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Theydon Bois Parish Council

Parish Office, The Village Hall, Coppice Row,
Theydon Bois, Essex CM16 7ER

Clerk to the Council: Mrs Julia Gale
Assistant Clerk to the Council: Mrs Sarah Gysbers

Minutes of the Full Council Meeting of the Council held at the Village Hall 7:30pm on Thursday 29th February 2024

Councillors Present: Cllrs Gooch (Chairman), Purkiss, Amos, Blake, Burn, Gill, Hannibal, Morton.

Officers Present: Julia Gale Parish Clerk
Sarah Gysbers Assistant Clerk

Members of the Public: The meeting was attended by 3 members of the public.

1716. Apologies for Absence. Cllrs Cowup and Morris.

1717. To discuss and approve the minutes from 25th January 2024. **Approved.**

1718. Disclosure of Interests with regard to specific items on the agenda (existence of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, or existence and Nature of other Pecuniary Interest or a Non-pecuniary Interest). The Council has adopted Essex Public Law Partnership Code of Conduct. **None.**

1719. Public participation session with regard to specific items on the Agenda.
NONE.

1720. Police report.

PC Cook reported:

- Thefts for 3 vehicles.
- Attempted break in at Little Gregories.
- 2 burglaries on Forest Drive (nothing taken) and Hill Road (went through back door but alarm went off, the house was unoccupied)
- Criminal damage to tree (black spray), the tree that stands alone in second field from bottom of Forest Drive.

1721. Clerks Report.

The Parish Office had a request for CCTV footage of a lorry on Coppice Row which sideswiped the railings attempting a U-turn by the Zebra.

We received a complaint from Tikadi that three black bags had been dumped outside their shop one night. This was reported to Epping Forest District Council, they came and picked them up straightaway.

A complaint was received about car parking in Baldocks Road. This was passed on to North Essex Parking Partnership to action.

A request was received from a resident asking that a complaint be made by the Parish Council to TFL regarding the ongoing problem on the Central Line. After a discussion it was decided to monitor the situation and see what happens after the new timetable is introduced on Friday 1st March.

The Parish and Assistant Clerk attended a briefing given by EALC regarding the May elections. It would be helpful if Councillors could let the Parish Office know if they will be standing again for election this year.

Please note that the next Full Council Meeting will be early on 21st March.

Please note that Theydon Mount council have invited Theydon Bois PC to a meeting next Wednesday 6th March at 7pm to the Oak Room to discuss the Gravel Extraction at Pakes Farm.

Regarding the Articulated lorry that crashed into the barriers in Coppice Row, Cllr Gill has been in touch with the delivery manager at Arla milk company. They are speaking with transport company, who own the lorry, tomorrow. The parish Office will be reporting the incident to the police.

1722. Reports from District and/or County Councillors’.

Cllr Amos - Epping Forest District Council(EFDC) gave a report:

After the sale of part of North Weald airfield, EFDC has been able to repay some of their Public Work Loans and with the savings from that, they are able to retain the three EFDC Police Officers and reinstate the budget for Citizens Advice Bureau and Voluntary Epping Forest. EFDC council tax for next year will increase by 2.99%. The vote was unanimous.

1723. Reports from Parish Representatives on outside organisations.

Cllr Burn gave the following Reports:

Local Councils' Liaison Committee meeting - 21st September 2023

Cllr Sam Kane (Waltham Abbey) gave a presentation with respect to the restructuring of the Epping Forest Local Highways Panel (LHP). Rather than a Town/Parish Councillor being appointed to the Panel, all representations from local councils should now be made via their respective County Councillors. However, there will also be provision for local councillors to address the Panel and speak, by request. This was considered to be a better option than simply appointing one councillor to represent all 24 parishes.

Re. Financing: There will be a dedicated budget specifically for repairs to footways, presently set at £174,000, although requests for such funding now exceed £700,000. Priority is therefore likely to be given to schemes relating to safety issues. Provision for match-funding over the next two years seems less likely.

With respect to LHP reporting, agendas and minutes of meetings are published on Essex County Council's (ECC) website. Ringway Jacobs' current contract with ECC lasts until April 2027. An alternative contractor could be engaged after this date, subject to the relevant procedures for such contracts.

Nigel Richardson (Head of Planning Services, Epping Forest District Council, EFDC) responded to questions from Local Councils:

If local councils wish to resource a printed copy of the New Local Plan they should seek to do so individually. Suggestions were made with respect to printing firms who may be able to assist. However, local libraries have each been supplied with one hard copy.

