



MINUTES

Meeting: PARISH COUNCIL

Date: 4th October 2021

Time: 7.00PM

Venue: PARISH HALL, THORNWOOD COMMON

PRESENT:

Councillors (10) A Buckley (Chairman), Mrs A Grigg, T Blanks, B Clegg, G Mulliner, R Spearman, Mrs S Jackman MBE, A Tyler, Mrs P Etherington, A Irvine

Officers in Attendance (3)

Susan Deluca - Clerk

Adriana Jones – Principal Financial Officer

Joanna Tyler – Senior Administrative Officer

Also in Attendance (2)

EFDC District Councillor R Morgan

PC Andy Cook

Members of the Public (0)

Members of the Press (1)

C21.068 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (2)

Apologies received from Cllrs Mrs Hawkins and Ms Wood

C21.069 OTHER ABSENCES (2)

No apologies for absence received from Cllrs Bedford and Stroud

C21.070 MINUTES

Cllr Mulliner referred to Minute No. C21.054 (d) and queried the amount of money noted for the repair of potholes and said that it should be £4,200. Following which, the Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council Meeting held on 6th September 2021 were **APPROVED** as a correct record.

C21.071 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Mulliner declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 8(d) as Chairman of the North Weald Village Hall Committee and Item 14 as a Member of the Royal British Legion.

Cllr Mrs Grigg declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 14 as a Member of the Royal British Legion.

The Chairman declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 14 as a Member of the Royal British Legion.

Cllr Blanks declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 14 as a Member of the Royal British Legion.

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

C21.072 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no members of the public present.

C21.073 RESIGNATION OF A COUNCILLOR

Councillors **NOTED** that the Clerk had received the resignation of Cllr Coop-Rodia. The resignation would be reported to Epping Forest District Council Elections Office and the relevant procedures will be followed. It was noted that Cllr Coop-Rodia had also resigned as Allotment Warden of Wheelers Farm Gardens Allotment site. The position would now be advertised accordingly. Councillors Mulliner and Hawkins will undertake the role until the position can be filled. The Clerk confirmed that she would write and thank Cllr Coop-Rodia for her service and assistance to this Council during her time as Councillor and Allotment Warden. Cllr Mrs Grigg asked for the Council's thanks to be recorded, as Cllr Coop-Rodia had put a lot of time and energy into the allotments.

C21.074 REPORT OF THE CLERK

Councillors **NOTED** that all staff had been working on the items within the Agenda. The Clerk mentioned specifically Remembrance Sunday, the Anti-Social Behaviour Meeting and the three Community Events which were held around the Parish. The Clerk commented that the events were not as successful as the Council had hoped they would be, despite publicising them and said that any suggestions from Members would be welcomed as to how this could be improved upon. The Clerk said that she had discussed the issue with the Chairman and short of alerting people to the number of homes that are going to be built near to where they live, she did not know what else could be done to gain residents attention. Cllr Mrs Grigg stated that the numbers had been disappointing and said that the Council can only offer to be there and hope that they (the public) will attend. The Chairman mentioned that he had discussed with the Clerk a suggestion that if there were any suitable functions coming up at any of the halls, perhaps the Council can put on a stand with some information and the rolling presentation. Cllr Blanks suggested a poster stating "1,000 plus houses here shortly". Cllr Mrs Jackman MBE, suggested a poster stating "Hands Off North Weald". Cllr Tyler commented that people seem to have forgotten the publicising of the homes and referred to the Neighbourhood Plan Committee Members giving up their time to stand in the High Road to raise awareness. Cllr Tyler said that residents will have lots to say when the first digger comes in and said that he finds the apathy very sad.

