



MINUTES

Meeting: PARISH COUNCIL

Date: 6th March 2023

Time: 7.30PM

Venue: PARISH HALL, THORNWOOD COMMON

PRESENT:

Councillors (12) Cllr Buckley (Chairman), Cllr Spearman, Cllr Mrs Hawkins, Cllr Mrs S Jackman MBE, Cllr Tyler, Cllr Mrs Etherington, Cllr Irvine, Cllr Clegg, Cllr Blanks, Cllr Mrs Grigg, Cllr Ms Wood*, Cllr Stroud

** for part of meeting*

Officers in Attendance (2)

Susan De Luca – Parish Clerk

Adriana Jones – Principal Financial Officer

Members of the Public (1)

Members of the Press (1)

C22.182 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (1)

Apologies received from Cllr Bedford as he was attending the EFDC Extraordinary meeting at which the Local Plan was due to be considered.

C22.183 OTHER ABSENCES (0)

None.

C22.184 MINUTES

Councillors **AGREED** the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 6th February 2023.

C22.185 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Spearman declared a pecuniary interest in any item concerning the Local Plan. Cllr Mrs Grigg declared a pecuniary interest in any item concerning the Bowls Club.

C22.186 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

None.

C22.187 REPORT OF THE CLERK

The meeting Clerk provided the following report, which was **NOTED** by Councillors present:

- **Latton Priory Consultation** – The Clerk advised that a Zoom meeting had been held with the site promoters of the Latton Priory development, members of EFDC, and members of this Council on 27th February 2023. This was an opportunity for the site promoters to answer the points raised in this Councils response to the consultation which ended in January 2023. A copy of the notes from the meeting were tabled for members information.
- **Weald Common Tree Project** – The Clerk asked the Chairman to provide an update. The Chairman stated that as previously advised the main works had been completed including planting of all the whips, however some additional works will be necessary to increase the mulch around some of the trees as much of it seems to have washed away and this is key to providing protection for the trees. The Chairman and office staff met at the end of February

to agree a management plan for Weald Common going forward, and a further meeting will be held regarding the installation of benches, information boards, corner fencing, etc. There will be a 5-year period of management where the whips will be inspected and replaced at intervals, as this Council has a responsibility to ensure any dead trees are replaced. The area will be cut twice a year for the next few years, then will be left to grow wild. There will also be an opening event. The Chairman mentioned about the three plaques which will be erected at the central point near the Copper Beech where the footpaths converge. Tom Moat, ECC, has confirmed that he is progressing the grant funding receipt in February. The Clerk confirmed that she would liaise with Jimmy Waters regarding some historic information for the boards.

- **Letter received from Resident adjacent to Allotments** – This was passed to the Clerk and Chairman, and a response has been sent to the Resident advising that Allotment Tenants will be politely asked to lock the gate, however tenants will be advised to undertake this at the Allotment Meeting in March.
- **Staffing Matters** – The Clerk is on a phased return to work (for one month).
- **Coffee With Cops** - The PC have been Liaising with PC Cook and NWVH and have secured an evening date for hall hire for an evening Coffee with Cops event – this will be held on: Date: Friday 17th March 2023 Time: 6pm – 7.30pm - Location, North Weald Village Hall. Councillors also invited to attend.
- **Essex County Council Recycling Centres** – The Clerk advised she had received a number of complaints from local residents regarding the fact that Essex County Council had made changes to their Recycling Centres from Monday 13 March 2023, whereby anybody wishing to attend needs to book a slot in advance. Full details were included within the main body of the agenda. The Clerk stated that this was for a trial period. Cllr Clegg asked what happens if the trial period is unsuccessful – will they revert to the previous system, to which the Clerk advised she would contact ECC and find out, as well as establishing how long the trial period was for. Cllr Blanks enquired as to if you can attend on foot, to which it was confirmed blue badge holders and pedestrians were not required to make bookings. Cllr Tyler said this was all about capping costs, and they want less bodies to attend, however any money savings would be offset by the extra cost to clear the resultant fly tipping.
- **Kings Coronation** – The Clerk advised that the Hastingwood Village Hall team were putting on an event, and it was **AGREED** that the £1,000 grant funding to the event could be split three ways, which each village receiving £333 towards any community events being held subject to application and agreement to/by the Parish Council. Cllr Mrs Hawkins confirmed her leaflet for the Thornwood event had been distributed. Cllr Ms Wood advised the Queens Hall would not be holding an event.

