



MINUTES

Meeting: PARISH COUNCIL

Date: 7th October 2024

Time: 7.30PM

Venue: PARISH HALL, THORNWOOD COMMON

PRESENT:

Councillors (9) Cllr Buckley (Chairman), Mrs S Hawkins, R Spearman, Cllr Irvine, Cllr Blanks, Cllr Born, Cllr Stroud, Cllr Clegg, Cllr Mrs Etherington

** for part of meeting*

Officers in Attendance (2)

Susan Deluca - Clerk

Adriana Jones – Principal Finance Officer

Members of the Public (2) – inc EFDC Cllr Burrows and PC Andy Cook*

Members of the Press (1)

C24.094 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (5)

Apologies from Cllrs Bedford, Ms Wood, Kinnear, Tyler, and Mrs Jackman. EFDC Cllrs Holly Whitbread and Bromwich, and ECC Cllr Chris Whitbread had given apologies.

C24.095 OTHER ABSENCES (1)

None.

C24.096 MINUTES

Councillors **AGREED** the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 2nd September. Cllr Blanks asked if the meeting with the director of Qualis had taken place (as per minute C24.080) to which the Clerk advised not yet, but she would chase.

C24.097 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Spearman declared an interest in the Local Plan.

C24.098 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

The meeting Chairman welcomed members of the public present. PC Cook provided an update on the crime statistic for the last three months, stating there had been a burglary at the Co-op in North Weald, one residential burglary in Lancaster Road (domestic related and charged), and a garage burglary in George Avey Croft. Vehicle crime was still the biggest issue for this area, with one vehicle interference in the High Road, 4 thefts of vehicle from the High Road, one theft from a vehicle in the High Road, and in Vicarage Lane where 350L of fuel was removed from a lorry. There had also been criminal damage to a gate at a property in George Avey Croft. PC Cook thanked the Parish Council for cutting back the hedges along the Hastingwood Allotments. He also asked to be advised of any community events at which he could be present. The Chairman thanked him for his report.

Cllr Clegg asked if there had been a response from EFDC regarding the security of Fuel at the new waste depot on the Airfield. The Clerk advised she had not heard back, but that Cllr Burrows may know more, Cllr Burrows stated that it would be biofuel and not diesel, however he was not aware of the security measures, although he expected there to be cameras and the usual security measures in place. The Clerk confirmed she would chase this up, and Cllr Burrows also advised he would speak to EFDC Cllr Balcombe.

C24.099 REPORT OF THE CLERK

The Clerk provided the following reports:

- a) Planning Matters – Various including consultations for Developments in the Parish
- b) Allotment Matters - Cllrs Hawkins and Spearman advised allotments were in a good state now.
- c) Cemetery and Burial Matters – The Clerk reminded Councillors of the visit to Cemetery on 9th October.
- d) PROW – covered in Agenda
- e) Battle of Britain Sunday – also covered in Agenda, however Clerk confirmed event took place on 15th September, and that organisation for this event was taken over from RAFA.
- f) Remembrance Sunday – covered in agenda

C24.100 REPORTS & MEMBERS REPORTS

- a) **Chairman's Report** – The Chairman advised that a number of advertising A-Frame boards continued to be left on highway or private land, and that this matter had been raised with EFDC. This included boards in both the garden by the shops in North Weald, and near the Debt of Honour. The Chairman advised he had no issue with businesses advertising, but this needed to be in the correct place. Cllr Clegg advised that there was also numerous businesses advertising on street lamps between Thornwood and Epping, including for a granite workshop. The Chairman advised that the person dealing with it at EFDC was on holiday until 17th October.

The Chairman also advised that he would soon be starting his annual collection for the Children's Christmas party at Norway House. He also reported that the Christmas Tree previously gifted to the Parish Council from EFDC and planted on the village green had sadly perished despite watering, stating that it wasn't in a particularly good state when this Council received it. It was hoped to purchase and plant another one before Christmas. The Chairman reported that many of the plants in both the sensory garden and garden outside the shops had also sadly perished, and that we would soon be sourcing plants for the winter seasons.

