

Minutes of Barkway Parish Council Meeting
Held remotely via Zoom on Tuesday 14th July 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

Members of the Public: Two members of the public present

2. To receive and accept apologies for absence: Dist. Cllr. Tony Hunter

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. Minutes

4.1 To approve the minutes of the last meetings (09.06.2020 & 30.06.2020) - Proposed, seconded and all in favour to approve. Resolved. **Action: Clerk**

4.2 To consider any matters arising from the last meetings – Cllr. Baker had conducted some research into recommended playground area needed per pupil of a Nursery/Primary School (re: item 9.2.2). With 57 pupils on the role this would be 2,600 square meters and Barkway School would have nowhere near that with the added extension. However, he was unsure whether the Forest School site and the field at Barley School needed to be included in the calculation.

5. Public Session - to receive representations from members of the public – Standing Orders were suspended to allow a member of the public present to inform the Council regarding some fly-tipping that had been set fire to in a layby south of Barkway. The Clerk would report this to the District Council online. **Action: Clerk**

6. To receive report from District Councillor – Dist. Cllr. Morris reported that the recycling centre in Royston was operational again and that Officers from North Herts District Council were now venturing out again.

7. To receive report from County Councillor - County Cllr. Hill reported that Royston Library was now partly open with an online service with click and collect. Although Royston recycling was open, Buntingford was still being reviewed as the site location was making it more problematic.

8. Council Administration – To receive update on recruitment of a new Parish Councillor – The Clerk reported that two members of the public present at the meeting had indicated an interest in becoming a Parish Councillor. One of which had expressed a definite interest and had forwarded some information about himself which had been circulated to the Councillors. The other member of the public was sitting in on the meeting to get a better idea of the role and would forward some information about himself in due course. It was agreed to defer the matter to the August meeting. **Action: Clerk**

9. To receive updates from Portfolio Holders

9.1 Corporate Governance – review of Standing Orders – Cllr. Cox had been comparing a standard model document against the current document and the main changes needed were regarding General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). A proposal of changes would be circulated to all in time for the next 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 – Cllr. Magill explained that there was still missing information on this application. It was understood that an enforcement officer had attended the site and had measured the existing building to be a height of 4.8m, which was somewhat lower than the height being put forward by the applicant. The applicants were also being requested to have a bat survey carried out. Once the conflicting information was clarified and the results of the bat survey made available, then a full response could be submitted to NHDC. The Clerk to contact the Case Officer at 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 – The Parish Council was still unable to make comment on this application due to not having access to two relevant drawings 11C and 21, which were referred to in the application documentation. It was important for the Parish Council to see what the proposed building would look like from certain angles, as it was in the Conservation Area. The Clerk to contact the planning case officer to request those drawings to be made available and also to find out from the agent the origins of the formula being used to calculate area of recreational space needed to remain. Concern was raised by the Parish Council that an important planning application was being held up from determination due to matters beyond its control. **Action: Clerk**

9.2.3 To consider and make comment on planning application : Full Permission Householder : Enlargement of existing rear dormer window and replacement of existing pantiles over existing left hand side of front elevation.

17 High Street, Barkway, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 8EA. Case Ref No: 20/00927/FPH – The Parish Council was unable to respond to this consultation as the

drawings and description with the application were inconsistent and did not tally. The Clerk to contact the planning case officer at NHDC. **Action: Clerk**

It was proposed and agreed to write to NHDC executive officers and party leaders to bring to their attention the poor quality of information being provided with planning applications, that as a primary consultee, the Parish Council was supposed to be able to decipher and from that submit meaningful responses. Examples would be given of recent applications which had been held up from determination due to inaccurate, misleading or completely missing information. **Action: Clerk/JM**

9.2.4 To consider request from NHDC for a deed of variation relating to S106 agreement regarding land at Wheatsheaf Meadow – This was an agreement dating back to 2011, regarding a small area of garden in front of two bungalows on the old Wheatsheaf Meadow House site (Periwinkle Close), which was supposed to have been given to the Parish Council as a Community Area. After much going back and forth, due to complications of obtaining a sensible lease agreement and regarding S106 monies allocated for the Pavilion, it was agreed by the Parish Council in 2014, to let NHDC retain and look after the garden. The need now for a request for approval of a deed of variation was because when pre-contract land searches were conducted for the area, it flagged up as an unresolved issue. Cllr. Stuart pointed out that the postcode for this land quoted on the front of the lease related to an area in Hitchin! This would be pointed out to NHDC. It was proposed, seconded and agreed that there was no objection to this proposed deed of variation. The Clerk to respond to NHDC. **Action: Clerk**

