been invited to take part in a commemorative event hosted by The Squadron on North Weald Airfield over these three days. Limited details were available at this time, however it was understood that the event would be based on historic/military/airfield memorabilia/exhibits. The parish council has historic records/photos etc that it could exhibit. Councillors noted that whilst staff could make themselves available during this time, it would mean that Councillors would need to provide their services on 'Rota Basis' to ensure that the stand would be fully manned. The Clerk suggested the stand could be manned between 10am and 3pm each day. It was **AGREED** that the Parish Council should have a stand at this event, showing historic memorabilia, and that Councillors would let the Clerk know which dates and times they could do. Cllr Born suggested that perhaps music could be played.

C23.186 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

At the 31st January meeting of the Neighbourhood Plan Committee, it was agreed to place the following recommendation to full council:

- That the Parish Council does not continue with the creation of a Neighbourhood Plan
- Instead, the draft Neighbourhood Plan document should be used as a basis for creating an alternative document which sets out the priorities of the residents and the Council, based on the feedback from the 2018 survey, along with any current matters causing concern.
- This document would still be used as a tool to engage with developers, and as a way of focussing the priorities of the Council.
- The new document should be kept under review possibly by a newly formed committee (the name and remit of which is to be agreed by Council), or by way of a change to the name and terms of reference of the Neighbourhood plan Committee. This should continue to include all members of the Council.
- That the PFO and Clerk should create

- a draft copy of this new document for review, and that it should include focus areas for each of the three villages in the Parish.

The PFO provided a brief update, stating that the Committee felt that much of what could be achieved by producing a Neighbourhood Plan had in effect already been achieved by getting a ‘seat at the table’ to influence the upcoming development, and that the benefits to creating a Neighbourhood Plan were not commensurate with the cost involved in creating it. Cllr Born stated that the Council needed to ensure there was still a mechanism in place to engage with developers. Councillors **AGREED** to move forward with the recommendations of the Committee. It was noted that the funding for the Neighbourhood Plan would move to a different earmarked reserve associated with creating the new document and associated actions.

C23.187 PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT

Members noted that the Annual Report was well underway, and it was expected that this would be finalised and ready for distribution around 18th April. A draft copy of what had been completed so far was tabled. Councillors noted that prior to distribution it would need to be folded, and that there were approximately 3000 copies in an A4 format which would need to be folded into an A5 Size so that it can be posted through the doors by the Distributor. The cost to fold the 3000 Position Statements prior to their distribution was £95. Councillors suggested that perhaps as part of their ‘Community Engagement’ badge, the Scouts may be interested in completing the folding, with a small contribution given to their organisation. It was also suggested that perhaps Councillors could simply arrive at the next Parish Council meeting 20 minutes before it started and each Councillor responsible for some folding. It was **AGREED** that in the first instance the Clerk would liaise with Cllr Stroud to ask if the Scouts would like to take on this task.

C23.188 COFFEE WITH COPS

The Clerk provided an update on the Coffee with Cops held on 7th February between 10am and 12 Noon. Posters had been placed on Noticeboards, and advertised on the Parish Council Website and published on Social Media, however only one Councillor and one member of the public attended. Councillors **AGREED** it would be best for the Police to try to ‘tag’ on to other group sessions. The Clerk advised that an introduction to Thornwood Seniors had already been made and the Police were expected to attend their September Meeting. It was also stated that the Playgroup at Queens Hall would be interested, and that perhaps PC Cook should make contact with the School.

C23.189 NORTH WEALD METHODIST CHURCH

Members were reminded that the Parish Council had been actively attempting to purchase the Methodist Church in North Weald, with the Council making an Offer of £460,000. As part of this process, a survey of local residents views was also completed to establish if residents would be in support of this purchase, the result of which yielded just under 200 responses in less than a week, with around 96% of residents fully supportive of the purchase. Unfortunately, the Parish Councils offer was not accepted by the Methodist Church Administration. Copies of the Survey that were completed have been held on file, as this may be of use if any planning application comes forward for alternative uses for the building, as it is a designated F1 Community use. It was unclear at this time to whom the Methodist Church had been sold. Thanks were recorded for the staff’s work in this matter.

C23.190 ROYAL BRITISH LEGION – NORTH WEALD BRANCH

As briefly reported earlier in the meeting, Members noted that three Councillors: Kinnear, Tyler and Bedford had attended the recent RBL Quiz Night. Cllr Kinnear stated it was a great night, with about £300 being raised. Funds raised by Cllr Tyler and colleagues for the poppy appeal last year was about £2,000. Cllr Kinnear confirmed there were more plans and events in the pipeline to try and raise funds, including a talk from Mark Smith. The Chairman asked if the RBL were looking for any administrative support from the Parish Council this coming year, to which Cllr Kinnear confirmed he had spoken to the RBL Chairman who had expressed thanks for the offer, but not advised if such help was needed.

