



MINUTES

Meeting: PARISH COUNCIL

Date: 5th September 2022

Time: 7.30PM

Venue: PARISH HALL, THORNWOOD COMMON

PRESENT:

Councillors (10) A Buckley (Chairman), R Spearman, Cllr Bedford, Cllr Mrs Hawkins, Cllr Mrs Grigg, Cllr Clegg, Cllr Mrs S Jackman MBE, Cllr Mulliner, Cllr Ms Wood, Cllr Blanks

** for part of meeting*

Officers in Attendance (2)

Susan De Luca – Parish Clerk

Adriana Jones – Principal Financial Officer (PFO)

Members of the Public (2) Inc PC Andy Cook*

Members of the Press (1)

C22.067 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (4)

Apologies received from Cllr Irvine, Cllr Tyler, Cllr Stroud and Cllr Mrs Etherington.

C22.068 OTHER ABSENCES (0)

None.

C22.069 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 11th July 2022 were **APPROVED** and duly signed.

C22.070 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Spearman declared a pecuniary interest in any item concerning the Local Plan. Cllrs Mrs Grigg declared a personal interest in agenda item 27 by virtue of being a previous member of the Bowls club. Cllr Bedford declared a non pecuniary interest in any agenda item concerning the Local Plan.

C22.071 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

The Chairman welcomed the two members of the public present and invited them to address Council. The first member of the public referenced the wording on the agenda regarding the inspection of the accounts stating it seemed as though the Parish Council did not want to be audited. She stated that she has a right to ask questions as a local resident according to the national audit office which states that any local authority has to give a legal right to inspect, ask questions and challenge items in the authority's accounts. The member of the public asked who had asked for the number of hours to be detailed in the Agenda, and which was shown as being 20 hours, to which the Chairman advised it was himself who asked. The member of the public asked if overtime was used, to which the Chairman stated it was not. The member of public advised that she never looked at any of the invoices, but used the nominal ledger, and could not understand why 20 hours were required stating this seemed massively in excess considering she needed nothing to be redacted other than wages as she wasn't looking at the invoices. The member of the public stated that her concern was why North Weald Bassett Parish Council has one of the highest precepts in the Epping Forest District.

The Clerk advised that in order for somebody to inspect the accounts this Council has to adhere to the relevant regulations and Staff have to redact any and all personal information on all the records, advising that the Parish Council does not know beforehand what information members of the public may wish to look at so have to make everything available. The member of the public asked what sort of personal information needs to be redacted on the invoices, to which the PFO gave one example concerning income invoices for the hire of Thornwood Common Parish Hall which contains the names and addresses of hall hirers, and that there could be 100 invoices for the year so each one of those must have the information redacted. The member of the public stated that perhaps it would have been easier to ask her what information she wanted, to which the PFO advised that in law the Parish Council has to provide all the relevant information as people have the right to view it. The member of the public stated that she now has questions arising from the review of the accounts, one of which is that she has been referenced in the agenda as being a 'member of the public', stating she was more than a member of the public as she is a registered elector and has been for 40 years, and that she has the right as a registered elector to ask for the audit, and that she felt the tone of the content of the agenda was against anybody else who wanted to look at the audit, as they would be put off. The member of the public advised she found it intimidating.

The Clerk advised that the Parish Council was completely transparent, and that is why people were encouraged to come in and look at the information, and that this can in fact take place at any time and is not restricted to audit time. The member of the public stated that within the agenda it states that she asked both 'why' questions and 'what' questions. The Clerk clarified that the Audit guidance states that questions at Audit time are limited to 'what' questions and not 'why' questions, to which the member of the public stated she disagreed further commenting that it was stated in the agenda that she had asked 'why' questions. The Clerk confirmed this was the case, and that many of the questions posed by the member of the public were relating to decisions of the Council and not concerning clarification of accounts. The member of public stated that the tone of this further suggested she was in the wrong, to which the Clerk advised this was not the case and that hopefully she was given answers to all the questions she posed when she inspected the accounts. The member of public advised that when she left the audit inspection, she was very happy with the information she was provided with, albeit she does have some further questions so was disappointed when she read the tone of the agenda. The Clerk apologised if the member of the public took it this way, but that she felt it was written correctly.

