

Minutes of Barkway Parish Council Meeting
Held at the Pavilion, Barkway on Tuesday 13th May 2025 at 7.35pm.

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

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

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

- 2. To receive and accept apologies for absence:** Cllrs. G Swann and W Sapsford (work commitments), PCSO Chris Brabrook and County Cllr. R Brown. 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** – Item 10.5.2 Cllr Dennis, Item 11.2 Cllrs. Baker and Cox.

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 – None.

Standing Orders were suspended.

- 5. Public Session – to receive representations from members of the public** – A member of the public was present to explain about his planning application. He explained that smaller bushes would be removed to make room for the garage but all trees around the boundary would remain.

Standing Orders were resumed.

It was proposed and agreed to bring forward item 10.2.5

10.2.5 To consider and make comment on planning application: Full Permission Householder : Erection of detached 4-bay garage.

Howletts Farm, Gas Lane, Barkway, Hertfordshire, SG8 8ET. Case Ref No: 25/00942/FPH - After consideration of the plans it was proposed, seconded and agreed by all that there was no objection to this application. The Clerk to submit response to North Herts Council (NHC). Resolved. **Action: Clerk**

It was proposed and agreed to bring forward item 8

- 8. To receive report from the Police** – Two members of the Police were present. It was reported that the past year had commenced with thefts locally relating to motor vehicle break-ins, the Autumn had seen shed and outbuilding break-ins where

agricultural machinery had been stolen. Recently in Barkway there had been two house burglaries at the southern end of the village and people belonging to an organised crime group had since been arrested in connection with these break-ins. There was the ongoing issue of lamp and lantern thefts which had occurred in various places throughout the country, and in which the suspect was a local man.

The Police had been involved in various community engagements, including attending schools to give talks. Neighbourhood Watch had now been re-branded to 'Herts Connect' and residents were being encouraged to sign up.

Recent speed checks had been carried out in the village, outside the Tally Ho pub. The matter of the vehicle racing along Nuthampstead Road was raised with the Police, who said that they had visited the Industrial Estate from where it seemed these vehicles originated and had spoken to people there. If it continued then they would re-visit but if extra evidence could be provided, such as times of speeding and vehicle registrations, it would be very helpful.

The Police were thanked for their report.

6. To receive report from District Councillor – District Cllr. Prescott reported that as a member of a minority political group now at NHC he unfortunately had less voice but would continue to work hard raising issues on behalf of the residents that he represented.

As a member of the Scrutiny Committee at NHC he had been made aware of a massive future overspend on the project for decarbonisation of leisure centres in the district. The original cost was to be £10.5m and a grant had been obtained of £7.5m towards the project. As two of the leisure centres needed new boilers anyway, it seemed to be an ideal time to obtain majority funding and change the boilers for heat pump systems. Since the outset, the costs had increased by £900k and then problems had been discovered meaning that some roofs were structurally not sound enough to incorporate the addition of solar panels without remedial work. That work would mean temporary closure of some leisure centres and the operators would need compensation for loss of income during closure. The estimated cost of the project had risen then to £16.5m with £9m having to be funded by tax-payers. There was still no final cost known as the project had not even started yet.

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

Hertfordshire County Council - There has been additional funding allocated in the Integrated Plan (Budget) towards flooding and verge erosion (particularly relevant to The Joint) across the County.

Over 92% of schools in Hertfordshire are currently rated Good or Outstanding and it is wonderful that we have such good schools in Barkway, Barley and Reed, plus a great pre-school in the village. The additional funding into SEND is now showing improvements in the system.

Hertfordshire Armed Forces Covenant had a very positive Board meeting in March with excellent attendance and engagement. This is so important in working with stakeholders to ensure that the Armed Forces Community is not disadvantaged and I am delighted that Barkway Parish Council has signed up to the Covenant.

Highways - The data from the Speed and Volume surveys in the village has been sent to the Parish Council and we have had a meeting to discuss various options suggested by Highways officers. These will be considered going forward and work will continue with the Police who have been carrying out speed checks in and around Barkway. The speeding particularly from the south end of Barkway to Nuthampstead has been noted

and is being monitored. 20 mph zones are being considered across the County and data is being collected including in the villages in Ermine Ward.

