



DRAFT

MINUTES

Meeting: ENVIRONMENTAL
COMMITTEE

Date: 7th October 2015

Time: 10.30 am

Venue: NORTH WEALD LIBRARY, HIGH ROAD, NORTH WEALD

PRESENT:

Councillors (7) G Mulliner (Chairman), C Hawkins*, B Bartram, A Buckley, T Blanks,
Mrs E Godwin-Brown, B Clegg*

Also in Attendance (2)

Adriana Jones, Principal Finance and Administrative Officer*
Joanna Tyler, Senior Administrative Officer*

*For part of meeting

Members of the Public (0)

E15.13 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (2)

NOTED Apologies received from Cllr Eldridge, and Cllr Hawkins for lateness.

E15.14 OTHER ABSENCES (3)

NOTED other absences of Cllr Bedford, Cllr Spearman and Cllr Mrs Grigg (Cllr Mrs Grigg had previously stated she would attend when able to).

E15.15 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

NOTED there were no declarations of interest.

E15.16 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 17th June 2015 were **CONFIRMED** and signed as a true record.

E15.17 ALLOTMENTS

Councillors **NOTED** that weekly Allotment Sub-Committee meetings still take place subject to their being issues to be discussed.

a) Smaller Allotments

Councillors **NOTED** that recent articles in the press had suggested that many people are finding it difficult to tend to the average size allotment, and that there are a number of plots available on WFG, QR and Hastingwood A sites that are rather large. Councillors stated that although there hasn't been any specific requests or demand for smaller plot, this was a good idea and **AGREED** that adverts should be placed in the local press offering smaller, more manageable allotments. Cllr Clegg stated that if somebody with a larger allotment wanted to downsize, they should be able to do so on their same plot. This was **AGREED**.

b) Communal Allotments

Councillors discussed the possible creation of Communal Allotments at all of the allotment sites in the Parish - allotments which could accommodate raised beds and

facilities for the disabled. It was noted that there hadn't been a specific request for this, and as such demand could not be gauged. Cllr Hawkins stated that he was aware of one request, which lasted two weeks, before the person whom requested these facilities left, subsequently resulting in another residents taking on the plot. Councillors raised concerns about the cost of creating these allotments, together with any ongoing maintenance costs, especially when there was no clear evidence of need. Cllr Clegg suggested advertising to establish need, however this was not supported. Cllr Bartram asked if the meeting Parish Office could investigate whether or not allotments could be leased to consortiums, and if so the process. This was **AGREED**.

E15.18 PLAY AREAS

a) Inspection regime

Members **NOTED** that at the 7th September meeting of the Parish Council, it was agreed that the following play area inspection regime would be implemented:

- Weekly - Routine Visual Inspection completed by the Principal Finance Officer
- Last week of each Month - more thorough Routine inspection completed by Parish Council handyman
- Quarterly - Operational Inspection completed by Parish Council handyman
- Annual - Full inspection looking at compliance of equipment with national standards completed by external company

Councillors **NOTED** this regime began at the start of September.

b) Actions for Consideration following inspections

Councillors **NOTED** that as a result of the above inspections, the following issues needed to be reviewed, and any actions agreed. It was also **NOTED** that any faults or issues classified as Medium or High Risk had been actioned immediately (or are in the process of being actioned).

Weald Common Old Play Area	
All Equipment	<p>All items of equipment are showing signs of rot at the bottom, some more significantly than others. There are a number of items that will need replacing in the near future, and the Committee should consider budgeting for the cost of replacing these. The findings of both the Quarterly (27th July 2015) and Annual (8th June 2015) inspections have identified this rotting and splitting, however they have been classified as low risk. The long term future of this play area should be considered, and if it is to be retained significant funds should be budgeted for to effect the required repairs.</p> <p><i>Councillors AGREED that due to the grounds conditions at Weald Common, wooden play equipment was not the most suitable equipment for the area, and that any Play Equipment needing replacing, or needing to be taken out of active availability should be removed instead of replaced, gradually phasing out this play area. The Fence however could remain</i></p>

