



MINUTES

Meeting: PARISH COUNCIL

Date: 1st September 2025

Time: 7.30PM

Venue: PARISH HALL, THORNWOOD COMMON

PRESENT:

Councillors (9) Cllr Mrs Hawkins (meeting Chairman), Cllr Clegg, Cllr Kinnear, Cllr Ms Wood, Cllr Spearman, Cllr Blanks, Cllr Mrs Jackman, Cllr Mrs Etherington, Cllr Born

** for part of meeting*

Officers in Attendance (2)

Susan De Luca, Parish Clerk

Adriana Jones – Principal Finance Officer

Members of the Public (5) – inc PC Andy Cook*

Members of the Press (1)

C25.075 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (5)

Apologies from Cllr Bedford, Cllr Lambert, Cllr Tyler, Cllr Buckley, and Cllr Irvine.

C25.076 OTHER ABSENCES (1)

Cllr Stroud.

C25.077 MINUTES

Subject to one amendment in relation to Page 4 where the date was incorrectly stated as 2025 but should be 2026, Councillors **AGREED** the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 14th July 2025.

C25.078 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Mrs Jackman declared a pecuniary interest in agenda item 15 Media Service, confirming she would leave the room. It was **AGREED** to move this agenda item to the end of the meeting. Cllr Spearman declared an interest in the Local Plan should it arise.

C25.079 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

The Chairman welcomed members of the public present. PC Cook provided a very brief update, advising that he had looked at the figures back to 1st July, and there had been a couple of theft of motor vehicles, a burglary in Vicarage Lane but they were scared off, and a criminal damage occurrence in York Road. Overall, there had been 36 reports. Cllr Ms Wood advised she had made a report with regard to a man lurking around the Memorial Playing fields and Blackhorse Lane in the early hours of the morning, giving the police a very detailed description of the individual. The Police Officer first went to the wrong address, but when they did attend the Memorial Playing Field they stood in the car park saying they could not see anything. Plus Cllr Ms Wood advised she never received any response or outcome of this report. PC Cook advised he would contact Cllr Ms Wood the following morning to discuss the matter with her.

Also in attendance were members of the North Weald Mums Group. A representative of the group addressed the Council, reminding them of the work they completed around 10 years ago to source funding for the project to create the new children's play area at Weald Common. The group now wanted to embark on another project to provide adult gym equipment to be located on Weald Common. This would follow the same pattern as the previous project, with the group willing to do the work in terms of fundraising and sourcing funding opportunities, but needed the support of the Parish Council in terms of

having permission to locate the equipment on Weald Common, and for its ongoing maintenance as the items would become the responsibility of the Parish Council. This equipment would be available and suitable for all ages, including young adults. It was expected there would be around 4 or 5 pieces of equipment. The suggested location for this equipment was between the play area and the swale. The question was raised as to if this area was covered by CCTV, as any new equipment would need to be covered for security reasons. The estimated cost of supplying and installing the equipment was between £30-£40k. Queries were raised as to if a reputable company would be used, and if these pieces of equipment would comply with outdoor standards and have a good warranty life. The representative advised this would be the case, and they were happy to do the work if the Parish Council supported the project.

Cllr Clegg mentioned there was such equipment at Harlow Park, but that he had never seen anybody using it, so it was essential to establish if the equipment would be used considering the estimated cost of the project. Cllr Ms Wood questioned if the area was lit. The Clerk explained that the area was not lit, but that the CCTV did provide some level of coverage overnight, but she would need to check if this would be sufficient. Cllr Mrs Etherington suggested you probably didn't want to encourage use of such equipment outside of daylight hours as it could encourage antisocial behaviour. One of the North Weald Mums supported this position expressing caution about lighting.

The Clerk advised that Councillors needed to consider if they would be minded to let outdoor gym equipment be located on Weald Common, which is Parish Council owned land, and would they be willing to liaise with the North Weald Mums on this project. Cllr Clegg **PROPOSED** the North Weald Mums were given the opportunity to progress this project, and to come back to the Parish Council with the finer details, but in principle the idea was supported. This was **SECONDED** by Cllr Kinnear. A vote was unanimous.

