



MINUTES

Meeting: PARISH COUNCIL

Date: 2nd December 2019

Time: 7.30PM

Venue: NORTH WEALD LIBRARY, 138 HIGH ROAD, NORTH WEALD

PRESENT:

Councillors (10) A Buckley (Chairman), B Eldridge, B Clegg, G Mulliner, Mrs S Jackman MBE, Mrs A Grigg, T Blanks, A Irvine, A Tyler, R Spearman

Officers in Attendance (2)

Susan De Luca – Clerk to Parish Council

Adriana Jones - Principal Financial Officer (PFO)

Members of the Public (0)

Members of the Press (1)

C19.118 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (3)

Cllrs Mrs Wood, Bedford and Stroud had offered their apologies.

C19.119 OTHER ABSENCES (0)

None.

C19.120 MINUTES

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 1st November 2019 were **AGREED**. Councillors also **NOTED** the Minutes of the Queens Hall Charity held on the 24th October 2019.

C19.121 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Spearman declared a pecuniary interest in any agenda item concerning the Local Plan.

C19.122 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no members of the public present. Following the amendment from the November Parish Council meeting, updated sheets detailing the process for questions from members of the public had been placed on the chairs in the public gallery should any members of the public attend.

C19.123 CLERKS COMMUNICATIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE REPORT

Councillors **NOTED** the Clerk's report which was attached to the agenda. The Chairman asked if there was any update on the water issue on the North Weald Allotments, to which the Clerk advised a response had been received from EFDC on this issue, stating that the Contractors who caused the leak had advised they would be willing to give a contribution to the cost of the water bill. The Chairman asked what evidence the Parish Council had, to which the Clerk confirmed there was a lot of evidence, and copies had been sent to Cllr Blanks to review. This evidence included photo's of the contractor tapping into the Allotment water supply and hiding this with boards, and various emails where the contractor had agreed to repair the water tanks.

The Clerk confirmed that 5 years' worth of financial data would be sent to EFDC. Cllr Blanks stated that if there was any issue with the contractor failing to pay the bill, the Parish Council should prosecute them for theft. The Clerk confirmed that she had contacted Affinity to explain the situation, and that the water bill had been placed on hold for 30 days.

C19.124 REPORTS AND MEMBERS REPORTS

a) Chairman's Report – The Chairman welcomed Cllr Eldridge back, and thanked all Councillors who had contributed to the children's Christmas party at Norway House. These funds would be taken to the Manager of Norway House the following week.

b) Vice Chairman's Report – Cllr Eldridge thanked Councillors for their thoughts and kind wishes over recent months, and explained he was likely to be absent for some time after Christmas. Cllr Eldridge reported that a mass of traffic is causing considerable damage to the verges at the top of Mill Street, with the majority of daffodils planted by the Council at this location now squashed by HGVs. Due to the extra houses and increase in traffic, Mill Street is Chaos in the mornings. Various advertising signs and posters have been erected along Hastingwood road just before the Rainbow and Dove. Cllr Irvine advised that himself and the Clerk would be meeting with a representative from the Local Highway Panel on 12th December, and suggested Brian could also come. The Clerk agreed to send detail to Cllr Eldridge. Cllr Eldridge asked if there was any further update on the pond and tree adjacent to his home, to which the PFO advised that she had received a response from Harlow Council to confirm they were dealing with it, and that she would chase them. Cllr Eldridge also advised that some of the 40MPH speed limit signs along Mill Street had been flattened, and the Clerk confirmed she would add these to the LHP list of required works.

