

The Annual Parish Assembly of the North Weald Bassett Parish Council was held on Monday, 22nd April 2024, in the Parish Hall, Weald Hall Lane, Thornwood Common at 7.00pm.

ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY MINUTES

Parish Council Members Present: Councillor Alan Buckley, Chairman
Councillor Shirley Hawkins, Vice Chairman
Councillors: N Bedford*, T Blanks, N Born, B Clegg, A Irvine,
Mrs S Jackman MBE, C Kinnear, M Stroud, A Tyler, Ms D Wood
**Also, District Councillor and Deputy Leader of EFDC*

District Councillors Present: L Burrows, R Morgan

Essex County Councillor Present: (0)

Apologies received from ECC and District Councillors C Whitbread and Miss H Whitbread

Public: Forty-seven
Police: One
Press: One

In Attendance: Susan De Luca – Clerk to the Council
Adriana Jones – Principal Finance Officer
Joanna Tyler – Senior Administrative Officer

The Chairman welcomed Members of the Public to the Annual Parish Assembly.

1. Introduction of Councillors

The Chairman introduced all Parish and District Councillors and Parish Council staff who were in attendance.

2. To agree the minutes of the Parish Assembly held on Thursday, 16th March 2023.

The minutes were circulated and all those present **AGREED** that the minutes be approved as a true record.

3. To consider any matters arising from the last meeting

No matters were raised.

4. To receive a report on the Council's activities from:

The Chairman of the Council: Councillor Alan Buckley

The Chairman referred to the Annual Report which had been circulated at the meeting, together with a copy of the Chairman's speech. The Chairman highlighted various items contained within the report which the Parish Council had been involved with.

5. To receive a report from District Councillors

Councillor Nigel Bedford, Parish Councillor for Village Ward and Deputy Leader of EFDC referred to the Local Plan and commented that as it had now been passed, it should stop a lot of the rumours concerning development in the parish, such as the golf course at Rayley Lane and land at the top of Weald Common. Cllr Bedford advised that these areas are greenbelt sites and are not highlighted in the Local Plan. Cllr Bedford commented that EFDC had to put forward a very small area of greenbelt land at the back of Queens Road and a couple of other sites and said that these sites were rigorously tested before given the go ahead

to be included in the Local Plan. He said that District Councillors would be working on behalf of residents to make sure that they hold the developers to account to get the best infrastructure that they can.

Cllr Bedford referred to the recent sale of 52 acres of land on North Weald Airfield to Google, advising that as it will be a data centre Google will be bringing a low amount of jobs to the area, however, each one of those jobs will bring 6 others. Cllr Bedford advised that Google are looking to set up a fund in the future to assist with additional training for enhancing education. Cllr Bedford referred to the new waste hub that is being developed at the Airfield. He said that EFDC are taking back control from Biffa. Biffa have gone out and purchased new vehicles and the majority of rubbish is now being collected on time. Cllr Bedford advised people to report any issues with collections direct to EFDC. Cllr Bedford mentioned the investment by EFDC in the provision of a new fire station and control tower and said that this shows the commitment that EFDC has to not only maintaining the flying at the airfield but also investing in the airfield. Cllr Bedford referred to the Masterplan, commenting that the southern area will be used for development of more intensive jobs and recreation.

Councillor Richard Morgan, representing Hastingwood, Matching & Sheering Village Ward commented on the Boundary changes, stating that there will be 54 District councillors instead of 58, with the district having 18 wards with 3 councillors representing each.

Councillor Les Burrows, representing Thornwood Common Ward thanked his fellow District Councillors for their reports, stating that they had covered everything.

6. To receive a report from County Councillors – no report received.

Cllr Bedford mentioned that the only thing that Cllr Whitbread may have mentioned was the work on the new pavements taking place throughout North Weald village.

7. To receive a report from other organisations

Sharon Elmes, Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator: Sharon advised that she had recently taken over the role of co-ordinator and drew people's attention to the article contained in the Annual Report. Sharon urged people to get in contact and commented that since the article was published, 4 volunteers had signed up.

PC Andrew Cook gave a review of crimes reported in the past year, comparing the figures to the year before:

| CATEGORY | 22/23 | 23/24 |
|-------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Dwelling burglaries | 10 | 3 |
| Non-dwelling burglaries | 4 | 2 |
| Attempted dwelling burglaries | 5 | 3 |
| Motor vehicle interference | 2 | 2 |
| Theft from motor vehicle | 10 | 12 |
| Theft of a motor vehicle | 19 | 19 |
| Criminal damage | 30 | 20 |
| Robberies | 0 | 3 |
| Arsons | 2 | 0 |
| Race related | 9 | 4 |
| ASB reports | 1 | 2 |
| Overall reported crimes | 312 | 242 |
| Non-criminal reports | 51 | 68 |
| Overall positive disposals | 40 | 22 |
| Solve rate | 13% | 9% |

PC Cook commented that the reported crimes are down by 62 incidents and the solve rate is down 4%.

8. To receive questions from the public concerning matters over which the Parish Council has control or some influence

The Chairman invited members of the public to ask questions, reminding them that they needed to be listed on the Electoral Roll. The Chairman advised that if the council was able to answer questions straight away, it would do, however, if not, names and addresses would be taken and a response would be sent. The Chairman reminded members of the public that they could also post questions in the Question Box, and a written reply would be sent.

