

Minutes of Barkway Parish Council Meeting
Held remotely via Zoom on Tuesday 13th October 2020 at 7.48pm.

1. In attendance: Cllrs:

Mr W Dennis (Chair)
Mr P Baker (Vice Chair)
Ms J Cox
Mrs J Connolly
Mr D Marchant
Mr N Stuart
Mr R Tym

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

Members of the Public: No one 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 – Cllr. J Cox (re: item 10.2)

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 – None

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

Standing Orders were suspended to allow County Cllr. Hill and District Cllr. Morris to make their reports.

6. To receive report from District Councillor – Cllr. Morris mentioned that he was due to speak at the North Herts District Council (NHDC) Local Plan Hearings on 3rd December and needed someone to deputise for him by reading out a prepared script. He also had attended an Extraordinary Council meeting at NHDC where the Liberal Democrats had put forward a motion that the NHDC Local Plan Hearings should be delayed whilst the proposed housing numbers were looked at again. He had voted in support of this. Other matters to report were covered elsewhere in the agenda.

7. To receive report from County Councillor - County Cllr. Hill reported that services were returning to normal, Buntingford waste recycling was not yet open but hoped to be so soon. Herts County Council (HCC) was continuing to closely monitor developments

with Covid-19 and take appropriate actions. Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs) were being installed on the A10 at Reed and would soon be operational. Other matters to report were covered elsewhere in the agenda.

Standing Orders were resumed.

8. Council Administration

8.1 To agree attendance at Hertfordshire Association of Parish and Town Councils (HAPTC) New Councillor Training Session – The Clerk reported that there was an opportunity for Cllrs. Marchant and Tym to attend a virtual training session on 22nd Oct at a cost of £30 each. It was proposed, seconded and agreed to approve this expenditure. Resolved. **Action: Clerk**

8.2 To receive report from Clerk's attendance at Zoom meeting regarding proposals for a Unitary Council – This had been organised by HAPTC with representatives from Herts County Council (HCC) present and attended by 37 Clerks from Town and Parish Councils. Since dealing with the pandemic, issues arising had highlighted the need to consider the creation of a new body of a Unitary Council for Hertfordshire. There was a desire to create a system that was better organised and structured to deliver fundamental services to the County for the future, without the current duplications, ensuring also that the infrastructure met the need for growth. There was a strong financial argument for implementing this idea which would achieve a more unified and stronger system, with equality of services across the County at a more cost-effective price. There was a need to save £92m per annum and it was estimated that by year 3, annual savings of £143m could be achieved. The existing system was complex with different levels of Council dealing with different services. There was an opportunity for powers to be devolved from Parliament to Unitary Councils, who would have more say in how services were delivered. Powers would then be further devolved down to Town and Parish Councils. Exactly how this would work and be funded was yet to be seen when the White Paper was produced by the Secretary of State. HCC was looking to engage with all stakeholders to co-develop this proposal and put forward the best option to Government.

9. To receive updates from Portfolio Holders

9.1 Corporate Governance

9.1.1 To adopt revised Standing Orders – These had previously been circulated. A couple of queries were clarified by Cllr. Cox. It was proposed, seconded and agreed by all to adopt the revised Standing Orders. Resolved.

9.1.2 To adopt Terms of Reference for Committees – Cllr. Cox reported that this was still being worked on. The Terms of Reference would be difficult to do without an associated Scheme of Delegation. A proposal would be circulated before the November meeting to enable an informed discussion/decision to be made. **Action: JCox/Clerk**

9.2 Planning

9.2.1 To consider and make comment on planning application : Full Planning Permission : Change of use of land north of the Public House building to residential garden and parking area to serve ancillary residential dwelling. Erection of detached double garage/store and creation of vehicular access off the High Street.

Tally Ho, London Road, Barkway, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 8EX. Case Ref No: 20/01866/FP – 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**

9.2.2 To consider and make comment on planning application : Single storey side extension to main dwelling and single storey extension to existing garage outbuilding to create new double garage with archway link, and ancillary works (as amended).

