



MINUTES

Meeting: ENVIRONMENTAL
COMMITTEE

Date: 20 September 2013

Time: 10.00 am

Venue: THORNWOOD COMMON VILLAGE HALL, WEALD HALL LANE, THORNWOOD

PRESENT:

Councillors (5) G Mulliner (Chairman), C Hawkins, B Bartram, B Clegg, A Buckley

Also in Attendance (2)

Susan De Luca, Clerk to the Council
Joanna Tyler, Administrative Officer

Members of the Public (0)

E13.25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (2)

NOTED apologies received from Cllrs McCormack, Mrs E Godwin-Brown

E13.26 OTHER ABSENCES (0)

E13.27 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

NOTED there were no declarations of interest.

E13.28 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 5 July 2013 were *CONFIRMED* and signed as a true record.

E13.29 PLAY AREA INSPECTION REPORT

Members *NOTED* that a quarterly inspection of each Play Area within the Parish had been carried out on Monday, 16 September 2013, by Councillors Hawkins, Mulliner and Bartram, together with the Finance and Administrative Officer. A report detailing notes/actions required was tabled at the meeting. Members *NOTED* that any items listed as requiring action are in the process of being resolved.

E13.30 THORNWOOD ALLOTMENTS NATURE AREA

Members *NOTED* that Epping Forest Countrycare were scheduled to visit Thornwood Allotments nature Area on Thursday, 12 September 2013, to carry out the following works:-

- Cut grass
- Trim trees and bushes to ensure footpath is clear
- Inspection of recently dug out ditch, to ensure it is clear (in the event of heavy rain).

Councillor Hawkins stated that he had received positive comments from local residents, praising the work carried out.

In addition, Countrycare had advised that work was due to be carried out on

Thursday, 5 September, at Church Lane Flood Meadow in North Weald, which would entail coppicing the trees at the northern end and clearing around the steps and benches.

E13.31 THORNWOOD COMMON, COMPLAINT REGARDING BUS STOPS

The Clerk informed Members that she had received a complaint from a resident regarding the lack of crossing facilities near to the Cross Keys Cafe. Teresa Milbourn, who is an Infrastructure Development Manager at Essex Highways has been liaising with the resident. The resident stated that a petition had been sent to the Parish Council many years ago, however, following investigation, the Clerk was unable to locate a copy of the petition. The Clerk was subsequently informed that the resident had not sent in the petition and that it was hearsay. Following further contact by the complainant's son, the Clerk advised Members that she had approached Jon Whitehouse, who had now got involved with this issue. The Clerk asked Councillors if they thought the road would benefit from a crossing, the Clerk stated that her view is that the bus stop should have a better "pull in", to which both Jon Whitehouse and Teresa Milbourn agree. The Clerk read out an excerpt from an email received from Teresa Milbourn regarding this matter.

Councillor Clegg asked which bus stop was the email referring to. Both the Clerk and Cllr Hawkins stated that it was the bus stop located by the Cross Keys Cafe. Cllr Clegg stated that the road is too dangerous for a pedestrian crossing on that stretch of road, adding that the police have stated that they cannot get the speed limit reduced. He stated that the speed of the traffic needs to be calmed down, perhaps with mini roundabouts at the junction of Upland Road and the junction of Rye Hill Road. The Chairman of this Committee asked the Clerk what the Parish Council's responsibility is with regard to this issue? The Clerk stated that the Parish Council should respond confirming that it would encourage any help Essex County Council can give with regard to bus passengers. In addition, this matter should also be referred to LHP.

The Chairman of this Committee informed Members that he had received two complaints regarding the replacement of the bus shelter outside the Kings Head, both stating that it was a "total waste of money". The Clerk stated that the new bus shelters in North Weald had been funded from Section 106 monies, which came from the developers who built Lysander Court, which is located on the site formerly occupied by the Queens Head Public House. The Clerk suggested that maybe a plaque could be placed on the bus shelter informing local residents of this, together with a notice in next month's Village Life Magazine.

Councillor Clegg asked whether the Clerk was aware of any further development with regard to the bus stop outside Popplewells. Cllr Hawkins stated that the Parish Council is waiting to hear what is happening with regard to this site.

E13.32 THORNWOOD PLAY AREA

Members **NOTED** that, following a weekly play area inspection, Mr Hebden had reported that dog waste was still being deposited in the bin situated in the play area, despite a notice placed on the bin requesting dog owners to use the dog waste bin provided in the playing field. Members **AGREED** that this matter should be monitored.

Members **NOTED** the Parish Office were recently contacted by a member of the public regarding dog waste being placed in bags and thrown into bushes and trees surrounding the Thornwood Allotments Nature Area. A notice has been placed on the gate to the area requesting dog owners to deposit bags containing dog faeces in the dog bin provided.