c) District Councillor Reports – The Clerk advised that Cllr Bedford had been working extremely hard to get the responsible body to deal with the leak on the High Road by Skipp's Corner, and was providing almost daily updates on Facebook. The Chairman advised it was icy earlier that morning, and that he had taken photographs of it. The Clerk stated that she was extremely concerned that this was an accident waiting to happen, and that so far ECC had not agreed to place any ice warning signs at this location, stating it was not a high priority, and that the Parish Council could if they so wished purchase two road signs and place them there. Cllr Tyler advised that unfortunately if the Parish Council did do this, to a certain degree they then could be held liable in case of any accident as it could be assumed that the Parish Council were taking responsibility for the leak which was not the case. The Chairman stated that the leak has been there for nearly two months, and that the Parish Council reported this to ECC and the water company on numerous occasions. Certain individuals from these organisations have been down to investigate the leak, and the drainage pipe is thought to be the cause. Cllr Bedford is extremely upset at the failure of the bodies to deal with the problem or erect the warning signs, and is doing what he can to try and get this issue concluded.

d) County Councillor Reports – No report.

e) Parish Councillors Reports – No reports.

f) Local Plan – No update.

g) Neighbourhood Plan – Prior to the meeting, Councillors received an update on progress with the Neighbourhood Plan, together with a short summary from the Masterplanners on work to date. In addition, a copy of the presentation boards for use at the three public events had been given to Councillors to review. The PFO asked for any comments concerning this. Both the Chairman and Cllr Clegg stated they found it quite difficult to follow as they could not see the map clearly, suggestion better visual aids would have been better. The PFO asked Councillors if they felt a more in dept detailed presentation should be given by the Masterplanners to Councillors prior to their public consultation that they planned to hold early in the new year, to which it was agreed this would be a good idea. Cllr Mulliner asked if the content of the finalised Neighbourhood Plan would apply to all future planning applications, to which the Clerk confirmed up until the end of the plan period, yes. Cllr Mulliner stated that other developers would then not be able to apply for things that weren't in the Neighbourhood Plan, such as high rise buildings, to which the PFO advised that the adoption of a Neighbourhood Plan didn't prohibit developers from applying to do whatever they wanted, but it would provide policy guidance as to what would be acceptable by the Local Planning Authority, and any developer would have to prove very special circumstances to move away from this.

Cllr Mrs Grigg asked if the Gypsy and Traveller site had now been absorbed into the Countryside Properties site, to which the PFO advised that this wasn't the case, and that the Local Plan had set a rough location to the north east of the Masterplan site where the Gypsy and Traveller site should be located.

Cllr Blanks stated that generally speaking, developers are only really interested in what goes on within their site, and are not too interested in what happens outside their site, and as such how people get too and from their site tends to be worried about later. This will have an affect on existing villagers, and their seems to be no tie up with other nearby developers, specifically the Latton Priory developers. Cllr Clegg concurred, stating that biggest issue is transport, with the success of the development relying on buses. In addition, the reduction of speed on the A414 to 40mph for a certain section – is this a reality. Cllr Clegg emphasised that the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has tasked him with looking at Transport issues, and he is extremely concerned about this for all the developments in the Parish. Cllr Blanks stated that he was also concerned with the statement that was made about water supply, and that the powers that be were currently considering their next round of funding, whereas Cllr Blanks felt that this should be done early on this process, and not at this late stage. The PFO stated that the Local Plan does offer some form of degree about this.

The PFO reminded Councillors about the three public events the following week and asked if Councillors could attend at least one or any of the events. In addition, if there were any questions about the content of the boards, Councillors should contact

Adriana prior to the events. Councillors noted that these were consultation events, with every attendee being given a questionnaire to complete.

It was **AGREED** to request a further presentation in the new year.

h) Queens Hall Report - No report, but minutes were attached to the agenda.

C19.125 FINANCIAL REPORTS

a) List of Cheques & Monthly Statement of Accounts – The list of payments, receipts and balances for November 2019 had not been completed, and would be emailed to Members the following day.

b) General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) – The Clerk confirmed good progress had been made this month.

