

**Minutes of Barkway Parish Council Meeting  
Held in the Community Room, Barkway on Tuesday 10th December 2019 at  
7.30pm.**

**1. In attendance:** Cllrs:

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

**Also present:** Mrs C Toms (Clerk/RFO)  
Dist. Cllr. G Morris  
County Cllr. T Hunter

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

**2. To receive and accept apologies for absence:** County Cllr. F Hill and PCSO Chris Brabrook

**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** – Cllr. Magill (re: item 7.3), Cllr. Cox (re: item 5), Cllr. Baker (re: item 8.3)

**4. Minutes**

**4.1 To approve the minutes of the last meeting** – Approved as read. **Action: Clerk**

**4.2 To consider any matters arising from the last meeting** – Cllr. Dennis reported that Herts County Council Highways would chase contractors to fix the matting installation for off-road parking along Cambridge Road.

**5. Public Session - to receive representations from members of the public** – Standing Orders were suspended to allow members of the public present to make representations to the Council. Cllr. Cox left the meeting. A resident was present to inform the Council about an impending planning application relating to his property and answer any questions that the Council might have. He was thanked for attending and he then departed from the meeting. Cllr. Cox returned to the meeting. Standing Orders were resumed.

**6. Council Administration**

**6.1 Parish Councillor vacancy** – adverts were on the noticeboards, on the website and in the Diary. No one had come forward so far.

**6.2 Update on provision of printer for the Reading Room** – there was no update to report. Further research was needed. A laser printer was recommended. **Action: Clerk**

**7. To receive updates from Portfolio Holders**

**7.1 Corporate Governance – to receive update on review of Corporate Governance documents** – item to be deferred to the next meeting. Cllr. Cox and the Clerk to meet to go through the documents. Certain documents to be prioritised to be reviewed before the end of the financial year. **Action: JC/Clerk**

## **7.2 Planning**

**7.2.1 Report from meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> December with NHDC Senior Planning Officer** – A meeting had taken place the day before. The purpose of meeting was that the Parish Council was being consulted on a number of planning applications (including site BK3) that were outside the current settlement boundary and advice was sought, as the Parish Councillors were not fully trained planning officers, as to what weight should be given to these applications. It was understood that it was not straight forward as each application needed to be considered on its own merits, balancing the pros and cons to fit in with policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), many policies of which overlapped, the emerging NHDC Local Plan and the emerging Barkway and Nuthampstead Neighbourhood Plan (BNNP). It was left that the Parish Council needed to try and relate each case to policy background as it was only acting in an advisory capacity and was not the ultimate decision maker. Any technical planning judgement was down to NHDC.

**7.2.2 To consider and make comment on planning application: Full Planning Permission : Erection of one detached 3 bed single storey dwelling and cycle/store building following demotion of existing farm building.**

**Land South of Willow Tree Farm, London Road, Barkway, Hertfordshire. Case Ref No: 19/02701/FP** – After consideration it was proposed, seconded and agreed by all to object to this application for the following reasons:

- the proposal did not meet the requirements of Policy 6 for developments in rural areas beyond the Green Belt;
- the proposed development fell outside the settlement boundary of the village of Barkway and did not meet the requirements of Policy 7 on Selected Villages Beyond the Green Belt;
- the proposal did not meet the requirements of Policy 29 for a proven local need for rural housing as an exception to normal policies.

The Clerk to respond to NHDC. **Action: Clerk**

**7.3 Neighbourhood Plan – Report from the Neighbourhood Plan Meeting – Weds 27<sup>th</sup> November (see Appendix A)** – a review had taken place of the pre-submission Neighbourhood Plan document and the draft summary document. Various amendments were then agreed and decisions were made on where the finalised pre-submission documents would be located for consultation purposes. There were still various supplementary documents and statutory statements to be added but the aim was to get the pre-submission document ready for distribution by the end of January. A six week consultation period would follow. Comments received would be considered and decisions would be made on any amendments required. This would then be put before the Parish Council for approval. Once approved it would then be forwarded to NHDC for approval and for them to take it through the legalities of forwarding it to the Planning Inspectorate. Once this was successfully done then there would then be a referendum and if approved by a majority then the plan would be ‘made’. It would then become a legal document and should carry weight when NHDC were making decisions on planning applications, particularly in the absence of an NHDC finalised Local Plan.

**7.4 Highways – Update from the Highways Together Meeting (Weds 13<sup>th</sup> Nov) and Barkway Parish Action Plan (PAP)** – This was an initiative to enable Herts County Council (HCC) Highways and the Parish Council to work together by producing a PAP which would be a living document. It would be available online and highways issues could be added enabling both authorities to see any progress on work and who would be responsible for carrying out the work. The advantage would be that if Highways were coming to the area to sort out one issue they could check to see if anything else could be resolved at the same time. Anything like blocked drains and potholes would still need reporting via the HCC website but the details could then be added onto the PAP and progress could then be monitored. The scheme would also enable some jobs to be carried out by volunteers, e.g. cutting back overhanging vegetation, or clearing overgrown footpaths, providing that it was not in areas beyond the 30 mph speed limit.

**7.5 Sports and Recreation** – Cllr. Connolly had spoken to a manager of Hormead Hares football club regarding their possible usage of the facilities at Barkway. He had noted the availability of pitches at Barkway. It was understood that many local teams were folding due to lack of people willing to manage them. The Clerk reported that the changing rooms at the Pavilion had recently been left in an unacceptable state, both muddy and flooded. Both teams that had played would be contacted by the Bookings Clerk.

