



**MINUTES**

**Meeting:** ANNUAL PARISH  
COUNCIL

**Date:** 10<sup>th</sup> May 2021

**Time:** 7.30PM

**Venue:** PARISH HALL, THORNWOOD COMMON

---

**PRESENT:**

**Councillors (13)** A Buckley (Chairman), Mrs A Grigg (Vice Chairman), N Bedford, T Blanks, B Clegg, G Mulliner, Mrs S Hawkins, A Irvine, Mrs S Jackman MBE, R Spearman, M Stroud, A Tyler, Ms D Wood, Ms Coop-Rodia

***Officers in Attendance (3)***

Susan Deluca - Clerk  
Adriana Jones – Principal Financial Officer  
Joanna Tyler – Senior Administrative Officer

***Also present (3)***

ECC Councillor and Leader of EFDC, C Whitbread  
ECC Councillor and District Councillor Ms H Whitbread  
District Councillor L Burrows

**Members of the Public (0)**

**Members of the Press (1)**

**C21.001 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

Councillor Mrs Grigg **PROPOSED** Councillor Buckley as Chairman, the proposal was **SECONDED** by Councillor Mrs Jackman MBE. There being no other nominations, Councillor Buckley was duly elected as Chairman of North Weald Bassett Parish Council for the current Municipal Year, following which the Declaration of Acceptance of Office of the Chairman of the Council was duly executed.

**C21.002 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN**

The Chairman **PROPOSED** Councillor Mrs Grigg as Vice Chairman, the proposal was **SECONDED** by Councillor Mrs Hawkins. There being no other nominations, Cllr Mrs Grigg was duly elected as Vice Chairman of North Weald Bassett Parish Council for the current Municipal Year, following which the Declaration of Acceptance of Office of the Vice Chairman of the Council was duly executed.

**C21.003 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (1)**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Mrs Etherington.

**C21.004 OTHER ABSENCES (0)**

None.

*The Chairman brought forward item number 9 on the Agenda*

**C21.005 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr Bedford declared a non pecuniary interest in any agenda item concerning the Neighbourhood Plan and confirmed that he would not take part in any discussion as EFDC Portfolio Holder for Planning

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

#### **C21.006 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2021 were **APPROVED** as a correct record.

Councillors **NOTED** that a standard Scheme of Delegation, as agreed at the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2021, was attached to the agenda for Members safekeeping.

#### **C21.007 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

There were no members of the public present.

#### **C21.008 REPORT OF THE CLERK**

Members **NOTED** that all staff had been working on all items within the Agenda. The Clerk referred to the Parish Hall and confirmed that it was ready for reopening on the 21<sup>st</sup> June. The Clerk said that she had followed the guidance received from RCCE and offered her assistance to Cllr Ms Wood and Cllr Mulliner with regard to the opening of the Queens Hall and North Weald Village Hall.

#### **C21.009 REPORTS AND MEMBERS REPORTS**

a) Chairman's Report – The Chairman congratulated Cllrs Chris Whitbread and Ms Holly Whitbread on their recent success in being elected as ECC Councillors. The Chairman referred to the Clerk's report and reiterated that the Parish Hall is ready for reopening on the 21<sup>st</sup> June to all hirers and confirmed that the office staff would be working from the hall on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. The Chairman said that the Clerk had worked very hard to ensure that everything had been set up in line with the regulations for the Parish Council meeting to take place.

The Chairman referred to the £40,000 received from EFDC in relation to the HMRC Border Facility at North Weald Airfield and once again thanked Cllr Whitbread. The Chairman referred to recent meetings that he had attended regarding the HMRC facility. The Chairman said there is now evidence that the 10 point plan is being worked through and commented that the issues surrounding the HGVs using Vicarage Lane West seemed to have quietened down. The Chairman advised that the Parish Council had installed no parking signs by the lay-by adjacent to the cemetery and said that if any vehicles parked there are believed to belong to HMRC staff, a note of the registration number will be taken and EFDC will check it with HMRC. Cllr Bedford referred to the no parking signs and said that he had made enquiries as to whether an additional sign with the same message translated to cover various foreign languages could be installed as well. Cllr Tyler mentioned that HGVs were still using Wellington Road / Church Lane. The Chairman referred Cllr Tyler to the 10 point plan and mentioned the proposed signage and width restrictions.

