

**Minutes of Barkway Parish Council Meeting
Held at the Pavilion, Barkway on Tuesday 12th March 2024 at 7.30pm.**

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

Also present: Mrs C Toms (Clerk/RFO) 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. G Swann (away on business) and Cllr. D Marchant (unwell). Dist. Cllr. G Morris and the Police. Apologies were 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 10.5.1 & 10.5.2. Cllr. Cox – item 10.2.2.

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.

6. To receive report from the Police – No one was present.

7. To receive report from District Councillor – Cllr. Morris had sent in a report in his absence.

Some sort of investigative work had recently been carried out on the BK3 site.

Land west of Ashmill – The North Herts Council (NHC) Planning Control Committee supported the Planning Officer's recommendation to refuse the application to build 6 houses on the site.

Wisbridge Reservoir – Condition 9 of permission granted has been kept but amended. Biodiversity net gain of 10% is now part of planning policy. Which means that as part of a planning application there must be at least a 10% habitat improvement on that which is already there. This is considered to be a good environmental result.

Royston Area Forum Grants recommence in April, with a grant pot of £11,000.

8. To receive report from County Councillor - Cllr. Hill had stepped out of a Bus Workshop Meeting in Royston to briefly attend.

Items on the list to be investigated by Herts County Council (HCC) Highways in the forthcoming financial year included: the broken gully in the High Street, the drain in front of the War Memorial, and the problem of flooding in Gas Lane.

She was working with Cllr. Dennis and the HCC Rights of Way Officer regarding Bridleway 17.

She had been notified of an issue of flooding onto Birch Meadow (BK2) from the field of site BK3. The outcome of a resident's meeting with the Management Company (as Birch Meadow was not a HCC adopted road) was awaited. Riparian Rights were being investigated and the Planning Department at NHC had been contacted.

The Herts Lynx bus service was continuing until 2025, where it was hoped to continue subject to further funding being made available.

County Cllr. Hill was thanked for her report and she then departed from the meeting at 8.15pm.

Standing Orders were resumed.

9. Council Administration

9.1 To agree pledge to sign up for the Armed Forces Covenant – Of the various pledges there were some pledges that could be agreed to - to appoint a champion to lead support (Cllr. Sapsford), to ensure upkeep of the War Memorials (Barkway & Newsells) and to hold an annual Remembrance Day Service. Cllr. Sapsford to give the Covenant further consideration and report back at the April meeting with his recommendations for Council agreement. **Action: WS**

9.2 To agree to assist Nuthampstead Parish Meeting by applying for grant funding to purchase a defibrillator – Nuthampstead village had recently lost their defibrillator due to the recent relocation of the business that had provided the facility. County Cllr. Hill had invited them to apply for a £500 grant from her Locality Budget but for that they needed a bank account, which they didn't have as they received no Precept income. They planned to raise any additional monies needed through donations, so there would be no cost implication involved for Barkway Parish Council.

It was proposed, seconded and agreed by all to apply for a Locality Budget Grant on behalf of Nuthampstead Parish Meeting. Resolved. **Action: Clerk**

9.3 To appoint an Internal Auditor for 2023/24 – It was proposed, seconded and agreed by all to appoint Carol Willis as the Internal Auditor for 2023/24. Resolved.

9.4 To review the effectiveness of the Internal Audit – The document had been reviewed by the Clerk and Cllr. Cox. There were no proposed changes. These were the guidelines for the Internal Auditor. Proposed, seconded and agreed by all. Resolved.

9.5 To approve proposal for renewal of Zurich Insurance (including fidelity guarantee) – The renewal premium was £2,456.89 an increase of £145.59 (+ 6.29%) on the previous year. As insurance premiums had risen sharply across the board it was considered to be very reasonable. Fidelity Guarantee cover at £100,000 was considered to be more than adequate. It was proposed, seconded and agreed by all to renew the policy. Resolved.

9.6 To approve changeover of Portfolio responsibilities for Highways and Sports & Recreation – Cllr. Sapsford to take over Highways and Cllr. Dennis to take over the responsibility of the Sports and Recreation Portfolio. Agreed.

10. To receive updates from Portfolio Holders

10.1 Corporate Governance – nothing to report.

10.2 Planning

10.2.1 To receive update on matters relating to site BK2 and agree any necessary action – No update.

Cllr. Cox left the meeting.

