

**Minutes of Barkway Parish Council Meeting
Held in the Reading Room on 8th February 2016 at 7.30pm.**

1. In attendance: Cllrs:
Rev S Falaschi-Ray (Chair)
Mr J Dalton (Vice-Chair)
Mrs J Warren
Dr G Frapporti
Mr R Squire
Mr G Swann
Dr R Davidson

Also present: Mrs C Toms (Clerk/RFO)

Others present: Mr Tom Wornham (Chairman - Barkway Village Hall), Mr Chris Cockerton, Mr Bob Humphreys and Mr Barry Gatward (residents of Townsend Close)

2. To receive and accept apologies for absence: County Cllr. Tony Hunter, Dist. Cllr. Gerald Morris

3. To receive Councillor's Declaration of Interest: Cllr. Swann declared an interest in item 7.2.1 but it was proposed and agreed that in this case he should be allowed to take part in the discussion on this item. Approved.

Cllr. Warren declared an interest in item 5 as a member of the Barkway Village Hall Management Committee and requested to be able to take part in the discussion on the matter. Approved.

4. Minutes

4.1 To approve the minutes of the last meeting - approved as read.

4.2 To consider any matters arising from the last meeting: Cllr. Davidson wished to mention to the Council that despite The Clerk having spoken to the owner of VK Hairstyling regarding parking issues, parking by staff and customers still remained a problem. Recent hazardous parking by two cars just around the corner in Royston Road had nearly caused a very nasty accident.

The Clerk reported to the Council that the planning application for the kitchen extension at Barkway Village Hall had been approved and that the application for the permanent siting of the two shipping containers off Quinbury Lane had been refused.

5. Public Session: Tom Wornham was present to reply to correspondence received from Cllr. Davidson regarding the proposed reduced hire charges for the Community Room to benefit parishioners. He told the Council that the Village Hall Committee supported this initiative and understood the complications that had arisen from the development of the new facility. He also said that it was in common interest that each of the community buildings should co-operate whilst developing their own specific roles in continuing to make Barkway an attractive place in which to participate in recreational activities.

Mr Wornham then spoke to the Council regarding the cost of creating a new car park behind the Village Hall in the field belonging to the Social Club. This would allow overflow parking for all three venues in the area. The projected cost of creating the hard standing, together with fencing and lighting would be £11,172.

Mr Barry Gatward and Mr Chris Cockerton addressed the Council on behalf of No's 2, 4, 6, 8 & 10 Townsend Close to express their concerns about the planning application for a

detached four bed dwelling on land to the rear of 109 High Street and creation of new vehicular access off Townsend Close (re: item 7.2.3). On examination of the application the residents felt that the documents submitted to the planning dept. at NHDC were misleading, referring in many cases to the original application for a single storey, three bedroom dwelling in the garden of 109 High Street, which had already been approved. This new application was for a completely different property, to be sited in the orchard and with an extended access road. This development would mean that the current orchard would largely cease to exist. They suggested that an alternative entrance/exit of the access road would be to extend the drive that already existed at Townsend House (109) and allow vehicles through the existing entrance which would mean less disturbance to the houses at the end of Townsend Close and alleviate any safety issues that a new access on a bend may create. It was also pointed out that the orchard had been classed as Priority 3 land by NHDC when the applicant had put forward this piece of land for development during the NHDC Land Allocation Consultation in 2013. This site (site 20) had been classed as 'least likely to be acceptable'. The site was grade 2 agricultural land on a protected groundwater source but no mention of this had been made in the current planning application. The residents were writing in to NHDC to object to the application on the above mentioned grounds and also because they were worried that if the development was approved it would set a precedent to build further dwellings on that site at a later date, to which they were opposed.

The Council pointed out that it could only comment on the application supplied and that an objection would not stand with NHDC because of what might happen in the future.

The residents present then departed from the meeting.