- b) **Vice Chairman's Report** – As mentioned earlier in the meeting, many of the allotments were now being used, and the sites were generally in a good condition, albeit we were coming up to winter so there would now be less activity.
- c) **District & County Councillors Reports** – None
- d) **Parish Councillors Reports** – Cllr Clegg advised that the CSW team would be out twice in the next few weeks, including 16th October were they would be supporting the wider CSW team, and on 31st October in Weald Bridge Road. Cllr Blanks advised Councillors of an article in the Sunday Times a few weeks ago regarding speederbot. Cllr Irvine stated 'speedcamanywhere' was also a good tool.
- e) **Queens Hall Charity Report** – No report.
- f) **Highways** – The Clerk advised that many of the pavements in North Weald seem to have been sprayed with some type of black surfacing. Cllr Etherington asked if the Clerk could establish what this was, as after walking on it it seemed to be sinking, it leaves residue on trainers, and her dogs paws were covered in it when she returned home earlier that evening. It seems to stick to dogs feet like tar, and this is simply not acceptable. The Clerk confirmed she would ask Cllr Chris Whitbread what the purpose of putting down this surface was for. Cllr Born reminded Councillors that some time back this Council has an issue with the quality of work completed on

the pavements, and that Cllr Bedford had said he would take this up with the contactor involved in terms of the quality of work.

C24.101 FINANCIAL REPORTS

- a) Councillors **AGREED** the monthly cheque lists for September 2024, and noted the bank balances as at 30th September 2024.
- b) Members noted that the CCLA investment account now held £150,000, and the investment interest last month was £621.

C24.102 EXTERNAL AUDIT -NOTICE OF COMPLETION OF EXTERNAL AUDIT 2023/2024

Councillors **NOTED** that the Limited Assurance review of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR – External Audit) for 2023/2024 had concluded. In accordance with the regulations, a copy of the Notice of Conclusion of Audit had been placed on notice boards in the Parish and on the Councils website, together with a copy of the certified AGAR sections 1, 2 and 3. Councillors noted there was no action to take.

C24.103 STREET LIGHTING ELECTRICITY SUPPLY (NON METERED)

Members noted that the street lighting electricity supply contract would come to an end in November, and there were currently no Suppliers who were willing to enter into long term contracts. This Council was fortunate that we had an extended contract, however all of the companies that had been contacted so far had come back advising that they expect the cost to be at least double what we have been paying. The PFO advised that NALC had a joint relationship with Utility Aid, and that she had contacted them, and they in turn confirmed they would go out to tender to see who would be offering the best deal.

C24.104 MEETING BETWEEN EFDC, MARKET OPERATOR AND CHAIRMAN OF PARISH COUNCIL – NORTH WEALD MARKET TRAFFIC REPORT

Members noted the revised report which was attached to the agenda, with the Clerk stating that she believed this was probably a living document. It was noted that it was expected that an extension of time for the market was due to be agreed at EFDC Cabinet this night. The Chairman advised that EFDC did state at the recent meeting that contracts were due to be renewed. Cllr Born asked if this extension of contract was for the market itself, or for the operator who runs it, however this was not clear. The Clerk advised that they were talking of extending the current operator's contract for an additional three years. The Chairman advised that the attached report included traffic measures to be introduced, stating that the traffic impacts were of great concern to local residents, and this Council had put EFDC on the spot to get them to address how they were going to sort this problem out, especially in light of when the Google site becomes operational. Cllr Born advised that he was speaking to the transport people recently and had suggested to them that a shuttle bus could be put on to collect people from local towns and bring them to the market, however was advised there were not any drivers to run the buses.

C24.105 REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY COMMERMORATIVE EVENTS 2024

Members were advised of the following actions that had been taken:

- Advert placed in Village Life regarding the Lunch & Service
- Royal British Legion had been informed
- Invitations gone out
- Lunch arranged
- Vicar booked
- Bugler booked
- All other arrangements are in hand

The Clerk advised that there had been 17 responses so far in terms of attendance at the memorial, with 16 bookings for lunch. The poster in North Weald Village Life would be going out again in the next edition, and also placed on social media and notice boards. The Clerk advised it was normal to have a flurry of late replies, however this year the programme would be printed on 28th October so anybody confirming after this date would not be included in the programme. The Chairman advised that there would be a service at St Andrews Church earlier in the day, followed by a service at the Debt of Honour.