Details of EFDC's current corporate structure relating to the Planning Implementation Team, Planning Policy Team and the Garden Town Liaison Team were provided by way of a chart, although a number of senior posts have proven difficult to fill. Competition from other Local Authorities and rates of pay may affect the ability to secure long-term employees. Further restructuring of Planning Services is ongoing.

A number of concerns were raised by local councils regarding the new Arcus Planning Portal, which does not appear to contain either the same detail, nor search facilities, as the previous iPlan System. Mr Richardson offered to discuss some of the issues with the IT department and it was suggested that a 1 hour Teams meeting be set up, to allow local councillors, and their clerks, to put questions to him to assist their understanding of the new portal.

As the Clerk to the Epping Forest Branch of the Essex Association of Local Councils (EALC) has since stood down, this has yet to be arranged.

Local Councils' Liaison Committee meeting - 1st February 2024

The Agenda included a presentation by the Chairman of Qualis, and his colleagues from the group, to provide background information relating to the corporate structure, and to advise that their first Annual Report will be issued in March 2024. The group holds a development portfolio for some 342 new homes, including 52 designated as 'affordable'. They also have an interest in the North Weald Masterplan site, and will be relaunching their website in order to promote a better level of understanding and communication with local councils and residents.

Gary Woodhall, of EFDC's Democratic Services, will consider further aspects relating to the 'Terms of Reference' for the Local Councils' Liaison Committee, but pointed out that this is a committee on which District Councillors sit as an 'outside body'. However, in the past, there has been a Charter, which he will seek to review.

Nigel Richardson gave a short presentation re. S106 agreements, being those primarily intended to bring forward infrastructure improvements on allocated, and masterplan, development sites within the District. Alternative funding, by way of a Civil Infrastructure Levy, may be a consideration for the future. He mentioned, in particular, the importance of Viability Assessments, since these can impact on the level of financial contributions ultimately paid by the developer - particularly with respect to the aspiration to achieve 40% affordable housing on such sites, given the present economic climate.

Councillors present were given to understand that S106 monies relating to the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation (EFSAC) are being received by EFDC, but have not yet been distributed to fund associated projects.

Cllr Sam Kane suggested a 'levy', with respect to all new residential developments and extensions, to provide for repairs to footways, verges and kerbs that can be damaged during building work. This is a topic that has been raised many times at local council level: Mr Richardson offered to consider this matter further.

Cllr Purkiss recently made contact with Parish council about finger posts.

1724. To discuss pedestrian crossing flooding

Cllr Amos asked if anything could be done about the Pedestrian Crossing flooding every time it rains. Cllrs Purkiss and Gill explained that Excess water runs onto the Abridge Road from Thrifts Farm, and down onto the crossing. Cllr Purkiss has investigated this in the past but where will money and resources come from, the water drainage does work but volume of water is too much. Cllr Morton agreed that he would note which gulleys were not taking away the water next time it rains heavily. It would then be reported to Essex Highways.

1725. Finance Committee.

1725.1 To approve the payments for December 2023 and January 2024. [Approved.](#)

1725.2 To approve renewal of subscription to Open Spaces Society. [Approved](#)

1726. Planning Committee.

1726.1 To receive an update on planning matters since the last meeting.

Cllr Burn read the following Report:

Since the previous Full Council Meeting on 25th January 2024, the Planning Committee has considered five planning applications, to which it returned two strong objections, one 'no objection, subject to comments and conditions', and two no objections. The Committee also noted three applications for 'approval of details reserved by condition'.

The Committee's two 'strong objections' related to applications for the construction of large garden annexe buildings. The 'no objection subject to comments/conditions' related to an application for the extension of 28 Piercing Hill. A previous application, in 2023, for the demolition and replacement of this distinguished 'Manor Villa' was refused by Epping Forest District Council ('EFDC'). EFDC's Senior Conservation Officer had voiced concerns re. the potential loss of this heritage asset, and the Parish Council also submitted a strong objection to that earlier proposal.

Further to EFDC granting planning permission for the erection of 38 new residential dwellings on Land North of Forest Drive, the Parish Council has sought advice from independent town planners as to whether a challenge regarding EFDC's decision could be made to the Secretary of State. After due consideration, Solve Planning Consultants has now advised that the prospects of a 'call in' would not be good.

