

**Minutes of Barkway Parish Council Meeting
Held at the Pavilion, Barkway on Tuesday 13th February 2024 at 7.30pm.**

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

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. J Cox (work 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 9.1.1 and 9.1.2. Cllr. Dennis and 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.

It was proposed, seconded and agreed by all to bring forward item 9.3.5.

Standing Orders were suspended.

Ms Veater from GovResources was to join the meeting via Zoom to give an update on matters relating to the Barkway and Nuthampstead Neighbourhood Plan (BNNP). She informed the Parish Council that in order to save time she wished to submit to North Herts Council (NHC) a draft version of the BNNP as it was considered that at this stage there would be very few further changes to be made. NHC had a timetable to send it out to the statutory consultees which would then proceed into the examination of the BNNP. The process would now have to work around the Local Elections on 2nd May.

She wished to draw to the Council's attention some matters that had arisen as a result of the Steering Group meeting held the previous evening.

Recommendations were as follows:

Policy on Leisure and Recreational Facilities - L4 - Protected Recreational Open Spaces – to leave just three of these in the Plan – the Recreation Ground, the Open Space behind Windmill Close and the Allotments.

Policy on Transport and Parking - T5 – Vehicle Parking in Residential Development – new wording recommended by examiners of other plans – 'Number of parking spaces should be a minimum of two spaces unless there is a justification for a lower standard'.

Policy on Housing – H5 – Framework for BK3 – the wording regarding the Herts County Council (HCC) Reserved School site needed to be changed to: the land should remain fallow or in agricultural use until such time as it is needed for a school and be demarked from the rest of site BK3, preferably by means of planting and maintaining of a hedgerow. In addition, remedial work must be carried out along Bridleway 17 to widen the route where the usable width was less than 4 metres to ensure safety for all users. Appropriate planting along the bridleway would be required to ensure endurance of the wildlife corridor during construction and occupation of the new homes.

9.3.5 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.

Changes as recommended were proposed, seconded and agreed by the Council. A revised document would be circulated by the Clerk as soon as possible ahead of the next meeting of the Council on 12th March, where it would be proposed to give the Plan approval for submission to NHC. Nuthampstead would have their meeting on 20th March to do likewise. **Action: Clerk.**

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 reported that a member of Nuthampstead Parish Meeting had pointed out to him that the newly approved development site (for 12 dwellings) at Bell Farm Industrial Estate was closer to the Barkway Sewerage Treatment Plant than site BK3 in Barkway. It was therefore questioned whether (unlike the rest of Nuthampstead) it could be provided with mains sewerage. Cllr. Morris would investigate but also remind the planning case officer about the planning condition in place regarding sewerage in the planning approval for site BK3.

Cllr. Morris was requested to call in the latest Wisbridge Reservoir application to be determined by the Planning Control Committee should the planning case officer to be mindful to approve the application to remove Condition 9. The Clerk to email Cllr. Morris. **Action: Clerk**

The Council were informed that as from 12th February, any planning applications other than small sites, now have to comply with the requirement for more biodiversity – a net gain of +10%.

North and Herts Councils were proposing to reduce the number of litter bins throughout the County and bin collections in North Herts were to be reduced to 3 weekly collections, with one extra bin for cardboard. Seasonal leaf fall may or may not be cleared, depending on whether it was considered a hazard.

7. To receive report from County Councillor - County Cllr. Hill reported that Herts County Council (HCC) had set a budget of £1.1 billion (to exclude schools) in order to maintain services for 2024/25. The grit bin in Windmill Close was now in place and had been filled with salt. There was a proposed £98m HCC increase in spend with 2% ring-fenced for Social Care.

Gulley works for Cambridge Road and High Street were scheduled for 2024/25. New signs had been ordered.

Cross border recycling centre issues had now been resolved with Hertfordshire residents now able to apply for a free permit to use the site at Thriplow.

Minor roadworks were taking place around the area between 1-5 March.

Cllrs. Morris and Hill were thanked for their reports and they departed from the meeting at 8.15pm.

Standing Orders were resumed.

8. Council Administration – To agree pledge to sign up for the Armed Forces Covenant – Of the various pledges there was really only one pledge that could be agreed to - to hold an annual Remembrance Day Service. Cllr. Sapsford to give the Covenant further consideration and report back at the March meeting with his recommendations for Council agreement. **Action: WS**

9. To receive updates from Portfolio Holders

Cllr. Baker took over to Chair the meeting.

9.1 Community Property

9.1.1 To receive update from Working Party looking at updating the Constitution of the Reading Room – Two meetings had been held with interested parties, from which there had been positive feedback. A point had been reached where the renovation and redevelopment of the Reading Room could be pushed forward. The next stage was to get input from the main user – the Barkway Local History Group. It was suggested that an appropriate budget for internal works (using the Covid grant monies received) was £8k + 10% contingency. In addition to this, monies needed to be spent on the access (see 9.1.2). It was proposed, seconded and approved by all to agree the proposed budget. Resolved.