The Chairman stated that he wanted the report on the agenda to be very factual, and that this issue was a matter of opinion. The content was written so as to not identify who the member of the public was. The member of the public again stated that she was a registered elector and that she has a right to ask questions, to which the Chairman agreed stating nobody was disputing this fact. The resident stated that the redaction was done by the Council because they chose to and that it didn't need to take 20 hours, to which the Clerk stated that this Council is required under data protection laws to redact information, and this was not a choice of the Council. The PFO advised that if the redacted income and expenditure invoices had not been made available to the resident, the Council would have been failing in its obligation under the Audit legislation to provide said information.

The Chairman stated that he wanted to bring this matter to a close and that he felt the Council had tried to explain its position clearly, and that as the Council staff were very busy he wanted to understand the timing of this work. The resident asked if she could have a meeting with her Councillors and to raise the questions that she has, to which the Chairman made a suggestion that

she puts these questions in writing to the Clerk so that the Council can prepare the responses. The resident stated that she was told that if she had any questions on the day she could ask her Councillors, and that she now wanted to do this, to which the Chairman once again suggested she put these questions directly to the Clerk and that it can be addressed at the next meeting.

The Chairman invited the other member of the public - PC Andy Cook - to address the Council. PC Cook advised that he was present to give an update on crime in the area as he hadn't attended the July meeting, so these figures he would be quoting were from 1st July to today. There had been one dwelling burglary, 2 non dwelling burglaries, one attempted, 5 criminal damage, 3 motor vehicle thefts, 3 thefts from motor vehicles, and that this represents a rise which is the same all over the district with a specific pattern of range rover thefts. Faraday bags are handed out at public events where possible, including coffee with cops. There have been a number of nuisance calls all over the village. The next Coffee with Cops was the following day at the Methodist Church. Cllr Bedford asked if there were any special arrangements this year for Halloween, to which PC Cook advised both teams will be on again, including specials, and there will be a heavy presence in the village as well as Theydon Bois. Cllr Bedford advised there were also some anti-social behaviour issues at Ongar, and asked if Ongar and North Weald could communicate together, which was noted by PC Cook. The Clerk advised PC Cook of continued problems at the Church Car Park at St Andrews, to which PC Cook advised he had been there the previous weekend and there were no issues. He advised it seemed a post and chain has now been erected across the entrance which may help. Cllr Ms Wood advised that she still had not received a response to the crime report she raised on 7th February when she was assaulted. There had also been some issues at the Youth Shelter on the Memorial Playing Fields and a lot of problems with dog mess. The Chairman advised that he recently completed a litter pick around the North Weald Village Hall and had picked up 8 gas cylinders, and it seems that use is now moved onto the large cylinders. This seems to be an issue along the rear of Bassett Gardens. There was concern as to how these should be safely disposed, and PC Cook stated the police have to use a specialist company to remove them. Cllr Mrs Jackman asked that thanks were recorded for PC Cook for everything he does for us.

C22.072 REPORT OF THE CLERK

Councillors *NOTED* the report of the Clerk as detailed within the agenda, which included the following updates:

- **Weald Common Tree Project and Swale** – The Chairman would provide a full update at under his Chairmans report.
- **External Audit** – Completed Audit, covered further in the meeting.
- **Various Planning Matters** – Clerk is liaising with applicant regarding Rosario and this will be dealt with under the next planning committee meeting.
- **Cemetery Matters** – Member of public who wants a bench in the middle of CR sections, however Clerk has confirmed this cannot be located here - this will be included in the next Environmental Committee Meeting. The same member of public has also complained about the cost of burial and this too will be on the next Environmental Committee agenda.
- **Environmental Committee Matters** – agenda currently being drawn up.
- **Parish Hall at Thornwood** - Personnel issue, Clerk dealing with.
- **Numerous enquiries from residents** – various matters including highways, litter and street lighting.
- **Picking up RAFA Battle of Britain service** – In man body of agenda.

C22.073 REPORTS & MEMBERS REPORTS

- a) **Chairman's Report** – The Chairman provided an update on the Weald Common Swale and Tree Project and tabled for members a site plan of Weald Common showing where the swale and tree planting project is located. A quotation from a suitably qualified and experienced contractor was received and work has now been completed regarding the creation of the Swale which it is hoped will take much of the surface water from the top of Weald Common and redirect it to the EFDC Nature Reserve area – a distance of approximately 75m. It is hoped this will be of great benefit to the play area through the winter to stop it getting so wet and making it useable 12 months of the year. The Chairman advised that there had been some discussion between himself and the office staff concerning the health and safety aspect of this swale, and photos have been taken and advice sought. A minimal area of the hedging adjacent to the nature reserve has been removed, and we will monitor how effective the swale is over the coming months.