E13.33 ANY OTHER MATTERS RELATING TO ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE

- a. The Clerk has received an email from Nicky Dorras regarding next year's 100th Anniversary of World War I. North Weald Village Hall Committee have decided to plant poppy seeds. Cllr Hawkins stated that care should be taken as poppies are subject to excessive germination in certain conditions, however, the seeds are being planted on land owned by North Weald Village Hall.
- b. The Clerk has received a letter regarding on-going issues at Wheelers Farm Gardens allotment site. The Administrative Officer read out the contents of the letter. Members **NOTED** the following:-

Blackberry bushes – these will be planted within the next fortnight.

Pallets – this issue has now been resolved and the key to the gate has been returned. The Chairman of this Committee stated that permission to bring the pallets on site was initially given by the warden, however, the warden is now aware that no further pallets can be delivered. He added that the warden is highly valued and he would not wish the warden to be upset by other plot holders. Cllr Bartram stated that Members of the Allotment Sub Committee had discussed looking at a change to the Rules and Regulations with regard to pallets. It was suggested that the Rules and Regulations should state that pallets should be used within one year and that no further pallets should be delivered to the site unless permission has been given by the Parish Council, or the Parish Council's representative.

Right of Way – The Clerk confirmed that there is only a walking right of way between Wheelers Farm Gardens and Queens Road allotment sites.

Cllr Clegg asked why the ditch had been filled in. Cllr Hawkins stated that ditch had not been filled in, it had silted up over the years. Cllr Hawkins added that a representative from the Water Board had recently visited the site with regard to work which they will need to carry out relating to the ditch/drainage system.

- c. The Clerk advised Members that, with regard to the Cemetery, a total of 28 plot holders had been written to, notifying them that the memorials on their plots had not passed the topple test and therefore required stabilising. The Clerk stated that there was an issue with the plot holder of grave number 6. The plot holder disputed that it was his responsibility to make the memorial safe and had argued that he had been informed that the Parish Office would arrange for the memorial stone to be replaced on the grave, once it had been engraved (the plot holder engraved the stone himself). The Clerk advised Members that the Parish Office staff are fully conversant with the memorial procedures and would not have advised this, as the Parish Council does not have the facility/manpower to carry this out. The plot holder informed the Clerk that he would be writing a letter of complaint to the Chairman of the Parish Council.
- d. Councillor Buckley asked about the potholes in the vicinity of the roundabout with the junction of Wellington Road, North Weald. The potholes have been outlined with red spray paint and he wondered if these were due to be repaired in the near future. The Clerk stated that the spray paint normally indicated that the potholes had been inspected and were due to be repaired, however, an update from Highways will be obtained. Councillor Buckley mentioned the lay-by located at Harlow Garden Centre, near to the bus stop. Deep scores have been made in the pavement, possibly by an HGV. The Clerk confirmed that this would be reported to Highways.
- e. Councillor Buckley mentioned an item in the previous Committee Meeting Minutes relating to the possibility of having flower beds placed on the green outside the village shops and stated that he had not had an opportunity to speak to Cllr McCormack, however, he intends to, prior to the next meeting.

Councillor Buckley mentioned the phone box located in the same area and asked whether or not the Clerk could find out if it could be removed as he is of the opinion that it is a health hazard. The area in general looks very untidy, the green is covered by A frames, there is always a large amount of rubbish and the phone box is used for posting advertising. The Clerk confirmed that she would need to investigate this matter further. With regard to the flower beds, the details required in order to obtain a license have been passed to Cllr McCormack, however, he has not advised the Clerk whether or not the matter is to be pursued.

Councillor Buckley mentioned that he had spoken to Mr Jackson, the volunteer who looks after the flower bed located near to the Parish Council flag pole. Mr Jackson had mentioned that the wooden boarding required painting. Cllr Hawkins confirmed that he had spoken to Mr Jackson regarding this and it had been agreed that Mr Jackson would pick up the paint and plants from Happy Grow Garden Centre.

- f. Councillor Hawkins asked Members if they would consider looking at what jobs are required to be undertaken during the Winter months. Suggestions were as

follows:-

- Bulb planting.
 - Replace fronts of Notice Boards and cut back vegetation.
 - Weald Common Play Area – wood requires treating.
 - Allotments – clearing of spare plots
 - The swings at School Green Lane Play Area require re-painting (the Clerk suggested that the equipment should be painted in a bright colour to give the area an uplift and make it more welcoming.
- g. The Clerk mentioned the issues regarding Hastingwood B Allotment Site. No further correspondence has been received, therefore Members **AGREED** that the matter should be closed.
- h. The Chairman of the Committee reminded Members that allotment plot holders will be able to light bonfires in a few weeks time and suggested that it would be a good idea for Parish Staff to have a list of contact numbers to refer residents to, should they have a complaint.
- i. Councillor Clegg asked who should be approached about the phone box located in the cut through at Rowley Mead, the phone box has been vandalised and is in a dilapidated stated. The Clerk said that she would investigate this further, along with the phone box mentioned outside the parade of shops in North Weald.

Meeting closed: 10.57 am

Signed

Date