**7.6 Community Property** – Quotations to replace the double entrance doors were still awaited. The disabled toilet had been vandalised yet again, it seemed. The toilet had never worked properly from first installation due to incompatible parts being used. The Clerk to obtain a quotation from the Dodkins to replace the entire unit. **Action: Clerk**

**7.7 Environment** – Cllr. Dennis reported that he had asked HCC Highways about Heritage Verge but understood that this was outside their remit. He would follow this up with County Cllr. Hill. **Action: WD**

Cllr. Connolly reported that the way marker signs along footpath 15 had rotted and fallen over. The Clerk to ask the Dodkins to repair/replace these. **Action: Clerk**

Cllr. Connolly also reported that the missing defibrillator had been found and understood that it would be returned eventually.

## **7.8 Media and Communications**

**7.8.1 Website report** – Cllr. Stuart reported that he had looked at the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) guide to website accessibility regulations and that the current website did not meet the criteria by a long way. He was still investigating but one option would be to hand it over to a website development company and ask them to build an appropriate website that the Parish Council could manage ongoing. Cllr. Stuart to find out costings. **Action: NS**

It was considered that the current website was underused and there could be much improvement made to the look and feel of it. For example, an item on the front page could show something that had changed on the website, with a link to that page.

It was considered that communication with the village could be improved. With GDPR in mind, appropriate means of communication would be looked into. **Action: NS**

**7.8.2 Police report** – Cllr. Stuart had met with PCSO Chris Brabrook and discussed the way forward as to what Police information could be put on the website. A

live Twitter feed was discussed, allowing information on any criminal activity or scams to be made available, which might prove useful.

## **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 10.12.2019 was £93,430.34

Petty Cash £50.00

Receipts since the last meeting:

£60.00 – FWAG Consultancy – Hire of Community Room

£100.00 – Barkway Vets – Hire of Football Pitches

£50.00 – Royston Rugby Club – Hire of Community Room

### **8.2 To authorise payments to be made**

#### **Approval of payments since last meeting:**

DD £7.20 – Sage Software – Monthly Subscription

DD £17.44 – Castle Water – Waste Water Pavilion

DD £61.00 – EDF – Electricity Pavilion

DD £13.00 – Affinity Water – Water Pavilion

CHQ 102855 – £660.00 - Barkway Local history Group – Grant awarded

#### **Approval of payments to be made at meeting:**

CHQ 102856 £120.00 – SLCC – Annual Subscription

CHQ 102857 £72.00 – S Scott – Cutting of Heritage Verge x 2

CHQ 102858 £550.00 – J Poulton – Replacement of wooden posts on Royston Road

CHQ 102859 £55.00 – M Thornton – Window and Bus Shelter Cleaning

CHQ 102860 £68.00 – R Bonfield – Pavilion Maintenance

CHQ 102861 £100.00 – T S Drake – Line marking Nov

CHQ 102862 £1,041.18 - Catharine Toms – Clerk’s Monthly Salary + Office Allowance

CHQ 102863 £115.00 – Roz Danter – Cleaning/Bookings Clerk Pavilion Nov

CHQ 102864 £41.25 – Orla Swann – Litter Picking Nov

CHQ 102865 £37.50 – Kaitlin Aldridge – Litter Picking Nov

CHQ 102866 £59.73 – Catharine Toms – Clerks Expenses \*

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£29.34 – Amazon – Black refuse sacks

£5.90 – Tesco - Paper

£24.49 – Tesco – Ink Cartridges

#### **Parish Council – Pavilion Account:**

Bank Balance at 10.12.2019 was £286.38

Receipts since last meeting: None

Payments since last meeting: None

**Reading Room Accounts:**

Bank Balance at 10.12.2019 was £1,233.98

Receipts since last meeting: None

Payments since last meeting: 'DD – 40.00 – NHDC – Rates

**8.3 To consider grant application from Barkway Market Committee** – a grant of £300 was sought to purchase communication equipment (walkie talkies) for use at village events in general by request. It was proposed, seconded and agreed by all to support this request from the Push Energy Community Contribution Fund. The proviso being that it be stored in the Reading Room and the lending of this equipment be controlled by the Parish Council. **Action: Clerk**

**8.4 Report from meeting of the Finance Committee Mon 2<sup>nd</sup> December and to consider draft budget proposal for 2020/21 – (see Appendix B)** a draft budget had been produced for consideration by the Council. The Councillors were asked to study the figures to ascertain if the budgets for their portfolio areas were appropriate and if the Precept should remain at the same level as last year. To be finalised at the January meeting as the Precept application needed to be submitted to NHDC by 17<sup>th</sup> January. **Action: All**

**9 Correspondence:** Email about NHDC Local Plan examination. Need to formally signal that Barkway Parish Council would wish to make representation at the forthcoming hearings. **Action: Clerk**

A complaint had been received about poor broadband signal within the area of the village that was already connected to fibre broadband via the cabinets. Cllr. Baker agreed to initiate an investigation with BT Openreach for the community, as to why the broadband was still so poor in the village. **Action: PB**

**10 Items to be deferred to the next meeting** – Governance review, quotations for new door for Pavilion, quotations for a printer for the Reading Room, Highways Parish Action Plan, Budget for 2020 and Precept application 2020/21, Wisbridge reservoir development.

**11 Date of next meeting:** Tuesday 14th January

Dist. Cllrs. Morris and Hunter departed from the meeting at 9pm.

**12 To consider that under Section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 that the press and public be excluded from item 13 of the agenda of this meeting in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.** Proposed, seconded and agreed by all. Resolved.

**13 To review and agree any action regarding reservoir development** – a course of action was agreed.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 9.21pm