



**DRAFT MINUTES**

**Meeting:** PARISH COUNCIL

**Date:** 5<sup>th</sup> October 2020

**Time:** 7.30PM

**Venue:** IN LINE WITH CURRENT GOVERNMENT GUIDELINES, THE MEETING WAS CONDUCTED ELECTRONICALLY VIA VIDEO CONFERENCING

**PRESENT:**

**Councillors (10)** A Buckley (Chairman), Mrs A Grigg, T Blanks, Mrs S Jackman MBE, A Tyler, B Clegg, R Spearman, Mrs S Hawkins, A Irvine, Ms Coop-Rodia

**Officers in Attendance (3)**

Susan Deluca - Clerk

Adriana Jones – Principal Financial Officer

Joanna Tyler – Senior Administrative Officer

**Members of the Public (1)**

**Members of the Press (1)**

**C20.106 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (4)**

Apologies received from Cllrs N Bedford, M Stroud, Ms D Wood, G Mulliner

**C20.107 OTHER ABSENCES (0)**

None.

**C20.108 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the 7<sup>th</sup> September 2020 were **APPROVED**.

**C20.109 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr Spearman declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in any agenda item concerning the Local Plan. Cllr Mrs Grigg, Cllr Blanks and the Chairman declared a non pecuniary interest as members of the Royal British Legion.

**C20.110 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

One Member of the Public joined the meeting who wished to speak regarding Agenda Item 22.

**C20.111 REPORT OF THE CLERK**

Councillors **NOTED** that the Clerk and Staff had all been working on the items within the Agenda. The Clerk advised that there was one additional item, the commemorative brochure for Remembrance Sunday, and further information regarding this would be given later in the meeting. It was also noted that the Clerk had received a large amount of additional Government Guidance.

**C20.112 REPORTS AND MEMBERS REPORTS**

**a) Chairman's Report** – The Chairman referred to the garden in front of the parade of shops. He reported that himself, together with Mrs Buckley, Cllr Mulliner and Mrs Mulliner, had maintained the garden on a regular basis over the past four years. The

garden has become hard work and therefore, in conjunction with the Clerk, the Chairman advised that it had been agreed to spend £70.00 on initial work to cut back and tidy the area. Approximately £50.00 per month would then be spent maintaining the garden. The work is to be undertaken by the Parish Council's cemetery groundsman. Cllr Ms Coop-Rodia suggested that volunteers may wish to get involved with the garden. The Chairman advised that volunteers had been sought over the past four years and mentioned the "If you feel the need, Pull a Weed" slogan that was publicised. The Chairman said that there are five or six local businesses who sponsor the garden on annual basis and this money goes towards helping to meet the maintenance cost and the cost of new plants. The Chairman advised that members of the Preservation Society maintain the garden on the Village Green by the Flag Pole free of charge. The Chairman said that every year he puts a 'Thank You' in North Weald Village Life magazine.

**b) Vice Chairman's Report** – Cllr Mrs Grigg reported that she had been contacted by a resident in North Weald who had wanted to pass on a big 'Thank You' for the remedial work to the Wellington Road / High Road roundabout recently completed by Highways. The resident said that they wanted to thank the Parish Council and Cllr Whitbread for the action taken to get the work completed. However, the resident had reported that the Give Way sign, although repaired, is obscured by a small tree. Cllr Mrs Grigg asked that thanks be recorded to ECC Cllr Whitbread and said that although North Weald is not his area, he does carry out a lot of work for it.

**c) District Councillors Reports** – no report.

**d) County Councillor Reports** – The Clerk advised that ECC Cllr Jackson is looking at the Locality Fund for the Wheelers Farm Gardens Allotment Community Garden.

**e) Parish Councillors Reports**

**Speedwatch** – Cllr Clegg stated that the report is similar to the previous month, as at the current time the scheme is effectively 'furloughed'. He advised that he had been in contact with the co-ordinator and is currently awaiting a reply. Cllr Clegg mentioned that two questions had come forward recently to the Clerk with regard to new places, one is Weald Bridge Road and the other is Vicarage Lane West. The Clerk confirmed this and said that it was to do with vehicles heading from Church Lane towards Merlin Way. Cllr Clegg said that it was very difficult to add new places to the scheme and gave Foster Street as an example. Cllr Clegg stated that, along with another volunteer, they would try to carry out an unofficial survey to see what residents are complaining about.

