



MINUTES

Meeting: PARISH COUNCIL

Date: 2 September 2024

Time: 7.30PM

Venue: PARISH HALL, THORNWOOD COMMON

PRESENT:

Councillors (8) Mrs S Hawkins (meeting Chair), Mrs S Jackman MBE, R Spearman, Ms D Wood, C Kinnear, A Tyler, I Irvine, Cllr Blanks

Officers in Attendance (2)

Susan Deluca - Clerk

Adriana Jones – Principal Finance Officer

Members of the Public (5) – inc EFDC Cllr Burrows and Cllr Bromwich.

Members of the Press (1)

C24.066 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (5)

Apologies from Cllrs Bedford, Etherington, Clegg, Born and Buckley.

C24.067 OTHER ABSENCES (1)

Cllr Stroud.

C24.068 MINUTES

Councillors **AGREED** the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 1st July 2024, and noted the minutes from both the recent Remembrance Sunday and Parish Hall Liaison Meetings as attached to the agenda.

C24.069 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Spearman declared an interest in the Local Plan.

C24.070 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

The meeting Chairman welcomed members of the public present, and advised that two members of the public were present to discuss the agenda item towards the end of the meeting regarding double red lines on the corner of Upland Road, asking Councillors if they were happy that this matter be brought forward for discussion at this point, with any agreement recorded under this agenda item. This was unanimously agreed.

The member of the public stated that they fully understood there was a parking issue at the corner of Upland Road, and that in the past he too had tried to address the problem by speaking with the organisations that were using this area to park in, as per the appendix that was attached to the agenda. He had previously put in a request for yellow lines at this location, and the only difference now is that these have been upped to red lines. The issue with red lines is that there is absolutely no stopping at all, which means currently Royal Mail are unable to stop and empty the post box, you cannot empty the rubbish bin, and you cannot stop to place anything on the notice board. It has been stated that the opposite site of the road has no restrictions so you could park here, however this would be very dangerous. The resident then suggested that the red lines should be downgraded to yellow lines to allow a very short time period where people could stop and post a letter for example. He stated that he accepts the parking there was awful, but yellow lines would be a better option.

A second member of the public stated that this area of Upland Road had suffered parking obstructions for quite a while, and the tipping point was when gym users starting parking there and residents were knocking on his door asking if something could be done about it. When he contacted the authorities he was advised to put in a TRO, but advised that he would need 75% support from local residents. He had asked the authorities if all properties should be canvassed and was advised of the specific properties that needed to be consulted. Thus, he approached these properties, and gained enough support for the project with almost all the properties being in support. He also contacted NEPP who visited site to view the issue, and it was their suggestion that the TRO be upgraded to red lines as it was a serious road safety and traffic movement issue. He stated that when he found out about this meeting, he canvassed a number of residents for their views, all of whom stated they were still in full support of the red lines. He also stated that the opposite side of the road had no restrictions.

The meeting Chairman thanked both parties for their comments. The Clerk read out an email she had received from a resident just beyond the Parish boundary which was in support of the red lines.

Cllr Blanks stated that he had never lived in Upland Road, and whilst he had no faith in ECC Highways whatsoever, especially considering the number of speed limit changes along the B1393 and their failure to liaise with developers on a collective basis, on this occasion he fully supported the decision to install red lines. Cllr Spearman stated that the Royal Mail were clearly picking up the post, and as long as we don't receive any complaints there really wasn't an issue. Cllr Spearman **PROPOSED** monitoring the situation, and reviewing it again in 6 months. Cllr Blanks **SECONDED** this proposal, and it was unanimously **AGREED** to monitor and review again in March 2025.

C24.071 REPORT OF THE CLERK

The Clerk provided the following reports:

- Parish Hall – various matters.
- Developer Working Group – a copy of the notes from the last meeting dated 12th August 2024 which had been previously emailed to Councillors was tabled. Councillors agreed to the recommended actions. Cllr Tyler also provided a brief summary about the sewage treatment works issues raised by Thames Water, which was included within the minutes. He stated that the lack of a plan to cope with the sewage from new development was a valid reason to delay development, as had happened in other areas of the Country including South Woodford.
- Numerous responses to Consultations for Developments in the Parish
- Allotment Matters
- Tree Risk Assessment was completed earlier this year, with two areas of trees identified for works within 12 months, which included trees along the ditch at Thornwood Allotment (work taking place 7th November cost £700), and Trees on western side of Wheelers Farm Gardens Allotments (work taking place 8th November costing £1,300).
- Planning Matters – Including Constitutional Changes at EFDC
- Cemetery and Burial Matters
- PROW
- Grant Applications
- Battle of Britain Sunday
- Remembrance Sunday

C24.072 REPORTS & MEMBERS REPORTS

- a) **Chairman's Report** – The meeting Chairman advised that Thornwood Allotments had seen a number of new tenants, and the site was really looking good.