With regard to the tree project, Councillors were reminded of the plan to plant around 3000 trees in an area around 2ha in size. The Copper Beach was planted in May, and although it was touch and go as to if this tree would take, it now seems to be thriving. This will be the focal point for this particular area with a plaque to commemorate the Queens Jubilee. One of the sunken concrete structures that used to hold the wires in place for the radio station will be identified as a feature with an explanation as to what it is / they are located on Weald Common. There would also be two benches situated in the area, along with a dedicated 'dementia' area, the site of which is yet to be agreed. A meeting is scheduled to take place on 9th September with a member of the Forestry Commission to ensure the accessibility arrangement of having 50% of the space accessible by members of the public for the next 30 years was possible. It was hoped that tree planting would commence in November. Cllr Bedford stated that many trees have been lost this year, and asked if a plan was in place to ensure these trees are watered for a year. The Chairman touched on the two smaller copse areas dedicated to the late Cllr Eldridge, and advised that out of the 149 trees planted in this area only 12 haven't taken, and that the nature of the area is that it does retain water quite well. The Clerk reminded Councillors that this area was originally called Weald Gullet. It was suggested the trees would be ok up until March, but that we may need to have a plan for after this time.

- b) **Vice Chairman's Report** – Cllr Mrs Grigg asked if ECC could replace an old and faded 40MPH sign on the roundabout as you go into Hastingwood Road. It has been faded for many years, and she walks regularly along this stretch and 40MPH is very rarely observed.
- c) **District & County Councillors Reports** – No reports.
- d) **Parish Councillors Reports** – Cllr Blanks reminded Councillors of the recent presentation to Councillors given by the Relight Group who were keen to put forward an alternative Masterplan for the Airfield, stating that he had contact with them today and they had confirmed that following what they called complete radio silence from EFDC they were now concentrating their efforts on other venues. Cllr Mrs Jackman stated this was a shame, and that if true it was very rude of EFDC not to respond. Cllr Blanks had advised the Relight Group that the person responsible for the Airfield Masterplan at EFDC had not been at their desk since 31st March which may have had a bearing on the lack of response, however Cllr Whitbread had advised them to contact him directly and he would ensure the message was passed to the appropriate department. The Clerk advised that Cllr Whitbread should be at the District Councillors meeting on 26th September so Councillors could ask

him then. Cllr Mrs Jackman stated it should be done before then, and it was **AGREED** the Clerk would email Cllr Whitbread regarding this matter.

Cllr Clegg reported on the Community Speedwatch (CSW) Programme, stating that the reason he had not submitted a written report was that the events were run earlier in the day. Liam Collins is the Essex County Co-ordinator for CSW and is very supportive of North Wealds programme. There is another session being run in Upland Road between 4-5pm on Friday, as they have been monitoring the speed in a clandestine fashion, the result of which is that over a 25 minute slot 20% of the vehicles were speeding. Two weeks ago the police issued 8 tickets and 6 warnings. Liam had been concerned that some of the approved CSW locations were not being used, however Cllr Clegg had confirmed to him they were being used but if nobody was speeding in these locations nothing is recorded. Liam had advised if they were not used, their approved position would no longer be authorised for CSW activity. Cllr Clegg advised that at present there wasn't any real evidence of speeding in Mill Street, which is contrary to public perception. In addition, they could only record vehicles doing over 47mph along the High Road in Thornwood. Cllr Clegg advised that Liam had agreed to a moratorium for a while on removing the authorisation for CSW sites. There had been a request for a CSW location along Weald Bridge Road, and it was hoped Liam would look into this in the next few weeks. There had been one additional volunteer put themselves forward. Cllr Clegg advised that he had passed on the possible dates to hire the hall for CSW training and was waiting to hear back from Liam.