10.2.2 To consider and make comment on planning application:

Full Planning Permission : erection of one detached 5-bed dwelling, garage and associated parking, access and amenity land.

Langham, Church Lane, Barkway, Hertfordshire, SG8 8EJ – case Ref No: 24/00386/FP – After consideration of the application, it was proposed, seconded and agreed by all that there was no objection to the application. Resolved. Action: Clerk to respond to NHC.

Cllr. Cox re-joined the meeting.

10.2.3 To consider and make comment on Section 73 Application: Rewording of Condition 9 (Excess imported Material) imposed on planning application reference 22/00910/FP granted on 17/10/2022 to:

The reservoir shall be constructed from material already on site in accordance with the approved plans. No excess imported material not required in connection with the development material shall be removed from the site without full details of a disposal/reprofiling plan being submitted to and thereafter approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such details shall include a timetable for implementation for the proposed works. Such works shall thereafter be carried out in complete accordance with the approved details or particulars and in accordance with the agreed timescale unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that any excess material imported onto the site is removed or dispersed appropriately following the completion of the development, in the interest of visual amenity.

Amended description only. Land Between Bush Wood and Rokey Wood, High Street, Reed, Hertfordshire. Case Ref No: 23/02887/S73 – The Clerk read out a detailed response of strong objection already submitted to NHC by Reed Parish Council. It was proposed, seconded and agreed (Cllr. Sapsford abstained from voting as he had little knowledge of the application) to respond to NHC fully endorsing the objection submitted by Reed Parish Council. Resolved. Action: Clerk to respond to NHC.

10.2.4 To receive update on decision of Planning Control Committee on land East of Ashmill Poultry Farm – (see item. 7)

10.2.5 To approve the BNNP Reg. 15 VERSION 05.02.24 of the Barkway and Nuthampstead Neighbourhood Plan (NP) for submission to North Herts Council subject to any minor wording amendments requested by the Steering Group or Parish Councillors at the Parish Council Meeting, in agreement with the Chair – The revised document had been circulated and thanks given to Cllr. Fletcher for her work proof-reading. It was agreed with the proposed amendment of Local Green Space (L4) to remove Manor Farm paddock, leaving just the area of the Carriage Wash and adjoining grass verge. After discussion other amendments agreed to be necessary were: removal of the word ‘proposed’ when referring to a Community Hub, to include a map of site BK3 clearly delineating the HCC Reserved School site and to strengthen the wording about the necessary upgrading of the Barkway Sewerage Treatment Plant and the associated condition imposed by NHC in the outline planning permission granted for site BK3. Nuthampstead Parish Meeting were due to meet on 20th March, which could result in further amendments to the draft BNNP.

It was proposed, seconded and agreed by all to approve the current draft, subject to the above amendments being made. The Clerk to contact Ms. Veater. Action: Clerk

10.3 Highways – to receive update on progress being made to address the problem of traffic speeding in the village – Cllr. Dennis had met with PC Tom Wollard and PCSO Chris Brabrook who had visited the village. They had discussed the speeding problem and how to restart the Drivesafe campaign. Attempts so far to re-start

Drivesafe had failed due to 2 of the 3 proposed sites apparently not meeting the criteria. A useful point that had come out of the meeting was that previous anti-speeding campaigns would have had their monitoring locations approved. They would try and obtain a copy of that document from their files and this could be used when re-applying to the Police and Crime Commissioners Office. It was noted that there was continued pressure from Parishioners being put upon the Parish Council to address the traffic speeding problem.

10.4 Sports and Recreation

10.4.1 To receive update on project to upgrade the play area equipment – Cllr. Baker had requested a separate quotation from Playground Facilities for a slide for the multi-play equipment. They would also be asked to provide quotations for a re-planned adventure trail and a set of junior swings. He offered his apologies for the April meeting. He would update the Council by email ahead of the meeting. **Action: PB**

10.4.2 Update on football activities – The pitches were currently very wet and games were likely to be cancelled for the forthcoming weekend. Pitch inspections were always carried out ahead of any games.

The Clerk had emailed Royston United about their request to hold a tournament in August and Parish Council approval being subject to the requirement for them to submit an event management plan to the Parish Council well in advance of the event. No response had been received.

Cllr. Baker took over to Chair the meeting.

