

**Minutes of Barkway Parish Council Meeting**  
**Held at the Pavilion, Barkway on Tuesday 9th January 2024 at 7.30pm.**

**1. Attendance:** Cllrs:  
Mr W Dennis (Chair)  
Mr P Baker (Vice Chair)  
Ms L Fletcher  
Mr G Swann  
Ms J Cox  
Mr W Sapsford

**Also present:** Mrs C Toms (Clerk/RFO), Dist. Cllr. G Morris and County Cllr. F Hill.

**Members of the Public:** One other member of the public was present.

**2. To receive and accept apologies for absence:** Cllr. D Marchant (family commitment). Apology was 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. Dennis – items 9.5.1 and 9.5.2. Cllr. Swann – 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.

Standing Orders were suspended.

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

**6. To receive report from District Councillor** – District Cllr. Morris informed the Council that the District Council was considering discontinuing seasonal leaf clearing. Purple bins (general waste) were soon going to be collected less often, every 3 weeks. The adopted North Herts Council (NHC) Local Plan was about to be reviewed.

**7. To receive report from County Councillor** - County Cllr. Hill reported that Herts County Council (HCC) had put additional funding into Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and were recruiting and training new staff.

The consultation on proposed school admission arrangements for 2025/26 had closed on 11<sup>th</sup> Dec.

Libraries had held well attended seasonal events and slipper swaps.

She would forward details to the Clerk on how to progress matters to sign up to the Armed Forces Covenant. **Action: Clerk**

The problem gulleys in Gas Lane and the High Street had been reported and were being investigated.

The application submitted by the Clerk for funding towards the Windmill Close grit bin from her Locality Budget would be approved. The bin could then be ordered. The Clerk to liaise with Cllr. Hill to identify a suitable location for it to be sited. **Action: Clerk**

Cllr. Hill had responded to various surveys/consultations including objecting to proposals to increase car parking charges in Royston, and the proposed Congestion Charge in Cambridge. She had also voiced concerns regarding the forthcoming proposals for the Waste service provided by the District Council.

Cllrs. Morris and Hill were thanked for their reports.

Standing Orders were resumed.

**8. Council Administration** – Nothing to report.

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

**9.1 Corporate Governance** – nothing to report. A review of governance documents would be needed before the end of the financial year. **Action: JC/Clerk**

**9.2 Planning**

**9.2.1 To receive update on matters relating to site BK2 and agree any necessary action** – Cllr. Swann reported that the major building works were now all complete, so some attention needed to be given to restoring the grass verges along Windmill Close which were in a terrible state due to vehicles using them for parking. Cllr. Hill would be liaising with HCC Highways to see what could be done to improve matters.

**9.2.2 To consider and make comment on planning application:**

**Full Permission Householder : Single storey and two storey extensions Mews Cottage, 150 High Street, Barkway, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 8EG. Case Ref No: 23/001813/FPH** – It was proposed, seconded and agreed by all that there was no objection to the application subject to the Conservation Officer being satisfied that the plans were sympathetic and in keeping with the Conservation Area. Resolved. The Clerk to respond to NHC. **Action: Clerk**

**9.2.3 To consider and make comment on planning application:**

**Listed Building Consent : Single storey and two storey extensions. Internal alterations.**

**Mews Cottage, 150 High Street, Barkway, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 8EG. Case Ref No: 23/001814/LBC** – It was proposed, seconded and agreed by all that there was no objection to the application subject to the Conservation Officer being satisfied that the plans were sympathetic and in keeping with the Conservation Area. Resolved. The Clerk to respond to NHC. **Action: Clerk**

**9.2.4 To consider and make comment on planning application:**

**Section 73 Application : Removal of Condition 9 (Excess imported material) of planning application reference 22/00910/FP granted on 17/10/2022 for Retention of 11,936 cubic metres of soil to create an agricultural Reservoir with the capacity of 5,500 cubic metres.**

**Land Between Bush Wood and Rokey Wood, High Street, Reed, Hertfordshire. Case Ref No: 23/02887/S73** – It was proposed, seconded and agreed by all to object to the application. Cllr. Swann to liaise with Dist. Cllr. Morris on a suitable response to be submitted. **Action: GS**

