



North Weald Bassett Parish Council

Parish Hall at Thornwood Common, Weald Hall Lane,
Thornwood, Essex CM16 6NB comments.

Tel: 07572 507591

Email: clerk@northweald-pc.gov.uk

Web Site: www.northweald-pc.gov.uk

Clerk to the Council.
Susan De Luca

31st December 2024

TO: ALL COUNCILLORS

NOTICE OF MEETING

You are summoned to attend a Meeting of the Parish Council which will be held on **MONDAY 6th January 2025 at 7.30 pm** to transact the business shown in the Agenda below.

This meeting will be held in the **Thornwood Common Parish Hall, Weald Hall Lane, Thornwood.**

Susan DeLuca

Susan De Luca
Clerk to the Council

Members of the public and press are invited to attend this meeting

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To **NOTE** any apologies which have been received.

2. OTHER ABSENCES

To **NOTE** any absences for which no apology has been received.

3. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES 🖐️ 📄

To **AGREE** the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 2nd December 2024, and to ratify the Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting held on the 16th December as attached at **Appendix 1.**

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST 🖐️

To **RECEIVE** any Declarations of Interest by Members.

A Member with a personal interest in a matter must consider whether it is a Disclosable Pecuniary, Non Pecuniary or Other Pecuniary Interest, and declare it accordingly. A Member who is unsure as to how to declare their interest should seek independent advice.

5. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

To **RECEIVE** questions from members of the public for a period determined by the Chairperson of the Meeting. ***Please NOTE if the Clerk has not been previously notified of the Question Council may have to note questions and respond to them after the Meeting.***

6. REPORT OF THE CLERK

To **RECEIVE** a report or update from the Clerk on Parish Council matters that staff have been working on.

- a) Planning Matters
 - b) Cemetery Matters
 - c) Internal Audit
 - d) Budget and Precept
-

- e) Annual Report
- f) Neighbourhood Planning

7. REPORTS & MEMBERS REPORTS

Councillors are reminded that, if possible, members reports should be submitted in written form for noting only, this enables the meeting to flow smoothly and allows adequate time for discussion of matters appertaining to the Parish. Written reports, if available, will be reproduced at *Appendix 2*.

- a) Chairman's Report
- b) Vice Chairman's Report
- c) **District & County Councillors Reports** - District Councillors are invited to submit a written report if they are unable to attend the Parish Council Meeting
- d) **Parish Councillors Reports**
- e) **Queens Hall Charity Report**
- f) **Highways** - No Report

8. FINANCIAL REPORTS

- a) **List of Cheques & Monthly Statement of Accounts** – No Report
- b) **Investments** – Report for December will be given

9. BUDGET / PRECEPT FOR 2025/2026

On 16th December 2024, the Finance and General Purposes Committee met to consider both the budget and precept for 2025/2026. At the time of the meeting, the Tax Base figure had not been received from EFDC, and as such the Committee was unable to fully calculate an accurate cost per Band D property. At the meeting, it was agreed to put forward a recommendation to full Council to raise the precept by 4%, mainly as a result of the expected significant increase in street lighting electricity costs and the Governments decision to raise Employers NI contributions. At the meeting, a 4% increase was thought to be around £244,240 (based on the 24/25 Tax Base figure as this was all the committee had to go on). The Tax Base figure for 2025/2026 has now been received and is 2,619.50, a drop on the 2024/2025 Tax base which was 2,627.80. This means that a 4% increase would result in a precept request of £243,469 (a deficit of £4,679 in the budget for 2025/2026 which would need to come from either earmarked or general reserves). This equates to an annual increase of £3.56 for a Band D property (£92.65) – an increase of approximately 6p per week for the Parish Council element of the Council Tax. Should Council wish to stick with the £244,240 figure provisionally agreed, this would equate to an increase of approximately 4.4%, leaving a deficit of £3,743 in the budget which again would need to come out from either earmarked or general reserves. Council is therefore asked to **CONSIDER** the precept for 2025/2026.

10. APPOINTMENT OF INTERNAL AUDITOR 2025/2026

The Parish Councils long standing Internal Auditor has now retired, albeit they will complete the final internal audit for 2024/2025 in May of 2025. As such, the Council will need to appoint another internal auditor. The availability of decent quality auditors who understand the requirements of Parish Council audits are few and far between. As such, the Council is now asked to **CONSIDER** the appointment of Heelis & Lodge Independent Internal Audit Services as this Councils Internal Auditor for the 2025/2026 financial year. The cost for an Interim and year end inspection of the accounts is £510.

