



MINUTES

Meeting: PARISH COUNCIL

Date: 3rd June 2019

Time: 7.30PM

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

PRESENT:

Councillors (7) A Buckley (Chairman) B Clegg, G Mulliner, A Tyler, Mrs A Grigg,
Mrs S Jackman MBE, Ms D Wood

Officers in Attendance (2)

Susan Deluca - Clerk

Adriana Jones - Principal Financial Officer (PFO)

Members of the Public (1) - EFDC Cllr McIvor

Members of the Press (1)

C19.029 COUNCILLOR BARTRAM

Councillors **NOTED** the death of Cllr Brian Bartram, Councillor for Hastingwood Ward, and a minute silence was held in recognition of his service to this community. Cllr Bartram's funeral will be held on 24th June, 1pm at the Kiln Road Burial Park. The Clerk confirmed that she had now been passed the RBL medal and flag pole keys.

C19.030 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (5)

Cllrs Stroud, Blanks, Eldridge, Spearman and Bedford had offered their apologies.

C19.031 OTHER ABSENCES (0)

None

C19.032 MINUTES

Councillor Ms Wood confirmed that she is Ms not Mrs. The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held of 13th May 2019 were **AGREED**.

C19.033 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

C19.034 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

The Chairman welcomed EFDC Cllr McIvor to the meeting, however there were no questions.

C19.035 CLERKS COMMUNICATIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE REPORT

Councillors **NOTED** the Clerk's report, which was tabled at the meeting. Members **NOTED** that H&S Topple Tests had been carried out at the Cemetery, and details will be reported to the Environmental Committee on 19th June 2019. In addition, as discussed at the May Parish Council meeting, an article has been submitted for inclusion in the next issue of Village Life detailing what the Parish Council does. The Clerk reported that the Parish Council had been successful in receiving £1,000 in grant funding by way of the Tesco's Bags of Help grant funding Scheme, which will be used to upgrade the North Weald Play Area at School Green Lane.

C19.036 REPORTS AND MEMBERS REPORTS

a) **Chairman's Report** – No report

b) **Vice Chairman's Report** - No report

c) **District Councillor Reports** - Cllr McIvor had no formal report to give, however advised the Parish Council that he would be sitting on the Stronger Communities and Stronger Place Committees, and the Stronger Place Committee had a particular agenda item for North Weald Bassett.

d) **County Councillor Reports** – None.

e) **Parish Councillors Reports** – Cllr Tyler reported that he had grown some sunflowers for Norway House from seeds, and had already delivered these to Norway House which runs an after school club and they were trying to get the children interested in gardening. Cllr Tyler had put up a £20 voucher for the best grown sunflower. The Clerk reminded Councillors of the CIF Microgrant application she had completed for a gardening project at Norway House. Cllr Mulliner advised that it was worth bearing in mind that the Horticultural Society spent a lot of money on a similar project for Norway House, which ended up going to rack and ruin, to which the Chairman stated that he had discussed this project in detail with the Norway House manager, and expressed that Norway House will need to commit to keeping this going.

Cllr Clegg reminded Councillors that the new Speed Gun had been purchased, advising that himself and a local Thornwood Resident had been out and tested it. The guns works through windscreen and glass, and out of the 30 or so cars it was tested on, the fastest was travelling at 53mph in a 30mph zone. The average vehicle speed was middle to high 40s. Members noted that Cllr Clegg was waiting for official confirmation from the Community Speedwatch Team on a number of points, after which the plan was to begin formal speedwatch events immediately. If no response is received by mid June, Cllr Clegg confirmed he would chase.

Cllr Mulliner reported that there was a large overgrown allotment at Hastingwood which has now been prepared for a new tenant, however this did involve a cost to the Council. In addition, the flowers in the garden outside the shops in North Weald were looking great, and may not need any further spent on it for the remainder of the year.

Cllr Tyler reported that it had been widely believed that the bins outside the shops in North Weald had been vandalised / stolen, however he confirmed that it was in fact the shop manager who removed them as the bin would get full of fish and chip papers and needed clearing up to 6 times a day. Cllr Tyler asked if the Parish Council could ascertain if the requirement for a bin was part of any planning permission in place. The Chairman suggested that it may be worthwhile writing to the shops asking them to keep the area clean and tidy.