**9.2.5 To receive update on progress for finalisation of the Barkway & Nuthampstead Neighbourhood Plan (NP)** – The Clerk to contact Planning Consultant Jacqueline Veater for an update. **Action: Clerk**

**9.3 Highways**

**9.3.1 To receive update on purchase and siting of a grit bin in Windmill Close** – (see item 7).

**9.3.2 To receive update on possible Community Payback Team work in Gas Lane and on Royston Road** – Following the Street Cleaning that had taken place

on 18<sup>th</sup> December, the footpath along Royston Road was now clear of leaves and debris, so no work was now needed there. Cllr. Fletcher had reported that a culvert in Gas Lane was blocked and needed some repair, so until that was done there was no point in doing work on the ditch. HCC were aware of the issue and it was on the list to be sorted in the next financial year.

It was discussed that there was a need for the footpaths, in particular leading from the Village Hall towards the entrance to Cokenach, to be seasonally cleared to maintain the width of the path. It was agreed to approach the Community Payback Team Officers towards the end of the summer to try and schedule in some path clearing work for later in the year. **Action: Clerk**

**9.3.3 To discuss ongoing vehicular speeding issues through the village and agree action required** – Despite recent activity by Police with speed cameras in the village, there was still the ongoing speeding issues. Cllr. Dennis would talk to his new contact at the Police to see if they could help tackle the problem. **Action: WD**

**9.3.4 To submit report of state of Bridleway 17** – Cllr. Dennis had been working on a report which needed a few more amendments. He had been in contact with The British Horse Society who had indicated that there was a requirement for a minimum 4 metre width on a Bridleway for safety reasons. The bridleway currently narrowed to just 2 metres in places. A final draft of the report would be circulated for approval at the February meeting. **Action: WD**

#### **9.4 Sports and Recreation**

**9.4.1 To receive update on project to upgrade the play area equipment** – Nothing to report.

**9.4.2 To receive update on football activities** – The Clerk reported that football was going well and that Buntingford Cougars were proving to be a responsible club to deal with. All invoices were being paid promptly. Pitches were being inspected before games took place. The previous weekend all games had been called off due to the pitches being waterlogged.

#### **9.5 Community Property**

Cllr. Baker took over to be Chair of the meeting.

**9.5.1 To receive update from Working Party looking at updating the Constitution of the Reading Room** – Cllrs. Baker and Fletcher had sent out a draft constitution to interested parties and opinion had been equally divided as to best future use of the room. They would now make arrangements to share the plans with a wider audience.

In response to a member of the public requesting at the December meeting that a referendum be held to decide on the future use of the Reading Room, the Clerk had sought advice from Herts Association of Parish and Town Councils (HAPTC). They advised that a consultation rather than a referendum be held, as referendums were expensive and would have to be done through NHC. As only one person had requested a referendum, there was no legal obligation to hold one. The consultation could take on a variety of forms, via the website, WhatsApp, poll cards, etc.

Cllrs. Baker and Fletcher to meet to discuss a revised action plan. **Action: PB/LF**

**9.5.2 To receive update on progression of plans to improve accessibility to the Reading Room** – The Chair and the Clerk were due to meet the adjoining neighbours the coming weekend to discuss the plans. **Action: Clerk/WD**

Cllr. Dennis resumed as Chair of the meeting.

**9.6 Environment - To receive update on progress with Wagon Wash project** - Cllr. Fletcher had been in touch with numerous organisations to try and obtain some funding for the project, but sadly she had achieved no success. The recent Grade II listing of, the now to be known as the ‘Carriage Wash’ (due to its brick lined base), and

the ITV news coverage had raised the profile nationally, emphasising that it was indeed a rare historic structure. The Barkway Local History Group (BLHG) were keen to help with fundraising and were prepared to include details on their website, of which seemed to attract a lot of interest.

After lengthy discussion, it was proposed, seconded and agreed by all to set up a 'Carriage Wash Restoration' fund which would be added to annually by the Parish Council. It would show that some funds were already in place, which might encourage others to make contributions. The Barkway Market Committee could be approached for a grant each year from the market profits. Concern was raised that some of the restoration work needed doing soon, as the structure was in a poor state of repair.