C25.080 REPORT OF THE CLERK

The Clerk provided an update on current matters, which included:

- a) Various Planning Matters
- b) Various Cemetery Matters, which include, Interments & Bookings
- c) VJ Day Commemorative Event
- d) Thornwood Village Hall, Various Matters including maintenance issues and Wi-Fi
- e) Assistance to the Queens Hall Charity
- f) 85th Anniversary of Bombing of North Weald and North Weald Airfield
- g) Revetments on North Weald Airfield
- h) Councillors Surgeries
- i) Wayleave at Thornwood Common, confirming the works had been delayed by UKPN
- j) EFDC Local Council Liaison Committee meeting 18th September 2025

The Clerk also provided an update on the matter of flags having been erected both in the Parish and across the wider county, mostly on ECC property. She had been advised these flags would remain in place for VJ Day, and EFDC advised they had spoken to ECC who had confirmed they would not be moved at the current time.

C25.081 REPORTS & MEMBERS REPORTS

- a) **Chairman's Report** – No report.
- b) **Vice Chairman's Report** – Cllr Mrs Hawkins advised that herself and Cllr Spearman would start allotment visits after the summer on 3rd September.

- c) **District & County Councillors Reports** – Cllr Bromwich had submitted a written report which the Clerk confirmed she would circulate to all Councillors.
- d) **Parish Councillors Reports** – Cllr Clegg advised that the Community Speedwatch team held a session the prior Thursday at 4.30pm, with 26% of vehicles speeding. There were around 45 cars speeding, the highest of which was 47mph, and most being over 40mph.
- e) **Queens Hall Charity Report** – Cllr Ms Wood advised there had been a leak in the ceiling, and that a contractor was looking at this. In addition, one of the hall hirers had been given notice to quit on 31st December 2025 due to not following the terms of their hire. Cllr Ms Wood advised that as reported earlier in the meeting, there had been reports of a man behaving oddly on the field, and that hall hirers had been asked to keep the door closed and managed at this time for the safety of hall hirers, especially children.
- f) **Highways** – Various road closures and changes had been advertised.

C25.082 FINANCIAL REPORTS

- a) Councillors **NOTED** the monthly cheque lists for July and August which had been emailed to Councillors.
- b) The Clerk advised the latest CCLA interest payment was £538.57.
- c) It was noted that formal confirmation of the end of the Public Works Loan had now been received.

C25.083 TREES

Following the Tree Risk Assessment recently undertaken, quotes had been obtained to complete the recommended works. The PFO provided a summary of the costings received, and Councillors **AGREED** to go with the company who were providing the lowest quote of £2,300. This company had been used in the past for such works. Cllr Etherington asked who owned the land between Weald Common and Tempest Mead as a row of trees had been cut down at this location. The Clerk explained that one of the trees identified in the risk assessment was actually in this area, and that the office staff had contacted EFDC who advised it was not their land. It was thought to perhaps belong to the Epping Ongar Railway.

C25.084 PATHWAY BETWEEN WEALD COMMON AND NORTH WEALD VILLAGE HALL

Members recalled this matter was on the agenda and had been discussed at a meeting in 2024. However it 'dropped' off the agenda as the Clerk was awaiting confirmation from the Parish Council's Insurance Company in relation to this council's liabilities with regards to possible works to the willow tree that the Village Hall would want the Parish Council to undertake and maintain if a path was to be constructed between the Car Park and Weald Common. The insurance company had advised that they would not wish to see the council 'at risk' in undertaking this, however confirmation of this in writing was awaited, but had now been received. The Clerk has written to the Village Hall Committee explaining that even though it was their (Village Hall Committee's) understanding that the people in attendance could give confirmation that works such as this could be agreed, this was not the case, and that it first had to be discussed by the Council as a Corporate Body. Any action agreed by the Council then has to be actioned by the Clerk and then this action has to be advised to Council. Therefore, this is why this item was now back on the Agenda for Members information. Councillors **NOTED** this update.