Cllr Mrs Jackman MBE, reported that she had a number of items to update Members on as follows:-

- Church Funding – 1894 Act forbade Parish Councils to give funds. Process is being started to repeal part of the 1894 Act so that there is no longer a statutory prohibition.
- Attended a meeting of the Local Council's Liaison at District – matters raised included Planning Enforcement; Highway Rangers; discussion regarding the Board of Directors of Qualis

- Constitution of the Essex Association of Local Council's – has been changed to exclude Clerks. No consultation has been carried out. A further update will be given

Cllr Blanks referred to Qualis and the recent purchases of the shopping parades in Loughton and Debden. He also mentioned the Local Plan and the response from EFDC to the Inspector. The Chairman confirmed that this matter would be covered by the PFO later in the Agenda.

**f) Queens Hall Report** – no report.

**g) Neighbourhood Plan** – The Principal Financial Officer reminded Members that a consultant had been employed to bring together all the elements of the Neighbourhood Plan and start creating the policies. The PFO reported that the first draft of the policies had been received. These have been sent out to Cllr Blanks and the Steering Group for comments. Cllr Blanks stated that it was a good starting point.

**h) Local Plan** – Councillors recalled that at the last meeting it was discussed that a small group be set up in relation to EFDC Local Plan and the ONS Figures and the fact that EFDC had yet to respond to the Planning Inspector. However, a statement was issued by EFDC some days later in which they advised that they were replying to the Inspector. This response was not published until 29<sup>th</sup> September and was a joint response with other Authorities. Councillors noted that the figures required detailed consideration, therefore a letter (a copy of which had been attached to the agenda) had been sent to the Planning Inspector asking her if she would consult with the other interested parties such as Parish and Town Councils, as she had alluded that this may be a possibility in her original letter to EFDC. It was noted that links to relevant documents in this matter would be sent to Councillors to enable access to read them electronically, as one is quite lengthy. Councillors were asked to consider whether or not the Parish Council wished to issue a Press Release on this matter. Following lengthy discussion, all Councillors **AGREED**. The Chairman asked the Clerk and PFO to draft a Press Release. Councillors **NOTED** that if the Inspector agrees that she does wish to hear from Parish & Town Councils, then it may be prudent to employ the Barrister who represented this Council at the enquiry to dispute the figures, especially as the District Council's response is statistically based. It was noted that there is still funding in the account set aside for this.

**i) Highways Report** – Councillors **NOTED** that a number of Highways issues that were requested to be completed by ECC Highways had now been carried out. The Chairman confirmed that items that had been completed included some re-painting of white lining and roundabouts along North Weald High Road, signage replacement, bollards at the end of the cul-de-sac at Church Lane and a new indicator sign for Hastingwood Village Hall. The Chairman advised that ECC Cllr Whitbread had put an awful lot of work into getting these completed. Members noted that there are still some items requiring completion which have been chased, these include re-painting the posts and updating the belisha beacons for both zebra crossings in North Weald High Road, also re-painting of the

white lining between the Library roundabout and the Talbot. Cllr Blanks mentioned the potholes in the High Road North Weald, which are adjacent to the car park entrance at the parade of shops. The Chairman confirmed that these had been included on the list sent to ECC Cllr Jackson.

Councillors **NOTED** the following important Road Traffic Announcements:-

### **ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 – SECTION 14(1)**

Temporary Traffic Regulation Order

<https://one.network/?tm=119706946> The aforementioned link will provide full details of the intended closure of Woodside, between North Weald and Thornwood. This is due to commence on 5<sup>th</sup> October for 12 days. The closure is required for the safety of the public and workforce while Gigaclear Limited undertake various works.

### **Notification from Highways England**

Councillors **NOTED** that notification had been received from Highways England regarding essential drainage renewal works at M11 junction 7 to 8.

**Notification for Highways England M11 junction 7 to 8: drainage renewal** of essential drainage renewal works at the above location, in both directions.