6. Council Administration - to discuss appointment of Internal Auditor - The Clerk reported to the Council that Janis Baker no longer wished to act as the Internal Auditor. Enquiries had been made with Barley Parish Council and they used a firm of Accountants in Royston at a cost last year of £690 (incl. VAT). Previously Barkway had been lucky to be able to use local people for a token fee but the audit was an onerous task these days and it was considered unlikely to be able to find anyone to complete this task on that basis. The Council needed to consider allocating more money in the budget and securing help from an Accountancy firm. It was proposed and agreed that the Clerk would make some enquiries with local Accountancy firms and aim to obtain three quotations and report back to Council at the March meeting. **Action: Clerk**

The Clerk also reported that all Governance documents needed to be reviewed and readopted by the Council before the end of the financial year at 31.03.16. It was proposed and agreed that the Clerk would compile a list of the documents and send this to Cllrs Falaschi-Ray and Davidson and they could chose which ones they would review and report back to Council with any proposed amendments at the March meeting. **Action: Clerk/SFR/RD**

7. To receive updates from Portfolio Holders

7.1 Neighbourhood Plan - update. Cllr. Dalton reported that he had contacted Herts Association of Parish and Town Councils to find out what stage other Councils were with Neighbourhood Plans and if they had used and could recommend any Planning Consultants. As a result, Buntingford Town Council had put him in touch with Lorraine Hart, a Planning Consultant in London, who only worked for charities and small government bodies. Her charges would be £350 per day. Cllr. Dalton had sent her a copy of the draft plan. She had quickly responded by commenting that there was a lot of information in the plan that was only relevant to Barkway as a Parish and that the District

Council only wanted to see information regarding land use. Barkway Parish Council could comment on density of housing and which sites they thought suitable but not make comment on the percentage that they thought should be affordable housing. The huge frustration and difficulty experienced with trying to develop a Neighbourhood Plan was that it was being aimed at a constantly moving target. It was suggested that Cllr. Dalton read through the Buntingford Draft Plan and take note of the comments made and then with this in mind, review the Barkway and Nuthampstead Draft Plan. Once this had been done, he could send it back to Lorraine Hart for review. It was proposed and all were in agreement that Cllr. Dalton should progress with this. **Action: JD**

7.2 Planning

7.2.1 Update on land behind Windmill Close - Cllr. Swann reported that an email had been received from Solicitor Glynn Railton informing that the amended documents had been submitted to NHDC and that John Fairhall at NHDC was now awaiting instruction from his instructing officer. Cllr. Swann would contact HCC to keep them informed and further defer the Open Space application being assessed. **Action: GS**
The Clerk to contact Tony Hunter (and copy in Cllr. Morris) to request financial assistance towards the cost of the legal fees to secure the Open Space. **Action: Clerk**

7.2.2 To consider and make comment on planning application: Full Planning Permission Householder : First floor rear extension including balcony and replace section of thatched roof with clay plain tiles. Westwood Cottage, Newsells Village Road, Barkway, Royston, SG8 8DE - Case Ref No: 15/03197/1HH. No objection. Clerk to contact NHDC. **Action: Clerk**

7.2.3 To consider and make comment on planning application: Full Planning Permission : Erection of one detached four bed dwelling and creation of new vehicular access off Townsend Close. Land rear of 109 High Street, Barkway, Royston, SG8 8ED - Case Ref No: 15/03169/1 - Having heard the comments from the representatives of Townsend Close and examining the application in detail it was proposed by Cllr. Falaschi-Ray and seconded by Cllr. Dalton and agreed by all that the Council had no objection to the application but acknowledged that local residents were concerned that there may be a knock on effect of this development in the future with the possibility of further development then being allowed in that area. The Clerk to respond to NHDC accordingly. **Action: Clerk**

7.2.4 To consider and make comment on planning application : Full Planning Permission Householder : Detached garden room and shed following demolition of existing shed/greenhouse. 26 High Street, Barkway, Royston, SG8 8EE - Case Ref No: 16/00150/1HH - No objection. Clerk to contact NHDC. **Action: Clerk**

