

**Minutes of Barkway Extraordinary Parish Council Meeting
Held in the Pavilion, Recreation Ground, Barkway on 22nd May 2017 at 7.30pm.**

1. In attendance: Cllrs:

Rev'd S Falaschi-Ray (Chair)
Dr G Frapporti (Vice Chair)
Dr R Davidson
Mr G Swann
Mr B Morss
Dr R O'Sullivan

Also present: Mrs C Toms (Clerk/RFO)
District Cllr. Gerald Morris
County Cllr. Fiona Hill

Members of the Public: Laura Childs, Donna Stratton, Kate Gregory, Michelle Bonfield, John Armstrong, Alison Gower, Michelle Sleath, Nicole Spriggs, Steve Alsop, Barbara Fosker, Carol Doling, Andrew Laing, Peter Bassett, Joey Peverelli, Sarah Wylie, Gordon Ward, Lynette Tully, Wendy Goddard, Jade Nixon, Laura Crick, Natalie Sanchez, Lily Sanchez, Juliet Turner

2. To receive and accept apologies for absence: None received

3. To receive Councillor's Declaration of Interest: None received

4. Chairman's Statement

Cllr. Falaschi-Ray welcomed everyone to the meeting. She explained that one of the items on the agenda was to consider the feedback received as a result of recent consultations carried out by the Parish Council and residents and then to decide whether or not to go ahead with the new proposed car park project on the Recreation Ground.

She explained that the reason that the Parish Council was in the current situation, needing additional car parking facilities, was that in order to pay for the replacement of the old dilapidated Pavilion, a £60,000 grant was obtained from the Football Foundation. Part of the conditions of the grant was that for the next 21 years, the Parish Council needed to demonstrate that the facility was being used for football and in particular for Youth Football Development. In order to meet this criterion it was necessary to go into partnership with a football club. The Parish Council was currently in a 5 year contract with Royston Town Football Club (RTFC). RTFC paid a quarterly contribution for their use of the facilities at Barkway and this covered the cost to the Parish. That aside, the new Pavilion and Community Room was a great asset to the village and a facility for everyone to use.

However, it had become apparent that when there were activities taking place simultaneously at the different venues along Cambridge Road, there was a lack of available safe parking. It had resulted in haphazard and dangerous parking along Cambridge Road, with cars obstructing pavements causing pedestrians to have to walk in the road. The aim of the Parish Council was to find the least worst solution to this problem.

The proposed new car park area on the Recreation Ground would have a surface of plastic matting through which grass could grow, it was designed to not look unsightly. Fencing around the car park would protect users of the Recreation Ground from the cars. The project also included the idea of fencing off the children's play area. This has been

recommended on various occasions by the playground inspection company working on behalf of North Herts District Council (NHDC). However, this did not have to be done.

Summary of the feedback received so far:

Emails received by the Parish Clerk:

Support: 11 from Barkway, 3 from outside Barkway

Objection: 9 from Barkway, 6 from outside Barkway

In addition a petition objecting to the proposal was handed over containing 9 additional signatures from Barkway residents (it was noted that it was getting more difficult to quantify immediately as some people had used more than one method of communicating their opinion).

There was also an online petition which had been organised by Kate Gregory. This contained 56 unique signatories, 41 from outside Barkway (of which 37 had not signed/mailed elsewhere) and 15 from Barkway. Of those from Barkway, 14 objected (3 of which had also objected by other methods) and 1 supported the proposal.

Via the Pavilion website - there had been 1 unique objection and 1 unique supporter.

Overall summary to the time of the meeting:

Supporters:

Barkway 13

Non Barkway 3

Objectors:

Barkway 29

Non Barkway 47

Summary of the points of objection received to date:

Car Park

- Overlooking by Bond's Crescent
- Fumes
- 20 spaces not enough to make a difference
- Cars crashing through fence towards play area
- Child abduction
- How long would football contract last and what would happen after that?
- Use of the Social Club car park and field at the rear. Use of NHDC money. RTFC or the Football Foundation should pay for / provide a solution
- Notices up preventing car parking on Cambridge Road
- Why can't everybody use the car park? This is discriminatory.

Play Equipment

- Many objections to fencing off the play equipment
- Incensed that one lot of swings would be removed

5. Public Session - to receive representations from members of the public

There were a significant number of anxious people present that wished to address the Council on the matter of the proposed new car park on the Recreation Ground. A summary of points raised was that the proposed car park accommodating approximately 20 cars did not seem big enough to deal with the parking problem and at a cost of £16,000 did not seem good value for money. The Council was asked how it had come to the decision on the size required for 20 vehicles and had it taken into account guidelines for safe and practical use of the space, and would there be enough width when parked up for an emergency vehicle to drive through to get access onto the Recreation Ground?

