



DRAFT MINUTES

Meeting: PARISH COUNCIL

Date: 7th September 2020

Time: 7.30PM

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

PRESENT:

Councillors (11) A Buckley (Chairman), T Blanks, B Clegg, G Mulliner, A Irvine, R Spearman, M Stroud, A Tyler, Ms D Wood, Ms Coop-Rodia, Mrs S Jackman MBE*

*Attended part of the Meeting (apologies for absence had been received)

Officers in Attendance (3)

Susan Deluca - Clerk

Adriana Jones – Principal Financial Officer

Joanna Tyler – Senior Administrative Officer

Also Present (1)

District Councillor L Burrows (Thornwood Ward)

Members of the Public (0)

Members of the Press (1)

The Chairman read out a statement regarding The Law and new regulations which had come into force on 4 April 2020 which allow councils to hold virtual meetings at which members attend remotely via video conferencing. The regulations, in response to the Coronavirus crisis and the need for social distancing and isolation, ended the previous requirement for voting members to attend meetings in person. These regulations are in place for a period of one year. A full copy of the statement is attached to the minutes.

C20.069 CO-OPTION OF COUNCILLOR FOR HASTINGWOOD WARD

Members recalled that they had agreed to hold this Co-Option over until either the September Meeting or until when Meetings could be held 'In Person'. There had been no change to Government Guidance, therefore meetings should continue to be held remotely, ie., electronically. Members **NOTED** that there had been one application received from a local resident for the position of Councillor for Hastingwood Ward. A copy of the resident's CV was attached to the Agenda for Members perusal. The Chairman advised that the applicant, Ms Carmela Coop-Rodia, was present and requested that she leave the meeting whilst discussed her application. Following discussion, Councillors **AGREED** that Ms Coop-Rodia be Co-Opted to the position of Councillor for Hastingwood Ward. Ms Coop-Rodia re-joined the meeting and the Chairman advised her of the decision. The Chairman thanked Ms Coop-Rodia for her interest and also thanked her for undertaking the role of warden for Wheelers Farm Garden Allotment Site. The Clerk asked Ms Coop-Rodia to sign and date the Declaration of Office (which had been included with her Agenda pack). The Clerk confirmed that she would make arrangements to collect the signed Declaration, upon receipt of which she would also sign and date

it. The Clerk also asked Ms Coop-Rodia to complete the Register of Interests form, which she would collect at the same time.

C20.070 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (3)

Apologies received from Cllrs N Bedford, Mrs A Grigg, Mrs S Hawkins

C20.071 OTHER ABSENCES (0)

None.

C20.072 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the 6th July 2020 were **APPROVED**.

The Minutes of the Environmental Meeting held on the 13th July 2020 were **NOTED**.

C20.073 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Spearman declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in any agenda item concerning the Local Plan. Cllr Stroud declared a non pecuniary interest in any item concerning the Scouts Association. Cllr Mulliner declared a non pecuniary interest in agenda item 19 and in item 17 and as a member of the Royal British Legion. Cllr Ms Coop-Rodia declared a non pecuniary interest in any item concerning the allotments. Cllr Blanks and the Chairman declared a non pecuniary interest in agenda item 17 as members of the Royal British Legion. Cllr Ms Wood, Cllr Blanks and Cllr Mulliner declared a non pecuniary interest in agenda item 31 as members of the Queens Hall Charity.

C20.074 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no members of the public present.

C20.075 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 any additional items would be reported during the meeting.

C20.076 REPORTS AND MEMBERS REPORTS

a) Chairman's Report – The Chairman referred to the garden in front of the parade of shops and confirmed that the sponsorship plaques were now in place. The Chairman advised that he had submitted an article to be printed in the next edition of North Weald Village Life Magazine thanking the sponsors.

The Chairman asked for his thanks to be recorded to Cllr Bedford for continuing to raise the flags on the Village Green.

The Chairman mentioned the problems being experienced with Social Media. All Members had received copies of the exchanges recently posted. The Chairman commented that he believed the Council had now come to the end of its tether. He said that not only are the comments defamatory they are insulting to the Parish Council. The Chairman said that the Council should now be taking positive action and reminded Members of their agreement to form a "Rapid Response Team" at the

last meeting. He said that the Clerk is in the process of creating a dossier of comments made, not only from a legal aspect but also from a police aspect. The Chairman advised that Cllr Irvine would cover this matter in more detail later in the meeting.

b) Vice Chairman's Report – No report

c) District Councillors Reports – Cllr Burrows advised that he had attended a meeting with the Corporation of London regarding the B1393 speed request from St Margarets Hospital to North Weald and that hopefully this would be going ahead soon.

Cllr Burrows referred to the recent Councillors Surgery held at the Parish Hall in Thornwood and mentioned that there had been a number of complaints about Helicopter noise. Cllr Burrows informed Members that ECC Cllr Anthony Jackson has said that he would be organising a meeting with other relevant bodies. Cllr Burrows said that he would keep the Parish Council updated with regard to that meeting.

Cllr Burrows advised that the District Council Offices may possibly return for the Councillors in the first part of next year.

d) County Councillor Reports – The Clerk advised that a report from ECC Cllr Whitbread would be covered in the agenda under Highways.

e) Parish Councillors Reports – Cllr Blanks commented that it looked as though the next EFDC Cabinet Meeting would be an interesting one as far as residents of North Weald are concerned and he would advise them to view the meeting. Cllr Blanks said that the meeting was mainly about Qualis, the Company which EFDC have formed to look after such things as development. However, he said that if you tie that in with what the inspector has said about how many houses the EFDC is probably likely to require, as far as the Government is concerned, the number is reduced by over 5,000. Cllr Blanks said that the question is whether they are going to reduce the number of houses, or whether they are just going to plough ahead with the 11,000 put forward in what is called the emerging Local Plan. Cllr Blanks commented that he believed EFDC would have a very good reason for reducing the numbers of houses, however, it may not help North Weald.