The Chairman also referred to the recent meeting he had attended regarding illegal bikers accessing the golf course. He advised that Cllr Whitbread had also been present at that meeting, along with EFDC officers, several residents and the Police. It had been agreed that EFDC would write to the owner of the golf course. A request had been made to EFDC to reinstall the CCTV to cover the cemetery area. EFDC had also agreed to install two new styles at either end of the footpath running adjacent to St Clements. The Chairman stated this issue is an ongoing problem.

b) Vice Chairman's Report – The Vice Chairman reported that she had, for the first time, found reason to complain to the Airfield Manager with regard to the noise emanating from an overflying Jet Provost. The Vice Chairman said that she had received a response explaining that some technical tests were required to be carried out occasionally, which caused extreme noise. The Vice Chairman said that she would send a copy of the response to the Clerk in case anyone else complained.

c) District and County Councillor Reports – The Chairman said that as the Parish Council would not be holding a Parish Assembly this year, he would invite the District and County Councillors present to give a report. The Chairman asked the Clerk to send a letter on behalf of the Parish Council to Anthony Jackson thanking him for his services to the Parish over the years.

**ECC and Leader of EFDC, Cllr Whitbread** – reported that from both a District and County Councillor point of view it had been a year like no other and said that it was great to get back to proper meetings. Cllr Whitbread referred to the Chairman's previous report and said that he had found that meetings had been much more constructive on site, out in the open air, dealing with issues affecting local people. Cllr Whitbread thanked the Parish Council for facilitating those meetings, alongside the surgeries that the Parish Council had enabled which had been useful to pick up on residents concerns.

Cllr Whitbread reported that, from a County Councillor point of view, he had been fortunate to be involved with the Cabinet for the past year, dealing with Finance and a £2 billion budget. He said that he has been in the 'eye of a storm' with regard to the County Council's response to the Pandemic and praised his colleague for Social Care and Health, commenting that he had done a brilliant job, alongside Dr Fogarty. Cllr Whitbread said that they had had some tough decisions to make. Cllr Whitbread said that it had been his first year in Cabinet and commented that he had found the team to be first class and looked forward to continuing the work in the coming year. Cllr Whitbread reported that one of the major concerns are pavements and potholes and said that he continually reports issues. He said that the Winter weather had made the situation a lot worse, however, he would like to thank Highways who had managed to continue to maintain a good service despite the issues experienced over the past year. Cllr Whitbread commented that he totally understood how the public felt with regard to potholes. He said that with regard to Highways we need to be proactive as a team working together in partnership and said that he looks forward to working with this Parish and other Town and Parish Councils across Epping Forest in the future.

**District and ECC Cllr Holly Whitbread** – reported that although she had only been a County Councillor for 4 days, she was aware of some of the real key challenges. Cllr Ms Whitbread mentioned that she had knocked on thousands of doors over the past few weeks and said that a lot of issues had been highlighted and referred to Cllr Whitbread’s previous comments regarding potholes and Highways. Cllr Ms Whitbread stated that she is looking forward to getting involved with key strategic issues from Children’s Services, to Adult Social Care, particularly as we move towards social recovery and try and bounce back from COVID. She said that there are some positive things to do to make our County a better place and is looking forward to the future positively and also looking forward to being a County Councillor.

Cllr Ms Whitbread said that she had been a District Councillor for 5 years and is the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services. During the Pandemic it had been a very busy portfolio. With regard to Community Wellbeing, they have worked in partnership with Voluntary Action Epping Forest, dealing with the Community Shield Project. A lot of work had taken place with tenants and Carline Services, ensuring that they had all of the resources they needed, whether that be food parcels or pharmaceuticals. Cllr Ms Whitbread said that there had been a number of new challenges and mentioned maintaining social distancing and following COVID regulations which applied to businesses as well as individuals. Cllr Ms Whitbread praised EFDC’s ‘in house’ Police Officer Team and said that they had done a good job of patrolling the high roads and going to areas where there were particular issues, Epping Forest being one of them.