Barkway House, 66 High Street, Barkway, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 8EE. Case Ref No: 20/00275/FPH – After consideration of this application, it was agreed that the Clerk should contact NHDC to check if the Conservation Officer was now satisfied with the amended plans. **Action: Clerk**

9.2.3 To receive update regarding sale by NHDC of land at Windmill Close – The Clerk reported that she had been alerted to the fact that under the terms of the lease between NHDC and the Parish Council, upon sale of the land by NHDC, the green space ownership transferred to the Parish Council who could then get the area registered as an Open Space. The Clerk to deal with this. **Action: Clerk**

9.2.4 Wisbridge Reservoir update – It was understood that it was now up to the Environment Agency (EA) to decide if water could be extracted to fill the reservoir. Dist. Cllr. Morris agreed to chase up NHDC and the EA.

Cllr. Dennis mentioned that some recent drone footage of the area had been shown to a local Archaeologist, who had in turn shown this to a colleague who had, with appropriate software, indicated that there was evidence of some interesting archaeological infrastructure beneath the surface in this area. Once confirmed, Cllr. Morris would forward this evidence to the EA and NHDC for their information.

9.2.5 Neighbourhood Plan – to receive update on Reg. 14 consultation – The Clerk reported that the consultation period would run until 23rd November. The Planning Consultant would be available to meet people by appointment on Sat 24th October to answer any questions. So far, a number of responses had been received. These would all be collated at the end of November and the Committee would meet to discuss these and agree any amendments to the Plan.

9.2.6 NHDC Local Plan Hearing Sessions – to receive update regarding postponed hearing sessions – These had now been rescheduled to commence on 23rd November. The Clerk to contact the Planning Consultant to confirm that she was still able to represent the Parish Council at the Hearings. **Action: Clerk**

9.2.7 To agree response to Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government consultation on Changes to the current planning system (deadline for responses 15th and 16th October) – It was agreed that a response to these consultations was beyond the expertise of the Parish Council. A response had been already submitted to an earlier consultation on ‘Proposed Changes to the Planning System’.

9.3 Highways

9.3.1 To receive update regarding speed and volume surveys to be carried out – A survey had been requested by County Cllr. Hill but timing was dependant on her available Highways Locality budget. It was noted that one had already been carried out back in Oct 2018. This had resulted in a new Speed Indicator Device (SID) being located near Barkway Service Station. The Clerk to liaise with Cllr. Hill to arrange a site visit

with Highways. Cllr. Dennis to attend regarding Cambridge Road and Cllr. Marchant to attend regarding London Road. **Action: Clerk/WD/DM**

9.3.2 To receive update regarding arrangements for Remembrance Day (8th Nov) and road closure – Cllr. Dennis was continuing to liaise with NHDC and the Vicar to establish if any ceremony could take place this year due to the pandemic. Cllr. Cox volunteered to assist with the information required by NHDC and informed the Council that, if the event could take place, then as a Local Authority, track and trace was a legal requirement. Cllr. Stuart agreed to look into printing the NHS QR code for a paperless means of track and trace. Paper records would also need to be made for those attendees without the technology to log in via the QR code. **Action: NS**

Cllr. Dennis would keep the council informed of any updates regarding the event. **Action: WD**

9.4 Sports and Recreation

9.4.1 To consider quotations and possible dates for installation for replacing/repair of multi-play equipment and for carrying out regular play area inspections and maintenance – Cllr. Baker reported that he and Cllr. Merchant had met a representative from a play equipment supplier and been given a good overview of what equipment might be appropriate, including provision of some adult gym equipment. The full plans/quotations were still awaited. Other suppliers were being contacted for alternative quotations. To be reported on again at the November meeting. **Action: PB**

9.4.2 To consider and decide if a Barkway Bonfire Night can take place on 5th November – After much debate, for reasons of safety and insurance, it was proposed, seconded and agreed by all that sadly it would not be possible to have a Bonfire Night display this year. Resolved.