C19.126 NORTH WEALD AIRFIELD – TEMPORARY PLANNING PERMISSON

Members **NOTED** that the Parish Council had now received and banked the cheque from EFDC for £50,000, and that following last month's meeting the Clerk wrote and asked for a full explanation regarding the circumstances that led to the Parish Council being provided with £50,000 funding from the use of North Weald Airfield by HMRC for Brexit Preparations. The Chairman, Clerk, and PFO had met with the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council regarding this matter, where it was agreed that the Chief Executive would issue confirmation by way of an email regarding this. A copy of the email was attached to the agenda. Members were asked to confirm if this explanation was sufficient. Cllr Clegg stated that he was satisfied with this explanation, however he felt that the Parish Council acted too early with creating a wish list, as the £50,000 was to mitigate any impact as a result of the works, and the suggestion of a new outdoor gymnasium, new bus shelter or basket ball court covering is going to mitigate the impact of numerous artic lorries. Cllr Mrs Jackman stated that she too felt that the wish list was too previous to ask such information. The Clerk advised that this situation arose following a post of Facebook where it was stated that Parish Council would be receiving this money along with spurious statements as to where the money would be spent. This led to subsequent suggestions from residents as to what this money should be spent on. The Clerk read out the email, which stated the following:

“EFDC have made a decision to offer funds of £50,000 to North Weald Parish Council. This money is not ring fenced for a specific activity in order to ensure that the Parish Council is not fettered should they chose to engage with residents on how it is best spent. The decision of the District Council to award the funds was in recognition that the EFDC contract entered into with HMRC for a customs hub facility at North Weald Airfield would potentially have a local impact. The £50,000 is to ensure that any expenditure required to mitigate any impact could be covered and would not be of detriment to the Parish Council budget.”

The Clerk stated that anybody who reads this know that this amount of money probably isn't even sufficient to fill potholes let alone mitigate any potential impact of the HMRC hub. Cllr Mrs Jackman stated that at this time she felt that the Parish Council should not take any action on the list, should hold back and see if there is in fact any impact on the

Parish as a result of the HMRC Hub, see what happens with Brexit and if in fact the site is used, before deciding how to spend the money.

The Chairman stated that we have the list, and that we now have clarity in terms of what the money was for, so we will need to decide as a Council how to progress. Cllr Eldridge stated at this stage it is not necessary for the Council to do anything, until it is clear whether there is in fact any impact and a need for the Council to do something. After discussion, it was **AGREED** that the £50,000 would be held in abeyance in case there is any impact from the HMRC Hub that needs to be mitigated.

Cllr Clegg stated that he had visited the HMRC site on the airfield, and that there were at last 8 HVGs parked up on the road from Blenheim, despite the fact that there was an EFDC notice stated not HGV should be parked in the vicinity as it was disturbing the residents. Cllr Clegg advised he would contact EFDC about this, as would the Clerk.

C19.127 EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL ACCOMODATION PROPOSAL

Councillors **NOTED** that following a Meeting with Councillor Chris Whitbread and the Chief Executive it was confirmed that the offer of an Office in the proposed development in Offices on North Weald Airfield is no longer 'on the table' as that proposal is no longer going ahead, as the EFDC Offices will remain in the Civic Office in Epping High Street.

C19.128 ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL LIBRARY

A copy of the ECC Library EOI pack had been distributed both electronically and in hard copy to all Councillors, together with a copy of the document that had been produced by SOLE. The Clerk and the Senior Administrative Officer have reviewed the document, together with the links within it, in considerable detail, and this had taken a considerable amount of time. This document is a 54 page document with over 100 links within it to other large documents. The Clerk was concerned that there has not been enough time to fully consider all implications within the document that would eventually fall on this Council in running a Community Run Library (CRL) and all the implications that would surround the provisions of this that are detailed within the document together with the links within it.

Members were reminded that the Leader of the County Council has clearly stated publicly that "No Essex Library Will Close within 5 Years", and as such there no longer seems to be any urgency to take immediate or urgent action with regard to stopping the closure of the Library. This need for action has always been first and foremost resident led, who were concerned that the Library was under threat of closure. However with the release of this statement it does not seem to be the case for the next five years. The Clerk would advise Members that some residents have stated that due to this statement they no longer feel the Library is under threat and have asked that the Parish Council withdraws its EOI.

