



MINUTES

Meeting: PARISH COUNCIL

Date: 12th May 2025

Time: 7.30PM

Venue: PARISH HALL, THORNWOOD COMMON

PRESENT:

Councillors (10) Cllr Buckley (Chairman), Cllr Mrs Hawkins, Cllr Irvine, Cllr Blanks, Cllr Clegg
Cllr Mrs Jackman, Cllr Ms Wood, Cllr Kinnear, Cllr Lambert, Cllr Mrs Etherington

Officers in Attendance (2)

Susan De Luca, Parish Clerk

Adriana Jones – Principal Finance Officer

Members of the Public (4) – for various parts of meeting

Members of the Press (1)

Prior to the start of the meeting, an award was presented to Elaine Davis, previous allotment warden for Thornwood, as recognition for her 10 year period of volunteering as warden.

C25.001 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Cllr Tyler **PROPOSED** Cllr Buckley as Chairman, the proposal was **SECONDED** by Cllr Kinnear. There being no other nominations, Cllr Buckley was duly elected by way of unanimous vote as Chairman of North Weald Bassett Parish Council for the current Municipal Year, following which the Declaration of Acceptance of Office of the Chairman of the Council was duly executed.

C25.002 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

Cllr Buckley **PROPOSED** Cllr Mrs Hawkins as Vice Chairman, the proposal was **SECONDED** by Cllr Tyler. There being no other nominations, Cllr Mrs Hawkins was duly elected by way of unanimous vote as Vice Chairman of North Weald Bassett Parish Council for the current Municipal Year, following which the Declaration of Acceptance of Office of the Vice Chairman of the Council was duly executed.

C25.003 VACANCY HASTINGWOOD WARD

Following interest from two members of the public, one individual was present at the meeting to put themselves forward for consideration of co-option. Councillors briefly discussed the applicant. There was a query as to the suitability of having a resident who lived outside the Parish but would be representing Hastingwood, and if this could create a conflict of interest on certain matters, however it was noted that the Council already had one serving Councillor who lived outside the Parish. After further discussion it was **AGREED** to co-opt Mr Peter Lambert onto the Council as Councillor for Hastingwood Ward. Cllr Lambert signed his declaration of acceptance of office, and joined the meeting. It was **AGREED** that a meeting would take place in the near future with Cllr Lambert, Cllr Irvine, Cllr Mrs Etherington and the Clerk to update Cllr Lambert on matters in the Hastingwood Ward.

C25.004 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (1)

Apologies from Cllr Bedford.

C25.005 OTHER ABSENCES (3)

Cllrs Born, Spearman and Stroud.

C25.006 MINUTES

Councillors **AGREED** the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 8th April 2025.

C25.007 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

The Chairman welcomed those present, and it was agreed that one member of the public could address the Council under agenda item 27.

PC Cook provided a brief update on crime, advising that he had statistics going back to 3rd March 2025 and could report that there had been no dwelling burglaries, one attempted burglary at a licenced premises in the High Road, one theft of motor vehicle from Thornhill, two theft from motor vehicles, a couple of criminal damage issues, and plant stolen from Vicarage Lane and Tempest Mead. Cllr Mrs Jackson asked if anybody had been arrested, to which PC Cook advised investigations were ongoing. Cllr Tyler advised that he believed there was potential drug dealing going on in Kiln Lane, and other areas in North Weald.