C22.188 REPORTS AND MEMBER REPORTS

The following reports were **NOTED**:

- a) **Chairman's Report** – The Chairman advised he had received an email from Sarah Smith, Manager of Norway House, thanking Councillors for the contribution towards the Christmas event held in December, which was a great success.

b) **Vice Chairman's Report** - Cllr Mrs Grigg advised that she was pleased to have received notification from ECC regarding the closure of Hastingwood Road on 13th March for 5 days, especially given that ECC were historically poor as providing such notice.

c) **District & County Councillors Reports** – No reports.

d) **Parish Councillors** – Cllr Irvine advised that he had received a number of complaints from residents about the vegetation overgrowth, parking and rubbish along London Road, but that Cllr Whitbread had agreed to meet with him to try and address this matter.

Cllr Clegg advised that he had received notification that the agreed community speedwatch location near the Horn and Horseshoe pub had been withdrawn following a lack of evidence that there is a speeding issue along this stretch, but had also received confirmation that Weald Bridge Road had been approved as a new location after around 6-9 months of campaigning.

e) **Queens Hall Charity Report** – Cllr Ms Wood advised things were moving along smoothly, and that the trustees would soon be considering if there was a need to increase the hall hire fees, given that last year they only increased by 5% where so many halls increased by 10%.

f) **Neighbourhood Plan Report** – Councillors **NOTED** that this will begin once the Clerk returns to work full time. Councillors also **NOTED** that now the Local Plan has been found Sound, the framework alongside which the Neighbourhood Plan sits is much clearer, and were reminded that a Neighbourhood Plan cannot stop development, but it does allow local communities to specify matters of design, protection of heritage, and set out what new development should look and feel like. In our case, the overriding feedback from residents what that new development should not detract from the fact that we are three villages – not towns – and new development should both respect and reflect this.

g) **EFDC Local Plan Report** – Members **NOTED** that the inspector had found the Local Plan sound, and that it was being considered for formal adoption at an Extraordinary Cabinet Meeting by EFDC this night. Councillors recalled that the Parish of North Weald Bassett features heavily in the plan, with the following Housing allocations included:

- North Weald Village – a minimum of 1,050 new homes
- Thornwood – a minimum of 172 new homes
- Hastingwood (Latton Priory) – a minimum of 1,050 new homes

This is in addition to a number of employment allocations, including North Weald Airfield and Woodside Industrial Estate amongst others. Now the plan has been found Sound, a flurry of activity is to be expected to progress the housing development sites. For full details, including maps of where the development sites are, visit www.efdclocalplan.org.

Cllr Tyler mentioned the Epping Forest Act of 1878, which sets out how Epping Forest should be protected and that any development which may be detrimental to this should not be permitted, and express concern that EFDC were trying to push the Local Plan through at speed. The PFO advised that the current process being undertaken by EFDC was in accordance with the legislative process for Local Plans.

h) **Highways Report** – No report.

C22.189 FINANCIAL

- a) **Payments** – Councillors formally **APPROVED** the list of Cheques & Monthly Statement of Accounts up to 28th February 2023.
- b) **Investments** – **NOTED** that the paperwork had been submitted to CCLA.
- c) **Internal Audit** – **NOTED** the internal auditor would be in attendance on 25th May 2023.

C22.190 FORTHCOMING ELECTIONS

Councillors **NOTED** that the parish council elections would be taking place on 4th May 2023. For sitting councillors wishing to stand again, copies of nomination papers would be made available to the Clerk, however other parish residents who wish to stand will be advised to contact EFDC Elections Office to pick up the necessary election paperwork. This will ensure they receive the exact details regarding how they should deposit their electoral documentation with EFDC as they are the Electoral Authority, not the Parish Council.

The Clerk summarised the period of Purdah which would commence on 22nd March 2023 and last up until the date of the elections. Full details were also included within the body of the agenda.

C22.191 NORTH WEALD AIRFIELD WASTE DEPOT

Councillors recalled that at the February meeting, the meeting clerk was asked to arrange a formal meeting with Cllr Nigel Avey, the EFDC Portfolio Holder, and this Council, the result of which was that a meeting was held on Wednesday 22nd February where this matter was discussed at considerable length. The Clerk stated that she thought members would agree that the meeting was very informative, noting that there would be demountable offices, no waste transferred on site, and that the site was only for the storage, cleaning and possible maintenance of waste vehicles and storage of bins. In addition, it was felt that the wording used by EFDC itself and been inflammatory, as by calling it a Waste Depot instead of a Vehicle Storage Yard would be confusing. The Chairman stated that he had raised concern at this meeting about the waste lorries staying off of local roads, and sticking to the main highways, which had also been an issue when the HMRC site was there. Cllr Stroud asked if there would be any benefit, including financial, for the people in the Parish, to which the Clerk advised that she had made it very clear she would expect this however had been categorically told there were no funds available, confirming she had spoken to both Cllr Avey and Cllr Whitbread regarding this. Cllr Blanks stated that the funds received from the HMRC site indirectly came from the Government, however he asked that it be recorded that EFDC should be defended for their action in forwarding some of these funds to the Parish Council. The Clerk stated that EFDC District Councillors were expected to be in attendance at the Annual Parish Assembly, and this was an opportunity to ask them to address any concerns.