Highways England plan to complete the works over **eleven weeks**, from **Monday 5 October to Friday 18 December**, working between the hours of **7.30am to 6pm**, subject to weather conditions. The work will be carried out under land closures which will be in place 24 hours a day, alongside weekend closures. There will be four weekend full closures on the M11 northbound between junctions 7 and 8 from **Friday 6 November to Monday 9 November, Friday 13 November to Monday 16 November, Friday 20 November to Monday 23 November and Friday 4 December to Monday 7 December**, working between the hours of **Friday 10pm to Monday 5am**.

**Diversion routes** – Traffic will be diverted off the M11 at junction 7 to join the A414, along the A10 northbound and onto the A120 eastbound, to re-join the M11 at junction 8 and it is expected this will add approximately 35 minutes to your journey. Please be aware, there are also works taking place on behalf of Essex County Council on the M11 at junction 7a, this work will continue once works are completed on **Friday, 18 December**. If you have any queries about this work, please contact Essex County Council directly.

## **C20.113 FINANCIAL REPORTS**

### **a) List of Cheques & Monthly Statement of Accounts**

Members **APPROVED** the lists of payments (these were emailed to Councillors prior to the meeting) which were made up to the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020. Members **NOTED** the account balances at the end of the month.

## **C20.114 ‘GOING FORWARD’ PARISH COUNCIL – STAFF AND COUNCILLOR TRAINING**

Councillors **NOTED** that the PFO will begin her CiLCA training by EALC leading to a qualified clerk qualification from the 5<sup>th</sup> October. The actual training is scheduled for 1 year. As the training is carried out remotely, EALC have advised that 1 day a week should be set aside for this training. It was noted that this may be

less as the training has not been undertaken remotely before. The Clerk advised that the training had been delayed by one week and would commence on 14<sup>th</sup> October.

Councillors **NOTED** that EALC would shortly be recommencing New Councillor Training. It is expected to begin during October and would be carried out remotely via either Microsoft Teams or Zoom. The training is expected to take four sessions, rather than the previous two morning sessions. Any new Councillor who wished to undertake the training was asked to contact the Clerk as soon as possible. It was noted that any other Councillor who may have missed this training but now wished to undertake it should also contact the Clerk.

#### **C20.115 ‘GOING FORWARD’ PARISH COUNCIL & PARISH HALL AT THORNWOOD**

Councillors **NOTED** that following last month’s decision to work out of the Parish Hall from 14<sup>th</sup> September 2020, the Prime Minister made a ministerial Statement as a result of the increase in Covid-19 cases in which employees were urged to ‘work from home’ if they could. It was noted that as Government Guidance had been very ‘up and down’ since the beginning of September in relating to Community Halls and Work Places, the Clerk, in conjunction with the Chairman, took the decision to ask the office staff to once again work from home. It was noted that the Clerk’s main concern was that she did not want to leave residents without a place to go to for Parish Enquiries and Cemetery Enquiries. Therefore, it was agreed that the Face to Face Administration Centre should be opened solely on a Monday morning between 10am and 12 noon. It was noted that the staffing of this would try to be kept between the Clerk and the PFO where possible as they are within the same ‘social bubble’, this would be subject to annual leave and other unforeseen matters.

The Clerk advised that regular contact is made with the Regular Hall Hirers, to update them with any changes to guidance. Councillors noted that the Harlow Bowmen are using the hall and the Tuesday Club would be starting back week commencing 13<sup>th</sup> October. Councillors noted that the Clerk had managed to secure £10,000 small business grant funding from EFDC for the Parish Hall. The Chairman thanked the Clerk for her persistence.

#### **C20.116 ‘GOING FORWARD’ PARISH COUNCIL ELECTRONIC MANAGEMENT OF PC FUNCTIONS**

Councillors recalled from the July Meeting, that it was agreed, in principle, that the administration of a number of Parish Council functions would move to electronic management. It was noted that further information had been sourced and a proposal as to how this would work and the cost to the Council was attached to the agenda. All Members **AGREED** to the proposal. The Chairman asked what the time span for implementing the system would be. The PFO confirmed that she would contact the company and report back to the Chairman.