- b) **Vice Chairman's Report** – Reported above.
- c) **District & County Councillors Reports** – Cllr Burrows provided a brief update to advise that Thames Water had repaired the water main and associated potholes along Woodside. Park Avenue in Harlow has been marked for repair, and some of the verges are overgrown and he is waiting for grounds maintenance to come back to him. With regard to the crossing point near the library in North Weald that has recently had works done to it, a gas main has been identified at this location and this is an ongoing issue which Cllr Bedford has further information on.

Cllr Bromwich advised that he had organised a meeting with the new Member of Parliament for Harlow, however unfortunately Cllrs Etherington and Irvine were away so could not attend. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss community speedwatch in Hastingwood and emphasise that the MPs priorities were not just in Harlow. There will be a follow up meeting with Cllr Whitbread, and Cllr Bromwich will be putting together a brief for the MP for this meeting regarding Hastingwood. Cllr Bromwich advised there had been a number of complaints about the garages in York Road, and he was working with EFDC to establish ownership. There had also been complaints about the number of Peacocks on Pike Way causing damage to vehicles and making a mess, so he was chatting to officers to see if perhaps some of them could be relocated. Cllr Irvine thanked Cllr Bromwich for taking up the issue of traffic and speeding in Hastingwood, and confirmed he would like to be involved in future meetings.

- d) **Parish Councillors Reports** – Cllr Blanks directed an issue to Cllr Burrows, advising that the recent road repair works completed on the A414 between Rayley Lane and the M11 roundabout were already failing, suggesting that there may be a warranty issue he might consider taking up with the contractor. He also advised he was disappointed to see from the Overview and Scrutiny committee that after somebody had complained about grounds maintenance in the district, Qualis had stated they were not clear as to which areas they were responsible for. Cllr Burrows stated that a lot of the land is owned by ECC but that they pay EFDC to do the work, but EFDC wont do the work until ECC has authorised it. Cllr Blanks stated that this was never a problem until Qualis took over. The Clerk confirmed she was in discussion with Cllr Bromwich to obtain a map of the public open spaces and who was responsible for maintaining them.

Cllr Ms Wood advised that there was a very large pothole near the Fiddlers Hamlet that had caused £300 of damage to her car. Cllr Burrows suggested she speak with Cllr Holly Whitbread. Cllr Tyler stated that the roads in the country have been degrading for many years, but there is no money in the pot to repair them the way they needed to be repaired. Cllr Mrs Jackman suggested that ECC should look at other areas in the country that seemingly don't have the same issues with all their roads being well maintained. The works to dig up various pavements in North Weald after only a few months when works were completed to repair them was discussed, with Councillors stating it was ludicrous that there was no joined up thinking and it was simply wasting money.

Cllr Tyler stated that he recently visited the Cemetery at North Weald for the first time, and felt it was beautifully maintained and a lovely asset.

- e) **Queens Hall Charity Report** – No report.
- f) **Highways** – No report.

C24.073 FINANCIAL REPORTS

- a) Councillors **AGREED** the monthly cheque lists for July and August 2024, and noted the bank balances as at 31st August 2024.
- b) Members noted that the CCLA investment account now held £150,000.

C24.074 STREET LIGHT REPAIRS

Members **NOTED** that the periodic inspection of the Parish Council owned street lighting took place earlier this year, and 5 electrical risks and 1 structural risk were identified that needed rectification. These works had now been carried out, the cost of which was as follows:

- Structural – 6038 School Green Lane – several structural defects identified, and recommended street light replaced. The Parish Councils street lighting contractor has been instructed to replace this street light, the cost of which is £8,171 plus VAT, which will come from the Parish Councils rolling street light replacement Earmarked Reserve.
- Electrical – 5 street lights identified as having electrical risk issues. The Parish Councils street lighting contractor has completed the necessary repairs, the cost of which was £1,324 plus VAT.