10.5 Community Property

10.5.1 To receive update from Working Party looking at updating the Constitution of the Reading Room – Cllrs. Baker and Fletcher had met with some key members of the Barkway Local History Group (BLHG) to discuss upgrade of the Reading Room. It had been a constructive meeting and it was left with them considering the updated proposals, including additional lighting and partitioning. They would then come back with any suggested modifications. If the project was likely to come in under budget then quotations would be sought. Work would include stripping out of the room, redecorating and re-fitting.

10.5.2 To receive update on progression of plans to improve accessibility to the Reading Room – The Clerk to contact the Architect to see if any progress had been made on the plans to improve accessibility. **Action: Clerk**

Cllr. Dennis resumed as Chair.

10.6 Environment – to receive update on progress with Carriage wash project – nothing much to report as attention had been diverted to sorting out the Reading Room. Cllr. Dennis informed the council that the BLHG were keen to support the campaign to restore the Carriage Wash and information could be put on their website, which enjoyed a substantial number of hits.

It was agreed that a campaign would need to be launched, commencing with the agreed £10,000 being transferred by the Parish Council into the spare bank account in April.

Action: Clerk

10.7 Media and Communications

10.7.1 To receive update regarding the new website – It was agreed to seek help with the ongoing maintenance of the new website and the creation of a dedicated page for the BNNP. **Action: Clerk**

10.7.2 To discuss and agree content for the Spring edition of the Bulletin – After discussion the following topics were agreed for inclusion and Cllrs. to submit wording to Cllr. Cox:

Reading Room (**LF/PB**)
Bridleway 17 (**WD**)
Carriage Wash media coverage (**WD**)
New Telephone Systems (**DM**)
Armed Services Covenant (**WS**)
Play Equipment (**PB**)
Neighbourhood Plan (**Clerk**)

11. To receive finance reports from the Clerk

11.1 To provide update on current financial position

Parish Council Account:

The Parish Council bank balance at 12.03.2024 was £51,622.76
Petty Cash £9.28

Receipts since the last meeting:

CR £240.00 – Buntingford Cougars – Hire of Football Pitches
CR £6,393.44 – HMRC – VAT Reclaim
CR£207.89 – Barclays Bank - Interest

11.2 To authorise payments to be made

Approval of payments since last meeting:

DD £123.00 – EDF Energy – Electricity Pavilion
DD £22.48 – Castle Water – Water Pavilion
DD £87.14 – Nest – Pension Contributions
DD £9.60 – Sage – Payroll
DD £53.94 – BT – Broadband
DD £1,448.71 – NHC - Annual Dog Bin Emptying
DC £15.59 – Software Subscription - Zoom

Approval of payments to be made at meeting:

By bank transfer

BP £1214.97 - Catharine Toms – Clerk's Monthly Salary
BP £33.75 - Orla Swann – Litter Picking Jan
BP £15.00 - Annie McPherson – Litter Picking Jan
BP £2,456.89 – Zurich Municipal – Annual Insurance Renewal
BP £440.00 - Tim Drake – Line Marking Feb
BP £268.80 - Deluxe Perfect Cleaning Ltd – Cleaning at Pavilion Feb
BP £157.50 – R Bonfield – Maintenance Pavilion & Rec. Feb
BP £84.00 – Playground Facilities Ltd – Quarterly Inspection
BP £394.00 – A Dodkin – Maintenance
BP £150.00 – The Diary – Annual Advertising for Pavilion
BP £751.17 – The Printed Page – Printing for Neighbourhood Plan & Welcome Pack

Reading Room Accounts:

Bank Balance at 12.03.2024 was £20,140.05

Receipts since last meeting:

CR £34.90 – COIF – Interest
CR £41.54 – Barclays – Interest

Payments since last meeting:

DD £84.57 – British Gas – Electricity

12. Correspondence – Nothing not already covered elsewhere.

13. Items to be deferred to the next meeting – Play Equipment repairs/replacements, Carriage Wash project and ring-fenced Restoration Fund, Audit of Seats and Benches, Reading Room Constitution, Open Space tidying, shipping container for storage, Armed Services Covenant, Barkway Bulletin, Barkway and Nuthampstead Neighbourhood Plan, Drivesafe.

14. Date of next meeting – Tuesday 9th April 2024.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 8.53pm