Speedwatch – Cllr Clegg advised that Speedwatch is currently on hold as they had not been picked as one of the start-up groups. Cllr Clegg informed Members that he had been in contact with the co-ordinator for North Weald who had advised him that they were also on hold. Cllr Clegg reported that one of the volunteers had been carrying out 3 clandestine checks in Upland Road from his front window and speeds had varied from 8% to 19%. One passing vehicle had been recorded as travelling at 56mph. The volunteer had passed the information to the police. Cllr Clegg mentioned the notice regarding Local Heroes and asked the Clerk if it was just for North Weald. The Clerk confirmed that it was under District Cllr Jaymey McIvor's area, which is North Weald.

f) Queens Hall Report – Cllr Ms Wood reported that the hall is back open and that most of the users are back in. Cllr Ms Wood advised that the hall had lost a couple of users, one of which is Tai Chi. However, she had managed to fill those slots. Cllr Ms Wood advised that she has been referring potential hirers to the Parish Hall if she is unable to accommodate them. Cllr Ms Wood advised that there is an item later in the agenda regarding the boiler. Members **NOTED** that the Annual General Meeting and Annual Meeting was scheduled to be held the following evening.

The Chairman asked if the recent “Free Food for All” had been a success. Cllr Ms Wood confirmed that it had been, however, she advised that there had been some negative comments on social media about it. Cllr Ms Wood gave a brief report regarding the positive feedback she had received from people. She advised that she would be looking at ways to give further support, in particular looking at donations of pet food as well. Cllr Clegg informed Members that his wife is a volunteer at the Foodbank in Epping. He advised that the area co-ordinator who covers the whole of the district had offered her services, if required. Cllr Clegg asked if he should liaise with the Clerk regarding this. The Clerk confirmed that he should.

g) Neighbourhood Plan – The Principal Financial Officer referred back to the earlier report given by Cllr Blanks under Parish Council Reports and advised that District Cllr Burrows had confirmed that the next EFDC Cabinet Meeting is scheduled to be held on Monday, 14th September at 7pm.

The PFO reported that on the 12th August 2020, the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, made up of a very committed group of local residents who have worked very hard, agreed to appoint Navigus Planning to complete the final stages of the Neighbourhood Plan. Navigus Planning will bring together all the evidence and draft the plan itself. Although the appointment was approved by the Neighbourhood Plan Sub Committee, Councillors were asked to ratify the appointment. The PFO shared information regarding the costs. Cllr Tyler asked if it was expected to be the high scenario or the low. The PFO stated that it could be either. The Chairman asked Members to raise their hands if they were in agreement. All Members **AGREED** to **RATIFY** the appointment.

h) Local Plan – The Principal Financial Officer referred Members to the copy of the letter from Louise Phillips, Inspector for EFDC’s Local Plan, which was attached to the agenda. The Inspector had written to Epping Forest District Council asking for the Council’s opinion as to if a meaningful change in the housing situation had occurred as a result of changes in the ONS 2018 Based Household Projections. The PFO reported that no response to this letter had been published on the District Council’s website. The PFO stated that this is what Cllr Blanks had referred to earlier when he commented with regard to the reduction in the numbers of homes that may be needed.

Following lengthy discussion, Councillors **AGREED** that the Clerk and PFO would look to form a Sub Committee Group, if appropriate, to discuss what action needed to be taken by the Parish Council in response to the changes. Councillors Blanks, Tyler, Irvine, Stroud and Ms Coop-Rodia agreed to be

part of the Sub Committee.

i) **Highways Report** – Councillors *NOTED* that Highways would be covered under an item in the main Agenda.

C20.077 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 31st August 2020. Members *NOTED* the account balances at the end of the month.

C20.078 ‘GOING FORWARD’ PARISH COUNCIL

a) Parish Hall at Thornwood

Councillors *NOTED* that following a considerable amount of administrative work to ensure that the Parish Hall is ‘Covid-19’ Free, the Hall reopened on 1st August. All User Groups have been written to on a regular basis, with the last email being sent to the co-ordinators on 18th August. It was noted that the Bowmen are the only User Group returning in September. The ‘Over 60’s’ Tuesday Club is expected to return in October. Notification has been received that the Seniors and the Flower Club will return in January, with Mums and Tots possibly returning as well. The Hands on Healing Group do not currently know when they can return. It was noted that two parties have been pre-booked and other groups are making tentative enquiries for evening bookings.

Councillors *NOTED* that meetings have been held with the Parish Council Staff to ensure that they are content with the Parish Council’s Covid-19 Regulations that have been put in place and that employees have to be consulted upon. The Caretaker is also back to regular employment and adhering to the enhanced cleaning schedule. The Clerk reported that it takes the Caretaker approximately 90 minutes to clean following an event.

Councillors *NOTED* that the Parish Hall had been open (from 3rd August) on a limited one day a week basis, as The Parish Council Face to Face Administration Centre. The first two days had shown encouraging signs with 5 residents per day visiting the centre for enquiries. The third and fourth week there were less visits, however it was believed that there were probably quite a number of residents away on ‘staycations’. In the third week an EFDC Councillor Surgery was hosted, with all appointments for Cllr Whitbread’s Surgery taken. Two other District Councillors were also in attendance and the afternoon was very busy and a complete success. Two further Surgeries are planned to take place before the end of the year.

b) ECC Library

Councillors *NOTED* that despite constant reminders to the Library Service over the last few months, the Parish Council are still awaiting a copy of the Risk Assessment or the enhanced Cleaning Schedule from ECC. Notwithstanding the previous communications that have been presented to Members, no further communications have been received from ECC regarding the Parish Council Office within the Library. Members were reminded that the Parish Council no longer has a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with ECC (as mentioned in documentation previously

circulated). Members recalled that Cllr David Finch made a statement that no Library in Essex will close within a 5 year term, therefore North Weald Library will 'Remain Open' for residents for that period of time.