Cllr Ms Whitbread said that there had been a lot of work around Community Wellbeing which had to move online. Various sessions had taken place with elderly people, such as virtual coffee mornings. They had worked in partnership with Essex with regard to digital work to ensure that elderly people could access computers to keep in touch with their families. Cllr Ms Whitbread mentioned the Museum and said that the Heritage and Culture work continued. The Museum had been closed for most of the year, however it should be opening in a week’s time. Cllr Ms Whitbread mentioned that there is a new exhibition on the Holocaust and Epping Forest and they are also currently running the Festival of Culture, which includes walks as well as interactive sessions. Cllr Ms Whitbread commented that it was good to continue to carry on her work as a District Councillor and said the surgeries that she had attended in the Parish Hall had been brilliant.

**District Councillor Les Burrows** – reported that he had been looking at speeding in Woodside and litter picking. He said that he looked forward to supporting his two colleagues.

**District Councillor and Parish Councillor Nigel Bedford** – reported that it had been a very interesting year and there had been a lot of work going on behind the scenes with regard to the Local Plan. He advised that there had been a number of changes on the team and said that although Ms Blom-Cooper had now left, she would be returning to work on specific projects. Cllr Bedford advised that EFDC were now in consultation with the Inspector and said that everyone wanted to see

the Local Plan “done and dusted” and signed off.

Cllr Bedford said that he was very pleased that the Parish Council had taken up the offer of free trees from the Woodland Trust and that the Parish now had two new planted areas, namely Eldridge Wood and Eldridge Coppice. He said that he would encourage the Parish Council to apply again for more trees this year and said that he understood that individual households could also apply. Cllr Bedford said that, together, we can make a difference with planting trees and this is being encouraged by the Government.

Cllr Bedford commented that it was difficult for him being a District Councillor for a ward outside of North Weald Village, however, he does get involved with things affecting the village. Cllr Bedford said that during the Pandemic, Cllr Ms Whitbread had worked extremely hard behind the scenes, in particular with regard to mental health. He commented that a lot of residents had suffered terribly during the Pandemic with isolation and said that Cllr Ms Whitbread’s team had been on top of that at every opportunity to ensure that people felt included with what has been going on.

**d) Parish Councillors Reports**

Cllr Tyler referred to Cllr Bedford’s report and agreed that there had been a lot of people suffering from isolation, which he had been made aware of when he had volunteered to deliver prescriptions to residents who were shielding. He said that a lot of people had taken up walking and there were certain areas that were in need of a litter pick and said that if one could be organised he would be happy to help. Cllr Ms Whitbread advised that she had recently organised a litter pick in Coopersale and Epping and said that it is legal to carry one out and suggested that Cllr Tyler contact her and she would direct him to the right people. The Clerk said that the Parish Council can provide items for litter picks, however it is difficult for the Council to organise one due to insurance. The Clerk advised that the Council had provided some funding to Cllr Ms Coop-Rodia for a litter pick and suggested that Cllr Tyler could contact her.

**e) Queens Hall Charity Report** – Cllr Ms Wood said that the hall will be open for more users from 17<sup>th</sup> May. Restricted numbers will continue to be adhered to until 21<sup>st</sup> June.

**f) Neighbourhood Plan Report** – The PFO referred Councillors to the latest draft copy of the Neighbourhood Plan which had been included in the agenda pack and commented that this would be the first time that Members had seen the plan in its entirety since the process had been started. The PFO said that the reason this had been sent to Councillors was because the Parish Council is the qualifying body for creating the Neighbourhood Plan and would need to agree it, even though it is the Steering Group who had worked on the plan. The PFO said that the plan would not be agreed at this meeting and that Councillors would be able to familiarise themselves with the policies and it would give them the opportunity to raise any issues. The Clerk said that the PFO had completed an inordinate amount of work on the plan and had pushed this forward as the Steering Group is very tiny, with only 2 or 3 people working on it now. The Chairman asked the PFO if she had a