C25.085 YOUTH CLUB

Members were reminded that this matter was discussed in April 2024, and that funding had been offered to the organisation which had approached the Council, but they did not feel they could fulfil the necessary criteria, so the funding was not accepted. A summary of the history including the specific meeting

minutes was included in the body of the agenda for Councillors information. The Clerk advised that she had now received an approach from the Queens Hall Charity who themselves have been approached by an organisation who wish to start up a Youth Club in the Queens Hall. Detailed in the agenda was an extract from the email from the Queens Hall, which set out that there was a new administrator of Zinc Arts, and that they were looking to hire the Queens Hall on a Tuesday 4-5.30pm, and were looking for funding of £25 per session. Cllr Ms Wood had calculated the cost of the hires as follows:

Sept- £125.00, Oct - £100.00, Nov - £100.00, Dec - £75.00, Jan - £100.00, Feb - £100.00, Mar - £100.00, Apr - £125.00

It was understood the group were looking to run this for a year, and were looking for start up funding for the project, hence the approach to the Parish Council. The group had confirmed that the children would come from the North Weald Bassett Parish Area. Cllr Ms Wood provided a further update, advising that this person was already running youth clubs in other areas, and was suitably qualified. They have all their own equipment, and take a holistic view of the Youth Club, with children also being offered food. The request to the Parish Council was to cover the hire fees of the hall. At this stage they don't know how successful it would be, but want to give it a shot. Cllr Mrs Hawkins advised that she would support the project, stating this Council had earmarked funds of around £2,500 for a youth club at the last budget meeting, suggesting that these funds could be used for this new youth club given the lady was only asking for around £800. Cllr Clegg supported this, proposing the Council agree to pay the hall hirer up to 31st December initially, and then receive an update on success before deciding if further funding should be released. The PFO advised that the Parish Council held £500 in an earmarked reserve specifically for a Youth Club, so these funds could be used. This was unanimously **AGREED**.

C25.086 EXTERNAL AUDIT 24/25 – AGAR

Councillors noted that the Limited Assurance review of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR – External Audit) for 2024/2025 had now concluded. In accordance with the regulations, a copy of the Notice of Conclusion of Audit has 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 reviewed section 3 of the AGAR as attached to the agenda, which included one 'except for' matter. The PFO provided an explanation as to why this except for matter had arisen, stating that it was as a result of how the accounts were originally set up over 10 years ago, and that she had liaised with the software provider and the set up error had now been corrected. Councillors **AGREED** this action was sufficient, and no further action was needed.

C25.087 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

An updated copy of the Neighbourhood Plan had now been received from this Councils consultant. A full copy of this draft NP had been emailed directly to members on their Councillor email addresses for review. It was noted that a few amendments were needed. After discussion, Council **AGREED** the following:

1. Accepted they were happy with the general content of the NP, but agreed that the PFO and Cllr Blanks would liaise to correct any typos or factual errors.
2. Once completed, to submit the updated draft copy to EFDC to ask if they would want to screen for the need for a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) at this stage. Consideration of SEA and HRA are two of the Basic Conditions that an NP must meet if it is to pass examination. EFDC will initially 'screen' for the need for SEA/HRA. If they decide that the plan is not likely to have a significant environmental impact (SEA) or a significant impact on European habitats (HRA), then that is the end of the process. If they do consider that it could have these impacts, then an SEA and/or an HRA will need to be prepared.

3. Start the processes of progressing with a Regulation 14 Consultation.

C25.088 MEETING WITH EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL RE. NORTH WEALD MARKET TRAFFIC

The Clerk had previously been asked to contact EFDC to put a date into the diary of Epping Forest District Councillors of mid January 2026, to discuss North Weald Market Traffic (follow up meeting). Councillors noted that this date had now been set and confirmed as Thursday 15th January 2026 at 3.30pm. The venue has been set as Thornwood Parish Hall, however if this is not possible it will be held in the Council Chamber at Queens Hall Community Centre. The Clerk is currently checking the 2026 Parish Hall Diary. Members were reminded they should ensure that they bring along any questions that they have to that meeting.