Cllr Irvine suggested publicising events via a leaflet drop, which he said had worked very well in Hastingwood. The Clerk advised that she is aware of someone in Hastingwood who would do a leaflet drop for a small amount of money, however, this would be in Hastingwood only, we do not have anyone for North Weald or Thornwood. The Chairman commented that the members of the public seem to be a bit lethargic in North Weald Bassett when it comes to attending meetings, even though the events had been publicised via Social Media, there had been very little, if any, comments made on any of the posts. The Chairman said that this is not going to go away and Council needs to think of the best ways of getting the message across. Cllr Mrs Jackman MBE commented that the Council had done its best and said that she believed it may be time to say that the Council is not going to spend any more money on this.

C21.075 REPORTS & MEMBERS REPORTS

a) **Chairman's Report** – The Chairman reported that all of the Management Staff were now back working in Norway House. The Chairman referred to the Sunflower Competition and advised that this had been cancelled as the plants had been planted in the wrong location and had grown to only 2 or 3ft. He stated that there had been a large turnaround in residents during the Summer, so although there had been good intentions residents had been moved to new residencies. The Chairman advised that Norway House intended to hold the Christmas Party this year and said that he would organise a donation envelope for the next meeting. The Chairman would deliver the donations by 26th November. The Chairman advised that Derek Tringham would, unfortunately, no longer be able to attend as Father Christmas, however, he has offered use of his outfit. The Chairman said that he understood that Norway House do have a replacement Father Christmas lined up. The Chairman is trying to source a couple of Christmas Trees for them. Cllr Irvine asked if Norway House required any other donations apart from money, ie., books, toys, etc. The Chairman stated that the Rugby Club usually helps and the Management Staff have lists of what presents to buy. Norway House has stopped taking donations of second-hand clothes etc. The Clerk commented that last year someone donated stocking fillers such as pens and pencils etc. The Chairman thanked Cllr Tyler for supplying the Sunflowers.

b) **Vice Chairman's Report** - The Vice Chairman reported that she had attended the Dedication of the Memorial Bench to the Lloyd Family at Hastingwood Allotment Site on Sunday, 3 October. She said that there it had been well attended with around 20 people. There was an afternoon tea held in Hastingwood Village Hall. The Vice Chairman commented that the Lloyd family were very pleased. The Clerk confirmed that she would be sending a letter of thanks to Mrs Davis for organising the event.

The Vice Chairman reported that the North Weald Preservation Society had ceased to function. She commented that they had done a lot of good works over the years. The Chairman mentioned the flower box by the flagpole which is maintained by the society. Cllr Mrs Grigg confirmed that she would find out if they would still be continuing with this.

c) **District & County Councillors Reports** – District Councillor Richard Morgan reported that the District Council Offices had been refurbished, the official opening was held on Friday, 1 October. Cllr Morgan commented that the name for the building was still to be decided. The ground floor is for various organisations.

Cllr Morgan reported that Hastingwood is quiet, and he had not been made aware of any problems. He mentioned that the Boundary Commission are reviewing the boundaries and that it is likely that there will be some changes, which should be decided by the end of 2023. There will be elections for some District Councillors in 2023, however, all of the District will be up for election in 2024. Cllr Blanks asked if there had been any mention of Harlow Council's decision not to

cooperate with EFDC with regard to the Local Plan. Cllr Morgan said that he did not have any further information. Cllr Irvine said that he would send an email to Cllr Morgan giving a summary of what is happening in Hastingwood.

d) Parish Councillors Reports

Cllr George Mulliner, on behalf of North Weald Village Hall. Councillors were asked to recall a request from the previous meeting for funding towards the filling in of potholes on the access road. The Clerk was also asked to investigate further as to whether or not it was felt possible that the 8 Parish Council Parking Spaces could be part of a controlled parking scheme.

Cllr Mulliner reported that North Weald Village Hall had paid £9,600 to fill in the potholes in the car park. He said that as the Parish Council had 8 parking spaces there, would the Council be willing to give a contribution towards the cost.