C22.192 NORTH WEALD AIRFIELD

Members noted that the Clerk had been contacted at short notice and asked to attend a number of meetings with the Chairman of the Parish Council and Officers and Members of the District Council, in relation to North Weald Airfield. There were two meetings:

1. The first was regarding proposals for the future operation of the Airside of the Airfield, and a meeting was held with Darren Goodey regarding a report that was going to the Stronger Place Select Committee on 7th March. The meeting included the fact that EFDC intended on keeping the Airfield as an unlicensed aerodrome whilst developing the aviation operations and improving facilities, including attracting new business opportunities through

the use of developable land. The Clerk explained to Councillors where the proposed developable land was, and expressed concern that this was not included as part of an overall Strategic Masterplan for the Airfield. Cllr Tyler stated that he felt EFDC was not looking at the Airfield as one entity, but looking at separate parts individually which didn't make sense. Cllr Mrs Etherington agreed, stating that Cllr Bedford had originally said whatever was going on the airfield 'wouldn't be that bad', and that she could see the airfield being eroded away bit by bit. Cllr Tyler advised he was very cynical about what was taking place. The Chairman stated that at the meeting with Darren Goodey, he had advised that he expected there would be general support from this Council as to keeping the Airfield unlicensed, as the village does not need nor want a commercial enterprise.

2. The second meeting was regarding the Airfield Masterplan, and was to provide an update on its progress as well as responding to the questions raised in this Council's response to the consultation. The Chairman and Clerk had been advised that the Masterplan was going to Cabinet on 13th March for approval and adoption. The PFO explained that the meeting was very informative, and certainly answered many of the points raised by this Council, however according to the Local Plan the proposals for the entire airfield were supposed to be considered collectively by way of a Strategic Masterplan for the entire site, but that it seemed at present there were three separate proposals all being considered in isolation which was a piecemeal approach.

The Clerk reminded all present that EFDC District Councillors would be attending the Annual Parish Assembly, and that this would be a good opportunity to pose any questions directly to them.

C22.193 CIVILITY AND RESPECT PLEDGE

Members were advised that over the last year the National Association of Local Councils and other Local Government Organisations such as the NHS and Local Authorities have been drawing up and promoting the Civility and Respect Pledge. This Pledge is about how we treat each other at work, and the fact that differing type of behaviours and disrespect can become common place. People report that bullying and harassment is prevalent in any organisations and any rude and unkind behaviour can have a detrimental impact on staff and councillors wellbeing and the way residents perceive us. The Pledge makes a statement and commitment that any type of uncivil and disrespectful behaviour is unacceptable. It is unprofessional, unnecessary, and has no place in our organisation or Local Government as a whole. Full details were included within the main body of the agenda.

Councillors fully supported the Pledge, and **AGREED** to sign up to the Pledge, and **ADOPTED** the following statement:

NORTH WEALD BASSETT CIVILITY AND RESPECT STATEMENT

At our Parish Council meeting on Monday 6th March 2023, North Weald Bassett Parish signed up to the Civility and Respect Pledge in line with many other town and parish councils across the country. We recognise that throughout the sector, there are growing concerns about the impact of bullying, harassment, and intimidation on local councils, councillors, clerks and council staff and the effectiveness of local councils. For this reason, the National Association of Local Councils has been working together with partner organisations in putting civility and respect at the top of the agenda in order to maintain a culture change within the local council sector. North Weald Bassett Parish Council has signed the pledge to demonstrate it is completely committed to standing up to

poor behaviour across the sector and to driving through the positive changes that support both civil and respectful conduct. This is the result of the growing concerns about the impact of bullying, harassment and intimidation on local councils, councillors, clerks and council staff and the effectiveness of local councils. This pledge extends to Councillors, Officers, and members of the public.

It was **AGREED** this statement should be uploaded onto the Parish Councils website. This was agreed by unanimous vote.