The Clerk has consulted with the clerk at Buckhurst Hill Parish Council, who run a library service for ECC (2 days a week). They advise that that they also now feel that there is no urgency to make a decision regarding the Library Service because of this statement. Members **NOTED** that currently the Parish Council is being asked to advise the Library of what meetings it holds in the Library together with any additional

meetings including Planning and or Parish Council Meetings. Members have also been forwarded personal invitations regarding Information Sessions regarding the EOI. The Clerk has booked a slot at Ongar Library on the 5th December between 10am and 11am.

Therefore Members are asked to ensure that they have fully considered this EOI document which will enable them to make a fully informed decision as to what avenue they wish to take regarding a Community Run Library. Members were asked if they felt that after reading this document they now had enough information to make a **DECISION**, on whether they wish to:

- Take on the expenditure of a purchase of the current building
- Take on the expenditure of leasing the current building
- Maintain the Status Quo at the current time, and continue to provide the service that we currently do to Essex County Council – this may indeed involve further negotiations – but ECC would then need to come to the Parish Council to begin negotiations, but this could actually be in five year's time.

The Clerk advised that she had met with ECC Cllr Jackson regarding this matter and had briefly discussed the EOI document, and Cllr Jackson had expressed concern that if the Parish Council did not take over the running of the library, it would in fact close. However the Clerk stated that she had personally attended three meetings on this matter, the last one of which ECC Cllr Finch clearly stated that no library in Essex would close for the next 5 years.

The Chairman stated that he was sure all Councillors had also read the Save Our Libraries Essex (SOLE) paper which raised a lot of issues, including the issue of lack of support, and that the ECC EOI paper seemed to contradict a lot of what was said. Both the Chairman and the Clerk stated that they were concerned that the Parish Council could be getting themselves into a huge amount of debt based on the content of this EOI document. Cllr Mrs Jackman stated that ECC had clearly stated no library would close, and that Cllr Susan Barker had also stated this. Cllr Tyler stated that he too had read the ECC EOI document, and had a number of concerns including the fact that if the Parish Council took over or leased the building, the Parish Council would have an obligation to get the building up a level that is suitable for ECC, however it was not defined what this level was. This could mean the Council could spend £150,000 and it may still not be acceptable with ECC. Cllr Tyler stated that in his opinion, the offer to take over the running of the library is no longer urgently needed, nor is it an attractive offer as it once did seem.

Cllr Blanks advised that he too had been through the ECC EOI document, most of which was about running a library, however there seemed to be lots of fundamental points missing. In addition, the subject of a 50% overage is appalling, and that he would suggest it is rejected on this basis alone.

Cllr Irvine stated that when entering into any long term agreement, there needs to be a clear cut business case, and that on reading the ECCEOI document he could not see how any income would be made. It was clear what the expenditure costs were, however there was nothing about income. Cllr Irvine agreed that the Parish Council should fight to keep a library facility in the Parish, however bowing down to the suggested proposal by ECC would not the way to do it, and it could be very costly. The Clerk advised that

both herself and the Senior Administrative Officer had created a business plan which set out how some income could be achieved.

The Chairman **PROPOSED** that Option 3 – maintain the status quo – should be the basis on progressing with this matter. Cllr Mrs Grigg **SECONDED** this proposal, stating that the moment ECC stated they would not be closing any library for 5 years effectively removed the guillotine from the Parish Council, which in turn allows the Parish Council to continue as at present, however after the 5 year period the Parish Council may wish to review the decision if ECC changes its mind about closing the library. All **AGREED**.