C25.008 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

C25.009 REPORT OF THE CLERK

The Clerk provided an update on current matters. Councillors noted that a new maintenance plan had been created for both the Sensory Garden and Weald Common, a copy of which was available for Councillors inspection. The Council thanked Cllr and Mrs Tyler for maintaining the planting at the sensory garden free of charge. Cemetery grounds maintenance costs had increased by £20 per month, and the cemetery continued to be extremely well maintained. The Clerk had applied for £50,000 of grant funding via the Rural England Prosperity Fund toward a new roof and solar panels at the Thornwood Hall, the cost of which was expected to be around £93,000. A further £20,000 had also been applied for via the National Lottery Funding scheme. A further update would be provided at a future meeting. The Clerk had been liaising with Mr Lloyd-Right at EFDC with regard to the possibility of having vehicle charging points on some of the street lights in the Parish, however further information was needed before it could be presented to Council and a meeting would be taking place next week. Confirmation had been received from ECC that £19,000 had been awarded to the Council following the 'Love Your Bus' grant application, and the Clerk was going through the paperwork to clearly establish what the money could be spent on. The Council thanked the Clerk for her efforts with applying for, and obtaining grant funding. Councillors noted the Neighbourhood Plan results report.

C25.010 REPORTS & MEMBERS REPORTS

- a) **Chairman's Report** – The Chairman advised anybody who had not seen a copy of the Annual Report to speak with the Clerk to obtain a copy. He also updated Council on the search for a contractor to complete the regular maintenance work on the garden outside the shops in North Weald, and it was hoped that a contractor had now been found. He would be doing a clean up of the site this week, after which time the Clerk and Chairman would discuss if this individual should be appointed.
- b) **Vice Chairman's Report** – Cllr Hawkins advised that herself and Cllr Spearman had completed site visits of the allotments at the start of May, and there had been a great improvement on the majority of plots, especially considering the hard ground. She also asked Council for permission to purchase new plants for the entrance way to Thornwood Hall, which was agreed.

- c) **District & County Councillors Reports** – The Clerk read out a written report that had been submitted to her by EFDC Cllr Bromwich. Councillors asked that the Clerk write to Cllr Bromwich thanking him for his continued effort and support in the Parish.
- d) **Parish Councillors Reports** – Cllr Irvine advised that there had recently been fireworks at Blakes Golf Course, and that he had received a number of complaints from residents who have pets suggesting that it would have been very helpful if Blakes had given notice of this via social media. Cllr Mrs Etherington advised that notice was placed on North Weald Village Life social media, to which Cllr Irvine suggested that if Blakes could also notify the Parish Council we too could place this on social media, hopefully reaching a wider audience. It was agreed the Clerk would contact Blakes regarding this.

Cllr Clegg provided a brief update on Community Speedwatch, advising that five volunteers had recently conducted a session in Upland Road, and were expecting the police to attend also but they did not. 20% of drivers were speeding with most doing over 40MPH and one doing 50MPH. In addition, as requested by Cllr Bromwich, a session had taken place in Hastingwood Road at 8am on Thursday, and despite there being low traffic, out of the 15 people that were speeding all were at 50MPH, with one motorbike doing 68MPH, who was very apologetic. They also did an unofficial 15 minute review of Mill Street, with only 5 cars driving past, none of which were speeding, and pretty much the same for Foster Street. A further session will be taking place on Wednesday. Cllr Irvine stated that the Hastingwood results were quite concerning. Cllr Clegg advised that all the speeders on Hastingwood Road were coming from the Mill Street end and were clearly accelerating when they hit the straight.

- e) **Queens Hall Charity Report** – Cllr Ms Wood advised that the AGM would be taking place the week after next, and that the asbestos report had been received which showed there was no asbestos at the hall other than a low risk element under the canopy.
- f) **Highways** – The Clerk reminded Councillors that the B181 between North Weald and The Plain, Epping, would be closed between 10am and 3pm between 29th May and 3rd June.

C25.011 FINANCIAL REPORTS

- a) Councillors **NOTED** the monthly cheque lists for April which had been emailed to Councillors.
- b) Members noted the CCLA investment report for April - £550.16

C25.012 MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES

Councillors reviewed the membership of Committees for 25/26, with there being no changes agreed. Cllr Lambert advised he would look at the list and come back to the Clerk if he wished to sit on any committees.

C25.013 DATES OF MEETINGS FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR

Councillors **AGREED** the dates of the meeting for the 25/26 year, noting a change to the July date to Monday 14th July.

