

**Minutes of Barkway Parish Council Meeting
Held at the Pavilion, Barkway on Tuesday 14th May 2024 at 7.35pm.**

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

Also present: Mrs C Toms (Clerk/RFO) and County Cllr. Fiona Hill.

Members of the Public: No of the public were present.

2. To receive Councillors' signed Acceptance of Office Declarations – not applicable as this was not a year of elections.

3. To receive and accept apologies for absence: Cllr. G Swann (away on business) and Dist. Cllr. Martin Prescott (would be late attending, due to attending another meeting). Apologies were accepted.

4. 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 11.5.1 & 11.5.2.

5. Minutes

5.1 To approve the minutes of the last meeting - Proposed, seconded and all in favour to approve. Resolved. **Action: Clerk**

5.2 To consider any matters arising from the last meeting – None.

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

7. To receive report from District Councillor – There was no report.

8. To receive report from County Councillor - County Cllr. Hill congratulated Dist. Cllr. Prescott for his appointment following the recent elections and would support him in his work to benefit the area. She also thanked outgoing Dist. Cllr. Morris as they had worked well together over many years to help the community.

Speed and volume surveys were scheduled to be carried out on Cambridge Road and the High Street, the date to be confirmed. The Police had been asked to carry out more speed checks in the village.

Works on the broken gully in Gas Lane were being programmed and the broken gully in the High Street was being investigated.

The forthcoming Ride London event would affect Barkway with temporary road closures and ensuring that the High Street was clear of any parked vehicles.

Barley and Barkway Schools had set up an Eco-Council which was a project to raise awareness to prevent sewerage being discharged into protected chalk streams. Cllr. Hill had already written to MP Steve Barclay – Secretary of State for the Environment, supporting this initiative. She encouraged the Parish Council to do likewise.

A Banking Hub would be opening in Royston by 24 Sept, but a suitable location was yet to be found.

The matter of the Post Office closure in Barley had been taken up with MP Sir Oliver Heald.

She had attended a meeting of Drivesafe and would liaise with Cllr. Dennis on matters regarding suitable locations for monitoring speed.

She was working with various parties to try and resolve issues regarding trees and flooding in Birch Meadow. The overhanging trees were considered by residents to be dangerous and the ditches needed maintenance to prevent flooding into the close. However, it was unclear whose responsibility it was for these matters.

Cllr. Hill was thanked for her report.

9. To receive report from the Police – There was no report.

Standing Orders were resumed.

10. Council Administration - To agree final arrangements for the Annual Parish Meeting (APM) on Weds 22nd May – All arrangements were in hand. Newsells Park Stud had kindly agreed to be the guest speakers, talking about their new winery business venture. Cllr. Fletcher would make a presentation (with help from Cllr. Cox) on the Carriage Wash restoration project. The Clerk to organise drinks and a light buffet.
Action: Clerk

11. To receive updates from Portfolio Holders

11.1 Corporate Governance – A NALC Model Financial Regulations April 2024 had just been circulated by HAPTC – the Clerk to forward to Cllr. Cox for comparison against the current Barkway Parish Council Financial Regulations. **Action: Clerk/JC**

11.2 Planning

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

11.2.2 To consider and make comment on planning application:

Full Permission Householder : Retention of swimming pool and associated pump house in rear garden.

109 High Street, Barkway, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 8ED. Case Ref No: 24/00771/FPH – After consideration of the application it was proposed and agreed to submit the following response to North Herts Council:

The Parish Council wished to object to the application as, whilst it would normally be classed as a garden project, the builder and the owner should have known that it was considered that people purchasing a listed building in a conservation area not only purchase the property but also the responsibility to meet any obligations that come with the building and restrictions put in place to protect the building and the area around it. If this application was allowed, it would set a precedent, and others could follow with Garden projects without the necessary planning permission, knowing that if necessary, they could apply for and successfully obtain retrospective permission. However, the Parish Council would respect the views of the Conservation Officer on this application.

Action: Clerk

11.2.3 To receive update on progress with the Barkway & Nuthampstead Neighbourhood Plan (BNNP) – The BNNP was now in its final stage of public consultation and independent examination.

The Plan was our vision for the two parishes, and it contained 28 planning policies which will be used to determine planning applications. Included were policies on housing and design to get the very best development possible, along with protections for the environment, our heritage, our leisure facilities and local employment opportunities. Priorities for using funding from development, were outlined and there was an Action Plan which would be updated as projects are achieved.

The final consultation on the Plan was in progress and this would be the last opportunity to comment on its contents. The consultation would be open until midnight on Tuesday 27 June and was being run by North Herts, so any responses must be sent directly to them. All the details were on [North Herts Council's website \(https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/barkway-and-nuthampstead-neighbourhood-plan\)](https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/barkway-and-nuthampstead-neighbourhood-plan).

Once the consultation has finished, an independent examination of the comments from the consultation and the content of the Plan will take place. Further updates will be made on the examiners recommendations prior to the Plan being subject to a referendum. The date of the referendum will be well publicised and that is likely to be in early autumn.

The Clerk to make everyone aware of this consultation via The Dairy, noticeboards, WhatsApp and the website. **Action: Clerk**

11.2.4 To receive update on enquiry made with Thames Water regarding repairs to the Barkway Sewerage Treatment Plant (STP) – Cllr. Dennis had ascertained from Thames Water that in their Capital Plan 2023-30 there would be money available to upgrade the STP so that it could deal with current (2024) levels of demand, so this precluded any further requirement should additional development in Barkway take place. Cllr. Dennis had passed on this information to North Herts Planning Authority.