C22.194 REPORT FROM COUNCILLOR BLANKS

Councillors recalled that this report was circulated to Councillors at the last meeting by Cllr Blanks under Members Reports, however as it was not a specific item on the agenda it was not able to be discussed. Cllr Mrs Jackman had asked that the report be placed on the March Agenda for perusal and or discussion by Members of the Parish Council, to which Members agreed. Cllr Blanks provided a brief summary, stating that things had somewhat moved on since the report was drafted, and that his main concern was that EFDC has a £4m shortfall and concerns as to both how, and the truth, of the way they were dealing with it. Cllr Blanks advised that one of the primary impacts on this shortfall was that EFDC hadn't received as much as they were expecting to receive from the Qualis Companies, and that the report of finances was written in such a political way it was difficult to read through the lines. Cllr Blanks stated there were now 6 Qualis companies, none of which were open to public scrutiny as they were all limited companies that were effectively separate organisations to EFDC, and that this was concerning for local residents as it was their money that was going to fund the Qualis Companies. In addition, the year end for the Qualis Companies is September which doesn't line up with EFDC making it difficult for the Auditors to incorporate this into their assessment of EFDC. Cllr Blanks stated that residents in the District should be very careful where their monies were going when it comes to EFDC / Qualis, and discussed that the Chairman of Qualis has never been seen. The Clerk once again explained that District Councillors would be at the Annual Parish Assembly, and that this would be an opportunity to raise such concerns with them.

C22.195 RIDE LONDON 2023

At the last meeting Members were advised that on 28th May 2023 this year's Ride London Event would be taking place. This event is a partnership between ECC and London Marathon Events, with an estimated 25,000 cyclists expected to take part. On 24th February, the organisers held a public meeting to provide an opportunity for residents to raise any queries or concerns. The Clerk confirmed she had attended this meeting, and there were 5 residents present which was more than the Epping event had received. The organisers advised that there will be additional Crossing Points, additional Marshals, and Carers having to get either into or out of North Weald will be able to do so as long as they contact the Organisers in plenty of time. If residents felt there were not enough crossing points they could contact the organisers by email and they would look at this. Cllr Etherington asked when the road closures would be, to which the PFO advised 5am to 1pm, although the Clerk had been advised they expect the road to open by 12.20pm.

C22.196 MEMORIAL PLAQUE FOR COUNCILLOR GEORGE MULLINER

Members discussed the possibility of placing a plaque in the North Weald Village Hall in recognition of all the work undertaken by former councillor George Mulliner. Cllr Mrs Etherington agreed Cllr Mulliner had worked very hard for the community, but that there were also other individuals who had also worked hard for the community. This was supported by the fact that the lounge in the North Weald Village Hall was called the 'Derek Tringham Lounge'. Cllr Mrs Grigg

advised she would support the suggestion of a plaque being located at the North Weald Village Hall, and this was supported by all Councillors present.

C22.197 EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL CORPORATE PLAN

Councillors **NOTED** that EFDC had issued its new Corporate Plan, together with the link to the full document which was contained in the body of the agenda.

C22.198 NORWEGIAN MEMORIAL NEAR SQUADRON ON NORTH WEALD AIRFIELD

Members recalled from the last meeting that the sum of £500 had been precepted for the possible maintenance of the Norwegian memorial located at the revetment near the Squadron subject to the memorial being moved to a different location on the airfield, given the poor state of the current memorial and surrounds and the cost to maintain it. A lengthy discussion ensued at the last meeting and Members went over the historical facts and moral liabilities to the Norwegians and Cllr Tyler and Cllr Mrs Etherington asked that 'stating that out of respect this should be maintained and suggested the decision should be revisited'. After further discussion it was agreed that the meeting clerk would ask EFDC if they were financially contributing to its maintenance or maintaining it, and that Cllr Tyler would speak to his contact at the war graves commission. The Clerk has undertaken some research and contacted EFDC, and Darren Goodey has agreed with the Clerk that the stone which was put on top of the Revetment is classed as a 'Memorial' even if the Revetments are not, however there is no way that he feels that the Memorial Stone should be moved elsewhere. Darren did agree that the area around the Memorial Stone should be maintained, however the land that it stands on is leased to a company on the Airfield.