The Clerk referred to the question of whether or not it was felt possible that the 8 Parish Council parking spaces could be part of a controlled scheme and advised that she had been looking into the issue and had spoken to the Parish Council's Solicitor. The Solicitor felt that the wording on the original document would make it very difficult for the spaces to be controlled by a Parking Authority, as the document states 'Temporary Parking' for Weald Common. To have the spaces managed could go against the terms of the Agreement. The Solicitor is willing to look at the Agreement, however, that would cost the Parish Council money. Councillors noted that the Solicitor felt it would not be appropriate to have the 8 parking spaces managed. Cllr Mulliner confirmed that, should the Village Hall decide to have a controlled parking scheme, he would inform the parking authority that those 8 parking spaces would not be managed under the scheme. However, Cllr Mulliner expressed his concern that visitors to either Weald Common or to the Play Area may then have to pay (as the 8 spaces that would not be covered under the scheme and could be taken by people parking there all day). The Clerk advised that the Parish Council would then be able to say that the people who are parking there are parking against the Temporary Parking Agreement and then the problem would need to be addressed.

Councillors discussed the matter at length, following which Members **AGREED** unanimously to make a one-off contribution of £5,000 with a suggestion that it is used for the car park. The contribution would be given on the condition that the Trustees of North Weald Village would also chase Peer Group for a contribution. It was agreed that the Clerk would liaise with Cllr Mulliner regarding this matter.

Councillor Training: Cllr Tyler gave a brief verbal report regarding a two-day EALC Training Course he had recently attended via Zoom. He said that he would highly recommend the Training Courses and commented that any councillor, regardless of how long they had been in the role, could benefit. Cllr Mrs Jackman MBE commented that she had sat in on EALC training sessions and agreed that it is a very good thing to do.

- e) **Queens Hall Charity Report** – the Clerk advised that there was nothing to report.
- f) **Neighbourhood Plan Report** – the PFO advised that she would be concentrating on the Neighbourhood Plan during October.
- g) **EFDC Local Plan Report** – the PFO advised that the letter has been submitted

and is now in the hands of the District Council. The Clerk advised that she was told at the Liaison Meeting that all submissions would be looked at by EFDC and summarised in 300 words. The Clerk commented that the majority of Councils who were present could not believe what they had heard. The Clerk advised that she had written directly to the Planning Inspector and had been assured that the Planning Inspector will see the whole letter.

- h) Highways Report** – the Clerk said that she had nothing to report, other than that she would be attending a Highways Meeting on Thursday. Cllr Mulliner asked about the road closure in North Weald High Road, the Chairman confirmed that it would be starting on 1st November for two nights for surfacing of the roundabout at the junction with Wellington Road. Cllr Mrs Jackman MBE mentioned the High Street in Epping and rumours that the works carried out in response to COVID may be taken up again and expressed her concern at the waste of money. The Clerk said that she had not heard anything but understood that the Parish Council may receive a report. Cllr Irvine asked if the Parish Council had received any warning of the parking restrictions that have been put in place around Epping and expressed his concern that residents had not been consulted, making it difficult for people to park. The Clerk stated that the Parish Council had not received any notification and suggested that Cllr Irvine may wish to attend a webinar hosted by Essex Parking Partnership, details of which had recently been sent out to all Members. The Clerk said that she would find out if there were any spaces still available on the workshop.

Cllr Clegg mentioned a yellow Hungarian lorry trailer that had been parked in the lay-by (on the right-hand side of the road before McDonald's) for the past 5 weeks. PC Cook confirmed that he would take a look at it.

*The Chairman asked Councillors if they would agree to Agenda Item No. 11 being brought forward. All Members **AGREED**.*

C21.076 RESIDENTS ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR MEETING

Councillors recalled that as there had been an increase in vandalism and anti-social behaviour within North Weald Village and also some in Thornwood over the last couple of years, and a number of residents were becoming increasingly concerned at this type of behaviour. June Peachey, the Editor of North Weald Village Life, had liaised with the Clerk in facilitating a meeting on behalf of local residents. This was a meeting 'For Residents By Residents' and was held on 17th September at North Weald Village Hall, with attendance by the Police and EFDC Safer Communities. It was noted that, sadly, the turnout by the public was fairly low with only 21 Residents attending, 8 of those being Parish Councillors. However, those present felt that it was a very worthwhile meeting and it was agreed that a follow up meeting be held, where the Police would provide further details on crime numbers and statistics.