It was reported that the Barkway STP was discharging 31% of the time, 13,975 hours in the past 6 months. At one point, it discharged continually for 30 days. The situation was total unacceptable and was at risk of damaging the very fragile environment of the protected chalk stream.

A resident had expressed concern to the Council that attention also needed to be given to the ageing feeder pipes to the STP as these may also be no longer adequate to cope with the additional demand. Cllr. Dennis to apply to obtain a detailed plan, at a cost of £70, showing location of the sewerage pipe network in Barkway. Proposed, seconded and agreed. **Action: WD/Clerk**

Dist Cllr. Prescott arrived in the meeting at 8.41pm

11.2.5 To receive update on matters regarding reinstatement of hedgerow on Bridleway 17 – The Public Access Officer from Herts County Council was due to meet Cllr. Dennis to examine the state of the bridleway. The Woodland Trust were offering free saplings which could be used to reinstate the hedgerow. Cllr. Dennis to draw up a proposal which would also include protection of the Reserved School Site on BK3. **Action: WD**

11.3 Highways – to receive update on progress being made to address the problem of traffic speeding in the village – Work was still ongoing, working with

various parties, to try and resolve issues. (Also see item 8). Further correspondence had been received from residents regarding concern about vehicles speeding. The Clerk to respond. **Action: Clerk**

11.4 Sports and Recreation - To receive update on project to upgrade the play area equipment - no update.

Cllr. Baker took over to Chair the meeting.

11.5 Community Property

11.5.1 To receive update from Working Party looking at updating the Constitution of the Reading Room – The only update to report was that the Barkway Local History Group had requested a meeting on 23rd May to progress matters.

11.5.2 To receive update on progression of plans to improve accessibility to the Reading Room – The Clerk had reminded the Architect, who had promised to produce the revised plans as soon as possible.

Cllr. Dennis resumed as Chair of the meeting.

11.6 Environment

11.6.1 To receive update on progress with Carriage Wash project – Cllr. Fletcher had produced a draft grant application for The Hundred Parishes Society. It was agreed to adjust the wording slightly to reflect the change of requirements regarding newts. Cllr. Cox to investigate the new rules regarding newt mitigation licence requirements. **Action: JC.**

The grant application to be submitted as soon as possible. **Action: LF/Clerk**

11.6.2 To agree remedial works needed on the overflow pipe and area of the pond – The Clerk had spoken to Mr Bentley who would check out the overflow pipe and advise what remedial work, if any, was needed. Ongoing, he would continue to regularly check the overflow pipes of both the pond and the Carriage Wash and clear any blockages.

11.7 Media and Communications

11.7.1 To receive update regarding the new website – The Parish Council had been fortunate to have enlisted the help of a volunteer who was willing to support the Parish Council by maintaining the website.

11.7.2 To receive report on progress of production of the Summer edition of the Bulletin – It was reported that the matter was in hand and Cllrs. were asked to submit their articles to be included. Cllr. Cox would pull the document together and produce a draft for approval. **Action: JC/ALL**

12. To receive finance reports from the Clerk

12.1 To provide update on current financial position

Parish Council Account:

The Parish Council bank balance at 14.05.2024 was £61,453.76

Petty Cash £9.28

Receipts since the last meeting:

CR £440.00 – Buntingford Cougars – Hire of Football Pitches

CR £50.00 – Pape – Hire of Community Room

CR £100.00 – Butler – Hire of Community Room

CR £50.00 – Fuller – Hire of Community Room

CR £60.00 – Northen – Hire of Community Room

12.2 To authorise payments to be made

Approval of payments since last meeting:

DD £112.00 – EDF Energy – Electricity Pavilion

DD £24.69 – Castle Water – Water Pavilion

DD £87.14 – Nest – Pension Contributions

DD £9.60 – Sage – Payroll

DD £58.21 – BT – Broadband

DD £162.50 – North Herts Council – Quarterly bill for waste collection Pavilion

DD £35.00 – Information Commissioners Office – Annual Subscription

DC £15.59 x 2 – Zoom – Subscription

DC £239.60 – The Soccer Store – New 5-aside goal posts

DC £16.50 – Amazon – Black Sacks for Litter Picking

DC £50.00 – Cyan – Replacement slat for Memorial Bench

Approval of payments to be made at meeting:

By bank transfer

BP £1221.50 - Catharine Toms – Clerk's Monthly Salary

BP £38.70 - Orla Swann – Litter Picking Apr

BP £30.00 - Annie McPherson – Litter Picking Apr

BP £440.00 - Tim Drake – Line Marking & Grass Cutting Apr

BP £390.00 - Deluxe Perfect Cleaning Ltd – Cleaning at Pavilion Apr

BP £184.00 – R Bonfield – Maintenance Pavilion & Rec. Apr

BP £75.18 – JRB Enterprise Ltd – Dog Waste Bags

Reading Room Accounts:

Bank Balance at 14.05.2024 was £21,414.06

Receipts since last meeting: None

Payments since last meeting:

DD £49.60 – North Herts Council - Rates

DD £74.04 – British Gas – Electricity

12.3 To set a date for meeting of the Finance Working Party – Tuesday 4th June. Agreed.

13. Correspondence – nothing not covered elsewhere in the meeting.

14. Items to be deferred to the next meeting – Play Equipment repairs/replacements, Carriage Wash project, Audit of Seats and Benches, Reading Room Constitution, Open Space tidying, shipping container for storage, Barkway Bulletin, Barkway and Nuthampstead Neighbourhood Plan, Drivesafe.

15. Date of next meeting – Tuesday 11th June 2024.

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