Councillors are aware that social distancing cannot be carried out within the Parish Office within North Weald Library. It was noted that under the 'Covid-19 Road Map', Employees considerations must be taken into account on how they feel in relation to returning to the workplace. At the current time none of the Parish Council Staff would feel safe working within the Library whilst Covid-19 is still an issue and would continue to want to work in a Covid-19 Secure Environment, which the Parish Hall and working from home offers. Councillors **NOTED** that the Clerk's recommendation would be that the temporary move to the Parish Hall is now made a permanent move. It was noted that the office within the Parish Hall, which has been occupied, is to become vacant by the end of the year and this could be utilised by the Parish Council. It was noted that it is expected that a permanent office building for the Parish Council can be written into the Local Plan when the housing being developed by Countryside Homes commences.

The Clerk reported that Cllr Ms Wood had offered use of the Committee Room in the Queens Hall. The Parish Council would therefore be able to offer an 'Outreach' Centre one morning a week in North Weald. The Chairman asked if any equipment would need to be moved to the Queens Hall. The Clerk advised that the Parish Council has a small portable photocopier which could be used. The PFO confirmed that the Covid-19 screens are portable and would be able to be used at the Queens Hall. All Councillors **AGREED** that the temporary move to the Parish Hall should be made permanent.

c) 'Going Forward' - Parish Council Electronic Management of PC Functions
Councillors **NOTED** that an update regarding progress with this matter would be given at the October Parish Council Meeting.

d) 'Going Forward' – Highway Matters

i) Members **RECALLED** that it was reported at the last meeting that over the last few months reporting and actual work on these issues had become increasingly more difficult, especially by Essex County Council, when the issues do not get resolved for a considerable time. We are often not able to re-report or chase the matter on the website. It was previously reported the fact that the website clearly states that if the person reporting the issue believes there is a risk to health and safety, they should call ECC Highways as a matter of urgency. If we try to do this, we get told to report the issue via the website – it is a 'catch 22' situation. It was noted that, more often than not, we are not given an exact location or seen the issue in person, therefore we are unable to provide full details of the issue to ECC Highways, which means we are falling at the first hurdle. Members **NOTED** that this matter was brought up at the District / County Council Surgery with Cllr Chris Whitbread. A large number of issues were identified, including items which have been placed on the Local Highways Panel for consideration and which are detailed as being under the wrong Parish Council, ie., Epping Town Council instead of North Weald. Also items that need maintenance such as Footpath repairs and hedges cutting back where no action had been taken. Also highlighted were items which had the same comments being

made by ECC Highways (at least three times) which resulted in no action being taken for over a year. Members **NOTED** that Cllr Chris Whitbread would be investigating these matters on behalf of the Parish Council.

Councillors **NOTED** that Cllr Buckley had spoken with Cllr Whitbread at his Highways Surgery regarding the inaction on numerous Highways matters over the last 18 months. These matters included the re-marking of the white lines along the High Road in North Weald and the continuing problems at the High Road / Wellington Road Roundabout junction. Cllr Buckley provided Cllr Whitbread with photos and a dossier of all the problems that have been given to ECC over the last 18 months. Cllr Whitbread has promised to look at this personally in his capacity as ECC Councillor with a responsibility for LHP/Highways.

The Chairman advised that he had received some comments back from Cllr Whitbread. Members **NOTED** that bollards are to be installed at the end of Church Lane towards the end of September / beginning of October. Also the white-lining of the High Road with Wellington Road Roundabout junction had been placed at the top of the list.

ii) Members **RECALLED** that they had been asked to provide details of potholes in their areas. A full dossier of the information received from Members has been forwarded to the Local Essex County Councillors for action, this included photos, road names, etc. The roads submitted included the following:-

NORTH WEALD: Bassett Gardens; Beaufort Close; Blackhorse Lane; Emberson Way; Hampden Close; High Road (opposite entrance to parade of shops); High Road (just before roundabout near to Wellington Road); Higham View; Pike Way; Silver Birch Avenue; York Road

THORNWOOD: Rowley Mead

HASTINGWOOD: Hastingwood Road; London Road (opposite Miller & Carter)

Members **NOTED** that it is not known whether all the potholes will be filled, or whether the road surfaces will be re-tarmacked, but as the Parish Council has reported these as requested, the details will be kept in the Highways file.

C20.079 CEMETERY

Councillors **NOTED** that in July / August there had been one further Burial and one further interment of Ashes. Work to the rubbing down and oiling of the benches is shortly to commence.

C20.080 'GOING FORWARD' PARISH COUNCIL

a) Additional CCTV Camera at Thornwood

Councillors **NOTED** that since the installation of the CCTV at the Parish Hall, the Parish Council had been asked to view the cameras numerous times. This was in response to requests from the police, as well as numerous incidences of anti-social behaviour and other matters reported at the last meeting. It was noted that the

car park is being used for car repairs, learning to drive, some seemingly unauthorised activities which may be of interest to the police, storing of vehicles, dumping of rubbish, U turns for lorries and many other activities. The Clerk advised that the police had suggested that the Parish Council may wish to consider installing a 5th camera to cover the Play Area and part of the field. Following discussion, a decision to use the Delegated Powers of the Chairman and the Clerk was made to authorise the purchase and installation of the additional camera. Members **NOTED** that the cost for the groundworks and the installation would be a total of £1770. All Councillors were in agreement to **RATIFY** the cost.

b) CCTV at Weald Common Play Area

Councillors **NOTED** that the Parish Council is still awaiting the transfer of the CCTV to be placed under the maintenance contract of Essential Group. Some operation difficulties are being experienced by Essential with regard to the Operations Cabinet. The Clerk confirmed that an update would be given at the October Meeting.

c) Consideration of CCTV in Additional Areas

The Clerk reminded Members that if there are any other areas they would like to see put forward for consideration for CCTV coverage, to send in their suggestions for the Budget and Precept Meeting scheduled to be held in December.

C20.081 GDPR FILING

Councillors **NOTED** that limited progress had been made during August into the GDPR filing by the Clerk. The last cabinet from the Library Store Room is currently being sorted through. Work is ongoing.

