

Minutes of Barkway Parish Council Meeting
Held remotely via Zoom on Tuesday 11th August 2020 at 7.30pm.

1. In attendance: Cllrs:

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

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

Members of the Public: One member of the public present

2. To receive and accept apologies for absence: Cllr. J Connolly (on holiday) – apology accepted.

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. J Magill (re: item 9.2.6)

4. Minutes

4.1 To approve the minutes of the last meeting - Proposed, seconded and all in favour to approve. Resolved. **Action: Clerk**

4.2 To consider any matters arising from the last meeting – The Clerk informed the Council that the fly tipping in a layby south of Barkway had been reported to North Herts District Council (NHDC) but as yet it hadn't been cleared.

5. Public Session - to receive representations from members of the public – No one wished to speak.

6. To receive report from District Councillor – Dist. Cllr. Morris reported that NHDC were still considering what action to take regarding the mobile home sited without permission on land south of Barkway. Lorry movements had resumed again to and from the Wisbridge Reservoir site. There was talk of a project to create a cycle path between Barkway and Barley.

7. To receive report from County Councillor - County Cllr. Hill reported that Herts County Council (HCC) was looking at opening up Day Centres again. Test and trace was into partnership with local authorities. There had been no Covid related deaths in care homes in Hertfordshire in the past week. Cllr. Hill invited feedback on the idea of a cycle path between Barkway and Barley. This was just one of many possible projects in her area and she would need to bid for the funding if the idea was supported.

8. Council Administration

8.1 To co-opt a new Parish Councillor – Mr David Marchant was present to step forward to become a Parish Councillor. It was proposed, seconded and agreed to co-opt Mr Marchant. As this was a virtual meeting, the Clerk would deliver Declaration of Acceptance of Office and Members' Interests forms to him for signing the following day. Mr Marchant was welcomed onto the Parish Council and was invited to remain for the rest of the meeting but would be unable to participate in any decision making until the necessary paperwork had been signed. Resolved.

There was also an additional candidate for Parish Councillor but he had not attended the meeting. Cllr Magill informed the Parish Council that as there were now people willing to join the Council that this would be an opportune moment to tender her resignation for personal reasons, something she had been thinking about for some time. It was with deep regret that the Chair accepted her resignation for the end of the meeting and wished it to be put on record the Council's thanks and appreciation for all her hard and diligent work. Cllr. Magill would remain on the Neighbourhood Plan Committee as a representative of Nuthampstead Parish Meeting, in order to help bring the Neighbourhood Plan to conclusion.

8.2 To note completion of Internal Audit - The Clerk informed the Council that the Internal Audit had now been completed. The report said that the review concluded that there were effective systems in place to ensure that the financial statements accurately represented the financial position of Barkway Parish Council. As a result, no matters had arisen which needed to be brought to the attention of Barkway Parish Council. Information would now be forwarded to the External Auditors. **Action: Clerk**

8.3 To set dates for Notice of Public Rights – 17th August to 28th September. This was a 30 day period where the accounts and financial records for 2019/20 could (by appointment) be inspected by the public.

8.4 To consider applying to join the NHDC Standards Committee – After due consideration and an explanation from Cllr. Magill, as she was currently on this Committee, it was decided to not apply for co-option. Resolved.

9. To receive updates from Portfolio Holders

9.1 Corporate Governance – review of Standing Orders – To be deferred until the September meeting. **Action: JCox**

9.2 Planning

9.2.1 To consider and make comment on planning application : Full Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent : Remove single storey lean-to to front elevation. 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 2-bed dwellinghouse.

Land rear of 9 High Street, Barkway, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 8EA. Case Ref Nos: 19/01700/FP & 19/01701/LBC – Since the previous meeting additional information had been provided by the Case Officer at NHDC. After some discussion, it was proposed, seconded and agreed by all to not object to the application subject to clarification that Herts County Council Highways were fully aware of the fact and satisfied that the access actually narrowed to 2.85m to get to the side and rear of the property when a 3.4m width access was required for emergency vehicles. Resolved. The Clerk to respond to NHDC. **Action: Clerk**

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

Barkway First School, 84 High Street, Barkway, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 8EF. Case Ref No: 20/00874/FP – Since the previous meeting additional information had been provided by the Case Officer at NHDC. Having studied the detailed plans and had clarification on calculation of recreational space needed for the pupils, it was proposed, seconded and agreed by all to fully support the application. Resolved. The Clerk to respond to NHDC. **Action: Clerk**

9.2.3 To consider and make comment on planning application : Full Permisson Householder : Change fenestration on north and east elevations.