PC Cook reported that the anti-social behaviour, particularly in Blenheim Square and Tempest Mead, had reduced considerably and said that an increase in CCTV and regular patrols had worked. PC Cook mentioned Halloween and Fireworks and said that an increase in anti-social behaviour was expected around this time. The Clerk confirmed that Halloween information notices were to be distributed in the local shops by June Peachey and the notice would also be published in North Weald

Village Life magazine. PC Cook said that the past two years had not been too bad in comparison with Epping High Street and Theydon Bois. PC Cook advised that the Police had plans in place and there would be an increased presence. The Chairman asked whether the next meeting date should be before Halloween. The Clerk stated that she was waiting for June Peachey to advise her of the next meeting date. Cllr Tyler suggested that the next ASB Meeting could be advertised on a banner, which may attract more attention.

PC Cook gave details of crime figures for 1 month for North Weald Village:

- No burglaries
- No theft of, or from, motor vehicles
- 1 offensive weapon incident – investigation on-going
- 2 criminal damages
- 1 drug related incident
- 2 nuisances
- 1 ASB

PC Cook also advised that there had been a number of hoax calls the previous night, however, he said that overall crime is very low, which is good. PC Cook suggested that the Police could attend the Parish Hall for an hour on the days that the Parish Council is open to residents to engage with the public. The Clerk confirmed that the Parish Council would welcome this and she would email the dates and opening times.

C21.077 FINANCIAL REPORTS

a) List of Cheque & Monthly Statement of Accounts

Members *APPROVED* the list of payments made up to 30th September 2021 (circulated prior to the meeting). Members *NOTED* the account balances at the end of the month.

b) Internal Audit - Members were reminded that the Internal Auditor would be in attendance on Friday, 12th November to carry out the first part of the Internal Audit.

C21.078 BUILDING BACK BETTER – POSSIBLE MOVE BACK INTO THE LIBRARY

Members *NOTED* that the Clerk is continuing with conversations with County and District Councillor Christopher Whitbread regarding a possible move back into the Library. The Clerk has advised the relevant parties that this Council would be available to move back in, subject to the relevant SLA and agreements being in place. This Council would welcome a move as soon as possible.

C21.079 DEBT OF HOUR RENOVATION

Members *RECALLED* that they were advised that works were taking place to the Debt of Honour / Airfield Memorial. The total cost of these works amounted to just under £10,000 (inclusive of VAT). It was noted that the Chairman had been visiting the site and following the works and had confirmed that the standard of works looks to be of an extremely high standard and have definitely enhanced the Memorial. The path to the Memorial has been made wider and there is no step, also 5 flood lights have been installed. It was noted that the problems were due to the foundations of the Memorial, not the proximity of the tree. Members were reminded that the Parish Council had funds available and committed to put towards these works. Following

discussion, all Members **AGREED** to a contribution of £3,000 towards the renovations. Cllr Mrs Jackman MBE suggested that a letter of thanks be sent to the EFDC Team.

C21.080 RE-DEDICATIONS

Councillors **NOTED** that the following items were being looked at for possible re-dedication:

- Norwegian Stone – Seventieth Anniversary – 19th June 2022
- Parish War Memorial – One Hundredth Anniversary – March 2019
(held over as no action was able to be taken due to COVID – until now)
- 2012 Memorial to Norwegians on top of the Revetment on the Airfield

With regard to the Parish War Memorial it was noted that some of the names listed may need to be re-leded.

