

Minutes of Barkway Parish Council Meeting
Held at the Pavilion, Barkway on Tuesday 18th March 2025 at 7.30pm.

- 1. Attendance:** Cllrs:
Mr W Dennis (Chair)
Mr P Baker (Vice Chair)
Mr G Swann
Mr D Marchant
Mr W Sapsford

Also present: Mrs C Toms (Clerk/RFO), Dist. Cllr. M Prescott and County Cllr. F. Hill (arrived late)

Members of the Public: Two other members of the public were present.

- 2. To receive and accept apologies for absence:** Cllr. J Cox (work commitment), Cllr. L Fletcher (on holiday) and the Police. Apologies were accepted.

- 3. To receive Councillors' Declarations of Pecuniary Interest and to remind Councillors of their requirement to update register of interests under change of circumstances** – None received.

4. Minutes

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

4.2 To consider any matters arising from the last meetings – Cllr. Marchant reported that North Herts Council (NHC) Committee had approved the application to list the Tally Ho Public House as an Asset of Community Value, despite some opposition from the owners. The listing would run from 05/03/2025 to 04/03/2030. Cllr. Marchant was thanked for all his work in achieving this.

Standing Orders were suspended.

- 5. Public Session – to receive representations from members of the public** – No one wished to speak at this point. The Chair agreed to suspend Standing Orders later in the meeting should members of the public wish to make comment.

- 6. To receive report from District Councillor** – District Cllr. Prescott reported that the District Council budget for 2025/26 had now been set. The Barkway and Nuthampstead Neighbourhood Plan (BNNP) was an item on the agenda for the North Herts Council Cabinet meeting that evening where it would be decided whether or not to proceed with organising a Referendum. The Council had agreed to set aside money for a feasibility study regarding the provision of learner swimming facilities at Royston. Learning to swim being such an important life skill, Cllr. Prescott was working to try and ensure that such a provision remained available. A very well attended Motor Cycle Safety event had been held at the Woodman Inn the previous weekend, supported by the Police.

Cllr. Prescott was thanked for his report.

Item 7 – to be deferred until later in the meeting, as County Cllr. Hill would be arriving late, as she was attending another meeting.

Standing Orders were resumed.

Cllrs. Prescott was thanked for his report.

8. To receive report from the Police – No report.

Standing Orders were resumed.

9. Council Administration

9.1 To discuss and agree a date and format for the Annual Parish Meeting in May – After discussion it was agreed to hold this on Weds 21st May and for it to take a different format this year. Village organisations would be invited to set up a table to promote their group and activities. Parishioners would be invited to attend to find out about the different things that were on offer to do and be involved with in the village. Drinks and nibbles would be available and the aim would be to create a more social event where people could drop in over a period of 2-3 hours. The Chair would present a short welcoming speech and take any questions from attendees. Proposed, seconded and agreed.

9.2 To resolve to appoint an Internal Auditor for 2024/25 – It was proposed, seconded and agreed by all to appoint Mrs Carol Willis to carry out the Internal Audit for 2024/25. Resolved. The Clerk to write to formally appoint Mrs Willis. **Action: Clerk**

9.3 To review the effectiveness of Internal Audit – An updated document had been previously circulated covering the scope of the Internal Audit. This included updated references to legislation. This was reviewed. Proposed, seconded and agreed by all. Resolved.

9.4 To review the Asset Register – item to be deferred to the April meeting.

9.5 To approve proposal for renewal of Zurich Insurance (including fidelity guarantee) – The premium had increased by 5% from the previous year, which was considered to be a moderate increase. The Fidelity Guarantee cover was for £100,000 which was considered more than adequate. It was proposed, seconded and agreed by all to renew the Policy with Zurich. Resolved.

10. To receive updates from Portfolio Holders

10.1 Corporate Governance – Nothing to report.

10.2 Planning

10.2.1 To consider monthly update report from Redrow regarding BK3 development and agree any response needed – This report had been previously circulated. Cllr. Dennis had written to remind Redrow about the necessary upgrading of the Barkway Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) ahead of any development commencing. Cllr. Dennis requested permission from the Parish Council to approach MP Mark Hinchliff for his support in obtaining critical Asset Information data from Thames Water about the current capacity of the Barkway STP, including the capacity of the existing feeder pipes to the STP. This was agreed. The data once obtained could then, if deemed necessary, be checked by an independent 3rd party.