C24.075 SREET LIGHT IN QUEENS ROAD – DAMAGE BY VEHICLE

Councillors noted that the Clerk had been advised that a resident had damaged his vehicle on a street light in Queens Road which had been cut down and made safe following a vehicle accident. This work was completed by the Councils Street lighting Contractors. The resident concerned had been provided with the Councils insurance details. The Clerk has kept a full record of the conversations she had, and the insurance company have been put on notice for possible contact by the individual.

C24.076 NEW STREET LIGHT AT HASTINGWOOD

Members noted that for approximately three years plus the Clerk and the RFO, in conjunction with the Council's Street lighting Contractor, have been trying to replace a broken Street Light in Hastingwood at the junction of Mill Street and Hastingwood Road. The original streetlight - and old SOX type lantern attached to a BT telegraph pole - failed and could not be replaced in its original format. BT would not allow a replacement on its pole. We could not put a new standard type of metal lamp column in the same location as there were no nearby services that could be wired into. Essex County Council had not been particularly helpful on this occasion, even with the assistance of Cllr Whitbread. We therefore have had to work on our own auspices, and it left us with only one alternative and that was to place a solar powered streetlamp in that location. It was not the perfect solution, but the only solution for the given area. It provides a motion sensor light system. We understand that the resident is disappointed with the solution, however we have not had any other complaints.

Cllr Irvine advised that the light does work, but not necessarily all the time. Councillors understood this was the only solution available. Cllr Irvine stated that the old lamp column has not been removed, to which the Clerk advised this was BTs responsibility. Cllr Irvine stated that the resident who originally complained has a number of other issues he would like the Council to address, to which the Clerk advised she was happy to look at this list.

C24.077 MEETING BETWEEN EFDC, MARKET OPERATOR AND CHAIRMAN OF PARISH COUNCIL – NORTH WEALD MARKET TRAFFIC REPORT

Members recalled they had previously been advised of this meeting which took place on 18th May 2024 between the abovenamed parties to discuss the traffic problems associated with the market. The Clerk has been contacted by Gary Saunders the Market Operator, who advised that he was due to have a meeting with Essex Highways during the week commencing 26th August. Attached to the agenda was a document

which included a map, however earlier in the day the Clerk received another email regarding this, but had not had the opportunity to review it before the meeting. The Clerk will forward this on to Councillors once she had reviewed it.

C24.078 REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY COMMERMORATIVE EVENTS 2024

Members noted the meeting to discuss the above took place on 1st July at 10am, detailed notes from which were circulated with the agenda. The Clerk is still awaiting confirmation as to whether there will be attendees from 56 Squadron. The Clerk advised that an invite to local residents to attend the luncheon had been placed in the next edition of Village Life, and would also be on the notice boards. The Clerk read out what was detailed in the notice. Cllr Tyler stated that all Councillors should support the lunch, perhaps with each Councillor hosting a table. Cllr Mrs Jackman stated that you needed to invite certain people, including councillors, to which the Clerk advised that all Parish Councillors were invited to attend. Cllr Tyler advised that whilst Mark Smith was unable to attend this years event, he would be doing a talk on 17th January 2025, the proceeds from which will go to the RBL.

C24.079 RURAL PROSPERITY FUND

Members **NOTED** that this Council had been successful in securing funds from the Rural Prosperity Fund for new windows in the main Parish Hall at Thornwood. The Clerk put in a grant application for the windows due to the Health and Safety implication as the windows are very difficult to open, with hall users having to stand on chairs to do this. The grant was for £8,000. The Parish Council has to pay 20% of the cost of the window replacement. The Clerk also assisted the Management Committee in their grant application for a new wooden floor at the Hastingwood Village Hall, which was also successful. The grant was for £32,000 with the Hastingwood Village Hall also having to pay a 20% contribution. Cllr Irvine stated that this wasn't luck, but was because of the hard work of the Clerk, and asked that thanks were recorded to her for her efforts.