The Council was asked if it had considered alternative locations where there might be more available space. Either in the field belonging to the Social Club, behind the Social Club and Village Hall or in the field adjacent to the Village Hall car park, perhaps to consider making the existing triangular, awkward shaped car park, into a rectangle, thereby maximising the number of cars able to park in the space. It was suggested that the parking requirement could be for up to 40 or 50 cars. It was considered that the new car park could then be a community asset for all venues along Cambridge Road and could be a Community Project to be funded by Solar Farm money. It was asked, when the new Pavilion was built, why all the Community Venues had not joined together at that point to sort out the parking issue.

It was considered that it was not appropriate to use space in the Recreation Ground for a car park as it would be a loss of recreational space. At times when the car park would be closed off, the plastic matting (possibly soiled with oil spill from cars) would not be suitable for recreational purposes. It was thought that the proposal would render the play space inferior to its current state and this was important as it was the only dedicated play space in the village where both children and adults could exercise.

If play equipment was to be relocated, it was asked if the Council had checked out the safety guidelines on distances between equipment and the type of surfaces to be used and type of fencing considered appropriate. A resident had forwarded some information to the Clerk regarding playground safety, which the Council was asked to consider before making any decisions.

It was asked if a safeguarding / child protection risk assessment had been done as part of Parish Council responsibilities when considering the proposed car park. It was considered that the positioning of a car park next to a child's play area would impact on the safeguarding of children who are using the park. This could be either through children being watched or filmed by users of the car park or through increased risk of child abduction.

It was considered that the car park would lead to dangerous levels of exhaust fumes being in the air next to a children's play area. Even if cars parked with exhausts away from the fence, the wind could move the fumes easily. It was asked if the Council had investigated guidance on air quality calculations and it was recommended that this should be carried out before any decision was made to build a car park.

It was asked why, when parked cars on the road near the recreation ground were considered a problem, that cars parked all along the High Street were not considered so. It was asked if the Parish Council could investigate, once more, the need for a safe pedestrian crossing.

The cost of the project was queried as there had been several different figures quoted for the work as the specification had altered. It was also asked if the Council could clarify exactly how the project would be paid for.

Some residents thought that to fence in the play area was a good idea in order to protect the area from dog fouling and to keep the smaller children safe within a confined area. Others considered that there were benefits for the children to have a free open play area and that to fence it in may discourage older children from using the area.

It was considered that the Parish Council had not properly consulted with the village and that more effective methods of communication could have been used.

It was recommended that money would be better invested in a project that provided more spaces being created, that could be used by all three venues and it was suggested that both the Village Hall and Social Club were consulted to see if current car parking could be shared in the short term and that as a group could then agree to work together on a project that would solve the parking for everyone.

In response to the many questions raised the Council addressed the residents present. It was explained that the Recreation Ground was the only really suitable piece of land for the car park as it was owned by the Parish Council. All other potential sites would have to be negotiated for with the appropriate landowners. It would mean investing money in land which the Council did not own or have any control over. The access into the field behind the Social Club was problematic as it would have to be through the existing Village Hall car park and the site, being on an incline could make usage weather dependent in the winter months. In addition people would have to cross over the B1368 to get to the Rec. To extend the triangular Village Hall car would need to be negotiated by means of a lease with Thomas Keir, the land owner, and on both of these alternative sites, planning permission would likely be required to create a new car park. The car parking problem along Cambridge Road was considered to be substantially more dangerous than the parking along the High Street as cars were often completely obstructing the narrow pavements. RTFC had received numerous emails from their visiting teams regarding the chaotic parking. Children and parents having to walk along the road to get to the Rec. There had already been an accident involving a cyclist. In response to the request to look again into getting a pedestrian crossing put in Barkway, the Parish Council had already responded in detail to the resident, explaining that the village did not have the footfall or the accident record to allow Herts County Council to consider allocating the many thousands of pounds that a crossing would cost to install. One resident pointed out that when and if sites BK1 and BK3 were developed, the problem of parking along that stretch of road would become far worse.

The final quotation that was being considered for the proposed work was for £15,910 + VAT and this would include the moving of the play equipment, fencing in of the children's play area and the creation and fencing in of the car park. It did not include a ramp from the Pavilion. The cost of this would be met by £11,500 from S106 monies (having consulted with planning officers at NHDC) and £4,410 from Solar Farm funds.