- e) **Queens Hall Charity Report** – Cllr Wood advised the hall continued to tick along, confirming that the emergency electrical works had now been completed costing just short of £3,000, but that she had already put in for some emergency funding for this, however had had to pay for the cost out of reserves otherwise the hall could not have remained opened during the summer. Temporary Fire Alarm system has also been installed – one for the Pavilion and one in the entrance hall, and currently awaiting on application for grant funding for LED lighting throughout the whole hall including the outside. There is a meeting of the trustees next week.
- f) **Neighbourhood Plan Report** – currently on hold pending the Local Plan.
- g) **EFDC Local Plan Report** – Cllr Bedford advised that following the recent changes in Inspector, and after liaising directly with Parliament, Mr Johnathan Bore had taken over as inspector around July and had written to Cllr Bedford immediately following his appointment. Mr Bore has completed a district wide inspection, reviewed all the paperwork for the local plan and came back to EFDC with a set of questions for planning officers to deal with, which was completed. The planning inspector also asked for confirmation concerning the 5 year land supply which meant EFDC having to go out to all landowners to confirm their position, and this caused a small delay. The Inspector has been very helpful. The inspector has now sent through some suggested wording for around 56 amendments, many of which were single word changes, including changes to class E which will take a little more time. Everything has been submitted back to the inspector with the exception of two small pieces of work. The Inspector was hopeful that the main modifications consultation would be completed in the Autumn, and EFDC is pushing for this to be completed for Christmas. There will be a 6-week statutory public consultation period of any proposed modifications.

Cllr Bedford stated that he nearly had an accident with a 38 tonne lorry going into Ashlyns Farm by Weald Lodge, and expressed concern about the suitability of the bridge to cope with such large

vehicles, advising that he would be speaking to officers at EFDC regarding this and a possible weight restriction.

- h) **Highways Report** – ECC Members Pothole Scheme – One pothole has been forwarded so far by Cllr Irvine. Councillors were asked to contact the Clerk as soon as possible if there were any others.

C22.074 FINANCIAL

List of Cheques and Monthly statement of Accounts

Councillors **NOTED** the cheque lists for July and August 2022, and the bank balances as at 31st August 2022. The PFO reminded Councillors that once these are sent to them, they are also published on the Parish Councils website. Cllr Bedford enquired as to the future costs of gas and electric for the Parish Council. The Clerk advised that we had just checked our contracts and for the Thornwood Hall we were on a fixed electricity contract until 2024, and that the Street Lighting supply throughout the Parish was unmetered but believed to be on a fixed rate also until 2023 – the Clerk stating she was just waiting confirmation of this. Cllr Bedford suggested it may be worth liaising with residents about turning off street lighting in order to save electricity costs, to which the Clerk advised that the last time this was suggested residents were up in arms about it. In addition, the cost to modify all 117 street lights would outweigh any saving that was made, and that this would need to be investigated further. Cllr Ms Wood stated that the Parish Council lights are consistent, and that it is a matter of perception of our residents. Cllr Bedford stated that the damaged lamp column by the debt of honour needed to be removed before remembrance Sunday. The Clerk confirmed she would speak to Darren Goody at EFDC. Cllr Bedford also asked if street lights were required at junctions, as there was a damaged column by Higham View. He had contacted ECC, who had in turn removed this, but it had not been replaced. The Clerk reminded members of the issue she reported some months back in that over 60 Street Lights along the High Road in Thornwood were out, and they were still not working. Cllr Spearman asked for a breakdown of the Ground Maintenance contract work to be included on the cheque lists, however it was agreed this would be sent to him separately.

C22.075 EXTERNAL AUDIT -NOTICE OF COMPLETION OF EXTERNAL AUDIT 2021/2022

Councillors **NOTED** that the Limited Assurance review of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR – External Audit) had now 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 also **NOTED** that this year a resident in the Parish exercised their right to inspect the accounts for the 2021/2022, with the preparation for the public inspection managed by the office staff. This is not just a simple case of making the relevant information available to a resident, but also involves a significant amount of staff time in order to comply with the relevant Audit and Data Protection regulations by redacting any personal information on invoices and receipts which much also be made available to residents. Furthermore, it should also be noted that the questions that can be asked by the public are limited to ‘what’ questions about the councils finances, and not ‘why’ questions, however many of the questions posed by the resident were in fact ‘why’ questions relating to the decisions of the Parish Council as a body. Whilst the Clerk and Principal Finance Officer were within their rights not to respond to such questions as they were outside the scope of the public inspection of the accounts, they did their best to answer all the questions raised by the resident in the spirit of openness and transparency. An estimate of the staff time to deal prepare and execute the inspection was around 21 hours. Councillors noted that this Council was coming to the end of the 5 year appointment of an external auditor, and

whilst the Smaller Authorities Audit Appointments would be sourcing a contract with an auditor, this Parish Council did not have go with this appointment, and could appoint their own. This would be on the October meeting for a decision. Cllr Blanks stated that as long as this wasn't Deloitte, he would suggest going with the appointed auditor.