C24.080 MEETING WITH QUALIS DIRECTOR – SIMON RUTTER

In early July the Clerk was contacted by Simon Rutter's Office at Qualis and asked to attend a meeting in relation to North Weald Airfield, however unfortunately this meeting was cancelled twice by Simon's Office. The Clerk had since had a telephone conversation with Simon who advised that he would expect to be able to arrange a meeting with the Clerk to have 'relative' matters to discuss early in October. After the initial meeting he would like to hold meetings every three months to keep the Parish Council 'up to date' with what was going on at the Airfield. It would be to talk about things in NW, and the Airfield, etc. At present the format of these meeting was not clear, but initially it would be the Clerk and the PFO who would attend, the first meeting being in October. Cllr Blanks stated he was not confident that the meeting would go ahead, and expressed some cynicism about the meetings, to which the Clerk advised that it was Qualis who had contacted her. The Clerk stated that she intended on asking at the meeting that he meets with full council.

C24.081 SHED ON THE ALLOTMENTS AT WHEELERS FARM GARDENS SITE

Members recalled a recent meeting of the Parish Council where a resident voiced her concerns in relation to a shed being constructed on the Wheelers Farm Gardens site and which was at the rear of her garden. The Clerk reported that this matter had now been concluded, with the shed being constructed, with a slightly different style roof and some trees having been cut back.

C24.082 PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY – JOINING UP OF TWO FOOTPATHS WEALD COMMON

The Clerk reported that she had sent an email to Alan Roscoe the ECC Public Rights of Way Officer and was awaiting further information from him on how to proceed on this matter. Quite a number of residents had contacted the Clerk in relation to having used the footpath between the Village Hall Car Park and

Weald Common, and she was waiting for clarification as to exactly who needed to complete the submission forms – if it could just be the Clerk on behalf of these residents, or the residents would need to complete forms individually.

C24.083 BENCH ON WEALD COMMON

Councillors *NOTED* that following the theft of the Eco Warriors bench from Weald Common, a new bench was ordered and had now been installed. Members were encouraged to visit and view the bench in situ.

C24.084 BUS SHELTER CONSULTATION

Members were advised of a collaborative scheme that ECC had put together, full details of which were included within the agenda. The Clerk provided a verbal summary, stating that most of the bus stops in the Parish belonged to the Parish Council, however this new scheme did give us the opportunity to suggest other bus stops that need renovating. The Clerk suggested the two bus stops in Hastingwood near to the garden centre on the A414 should be put forward, as they were in an extremely poor state. Cllr Irvine fully supported this proposal, and it was *AGREED* the Clerk should contact ECC and put forward these two bus stops.

C24.085 TRIP TO AIR AMBULANCE STATION ON NORTH WEALD AIRFIELD

Members were reminded of the trip to the Air Ambulance Station for Councillors, which will take place on Thursday 5th September at 6.00pm. The Chairman, his wife, Cllr Irvine and his wife, Cllr Etherington, and Cllr Hawkins had all advised they would be attending. Cllr Blanks also advised that he and his wife would like to attend.

C24.086 INVITATION TO ATTEND GREENACRES LIVING MEMORIAL PARK

Members were invited to attend Greenacres Living Memorial Park in Kiln Road on Thursday 19th September at 5.30pm. The invitation was from the Managing Director of the Park, who will advise on the changes to the park. It would involve a talk by MD and a walk around the park.

C24.087 BATTLE OF BRITAIN SUNDAY

Councillors noted that invitations had been sent out for Battle of Britain Sunday. This event was being organised for the third year in a row by the Parish Council, after we were advised that there was no one from RAFA who was able to organise the event. Commemorations will take place on 15th September at 3.00pm at the Cross of Sacrifice in the grounds of St Andrews Church, North Weald. Councillors were invited to attend.

C24.088 RED LINES CORNER OF UPLAND ROAD & JUNCTION OF HIGH ROAD THORNWOOD COMMON

This item was discussed and agreed earlier in the meeting.

C24.089 COUNTRycARE VOLUNTEER DAY

Members noted that EFDC had once again carried out a Volunteer Day at Thornwood Common. The works carried out were part of the conservation management for Thornwood Common Nature Area, and included the meadow areas cut and raked into habitat piles, woodland pathway cleared, and trees uplifted, as well as additional works to the pond to increase biodiversity. During the works it was found that there was a tree emanating from a neighbouring property adjacent to the site which was leaning on to the fence of the nature area. It was possibly causing some damage to the fence however it is not a health and safety hazard at this time. The owners of the tree have been contacted, and discussion is taking place about how to resolve this matter.