	<p><i>once all the equipment had been removed, leaving a simple fenced off area.</i></p>
School Green Lane	<p>One of the entrance gates no longer operates correctly. Both the external play area contractor and the Parish Grounds Maintenance contractor have looked at the equipment and are not able to fix it. The gate is currently padlocked shut, and the Office has received phone calls from members of the public asking when it is going to be opened.</p> <p><i>It was AGREED to ask our Grounds Maintenance Contractor to quote for removing the functioning gate at the field end, blocking the space left off, and installing this gate in the location where the current broken gate is.</i></p> <p>2 bay cradle swing - Annual report identified that the shackle bolt should be removed and the bushes and shackle pins checked for wear. The quarterly report stated that there is some movement in the top supporting joint, and that the shakles should be removed and inspected. In addition, one of the supporting posts seems to come out of the supporting top joint, however when tested this showed no movement as seemed solid.</p> <p><i>Councillors reviewed the pictures, and there was some concern that there was perhaps movement in the ground or the other top supporting joint which was causing the problem. Councillors noted the quote to replace the swing unit was £2,199, however this did not include the removal of the old swings. Councillors asked the post could be replaced and securely fixed, however the PFO stated that the swing were in excess of 20 years old, and another company may not be prepared to complete such works, however she would check. It was agreed to review this item once this had been established.</i></p>
Graffiti	<p>There is non offensive graffiti on the multiplay unit at the new WC play area, and the sign of the old WC Play Area. There is also graffiti on the Youth Shelter at Weald Common.</p> <p><i>Councillors AGREED that the removal of this graffiti should be considered after adoption of the Graffiti Policy at the November Parish Council meeting. Cllr Godwin-Brown stated that the graffiti at the Weald Common youth shelter should not be removed as it simply won't stop.</i></p>
Thornwood Common	<p>Quarterly play area inspection dated 27th July stated with reference to the play shell that the securing pieces are loose, some are cracked and some grub screws missing. Finger entrapments, and minor scratched graffiti on 1 panel. However the annual</p>

	<p>report completed on 8th June stated that the item complies with BS EN 1176 and that the only remedial works is to monitor the wetpour shrinking around that base of the item. The Environmental Committee commissioned a separate operational inspection of this item by an alternative contractor, which was completed on 22nd July, the results stating that the grub screws were tightened or replaced, and that the equipment should be monitored for signs of movement to the green plates. During the weekly inspection on 21st September, no movement was found.</p> <p><i>This was NOTED by Councillors, and it was AGREED this should simply be monitored during the weekly inspections at this time.</i></p>
Wetpour	<p>Minor damage and shrinkage has occurred at Thornwood, Weald Common New and School Green Lane play areas. The PFO has sourced a company who are able to provide a wetpour repair kit, and it is hoped costings will be available for the meeting. This will allow the Parish Council to complete the repairs themselves, without incurring significant costs.</p> <p><i>Cllr Bartram asked how long the wetpour takes to set, and it was AGREED the PFO would find this out. However, it was AGREED that one kit of black wetpour should be purchased, and that Cllrs Clegg and Hawkins would trial it on a patch of Wetpour.</i></p>

Councillors discussed the issue of people still bringing dogs into the play areas, and it was noted that Cllr Buckley has on at least two occasions informed parents of children using the play area to remove their dogs, this is despite the fact there are clear signs at the entrance to each play area stating dogs are not permitted. Cllr Hawkins stated that happens in Thornwood too.

E15.19 ASSET CHECKS

Councillors **NOTED** that the PFO had nearly completed the annual check of all the Parish Council assets, with only a few still to be completed. A copy of pictures of all the assets inspected, together with any faults found, was tabled for Members. The PFO informed Councillors of the following faults, and the agreed action is detailed alongside:

Picture Page No	Item and Location	Fault Identified	Action AGREED
1	Cradle Swings - School Green Lane Play Area	Supporting section not fixed into mechanism at top. Cannot be moved. Affecting the integrity of	As agreed under previous agenda item

