

Minutes of Barkway Parish Council Meeting
Held remotely via Zoom on Tuesday 9th June 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: One member of the public 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. Cox (item 10.2).

4. Minutes

4.1 To approve the minutes of the last meetings (12.05.2020 & 26.05.2020) – Two amendments were agreed to correct wording. Proposed, seconded and all in favour to approve. Resolved. **Action: Clerk**

4.2 To consider any matters arising from the last meetings – None

5. Public Session - to receive representations from members of the public – Standing Orders were suspended to allow a resident who was present to discuss a recent response by the Parish Council to a planning consultation regarding the Tally Ho pub. An email stating that he did not agree with the comment submitted to North Herts District Council (NHDC) had previously been circulated to Councillors. The resident was advised to submit his own comments into NHDC even though the deadline for submission had passed it would still likely be taken into consideration.

6. To receive report from District Councillor – Dist. Cllr. Morris reported that he was going to make a representation objecting to the Tally Ho application at the forthcoming NHDC Planning Control Committee Meeting via Zoom. The planning case officer had already made their recommendation, the application would then be determined by the Planning Control Committee. With regard to the illegally placed mobile home in a field at the south end of Barkway, it was reported that the deadline of 30th Nov 2019 for compliance to remove the home had passed and a 6 month extension granted. This deadline had also now passed, but because of COVID-19 no enforcement by NHDC had taken place.

7. To receive report from County Councillor - A report that had previously been sent by email was read out by Cllr. Hill (see appendix A).

Standing Orders were resumed.

8. Council Administration – To receive update on recruitment of a new Parish Councillor – The Clerk reported that interest in becoming a Parish Councillor had been received, it had been hoped that they could have joined the meeting. The Clerk would inform the Council of any further updates on the matter. **Action: Clerk**

9. To receive updates from Portfolio Holders

9.1 Corporate Governance – To receive update on review of documents – It was reported that due to COVID-19 and time taken having to deal with the Barkway Hub, not much progress had been made. The Standing Orders would be reviewed compared with a model document from the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and a proposed document would be prepared for comment. It was noted that Terms of Reference were needed for Committees and Working Parties and Herts Association of Parish and Town Councils (HAPTC) would be consulted for model documents. **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 – An email had been received from the planning case officer. She had requested additional information from the agent, including clarification on proposed area of the garden to the north and to request a bat survey. It was understood that both side windows would be obscured glass to provide privacy to neighbouring properties. Concerns about the driveway had also been forwarded to Highways again for their comment. It was hoped that the information would be available in time for the next Council meeting on 14th July. A neighbour had since measured the height of the ridge of the existing building and reported that it was only 5m not 5.8m as stated in the application. It had been recommended to NHDC that the Case Officer needed to physically come and check the height of the existing building as the proposed height of the developed building would be significantly different from existing and would have greater impact on the appearance set within the Conservation Area. **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 – It was reported that the planning case officer had requested more detailed information from the agent and the School Head. Research was still required into how much playground area needed to be retained for the number of children at the school. **Action: PB.**

Concern was raised by the Council not wishing to hold up a planning decision for the school. However, it needed to be pointed out to the Planning Officers at NHDC that failure to provide enough detailed information, on important planning applications such as those that would affect the Conservation Area, wasted everyone's time. Primary consultees, such as the Parish Council, needed to have access to sufficient information to enable them to provide meaningful and valid comments. **Action: Clerk**

9.2.3 To receive update regarding Wisbridge Reservoir – It was reported that correspondence backwards and forwards to the Environment Agency (EA) had taken place, and in parallel with Reed Parish Council. From the prospective of the EA, imported material had been compliant at the time they had checked. Photos taken more recently had since been submitted to the EA. This further evidence needed to be assessed by the EA and they needed to decide if any action was needed. In relation to water extraction needed to supply water to the reservoir, the EA acknowledged that the reservoir could not fill purely from rainwater. If the reservoir was to be filled from nearby ditches at a rate of more than 20 cubic metres per day then a water extraction licence would be needed. The EA had contacted the agents back in January asking for confirmation on how they proposed to fill the reservoir and a response was still awaited. If the rate was less than 20 cubic metres per day then it would need to be demonstrated that this was so. This was a matter for EA to follow up and for the Parish Councils to request that they were kept informed. It was calculated that it could take 3.6 years to fill the reservoir to 1m, so it could take 10 years to fill completely without any use of water or evaporation. At last the EA seemed to be engaging with the issue. Beyond that, MP Sir Oliver Heald had an interest in the chalk aquifer and preservation of ancient chalk-based streams, such as the River Quin. It should be challenged as to whether the 20 cubic metre extraction volume was sustainable or valid in this situation from where water eventually fed into the protected River Quin. NHDC and EA were now liaising. If the reservoir was unviable because it couldn't be filled with water, then the operation would need to submit an application for planning permission because it was then a waste transfer operation and not allowed under a permitted development order.

County Cllr. Fiona Hill had raised the issue with MP Sir Oliver Heald as it appeared that the EA were encountering the same problem as Councils, in that they could only do what they were permitted to do within the limits of the law. Ministers needed to be made aware that the law needed changing to prevent projects like this happening, as it seemed it was not an isolated incident, this was a national problem.