C23.191 PARISH COUNCIL CIVIC AWARDS

Members were reminded about the Parish Council Civic Awards which that will be presented at the Annual Parish Meeting on 22nd April, and were asked that if do have any nominations they should advise the Clerk in the next fourteen days. The closing date for nominations was Monday 25th March.

C23.192 ANNUAL ALLOTMENT MEETING

Members noted that the Annual Meeting of Allotment Holders would be held on Sunday 24th March at 9.30am for a 10am start. This will be held at the Parish Hall in Thornwood Common, and all Councillors are welcome.

C23.193 EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL WASTE OPERATIONS HUB ON NORTH WEALD AIRFIELD

Members were reminded that EFDC had submitted a planning application to site its waste operations hub on land vacated by the HMRC Inland Border Facility on North Weald Airfield. The Clerk attended a meeting of the District Development Committee on 13th February and voiced the original concerns of this council. However the application was passed as per the following:

The site comprises of a parcel of land to the northeastern section within the North Weald Airfield, and the North Weald Airfield Strategic Masterplan Area as identified under Policy P6 of the adopted Local Plan. It was formally used by HMRC as the North Weald Inland Border Facility which ceased operations from the 11th September 2022. The site is to be accessed from Merlin Way with egress out to Rayley Lane. The proposal was for the construction of an Operations Hub comprising commercial vehicle fleet parking (including offices, storage, and vehicle maintenance hangers) and associated infrastructure including fuel island, vehicular access, internal roads and paths, parking, cycle/bin store, security fencing/gates/barriers, lighting, and landscaping. The Operations Hub will provide the following key elements of built development;

- A single storey office block with space to provide:
 - Office space for approximately 30 people along with meeting rooms and other ancillary facilities (including a training room)
 - A storeroom for office and clothing supplies as well as a medical room
 - A canteen
 - Lockers and changing facilities.
- A maintenance building / hangar (Transport Hangar) to allow day to day routine maintenance of the vehicle fleet.
- A contract & storage hangar for storage of key items of equipment for use in delivery of the service inclusive of:
 - a supply of new/replacement wheeled bins for use in the district
 - personal protective equipment (PPE)

- recycling sacks
- brooms & shovels
- consumables
- Fuel Island incorporating diesel tank(s), fuelling pump(s) and AdBlue tank with dedicated dispensing point.
- Parking provision for:
 - up to 36 Refuse collection vehicles and 32. other vehicles (e.g., Street Sweepers and Caged Tippers) used to deliver the service.
 - 90 vehicles spaces for office staff and operatives – with the scope for a further 29 spaces if required (this will be subject to a separate planning application).
- Proposed Access to and Egress from the Operations Hub Facility for commercial vehicles (05.00 – 18.00 Monday to Saturday).

As well as the original concerns which the Clerk reiterated at the meeting in her speech, the Clerk raised additional concerns over Highway Signage, Parking by the Cemetery and the Church, rubbish emanating from the Site, no food/ refuse to be left in vehicles overnight and the fact that residents in Wilhelm Mohr Court had not been consulted. The Clerk stated it was important this lack of consultation was recorded.

Cllr Irvine expressed concern that the vehicle numbers had changed since the Parish Council had originally seen it. He also expressed his frustration that all this money could be spent on the new waste hub, but nobody was prepared to pay for 30m of cable to get residents from Wilhelm Mohr Court connected to the internet. Cllr Clegg stated he would be very interested to see how the issue of security would be managed, especially given the large amount of diesel that was expected to be stored on site, stating there were strict regulations concerning fuel and lorries. There had been theft of diesel from a business in Thornwood that had resulted in the business no longer storing diesel on site. Cllr Irvine stated that one you have a contaminated site it is very difficult to get any other planning through. Cllr Blanks stated that there was no mention of electronic charging points, stating EFDC had promoted themselves as being very 'green'. It was **AGREED** that the Clerk would put in an enquiry to EFDC regarding security of the site.

C23.194 TOUR OF NORTH WEALD AIRFIELD

Members were advised that Darren Goodey had confirmed he would be available to provide a tour of the Airfield for those Members who would like to have this and familiarise themselves with the new layout. The dates that he currently had available were March 26th, 29th or April 5th. Times to be confirmed. Cllr Mrs Hawkins had advised that 29th March was bank holiday weekend. Cllr Blanks asked if a map had been made available to advise which part of the land had been sold to Google, however the Clerk stated EFDC had advised this was not currently available. A map was circulated of the recent new Air Traffic Control tower planning application which gave a broad idea of what area this would be.

Meeting closed: 9.10pm

Signed

Date