		the swings	
1	Weald Common Play Area - various items	Rot on all items, some items leaning and splitting.	As agreed under previous agenda item.
3 & 4	Higham View Bridge	1. Matting on base of bridge damaged 2. 3rd step - dangerous with damage, and movement	Matting to be replaced and 3rd step to be replaced. Obtain quotes from Countrycare and Grounds Maintenance Contractor.
3 & 4	Dog bin, Memorial Playing Fields	Hole at bottom of bin, and spray painted all over obscuring signs and labels	The hole does not cause an issue as liners are placed in the bins to hold the dog waste. Agreed to purchase anti-graffiti red paint, and to repaint the bin at this time.
6	Dog Bin, Bluemans	Unstable in ground (being fixed by Kevin), lid cracked	Purchase new lid
6	Goal posts, Bluemans	Showing signs of movement - not significant, however should be monitored.	Monitor as part of weekly checks.
6	Bench, Village Green, NW	Both ends have damaged posts	Cllr Clegg and Cllr Hawkins to complete works to make the ends good.
6	North Weald Bassett sign on village green	No fault, but could do with painting	Pass to Cllr Eldridge to consider
7 & 8	Bridge on Weald Common	Guard rail on left of bridge missing	Noted this was recently repairs by Countrycare, however further guard rail is needed. Inform Countrycare.
7 & 8	Youth Shelter, Weald Common	Graffiti on all inside panels - not offensive	Agreed to consider this after adoption of the Graffiti policy at the November PC meeting, and remove in accordance with policy.
8 & 9	Dog bin, York Road	Damaged by heavy machinery (hedge cutter) - twisted metal at back where post is. Structurally sound	Noted. No action needed.
9	Bench, corner of Dukes close	Graffiti on seat - Not offensive	Agreed to consider this after adoption of the Graffiti policy at the November PC meeting, and remove in accordance with

			policy.
9	Weald Common Stone (towards Bowls Club)	Cannot see it	Agreed that Cllr Mulliner would ask George if he would trim.
9	Bus Stop, High Road Nr Upland Road	Windows missing	Noticed windows do not provide any protection from water due to location of shelter. Agreed not a H&S risk, and not to take any action.
10	Bench, Hastingwood Green	Bench is very old, structurally sound, but there is movement in the wood.	No action needed on bench, however concerns over fact that somebody is cutting half this area, and if left to do so may try and obtain occupiers rights. Agreed to look into this area of land (common, meadow, etc) and for Grounds Maintenance contractor to continue to cut it once per year.

E15.20 CEMETERY

a) Row Markers

Members **NOTED** that the Clerk had made enquiries regarding the purchase of row markers for Burial Section One. The use of row markers would aid not only the Parish Council's Grave Digger but also prospective purchasers in identifying which plots are currently available (at the present time there are 12 plots available for purchase in Section One). There are a total of 11 rows which require marking, the cost of providing one 4" x 4" granite marker inscribed with 'Row Number' secured on a stainless steel spike is £18.00 (plus vat). Members were asked to **CONSIDER** the purchase of 11 row markers, together with the purchase of an additional 11 in readiness for the use of Burial Section Two (in order to mirror the layout of Section One). Following discussion, Members **AGREED** to the purchase of a total of 22 row markers for Burial Sections One and Two.

b) Granite Memorial Tree

Members **NOTED** that consideration would soon need to be given to the marking out of Burial Section Two. With this in mind, the Clerk had investigated the possibility of purchasing a Granite Memorial Tree as a centre piece for Section Two. The "tree" would be produced in light grey granite, with 18 leaf shaped black granite plaques on each face, providing 36 plaques in total. The plaques would be available for purchase and inscription. The total cost of supply and installation would be £2950.00 (plus vat). The tree is supplied by granart Memorials (the memorial masons who supply the boulders and plaques for use in the Cremated Remains section). Granart have advised the Clerk that they would also be able to carry out the necessary ground work and install the concrete foundations at a cost of £600.00. The price quoted for the inscription on the leaf (including postage) is £48.00 (the leaf plaques would be secured with stainless steel security fixings).

Councillor Godwin-Brown stated that she thought that a centre piece was a good idea and wondered whether it would be possible to plant a living tree in the centre and allow people to hang, for example, copper tokens from its branches. It was agreed that this would not be possible because of the spread of roots and concerns were raised that it could look untidy. The Senior Administrative Officer explained that the Clerk had suggested that the leaves could be offered as an alternative to the Garden of Remembrance, with the ashes being deposited in an area around the Memorial Tree. It is envisaged that the cost for the purchase and inscription of a leaf, together with the deposit of ashes would be in the region of £300.00. Councillor Buckley stated that he thought this was a good idea and the purchase costs would be recovered through the purchase of the leaves. Councillor Hawkins **PROPOSED** that the purchase of a Memorial Tree be included as an item on the Parish Council's Budget and Precept Meeting Agenda, in order that it can be ratified by Full Council. All Members **AGREED**.

The Senior Administrative Officer advised Members that the Clerk had asked if she could raise the suggestion of removing the plaque in the area of the cemetery which is designated as a Children's Area. Councillor Godwin-Brown expressed concern at this suggestion and stated that when it was raised at a previous meeting she had opposed it then. Members discussed the matter and **AGREED** that the plaque could be removed and placed in storage, should it be required in the future.