#### **C20.117 ‘GOING FORWARD’ PARISH COUNCIL CCTV**

Councillors **NOTED** that the Parish Council is looking at CCTV for Wheelers Farm Gardens Allotment site and also looking at changes into the way it manages the surveillance of the Weald Common Play Area. The Clerk confirmed that Essential Group are looking at both sites. Councillors **NOTED** that an additional camera had

been installed at Thornwood and covers part of the field and the Play Area.

Councillors were reminded to put forward any other areas which could benefit from CCTV for the Precept Meeting later in the year. The Clerk advised that Cllr Ms Wood had mentioned the Play Area at the Memorial Playing Field as a possible site. The Chairman asked the Clerk if the Queens Hall used the same CCTV provider, the Clerk confirmed that they did.

**C20.118 'GOING FORWARD' PARISH COUNCIL – VACATING OFFICE AND STOREROOM IN LIBRARY**

Councillors *NOTED* that the Parish Council had given Notice to the Library Service that it would leave the Library premises by the 31<sup>st</sup> October. ECC had confirmed that the arrangement that the Parish Council had was an informal one as the SLA had expired in 2018. It was noted that the Clerk and PFO had moved the majority of the boxes to the Queens Hall for storage. The furniture would be moved within the next two weeks.

**C20.119 NORTH WEALD AIRFIELD – HMRC**

Councillors *NOTED* that the Parish Council had been advised by EFDC that Explanation Leaflets and Letters are being sent out to 1500 Residents who may be affected by the extension of use of North Weald Airfield by HMRC in the case of a no deal Brexit. It was noted that the Parish Council was advised that the letters and leaflets would be sent out by HMRC on 30<sup>th</sup> September and that the Parish Council would receive a copy at the same time. As of the date of the meeting, the letters and leaflets had still not been received.

**C20.120 2020 REFLECTION GARDEN BRING TOGETHER RAINBOW STONES & REFLECTION BENCH**

Following on from previous meetings, Councillors noted that the Clerk had contacted EFDC Youth Council for assistance with this project and at the date of the meeting was awaiting a response. It was noted that the Clerk has also been looking at the possibility of obtaining some grant funding for the project. The Clerk advised that a number of residents had suggested that stones with poppies painted on them could also be a feature of this Reflection Garden / Memorial. All Councillors *AGREED* to the suggestion.

**C20.121 CEMETERY**

Councillors *NOTED* that the contractor has completed the maintenance of the benches. It was noted that the works to replant the central gardens in the Gardens of Remembrance should start in October.

**C20.122 GDPR FILING**

Councillors *NOTED* that due to undertaking the move from the Library, no GDPR filing had been undertaken during September.

**C20.123 AUDIT**

Councillors *NOTED* that the Internal Auditor had advised that he will be carrying out the Internal Audit for 2020-2021 remotely. This would mean that the documents would need to be sent to him remotely.

**C20.124 ALLOTMENTS**

**a) General Report**

Councillors *NOTED* that the majority of Allotments are now rented out and a waiting list has been set up.

**b) De Allotmentisation of Hastingwood B**

Councillors *NOTED* that work continued on this project.

**c) Community Allotment Garden at Thornwood on Charlie's Garden**

Councillors *NOTED* that work to the garden had started, with a substantial amount of clearance works. Some funding had been received via a donation from the now defunct Thornwood Residents Association. The Clerk confirmed that the donation amounted to just over £1600, which would benefit the project immensely. The person who had donated the funds, a former officer of the Residents Association, met with Cllr Mrs Hawkins and Elaine Davis and discussed the surplus funds. Between them, they had agreed that these funds should be specifically spent on this project as it would benefit all the residents in Thornwood. The Clerk confirmed that a Thank You letter would be sent to the person who provided the money.

**d) Community Allotment Garden Wheelers Farm Gardens**

Councillors *NOTED* that EFDC Community Worker Victoria Robertson had advised that she hoped to begin the Community Allotment Garden for socially isolated residents who live in North Weald. The garden will be a great place to work together and develop a lovely educational space that can be enjoyed by the current people on our allotments and for a few more to join in. All would gain an increased working knowledge of plants, how they develop and different ways to grow them, using innovative ways including organic and modern. Every step of the way EFDC Community Workers would work with our Allotment Wardens to make sure the Council and the existing allotment holders are all happy. There would be no more than 6 people on the Community Plot at any one time. Councillors *NOTED* that the Clerk had approached County Cllr Anthony Jackson to see if grant funding could be obtained from the Locality Fund for this innovative project.