7.3 Highways - Cllr. Swann reported that he was still waiting to hear about when the Community Payback Team could commence work, there was apparently only one supervisor available at the moment, which was delaying matters. Cllr. Swann had compiled a list of highway signs that needed replacing. These could be paid for out of the Highways Category 2 budget. He was awaiting a response from Ringway. He reported that there were some BT roadworks due to start in mid March at the junction of High Street and Royston Road. There was still no news regarding the evening training session for Risk Assessment necessary to implement the jobs lined up under the Highways Together Scheme. Cllr. Swann would chase Highways regarding the Royston Road pavement works which had been planned to take place in March / April. **Action: GS**

7.4 Pavilion and Community Property

7.4.1 Pavilion and Community Room - BRGMC

7.4.1.1 To accept resignation of Steve Alsop from the BRGMC and to discuss and agree action to seek and recruit new Committee members. Cllr. Davidson reported that he had responded to Steve Alsop's letter of resignation. The

Council accepted the resignation and expressed their gratitude for the hard and dedicated work that Steve Alsop had put in (together with the rest of the Project Group) to get the Pavilion Project off the ground, against all odds, and bring it to such a successful conclusion. Cllr. Davidson said that the next BRGMC meeting had been set for 1st March and this would be reported on at the next Council meeting. **Action: RD.** There was an urgent need noted to recruit new members to the Committee to assist with the day to day running of the place. It was reported that there were some Charity events being planned, the first one being a Charity Football Match and Easter Fun Event on Saturday 23rd March.

7.4.1.2 To discuss and agree action to spread the gravel on the Pavilion driveway - Cllr. Davidson reported that the fence between the Pavilion driveway and Bonds development was nearly finished. It would then be possible to finish off raking the gravel out. Cllr. Davidson had obtained a quotation of £70 for labour and equipment to spread the stones. Cllr. Davidson proposed and Cllr. Falaschi-Ray seconded and it was approved by all to go ahead with this. **Action: RD**

7.4.1.3 To discuss and agree action to resolve problem of the Pavilion hatch and necessary kitchen repairs - It was reported that the hatch from the kitchen to the outside was not water tight and consequently had been letting in water. This had caused damage to the kitchen wall inside. The creation of an external shutter would resolve the problem and the Clerk was in the process of obtaining a quotation to have this done and would report back to the Council in March. The Clerk had contacted Paul Duncan, the builder, to let him know that the council would be asking him to come back and make good any damage once the building had been made water tight again with the installation of the external shutter. **Action: Clerk**

7.4.1.4 Community Room - to agree amendments to hiring by Barkway Precept payers - The Council had received a response from the Village Hall Committee regarding the proposed amendment to hiring rates of the Community Room (see item 5). The Village Hall Committee were thanked for their support and understanding of the situation. Cllr. Davidson proposed that the hiring rates were now amended to include an hourly rate to encourage increased usage of the facility by local residents and organisations. This was seconded by Cllr. Falaschi-Ray and approved by all. It was understood that NHDC would soon be requesting a site meeting as a follow up to the PACIF grant award. **Action: RD**

7.4.1.5 To provide update on football activities - Cllr. Davidson reported that due to the recent wet weather Royston Town FC had struggled to play some games but they were generally very happy with the whole set up and had respected the need to not overplay the pitches. Parking still remained an issue to resolve. People would be asked not to park on the pavement along Cambridge Road. Cllr. Swann would chase Derek Jerrard at Ringway about the Community Payback Team and the work needed to reclaim width in the footpath along Cambridge Road. The Council discussed the proposal made by the Village Hall for the additional car park. It was considered that £11,000 was a lot of money to spend and where this money could be sourced from was undecided. The Clerk was asked to draft a letter to Tom Wornham to thank him for coming and talking to the Council and explain that the Council were still considering options at this stage. **Action: Clerk**