Cllr Gooch also explained, during the meeting, that Solve Planning had reviewed the relevant background information, and viewed the webcast of the Area Planning Sub-Committee East meeting of 17th January 2024, before offering advice. They also took into account a recent Court decision with respect to the remit of the Secretary of State to 'call in' certain types of planning application.

It was further noted that the Grant has still not been formally issued, but that, once this is available in the public domain, the Planning Committee will take a close look at the detail of the S106 agreement and the Conditions, including the Construction Method Statement.

At a recent Planning Committee meeting, held on 26th February 2024, it was agreed that Theydon Bois Parish Council would support neighbouring parish council concerns regarding the inclusion of Patch Farm, Abridge Road, as a candidate site for sand and gravel extraction as detailed within 'Essex County Council's Replacement Minerals Local Plan Review 2025-2040'. A public consultation on this stage of the Review runs until 19th March 2024.

1727. Highways, Cemetery and Environment Committee.

1727.1 To receive an update on Highways, Cemetery and Environment matters within the Village.

Cllr Purkiss gave an update:

The Responsibility for flowers around the trees in Forest Drive have been passed to the Horticultural society

The Dentist have been approached in regards to tidying up the green verge outside their property.

Cllr Purkiss raised the poor state of the roads in the area, Poplar Row and the pedestrian crossing in particular, Cllr Purkiss and Gill have done as much as they can but they can't see what the process is to have the roads done correctly. They particularly questioned the costing of temporary repairs that only last a few weeks.

Eight packs have been prepared by Essex Highways for the village, they just need approval and funding.

The Loughton Lane project will be starting shortly.

The Youth Community trust would like to pay for a defibrillator to go in the children's playground –

Cllr Gooch asked if Thea could be made aware of pothole on road up to the cricket club, Cllr Purkiss to follow up on this.

The work on the extension to the new cemetery area will start soon. The Woodland Trust are happy to allow access to start on the haha.

Cllr Purkiss stated that following complaints from mourners at the cemetery about inconsiderate parking of cars by professional dog walkers, new Signs for cemetery were needed to stop people leaving unattended vehicles,

PLEASE DO NOT LEAVE VEHICLES UNATTENDED

NO UNATTENDED VEHICLES (3x signs) AGREED

1728.1 To receive an update on Community Engagement matters within the Village.

Cllr Gill updated the meeting:

At the recent Community Engagement meeting, Events were discussed for 2024, Cllr Cowup is planning on doing a small celebration for D day (Thursday 6th June), lighting the beacon at the front of the Village Hall, He has approached the VA, timings are set out by the government and Cllr Morton has a pack of the proceedings. There is no budget for this, so the ceremony will be low key-

A big event for is planned for 2025, Cllr Gill would like to organise this, VE day with a band and dinner, possibly look at a charity ball in May.

Cllr Gill stated that he is Still collecting mobility equipment. To loan out. It is stored in the Parish Shed.

The repair café celebrated its 1st year and is going well, good feedback received.

Cllr Morton stated that there will be No Theydon Bois open gardens this year due to lack of suitable gardens to open.

The Christmas Budget – renew Christmas lights for the tree

1729 Any Other Urgent Business for report (without decision).

None.

1730. Public Participation session with regard to items of interest to the Parish.

Allotments - a resident questioned whether plots were actually being worked. Many people are just using the allotments as a free car park. A discussion followed, it is hard to monitor this,

The Parish Office is to go out to all existing allotment holders, suggesting shared plots

It is Parish Council policy that the plot needs to be worked on.

Invoices are to be sent soon to all allotment holders with reminders that plots need to be worked and this will be monitored, vehicle plates could be taken.

The Parish Clerk and Assistant will be meeting at the allotments on Wednesday 6th March to look at plots and potential for more plots.

A resident stated that the trees in the orchard need pruning. Cllr Purkiss said that all the trees are pruned on a regular basis.

1715. Staff Matters.

The standard NALC Contract. There are a was updated in December, few variations, holiday was 21, plus BH and 2 statutory days and is now 23 days, travel expenses were 45p p per mile and is now 65p per mile.

Asked permission to have contract all the same for annual leave and mileage rates – agreed in principle

Contract needs to be sorted so they are the same – to be discussed at the next finance meeting

Meeting closed at 9.10 pm

Signed:
Cllr Peter Gooch
Chairman

Dated: 21st March 2024