A bench seat located on the verge near the Cambridge Road site entrance had been damaged beyond repair whilst works had been carried out to allow vehicles on site for the archaeological investigations. Redrow had agreed to replace the bench and had asked where it should be re-sited. Barkway Chapel had asked if they could re-use old

bench outside the Chapel. This was agreed although considered that it was probably too badly damaged to be of use.

10.2.2 To consider amended BK3 Plan Pack from Redrow ahead of their Workshop meeting with NHC on 19th March and agree any comments to be submitted – The following two points were submitted to Redrow:

- *Whilst you are looking to improve the southern boundary by the Village Hall, the fence line along the southern boundary of the school boundary is still a full 6ft fence panel, so you have not taken into account concerns about this area.*
- *Upgrading of the Sewage Treatment Plant (Condition 9 of the Outline Planning Permission granted) - **this is an absolute necessity and cannot be overlooked.** The Friends of the Rib & Quin have provided additional information on discharges. It clearly shows that, especially last year 2024 the plant just cannot cope. The figures come from the Rivers Trust. This re-enforces our point that the existing plant and infrastructure cannot cope with the current domestic sewage and with climate change. All we have asked for is that it is up-graded to cope with current and future waste.*

2019 - 175 hours of discharges, 2020 - 548 hrs, 2021 - 734 hours, 2022 - 145 hrs, 2023 - 627 hrs and lastly 2024 - 1296 hours (or 54 days) of discharging raw sewage into the River Quin.

Proposed, seconded and agreed by all.

It was also agreed that Herts County Council (HCC) should be requested to actively protect their Reserved School Site by planting a hedgerow.

10.2.3 To receive update on matters relating to the Open Space agreement between NHC and the Parish Council – The matter was still in the hands of the NHC Legal Dept. Dist. Cllr. Prescott to pursue NHC for an update. The Clerk to forward email exchanges to date with NHC to Cllr. Prescott. **Action: Clerk**

10.2.4 To receive update on progress with the Barkway & Nuthampstead Neighbourhood Plan (BNNP) – NHC were meeting that evening where there would be a report presented to consider the examiner's report and the proposed modifications to the BNNP and to agree that officers make arrangements to conduct a Referendum within the designated neighbourhood planning area.

For cost, efficiency, and resource reasons it was considered preferable by the Proper Officer of NHC to hold the Referendum on 1st May, alongside the scheduled County Council elections.

10.2.5 To consider and make comment on planning application:
Full Planning Permission : Erection of triple garages following demolition of existing fire damaged garages

94, 94A & 94B High Street, Barkway, Hertfordshire, SG8 8EF. Case Ref No: 25/00080/FP – After consideration of this application it was proposed, seconded and agreed that there was no objection to the application but it would be queried with the Planning Case Officer whether there was any input from the Conservation Officer on the application, as it was within the Conservation Area in Barkway. In addition, query why a window had not been incorporated within the application, when there had been one in the right-hand section of the previous building. The Clerk to respond to NHC. **Action: Clerk**

10.3 Highways - To receive update on progress being made to address the problem of traffic speeding in the village – (See item 7).

Standing Orders were suspended to allow members of the Public present to speak.

These people were residents of the Penns and raised their concern over the excessive speed of some vehicles (estimated to be 60-70mph in some cases) travelling along that stretch of the road between Barkway and Barley. Whilst the Parish Council was sympathetic, this stretch of the road was de-restricted, however, the Police would be made aware of their concerns as these speeds were dangerous and over the speed limit on that road.

The data of the Speed and Volume surveys carried out within the 30mph areas of the village were still awaited, although early indications were that the results were not exceptional and would be unlikely to generate any necessary action by Highways/the Police.