C19.129 SOCIAL MEDIA

Cllr Irvine reminded members that at the last meeting, he addressed this issue of Social Media and the Parish Councils need to respond and increase their social media output in light of a number of untrue posts, some of which were aimed at Parish Council staff. Cllr Irvine advised that he met with June Peachey, producer of North Weald Village Life which also has an associated Facebook page, to discuss social media in North Weald and how the Parish Council can increase its reach. The difficulties of moderating a group were also discussed. Cllr Irvine recommended to the Parish Council that a new Parish Council Facebook account could be set up and run by himself in conjunction with the Clerk, and this would allow the Council to update residents with news of interest which the Council currently do not do, as well as clarifying any points that people don't perhaps understand, including setting the record straight when any incorrect information is posted. This should be done by way of a Parish Council Facebook Group. Mrs Peachey advised that she would be happy to advertise in her magazine to build up followers of the group, which Cllr Irvine agreed would be a good idea.

The Clerk advised that there was an advertising item that would be on the F&GP Meeting agenda, and asked if the promotion of the new PC Facebook page should be included in any future advertising with North Weald Village Life, to which Cllr Irvine this would be a good idea. These two groups would post each other's information as this would be beneficial to both parties. Cllr Irvine also stated that the Parish Councils group would have a different purpose to North Weald Village Life group as it would be for the whole Parish, and not just North Weald Village. Cllr Irvine stated that it may be that we need a bit of help with setting up the group and asked if there was possibly any grant funding for this. It was noted that how people receive information is changing, with not so many people now going onto Websites to get information. Cllr Mulliner advised that he was not happy with the staff being involved with administering the page, as this would be extremely time consuming. Cllr Irvine advised he could administer the page with the support of the Clerk in terms of the factual information. After further discussion, it was **AGREED** that Cllr Irvine, the Clerk and EEF would liaise regarding setting up a new Facebook page, and that it would progress on the basis as discussed at this meeting with a further update being given to Council at the next meeting. It was **NOTED** that EEF would continue to be the Press Officer for the Parish Council at this time.

C19.130 SPEEDWATCH

Cllr Clegg provided members with an update, advising that the speedwatch team had conducted an informal speedwatch along Woodside between 8-9am the previous week, with 270 using the road during this time, and if doing a formal speedwatch 22 road users

would now be receiving a letter from the Speedwatch Team. The average speed of vehicles during that hour was 31mph, with a full range of between 27-34mph. If the Police were conducting speed checks at the same time, 36% of the drivers would have received some form of warning. Cllr Irvine congratulated Cllr Irvine on completing the speedwatch course, stating he was now formally part of the team. Cllr Clegg confirmed he would be contacted Mary Whiley of Speedwatch concerning getting both Woodside and Hastingwood Road on the formal list of accepted streets.

C19.131 COUNTRYWIDE BROADBAND ROLLOUT WITHIN THE PARISH

Cllr Irvine provided members with an update on the Superfast Essex Countywide Parish Engagement Event he attended on Thursday 28th November, stating that good quality broadband remains an issue in some parts of the Parish, which is unfortunate given the current digital revolution. There were a couple of interesting points he picked up from the event, one of which is the Broadband Voucher Scheme. This scheme means that if you have 1 business and 10 homes in your local area who are willing to sign up to faster broadband, you are able to get a £5000 voucher that can be put towards infrastructure (given to an infrastructure provider) to provide superfast broadband. Cllr Irvine confirmed he intended to ascertain if there was enough take-up in Hastingwood for such a scheme, and if so he would take on the challenge. Cllr Irvine confirmed once he had been through the process with Hastingwood, he was willing to advise any other Councillor of the process on what they needed to do, however he could not do it for them.

C19.132 REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY EVENTS

The Clerk provided a summary of the Remembrance Sunday events which took place on 10th November, together with a dedication of a bench for the 75th anniversary of the Royal Norwegian Airforce. Two officers from the RNoAF attended and laid wreaths at both the Parish Memorial and the Debt of Honour. Thank you letters have been received and were tabled for Members information. A full breakdown of all the events will be given early in the new year when a dissemination meeting will be held. It is hoped that details regarding the Parish Council taking on responsibility of the Debt of Honour will have been received by then from EFDC. Cllr Irvine advised that this was the first time he had attended the events, and stating they were very well organised and it was superb day. Thanks were recorded for the Senior Administrative Assistant for the work she had undertaken in organising the events. It was **NOTED** that for 2020, it may be that wreaths are purchased directly from the RBL. Cllr Tyler advised that the RBL raised £5,821 for the poppy appeal this year.