The Parish Council did consider that they had consulted widely with the village. There had been an article in the Barkway Bulletin, there had been information on the website, a meeting had been arranged for 3rd May to which everyone had been invited, posters displayed on notice boards and emails sent to all those on the Parish Council email database (thought to be about 80% of residents) and letters hand delivered to all nearby residents. Only 5 residents had bothered to attend, in spite of a 2 week notice period. It was also pointed out to the residents present that the Parish Councillors were all volunteers with limited resources and that the Council was still trying to operate effectively with one Councillor short, the available portfolio of responsibility being Media and Communications. People were invited to consider whether they may be able to help the Council improve its communication methods by stepping forward to offer their services as a volunteer Parish Councillor.

6. To consider consultation feedback and to decide on whether or not to go ahead with the new proposed car park project on the Recreation Ground

It was proposed by Cllr. Davidson and seconded by Cllr. Falaschi-Ray, as there were such strong feelings about the proposal, to defer any decision to create a new car park on the Rec. whilst other options were explored. The Parish Council would set up a Committee which, along with members of the Parish Council, would hope to include members of the Village Hall and Social Club Committees and residents. Several residents present put forward their names to be on the proposed Committee. **Action: Clerk**

Michelle Bonfield, Natalie Sanchez, Laura Crick, Lynette Tully.

In addition, Alison Gower offered her assistance in an advisory capacity on safety issues.

County Cllr, Tony Hunter entered the meeting at 8.30pm.
Most residents departed from the meeting although a few stayed for the remainder of the meeting.

7. To consider and make comment on planning application: Full Permission Householder: Single storey rear extensions. New roof to existing extension. 124 High Street, Barkway, Royston, SG8 8EG - Case Ref No: 17/01035/1HH & 17/01036/1LB - Having considered the application, it was proposed by Cllr. Falaschi-Ray and seconded by Cllr. Davidson and agreed by all that there was no objection to this application. The Clerk to respond to NHDC. **Action: Clerk**

8. To consider and make comment on planning application: Outline Application: Outline application (including Access) for the erection of up to 25 dwellings Land north of Mill Croft, Royston Road, Barkway - Case Ref No: 17/00700/1
(See appendices A,B,C,D & E)

After discussing the application in detail, it was proposed by Cllr. Falaschi-Ray, seconded by Cllr. Swann and agreed by all to strongly object to this planning application. Cllr's Davidson and Swann had worked hard on pulling information together for a detailed response. Cllr Davidson had produced a 10 page document, with 4 appendices, which would be sent to NHDC. In summary, the objection was on the grounds of the site being outside the permitted development area, it was not a site included within the draft NHDC Local Plan or included in the Preferred Land Allocations, thereby considered to be a hostile application, there was no existing footpath along that part of Royston Road to access the site and the proposal contradicted many of the policies within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as it was unsustainable development. In addition the application was for access to the site, this was in a proven dangerous spot as data collected from the newly installed Speed Indicator Display sign (SID) indicated that 28% of cars were travelling above the speed limit at that point.

9. To give urgent consideration to the following matters:

9.1 To agree and accept conditions of grant contract from the War Memorials Trust and to agree to proceed with the project.

The Clerk informed the Council that she had recently heard that the Parish Council had finally been successful with the grant application to the War Memorials Trust. The grant offered was for £7,220 and would cover 75% of the cost of the project to renovate the War Memorial and surrounding paved area. However in order to accept the grant, the Council would need to accept the conditions of the grant contract (see Appendix F). The Clerk summarised the points in the contract. It was proposed by Cllr. Falaschi-Ray and seconded by Cllr. Davidson and agreed by all to accept and sign the conditions of the grant contract and proceed with the project. The Clerk to sort out all the necessary paperwork, contact the preferred contractor and speak to Mark Simmons, the Conservation Officer, at NHDC. **Action: Clerk**

9.2 To accept and sign Transfer document from Railton Law regarding transfer of land adjoining Willow Tree House, Barkway - the Parish Council examined the documentation, it was to regularise the ownership of a thin triangle of land adjoining the driveway to the Pavilion, which appeared to have been incorrectly registered in the past as belonging to the Parish Council. It was proposed by Cllr. Davidson and seconded by Cllr. Falaschi-Ray and agreed by all to accept and sign the transfer document. The Clerk to send back the signed documentation to Railton Law. **Action: Clerk**

9.3 To consider quotation received from Andrew Dodkin and agree proposal to go ahead with necessary repairs to the brickwork on the exterior of the Reading Room - A quotation of £375 had been received from Mr Dodkin. This was to take out and replace the worst of the blown brickwork on the lower level of the front and side exterior walls of the Reading Room. The Clerk had previously spoken to Mark Simmons, Conservation Officer at NHDC, who had said that Listed Building consent was not required as long as the bricks and mortar were being replaced on a like for like basis. It was proposed by Cllr. Davidson and seconded by Cllr. Falaschi-Ray and agreed by all to proceed with the work. The Clerk to contact Mr Dodkin. **Action: Clerk**

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 9pm