9.3 Highways update – Cllr. Dennis been in contact with the Police about motor bikes speeding on Cambridge Road. There had been no recent Police speed checks carried out along there. Barkway Drivesafe had appeared to have disbanded. The Clerk to contact the team leader and find out if they were still operating, and if not, if it could be re-started. **Action: Clerk.**

Standing Orders were suspended to allow a member of the public to talk about traffic speeding on London Road. The new Speed Indicator Device (SID) was not having much effect. In addition, the second SID was often obscured by overhanging foliage, so not fully operational. Police speed checks had taken place along there but had been during the day when the problem was not as bad. It was suggested that an appropriate time for Police speed checks would be 7-9am and 7-9pm. Cllr. Dennis agreed to contact the Police regarding more speed checks. **Action: WD.** County Cllr. Hill to report overhanging foliage. **Action: FH.** Standing Orders were resumed.

9.4 Sports and Recreation

9.4.1 To consider quotations received, consultation carried out and agree action to repair/replace multi-play 'fort' on the Rec. – Cllr. Baker reported that he had emailed some of play leaders to seek some feedback on type of equipment required, as alternative equipment to the play fort could be considered. A report to be given at the next meeting in order for a decision to be made. There would be a need to use a different location because of the cost of repairing the ground where the old fort stood. This could create some needed extra space just in front of the Pavilion. **Action: PB**

9.4.2 To consider quotations received and agree action for quarterly play area inspections and annual re-tensioning of zip-wire – Research indicated that a cheaper price would be obtained if inspections and maintenance were provided by the same company as would supply the new piece of equipment. Cllr. Baker to report back to meeting in July. **Action: PB**

9.4.3 To agree date for initial meeting to plan for Bonfire Night – 5th Nov 2020 – It was agreed to arrange an initial meeting towards the end of June to sound out people who had helped in the past then, if it could go ahead, some arrangements would already be in place. **Action: PB**

Cllr. Morris left meeting. He was thanked for attending.

Concern was raised regarding some football training sessions being conducted by unknown people on the Rec. using Parish Council equipment during lockdown. Goal posts were being dragged around. If these sessions were being carried out on a commercial basis then evidence of Public Liability Insurance was needed and some sort of payment from them in return for use of the equipment. The Clerk and Cllr. Dennis to find out what was happening. **Action: Clerk/WD**

9.5 Community Property

9.5.1 To receive update on renovation of Newsells War Memorial – The Clerk reported that she had been in contact with the contractor, who had been isolating due to COVID-19, and he had now agreed to start by the end of August without fail.

9.5.2 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**

9.6 Environment – to receive update – There was not much to report but thanks to County Cllr. Hill, contractors were cutting verges now to make the most of allowing wild flowers to flourish. There were now 34 wild flower sites in her area.

9.7 Media and Communications

9.7.1 To receive update regarding website – Updates had been posted regarding the Barkway Hub and COVID-19 information, along with Online Watch Liaison (OWL) reports. More work was going to be done to tidy up the website and remove anything out of date. **Action: NS**

9.7.2 To agree action to produce Summer edition of the Barkway Bulletin/Annual Report – It was agreed by all to submit reports to Cllr. Cox by Friday 10th July and Cllr. Cox agreed to produce the document. All were advised to look at a previous edition on the website. The aim would be to get this finalised and distributed by the end of July. **Action: All**

9.7.3 Police Report – Recent crimes included scams relating to Covid testing.

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 09.06.2020 was £82,417.14

Petty Cash £16.01

Receipts since the last meeting:

CR £21.01 – Barclays - Interest

10.2 To authorise payments to be made

Approval of payments since last meeting:

DD £8.40 – Sage Software – Monthly Subscription

DD £8.70 – Castle Water – Waste Water Pavilion

DD £81.00 – EDF – Electricity Pavilion

Bank Payment £310.00 – T S Drake – March and April Grass Cutting & Pitch Maintenance

Approval of payments to be made at meeting:

By bank transfer

£409.18 – Reading Room A/C – Rates 2020/21

£500.00 – Reading Room A/C – Electricity 2020/21

£59.50 – R Bonfield – Pavilion & Rec. Maintenance May

£140.00 – T S Drake – Grass Cutting May

£417.48 – The Printed Page – Barkway Hub Cards and Gloves

£530.68 – Saleesha Hall – Barkway Hub Sanitiser and Blue Roll

£36.00 – E-horse – Refund Booking for Community Room

£1,091.96 - Catharine Toms – Clerk’s Monthly Salary + Office Allowance

£110.00 – Roz Danter – Bookings/Cleaning Pavilion May + Holiday Pay 2019/20

£37.50 – Orla Swann – Litter Picking 1 week May + Holiday Pay 2019/20

£22.50 – Kaitlin Aldridge – Litter Picking Holiday Pay 2019/20

£24.95 – Catharine Toms – Clerks Expenses *

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£14.98 – Amazon – Gloves for Litter Pickers

£9.97 – Amazon – New Padlock for Shed

Parish Council – Pavilion Account:

Bank Balance at 09.06.2020 was £0.00

Receipts since last meeting: None

Going to PCC

Payments to be authorised at meeting:

Bank Transfer to close A/C to Parish Council A/C £286.38

Reading Room Accounts:

Bank Balance at 09.06.2020 was £952.25

Receipts since last meeting:

CR - COIF Interest - £33.53

CR – Barclays Interest - £0.13

Payments since last meeting:

DD - £41.00 – NHDC Rates Reading Room

10.3 To receive and approve grant application from Barkway Hub – This application had been received from the Rector on behalf of the Parish Pantry set up to provide food assistance to Barkway residents during the COVID-19 pandemic. It was for £50 to provide a small stock of food supplies for residents that may be facing financial hardship as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting change in job market. The money would go to the Parochial Church Council (PCC) and would be ring-fenced funds. It was proposed, seconded and agreed by all to support the application. Resolved.
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 14th July.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 9.35pm