C22.076 NORTH WEALD AIRFIELD ALTERNATIVE MASTERPLAN

Councillors **NOTED** the notes from the presentation to Councillors by Relight Group as attached to the agenda.

C22.077 INVESTMENTS

The Clerk advised that together with the PFO and Cllr Blanks, they will continue to look for investment and banking options for this Council.

C22.078 LOCAL GOVERNMENT REVIEW OF ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES

Councillors **NOTED** there was no further news on the matter regarding the review of Electoral Boundaries. Cllr Bedford advised it would be up to central Government what the final number of Councillors would be.

C22.079 COFFEE WITH COPS

The next Coffee with Cops would be held in the Methodist Church on Tuesday 6th September between 10 – 12 noon. The Police held the Coffee with Cops in Thornwood on Wednesday 20th July between 10am and 12 noon at the Parish Hall. It was not that well attended, but some residents did attend. The relevant notices have been placed on the Notice Boards and will be advertised on Social Media.

C22.080 WEALD COMMON

The Chairman advised that the project was forging ahead with the relevant permission in place, and that an update on this matter was reported earlier in the meeting under the Chairmans report.

C22.081 HASTINGWOOD B ALLOTMENTS

At the last meeting Members were advised of the concerns in relation to de-allotmentising Hastingwood B, and also recognised the problems that this may incur. As such the Clerk was instructed to review the government paperwork and law in relation to how this would work and if there were any pitfalls. Members had previously agreed that they would like to reconsider the sale or renting of Hastingwood B. Section 8 of the Allotments Act 1925 states "Where a local authority has purchased or appropriated land for use as allotments the local authority shall not sell, appropriate, use or dispose of the land for any purpose other than use for allotments without the consent of the Secretary of State". The Clerk provided a further update stating that she had been researching the updated information on Disposal of Allotment Land however there are many things to consider including future housing in the parish and whether any open space or disused or redundant Allotments could be used for that purpose in the future. Therefore with the amount of housing that North Weald Bassett Parish is expecting, it does seem it could become difficult to apply to the Secretary of State to ask for this area to be de-allotmentised at the current time. It is thought that the new developments in the Parish would include an amount of allotment land, however at present this cannot be quantified. Councillors **AGREED** to place this matter on hold and leave the allotment as an open space until such time as the future development of the Parish became clearer. Cllr Mrs Grigg asked that the person interested in renting the allotment plot should be advised.

C22.082 REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

Members were advised that arrangements were in hand for Remembrance Day Events held in November. Staff began to work on the events in August. Members confirmed at the last meeting that they wish the arrangements to remain the same as in previous years. Members of 56 Squadron will be attending the event at the Norwegian Memorial this year as they have been granted the Freedom of The District of Epping Forest and will be marching their colours through Epping Town. The Clerk confirmed she had met with Pat Segar concerning the arrangements. Members noted that this Council had initially been asked to change the timing of the service, however this had not been agreed given the service at the Debt of Honour had been held at 12.15pm for so many years. Cllr Mulliner advised that the cooker at North Weald Village Hall was not working and that as yet it had not been replaced, however he hoped to have more of an update by the next meeting.

C22.083 ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR IN THE CAR PARK OPPOSITE ST ANDREWS CHURCH

Members noted that the Clerk had received notification from a local resident regarding anti-social behaviour activities in the Church Car Park. The Clerk had already brought this to the attention of the Police at the Coffee and Cops Event, and this matter was addressed earlier in the meeting by PC Andy Cook.