It was agreed that Cllr. Fletcher needed help from other Cllrs. as this was a difficult project.

The Clerk suggested that the dormant Parish Council bank account could be used for the ring-fenced funds. This would be agreed at the February meeting, once it had been established that the Village Hall's new bank account was functioning properly and there was no longer a need for Market Stall Bookings money to be diverted temporarily into this dormant account. **Action: Clerk**

### **9.7 Media and Communications**

**9.7.1 To receive update regarding the new website** – Nothing to report.

**9.7.2 To note recent Police Report** - Nothing to report.

**9.7.3 To receive update on progress with renewing registration of Tally Ho pub as an Asset of Community Value** – Nothing to report.

It was reminded that next edition of The Bulletin was due to be published. It was agreed to try and get this done and distributed before the Easter weekend. A suggestion was made that part of this edition could be used to try and encourage volunteers to come forward, as so many of the village organisations were currently struggling due to having a lack of people getting involved. To be discussed further at the February meeting.

**Action: Clerk**

A revised edition of the Welcome Pack was needed to distribute to new arrivals in the Parish. The Clerk to liaise with a member of the Community Group to update the content. **Action: Clerk**

## **10. 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 09.01.2024 was £59,592.46

Petty Cash £9.28

#### **Receipts since the last meeting:**

CR £250.00 – Royston United – Hire of Football Pitches

CR £320.00 – Buntingford Cougars – Hire of Football Pitches

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

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

DD £123.00 – EDF Energy – Electricity Pavilion

DD £42.23 – Castle Water – Water Pavilion

DD £79.18 – Nest – Pension Contributions

DD £9.60 – Sage – Payroll

DD £53.94 – BT – Broadband

BP £55.00 – M Thornton – Window and Bus Shelter Cleaning

BP £148.51 – A Lashwood – Expenses Village Christmas Tree Event

BP £22.22 – Amazon – Toilet Rolls for Pavilion

BP £5,835.00 – M D Watson – New Bi-fold Doors for Pavilion

DD £60.00 – North Herts Council – Annual Play Area Inspection

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

By bank transfer

BP £1214.97 - Catharine Toms – Clerk's Monthly Salary

BP £41.25 - Orla Swann – Litter Picking Nov

BP £37.50 - Annie McPherson – Litter Picking Nov

BP £782.58 – HMRC – PAYE/NI Qtr 3

BP £18.50 – Catharine Toms – Clerk's Expenses – Refreshments for after Dec meeting

BP £260.00 - Tim Drake – Line Marking Dec

BP £201.60 - Deluxe Perfect Cleaning Ltd – Cleaning at Pavilion Dec

BP £157.00 – R Bonfield – Maintenance Pavilion & Rec. Dec

BP £600.00 – Barkway Parochial Church Council – Grant for Churchyard Maintenance

BP £75.18 – JRB Enterprises – Refill Waste Bags Dog Poo Dispensers

**Reading Room Accounts:**

Bank Balance at 09.01.2024 was £20,264.34

Receipts since last meeting: None

Payments since last meeting:

DD £75.34 – British Gas – Electricity

DD £43.00 – NHC - Rates

**10.3 To receive report from meeting of the Finance Working Party and consider and agree recommendations** – (see Appendix A and item 10.4).

**10.4 To agree proposed budget for 2024/25 and agree the associated Precept application** - The finalised draft budget had been previously circulated to Cllrs. for consideration. It assumed that the level of Precept requested remained the same as the previous year at £41,950 (to include the value of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme). It was proposed, seconded and approved by all. Resolved.

The Clerk to submit Precept application to North Herts Council. **Action: Clerk**

**11. Correspondence** – Nothing not already covered elsewhere in the meeting.

**12. Items to be deferred to the next meeting** – Play Equipment repairs/replacements, Carriage Wash project and ring-fenced Restoration Fund, renewal of registration of the Tally Ho as an Asset of Community Value, Audit of Seats and Benches, Reading Room Constitution, Open Space tidying, shipping container for storage, Armed Services Covenant, report on Brideway 17, Welcome Pack, Barkway Bulletin, Barkway and Nuthampstead Neighbourhood Plan

**13. Date of next meeting** – Tuesday 13th February 2024.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 8.36pm