deadline for Councillors comments. The PFO said that Cllr Blanks and Cllr Clegg had already given their comments and asked for other comments within the next three weeks. Cllr Mrs Grigg commented that she thought that the plan was very comprehensive and mentioned the green area in Tempest Mead, backing onto Dukes Close. Cllr Mrs Grigg expressed concern that although this land is currently Green Belt it could be removed and houses built there and asked if a comment could be added with regard to this. The PFO confirmed that the area of land in Tempest Mead is going to be removed from the Green Belt, however under EFDC's Local Plan it has been allocated as District Open Land and therefore will have a degree of protection. The PFO said she believed that it would be worthwhile mentioning this in the Neighbourhood Plan to recognise and support it and said that other residents may feel the same as they may not be aware of what is happening with the Local Plan.

- g) EFDC Local Plan Report – no report
- h) Highways Report – no report

#### **C21.010 MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES**

**Vacancies** – Members *NOTED* that there were currently still vacancies on the Trustees at the Queens Hall. It was also noted that it was not expected that there would be any vacancies to the new Liaison Committee at Thornwood.

Members *DETERMINED* the membership of the Council's Standing Working Committees as follows:

**a) Planning Committee** (11 Members)

Normally to meet 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Mondays, however dates now subject to plans being available and dates that comments have to be returned to EFDC.

**b) Environmental Committee** (7 but Open to All Members)

To usually meet four times a year – twice in the day – twice in the evening.

**(i) Allotments Sub Committee** (3 Members of the Environmental Committee)

To have delegated power to act on all matters relating to the allotments, to meet weekly during the day (usually Wednesday mornings – monthly currently Cllrs Mulliner and Mrs Hawkins).

**c) Finance & General Purposes Committee** (Open to All Members)

To meet at least once a year, but always to meet to set the Budget and Precept.

**d) Personnel Committee** (Up to 5 Members)

To meet as and when necessary.

**e) Emergency Personnel Working Group** (3 Members of the Personnel Committee). To be able to meet at short notice.

**f) Neighbourhood Plan** (2 Councillors).

The following changes were *AGREED*:

- Cllr Ms Coop-Rodia to join Planning, Finance & General Purposes, Environmental and Allotment Sub Committees
- Cllr Ms Wood to be added to Queens Hall Charity Committee
- Cllr Irvine to join the Planning Committee
- Cllr Mrs Etherington to be added to the Neighbourhood Plan and Finance & General Purposes Committees

The Clerk advised that there is no Forest Liaison Committee at the present time and said that she had been told the Committee would not restart until 2023. Cllr Bedford said that he would be able to update Council on this.

### C21.011 DATES OF MEETINGS FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR

Councillors noted that due to the current COVID-19 outbreak, a Notice of Meetings Schedule had been issued up to 21 December 2021, for Parish Council and one Environmental Meeting only. It was noted that once the Parish Council return to Meeting in Person in September, a revised Schedule of Meetings would be issued. All Councillors **AGREED** to the Parish Council Meeting scheduled to be held in June 2021 to be cancelled if there is not enough business to discuss.

### C21.012 REPRESENTATION ON OUTSIDE BODIES

Councillors **DETERMINED** the Council's representatives on outside bodies as shown in the following table:

OUTSIDE BODIES	
Outside Body	Representation Council Year 21/22
Parish Passenger Transport Forum	Cllr Mrs A Grigg
Norway House	Chairman of Parish Council
North Weald Village Hall	Cllr N Bedford
Epping Forest District Council Committees	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Epping Forest Branch of the Association of Local Councils – two reps (clerks may also attend these meetings)</li> <li>Local Councils Liaison Committee – two reps (clerks may also attend these meetings)</li> <li>Joint Standards Committee – one rep (but only if your council is a member of this)</li> </ul>	<p>Cllr Mrs S Jackman, MBE &amp; Chairman &amp; Clerk – In the absence of Cllr Mrs Jackman, Cllr T Blanks to attend as a substitution.</p> <p>As above</p> <p>Cllr N Bedford</p>

### Queens Hall Charity

Councillors **NOTED** that in the Governing Document the Term of Office is for One Year.