7.4.2 Recreation Area

7.4.2.1 To discuss and agree action to install new picnic tables, waste bin and dog bin. Cllr. Davidson reported that once the weather improved he would organise installation of the new equipment. **Action: RD**

7.4.2.2 To provide update on condition of play equipment - It was reported that the new ropes for the adventure trail bridge had arrived but they had not included any fixing nuts. The Clerk to phone Playdale. **Action: Clerk**

7.4.3 War Memorial - update on grant application for renovation works - The Clerk reported that she had had a positive conversation with the War Memorial Trust and they had recommended submission of a Pre-Application for a grant. This had been done and they would respond within 10 weeks and advise whether a formal grant application could then be submitted. It was thought that the cost of the project would be about £6,000 and if successful with the grant application, this would pay for 75% of the project. The remaining money was budgeted to be paid from Precept funds. Cllr. Swann said that he would commence the application for the road closure for Remembrance Day in November. **Action: GS**

7.4.4 Reading Room Management Committee update - The Clerk provided the Councillor with the notes from the AGM held on 20th January. (See Appendix A). Gordon Baker had completed the audit and all was found to be satisfactory and the Annual Return had been then submitted to the Charities Commission. Gordon Baker was thanked for carrying out the audit again this year. A few maintenance issues had arisen with the Reading Room. Slipped slates were causing a small damp patch on the ceiling. The Dodkins had been asked to fix this as soon as possible. On the exterior there were a few blown red bricks which needed taking out and replacing. The Clerk had spoken to the Conservation Officer at NHDC who had said that Listed Building Consent would not be required as this would be classed as a small repair job providing that bricks were replaced like for like and the same colour mortar used. The Clerk to seek quotations for the work to be done. **Action: Clerk**

The Management Committee requested the Council's view on the future use of the Reading Room. Currently the Reading Room was being used bi-weekly by a small Art Group and sporadically by the Community Group for talks and other activities. Other organisations, including FOBS, Playgroup and the Church, sometimes requested use of the room to hold their small committee meetings. The Parish Council meetings were held there on the second Monday of each month. Despite considerable effort by volunteers over a long period, the Reading Room book exchange facility did not seem to have much uptake and had since ceased. A question was whether there was still the need to have the Reading Room as a meeting venue when the new Community Room at the Pavilion was now available with much better facilities. Options for the Reading Room going forward were: 1) To sell it, 2) To develop it into a small residential property and rent it out, 3) To offer to lease it to the adjoining cottage, or 4) To leave it as it was. It was proposed and agreed that the Councillors should give this some thought and it would be put on the Agenda for the March meeting. **Action: ALL/Clerk**

7.5 Environment

7.5.1 Update on quotations for renovations works to Barkway Pier - Cllr. Frapporti reported that he had sent the job specification out to two people and had since met with one of those people. He would progress this matter further and report back at the March meeting. **Action GF**

7.5.2 To discuss and agree proposal to purchase an information sign to be placed at the Wagon Wash - Cllr. Dalton had made enquiries with three different providers, the general opinion was that it needed to be made in stainless steel in order for it to be low maintenance and keep in good condition for many years. The cost was thought to be around £200. The Council thought this was in principal a good idea. Cllr. Dalton would report back to Council in March with a firm proposal. **Action: JD**

7.6 Media and Communications

7.6.1 Police Report - Cllr. Squire informed the Council that there were no crimes to report in Barkway or in nearby villages for January. Warnings had been given from the Police about the requirement of keeping dogs under control near livestock.

7.6.2 Update on proposed Queen's 90th Birthday celebrations in 2016 - Cllr. Squire reported that the Community Group were planning a village celebration on Sunday 12th June. It was not considered by the Council appropriate to hold a Street Party as this would involve significant costs of a road closure. The Council would however support a Party on the Recreation Ground with use of the Pavilion and Community Room. A sum of £1,500 had been allocated for this event in the budget for the forthcoming year.