C20.082 AUDIT

Councillors **NOTED** that the Parish Council has had notification that all the relevant documentation had been received by the External Auditor. Once formal notification of any findings has been received this will be reported to Members.

C20.083 ALLOTMENTS

a) General Report

Councillors **NOTED** that a telephone complaint had been received regarding the fact that the access hours on the Wheelers Farm Garden Site had reverted back to the normal hours of 'from Dawn to Dusk' and that a plot holder had accessed the allotments outside of these hours. The complainant had also said that there were other items that they wished to complain about. During the lengthy telephone conversation, the Clerk had advised the complainant that all plot holders have been advised to adhere to Government Guidelines and to keep to the hours of entry and exit and to keep to social distancing and ensure that they sanitise their hands. The complainant advised that they did not want to put anything in writing but wanted action taken. The Clerk advised that she could not take any action unless she had written notification of what the complaints actually were, as the telephone conversation was not actually giving her all the indications of the complaints. The complainant said that they were refusing to put the complaint in writing. It was noted that the Clerk wrote to the complainant immediately following the telephone conversation and asked them to put any complaints that they had to

the Parish Council in writing in order for it to be considered. The Clerk informed Members that the complainant had now written to the Parish Council and the item would be covered under the Supplementary Agenda.

Councillor Ms Coop-Rodia reported that a lot of work had been undertaken at the Wheelers Farm Garden Allotment Site. It had been a massive success, especially during Lockdown. She said that there is now a real sense of community, with a variety of age groups. The plot holders had recently organised a socially distanced barbecue. They now have bees being kept on the allotment site which have produced their first batch of honey. The Chairman congratulated Cllr Ms Coop-Rodia on the hard work that has taken place. Cllr Ms Coop-Rodia thanked the Chairman and stated that it was also down to the allotment tenants.

b) De Allotmentisation of Hastingwood B

The Clerk advised that this was still a work in progress and stated that an update would be given at the October Meeting.

c) Hastingwood Allotments, Dedication of Seat

Councillors were reminded that the Hastingwood Allotment Holders have organised a bench to be placed in the Hastingwood Allotment site in memory of the Lloyd Family. Members recalled that the Parish Council had received a small grant of £500 for a seat from the Stansted Airport Trust. The grant monies were put towards the purchase of the seat as the Lloyd family had connections to the RAF. Fred Lloyd had served throughout the war with the RAF. The Lloyd family were much loved residents of Hastingwood and Ken, their only child, died at the beginning of this year. Ken had been a keen allotment tenant and gardener. Members **NOTED** that a small dedication event had been organised to take place on the 26th September at Hastingwood Allotments to which all Councillors are invited. Members **AGREED** to allocate some funding towards the refreshments for this event. The Clerk advised Members that they were trying to link this event in with the Defibrillator event at Hastingwood Village Hall.

d) Community Allotment Garden in Thornwood on Charlie's Garden

Councillors **NOTED** that Grant Funding of £3,000 had been received from Cllr Chris Whitbread via the ECC Local Services Fund for a Community Garden. Work has started on the Garden, with clearance works already begun and also works to some of the overgrown hedges. The Clerk advised that Cllr Mrs Hawkins had made arrangements for some plans to be drawn up.

e) Community Allotment Garden, Wheelers Farm Gardens

Councillors **NOTED** that the Parish Council is awaiting an update from Victoria Robertson at EFDC regarding further actions on the Community Allotment at Wheelers Farm Gardens. Cllr Ms Coop-Rodia offered to contact Victoria.

C20.084 DEFIBRILLATOR

Councillors **NOTED** that the defibrillator had now been installed at Hastingwood Village Hall. Arrangements are in hand for a small event to publicise the 'opening' of the defibrillator at the hall. The Clerk informed Members that Cllr Irvine had received a request from a local resident (whose relative had recently

passed away) who would like the defibrillator to be dedicated in memory of their relative. The Clerk stated that she had explained that this could be difficult as the defibrillator was purchased with Parish Funds. Members noted that the Clerk had posed the question to the Clerk's Forum to ascertain if anyone else had received a similar request, however no one was able to suggest anything. Members noted that the two defibrillators in Thornwood and North Weald were purchased with funds that had been donated. The Chairman suggested that a rose could be planted near to the defibrillator in memory of the person. Cllr Tyler suggested that a plaque could be placed there saying that it is "dedicated in the memory of". The Clerk suggested that the plaque could say "was placed here in memory of". Cllr Irvine said that he would not have asked for the defibrillator if the family had not suggested it. All Members **AGREED** to a plaque and asked that the Clerk find the appropriate action.

C20.085 REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY & DEBT OF HONOUR

Councillors recalled that, following the July Meeting, it was agreed that no decisions would be taken with regard to Remembrance Sunday arrangements until the September Meeting. The matter was discussed in considerable detail and in great depth. It was further agreed that Government Guidance and the current state of the pandemic would be 'key' to going forward in this matter. It was agreed that the Community Luncheon would not take place this year.

The Chairman reminded Members of the three options considered, as follows:-

Option 1: If the service were to take place in the usual format and considering current Social Distancing measures (even 1 metre), consideration would need to be given to the following:-

- Road closure to enable those attending to stand in the road (as a larger area will be needed to accommodate those that normally attend). **Liaise with EFDC and Essex Police to obtain a permit to close Hurricane Way to vehicles. The road closure would need to be in place from early in the morning until at least 1.30pm.**
- **Where would cars park? There would be no access to Bookers Car Park if permission is granted to close the road.**
- Seating for Wreath Layers – at last years' service a total of 36 wreaths were laid. A total of 70 seats were provided for wreath layers. An additional 10 seats were made available to others attending the service. **We would not be able to provide seating if Social Distancing measures are still in place, due to the layout of the site.**
- **The grass area and the road would need to be marked out to indicate where people should stand.**
- Service Sheets – **would it be appropriate to hand these out?**
- Attendance at the Wreath Laying Service increases year on year, **the Parish Office Staff on their own would be unable to manage the social distancing of those attending, therefore consideration may need to be given to the employment of Marshalls for the duration of the event.**

Option 2: An alternative suggestion to the usual format could be for the Parish Council to hold its own Wreath Laying Service for Councillors only. This could

either be held early in the day, for example 9.30am to 10am, or at the usual time 12.15pm, however the service would be an informal one. Members of the public would not be invited to attend. Representatives of other organisations who would usually be present could lay their own wreath any time after the Parish Council had laid their Wreath with no formal programme of events taking place.