C24.090 REQUEST BY DEVELOPERS TO SITE PORTACABINS ON THORNWOOD COMMON IF AND WHEN BUILDING WORKS TAKE PLACE (TUDOR HOUSE DEVELOPMENT)

Councillors noted that the Clerk had received an initial request from the developer for soil to be placed on the Nature Area on the Common during building works, and that she further advised that she did not feel that this would be appropriate. However, a second request was then received to establish if a temporary Site Compound could be created which would be an area 40m wide x 30m deep. A schematic diagram was attached to the agenda. The PFO provided a brief update, stating that Thornwood Common was a formally registered Village Green, and that there were legal restrictions as to its use, including not interrupting others' use or enjoyment of the green, and the depositing of soil. Cllr Tyler stated that he did not feel it was appropriate considering it was a village green for the community. Cllr Blanks stated that he would not support the proposal. After discussion, Cllr Mrs Jackman **PROPOSED** that the developer should not be permitted to use part of the Thornwood Common as a temporary compound. This was **SECONDED** by Cllr Ms Wood. A vote was taken, the result of which was unanimous.

C24.091 BUS SERVICES AND SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT IN THE PARISH

Councillors noted that the Clerk had received a communication from EFDC Sustainable Transport Officer – Stephen Lloyd-Jones. Detailed within the agenda was an extract from two emails sent from him regarding sustainable transport services in the parish. Councillors were asked to pass this information on to any residents who may be affected, which included the following:

Some important bus service changes worth renumbering, route/frequency changes – most significantly the changes to Vectare's commercial services between Harlow, Epping and North Weald & Ongar with a big improvement for Ongar in terms of evening as well as daytime services. Key changes to Vectare's commercial services in July (ie needing no ECC subsidy):

- 420/A services renumbered to 20/21/22
- The new 20 service goes to Ongar from Harlow/Epping/NW across a much wider timespan than before, including a last service back to Ongar from Epping station at 9:20pm
- The new 21 service runs Harlow to Epping Station via Thornwood
- The new 22 service runs Harlow to Epping Station via North Weald (diverting on A414 from Hastingwood M11 roundabout)

*This grows service coverage but also stabilises the core Harlow to Epping Station leg
Further good news is likely in September regarding the 13 service from Waltham Cross with extra runs to North Weald via Epping/station and St Margarets Hospital.*

Cllr Irvine asked if there was anybody that could be pressed to install the electronic information boards at bus stops, as these were not present in the Parish. The PFO advised that some of these would come forward via S106 agreements from the new developments, however Cllr Irvine stated it would be too long to wait for this and asked if there was another route. Cllr Kinnear stated that there was a free App – MYRIP – that could be used to track where buses were, which was very useful. It was also stated that it was very helpful to receive the update from Stephen Lloyd-Jones, and the Clerk confirmed she would go back to him regarding the electronic information boards.

C24.092 VISIT TO NORTH WEALD CEMETERY

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

cemetery. The visit would take place on Wednesday 9th October at 5pm, and would involve all the areas, including where the time capsule was located. All Councillors were invited to attend.

C24.093 VE DAY 80 – A SHARED MOMENT OF CELEBRATION

Following on from the enormous success of D-Day 80 - 6th June 2024, in which the UK commemorated the 80th Anniversary of the D-Day landings in Normandy, France, through the lighting of over one thousand beacons and five hundred lamp lights of peace throughout the Country, the UK is now focusing all its efforts on the celebration of the 80th Anniversary of VE Day which marked the end of the war in Europe and WWII as a whole on 8th May 1945, in a similar way. On Thursday 8th May 2025 we are all being encouraged to undertake the lighting of Beacons and Lamp Lights of Peace at 9.30pm, and the raising of a unique VE Day flag at 9am and, where possible, holding parties of celebration throughout the day in the streets, gardens at home, churches, villages, town halls, pubs, clubs, hotels and all manner of locations. Councillors **AGREED** they wished to hold an event to mark this occasion and that two specific VE Day flags should be purchased, the cost of which was around £40 - one for the Village Green, and one for the flagpole at the Debt of Honour. The Clerk will liaise with Darren Goodey regarding the Debt of Honour Flag, and look into options for an event.

Meeting closed 8.46pm:

Signed

Date