E15.21 COMMUNITY TREE STRATEGY

Members **NOTED** that the Clerk had been advised by Chris Neilhan, Principal Officer, Landscape and Trees, Epping Forest District Council, that there was not enough money in the budget to undertake a Community Tree Strategy at the present time. Mr Neilhan had stated that he would be in contact again when funding is available.

E15.22 WEALD COMMON

Members **NOTED** that Countrycare had contacted the Clerk to ask whether or not the Parish Council would like them to complete the following tasks:-

1. The length of hedge which is on the Parish Council part of the Common (towards the top end which did not get laid last year) looks out of character with the rest of the hedge. The hedge is around 40 metres long and the cost would be £350.00 for labour and £50.00 for materials. Alternatively, Countrycare have suggested that their volunteers would be prepared to carry out the work for the cost of materials only. Following discussion, Members **AGREED** that they would like the work carried out by the volunteers at a cost of £50.00 for materials only. Members asked that the Clerk to the Council reiterates that the cost will be no more than £50.00.
2. Cutting of hedge between Weald Common Play Area and Village Hall land – the hedge was laid two years ago and is now beginning to grow again. Countrycare have suggested, from a safety point of view, that the Parish Council may wish to consider having the height cut back. The cost for two people for

two hours to cut and tidy up would be £100.00. The Chairman asked if the hedge belonged to the Parish Council, the Senior Administrative Officer stated that she was almost certain that it did, however would need to check this with the Clerk. Members **AGREED** that this work should be carried out. The Chairman requested that the Village Hall Committee be notified of this work, out of courtesy.

E15.23 GREEN OUTSIDE THE PARADE OF SHOPS, NORTH WEALD

Councillor Buckley stated that the report was the same as he had given at the Parish Council Meeting on Monday evening. He referred to a photographic image of the proposed project and stated that the phone box had to stay. Some form of fencing will be required to form a boundary between the garden and the brick wall, consideration is being given to the possibility of using sleepers which would be stacked 3 high, however, costs may be able to be cut by stacking 2 sleepers high. Councillor Buckley has been in contact with Councillor Spearman who has supplied a list of shrubs for planting. The list has been sent to Essex County Council, with an invitation for an officer to meet Councillor Buckley to visit the green. The Clerk has sent the relevant paperwork to Epping Forest District Council to apply for funding towards the project.

Councillor Buckley stated that we are now just waiting for authorisation to go ahead with the project. Once that has been received, the overall design will need to be looked at and confirmed. He is currently looking at the possibility of a brick wall being built around the garden, however, this may prove to be more expensive. Councillor Buckley added that it would be nice to have the project completed by Spring of next year. Councillor Mrs Godwin-Brown referred to the phone box and suggested the possibility of investigating whether or not it could be replaced with an old fashioned red one. She referred to a comment that the Clerk had made at a previous meeting, stating that the boxes can be purchased for very little money.

E15.24 BULB PLANTING

Members **NOTED** that there had been no response to the adverts placed on the noticeboards, in the local shops and Village Life Magazine asking for volunteers to assist with bulb planting this year. Members discussed possible locations and Councillor Hawkins suggested that they meet next Wednesday to tour the village and decide the best place(s) to plant the bulbs. All Members **AGREED**. Councillor Mrs Godwin-Brown asked the Senior Administrative Officer to confirm the date and time via email.

E15.25 CHRISTMAS LIGHTS – VILLAGE GREEN, NORTH WEALD

Members discussed the possibility of holding an event to mark the turning on of the Christmas Lights this year. The Chairman stated that if there was to be an event, arrangements would need to be put in place now, together with notices to advertise the event. Members recalled that, last year, permission was not granted to use the hall at Wheelers Farm Gardens. The Senior Administrative Officer reminded Members that the Parish Hall Management Committee would

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be holding an event at the Parish Hall on Sunday, 6 December 2015 at 4pm and stated that it had been suggested that the lights could be timed to turn on at the Village Green at the same time. Councillor Hawkins stated that the event was open to everyone, a choir would be singing carols, the trees outside the entrance hall would be decorated with lights and mince pies and mulled wine would be available. Following discussion, Members **AGREED** that arrangements would be made to ensure that the Christmas Lights would be put up in time for Sunday, 6 December 2015, with the turning on of the lights timed to coincide with the event at the Parish Hall.

Meeting closed: 12.10 pm

Signed
Date