9.1.2 To receive update on progression of plans to improve accessibility to the Reading Room – It was reported that a second meeting had taken place with residents from either side of the Reading Room and the Architect. It was now learned that the footpath leading up to Daisy Cottage belonged to the Parish Council, so there was more space to work with, however the project would also now need to incorporate improvements to that path. Revised plans were awaited.

Cllr. Dennis resumed as Chair of the meeting.

9.2 Corporate Governance – nothing to report.

9.3 Planning

9.3.1 To receive update on matters relating to site BK2 and agree any necessary action – Cllr. Swann would try and arrange to meet Mr Bentley to agree works now needed to tidy up the Open Space behind Windmill Close and adjacent to BK2. **Action: GS**

9.3.2 To consider and make comment on planning application:
Full Permission Householder : Single storey front, side and rear extensions incorporating attached garage and front porch extension and two storey extensions (as a resubmission of planning application 23/01813/FPH granted on 23.01.2024)

Mews Cottage, 150 High Street, Barkway, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 8EG. Case Ref No: 23/02825/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**

9.3.3 To consider and make comment on planning application:
Listed Building Consent : Single storey front and side/rear extension (as a resubmission of listed building consent 23/01814/LBC)

150 Mews Cottage, 150 High Street, Barkway, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 8EG. Case Ref No: 23/02856/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**

9.3.4 To consider and agree to request that, should the Planning Case Officer be mindful to approve application Case Ref No: 23/02887/S73, Dist. Cllr. Morris call in application to be determined by the North Herts Council Planning Control Committee.

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 – (see item 6)

9.3.6 To ratify response submitted to the North Herts Council Gypsy Traveller Accommodation Assessment survey – Cllr. Dennis had submitted a response as recommended by Cllr. Swann. It stated that there had not been evidence of any increase in Gypsy and Travellers in the area. Barkway was not on the traditional route used by Travellers. Discussions in the past with both the Gypsy and Travellers Community had indicated that Barkway was not considered a suitable location for them, being off the traditional route and lacking employment opportunities.

Proposed, seconded and ratified by all. Resolved.

9.4 Highways

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

9.4.2 To receive update on communication with the Police to address ongoing vehicular speeding issues through the village and note recent correspondence received from a resident of the High Street – Cllr. Dennis to contact the Police and arrange a meeting in the village. A recent Police speed check had not been very successful due to their chosen positioning. A relatively new resident had written in to share her concerns regarding traffic and speeding in the village. This was duly acknowledged and agreed that issues raised were not new and for years the Parish Council had been working to try and resolve matters with very limited success. Efforts would nevertheless continue by the Parish Council to try and improve matters. The Clerk to respond to the letter. **Action: Clerk**

Standing Orders were suspended to allow the Clerk from Barley Parish Council to share some useful information regarding the two speed cameras in place in Barley and how they were tackling their issues of traffic speeding in the village. It was agreed to keep in contact over the matter. She was thanked for her input.

Stand Orders were resumed.

9.4.3 To approve and agree to submit report on the state of Bridleway 17 – Cllr. Dennis had compiled a report which the Clerk had previously circulated to Cllrs. It was proposed, seconded and agreed to accept the report and that it should be submitted to HCC in order that they were fully aware of the current state of the Bridleway and the need to reinstate it as appropriate ahead of any development on site BK3.

It was recommended by a member of the public present, to make contact with Mr Lloyd at HCC, who was the Public Access Projects Officer. Cllr. Dennis to send report to HCC and Mr Lloyd. **Action: WD**

Consideration would also be given to using the services of the Community Payback Team to carry out the necessary work to restore and plant hedgerow along the Bridleway.

9.5 Sports and Recreation

9.5.1 To receive update on project to upgrade the play area equipment – Cllr. Baker was due to meet with Playground Facilities in two weeks in order to get a slide fitted on the multi-play equipment.

9.5.2 To approve quotation received to clear bonfire site, make good and re-seed area – A quotation had been received of £240 to clear the bonfire site and re-seed. It was proposed, seconded and agreed by all to proceed with the work. Monies for this work would come out of the proceeds from the bucket collection at Bonfire Night and each year going forward. The Clerk to arrange for work to be done. **Action: Clerk**

9.5.3 Update on football activities and to consider request from Buntingford Cougars FC to have the pitches rolled – A quotation had been received of £350 + VAT. The Clerk to contact the grass cutting contractor to seek advice as to whether rolling the pitches would be beneficial at the current time. In addition, whether the cost could be deferred until after the end of March. **Action: Clerk**