9.4.3 To receive update on Covid-19 safe usage of the Rec. and play area – it was reported that advisory signage was still all in place and that the hand sanitiser stations were being used and refilled as and when necessary. The Bookings Clerk/Cleaner would be asked to oversee the duty of replenishing the hand sanitiser stations and all spare stock of sanitiser, gloves and paper roll would be stored inside the Pavilion Cleaner's cupboard. **Action: Clerk/JCox**

9.4.4 To receive report on football activities – Some training sessions had been taking place and a few pre-season friendly matches played. For the time being the changing rooms would remain closed.

9.5 Community Property

9.5.1 To agree Covid-Specific Risk Assessment for the Pavilion and decide if the Community Room can re-open for hire – After discussion, as the majority of bookings in the past had been for children's parties, it was proposed, seconded and agreed by all that the Community Room would stay closed. The situation would remain monitored and be reviewed again in January. Resolved. **Action: Clerk**

9.5.2 To receive update on donors board for the Pavilion entrance hall - Cllr. Cox put forward the idea of creating a digital wallpaper of bricks to be displayed, with bronze, silver and gold donors placed in a random fashion, interspersed with some photos. It was agreed that this idea would work well as a form of permanent display and that Cllr. Cox should go ahead and obtain costings. **Action: JCox**

9.5.3 To agree size and location of a storage container/metal shed for the Recreation Ground to enable quotations to be sought – Cllrs. Baker and Marchant had measured the space between the back of the Pavilion and the fence. It was considered that

an 8' x 8' half shipping container would fit. It would probably require a concrete base to stand on. Likely cost would be approx. £1,200 to £1,500, plus the cost of a base. It was understood that planning permission may need to be obtained. The Clerk to contact NHDC and report back at the November meeting. **Action: Clerk**

9.5.4 To receive update on repairs to Pavilion ballastrade – The Clerk reported that the go ahead had been given to replace the ballastrade but there was some difficulty with obtaining the materials. A temporary repair would be carried out, for reasons of safety, if the delay was ongoing.

9.6 Environment

9.6.1 To receive update on renovation works to Newsells War Memorial and to consider quotation for additional works to steps – It was reported that the specified job had been completed and done to a high standard. Whilst doing the renovation, the contractors had unearthed part of the original steps, made out of rare bricks. These were stable bricks from St Pancras. A quotation had been received of £3,260 + VAT to reinstate the steps either side of the memorial. After discussion it was proposed, seconded and agreed by all, that due to the expertise involved and the need to complete the project timely, that this should be treated as a continuation of contract and that the requirement of the Financial Regulations to obtain other quotations should be waived in this instance and that the quotation be accepted. Resolved.

The Clerk to ask the contractors to proceed as soon as possible and she would contact Newsells Stud to update them on the project and enquire if the company might be willing to contribute financially, especially in view of the fact that St Pancras stable bricks would be used in the project. **Action: Clerk**

9.6.2 To receive update on survey being carried out to establish condition of the Wagon Wash – Cllr. Connolly had not yet received a report on the survey. She agreed to chase this and would report again at the November meeting. **Action: JC**

9.6.3 To receive update on proposed Herts County Council Rights of Way footpath maintenance works – Weather had delayed work on resurfacing areas on footpaths 11 and 14. The owners of footpath 11 had been contacted by Cllr. Connolly and were now aware of the proposed resurfacing work. They were unhappy with past hedge cutting maintenance work carried out along there by HCC contractors but would be willing to monitor any future work to see that it was done appropriately.

It was noted that the footbridge had now been fixed at Newsells and that the Kissing Gates on Bridleway 18 were on the list for HCC to deal with.