9.2.5 Wisbridge Reservoir – There was a need to agree the next steps to be taken regarding the issues relating to the reservoir development. No progress had been made so far with either the Planning Authority or the Environment Agency (EA). The EA were still waiting to hear back from the agents with basic information including their justification on how much water would need to be abstracted to fill the reservoir. There was a limit of only 20 cubic metres per day allowed without a licence granted by the EA. It was highly unlikely that a licence would be granted by the EA as it was a highly sensitive area environmentally with a chalk aquifer and the river Quin. Pressure needed to be put on the EA to more actively investigate this project. Cllr. Stuart had taken some interesting photos illustrating the vast amounts of material that had been imported and showing one bank far higher than the other and no evidence of a hole to form the reservoir. Movements of material had continued into June. Reed Parish Council had requested a joint meeting to discuss the Reservoir. It was proposed, seconded and agreed by all to meet with Reed Parish Council and combine effort to try and get action from other parties to address matters. The Clerk to arrange a meeting via Zoom the following week. **Action: Clerk**

9.3 Highways update – to receive update regarding Barkway Drivesafe – The Clerk had communicated with the person who had previously been leading Drivesafe, she had been informed that it had disbanded now through lack of interest. It was suggested to include an article in the Bulletin to generate interest and volunteer help in resurrecting the scheme as speeding through the village had become a major problem again. Cllr. Dennis agreed to co-ordinate the scheme with the help of volunteers. **Action: WD**

The Clerk to contact Barley Parish Council to get advice as their scheme was still active. **Action: Clerk**

9.4 Sports and Recreation

9.4.1 To receive update regarding play equipment consultation – Cllr. Baker had emailed a note to all Cllrs. regarding results of a recent consultation with parents and children, the feedback indicated that the fort was the most popular piece of play equipment. On examining the fort it had become clear that due to numerous repairs over the years, it would not stand up in the longer term to being dismantled and repaired again. It was recommended to proceed with replacing this with a similar piece of equipment. In order to save money (on making good the ground after demolition) and free up an area directly in front of the Pavilion, it was suggested to re-site the fort to the south west of its current location. The aim would be to complete the project by the end of summer. Three quotations had been circulated. It was proposed, seconded and agreed by all to proceed with replacement rather than repair with a similar but more up to date equivalent. Quotations would re-circulated and a decision would be made at next meeting. **Action: PB**

9.4.2 To agree action for replacing/repair of multi-play equipment and for carrying out regular play area inspections/maintenance - (see item 9.4.1). Inspections and maintenance to be agreed at the next meeting in conjunction with ordering of new equipment. **Action: PB**

9.4.3 To receive update on meeting to plan for Bonfire Night – 5th Nov 2020 – Cllr. Baker had emailed the firework team from last year and all had agreed that if regulations permitted the event to go ahead, then they would be willing to help again. In order to give the event a fund raising focus it was agreed to make it known that any profits from contributions collected would be put towards replacing of play equipment on the Rec., some of which was very old and needed updating. Some of the equipment would also benefit from a new coat of paint.

9.4.4 To consider Covid-19 Risk Assessment for Play Area and decide if safe and appropriate to re-open the Play Area – Clerk reported that some play parks in the area were reopening, whilst others were not. Every Council had to decide for themselves having carried out Covid-19 specific risk assessments. It was agreed that the Council needed to act with caution as the Play Area could not be cleaned or supervised. The onus needed to be put on users to keep to social distancing, using hand sanitiser, etc. by putting appropriate signage in place and the Parish Council monitoring the situation. If users did not behave appropriately then it could be closed down again. The Clerk and Cllrs. Cox, Dennis and Baker to meet later in the week to carry out risk assessment and agree signage and any other measures with the aim of reopening the play area safely as soon as possible. **Action: Clerk, J Cox, WD, PB**

9.4.5 To provide update on usage of the Rec. and equipment by 3rd parties providing football training – Cllr. Dennis reported that he had consulted with NHDC Leisure Services and had been advised that people carrying out training sessions on a commercial basis should ask the Parish Council for permission in advance and be prepared to show evidence of insurance cover. All requests to use the Rec. for training sessions needed to be booked through the Bookings Clerk and equipment would be made available to them in exchange for a small contribution. All booking would then be entered on the calendar which would make it clear when line-marking and grass cutting could take place. A Covid-19 specific risk assessment needed to be carried out for the football pitches with records kept of those attending training. The changing rooms would not be opening yet. This was proposed, seconded and agreed by all.