Cllr Mrs Grigg reported that she had recently received a number of complaints about the lack of clear white lines and markings at the mini roundabout by

Wellington Road, with residents advising they were unclear who has right of way. The Clerk confirmed that this issue was on the list of possible schemes for the Local Highway Panel that she discussed with both Sarah Alcock (ECC) and Cllr Chris Whitbread at a recent meeting at which both herself and the Chairman were in attendance. The Clerk read out the list of items that were on the Local Highway Panel list, stating that over the past 3 years a number of people at ECC have left which seems to have resulted in a number of schemes being dropped off the list. During the meeting, Sarah Alcock had advised which schemes were definitely not suitable for the LHP, however would be coming back to Sue regarding the other items, which includes the white lining and markings of roundabouts. The Chairman raised the issue of cars speeding through the z-bend area of North Weald, stating some drivers seem to take it as a challenge. Unfortunately, he has been advised in the past that a speed survey cannot be conducted along this stretch of road, stating it will be interesting to see if Sarah Alcock comes to a different conclusion. Cllr Mrs Grigg suggested 30mph repeater signs may be useful along this stretch of road.

Cllr Clegg advised that himself and a local resident recently cut back foliage and cleaned a number of road traffic signs along Upland Road. Cllr Clegg also advised that the B1393 was due to be closed to traffic week commencing 15th June for surface dressing, however he seemed to recall this was completed less than two years ago and questioned the need for it to be done again.

f) Local Plan - The PFO provided an update advising that the Parish Council had been represented at two separate hearings. This had involved a lot of preparation work by the PFO and the Solicitor, including the creation of Matter Statements, however to some degree it was frustrating in that we had many items and issues we wished to address, which had to be filtered down to correspond with the Inspectors questions, and at the actual hearing the Councils representative was given very little opportunity to speak. This effectively meant that the 'battles' to address has to be picked carefully, with not all of them being able to be addressed due to how the Local Plan hearing was run.

g) Neighbourhood Plan - Councillors noted that the Steering Group had been working hard on building its evidence base and looking at draft policies, however had agreed that some further external expert help was needed in order to pull this section of the process together. Cllr Clegg confirmed that this process had at times proved overwhelming, and fully supported the need for an external consultant. Councillors **AGREED** this support. The PFO also advised that the Steering Group had met with those involved in the Masterplanning for the proposed development site to the North of North Weald, in an attempt to try and influence the design of this development to accord with the feedback received via the Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire responses.

h) Queens Hall Report - Cllr Ms Wood gave a report on behalf of the Parish Council appointed Trustees advising that the Charity recently held their AGM which went well, with new Trustees being appointed. The meeting was long, with a number of issues needing to be addressed, including the subject of Quinn Estates funds. The concerns over the cricket club's use of the hall remains an issue, with

the club reporting that the £1,250 annual fee is unsustainable. This fee includes the use of the pavilion, main hall, and field for a total of 413.5 hours, every Saturday and Sunday between April and November for 9 hours a day. This equates to only £3.02 per hour, which is a third of what the current hirers are paying. In addition, the wickets are being watered by the Club using the hall water, which is a cost. Members recalled that historically the Cricket club used to cut the field in return for no charge for the hall hire, however this prohibited the hall from ensuring it was obtaining the most cost effective quotes and getting best value. The Cricket Club have advised they want the grass cut more frequently than once every two weeks, and they have been advised that they are free to cut the grass on extra occasions at their own cost if they so wish, however it is the Charity themselves who maintain the facility for the community. Cllr Ms Wood advised that the Cricket Club have been asked to pay their fees by Thursday of this week, and if this doesn't happen an Extraordinary meeting would be needed. Councillors fully supported this action, and confirmed to Cllr Ms Wood that the Parish Hall appointed Trustees had this Council's full support with the work they were doing, stating that it is essential the Cricket club, and all hirers, pay their fees if they wish to use the facilities. Cllr Clegg suggested that if an Extraordinary meeting is needed, full details of the hall costs should be made available, to include overheads, so that all parties were aware of what the costs to run the hall are. The Clerk advised that some time back, the Parish Council's solicitor had raised concerns at the state of the finances, and unless action was taken the hall would be bankrupt. Thankfully, it seems that these issues are now slowly being resolved.

Cllr Ms Wood confirmed that the water at the hall is metered, and she takes readings roughly around the 10th of each month.