A request had been received from Royston United FC to hold a football tournament on the Recreation Ground on 4th August. After discussion it was agreed that it could go ahead provided that they managed the parking throughout the event and ensured that no vehicles were parked on pavements and that a wide clear access to the Recreation Ground was maintained at all times. A proper event plan would need to be seen and approved by the Council before permission could be granted. The Clerk to respond to Royston United. **Action: Clerk**

9.6 Environment - To receive update on progress with Carriage Wash project - English Heritage had given permission for their photos to be used in promoting the Carriage Wash restoration project. Johnson Matthey were disappointingly unable to offer funding support. The last quotation received for work was £58k. After discussion it was agreed that fundraising needed to be a community effort and some Parish Council monies should be put in to start the fund. The dormant bank account would be used hold the ring-fenced funds. It was proposed, seconded and agreed by all to transfer £10k in April. **Action: Clerk**

9.7 Media and Communications

9.7.1 To receive update regarding the new website – An audit was needed to check the content on the website and update areas where necessary. A dedicated and prominent page needed to be set up for the Neighbourhood Plan. **Action: DM/Clerk**

9.7.2 To note recent Police Report - Cllr. Marchant to upload the Police report each month onto the website. **Action: DM**

9.7.3 To receive update on progress with renewing registration of Tally Ho pub as an Asset of Community Value – It was reported that this was no longer necessary as the current tenants were planning to remain and were not exercising their break clause in April. Item to be deferred until 2025.

9.7.4 To agree to produce an updated version of the Welcome Pack – A member of the Community Group had kindly assisted with updating the information and this had since been sent off for printing. Consideration would be given to providing a QR code on future editions.

9.7.5 To discuss and agree content for the Spring edition of the Bulletin – Cllr. Cox would aim to produce a first draft. It was suggested that an article be included to clarify what will happen regarding the forthcoming conversion of phone lines to an internet service. Cllr. Marchant to produce a paragraph of text on the matter and forward to Cllr. Cox. **Action: DM**

Cllr. Baker took over as Chair of the meeting.

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 13.02.2024 was £52,507.97

Petty Cash £9.28

Receipts since the last meeting:

CR £50.00 – Buntingford Town FC – Hire of Football Pitches

CR £100.00 – McEwan – Hire of Pavilion

CR £100.00 – Herts County Council – Locality Budget Grant for Grit Bin

CR £15.00 – Kim White Pilates – Hire of Pavilion

CR £65.00 – Rowe – Hire of Pavilion

CR £50.00 – Taylor – Hire of Pavilion

CR £400.00 – 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 £20.27 – Castle Water – Water Pavilion

DD £150.79 – Nest – Pension Contributions

DD £9.60 – Sage – Payroll

DD £154.70 – NHC – Quarterly Waste Collection Pavilion

DC £15.59 x 2 – Zoom

BP £2,520.00 – GovResources – Neighbourhood Plan Consultant

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 £30.00 - Annie McPherson – Litter Picking Jan

BP £260.00 - Tim Drake – Line Marking Jan

BP £336.00 - Deluxe Perfect Cleaning Ltd – Cleaning at Pavilion Jan

BP £178.50 – R Bonfield – Maintenance Pavilion & Rec. Jan

BP £159.73 – Glasdon UK Ltd – Grit Bin

BP £650.00 – M Bentley – Garden Maintenance – Rec, Pond and Windmill

Close

BP £1,890.00 – GovResources – Neighbourhood Plan Consultant – Jan

BP £12.00 – W Dennis – Teapot for Pavilion

BP £90.00 – Parish Online – Software Subscription - Mapping

Reading Room Accounts:

Bank Balance at 13.02.2024 was £20,148.18

Receipts since last meeting: None

Payments since last meeting:

DD £73.16 – British Gas – Electricity

DD £43.00 – NHC – Rates

Cllr. Dennis resumed as Chair of the meeting.

10.3 To agree to utilise the dormant bank account to ring-fence funds for the ‘Carriage Wash Restoration’ fund – proposed, seconded and agreed by all. Resolved.

11. Correspondence – A letter was read out from a resident regarding vehicle speeding issues, inappropriate parking whilst football took place at the Recreation Ground and concerns regarding meeting the conditions of the grant awarded from the Football Foundation for the build of the Pavilion and questioning how many people from the village were actually involved with the football.

A suggestion was put forward that the Parish Council could consider hiring a speed gun at about £110 per month to collect data on speeding traffic. He would willingly volunteer to help with this. After discussion, it was unanimously agreed that the Parish Council could not support this unofficial activity and that data collected in this way would hold little weight with the Police and HCC Highways.

With regards to the suggestion that the village was financially supporting football activity for people from outside the area, it had been learnt that there were at least 8 people from the village involved with the football and that people came from all over the place to use the facilities generally in the Recreation Ground and equally residents from the village freely used facilities in other areas.

12. 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, Report from meeting with the Police to discuss speeding issues

13. Date of next meeting – Tuesday 12th March 2024.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 9.30pm