The Clerk to contact Barley Parish Council for information on costs involved with having their speed indicator signs and cameras. **Action: Clerk**

Cllr Marchant raised again, the ongoing problem of racing vehicles along the Nuthampstead Road most evenings. The Clerk to make contact with PC Tom Woollard and ask for them to investigate the matter. **Action: Clerk**

Standing Orders were resumed.

10.4 Sports and Recreation

10.4.1 To receive update on project to upgrade the play area equipment

– Cllr. Baker reported that the current phase of upgrades was now complete. There was just an outstanding issue of a damaged spring on the zip wire. A recent quarterly inspection had indicated the bigger swings were now considered to be a ‘medium risk’, so these would be part of the next phase of upgrades.

Members of the public present expressed their thanks to the Parish Council for provision of such an excellent play area facility at the Recreation Ground.

It was agreed to consider getting some signs made to say ‘no parking’ for BK3 construction workers.

10.4.2 To receive update on football activities

– It was reported that the pitches were all playable again following a period of poor weather conditions. Football activities were all going well.

10.5 Community Property

10.5.1 To receive update from Working Party looking at updating the

Constitution of the Reading Room – There was nothing further to report on the Constitution. Cllr. Baker was awaiting a quotation from an electrician for new lighting inside the Reading Room. A meeting would take place with the Barkway Local History Group (BLHG) to finalise plans for the installation of the new display boards. The Clerk to forward Cllr. Baker details of how much money was left available to spend on the project, as the new path had cost more than originally anticipated. **Action: Clerk**

The Clerk to obtain a price for a small grit bin to be located at the side of the Reading Room on the grass. **Action: Clerk**

The room needed now clearing of contents in order for the internal re-decorating to be done.

10.5.2 To receive update on works to improve accessibility to the Reading

Room – The Clerk reported that the new path was now finished.

10.5.3 To receive update on progress with improving security measures for the Pavilion and Recreation Ground – Cllr. Baker to seek some advice and report at the April meeting. **Action: PB**

10.6 Environment

10.6.1 To receive update on progress with Carriage Wash project

– Nothing to report apart from it was now a feature on the BLHG website. The Carriage

Wash Restoration fund now stood at £11,806.03 with £160 of donations generated as a result of the Barkway Pantomime.

10.6.2 To receive update on clearance of bulrushes in the pond and hedge maintenance alongside path into school and to discuss potential project to create a healthier and more attractive village pond – The Clerk reported that work on the bulrushes was likely to take place in March. She would chase the contractors for an update. **Action: Clerk**

10.6.3 To receive update on tidying of Open Space to the rear of Windmill Close – Cllr. Swann reported that the rough scrub area was going to be rotorvated and any rough material found would be removed.

10.7 Media and Communications

10.7.1 To receive update regarding the new website – The Clerk to arrange to meet with the Webmaster to look at the website and agree any necessary amendments. **Action: Clerk**

10.7.2 To receive report on progress of production of the Bulletin – nothing to report.

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 18.03.2025 was £38,798.66

Petty Cash £9.28

Receipts since the last meeting:

CR £120.34 – Barclays Bank – Interest

CR £41.13 – Barclays Bank – Interest – Carriage Wash A/C

CR £440.00 – Buntingford Cougars – Hire of Pitches

CR £200.00 – Wesolowski – Hire of Community Room (incl Deposit)

CR £881.02 – EDF Energy – Refund of Credit on Account

11.2 To authorise payments to be made

Approval of payments since last meeting:

DD £15.59 – Zoom – Software Subscription

DD £31.63 – Castle Water – Water Pavilion

DD £91.97 x 2 – Nest – Pension Contributions

DD £12.00 x 2 – Sage – Payroll

DD £58.21 – BT – Broadband

BP £610.00 – Mr A Ricketts – Base for Container

DC £16.50 – Amazon – Black Sacks

CHQ 102935 £840.00 – GWB Horticulture – Hedge Trimming & Tree Removal

Approval of payments to be made at meeting:

By bank transfer:

BP £1,252.08 - Catharine Toms – Clerk's Monthly Salary

BP £41.25 - Annie McPherson – Litter Picking Feb

BP £22.50 – Sophie & Charlotte Anderton – Litter Picking Feb

BP £312.00 – Deluxe Perfect Cleaning Ltd – Cleaning at Pavilion Feb

BP £172.50 – R Bonfield – Maintenance Pavilion & Rec. Feb

BP £670.00 – Tim Drake – Line Marking & Bonfire Site Repair Feb

BP £550.00 – A Dodkin – Maintenance Reading Room, Pavilion, Bus Shelter & Dog Bin

BP £273.60 – Parish Council Websites – Website & Email Hosting
BP £84.00 – Playground Facilities Ltd – Quarterly Playground Inspection
BP £80.00 – The Diary – Advertising Pavilion
BP £2,589.19 – Zurich Municipal – Parish Council Annual Insurance
BP £75.18 – JRB Enterprises – Dog Poo Bags
BP £40.00 – Catharine Toms – Expenses *
£35.00 – Microsoft 365 Software Subscription & £5.00 – McAfee Software Subscription

Reading Room Accounts:

Bank Balance at 18.03.2025 was £4,674.64
Receipts since last meeting:
CR £35.74 – COIF - Interest
CR £24.68 – Barclays Bank - Interest
Approval of payments since last meeting:
DD £123.48 – British Gas – Electricity
BP £1,620.00 – Mr R Walley – Reading Room Path
BP £2,640.00 – J P Builders – Reading Room Path
Approval of payments to be made at meeting:
BP £1,400.00 – A Ricketts – Reading Room Path – Final Payment

Payments proposed, seconded and approved by all. Resolved.

County Cllr. Hill arrived in the meeting at 8.30pm.
Standing Orders were suspended.

7. To receive report from County Councillor – County Cllr. Hill provided the following report:

Hertfordshire County Council (HCC)

The Integrated Plan (Budget) has been through the process and the was agreed at Council in February - approximately £2.7 billion with £1.5 billion directly for schools. Adult Care and Health (approximately £527.3 million) and Children's Services (approximately £289.2 million) remaining the highest spend areas. Additional funding has been allocated for SEND and into Highways for flooding and verge erosion. The precept has been agreed at 4.99%, with 2% ringfenced for Adult Care and Health.

Highways Updates

Speed and Volume surveys for part of the village have been received and I am awaiting the other. These will then be discussed in detail with Highways officers prior to discussion with Barkway Parish Council.

Signs in the trees have been reported and now removed.

I have reported the damaged footpath in the High Street (opposite the coffee shop) and this is scheduled for repair. The footpath outside properties on Royston Road (corner of Windmill Close) needs resurfacing – part has been repaired by HCC Highways with the remainder being the responsibility of Settle Housing.

I have also identified some blocked drains in Cambridge Road and reported these. There has been representation regarding ditch clearance adjacent to Gas Lane to prevent water backing up into Gas Lane causing flooding. The landowner is being contacted to action.

BK3 SITE

Although the reserved school site land is still being maintained by the landowner, HCC has blocked the entrance and will be monitoring. Overgrown hedges have been reported and instruction given to cut back.

Royston Library

The improvement works have now been carried out.

Events/Consultations

The Ermine Ward Surgery was held on Saturday, 1st March in the Woodman, Nuthampstead with the Councillors' Surgery in Royston Market on Saturday, 8th March.

I have responded to consultations on the planning application off Barkway Road, Royston, the proposed increases in Parking Tariffs and the proposals on reducing Waste/litter bin collections.

Armed Forces Covenant

The Board Meeting took place on 5th March. I am delighted that Barkway PC has agreed to sign up to the Covenant and look forward to confirmation of acceptance.

Cllr. Hill was thanked for her report.

Standing Orders were resumed.

The Clerk to submit the signed Armed Forces Covenant – Cllr. Hill to confirm where this needed to be sent. **Action: Clerk**

12. Correspondence – Nothing not covered elsewhere in the meeting.

13. Items to be deferred to the next meeting – Review of Asset Register, Carriage Wash restoration project, Survey of Seats and Benches, Reading Room Constitution, Open Space tidying, Open Space agreement with HCC, Barkway Bulletin, Village Pond

14. Date of next meeting – Tuesday 8th April 2025.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 8.37pm