The Byre, Quinbury Lane, Barkway, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 8EQ. Case Ref No: 20/01443/FPH – After consideration of the application, it was proposed, seconded and agreed by all that there was no objection to this application. Resolved. The Clerk to respond to NHDC. **Action: Clerk**

In addition to the above response, the Clerk was requested to bring to the attention of NHDC Planning Officer the fact that the quality/legibility of the documentation uploaded onto the NHDC Planning Portal was of a very poor standard and ask that Officers take this up with those responsible for uploading the planning documents. **Action: Clerk**

9.2.4 To consider and if appropriate make additional comment on Appeal : Land South of Willow Tree Farm, London Road, Barkway, Hertfordshire : Erection of one detached 3-bed single storey dwelling and cycle/store building following demolition of existing barn building – It was proposed, seconded and agreed by all that the Council was still of the view that this development should not be allowed for the reasons already submitted. There was nothing further to add. Resolved.

9.2.5 Wisbridge Reservoir – There had been a meeting via Zoom with some members of Reed Parish Council to discuss a joint effort to try and pin down the Environment Agency (EA) to take proactive action. Cllr. Magill had circulated a draft letter to the EA. It was proposed, seconded and agreed by all to send this along with some photographic evidence attached. **Action: Clerk**

Cllr. Magill had spoken to a Reservoir Specialist who she knew, but he had since retired. It was recommended to contact some Reservoir Engineers based in Cambridge to obtain their opinion on the viability of the project but this would mean a site visit and co-operation of the landowner, so might not be feasible. It was agreed that the EA and NHDC had regulatory responsibility to look at this project and sort it out before it turned into an environmental degradation. Cllr. Morris would write again to the EA. Cllrs. Hunter and Hill asked to be kept fully informed. **Action: Clerk**

9.2.6 Neighbourhood Plan – To agree date of next meeting of the Neighbourhood Plan Committee – This was proposed, seconded and agreed as Monday 1st September at 7.30pm via Zoom. The Clerk to set up the meeting and send out the invites. **Action: Clerk**

9.2.7 To discuss new planning guidelines from HM Government and the effect on the Neighbourhood Plan - The changes to the planning system being now proposed by Government would not be in place until 2024. If there were any delays, then it could be even later. It therefore made sense to keep going with the Neighbourhood Plan and get some sort of protection in place against hostile planning applications by developers.

9.3 Highways

9.3.1 To receive update regarding Barkway Drivesafe - Cllr. Dennis reported that he had spoken to someone from Barley Parish Council regarding their Drivesafe Scheme. It was not an active scheme there, due to lack of volunteers. The plan was to hold a virtual meeting in September with the Police and Crime Commissioner, the Highways Safety Officer and Sir Oliver Heald.

Speeding through the village seemed to be getting worse. Data could be obtained from the installed Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs). Speed and volume surveys could be carried out using funds from Cllr. Hill's Locality Budget, this was agreed in order to ascertain the size of the problem. It was recommended to talk to Sgt. Vine at Royston Police Station as he was keen to resurrect Drivesafe and was encouraging as many villages as possible to take part. The Drivesafe criteria was however, now very strict. There had been some Police speed checks taking place, but just for very short periods, so not very effective.

9.3.2 To consider response to Speed Management Consultation – It was agreed that the Clerk and Cllr. Dennis would look at this and formulate a proposed response. **Action: Clerk/WD**

9.4 Sports and Recreation

9.4.1 To agree action for replacing/repair of multi-play equipment and for carrying out regular play area inspections/maintenance – Cllr. Baker reported that he was still awaiting prices and possible dates for installation. To be deferred until the next meeting. **Action: PB**

9.4.2 To receive update on Covid-19 safe usage of the Rec. – Cllr. Cox reported that the signage was all in place and that the hand sanitiser stations were being used. It was proposed, seconded and agreed to put a notice in the Diary and on the website to let everyone know that the play area was officially open again. **Action: JCox**

9.4.3 To note complaint received regarding condition of play bark – The Clerk reported that a child had grazed herself on the bark. Whilst the recent run of hot weather had probably dried the bark out so that it had become sharp and brittle it was agreed that the play bark needed to be replaced with a safer surface and that any new installations would have appropriate rubber safety matting installed beneath it. In addition, consideration would be given to fencing off the play area, to keep the area cleaner and safer and prevent animals fouling in the area.