9.7 Media and Communications

9.7.1 To discuss website accessibility, consider quotations and agree any necessary action to acquire a compliant website – Cllr. Stuart reported that having run some tests on the website, it concluded that the website was not compliant with the new accessibility regulations. He had been in touch with a number of website developers and hoped to have some quotations to build a new website and would report back at the November meeting. An Accessibility Statement had been produced and published in time to meet the 23rd Sept. deadline. It stated that the website was not compliant and that the Parish Council was working towards making it fully compliant. **Action: NS**

9.7.2 To receive update on the Autumn edition of the Barkway Bulletin/Annual Report – The Barkway Bulletin had been printed and distributed. The normal attendees of the Annual Parish Meeting had been contacted and asked to submit reports to be included within an Annual Village Report which would be published online.

Some reports had been received from various organisations but a reminder would be sent out to those who had not yet responded, along with a version of what the report looked like so far, and they would be given a further week to submit a report for inclusion in the document. **Action: Clerk/JCox**

9.7.3 Police Report – No report available.

9.7.4 To receive update on the Barkway Hub - Cllr. Cox reported that most of the volunteers were happy to continue helping with the support group. A Committee of the Parish Council would be formed and would present the Council with their Terms of Reference. A leaflet would be sent out to the village, reminding people that help was still available and to update people on matters concerning Halloween and Bonfire Night, when the normal activities would be unable to take place. It was requested that the Parish Council subscribed to CDA for Herts for an annual subscription of £35. This organisation provided valuable information and support for Community Groups like the Barkway Hub. It was proposed, seconded and approved by all. Resolved. **Action: Clerk**

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 13.10.2020 was £94,035.84

Petty Cash £16.01

Receipts since the last meeting:

£55.00 – Training / Hire of Football Pitch

£10.75 – Barclays Bank Interest

£18,360.00 – NHDC – Half Yearly Precept

10.2 To authorise payments to be made

Approval of payments since last meeting:

DD £8.40 – Sage Software – Monthly Subscription

DD £68.31 – Nest – Pension Contributions

DD £8.70 – Castle Water – Water Pavilion

DD £81.00 – EDF – Electricity Pavilion

DC £14.39 – Zoom Monthly Fee

DC £20.07 – Amazon – Ink Cartridge

Approval of payments to be made at meeting:

By bank transfer

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

£20.00 – Roz Danter – Pavilion Bookings and Cleaning Sept

£45.00 – Orla Swann – Litter Picking Sept

£45.00 – Kaitlin Aldridge – Litter Picking Sept

£68.00 – R Bonfield – Maintenance Rec. Sept

£240.00 – T S Drake – Grass Cutting & Line Marking Sept

£925.90 – The Printed Page – Printing for Neighbourhood Plan (NP) Consultation

£60.00 – HAPTC – Online Training Sessions for new Councillors

£5,376.00 – Herts Renovation – Repairs/Cleaning to Newsells War Memorial

£39.18 – Catharine Toms – Clerk’s Expenses – Postage and Stationery – NP Consultation

- £6.70 – Post Office Special Delivery Charge
- £23.40 – Post Office Stamps
- £9.08 – WH Smith Envelopes

Reading Room Accounts:

Bank Balance at 13.10.2020 was £11,483.51

Receipts since last meeting:

£0.07 – Barclays Bank - Interest

Payments since last meeting:

DD - £41.00 – NHDC Rates Reading Room

DD - £125.33 – Total Gas and Power – Electricity Reading Room

10.3 To set date for meeting of the Finance Committee – Monday 26th October via Zoom. Agreed. **Action: Clerk**

11. Correspondence – A letter from the HM Land Registry asking for comment on an application for registration of title ownership by adverse possession on an area of verge in Townsend Close. Details to be sent to Cllr. Hill who would check if HCC Highways had any information regarding this small area of land. **Action: Clerk**

12. Items to be deferred to the next meeting – Terms of Reference for Committees and Working Parties, Speed and Volume Surveys, New play equipment for the Rec. and maintenance programmes, the Donors Board for the Pavilion, New storage shed, structural report on Wagon Wash and Barkway Hub Committee.

13. Date of next meeting – Tuesday 10th November.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 9.31pm