9.4.6 To consider and decide if provisional booking for a football tournament on 15/16 Aug can go ahead on the Rec. As the current government advice was still not to encourage large gatherings, it was agreed that it would be too bigger risk to everyone and would upset the villagers with the disruption it would cause. It was proposed, seconded and agreed by all to refuse permission for this event. The Clerk to inform the Bookings Clerk. **Action: Clerk**

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 note poor condition of ballustrade in front of Pavilion and agree action to repair - The balustrade had been assessed and it was recommended that it needed restructuring to make it stronger. Quotations would be obtained. **Action: Clerk**
The Clerk to also progress with trying to obtain quotations for replacing the double entrance doors. **Action: Clerk**

9.6 Environment – to receive update – Cllr. Connolly had previously emailed to all Cllrs. a quotation received from a Conservation Accredited Engineer who could carry out a survey to report on the condition of the structure of the Wagon Wash and outline any recommendations for repairs. Prior to this, Countryside Rights of Way at Herts County Council had visited to give some land management advice and had recommended that a survey was carried out of the physical structure of the pond to ensure that any remedial work was appropriate to its historical significance. The cost of the survey would be £960 + VAT. It was noted that this cost could be covered by the £3,000 in the contingency budget. As this was very specialist work, it was proposed, seconded and agreed by all that it would be very difficult to obtain other quotations, so to accept the quotation and request the survey be carried out as soon as possible, particularly in view of the restoration works of the water gardens across the road at Barkway House and flooding in Church Lane earlier in the year. Investigation would be made to find out if any restoration works could be supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund. **Action: JC**

9.7.1 To receive update regarding website – Cllr. Stuart reported he was still working in the background on updating the website. **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 a rough draft would be circulated as soon as possible. The aim would be to publish by the end of July. Cllr. Dennis volunteered help if any photos were needed. **Action: JCox/WD**

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 as guidance had changed, meetings were now being held monthly. Tasks were still being done. It was suggested that the group of volunteers were kept going as a Village Volunteers network and that the Barkway Hub became a Committee of Barkway Parish Council. This idea would link in well to the aspirations within the Neighbourhood Plan as a way the village could operate going forward. Cllr. Cox to pull the idea together for proposal to the Council at the next meeting. **Action: JCox**

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 14.07.2020 was £74,730.73

Petty Cash £16.01

Receipts since the last meeting:

£286.38 from Pavilion A/C

10.2 To authorise payments to be made

Approval of payments since last meeting:

DD £66.00 – Nest – Pension Contributions

DD £8.40 – Sage Software – Monthly Subscription

DD £8.70 – Castle Water – Waste Water Pavilion

DD £81.00 – EDF – Electricity Pavilion

DC £28.78 – 123-Reg – Domain Renewal

DC £17.50 – Amazon – Black Sacks for Litter Picker

DC £29.98 – Amazon – Locks for Goalposts

DC £32.70 – Amazon – Black Refuse Sacks for the Rec.

DC £67.20 – Mark Harrod – New nets for 5-aside goals – Rec.

Approval of payments to be made at meeting:

By bank transfer

£1,064.19 - Catharine Toms – Clerk’s Monthly Salary + Office Allowance

£15.00 – Roz Danter – Bookings/Cleaning Pavilion May + Holiday Pay 2019/20

£30.00 – Orla Swann – Litter Picking 1 week May + Holiday Pay 2019/20

£37.50 – Kaitlin Aldridge – Litter Picking Holiday Pay 2019/20

£28.78 – Catharine Toms – Clerks Expenses – Zoom monthly charge x 2

£119.00 – R Bonfield – Maintenance Rec. – June

£137.00 – A Dodkin – Maintenance

£137.00 – D Dodkin – Maintenance

£55.00 – M Thornton – Cleaning Windows and Bus Shelters

£148.00 – Groundwork UK – Repayment of underspent grant for Neighbourhood Plan

Reading Room Accounts:

Bank Balance at 14.07.2020 was £1,820.43

Receipts since last meeting:

£409.18 – Parish Council A/C – Rates 2020/21

£500.00 – Parish Council A/C – Electricity 2020/21

Payments since last meeting:

DD - £41.00 – NHDC Rates Reading Room

10.3 To receive and approve grant application from Barkway Chapel – A grant application had been received from Barkway Chapel for financial assistance towards maintenance of their Churchyard. It was proposed, seconded and agreed by all to award £200, the same as the previous year and as included in the budget. Agreed. **Action: Clerk**

11. Correspondence – Nothing to report.

12. Items to be deferred to the next meeting – Standing Orders, Terms of Reference for Committees and Working Parties, Planning applications relating to Rear of 9 High Street and Barkway School, New play equipment for the Rec. and maintenance programmes, the Donors Board for the Pavilion and the Barkway Bulletin.

13. Date of next meeting – Tuesday 11th August.

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