11. NEW BUS STOPS – HIGH ROAD NORTH WEALD

The Clerk has been contacted by Essex County Council Passenger Transport Infrastructure Team. The Parish Council have been advised that ECC Local Passenger Transport have advised that they have been asked by the local bus operator to provide an additional pair of bus stops on High Road North Weald, as there are no physical bus stops between the stops known as The Talbot and Skips Corner which is a distance of

approximately 1400m. This far exceeds the recommended distance in urban areas of 400m. They are proposing to install a pair of new bus stops near to the junction with Black Horse Lane consisting of a pole, flag and timetable frame. They are not at this stage considering a shelter for the stops. The works would be programmed for the financial year 2024/25 and they would welcome the Parish Councils comments on this matter as soon as possible.

12. ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL – LOVE YOUR BUS

ECC have advised that they are pleased to announce the launch of the **Love Your Bus Grant Fund**. This initiative will provide **Parish and Town Councils** with the opportunity to secure grants of up to **£50,000** for projects aimed at increasing bus patronage and enhancing local services. The objective of the fund would be to enable Parish and Town Councils to invest in measures which would increase patronage on the bus service or services which serve their communities, projects that:

- Increase passenger numbers.
- Improve service frequency and coverage.
- Attract new users through community engagement and marketing.

This will allow Parish and Town Councils to propose initiatives such as increasing service frequency, running early morning or late-night services, and extending routes to connect underserved areas to key destinations such as hospitals or schools. These are just a few examples of what the funding can be used for, and they look forward to hearing about any exciting and community-led projects we can produce.

Collaborative applications between neighbouring councils will be encouraged to maximise impact across communities.

The Love Your Bus grant funding initiative would enable Parish and Town Councils in Essex to bid for funding to support and grow your local bus routes. This initiative is part of the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), a plan that Essex County Council (ECC) is committed to delivering. The fund would be designed to support community-led action to enable the growth of key local bus services throughout 2025/2026. The proposal is to create a £500,000 grant fund from the BSIP+ funding allocated to ECC by the Department for Transport (DfT). The maximum award would be £50,000 per project. The funding is revenue funding only. Any suitable measures would be considered, including but not limited to:

- Attract new passengers: Improve information through marketing, leaflets, timetables and maps, and/or community-led engagement events.
- Service enhancements: Increase bus service frequency during peak hours, introduce late-night or early-morning services, and/or create new route extensions to connect underserved areas to key destinations.
- Community engagement and promotions: Targeted marketing campaigns, community-led engagement events, and/or school and community group partnerships.
- Passenger experience improvements: Improved passenger information (provide information on bus routes and schedules using maps, leaflets, posters, and/or other accessible formats).

To read more details on eligibility criteria, application guidance and intended grant agreement visit the Love Your Bus Page - (<https://consultations.essex.gov.uk/iptu/84145fad/>). Applications will close on 14th February 2025.

13. NORTH WEALD MARKET TRAFFIC – MEETING WITH MARKET OPERATOR

The Parish Council held a Meeting via Zoom on Tuesday 17th December with Gary Saunders. Cllrs Alan Buckley, Andy Tyler, Paula Etherington, Dawn Kinnear, Colin Kinnear and the Clerk were present. Various concerns were discussed including the fact that even though various arrangements had been put in place for Church Lane and the immediate surrounding roads, there were still problems with traffic along the A414, Rayley Lane roundabout and the roundabout at the Talbot Harvester. Also the traffic problems definitely

seemed to be happening at certain peak times such as around 7.00-9.00am and around 12-2.00pm. General concerns included whether it was the marshalling of the traffic in to and out of the Airfield, or simply the volume and numbers of vehicles entering at the same time. Concern was also expressed that traffic was queuing at the Hastingwood Interchange and also the problems associated with traffic lights along the Thornwood Road outside the new developments.

Gary Saunders, the Market Operator, said that he visits the market most weekends and does attend the 'pinch points' to see for himself any perceived problems. He stated that he felt there had been a problem over the last couple of weeks but feels that these problems will reduce after Christmas as not as many people will be visiting the market. He also will be in talks with EFDC about the future of the size of the market and car parking. It was suggested to Mr Saunders that he should speak to Darren Goody, EFDC, to see if some of the old parking plans as used to be implemented for the Fighter Meets could be reinstated, where there were many vehicles that parked at the airfield on these events - far more than those for the market. Mr Saunders advised he would be contacting Darren and would copy the Parish Council into the email that he would be sending. It was agreed that Gary would contact the Parish Council before the Market picked up again in the Spring/Summer.

14. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

In the event that the Agenda contains Exempt (pink) pages, or an item needs to be discussed confidentially, to **CONSIDER** the following motion to be proposed by the Chairman:

"That the public and the press be excluded from the meeting, the Council believing that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business about to be discussed. However an item may be placed in the Confidential part of the meeting so long as it is accordance with the Statutory Guidance,

There are currently **NO** confidential items to be considered