C25.014 REPRESENTATION ON OUTSIDE BODIES

Councillors **AGREED** the following representations on outside bodies:

OUTSIDE BODIES	
Outside Body	Representation Council Year 25/26
Parish Passenger Transport Forum	Cllr Born

Norway House	Chairman of Parish Council
North Weald Village Hall	Cllr Mrs Etherington to attend where possible following Cllr Bedford's departure.
<p>Epping Forest District Council Committees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Epping Forest Association of Local Councils – two reps (clerks can also attend these meetings) and EFDC Local Liaison Meeting Joint Standards Committee – one rep (but only if your council is a member of this) 	<p>Cllr Mrs S Jackman, MBE & Chairman, & Clerk – In the Absence of Cllr Jackman – Cllr T Blanks has attended as a substitution</p> <p>Cllr Bedford</p>
<p>Queens Hall Charity (in Governing Document, term of office is one year)</p>	<p>PC Appointed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cllr Wood – Councillor, Administrator and Treasurer Cllr Kinnear – Councillor, Chairman Stuart Greenhill June Peachey Colin Twitchett <p>Users Groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Louise, Red School Diane Archer, Bowls Vince Current, NWCC Steve Hogg, Football Liane Hogan <p>New Trustees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daniel Kinnear Jaymey Hook <p>Leaving is Penny White.</p>

C25.015 REGISTRATION OF COUNCILLORS INTERESTS

Members were reminded that they should review their Interests on a regular basis, and if there are any changes to their interests, they should re-submit these forms to the Clerk

C25.016 APPROVAL OF ACCOUNTS 2024/2025

Attached to the agenda was a copy of the draft accounts for 2024/2025. Cllr Hawkins **PROPOSED** these be accepted. This was **SECONDED** by Cllr Tyler. A vote was taken, the result of which was unanimous for approval.

C25.017 INTERNAL AUDIT 2024/2025

Councillors **NOTED** the final internal audit for 2024/2025 had been completed in April, and noted the content of the report, a copy of which was attached to the agenda. It was agreed that the Clerk would write to the previous auditor to thank him for his time over the years.

C25.018 REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS OF SYSTEM OF INTERNAL CONTROL

The Council has a duty to ensure that the financial management of the body is adequate and effective and that the body has a sound system of internal control. To this end this Council reviewed the effectiveness of systems of Internal Control, and **CONFIRMED** they were happy with the current system for this financial year.

C25.019 APPOINTMENT OF INTERNAL AUDITOR 25/26

Council **AGREED** the appointment of Heelis and Lodge as the Parish Councils Internal Auditor for the 2025/2026 financial year.

C25.020 PARISH COUNCIL INSURANCE

The Parish Councils insurance is due for renewal on 1st June. Councillors noted that the cost for 24/25 was £3,082, however the Clerk has sourced a new quote for the 25/26 year for £2,842.64 with all the current areas fully covered. It was **AGREED** to go with Zurich Municipal for the current year as quoted, and to send a copy of the insurance document to Cllr Lambert to review.

C25.021 ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS

Members **CONFIRMED** that they would be happy when needed to have some of their documentation served on them for Parish Council and other Meetings electronically for reasons of efficiency and to save paper where possible.

C25.022 GENERAL POWER OF COMPETENCE

Councillors **RESOLVED** to confirm they met the eligibility criteria to hold the General Power of Competence, that being that at least two thirds of the Council are elected, and the Clerk holds the relevant qualification.