<b>Parish Council Appointed Trustees for 2021/2022</b>	Dawn Wood – Councillor, Administrator & Treasurer Colin Kinnear – Resident Jamie Prior – Resident Stuart Greenhill – Resident James Prior – TBC Terry Blanks – Councillor George Mulliner - Councillor
<b>Groups</b>	Helen Gould – Red School Ian Cuthbert – UKA Karate Vince Curran – NWCC – Cricket Diane Archer - Bowls

Cllr Ms Wood stated that she would advise the Clerk of the date of the Annual Meeting of the Queens Hall Charity, which would be held in early June.

### C21.013 REGISTRATION OF COUNCILLORS INTERESTS

The Clerk reminded Members that they should review their Interests on a regular

basis and said that she was advising Members as such on behalf of EFDC's Monitoring Officer. It was noted that any updated forms must be submitted to EFDC within 28 days of any change and that this was a legal requirement. The Clerk stated that it would be prudent for Councillors to complete and return a new form by the 27<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

#### **C21.014 APPROVAL OF ACCOUNTS 2020/2021**

A copy of the final accounts for 2020/2021 was attached to the agenda. The Chairman asked Members if they had any comments. Cllr Bedford referred to payment of £40,000 received from EFDC and asked if this would be recorded in next year's accounts. The PFO confirmed that it would as the payment had been received in April. Cllr Mrs Jackman MBE referred to 'debtors' and asked if they were persistent. The PFO confirmed that they were not. The Council were asked to **CONSIDER** the accounts and resolve to **APPROVE** them by way of resolution:

Cllr Blanks **PROPOSED** that the accounts be approved. The proposal was **SECONDED** by Cllr Bedford. Following which all Councillors **AGREED** unanimously to approve the final accounts for 2020/2021.

#### **C21.015 REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS OF SYSTEM OF INTERNAL CONTROL**

The PFO explained that the Council has a duty to ensure that the financial management of the body is adequate and effective and that the body has a sound system of internal control. Councillors noted that a statement of internal controls had been created, a copy of which had been attached to the agenda. This statement sets out the controls in place for this Council. Councillors were asked to:

- a) **REVIEW** of the effectiveness of the system of internal control
- b) **CONSIDER** the findings of this review.

The Chairman asked Members if they were in agreement with the statement. All Members **AGREED** unanimously.

#### **C21.016 EXTERNAL AUDIT (AGAR) 2020/2021)**

It was noted that each year the Council's 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. For 2019/2020, the legislation was amended due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, however this legislative change has now ended. As such, the following remains specified:

- The requirement for the public inspection period to include the first 10 working days of July
- The AGAR must be approved by 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021.

Cllr Mrs Sheila Jackman, MBE, asked for thanks to be given to the Clerk and the Principal Financial Officer, adding that they both do a fantastic job, which is reflected in the audit report and asked that her comments be recorded in the minutes. All Members **AGREED**. Cllr Blanks commented that this Council had managed to complete its return for 2020/2021, when EFDC had still not completed its accounts for last year.

It was noted that this year the Parish Council is subject to a Limited Assurance Review. A copy of the relevant pages of the AGAR was attached to the agenda.



Council was asked to:

- a) Prepare the Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) **AGREED**
- b) Approve the Annual Governance Statement by way of **RESOLUTION**.  
Cllr Tyler **PROPOSED** that Council **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the Annual Governance Statement. The proposal was **SECONDED** by Cllr Blanks. All Members **AGREED** unanimously.
- c) Consider the Accounting Statements (Section 2) **AGREED**
- d) Approve the Accounting Statements by way of **RESOLUTION**.  
Cllr Mrs Jackman MBE **PROPOSED** that Council **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the Accounting Statements. The proposal was **SECONDED** by Cllr Tyler. All Members **AGREED** unanimously.
- e) Ensure that both the Annual Governance Statement and Accounting Statements are signed and dated by the person presiding at the meeting. The Chairman signed and dated both documents.