C25.089 ANNUAL PLAY AREA INSPECTIONS

Members were advised that the External ROSPA Company used by the Parish Council to undertake its Annual Inspections of all three play areas was undertaken in August. A detailed evaluation of the report was currently being created to assess the priorities in relation to the need for the scheduled works necessary, and the office staff were awaiting quotes at this time.

C25.090 UKPN WORKS ON THORNWOOD COMMON

Councillors noted that works to lay cable under Thornwood Common commenced on 21st August. All the relevant notices were in place as well as the relevant safety documentation. The office staff had received a couple of enquiries and one complaint in relation to these works, however as these works were temporary in nature and were being carried out by a Statutory Undertaker, they were able to go ahead. As reported earlier by the Clerk, there had been a delay with regard to indemnity insurance as this Council holds possessory title and not title absolute.

C25.091 EFDC – CIL RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

Following a meeting of the Planning Committee where members were advised of an EFDC consultation on the introduction of a Community Infrastructure levy, it had been agreed that a response should be drafted by the Clerk and RFO and put to full Council to agree prior to the response being sent. A copy of this response was attached to the agenda for members to consider. Subject to one grammatical amendment, this response was **AGREED**, and the Clerk was asked to submit this to EFDC.

C25.092 BATTLE OF BRITAIN SUNDAY

Members were aware that over the last few months the Clerk had been entering into various communications with the PCC of St Andrews Church in relation to the Battle of Britain Commemorative Event. The Clerk had advised the PCC in her last email that the event was a simple Wreath Laying event, with no religious implications and no religious service, and that there was no Vicar in attendance. The Council then received an email (a full copy of which was included within the agenda) from the PCC which set out the legalities of ownership and permission to hold events on church land. The Clerk subsequently took the time to undertake significant research in relation to the fact that the PCC were advising that the land in St Andrews Churchyard was consecrated ground and only certain services could be carried out there. She had discovered that when Commonwealth war graves are located in churchyards in the UK, the ownership of the land remains with the church or the local authority that owns the churchyard. However, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) is responsible for the care and maintenance of the war graves themselves, regardless of who owns the land.

- Churchyards and cemeteries are typically owned by parish churches, dioceses, or local councils. The CWGC does not own the land in these cases.
- The CWGC has formal agreements or understandings with these landowners that allow them to maintain the war graves in perpetuity.

- In some cases, the CWGC may install standard headstones or markers, and they monitor the condition of graves even if they are marked with private memorials. If a private memorial deteriorates, the CWGC may liaise with the grave owner to replace it with a CWGC headstone .
- The CWGC's responsibility is defined by its Royal Charter, which mandates it to commemorate Commonwealth war dead "in perpetuity," including those buried in churchyards

Therefore, while the CWGC does not own the land, it has a long-term custodial role over the graves themselves. The Cross of Sacrifice found in churchyards and cemeteries across the UK is owned and maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC), even when it is located on land not owned by the CWGC, such as a churchyard.

- The land itself, including the churchyard, is typically owned by the church or local authority.
- The Cross of Sacrifice, however, is a CWGC structure. It was designed by Sir Reginald Blomfield and is installed by the CWGC as a symbolic memorial to the fallen of the Commonwealth forces
- The CWGC is responsible for the ongoing care, conservation, and restoration of the Cross of Sacrifice as part of its broader heritage estate, which includes headstones, memorials, and other commemorative structures

The Cross of Sacrifice at St Andrews churchyard was unveiled in 1954 by the RAF Station Commander and is maintained by the CWGC, even though the churchyard itself is not CWGC property. So while the churchyard remains under the ownership of the church, the Cross of Sacrifice is CWGC property, installed with permission and maintained in perpetuity.

