

**Minutes of Barkway Parish Council Extraordinary Meeting
Held in the Community Room, Barkway on Tuesday 26th May 2020 at 7.30pm.**

1. In attendance: Cllrs:

Mr W Dennis (Chair)
Mr P Baker (Vice Chair)
Dr J Magill
Mrs J Connolly
Ms J Cox
Mr N Stuart

Also present: Mrs C Toms (Clerk/RFO)
Dist. Cllr. G Morris
County Cllr. Fiona Hill
Dist. Cllr. Tony Hunter

Members of the Public: Two members of the public were present.

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

3. To receive Councillor's Declarations of Pecuniary Interest and to remind Councillors of their requirement to update register of interests under change of circumstances – None received.

4. Public Session - to receive representations from members of the public – A resident was present to discuss items 10 & 5. Stand Orders were suspended.

Following information published by the Estates Dept. at NHDC it was learnt that the remaining land behind Windmill Close had been successfully marketed and was about to be sold to a developer to provide additional private and affordable housing in Barkway. Concern was raised by the resident as to whether there was any guarantee of affordable housing on that site and whether it had actually been ascertained that this housing was required, as many of the new build houses in Barkway remained unsold. He also pointed out that NHDC should be reminded that a right of access across the land was agreed for maintenance of the Recreational Open Space. The resident also asked if Litter Pickers could resume duties again as they would be able to self-distance and it was an outdoor job, so risk of Covid-19 was minimal.

Another resident was present to speak about item 12. She wanted to express her concerns about the revised planning application on land behind 9 High Street. Her main objections were that the increased height of the building would mean that gardens in No's 5, 7 and 9 would be overlooked and that a proposed side window on the upper level would mean that bedrooms at No's 7 and 9 would lose privacy. Also, that there would be an increase of usage of the driveway alongside No. 7. The statements did not seem to take into account the existing users of that driveway in addition to the extra users as a result of the development. It was also pointed out that the existing building was documented in the emerging Neighbourhood Plan as a 'non-designated heritage asset' and by developing the building it would fail to maintain the existing character within the Conservation Area. In

addition, the outline of the garden in the revised application had been extended to the northern boundary, so would mean an increase in backland garden development. Standing Orders were resumed.

5. To discuss and agree if Litter Picking employees can resume duties whilst maintaining social distancing – It was proposed, seconded and agreed by all that Litter Pickers could resume duties from the coming weekend. Resolved.

6. To receive update from the Meeting of the Finance Group and to approve any recommendations (see Appendix A).

It was proposed, seconded and agreed by all to approve items 4, 12 and 13. Resolved.

7. To receive update on Barkway Hub – Cllr. Cox reported that the Barkway Hub had 33 volunteers with 12 co-ordinators who collated tasks. 56 tasks had been recorded to date and that those people who were in need of essential things were being cared for. An update would be sent to all volunteers that week. Following 1st June, when there might be a change of Government advice, a leaflet would be distributed to remind people that assistance was still available. The Hub was looking to work with other local support groups in order that work was not duplicated un-necessarily and that the Hub kept to its original remit. The co-ordinators were trying to meet weekly in order to keep up the momentum and, as and when the current COVID-19 crisis was over, to ensure that a volunteer network remained in place going forward. An application for a grant to cover some costs of providing support had been submitted to County Cllr. Hill's Locality Budget fund.

It was mentioned that the Vicar was trying to set up a small supply of essential food items to be made available for people identified within the Parish who were suffering financial hardship due to the COVID-19 crisis. This had been done in other Parishes and was called 'Parish Pantries'. She was needing a small sum (approx. £50) to set up an initial stock of essential food. Ongoing supplies would then hopefully become available via donations. It was proposed, seconded and agreed in principle to provide a small grant of £50 until a level of need was established and this could then be reviewed. The Vicar to be asked to complete a grant application form. **Action: JCox**

County Cllr. Hill mentioned that she might also be able to assist financially from her Locality Budget.

8. To consider quotations received and agree action to repair/replace multi-play 'fort' on the Rec – Cllr. Baker had received varying quotations for repair and replacement. The information had been previously forwarded to all Cllrs. Quotations for replacement did not include the cost of dismantling and disposing of the old equipment. It was considered that this could be done more cost effectively using someone locally. After discussion it was agreed that repair of the fort now would be a false economy as other parts of the equipment would need attention in a couple of years and this would be an ongoing expense up to maybe two thirds of the cost of a new piece of equipment. It was therefore proposed, seconded and agreed by all to replace the equipment but initially to seek opinion from the school children and their parents/carers as to exactly what might be wanted. **Action: PB**

The cost could be funded partly from the Solar Farm fund and partly through grants and S106 monies that might be available. The Clerk and Cllr. Baker to investigate possible avenues of funding. **Action: Clerk/PB**