C19.133 MEMORIAL TREE – HAMPDEN CLOSE, NORTH WEALD

Following investigations into the ownership of the Memorial Tree in the car park in Hampden Close, members were advised that ownership has been established and the Parish Council has been asked if they would like to take on the ownership of the tree, which would obviously involve the ongoing maintenance of the tree and the parking space etc. The Clerk advised that the area was initially owned by McLean homes, however after they went into liquidation ownership moved to a different organisation. The Clerk advised members that work was needed to cut back the tree, upon which was a TPO, and the cost was expected to be around £850. Cllr Clegg advised that he had raised this issue around 18 months ago, stating that the tree is now so large it is encroaching onto around 3 properties. There was further discussion regarding the liabilities of owning the tree and the ongoing work that would be required. Cllr

Eldridge stated that proper cutting back of the tree would only be needed every 5-10 years as oaks are slow growing. It was **AGREED** that as this was a memorial tree with a history in terms of military, the Parish Council should take on the ownership and management of the tree only, however the Clerk should try and secure some form of funding via either the current owner or EFDC for the works that are needed.

C19.134 NORTH WEALD ALLOTMENTS

In addition to this item being briefly discussed earlier in the meeting, Members **NOTED** that a meeting had been held with the Chief Executive and Leader of EFDC regarding problems concerning the use and a connection to metered water by the District Council's house building contractors on the Allotments. A large bill has been issued to the Parish Council by Affinity Water which has been passed on to the Chief Executive and Cllr Whitbread together with copies of all documentation.

C19.135 HIGHWAY UPDATE

The Clerk and Chairman met with ECC Highways Officer on 11th November 2019 and went through the list of outstanding items from the July Meeting. A new LHP Form has been completed and is supported by our County Councillor in relation to a possible pedestrian crossing by Norway House, however this does have to be considered by the Local Highways Panel and it is a long process and we do not know what the end result will ultimately be.

The Clerk has also been advised that the white lining in the High Road North Weald which was missed by the Operatives will be carried out, and the painting of the Crossing and the Roundabout by the Kings Head and Wellington Road will also be actioned. As discussed earlier in the meeting, Cllr Any Irvine will be meeting with the Highways Officer in December.

The Clerk stated that she had also been advised that halos would be placed on the two beleisha beacon crossings in North Weald Village. A further update would be provided at the next meeting.

C19.136 REQUEST FOR BENCH

Members recalled that the Parish Council received grant funding of £250 earlier in the year to fund a Memorial Bench from Stansted Airport Community Trust. The Clerk advised that the Parish Council has received a request from the tenants at Hastingwood Allotment if these funds could be used to place a bench within Hastingwood A Allotment Site in memory of Fred Lloyd who served throughout the war with the RAF. Detailed below is an extract from an email from one of the tenants who is representing the residents:

"It would be lovely if a bench could be dedicated to The Lloyd family. They were much loved residents of Hastingwood and Ken Lloyd, their only child, died at the beginning of this year. The residents have suggested that the text for the plaque could be

*In Affectionate Memory
The Lloyd Family, Fred, Rose and Ken
Residents of Hastingwood
"Happy Days"*

Happy Days was how every conversation ended with both Fred and Ken. It would be a lovely phrase to put on a plaque. Thank you for taking an interest in this."

The bench costs approximately £300, therefore there would be an additional cost of approximately £200 for the extra cost for the bench the installation and the plaque. Members **AGREED** to the funding of the bench and the additional costs.

C19.137 JANUARY PARISH COUNCIL 2020 MEETING

Members were **REMINDED** that that this Meeting will be held on **Monday 13th January 2020** at 7.30pm.

Meeting closed 9.19pm

Signed

Date