Councillors **NOTED** that the period for the exercise of public rights and publication of the unaudited annual return would be between Monday, 14<sup>th</sup> June and Friday, 23<sup>rd</sup> July and that the relevant notices would be erected onto the notice boards and the Parish Council website on 14<sup>th</sup> June.

#### **C21.017 APPOINTMENT OF INTERNAL AUDITOR**

Councillors **CONFIRMED** the appointment of Auditing Solutions as the Parish Council's Internal Auditor for the year 2021/2022.

#### **C21.018 INTERNAL AUDIT**

Councillors **NOTED** that this year's Internal Audit had been carried out remotely. A copy of the report was attached to the agenda for Members agreement.

#### **C21.019 PARISH COUNCIL INSURANCE**

Councillors **NOTED** that the Parish Council's insurance is due for renewal on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2021. It was noted that a copy of the policy document was available for Members perusal. The price for renewal is £3,468.69, this figure represents a small increase of just over 3% on 2020/2021. The Chairman mentioned that there is a slight decrease of £62.00 to the renewal price. The Clerk confirmed that the figure quoted would be challenged.

#### **C21.020 ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS**

Members were asked to confirm if they wished to have their documentation served on them for Parish Council Meetings electronically. The Clerk reminded Members that there is often a large number of appendices attached to the agendas which could prove to be expensive in printing costs. The matter was discussed at length and the following Councillors confirmed that they were in favour of receiving agendas electronically:

Cllr Bedford, Cllr Ms Coop-Rodia, Cllr Mulliner, Cllr Stroud, Cllr Tyler,  
Cllr Ms Wood

Cllr Bedford suggested that this be trialled for one year and asked if the electronic Document would be editable. Members **AGREED** that the Clerk would email

editable versions of the agendas.

### **C21.021 GENERAL POWER OF COMPETENCE**

Parish Councils are corporate bodies and their powers have accumulated through legislation since 1894. Their powers being constrained to specific and appropriate legislation until 2008, when they could, if eligible exercise the Power of Well-being 2008 Order made under Section 1 (2) of Local Government Act 2000 for the benefit of their community.

The Localism Act 2011, Chapter 1 of Part 1, Sections 1-8 has provided local authorities with a General Power of Competence, a radical new power with wide ranging possibilities. This broader General Power of Competence replaces the Power of Well-being.

The General Power of Competence was brought into force by S1, 961 The Localism Act 2011 (Consequential Amendments) Order 2012 on 28th March 2012.

*“The Government’s intention in providing eligible parish council with the general power of competence is to better enable them to take on their enhanced role and allow them to do the things that they have previously been unable to do under their existing powers”.*

It gives eligible local councils “the power to do anything that individuals generally may do” as long as they do not break other laws. It is intended to be a power of first not last resort. This Parish Council is an ‘eligible council’ as the Clerk is a Qualified Clerk and holds the Certificate in Local Council Administration, the Clerk has completed the training in the exercise of the General Power of Competence, and this Council fulfils the Electoral Mandate by having at least two thirds of the Member of the Council Elected (at the time their elections were held). Therefore, a Resolution must be taken at the Annual Meeting following elections to resolve the Eligibility of this Council to use this Power. Members **RESOLVED** by way of unanimous vote this Council’s Eligibility.

### **C21.022 THORNWOOD OPEN GARDENS**

Councillors noted that a request had been received for the use of the toilet facilities in the Parish Hall at Thornwood during the Open Gardens Event. The Open Gardens Committee had advised that they would be willing to pay a charge to cover the cleaning costs . All Members **AGREED** to the request.

### **C21.023 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.

### **CHANGES OF CONTRACT FOR CLERK AND PFO**

Councillors **NOTED** that contents of the report attached to the agenda and **AGREED** unanimously to the minor amendments.

**MINUTES**

*Meeting: PARISH COUNCIL*

*Date 10<sup>th</sup> May 2021*

Meeting closed: 8.42pm

Signed .....

Date .....