C22.084 VEHICLE OPERATORS LICENCE – PARIS HALL FARM – HASTINGWOOD

This matter was brought up at the Planning meeting on 15th August. It is an application for a Vehicle Operators Licence. This has now appeared on the Goods Vehicle Operators Licence List, and it is understood that Cllr Irvine has written as an individual councillor objecting to this application. The application is by Purser Transport Ltd and is for 6 Heavy Goods Vehicles and 4 trailers at Paris Hall Farm, Hastingwood Road, Hastingwood. It is a Standard International (SI) licence which allows the licence holder to carry both his own goods and goods for other people for hire or reward. These activities can be undertaken both in Great Britain and on international journeys. Cllr Clegg expressed caution, saying the Council needed to be careful about such licences as they can be quite complicated and permit 24 hour usage of HGV from an international standpoint. Cllr Mrs Grigg also expressed concern, stating that there were now more houses along Hastingwood Road, and although this location is a farm and they have plenty of farm vehicles operating from the site, she still had concerns. Cllr Mrs Grigg stated that although she didn't feel any objection would get very far because of this reason, she still felt that this Parish Council should object. It was AGREED the Clerk would object to this application.

C22.085 STREET LIGHT – CHURCH LANE, NORTH WEALD

Members **NOTED** that urgent repairs were needed to street light number 6007 located in Church Lane, but as this light is located within a very large hedge which we believe is owned and maintained by EFDC, these repairs cannot be carried out until EFDC cut an opening in the hedge to allow access. The Parish Council has written to EFDC requesting this take place, however had so far not received any response, even after chasing. Cllr Bedford requested copies of all correspondence be sent to him and he will chase this up for action.

C22.086 MEMORIAL TREE HAMPDEN CLOSE

Members were advised that works to this tree were carried out on the 25th August after planning approval was granted by EFDC as a result of the tree having a TPO. Two phone calls had been received thanking the Parish Council for the action taken. The Clerk advised that permission was granted for a very small cutting back of the tree and suggested this may need to be done every couple of years.

C22.087 NOTIFICATION OF ROAD CLOSURES

The Parish Council has received notification via Cllr C Whitbread of the following road closures:

- Epping Road (nr Woodside) – Date was previously 18th August however now changed to 28th November. Unclear if this will involve a full road closure, and office staff have written to Cllr Holly Whitbread for clarification as the website is not clear. Cllr Clegg asked how long an application for a road closure takes, explaining that following the recent clearing out of debris in a ditch along Upland Road and an associated field fire, it was discovered that one of the fire hydrants was inoperative. An official had visited site to look at it, and the following day he was advised that the work may need a JCB and a road closure. Cllr Bedford advised that if the work was related to gas, electricity or water it can be classified as urgent and a permit issued as quickly as the following day. Cllr Clegg stated it was disconcerting that a fire hydrant wasn't working to which Cllr Bedford stated this was not uncommon.
- Harlow Common – from Potter Street end going half way down Harlow Common - closure from 19th to 23rd September for drainage defect / Highway improvement works.

C22.088 NORTH WEALD LIBRARY – GOING FORWARD

Members were already aware of the wish of this Council to return to the Library and noted that the Clerk will be asking a question at EFDC Full Council – ‘Will our Local Ward District Councillors Support Us in the return of the Parish Council to North Weald Library’. Attached to the agenda was a full reported which would also be submitted to EFDC. The question the Clerk will be asking is:

WILL OUR DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS SUPPORT US?

If District Councillors (and those who are also Essex County Councillors) support the Parish Council in going back to North Weald Library, will they take that question back to Essex County Council for a response? The Parish Council's time in the Methodist Church is coming to an end and we will have to vacate the office by the beginning of October. The Parish Council needs to be back in the heart of the community as soon as possible and be based in North Weald. We understand that the library is back to only opening on:

*Monday Closed
Tuesday 9am to 1pm
Wednesday Closed
Thursday 2pm to 5.30pm
Friday Closed
Saturday 9am to 5pm
Sunday Closed*

The Registrar is no longer based at the library. We feel that we could offer a library service again Monday, Wednesday and Friday, 9am to 1pm

We know that the responsibility for libraries falls under Essex County Council, however what the Parish Council is asking is if the District Councillors who have responsibility for North Weald Bassett Parish would look to see whether they would support us in going back to the library. If so, would they lobby Essex County Councillors on behalf of residents and the Parish Council. Now that Harlow Library has reopened and North Weald has reverted to its previous opening hours, residents are now asking when, not if, the Parish Council will be returning. We would refer you to the background papers to help you with this decision.