7.6.3 To approve content for the Winter/Precept edition of the Bulletin - Cllr. Squire had produced a draft document for approval. It was agreed that an additional item about the Precept needed inclusion. Cllr. Dalton had already drafted a piece. (Clerk to forward). Cllr. Squire agreed to make any final amendments and forward to Cllr. Falaschi-Ray for final approval. It was aimed to have the Bulletin printed and distributed before the end of February. **Action: RS/SFR/Clerk**

7.7 Special Projects - Update on 'Smarten Barkway' project - there was nothing to report.

8. Finance - to receive finance reports from the Clerk

8.1 To provide update on current financial position

Parish Council Account:

The Parish Council bank balance at 08.02.2016 was £48,496.03

Receipts since the last meeting:

£1183.50 - Royston Town FC - Football Contribution

£250.00 - Royston Town FC - Football Contribution

£42.00 - Hire of Community Room

8.3 To authorise payments:

Approval of payments since last meeting:

DD £5.00 - EDF - Direct Debit Electricity Pavilion

DD £10.00 – Affinity Water – Direct Debit Water Pavilion

DD £115.05 - NHDC - Waste Collection Pavilion

Approval of payments to be made at meeting:

CHQ 102268 £1761.67 - Glasdon UK Ltd - New picnic tables, waste bin and dog bin

CHQ 102269 £35.00 - HAPTC - Training Course

CHQ 102270 £24.38 - Michelle Garner - Cleaning of Pavilion Jan

CHQ 102271 £861.04 - Catharine Toms – Clerk's Monthly Salary + Office Allowance

CHQ 102272 £165.75 - Sam Methven - Groundsman January

CHQ 102273 £48.00 - Claire Methven - Litter Picking January

CHQ 102274 £49.00 - Catharine Toms - Clerk's Expenses*

* £45.00 - Open Spaces Society - Annual Subs

£4.00 - Barley Stores - Coffee for Reading Room

Further to examining the invoice submitted by Michelle Garner for the cleaning and caretaking duties at the Pavilion for February, it was proposed by Cllr. Davidson and seconded by Cllr. Warren and agreed by all that Michelle Garner should put in a minimum charge of £5 if she has to leave her home to attend at the Pavilion for caretaking purposes. The Clerk to advise Michelle Garner of this amendment. **Action: Clerk**

Parish Council - BRGMC Account:

Bank Balance at 08.02.16 was £111.00

Receipts since the last meeting: None

Payments since the last meeting: None

The Clerk reported that the bank had been contacted to change the correspondence address and the name of the bank account. Changing of the bank mandates was also in progress.

Reading Room Account:

Bank Balance at 08.02.16 was £595.74

Receipts since the last meeting: None

Payments since the last meeting:

£63.00 D/D NHDC - Rates

£5.00 D/D EDF - Electricity

9. Correspondence - The Clerk reported that a letter had been received from Heidi Smith at Sworders regarding Barkway FP10. It seemed that no further progress had been made with any diversion and she was requesting a site meeting with attendance of a member of the Parish Council on Wednesday 17th February at 2pm. Cllrs. Falaschi-Ray and Frapporti would attend. **Action: SFR/GF**

Cllr. Falaschi-Ray informed the Council that a request had been received from the Church Fete Committee asking if this event could be held on the Recreation Ground on Saturday 2nd July. The Council were 100% supportive of this idea. The Clerk was asked to put event charges on the agenda for the March meeting. **Action: Clerk**

Cllr. Frapporti and Cllr. Dalton reported that they had received further correspondence from Ms. Connor of Periwinkle Close demanding the Parish Council resolve the issues that she had with vehicles from Walsh's Garage being parked in Periwinkle Close. It was agreed that her issues were definitely not within the remit of the Parish Council and that the Council would respond accordingly. Cllr. Dalton would draft a letter and the Clerk would then forward this letter to Ms. Connor. **Action: JD/Clerk**

10. Date of next meeting: Monday 14th March 2016

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 9.45pm