Option 3: The preferred way forward would probably be to hold an informal Wreath Laying Service at 12.15pm at the Debt of Honour. The Parish Council would write to the normal Invitees and advise them that the event this year would be informal with informal Wreath Laying only and no formal event happening except the opportunity to lay a Wreath. There would be no formal Order of Precedence for this year due to Covid-19 and the situation would be *managed in a way which would simply be as safe as possible* for all who attend under the current circumstances and would simply give attendees the opportunity to lay a Wreath. Any of the usual attendees who were not able to attend and wanted to purchase a wreath could ask a representative of the Parish Council to lay this on their behalf.

The Chairman stated that he believed that the preferred way forward would be Option 3. Cllr Stroud stated that he agreed that Option 3 appeared to be the most palatable. However, he said that he believed there would still be a need for some administration on the day. Cllr Stroud referred to VE Day and said that everybody just stood around waiting for something to happen. The Clerk stated that the Parish Staff would be there and would probably hand out a notice apologising that there is no service as normally expected. Cllr Stroud stated that he would probably be there on the day with the Scouts and thanked the Clerk. All Members **AGREED** with the preferred Option 3.

Wreath Orders: Councillors **NOTED** that the Parish Staff are currently trying to order 20 wreaths to assist the Royal British Legions' Representative who feels that she is unable to take this responsibility on this year. It was noted that any wreaths ordered through the Parish Council would be on a 'first come, first served' basis as we may not be able to obtain more.

The Royal British Legion Services: Councillors were **REMINDED** of the explanation given at the previous meeting. Due to the complexity of undertaking Risk Assessments of other people's services, the Parish Council would not be able to organise the RBL'S Event for them, however, if the RBL do decide to hold the event, the Staff are happy to undertake any necessary photocopying.

C20.086 PLAY AREAS

Councillors **NOTED** that the Play Areas continue to be used. New signage is currently being replaced. New Anti-Vandal bins are also being installed. It was noted that works to the play areas Wet Pour are currently being undertaken and the new swings are being installed. The Police have an ongoing investigation in relation to the Vandalism and Arson at Weald Common Play Area. The Parish Staff are currently liaising with the Insurance Company with regard to this matter.

The Principal Financial Officer reported that regular checks of the play areas have

been undertaken during a period of two and a half months and during this period, the Wet Pour has shrunk significantly. Councillors **NOTED** that there would need to be a regular programme of inspections to monitor this. The Clerk advised that the RoSPA checks were due to be undertaken in September, therefore she would wait to see the reports before assessing what action would need to be taken.

C20.087 CAR PARK FOR WEALD COMMON & PLAY AREA

Councillors **NOTED** that there had been a lot of chatter on Facebook in relation to the Car Park at North Weald Village Hall. Members were **REMINDED** that the Parish Council own and manage 10 Parking Spaces, 2 of which are allocated to the Village Hall. It was noted that the Parish Council had been asked whether it would be possible for the spaces to be marked advising that the Parish Council has responsibility for the spaces and that they are for the purpose of those using Weald Common or the Weald Common Play Area. The Clerk advised Members that Cllr Mulliner, as Chairman of North Weald Village Hall had put out a statement in response to the comments on Social Media. The Clerk stated that she thought it would be a good idea to mark the spaces. The Chairman said that he agreed and by doing so it would make it clearer for where people can park. Cllr Ms Coop-Rodia said that it was her understanding the comments made on Social Media had started when the pre-school re-opened and suggested that it may be easier to mark out the spaces that belong to the Village Hall. The Clerk advised that the Parish Council only have 8 spaces and stated that the rest belong to the Village Hall. The PFO stated that this is part of the complication as people do not realise that the Village Hall own most of the car park spaces. Cllr Ms Wood said that she did not realise how busy the car park is and asked if the Vets owned any spaces.

Cllr Mulliner advised that his statement had said that all of the land, the field, the car park, apart from the 8 spaces allocated to the Parish Council, all belongs to the Village Hall with a right of way running through it up to the farm, etc. Cllr Mulliner said that the Village Hall had stated that they would accept no liability whatsoever for cars parked in the car park. Cllr Mulliner commented that the Parish Hall in Thornwood had the same problem with its car park when permission was given for people to park there and it was totally abused. Cllr Mulliner said that in the past they had allowed people to park there when the hall was not busy, however they had created a liability and they were no longer prepared to do that as the hall's insurance will not cover anybody parking there. Cllr Mulliner said that even if he blocked off all of the parking spaces, apart from the Parish Council's, people would take no notice and park there anyway. Cllr Mulliner said that when people are asked not to park there, 99% of people do take notice.

The Chairman said that it reflects the lack of parking facilities in the village. The PFO commented that this was something that was consulted on in the Neighbourhood Plan and a possible solution may be put forward. The Chairman said that in conclusion, the Clerk would be asked to organise the signs to mark the Parish Council's parking spaces.

C20.088 PLANNING FOR OUR FUTURE

Councillors **NOTED** that on 6th August, the Government had released a Planning

White Paper entitled 'Planning for the Future'. A link to the web accessible version had been included on the agenda. Councillors noted the following:-

The paper proposes a major overhaul of how planning is dealt with across the country, and is seeking views from all communities, families, groups and individuals on the proposals. These changes will undoubtedly have an impact on how planning is dealt with a local level, with a greater emphasis being placed on community engagement being at the start of the Local Plan process, rather than at the time of individual applications. The content of the White Paper is wide ranging and vast, and it is recommended that Councillors take the time to review the document. A summary of some of the proposed changes are as follows: • Local Plans would need to be created within a 30 month period, with public consultation taking place at the start and end of the process, with residents being asked for put forward suggested areas for development.