C25.023 PARISH COUNCILLOR REMUNERATION

The Clerk advised that it had been formally requested that this matter be placed before the Council again for consideration. Cllr Mrs Jackson stated that she was very annoyed to see this back on the agenda, as this matter has been debated many times, each time the outcome being that Councillors do not wish to receive any financial benefit to being a Parish Councillor. Cllr Tyler advised he too agreed with Cllr Mrs Jackman, stating that there should be a public statement made to differentiate between a Parish Councillor who gives up their time free of charge and is in effect a volunteer, to District and County Councillors who get paid for their roles. Cllr Clegg stated he too agreed, and suggested that a line should be drawn under this matter, and that it should not keep reappearing on the agenda. Cllr Ms Wood stated she too agreed, stating that people take on the role of Parish Councillor to assist the community, and **PROPOSED** that this item should not be on the agenda again at least until such time as the next Parish Council elections were held and new Council was in place. This was **SECONDED** by Cllr Tyler, and a vote taken, the result of which was unanimous in favour. It was also **AGREED** that the Parish Council should issue a public statement regarding Parish Councillors doing their role without any financial compensation, versus that of District and County Councillors.

C25.024 COUNTRYCARE WORK AT THORNWOOD NATURE RESERVE

Each year the Parish Council budgets for one session of maintenance by EFDC Countrycare at the Thornwood Nature Reserve. The Clerk has been contacted by Countrycare who state that they believe two visits would be required this year – one in May/June, and one in September/October – at an additional cost of £450. Cllr Irvine asked what the purpose of the extra visit was, stating was is just to make the area nicer, or for biodiversity reasons, etc. The Clerk stated it was her understanding it was to improve access, ecology and biodiversity. Cllr Blanks asked if Countrycare were anything to do with Qualis, to which it was confirmed they were not. It was **AGREED** to fund an additional visit by Countrycare, with funds coming from the General Reserves.

C25.025 MEETING WITH EFDC – TO DISCUSS ECONOMIC GROWTH

Members were advised that the proposed meeting with the Acting Chief Executive Officer of Epping Forest District Council to discuss Economic Growth was postponed, and had now been rescheduled for

16th May, at which the Clerk and PFO would be in attendance, along with representatives from EFDC. The purpose of this meeting was unclear, and was at the request of EFDC. Councillors **AGREED** that the Clerk should go back to EFDC as soon as possible to establish what the agenda was, and ensure that the Parish Council could put forward questions for EFDC to answer.

C25.026 UPDATE ON DEVELOPMENTS AND DEVELOPER WORKING GROUP

On 14th April 2025 a meeting of the Developer Working Group took place, and attached to the agenda was a copy of the full notes from this meeting. Councillors considered the following points:

a) LAND AT VICARAGE LANE WEST

As detailed within the meeting notes, the representative has asked the Parish Council to adopt a collaborative approach in terms of designing the proposed development. The Chairman stated that whilst this was an additional development, it was fairly small scale given the other development, and the resident did want to create something fitting for the village, and had long historic links to the village. Cllr Clegg stated that there was a lot discussed at the developer working group meeting, and said there wasn't much else to consider. The Chairman stated that working group attendees were generally supportive of the approach from this individual about the development. Cllr Tyler asked if it was likely this piece of land would be classed as grey belt, to which the PFO stated that the establishment of grey belt is a complicated process, however it was certainly possible this could be deemed grey belt. After discussion, it was **AGREED** to have a collaborate approach with the member of public on this development site, to ensure that what was proposed respected the setting of the village, addressed matters of local concern, and was right for the area.

b) GOOGLE PLANNING APPLICATION – NORTH WEALD AIRFIELD

Further to the update given by Google representatives at the 14th April working group meeting, the Clerk had received notification that the application for a Data Centre on North Weald Airfield from Google had been received by Epping Forest District Council and has subsequently been validated. The link to the application was included within the agenda. Councillors **NOTED** that this application will come before the Parish Councils Planning Committee on 19th May 2025. The Clerk has emailed Councillors expressing the importance of reviewing the documents. This was supported by Cllr Tyler, who expressed concern about the height of the proposed building, and the impact this could have on aircraft.