**e) Works to Header Wall at Wheelers Farm Gardens Allotments**

Councillors *NOTED* that due to the creation of new homes on the Queens Road site adjacent to Wheelers Farm Gardens, strengthening works are required to the header wall located between the new development and the allotments. The Office Staff are liaising with EFDC, the allotment wardens and tenants regarding this matter. It was noted that staff have been advised that the works will be completed using hand tools with no disruption (other than noise) to the allotment tenants. Works are expected to begin mid October.

**C20.125 DEFIBRILLATOR**

Councillors *NOTED* that it had been hoped to have a small event to officially 'dedicate' the Defibrillator at the end of September. Members were reminded that it had been agreed to place a dedication plaque close to the defibrillator. The Clerk confirmed that the plaque had been ordered, however as at the date of

the meeting, it had not been delivered. The Chairman confirmed that he would contact the supplier. It was noted that a new date would be scheduled for the dedication as soon as possible.

**C20.126 DEBT OF HONOUR**

Members **NOTED** that the Clerk had received the following communication from EFDC in relation to the Debt of Honour. The Parish Council has been sending correspondence for a considerable time over at least the last 18 months. It was noted that this had been copied direct from the last email from the EFDC Officer:-

*“Firstly, I must apologise for the very lengthy delay in replying to your emails below. As you are no doubt aware, the district council offices are currently undergoing refurbishment and, ahead of this, I was heavily committed to organising the process of vacating the building, to be handed over to the contractor.*

*I have inspected the memorial again and have obtained a quotation to replace the somewhat uneven concrete slabs with natural stone chippings, including a concrete edging where the current paved area meets the grass. I am in a position to complete this work using my airfield maintenance budget for this year. If you are happy with this, I will proceed with the work.*

*It will then remain for the terms under which the parish council will take on the management of the memorial to be agreed. From discussions with colleagues, I understand that it is not the intention of EFDC to transfer ownership of the land but to put in place a service agreement detailing what maintenance or other liabilities will be taken on by the two councils. If you could let me have your thoughts on this then I will speak to our legal section about drafting an agreement for consideration by the parish council.”*

The Chairman **AGREED** that the Member of the Public could speak for 3 minutes. Councillors **NOTED** the Member of the Public’s concerns with regard to the proposal put forward by EFDC.

The Chairman expressed concern that EFDC would not be transferring ownership of the land, however expected the Parish Council to take on the management of the memorial. The Chairman said that his own personal view was that the Parish Council would end up with a ‘bad deal’ and it could end up costing quite a lot of money. Cllr Mrs Jackman MBE, said that she believed it was very unreasonable of EFDC to expect the Parish Council to spend money on the memorial when it does not own it. Cllr Blanks said that EFDC are always keen to promote the Airfield, however, it seemed that they do not want to take any responsibility for the memorial. All Members **AGREED** that they would not wish to take on the memorial under the terms proposed. The Chairman asked the Clerk to send a response to EFDC.

**C20.127 REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY & DEBT OF HONOUR**

Members recalled that, with much regret due to Covid-19 restrictions, they had agreed at the last meeting not to hold a formal Remembrance Day Event. However, a wreath would still be laid at the Debt of Honour / Norwegian



Memorial and would advise those organisations and people who normally lay a wreath that they would also be able to lay a wreath. It was noted that communications were sent out advising the same and Notices were placed on the Noticeboards, Website and Facebook. Within the communication it was advised that the Parish Council would be happy to lay wreaths on behalf of those who could not attend this year.

Councillors **NOTED** that a number of organisations had advised that they would like to lay a wreath on their behalf and others that intend to lay wreaths on the day. A list of the organisations who had responded was attached to the agenda.

Councillors recalled that the Clerk had circulated a document to Members in relation to Remembrance Sunday a few weeks ago, within which it was suggested that all wreaths should be laid at 11am and that a pre-recorded Last Post and Reveille should be played.