- The Government will impose a 'binding' housing figure to the Local Planning Authority by way of a standard method for assessing local housing need.
- New Local Plans would set out three categories of land – Growth Areas, Renewal Areas, Protected Areas – with some of the areas being granted 'permission in principle' at the time the Local Plan is made.
- Day to day planning decisions would be covered by national, not local, policy.
- Great emphasis on good design, creating beautiful homes reflecting local character.
- Move to make the entire planning system fit for modern electronic age, engaging with the PropTech sector to make it easier for people to access the data and express their views.
- System will be driven by Data, and will be visual and map based, with the need for numerous lengthy reports accompanying planning application being restricted and no longer needed.
- Great emphasis to improve the energy efficiency standards for buildings.
- Enforcement powers and sanctions to be strengthened.
- New development needs to create 'net gain' not just 'no net harm'.
- Sec 106 and CIL to be combined into one 'Infrastructure Levy'.

This Planning White Paper comes shortly after a number of changes have been made to Permitted Development Rights, details of which have been reported to the Planning Committee. The paper is also being consulted on at the same time as another consultation entitled 'Changes to the Current Planning System', which set out our proposals for measures to improve the effectiveness of the current system, including changes to the Standard Method for assessing local housing need, securing First Homes, temporarily lifting small sites threshold for affordable housing units and extending the current Permission in Principle to major developments. A link to the full copy of the consultation was given on the agenda.

The PFO gave a brief report and highlighted a number of good and bad elements. The Chairman asked Members if they wished to consider responding. The Clerk advised that the PFO would put together a response on behalf of the Parish Council. All Councillors **AGREED**. Cllr Mrs Jackman MBE asked for the response to be circulated to Members in case of any changes. The PFO confirmed that the Clerk would circulate the response for Members to agree.

C20.089 GOLF COURSE AT THE REAR OF THE CEMETERY

Councillors **NOTED** that the new gate, some additional fencing and a sign has been put in place on the Bridleway adjacent to the Cemetery. It was noted that it was understood that there were still some instances of anti-social behaviour taking place on the land at the rear of the Cemetery. The appropriate authorities have been advised of the continuing problems. It was noted that Residents are concerned that other authorities such as ECC and the Parochial Church Council (PCC) are not actually taking up the role that they have to play in this matter.

The Clerk advised that she had been informed that the Police had executed a number of Section 59 notices and explained that if the persons are caught again, their bikes would be confiscated. Discussion ensued regarding which route the bikers are now believed to be using to access the golf course. The Chairman stated that it was good to see that the Police are being proactive. It was noted that the Clerk is receiving a large amount of correspondence from the residents of Vicarage Lane. Councillors **AGREED** that the Clerk should contact PC Cook to Establish where the bikers are accessing the land from.

C20.090 SOCIAL MEDIA

Councillors **NOTED** that Cllr Irvine had been looking at various Facebook and Social Media Postings. A copy of the last Social Media Posting on Village Life was attached to the Agenda for Members perusal. It was noted that there had been a number of posts which had claimed things which are making deliberately misleading statements about the Parish Council, Councillors, the Clerk and the Council Staff.

Cllr Irvine referred back to the previous meeting and the discussion regarding a “Rapid Reaction Team” which was approved by Council. Cllr Irvine said that he would now like to form that team, which will allow him to respond to Social Media comments and give people the truth. He informed Members that he believed that some of the comments are defamatory under English Law and suggested that legal advice should be sought. Cllr Irvine said that most of the ‘attacks’ have been against the Parish Council Staff, in particular comments regarding the Clerk. Cllr Irvine said that the Parish Council has a duty of care to protect the staff and would suggest that the Parish Council agree to fund legal advice. Cllr Irvine recommended that the next steps to be taken with regard to Social Media:-

1. Form the “Rapid Response” team to go back on comments made on Social Media.
2. Draw a line at people making fictitious and malicious attacks on the staff and take legal advice
3. Cllr Irvine stated that the Parish Council does not have a steady stream of “micro news” as to what the Parish Council is doing. He referred to the agenda as an example and said that many of the items do not warrant a press release, however, they could have been mentioned on the Parish Council’s Facebook page as many of the items on there do not relate to the Parish Council specifically.

Following lengthy discussion, it was **AGREED** that the Clerk would arrange to speak with Cllrs Irvine, Ms Coop-Rodia and Bedford to discuss the “Rapid Reaction Team” in more detail. The Clerk would also speak with the Parish Council’s Press Officer to see how the Parish Council moves forward with this.

C20.091 FLAGPOLE – VILLAGE GREEN

Councillors **NOTED** that the flag to commemorate Merchant Navy Day was flown on Saturday, 3rd September.

C20.092 COUNTY & DISTRICT COUNCILLOR SURGERY

Councillors **NOTED** that County Councillor Chris Whitbread, together with Cllrs Holly Whitbread and Les Burrows, held a County and District Councillors Surgery at the Parish Hall in Thornwood. All available appointments for Cllr Whitbread were booked and all the other Councillors were kept very busy. It was noted that another surgery is planned for October, details of which would be advertised nearer the time.

C20.093 BENCH AT DUKES CLOSE

Councillors **NOTED** that a request had been received from a local resident for a bench to be placed on the green at the top of Dukes Close. The bench would be in memory of a local resident called Nanette Fletcher who had lived in North Weald for 60 years. The family would be providing the bench, applying for the License from ECC and would be installing and maintaining the bench. In order to do this, the family require the support of the Parish Council and their Essex County Councillor for the License. Details of where the bench is to be placed and details of the bench had been attached to the agenda for Members consideration. Following discussion, all Members **AGREED** to support the application.