The Clerk advised that she had been contacted by David Lodge and asked that a Wreath be laid by the plaque at the Memorial Playing Field, as it is named in memory of those who died in the world war. The Clerk reminded Members that there were also other areas where it could be appropriate to lay wreaths, such as where the 9 Airmen died in Hampden Close, and at the Revetments on the Airfield. Going back in history War Memorials were erected for 'parishioners' to come and commemorate their loved ones and those they knew, who had been lost and died during conflict. The Chairman suggested that rather than laying a wreath at all these additional locations, a single wreath should be laid at the foot of the Norwegian stone to cover all three. This was **AGREED**.

C24.106 DEVELOPER WORKING GROUP MEETING

Councillors noted the date of the next Developer Working Group meeting would be Thursday 17th October 2024, 7pm in the Thornwood Common Parish Hall.

C24.107 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Members recalled that in early 2023, the Parish Council decided to permanently place its Neighbourhood Plan on hold. The Clerk provided an update, specifically referencing the fact that EFDC was now considering the introduction of a Community Infrastructure Levy. The Parish Council would be entitled to 15% of these funds, however if it had a 'made' Neighbourhood Plan, this increases to 25%. The PFO advised that the CIL cannot be applied retrospectively, and that for any applications where permission has been granted, including outline, this could not be applied. Councillors **AGREED** that the PFO should complete a cost benefit analysis to establish if this was worth pursuing, and to report back at the November meeting.

C24.108 PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY – JOINING UP OF TWO FOOTPATHS WEALD COMMON

The Clerk advised she was still awaiting a formal response from ECC on this matter, however she would be meeting with ECC Cllr Whitbread at the upcoming Councillor Surgery event and raise this matter with him.

C24.109 TRIP TO AIR AMBULANCE STATION ON NORTH WEALD AIRFIELD

Five members of the Council had attended a trip around the Air Ambulance Station on North Weald Airfield on 5th September at 6.00pm. The Chairman provided a brief update, advising it was a fantastic and interesting tour, and Councillors were very well looked after. They also had the opportunity to see a helicopter taking off, which was great to see, stating that these individuals do a wonderful job. The Chairman stated that at the precept meeting, he would like Council to consider making a contribution towards this service – perhaps £500 – stating that as a Parish Council and on behalf of residents we should support them. Cllr Etherington provided a brief update, stating that the Air Ambulance had actually purchased this specific piece of land from EFDC. Cllr Clegg expressed his concern regarding this. It was also noted that the Air Ambulance working on donations gives them far more flexibility rather than being a charity.

C24.110 BATTLE OF BRITAIN SUNDAY

As briefly reported earlier, the Commemorations took place on 15th of September at 3.00pm at the Cross of Sacrifice in the grounds of St Andrews Church, North Weald. A number of dignitaries were in

attendance, and it does now seem that as RAFA are unable to organise this service, going forward it will fall to the Parish Council to undertake its organisation.

C24.111 VISIT TO NORTH WEALD CEMETERY

Members *NOTED* that prior to the next meeting of the Environmental & Open Spaces Committee a visit to the Cemetery and the rear area of the Cemetery will be held for all Councillors, as there will be a discussion of the Environmental & Open Spaces Committee which will be specific to certain areas of the cemetery.

C24.112 METAL DOG WASTE SIGNS

Members were advised that the Metal Signs that EFDC stated they would provide to the Parish Council had now been received, however only seven signs had been received after requesting 23. The Clerk and the Chairman will decide on the best locations for these to be erected. Further signs will be ordered, however these will have to be plastic and they will have the NWBPC Logo on and not EFDC one as the Parish Council is unable to reproduce the EFDC Logo, although the narrative will remain the same.

C24.113 NOTICEBOARDS

Members were advised that a number of the Parish Councils ‘Old Style’ Wooden Open Notice Boards were now becoming damaged and are beyond repair. It will be necessary place these on the Precept for replacement – there are currently 5 which will need replacing. Cllr Irvine asked if the locations could be moved, however the ones he referred to in Hastingwood did not belong to the Parish Council. The Clerk asked Hastingwood Councillors to put forward suggested alternative locations.

Meeting closed 8.38pm:

Signed

Date