9.5 Community Property

9.5.1 To receive update on donors board for the Pavilion entrance hall - Cllr. Cox reported that she had been busy with Barkway Hub but would attempt to get a draft together and circulated before the next meeting. **Action: JCox**

9.5.2 To options for repair of the ballastrade in front of Pavilion – An option of replacing the vertical wooden struts with metal struts had been previously circulated to Cllrs. This was considered a far more durable option. The Clerk to ascertain cost by the next meeting. **Action: Clerk**

9.5.3 To note recent break-in of shed and to consider purchase and relocation of a stronger storage facility – It was reported that, yet again, the shed had been broken into and the door damaged, but nothing had been taken. It was agreed to investigate how much a small metal container would cost as a more secure alternative. A better location for a storage shed would be to one side of the Pavilion, at the front. **Action: Clerk**

9.6 Environment – to receive update – Nothing to report.

9.7.1 To receive update regarding website – Cllr. Stuart reported he had been working on the front page and updating the website with information to warn of the many current scams. **Action: NS**

9.7.2 To receive update on production of Summer edition of the Barkway Bulletin/Annual Report – Cllr. Cox had received contributions from Cllrs. and now needed to edit the content and produce a final draft. The Clerk and Cllr. Cox to meet to get this done. **Action: Clerk/JCox**

9.7.3 Police Report – The recent report had detailed the many scams currently in circulation.

9.7.4 To receive update on the Barkway Hub - Cllr. Cox reported that a few tasks were still being carried out and that the supplies from the Parish Pantry were being used. The grant money of £50 had been used to top up the supplies and in addition, 4 boxes of goods had been donated into stock from Herts County Council, as their Shielders Boxes were no longer required.

10. Finance – To receive finance reports from the Clerk

10.1 To provide update on current financial position

Parish Council Account:

The Parish Council bank balance at 11.08.2020 was £76,907.57

Petty Cash £16.01

Receipts since the last meeting:

£15.00 – T Mayo – Football Training

£25.00 – D Evans – Hire of Football Pitch

10.2 To authorise payments to be made

Approval of payments since last meeting:

DD £8.40 – Sage Software – Monthly Subscription

DD £72.93 – Nest – Pension Contributions

DC £12.99 – Amazon – Net Clips for 5-aside Goals

DC £143.86 – 123-Reg – Website Hosting Fee

DC £29.98 – Amazon – Locks for Hand Sanitiser Stations Rec.

DD £8.70 – Castle Water – Waste Water Pavilion

DC £408.00 – Rajapack Ltd – Hand Sanitiser Stations for Rec.

DD £81.00 – EDF – Electricity Pavilion

DD £130.00 – NHDC – Quarterly Waste Collection

DC £55.22 – Amazon – Ink Cartridges

Approval of payments to be made at meeting:

By bank transfer

£1,064.39 - Catharine Toms – Clerk’s Monthly Salary + Office Allowance

£37.50 – Orla Swann – Litter Picking July

£37.50 – Kaitlin Aldridge – Litter Picking July

£76.50 – R Bonfield – Maintenance Rec. – July

£170.00 – T S Drake – Grass Cutting & Line Marking July

£300.00 – Carol Willis – Internal Audit 2019/20

Reading Room Accounts:

Bank Balance at 11.08.2020 was £1,657.24

Receipts since last meeting: None

Payments since last meeting:

DD - £41.00 – NHDC Rates Reading Room

DD - £122.19 – Total Gas and Power – Electricity Reading Room

11. Correspondence – Notification that NHDC had selected a bidder and was proceeding towards a sale of the land at the end of Windmill Close. Completion of the sale would be subject to the purchaser obtaining satisfactory planning permission for their proposed residential scheme.

A letter of thanks from Barkway Chapel for the grant received towards the cost of cemetery maintenance.

12. Items to be deferred to the next meeting – Standing Orders, Terms of Reference for Committees and Working Parties, New play equipment for the Rec. and maintenance programmes, Repair for the wooden ballastrade, the Donors Board for the Pavilion, New storage shed, and the Barkway Bulletin.

13. Date of next meeting – Tuesday 8th September.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 9.26pm