c) QUINN ESTATES

Councillors **NOTED** that the Clerk and RFO had an informal Zoom meeting with the consultant representing Quinn Developments on 29th April. During that meeting it was advised that following recent changes to the NPPF, and EFDCs failure to meet its required housing target, a future Outline Planning Application should be expected on land adjacent to Rayley Lane in the near future. The development will comprise initially of up to 600 homes, a 70 Bedroomed Care Home, a 2 Form Entry Primary School, some Sport Facilities together with 12 Hectares of Sang. The representative was provided with a copy of the Parish Councils' Position Statement. The representative also asked to meet with the Developer Working Group, to which the Clerk advised that he should send in a request and in line with Council Policy this would be accommodated accordingly. It was noted that at the current time the consultant advised that they had only formally met with Essex County Council and not Epping Forest District Council in relation to the proposed Outline Planning Application that they planned to submit, and had only discussed housing need, infrastructure and public transport matters. Councillors had some discussion about what was being proposed, why this had come back to the table now, and what this would mean for infrastructure and the future of the village. Councillors **AGREED** they wanted to hold a developer working group to meet with the applicant to establish more about what was being suggested, and that the Clerk should arrange this.

C25.027 FLAG

Members were advised that the Flag was hoisted on St Georges Day, and a VE Day Flag was flown on VE Day (8th May). The relevant flag will also be flown on Norway Day 17th May. Councillors thanked Cllr Stroud for managing the different flags.

C25.028 NORTH WEALD MARKET TRAFFIC

Councillors noted that the Clerk had once again contacted both EFDC Airfield Manager, and also North Weald Market Manager regarding residents concerns in relation to the increase in traffic. A response is still awaited. Cllr Tyler advised he was very passionate about this matter, and that nothing had happened since the last meeting. The traffic was as bad as ever, and traffic controls instigated before Christmas had not been reinstated. Cllr Tyler advised that EFDC made over £900,000 per year from the market, and when the temporary lease of the land from Google ceases, EFDC want to move the market outside the airfield boundary. Cllr Tyler expressed concern that the County is going through the devolution process, and in two years time when EFDC no longer exist, the residents in North Weald will have little input in the future of the airfield as it will be managed by a new Unitary authority. Cllr Tyler stated that EFDC must give three months notice of termination to the tenants, and that he was aware they were coming up with a strategy to move the market, but this Parish Council had not been advised as to their plans. Cllr Blanks advised that this should be a question raised at the 16th May Economic Growth meeting. Cllr Tyler suggested that the airfield should become an asset of the Parish. It was noted that the traffic as a result of the market causes issues for local businesses. The PFO advised that the feedback form the NP survey was that local people generally supported the Market, and that perhaps a short survey should be conducted to establish specifically what people thought. Cllr Tyler stated that he too liked the market, however the resultant traffic was not being appropriately and correctly managed, and this is what was causing the problem.

Cllr Tyler suggested that a meeting in public should be held with representatives from the Parish Council, EFDC, ECC, the Market Operator and members of the public so that this matter can be discussed and issues addressed. There was some concern regarding a public meeting, as frequently you get residents who may perhaps get stuck on a certain point for which an answer cannot be given, and this causes disruption to the meeting, thus stifling discussion. There was discussion regarding what funds EFDC was permitted to use following the sale of Google, and after further discussion it was **AGREED** that the Clerk should contact EFDC to arrange for a formal meeting with EFDC, ECC, the Market Operator and the Parish Councillors so that residents concerns, specifically about traffic and the future plans for the market, could be addressed.

C25.029 VE DAY COMMEMORATIVE EVENTS

The Clerk advised that the VE Day event went extremely well, and that pictures had been placed on the Parish Councils website and social media pages. The event included the unveiling of the Commemorative Bench, followed by a short toast, then the Proclamation was read by the Chairman, and the event ended with the lighting of the Ruby Lantern. The Clerk confirmed that she had received correspondence from the Norwegians thanking this Council. Cllr Clegg asked if a response had been received from the Norwegians regarding moving of the revetment stone, to which the Clerk confirmed she had not received a full response at this time.

Meeting closed 21.06

Signed

Date