The Clerk also undertook an AI search regarding this matter, asking whether or not the Parish Council needs permission from the Church to hold a Wreath Laying Event at the Cross of Sacrifice. The result confirmed that permission from the church was needed, including for occasions like Battle of Britain Sunday. Councillors noted that the Clerk had contacted the church well in advance (July) and explained the type of event, however we did not ask formal permission but simply advised that this Council was going to hold the event at Cross of Sacrifice as we believed we could and it was not religious. The timings were changed at the request of the church, and we felt we had fulfilled all the criteria. This then became a bit of a dilemma as we 'inherited' this event from RAFA, and it was never a Commemorative Event that the PC ever really got involved with, other than to simply turn up and lay a wreath. No procedures were ever handed over to the Parish Council to be able to work to.

At the last meeting it was clear to see that Members did not want it to be a religious event, but a Commemorative Event honouring the fallen of the Battle of Britain. It was noted that the Airmen who are buried in the Churchyard were also commemorated at the Debt of Honour, and perhaps the best scenario would be to hold the event at the Debt of Honour and to simply place the wreaths at the Cross of Sacrifice after the event, obviously advising the Church that this is what will be happening (and asking for permission to do this), as we will be going on to their land.

This was discussed at considerable length at a previous meeting with the Chairman and Vice Chairman, and it was subsequently agreed under Delegated Powers with the Clerk (due to time constraints) to move the event to the Debt of Honour, and to ask Council to ratify this decision, along with confirming if Councillors wished to leave the wreaths at the Debt of Honour or move them to the Cross of Sacrifice the following day. Councillors were emailed of this decision on the 15th August, and only one response was received.

Councillors **RATIFIED** this decision, confirming that the event should take place at the Debt of Honour, and that if permission was received from the church, wreaths should be taken to the Cross of Sacrifice the following day. The vote was unanimous.

C25.093 ANNIVERSARY PARISH HALL THORNWOOD

Cllr Mrs Hawkins advised that her efforts to run a community event to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the hall had been fruitless, and it was **AGREED** there would now be a 'scaled down' event with a simple plaque unveiling on 28th October 2025.

C25.094 PARISH OWNED STREET LIGHTS

Councillors noted that the office staff had been advised that the Street Light Energy Charging will now be carried out by the Energy Company on a half hourly basis. At this stage it is unclear what this will mean in terms of energy costs. Cllr Blanks queried the rationale behind this, and the PFO advised that according to reports this was part of the market wide half hourly settlement programme which aims to support grid balancing and net zero goals. Councillors also noted that the structural check of 47 of the Parish Council owned Street Lights due this year will be carried out over the next few weeks, the cost of which was £800.

C25.095 MILLENNIUM WALKS

The Clerk had been advised of various works necessary to some of the footpaths that together make up the Millennium Walks. All of the footpaths are on private land or under the responsibility of Essex County Council. The Clerk explained it was understood that a number of these routes would be upgraded under the development proposals relating to Countryside/Vistry development, so before looking at this it may be worth waiting to see these proposals. It was **AGREED** to place this hold at this time.

C25.096 MEETING WITH ST ANDREWS SCHOOL

The Clerk informed members that she had met with the Head and Deputy Head of St Andrews School, following an invitation which had been sent to EFDC Cllr Bromwich and Cllr Buckley, however Cllr Buckley had a prior appointment and had asked the Clerk to attend in his place. The Clerk explained that the school were very concerned with the problems emanating from the Bell Motel and the Phoenix Hotel, and the problems that this is causing regarding racist and anti-cultural issues within the school. The school advised during the meeting that racism in schools was become a growing concern in parts of the UK, including Essex, where recent data shows a sharp rise in racial incidents. While some of this increase may reflect stricter enforcement and greater awareness, it also points to underlying tensions that may be exacerbated by broader societal issues, including debates around immigration. The Illegal Migration Act and related political rhetoric have intensified public discourse, often framing migrants—particularly those from racialised backgrounds—as threats, and unfortunately this can influence young people's attitudes, especially in communities experiencing demographic shifts, leading to increased incidents of discrimination and bullying in schools. Experts stress the importance of equipping students with the tools to challenge racism and fostering inclusive environments to prevent long-term harm to victims' mental health and educational outcomes.