9. To consider quotations received and agree action for quarterly play area inspections and annual re-tensioning of the zip-wire – After consideration of the quotations supplied by Cllr. Baker it was proposed, seconded and agreed by all to opt for Playground Facilities Ltd who could carry out a quarterly playground inspection for £65 + VAT per quarter and an annual re-tensioning of the zip-wire at £300 + VAT per annum. Resolved. Cllr. Baker to obtain contracts for approval at the June meeting. **Action: PB**

10. To discuss matters arising regarding sale of land at end of Windmill Close and agree any action required – After discussion it was agreed that it was disappointing that the Parish Council had not been consulted further on the matter, particularly as the Parish Council had written to NHDC back in October last year, urging them not to market the land at least until after the Planning Inspector had reported on the outcome of the further Local Plan hearings he was proposing in relating to Barkway. It was proposed, seconded and agreed to write another letter to the Estates Dept at NHDC stating that the Parish Council should have been consulted and going forward wanted to be kept informed in the appropriate manner. Also, to remind NHDC of the requirement of access to the Recreational Open Space. Resolved. **Action: Clerk**

11. To receive update regarding Reservoir development at Wisbridge Farm – It was reported that the Clerk had written to the Environment Agency, followed by a letter to Sir. Oliver Heald. It was understood that Sir. Oliver had now taken up the matter with the Chief Executive Officer at Herts County Council. However, it was acknowledged by the Parish Council that Herts County Council and NHDC had both been working hard on the matter and that Sir. Oliver needed to take things up with the Environment Agency to get them to re-inspect the site and take enforcement action if necessary. The Environment Agency was not a regulating body and for this the law needed changing. The Minister for the Environment needed alerting to this Wisbridge Farm development as it was one of many such cases around the country.

12. To consider and make comment on planning applications : Full Planning Permission & Listed Building Consent : Removal single storey lean-to front extension. Replace existing roof with steeper pitched roof. Single storey rear extension with accommodation in roof space. Internal and external alterations, all to facilitate conversion to a 2-bed dwelling house.

Land to rear of 9 High Street, Barkway, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 8EA. Case Ref Nos: 19/01700/FP & 19/01701/LBC – Further to more discussion about this application (see Minutes 12th May) – it was considered that the plans were not detailed enough and as a statutory consultee the Parish Council should be provided with enough detailed information to make an informed decision. Three main issues were:

- 1) There was not enough information to ascertain what the difference in height would be between the existing and the remodelled building. This was very

- important in order to assess the impact that the building would have within the Conservation Area and to neighbouring properties.
- 2) There needed for clarification from the Fire Authority that the width of the driveway met the statutory requirements.
 - 3) As bats had been seen in the location, had an ecology report been done carried out?

The Clerk to ask NHDC for further information and request an additional two weeks to make comment in anticipation that more detailed information would be made available within that time. To be included on the agenda for the June meeting. **Action: Clerk**

13. To consider and make comment on planning application : Full Planning Permission : Single storey rear extension following demolition of existing single storey rear element.

Barkway First School, 84 High Street, Barkway, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 8EF. Case Ref No: 20/00874/FP – Following yet more discussion about this application (see Minutes 12th May) – the Council was still unable to decipher the plans to make an informed comment. The plans were confusing because existing elevation plans were not consistent with proposed elevation plans, so making it difficult to compare. One additional concern was that the proposed extension would diminish the area of the playground. Cllr. Baker would investigate how much area was required by legislation according to the capacity of the school. **Action: PB**

The Clerk to request NHDC to ask the applicant/agent to supply more detailed plans and request an additional two weeks to make comment in anticipation that more detailed information would be made available within that time. To be included on the agenda for the June meeting. **Action: Clerk**

14. To consider and make comment on planning application : Full Permission Householder : Installation of bi-fold doors to east elevation of existing detached car port and retention of replacement rear detached shed.

Grove House, Highfield Grove, Barkway, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 8DW. Case Ref No: 20/00947/FPH – After consideration of this application it was proposed, seconded and agreed by all that there was no objection. However, it would be asked if the planning officer would consider applying a condition, should they be mindful to give consent, to ensure that the building remained ancillary to the main premises. It would also be asked what materials would be used for the shed roof. The Clerk to respond to NHDC. **Action: Clerk**

Cllr. Cox had produced a draft letter to be sent to NHDC regarding the difficulties the Parish Council was currently having with trying to work through planning application documents published on the NHDC planning portal. It suggested a change in the way files were named so that it was clearer, particularly in more complex applications where revised applications had been submitted, in which order the documents needed to be considered. In addition to this it was agreed that it should be pointed out that the Parish Council did not want to have to keep on asking for extensions in time for submitting comments because it could lead to a delay in decision making. However, the reason for

asking for more time was often because sufficient detailed information was not being supplied in the first place to enable the Council to make an informed response. The Clerk to amend the draft and forward to NHDC. **Action: Clerk**

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.30pm