It was noted that the Clerk had written a number of times to the Chairman of the Royal British Legion North Weald branch and had not received a response regarding their event. However, the Clerk did receive an email late on the 29<sup>th</sup> September from the Chairman of the Branch which states that he will now be instructing RBL Members to attend St Andrew's Church and Parish War Memorial at 11am. A copy of the email was attached to the agenda for Members Perusal. Members were asked to consider if they wished to change the time of the wreath laying at the Debt of Honour to the usual time. Following discussion, Councillors **AGREED** that the wreath laying would be at the usual time, however, the time would not be publicised.

Members were asked to consider if they wished to publish a special glossy 2020 Remembrance Sunday Presentation Brochure that people could keep, giving a short history of the Norwegian Memorial, Debt of Honour and list the Names of the Fallen, together with an explanation of why this year's event had to be the way it is due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. The Clerk advised that a draft copy of the brochure had been circulated via email to Councillors prior to the meeting. It was noted that there was a space on the front cover which will contain a coloured in picture or drawing of a soldier. The Clerk stated that Cllr Ms Coop-Rodia would be speaking about this in more detail under the Supplementary Agenda. The Clerk said that the brochure could be put in the local shops two weeks beforehand and also made available on the day. All Members **AGREED**.

#### **C20.128 SOCIAL MEDIA**

Councillors **NOTED** that a meeting of the Social Media Task Force Group was held on the 18<sup>th</sup> September. The Clerk had presented a comprehensive dossier to the group. A lengthy discussion had ensued and it was agreed that the dossier would be presented to PC Andy Cook and that Cllr Andy Irvine would obtain additional legal advice. It was also agreed that Cllr Ms Coop-Rodia would meet with the owner of North Weald Village Life to discuss various matters. It was noted that David Jackman had made various suggestions on how to make changes on the way to issue Press Releases in the future. It was noted that it had been

agreed that a weekly meeting would take place going forward. The PFO had advised that the Parish Council would try to post a news story every day on their Facebook page.

Cllr Irvine stated that good progress had been made. He advised that there had been an increase in the number of Press Releases and they were trying to attract a bigger audience. Councillors noted that it was still a work in progress, with the next meeting scheduled for the following Thursday. Cllr Ms Coop-Rodia asked any Councillors that are on Facebook, to share the Parish Council page with friends in the area to help increase follower numbers.

**C20.129 FLAGPOLE – VILLAGE GREEN**

Councillors **NOTED** that the flag to commemorate Merchant Navy Day was flown at the beginning of September. In addition, the Union Flag was lowered to half mast in recognition of the killing of Police Officer Matiu Ratana, in line with other authorities.

**C20.130 PLANNING WHITE PAPER: PLANNING FOR OUR FUTURE**

Councillors recalled from the September Meeting that it was agreed that this Council would respond to the Planning White Paper. The PFO thanked the Clerk and Cllr Blanks for looking at the response in detail and for making a number of grammatical changes. The Chairman asked if the draft response dated 5<sup>th</sup> October 2020 was the most up to date. The PFO advised that there was a more up to date version, however the only changes were mainly grammatical. The Chairman asked Members if they were happy with the response, all Councillors **AGREED**.

**C20.131 VANDALISM ON THE WEALD COMMON PLAY AREA**

Councillors **NOTED** that the Clerk had been contacted by the Restorative Justice System and had been advised that the person responsible for the arson at Weald Common Play Area is now within the system and this Council will be advised accordingly of the relevant action. However, Councillors **NOTED** that the Parish Council would not be able to recoup any financial funds that have been expended in this matter.

**C20.132 APPOINTMENT ONTO PLANNING COMMITTEE**

Councillors **APPROVED** the appointment of Cllr Ms Coop-Rodia onto the Parish Council's Planning Committee.

**C20.133 COMMUNITY PROJECTS**

Cllr Ms Coop-Rodia gave a verbal report on future community-led projects in North Weald. She advised that some of the community initiatives being discussed included regular community litter picks (which would involve children and parents in the local community including some from St Andrew's Primary School), Remembrance Sunday Soldier Pictures for Windows and a Santa Dash around local walks in the Parish. Following lengthy discussion, it was **AGREED** that £500 be earmarked to a fund to help launch the projects.

Meeting closed: 9.39pm

Signed ..... Date .....