The Clerk advised she was still chasing Cllr Whitbread and the District Council on this matter. Cllr Bedford stated that he would be happy to help with securing the signatures of District and County Councillors on this matter and would liaise directly with the Clerk.

C22.089 'WARM BANKS'

Members noted that as inflation is set to rise to a 40 year high, many local authorities were looking at how they could help people keep warm during the winter months. The cost of living is causing significant anxiety especially as the days become shorter and cooler, and nights longer. Heating homes is simply becoming unaffordable for many. Warm Banks are simply public places where residents can go to keep warm in cold weather when they can't afford to keep warm in their own homes. Many homes are still using outdated, inefficient appliances such as old gas fires or expensive electric fires. Some people simply do not have the financial resources to change to a cheaper form of heating and are therefore not in a financial position to change their appliance for more energy efficient ones at the current time. This is where warm banks can become invaluable—they can become a safety net providing a few hours of heat and warmth. This is not a new concept. A Warm Rooms Community Project was set up in Suffolk last year. It has been tried and tested especially with the residents. It was noted that the sad truth was that people who could not afford to heat their homes would not turn their heating on. Whilst younger more fitter people simply put on more layers of clothing, this can be lethal for older members of the community. Local authorities will also need to look at other ways of helping and educating people as to how they can keep warm. Social deprivation can come in many forms, and some people may think it does not affect that many in areas such as Epping Forest, but we at North Weald Bassett Parish Council like to think we are 'forward thinking' and that we could offer this service.

Councillors were asked if they would support the setting up of a 'Warm Bank' in the Library 3 mornings a week offering a safe warm place for residents to come and enjoy a book, have a cup of coffee and a biscuit and enjoy the company of other residents whilst the Parish Council is in residence in the office (subject to this being agreed by Essex County Council). It may be that Village Halls could also be used in some cases as a Warm Bank.

Cllr Clegg stated he would support this, advising he was aware other organisations in the District were doing something similar. The Clerk confirmed she was looking at sourcing grant funding to support such a scheme. Cllr Mulliner stated that this matter was on the North Weald Village Hall agenda for the following week, however there were difficulties specific to the hall in that Ofstead have clear stipulations about what is acceptable when there is a nursery or preschool setting on site, and this would prove to be a challenge, specifically the matter of access to toilets. Cllr Ms Wood suggested it may be worth asking the school as there is a difficult period of time between 3-5pm for mothers and children. Cllr Ms Wood also suggested the Council should consider running the coat exchange again this year. The Chairman asked Councillors if they were supportive of running warm banks, following which there was general support for this, noting this was linked to the Parish Council going back into the library. Cllr Bedford Suggested the Clerk may wish to apply to EFDC for funding to run tea mornings. It was **AGREED** the Clerk would continue to pursue this project.

C22.090 BATTLE OF BRITAIN SUNDAY – 18TH SEPTEMBER

Clerk was approached by Mr Moreton - NW Airfield Historian - regarding Battle of Britain Sunday, and was asked if the Parish Council could assist with the arrangements for this event. The Clerk had made contact with Rev Lee Batson and between the Parish Council and Rev Batson the event could still be organised, as it is important that this commemorative event does not go unrecognised. Councillors **AGREED** the Parish Council should assist with arrangements for this event. It was

noted it would be a shortened event. The Church service would be at 3pm with wreath laying at 4pm. The Chairman will be laying a wreath on behalf of the Parish Council. Cllr Bedford confirmed he would lay a wreath of behalf of the Norwegians.

C22.091 MCMILLANS EVENT

Councillors **AGREED** the Parish Hall could be used free of charge on Friday 30th September to raise funds for the Annual Mcmillans Charity Event.

C22.092 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

The public and press were excluded from the meeting, 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.

C22.093 NORTH WEALD METHODIST CHURCH

Due to the confidential nature of this subject, these minutes are not available for public inspection as they contain or relate to exempt information within the meaning of the Paragraphs indicated of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

C22.094 NORTH WEALD RADIO STATION BOWLS CLUB

Due to the confidential nature of this subject, these minutes are not available for public inspection as they contain or relate to exempt information within the meaning of the Paragraphs indicated of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

Meeting closed

Signed

Date