The school stated that to ensure that this is addressed in a sympathetic manner they were looking for ways to embrace a project to counteract this. The school was involved in the Royal Opera House's Cultural Champions project and were also planning a Year of Culture for the school which will focus on exploring and celebrating the diversity and culture of the local community. One of the other ideas discussed to help engage children in this journey was a local diversity cultural trail featuring a series of owls in various places throughout the area. The owls, which are symbols of wisdom and knowledge, will

all be individually designed and decorated and positioned in a variety of locations, each one with a local meaning. Thereby each owl located will have a specific educational and cultural meaning.

Councillors were advised that the school was very keen to promote this within the Parish of North Weald Bassett and would like to have a list of a few locations where the owls could be situated and the meaning of that location. They would also be reaching out to local primary schools in High Ongar and Moreton, and also senior schools in Ongar and Epping. Members were asked if they would support this project.

Cllr Mrs Etherington advised that there was very little information about what these owls were, what they would look like, what was written on them, and what they would be representing, and without these facts she could not support the project as it was not clear how balanced the view would be. Whilst Cllr Mrs Etherington felt that potentially it was a good idea, there simply was not enough information. There was also a query as to how widespread such issues were at St Andrews School. There was discussion that the current tensions should not be inflamed, and that without knowing more about the project the Council could not be confident that this would not exacerbate the current situation. Cllr Clegg advised that it is the responsibility of the head and deputy head to combat such issues within the school environment. After further discussion, Councillors felt that at present they could not support this project.

C25.097 HEDGEHOG BOXES ON ALLOTMENTS AT THORNWOOD

Councillors noted that Mrs Crosby, who runs the Thornwood Market, had kindly donated a few Hedgehog Boxes to be placed on the Allotments at Thornwood Common and has been liaising with the RFO and the Allotment Warden in this matter. This will help with local biodiversity, and support a thriving hedgehog community. Councillors expressed their thanks to Mrs Crosby for this kind gesture, which would help support this Councils commitment to biodiversity.

C25.098 LOCAL GOVERNMENT REVIEW

Members were advised that a new website had been created where latest updates on local government reform could be viewed - <https://www.essexlgrhub.org/stronger-greater-essex>.

[Cllr Mrs Jackman and the press officer left the meeting]

C25.099 MEDIA SERVICES – PHOTOS ON REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

Members had asked for this item to be placed on this meeting as it was brought forward from the July meeting. The original agenda item was brought forward as some members were concerned at the lack of attendance at the Remembrance Sunday events by this Councils Media Representative. The Clerk advised that two of the Councillors who had raised the matter were not present. Councillors discussed the matter, and understood that the press officer attended many of this Councils public events, however on Remembrance Sunday his time was fairly restricted due to attending a number of larger public events. Some councillors were unhappy that this matter was even placed on the agenda, stating that it could have been dealt with by way of informal conversations. Council general felt that the press officer did a great job, and this council were very happy with the services he provided. It was **AGREED** Cllr Mrs Hawkins would contact him to ask if it was at all possible he may be able to attend the North Weald event this year, stating that it would be very much appreciated.

C25.100 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

The public and press were excluded for reasons that the Council believed publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be discussed.