With regard to the 2012 Memorial to the Norwegians, the Chairman gave a brief report and it was noted that there is a tiny stone with a plaque on the Revetment near to the Squadron. He said that no one was appointed to maintain the Memorial following the dedication and it is now completely overgrown. The Chairman advised that he is waiting for some idea of costings with regard to refurbishing part of the Memorial. However, he expressed concern that should the Parish Council agree to refurbish the area around the plaque, the rest of the area on top of the Revetment may not be maintained. Following discussion, all Members **AGREED** that the Clerk would send an email and photographs to EFDC to see if they would assist with this.

C21.081 REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY EVENTS 2021

Councillors **NOTED** that plans are in hand for the Remembrance Sunday Events being held on Sunday, 14th November 2021. The Vicar and the Bugler have been confirmed for the Service of Remembrance and Thanksgiving at the Debt of Honour / Norwegian Stone. All invitations have been sent out. Councillors were **REMINDED** that if they are attending the luncheon, to send their responses back as soon as possible. It was noted that Royal British Legion would be organising the Service at the Parish War Memorial in St Andrew's Church themselves this year and they have confirmed that no assistance is required from the Parish Council.

C21.082 COMMUNITY EVENTS

This item was discussed under the Clerk's Report.

C21.083 TREES FOR CELEBRATION OF QUEEN'S PLATINUM JUBILEE

Councillors **NOTED** that the Clerk is currently investigating grants for the provision of trees to be planted in small woods on Weald Common. The Clerk advised Members that the Senior Admin Officer had attended an EALC Webinar that same day which was hosted by ECC who were promoting the Essex Forest Initiative. The Senior Admin Officer was asked to give a brief verbal report. Councillors **AGREED** that the Parish Council's interest in the initiative should be registered and the matter be included on a future agenda for further discussion.

C21.084 NORTH WEALD AIRFIELD MASTERPLAN

Councillors **NOTED** that the Clerk had been investigating as to why the Parish Council had not heard anything regarding the further Consultation in relation to the Airfield Masterplan. It was noted that it is understood that the consultation is currently 'on hold' until late November or December and there is no confirmation as to whether or not Soundings will be involved in this.

C21.085 BATTLE OF BRITAIN SUNDAY

Councillors **NOTED** that unfortunately there did not seem to be an annual service at the Cross of Sacrifice to celebrate Battle of Britain Sunday. The Chairman of the Parish Council laid Wreaths at the Cross, one on behalf of the Parish Council and one on behalf of the Royal Norwegian Airforce. It was noted that photographs had been emailed over to Lt Henning Holm in Norway.

C21.086 DECEMBER MEETING

Councillors **CONFIRMED** that they would be accepting of the December Parish Council Meeting being substituted for the Finance and General Purposes Meeting. It was noted that the Principal Financial Officer is involved in the finalisation of the Neighbourhood Plan and is also away on Annual Leave from the 18th December. This will give enough time to ensure that the Precept and Budget is finalised in time for delivery to EFDC over this busy period.

C21.087 CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR CLOSURE

Councillors **NOTED** that the Parish Council Office will close at 12 noon on Monday, 20th December 2021 and re-open at 9.15am on Wednesday, 5th January 2022. It was noted that the Clerk will have the Council's mobile phone number on during that period for Cemetery Matters and Emergencies. Staff will take the relevant annual leave during this period.

C21.088 VARIOUS ITEMS FOR NOTING

Councillors **NOTED** the following:

- a) Grant Funding – confirmation of £2,000 – ECC Locality Fund, North Weald Allotments.
- b) Flagpoles – the Clerk is still sourcing competitive quotes.

C21.089 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.

C21.090 STAFFING MATTER

Councillors **NOTED** the report attached to the Agenda.

C21.091 DOG BINS

Councillors **NOTED** the contents of the report and **AGREED** to the recommendation, subject to an amendment being made to the contract.

MINUTES

Meeting closed: 8.50pm

Signed

Date