C20.094 BROADBAND

Members **NOTED** a report from Councillor Irvine regarding the actions he has taken in campaigning for improved broadband for areas of the Parish, as follows:-

1. This was inspired by the visit I made on behalf of the Parish to the to the Superfast Essex project run by Essex County Council (and my experience in IT and Telecom).
2. The aim is to get faster and more reliable broadband to The Parish.
3. We can access vouchers available from the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). This would provide a subsidy so that operators could provide residents and businesses with fibre optic access to their premises (known as Fibre to The Premises or FTTP).
4. This would provide speeds of up to 1Gbps (although likely speeds are 300 Mbps). This is much faster than available to many Parishioners.
5. It’s my view that slow broadband speeds limit the ability of Parishioners to participate in the digital economy. Many have complained of speeds of less than 5Mbps at time when they have been asked to work from home.
6. There are several operators who are part of the Superfast Essex scheme but only BT Openreach has engaged with my process.

7. So far, the campaign I have organised has attracted 110 sign ups from residents and 11 from businesses which would generate a subsidy of £203.5k I think this is a good result considering that campaigning has been restricted during lock down.
8. BT Openreach have expressed an interest and have applied to the DCMS for the appropriate grants. The result of this will be known by early September.
9. My original project focussed on 200 addresses in Hastingwood but in order to make the project BT Openreach wish to address a wider subset of their network and hence wish to include parts of Harlow and including 378 addresses . I have no issue with this as long as we achieve the objective.
10. So far this project has been running since November 2019 and I expect it to run into 2021. 11. I note that BT have announced an FTTP project for much of North Weald, that is welcome. I would be happy to help someone set up a project in Thornwood if there was sufficient demand

The Chairman thanked Cllr Irvine for the report and confirmed that he would contact him with regard to North Weald village.

C20.095 VJ DAY

Councillors **NOTED** that the Chairman and the Vice Chairman had laid wreaths at the Parish Memorial and the Debt of Honour on behalf of the Parish Council. They were joined by District Councillor Jaymey McIvor.

C20.096 BATTLE OF BRITAIN EVENT

Councillors **NOTED** that the Chairman had received an Individual Invitation to lay a wreath to commemorate a Battle of Britain Event from Arthur Moreton. The Chairman represented the Parish Council and laid two wreaths, one at the Hurricane on the Airfield and one at the Cross of Sacrifice in St Andrews Church.

C20.097 COVID-19 MEMORIAL BENCH

Councillors were asked to consider if they would be in support of a suggestion put forward by Cllr Tyler for a Covid-19 Memorial Bench. The Chairman stated that it had been suggested that the bench could compliment the Rainbow Stones Memorial. Cllr Tyler referred Members to the report attached to the Agenda, which gave details of the proposed bench. Cllr Ms Coop-Rodia expressed concern that a memorial bench could be seen to be a little premature, as we are not through the pandemic and could lose a lot more people in the future. Cllr Ms Coop-Rodia said that she was concerned that the Parish Council could be seen to be celebrating Covid-19. The Clerk mentioned the daily Government Guidance that had been received since March and stated that she believed the bench is meant to represent the current time and what people's general demeanor is as to what they have been through. Cllr Tyler agreed with what the Clerk had said and stated that we are still in the "eye of a storm" and Coronavirus would be a topic of discussion for many years to come. He said that he had thought it would be a good idea to have a memory bench for 2020 in conjunction with the Rainbow Stones. Cllr Ms Wood stated that she also agreed with what the Clerk had said. She commented that it was about the here and now and what we have all been

through and the community, adding that people would be able to sit and reflect. Cllr Ms Coop-Rodia said that she would agree with this, depending on how it is worded.

The Chairman stated that he would like to see the Rainbow Stones put in place at the same time as the bench and asked Members to agree on a location. The Chairman said that there were two potential sites, either on the Village Green near to the flagpole or near to the Debt of Honour. Cllr Mulliner recommended the Village Green, stating that the location was more easily accessible for people. All Members **AGREED** that the bench would be placed on the Village Green alongside the Rainbow Stones as one project. Cllr Clegg asked where the funds would come from for the project. The Clerk stated that she is looking to see if there is any grant funding available.

C20.098 BLUE HEARTS GARDEN AREAS

The Clerk informed Members that she had received an email from a member of the Preservation Society regarding Blue Hearts Garden Campaign. Councils are being asked to “sign up” to the campaign to encourage the planting of wild flowers. Documentation regarding the campaign was attached to the agenda for Members to consider. The Clerk suggested that it may be something the allotment sites may wish to take up as well. Anyone is able to take part in the scheme. Following discussion, Members **AGREED** that a Press Release could be issued to promote awareness and a supply of Blue Hearts could be held at the Parish Hall for residents to collect.

C20.099 BOILER QUEENS HALL

Councillors **NOTED** that a request had been received from the Queens Hall Trustees regarding the boiler. The boiler is on the brink of breaking down completely. With Winter fast approaching, a new boiler needs to be sourced. It was noted that the cost of a new boiler would be approximately £3,000. The Queens Hall is to look for some grant funding towards the cost, however it may not be received in time for when the boiler needed to be replaced by.

Cllr Mrs Jackman MBE asked if the Parish Council had any access to the Emergency Fund. The Clerk stated that applications closed at the beginning of July and advised that Cllr Ms Wood had tried to source funding. Cllr Ms Wood advised that three inspections of the boiler had taken place and it was now leaking. Cllr Mrs Jackman MBE suggested that Ms Wood contact Waltham Abbey Town Council who had recently obtained funding for a boiler. Cllr Ms Wood advised that she had been in contact and had been told that they had received funding from the COIF and it was now too late for new applications.