C25.101 THORNWOOD PARISH HALL ROOF - CONSIDERATION OF SINGLE TENDER ACTION FOR ROOF REPLACEMENT AND SOLAR PANEL INSTALLATION AT THORNWOOD COMMON PARISH HALL

At the July Parish Council meeting, it was agreed to progress essential works to the Thornwood Common Parish Hall, including the removal of the existing asbestos roof, installation of a new roof structure, and the addition of solar panels to improve energy efficiency and sustainability. This was following receipt of £50,000 in grant funding via the Rural Prosperity Fund. Whilst further funding is being sought, the Council agreed in July that should this not be forthcoming, the remaining funds will be taken from the HMRC Earmarked Reserve, or via any S106 receipts received as a result of the building work taking place in Thornwood. The Clerk had been liaising with a local contractor with proven expertise in asbestos removal, roofing, and solar panel installation – a contractor who had previously delivered high-quality work on very similar community project, and was available to commence work promptly. It was noted that the Rural Prosperity Grant Fund award came with a very strict time limit.

As the cost of work would be over £30,000 (inc VAT), a requirement to publish a contract opportunity on Contracts Finder may apply where an In-Scope Organisation advertises an opportunity, either by publishing a Contract Notice on FTS, or by advertising in another way, for example on another website, trade publication or newspaper. Where an In-Scope Organisation is satisfied it is lawful not to advertise an opportunity and chooses not to advertise the opportunity at all (e.g. where quotations are sought, single tender action is being considered, a framework agreement or dynamic purchasing system is used, etc), the requirement to publish an opportunity notice on Contracts Finder does not apply to that procurement. Councillors noted that when a contracting authority concludes that a Single Tender Action is being considered, it means they are evaluating whether the circumstances justify bypassing competition. As such, the Council was asked to formally consider the justification for a Single Tender Action in accordance with Regulation 32 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. The justification considered for proceeding with a Single Tender Action was as follows:

- **Technical Expertise and Integration of Services** - The proposed supplier offers a unique combination of skills in asbestos removal, roofing, and solar panel installation. Engaging separate contractors for each element would introduce significant coordination challenges, technical incompatibilities, potential safety risks, and necessitate a project manager which would significantly increase the cost of the project.
- **Continuity and Compatibility** - The supplier has previously worked on similar community buildings in a neighbouring parish, and has demonstrated a high standard of workmanship. Their familiarity with local building regulations and community needs ensures continuity and compatibility with existing infrastructure.
- **Urgency and Health & Safety Considerations** - The presence of asbestos can pose a health risk if disturbed, and solar panels cannot safely be installed on such material. By having one contractor complete the works, all safety matters can be considered as a whole, and reduce any associated health risk.
- **Value for Money and Efficiency** - The supplier has provided a competitive quote that reflects the integrated nature of the work. Their ability to deliver all aspects of the project reduces overheads and ensures efficient project management.

Given the supplier's unique qualifications, history of work, the integrated nature of the work, the deadline for use of the grant, and the need to replace the asbestos roof, Councillors **AGREED** that a Single Tender Action be pursued in accordance with Regulation 32 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. As part of the consideration Councillors also looked at whether the contract would have cross-border interest, and concluded that it did not.

C25.102 CCTV AT NORTH WEALD PARADE OF SHOPS

Members requested that the Clerk and RFO look at alternatives for the provision of CCTV at the parade of shops in North Weald. This was due, in part, to some of the difficulties attached to viewing the CCTV. As the maintenance agreement with EFDC was due for renewal, different quotes had been obtained, copies of which had been provided to Councillors for consideration. It was noted that the quote from EFDC did not include annual maintenance costs, as EFDC had advised this was not available at this time. Councillors also noted that there could be increased staffing resources needed if staff have to review the CCTV 'in house.' After consideration, Cllr Ms Wood **PROPOSED**, and Cllr Clegg **SECONDED** that this Council should move to full management and maintenance of the CCTV outside the shops, agreeing the quotation supplied by this Council supplier of CCTV at Thornwood Common, at a cost of £3,447.75 to install and upgrade the cameras, plus annual maintenance of £615. This was especially in light of the upcoming Local Government Reform which would make access to the CCTV even harder. A vote was taken the result of which was unanimous.

Meeting closed 9.12pm

Signed

Date