C19.037 FINANCIAL REPORTS

a) List of Cheques & Monthly Statement of Accounts

The cheque list up to 31st May 2019, and the account balances at the end of this month were *NOTED*.

b) General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

Councillors *NOTED* that good progress had been made with the majority of items in the filing room at the back of the office (with the exception of those in the main filing cabinets) having now been sorted and taken to the container for storage. The items that have to remain are now easily available to staff. Boxes that were moved from the filing room in the Parish Hall into the Container are now starting to be sorted, five have been completed so far. The large cupboard in the Storage area at the rear of the Parish Hall has been cleared and the Neighbourhood Plan Storage has been placed in there. The old storage room at the Parish Hall in Thornwood has now been converted to an office, which is being hired weekly. Records are being sorted, with items suitable for storage at Essex Records Office being identified. This physical filing and storage work is expected to take some time as it is being incorporated into normal working hours where possible.

c) Internal Audit

Members *NOTED* that the Internal Auditor was in attendance on the 24th May, and a copy of his report was attached to the agenda. The Clerk confirmed that the

insurance schedule had already been changed with regard to the loss of income for the Parish Hall. Cllr Mrs Grigg enquired about Councillors having their own email addresses, to which the Clerk advised that the office staff were currently experiencing some technical issues with the computers, and that she would be looking at a new IT package for the Parish Council which would solve the current issues, resolve numerous GDPR issues, and include new email addresses for Councillors use.

d) External Audit

Councillors **NOTED** the date on which the External Audit must be approved and published by the Parish Council is 1st July 2019. This year the Parish Council is subject to a Limited Assurance Review, and a copy of all the relevant paperwork, including the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), was attached to the agenda. Councillors:

- a) **NOTED** the ongoing review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control
- b) Considered the findings of this ongoing review
- c) Prepare the Annual Governance Statement (Section 1)
- d) Approved by way of **RESOLUTION** the Annual Governance Statement - Proposed Cllr Mrs Grigg, Seconded Cllr Tyler.
- e) Considered the Accounting Statements (Section 2)
- f) Approved by way of **RESOLUTION** the Accounting Statements - Proposed Cllr Mrs Jackman, Seconded Cllr Clegg.
- g) Ensured that both the Annual Governance Statement and Accounting Statements were signed and dated by the person presiding at the meeting.

Councillors also **NOTED** that the period of public rights and publication of the unaudited annual return was between 17th June and 26th July, and that the relevant notices will be erected prior to this date.

C19.038 REQUEST TO USE THORNWOOD FIELD FOR FOOTBALL BY EPPING YOUTH

At the May meeting, a member of the public made a request for the Thornwood Field to be used for the playing of Football matches from September 2019 to May 2020. A draft Contract (which will be subject to amendments) has been received from Epping Town Council, and confirmation of the agreed hire charges are now needed. It was **AGREED** that this contract would be used as the basis for any agreement with Epping Youth as it is tried and tested. Notes of the meeting between the Parish Councillors and Epping Youth Football Club were attached to the agenda. The Clerk reminded the Council that there is no field drainage on the Thornwood Field, and that any agreement would not include any changing facilities or the use of the hall. The Chairman asked if comparative fees had been sourced, to which it was confirmed they had been. The Clerk advised that the Parish Councils contractor would initially mark out the pitch, however after this time it would be completed by the football club themselves. The football club are aware they need to keep the car park area clean, and that this would be monitored. In addition, they were aware that there may be times when parking may be difficult due to a function taking place in the hall, and that the club would be responsible for setting out and removing the goal posts, which would be stored at the far end of the field. After discussion, it was **AGREED** that the hire for the field should be £600 for the 2019/2020 season, and then this would be

reviewed should a future season agreement be considered. Councillors **NOTED** that this agreement was for one season, that it would not be automatically renewed, but would be considered again in March 2020.

C19.039 ECC LIBRARY

Councillors **NOTED** that the Clerk had received confirmation from ECC Cllr Susan Barker that she was willing to meet with the Clerk, and two Members of the Parish Council on the 7th June at County Hall (Cllrs Buckley & Tyler have indicated that they would be willing to attend with the Clerk). However ECC require a Business Plan prior to the meeting (this had not been asked for initially as a requirement). The Clerk and the Senior Administrative Officer has worked on creating an Outline Business Plan, details of which were read out for members at the meeting. It was noted that a full financial breakdown of the running costs for the Library had not yet been received, but just one overall cost. The Clerk had asked for these costs on numerous occasions. ECC Cllr Whitbread and Cllr Jackson may also be in attendance. Cllr Clegg expressed his concern that by doing this, the Parish Council were making it very easy for Essex, as it would simply be easy for them to then hand over the library to the Parish Council, thus exonerating themselves of this statutory responsibility. Cllr Mrs Jackman explained that without going down this route, the library may simply be closed. Cllr Mrs Grigg advised it was important to ensure ECC were kept aware that the Parish Council had an interest in the library. All present commended the work undertaken to create the Business Plan, and Councillors **SUPPORTED** submission of this document. The Clerk confirmed she would report back at the next meeting.

C19.040 PARISH HALL AT THORNWOOD

Cllr Spearman was due to give an update on the new signage at the Parish Hall, however this item would be rolled over to the July meeting.

Meeting closed: 9.02pm

Signed

Date