The Clerk advised that there is £3,400 available in the Queens Hall Emergency Fund, however, if that money is used the Parish Council cannot claim back the VAT. Cllr Mulliner said that he thought the Parish Council should give the Queens Hall the money. The Clerk stated that the Parish Council would need to purchase the boiler and gift it to the Queens Hall, however, that would not leave any money available should they need anything else. Cllr Ms Wood asked if the Parish Council would consider granting £1,500 towards the cost and the Queens

Hall would fund the remainder. Cllr Spearman asked if the Queens Hall is in profit at the current time. Cllr Ms Wood stated that they are, however, she advised that there had been no revenue for the past 5 to 6 months and the account would soon deplete over Winter.

The Clerk advised that she had checked what the rules were and if Councillors wanted to give half the money, the Parish Council could not claim back the VAT. Cllr Mulliner asked whether the funds could be taken out of the £50k as it is a Community Hall. Cllr Irvine stated that he thought the Parish Council was not going to use the £50k and he believed that the Parish Council should fund the the £1,500. The Clerk recommended that the monies be taken from the Queens Hall Emergency Fund. Cllr Stroud agreed with this suggestion. Cllr Blanks **PROPOSED** that the Parish Council give half of the monies, £1,500 and Cllr Ms Wood would raise the rest of it. The proposal was **SECONDED** by Cllr Tyler. All Members **AGREED**. Cllr Ms Wood thanked the Council.

C20.100 DEVOLUTION

Councillors recalled the email which was circulated with an attachment from ECC Leader David Finch on Devolution. It is understood that Devolution will come, however, the way forward is not fully understood at the current time. It is expected that more powers will be devolved to Parish and Town Councils. The way different tiers will work has not been fully considered and once more information is forthcoming it will be distributed. Cllr Mrs Jackman MBE informed Members that Devolution was an item discussed at the Local Liaison Meeting held earlier in the evening. Cllr Mrs Jackman MBE stated that Town and Parish Councils are very concerned. Priority would be given to sharing further information as soon as it becomes available.

The Chairman referred Councillors to the Supplementary Agenda.

C20.101 LETTER FROM LOCAL RESIDENT – ALLOTMENTS

Councillors **NOTED** the contents of a letter received from a local resident regarding Wheelers Farm Gardens Allotment site. Members recalled that the Parish Council had received a number of letters on the same subject (from the same resident) over a number of years. The Clerk advised Members that she had spoken to the Chairman earlier in the day and had made the following suggestions:-

1. Arrange a small face to face meeting with the resident who has written the letter.
2. Consider the installation of CCTV at the allotment site for the benefit of the letter writer and well-being of the allotment tenants.
3. Consider fencing. Confirm the rights that the Parish Council has to the access and also to confirm that the Parish Council cannot access the Wheelers Farm Gardens site via the Queens Road site. Suggest, once again, that the resident takes their own legal advice.

Following lengthy discussion, Councillors **AGREED** that the resident should be invited to attend a small face to face meeting to take place on a Saturday morning

at the Parish Hall in Thornwood. It was agreed that Councillors Ms Wood and Ms Coop-Rodia would be in attendance with the Clerk. The resident would be advised that the meeting would be recorded.

C20.102 LOCAL HEROES

Councillors **NOTED** that the Clerk had received a request from Cllr Jaymey McIvor in relation to nominations for a Local Heroes Scheme. Cllr McIvor is looking for nominations for residents or groups who have gone above and beyond during the Covid-19 Pandemic. It was noted that a small event would be held to honour these people who are picked as 'Local Heroes', sometime between 23rd and 30th September. The Clerk advised that Nominations could be sent to either the Parish Council or to Cllr McIvor direct. The closing date for Nominations is the 15th September. It was noted that Cllr McIvor would be issuing a poster for the Noticeboards. The Clerk advised that Nominations are for North Weald only as Cllr McIvor is a District Councillor for North Weald.

C20.103 VEXATIOUS COMPLAINANT

Councillors **NOTED** that the Chairman had received a significant amount of correspondence regarding Parish Council Financial Staffing Matters. Following two consultations with the Internal Auditor, the Chairman was advised that these matters had been answered to a satisfactory standard. Due to the continuing nature of the enquiry and following this advice, the complainant was written to and advised that any further communications received on this matter would be treated as vexatious. Councillors were reminded of the Parish Council Minute agreeing to this as follows:-

C17.092 VEXATIOUS AND PERSISTENT BEHAVIOUR

Councillors CONSIDERED adopting the following Vexatious and Persistent Behaviour policy: We will always treat you with respect and we expect staff to be treated the same way. Rude, violent, or abusive behaviour towards staff will never be tolerated. If we consider behaviour to be unreasonable or vexatious, we will explain why and request the complainant modifies their behaviour and warn them that contact will be restricted if it continues. This includes behaviour such as refusal to follow the appropriate process, an aggressive style of communication, repeatedly contacting officers and councillors unnecessarily, and refusing to accept a decision without providing any necessary or new evidence. If it appears to the Parish Council that a complaint continues to be trivial, vexatious, repetitive, or frivolous, no further correspondence related to it shall be entered into by members of officers.

Cllr Stallan confirmed he supported the adoption of this policy, however suggested an amendment to include the provision for Parish Council members being made aware ASAP of any issues that have been deemed vexation under this policy, stating it was important councillors were made aware if such a decision is made by Officers. Councillors should be made aware in the first instance by email, and subsequently by post.

It was **AGREED** to adopt this policy, subject to the amendment suggested by Cllr Stallan being written into the Policy.

C20.104 REQUEST FROM ECC COUNCILLORS – LIST OF POTHoles IN THE PARISH

Councillors *NOTED* that following a request from ECC Councillors, all North Weald Bassett Parish Councillors were asked to report potholes in their wards. A dossier has been drawn up and submitted to both Cllrs Jackson and Whitbread.

C20.105 HMRC TEMPORARY CUSTOMS POST ON NORTH WEALD AIRFIELD

Councillors *NOTED* that Epping Forest District Council have been approached by HMRC for an extension of the existing licence for an additional 2 years in the event of a no trade deal on 31st December 2020. It was noted that there was no further information available at the current time.

Meeting closed: 10.18pm

Signed

Date