Thornwood Resident Claire Clegg asked why District Councillor Razia Sharif had not been listed as a councillor for Thornwood in the Annual Report. The Clerk responded and said that the omission had not been intentional. The Clerk advised that Cllr Ms Sharif had been invited to attend Parish Council Meetings and other events since being elected, however, she had never attended a meeting or responded.

North Weald Resident Joanne Taverner expressed her concern regarding the traffic congestion caused by the Saturday market on the Airfield. Ms Taverner stated that she must plan her journeys at weekends to ensure that she departs early in the morning and returns after the market has closed. Ms Taverner said that she had concerns about access for emergency services and asked if anything could be done, such as taking traffic through one of the other Airfield access gates rather than using Merlin Way. The Clerk responded saying that this matter had recently been raised and she had written to Epping Forest District Council. The Clerk asked Ms Taverner if she would pass on her contact details after the meeting so that she could respond further.

There was one question in the Question Box regarding the parking situation at North Weald Village Hall. The question was passed on to the North Weald Village Hall Management Committee to respond directly to the resident.

8. Presentation of Citizen of the Year Awards

The Citizen of the Year Award Winners were announced by Councillor Tyler, with the awards handed out by the Chairman:

Residents Nomination Award – awarded to Bryan Roth. Bryan regularly posts “feel good” stories on North Weald Village Life Facebook page, entertaining people with comments from everyday life. Bryan recently became a widower and documents his journey of keeping busy, learning to cook and how he is coping with being on his own.

Volunteer Award – awarded to Margaret Mulliner. Following the sudden death of husband George, Margaret, who was already the ‘go to’ person when problems arose at North Weald Village Hall during George’s illness, was persuaded to take on the Chair of the Village Hall Charity. For the past year she has continued to lead the Village Hall team and is always willing to cover jobs such as cleaning, bookings, correspondence, etc., when needed.

Sporting Award – awarded to Joanne Ryan. Joanne was selected to represent Great Britain and Northern Ireland in the 4 x 100 metre relay team at the European Masters Athletics Championships in Pescara Italy last year. The team, with Joanne as lead runner, won a gold medal. Due to previous commitments, Joanne was unable to attend the meeting, and arrangements have been made for her to be presented with the award at the Annual Parish Council Meeting to be held on 13th May.

Local Business Award, Highly Commended – awarded to Mary Crosby. Mary is the organiser of the community Farmer’s Market held in the Parish Hall on the 1st Saturday of every month.

Special Community Champions – awarded to Darren Goodey and Mike Whitham – North Weald Airfield Operations. In May 2023 Darren Goodey, Service Manager and Mike Witham, Operations Officer of North Weald Airfield Operations Team, were first on the scene to administer lifesaving first aid to Ken Waylett after the Chairman of the Lotus Drivers Club became ill during a driver training visit. Having made the

crucial first intervention, Darren and Mike handed over to paramedics from the Essex & Herts Air Ambulance based at the airfield.

Community Award – awarded to the Community Speedwatch team. Coordinated by Cllr Baden Clegg and local resident Jimmy Waters, the volunteer led Community Speedwatch team continues to operate around the parish. The team continue to highlight areas of concern such as Upland Road, Weald Bridge Road and Hastingwood Road. Cllr Andy Irvine is an active member of the team in Hastingwood.

Recognition Award – awarded to the Poppy Collection Volunteer Group at North Weald Airfield. Cllr Tyler and friends from North Weald have been active in collecting for the Poppy Appeal on North Weald Airfield since 2018. The group originally responded to an appeal from the North Weald Poppy Appeal organiser, who was looking for volunteer collectors in the absence of any volunteer members from the Royal British Legion. The group are present on Saturdays for 3 weeks on the run up to Remembrance Sunday, regardless of the weather. New Parish Councillor Colin Kinnear joined the group last year.

Organisation of the Year – awarded to North Weald Village Ploughman's Group. This organisation is run by an avid group of volunteers, who also undertake other functions within the village of North Weald. The group provide this monthly event which enables social inclusion and befriending across all generations. It allows people to get together and have a friendly chat and a meal. Mrs Margaret Mulliner collected the award on behalf of the group.

Group Award, Highly Commended – awarded to former members of the North Weald Preservation Society – who look after the planter next to the flagpole on the Village Green in North Weald, providing a much welcome burst of colour throughout the year.

Group of the Year Award – awarded to the Friends of St Andrew's School (FOSTAS). The group, led by Ele Fox and Jane O'Leary, won the People's choice show garden at the BBC Gardener's World Autumn Fair at Audley End. With help from the school's Eco-Warriors group, they designed the garden which is to be re-sited in the grounds of St Andrew's Primary School. The whole FOSTA's team have raised over £20,000 through various fundraising events to build a new inclusive play sensory trail in the school enabling equal access to meaningful play experiences for all children. The team hold pre-loved uniform sales in school to ensure all children and families have access to affordable uniform options. They worked with St Andrew's Church to ensure that children living in local temporary accommodation all received a Christmas present.

The FOSTAS team were nominated by the Clerk for Epping Forest District Council's Team of the Year and were awarded winners in that category at the Civic Awards held in March.

The overall winner of the Citizen of the Year Awards 2023 was awarded to Special Community Champions Darren Goodey and Mike Witham

Finally, the Chairman thanked the Parish Council Team and his fellow councillors for their support throughout the past year. The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and invited all those present to join him in some refreshments and to also take the opportunity to ask councillors any individual questions.

Meeting Closed: 8.32pm