Cllr Tyler stated that he had spoken to the Commonwealth War Commission, and it had been confirmed this was not a war grave. He had also spoken to Mark Smith who is making further enquiries, however it had become apparent during his investigation that before the stone was placed there this was the original Norwegian pilots informal memorial. There may be a document that proves this, but Cllr Tyler stated the memorial was there for a reason and if it's moved it may as well be placed on a skip – its location is important and relevant. Cllr Tyler confirmed he was awaiting a response from the War graves Commission. This was supported by Cllr Mrs Etherington. The Clerk stated that she would investigate this matter further and place on the April or May meeting. The Chairman stated that a few years ago the Chief of the Norwegian Airforce visited the site, and it was embarrassing because the site had not been maintained, and that this proposal was to move the memorial to a better location where it can be maintained and more people will get to see it. He further stated that the historical element of the Squadron had all but disappeared, and that the brickwork for the revetment was almost irreparable. After further discussion it was **AGREED** that the Clerk would investigate this matter further.

C22.199 RE-SITING OF DEFIBRILLATOR FROM NORTH WEALD METHODIST CHURCH

Members **NOTED** that the Parish Council was no further down the line with trying to get the Defibrillator re-sited from the Methodist Church to another business in the High Road. Further attempts have been unsuccessful. A suggestion was made that the library could be a good location. Cllr Ms Wood advised that the Queens Hall now had a defibrillator, and that she thought possibly the Harvester may have one, and suggested it should be located towards the opposite end of the village. The cost to run a defibrillator was thought to be about £8/year. Cllr Clegg suggested Norway House could be a good location. The Chairman stated they were looking for a location centrally in the village. It was **AGREED** the Clerk would place a notice in Village Life to see if residents had any suggestions or could offer a location.

C22.200 EV CHARGING POINTS

The Parish Council has had an approach from EFDC regarding the Parish Council providing EV Charging Points. One site that was suggested was the Parish Hall at Thornwood. The Clerk has advised that the Hall is normally accessed via locked gates unless there is a hiring and the problems that this may cause with regard to access, and also there are concerns regarding the rising cost of electricity. The officer in charge of the project at EFDC advised that he did not think the access arrangements would be a problem as these could be overcome. With regard to electricity cost, he stated that the PC would be able to set and change the tariff and retain a margin to cover admin costs or even make a profit. The staff EV chargers at Epping Civic Centre are currently charged at 23p per kWh which covers a small Podpoint admin charge plus a small admin margin on top of what they pay for electricity (until April covered by the government's price cap for businesses). Most public 7 kWh chargers currently cost at least 30p per kWh with some at 45p, so depending on the PC's own electricity tariff it could easily be revenue generating. He further stated that on that basis, if the capital cost were covered by grants, it would not actually matter too much if the car park was locked a lot of the time, provided people were made aware that it is not 24 hour access. The Parish Council could also make the chargers 'closed group' access so for example only local residents or others who were approved would be able to use them and they would not need to appear on the public EV charging sites like www.zap-map.com

Cllr Clegg stated that he was concerned about some of the wording used by the EFDC representative, and after further discussion it was **AGREED** that the Clerk would meet with this representative to find out more information.

C22.201 EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL EMERGENCY PLANNING LIVE REST CENTRE EXERCISE - EXPRESSION OF INTEREST – VOLUNTEERS

Councillors noted that the Clerk had been contacted by an Officer at EFDC regarding a live Emergency Planning exercise which will take place in June 2023 – Date to be confirmed and will be held between 10:00hrs – 16:00hrs. At this stage they are looking to rally some volunteers from North Weald Bassett parish who may be interested in playing evacuees. They would most likely keep numbers at approx. 60 of mixed ages and family groups where possible. They are insured for all ages, however would be looking sensibly at the demographics once they have an idea of interest. They will also be reaching out to their community champions and a couple of other parishes to make up numbers and give them a real time flavour of issues they hope to exercise.

They are only at early planning stages at this time, so cannot give any details, however the exercise will run between 10am and 4pm and although would like 'all day' volunteers, understand and welcome anyone who can perhaps give a few hours.

Cllr Mrs Hawkins said some of her Over 70s Group may be interested, and suggested the Clerk also contact the Thornwood Seniors. The Clerk confirmed she would also speak with other local groups.

C22.202 CHANGE OF DATE FOR ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY

Members **AGREED** to the change of date for the Annual Parish Assembly and the Civic Awards to Thursday 16th March to ensure District Councillors were available to attend.

C22.203 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

The public and press were 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.

C22.204 METHODIST CHURCH

Councillors **NOTED** that the Clerk was awaiting a response to an email she had sent to HAEBEA.

C22.205 NORTH WEALD RADIO STATION BOWLS CLUB

No further update at this time.

C22.206 PARISH COUNCIL OFFICES

AGREED that the Clerk would contact Cllr C Whitbread again concerning the Library. **NOTED** that the Queens Hall may have a suitable space.

Meeting closed 20.54

Signed

Date