Works to the footpath in the High Street have been identified and will be implemented early in this financial year by HCC Highways. There are further works needed along the remaining part of the footpath on the junction of Royston Road/Windmill Close which has been reported to Settle Housing to complete.

Investigations on the drainage issues in Gas Lane are ongoing regarding finding a permanent solution to the problems.

Rural Surgery - The Surgery took place in the Woodman, Nuthampstead on 3rd May.

Consultations - I have participated in many consultations including planning applications for BK3 and Barkway Road, Royston which will have a major impact on the village of Barkway. I have also responded to the proposals in the new Waste contract and the changes to Parking tariffs by NHDC.

As my term ends, I would like to thank Barkway Parish Council for welcoming me to their meetings. I would also like to thank District Councillor Martin Prescott and his predecessor Gerald Morris for their support and joint working particularly on issues such as street cleaning and drainage.

It has been a pleasure to represent the village of Barkway for so many years.

Cllrs. Prescott and Hill were thanked for their reports.

The Police departed from the meeting at 8.15pm.

Standing Orders were resumed.

9. Council Administration

9.1 To agree final arrangements for the Annual Parish Meeting on 21st May –

This would be a drop-in session between 6.30pm and 8.30pm. Complimentary refreshments would be available for attendees. The Chair would present a welcome speech at 7pm and village organisations had been invited to set up tables to promote their activities. Cllr. Dennis to post a reminder on the Community Facebook page.

Action: WD

9.2 To authorise quotation for the purchase of a replacement laptop for the Clerk at £455.00 + VAT – It was reported that the Clerk's 6yr old laptop had been functioning poorly and on investigation had been advised by the Webmaster to be beyond repair and needing replacement. It was proposed, seconded and agreed by all to authorise purchase of a new laptop. **Action: Clerk**

10. To receive updates from Portfolio Holders

10.1 Corporate Governance – Nothing to report.

10.2 Planning

10.2.1 To receive monthly update report from Redrow regarding BK3 development and agree any response needed – Cllr. Swann had responded to the recent report received from Redrow and the Clerk had provided details of where the replacement bench should be located. Redrow would forward specification of the new bench for approval in due course.

Redrow had asked if the Parish Council would like to see the details of the Reserved Matters Application ahead of its submission to NHC. It was agreed that it would be beneficial to get this arranged. The Clerk to contact Redrow. **Action: Clerk**

Cllr. Dennis reported that he had finally received the effluent flow data requested from Thames Water but needed an expert to analyse it. Cllr. Baker to contact a consultant previously used to see if he would be prepared to decipher the data and produce a report.

Action: PB

10.2.2 To receive update on matters relating to the Open Space agreement between NHC and the Parish Council – NHC had been in contact and reported that it would now progress completion of the transfer of ownership by contacting the Parish Council's Solicitor.

10.2.3 To receive and note results of the Referendum held on the Barkway & Nuthampstead Neighbourhood Plan – Cllr. Dennis had been in attendance at the count of the votes. 325 voted yes, 49 voted no and there were 3 spoiled ballot papers. With this positive result it just needed one final NHC Committee Meeting approval to endorse it and it would then be 'made'.

10.2.4 To ratify response sent to Section 73 Application : Removal of Condition 2.

2, Pledgers Place, Barkway, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 8DQ. Case Ref No: 25/00600/S73 – A response of 'no objection' had been submitted to NHC. Proposed, seconded and ratified by all. Resolved.

10.3 Highways

10.3.1 To receive update on progress being made to address the problem of traffic speeding in the village – (See items 7 & 8)

10.3.2 To note correspondence received regarding Bridleway 18, and the response from Herts County Council (HCC) Public Access Officer – A horse rider and frequent user of Bridleway 18 from Barley had contacted the Parish Council to raise concern about safety for users on the Bridleway once BK3 was developed. The plans for the development showed various points of access onto and across the bridleway. Horse riders might encounter sudden and unexpected appearance of people and vehicles which was dangerous for all concerned. The Public Access Officer at HCC had been consulted by the Clerk for his comments. He had responded to say that *it is the responsibility of all users including horse riders to ensure that they are using a public Highway (which includes Bridleways) in a safe manner which does not endanger other users. Cyclists must give way to horse riders on Bridleways, but both horse riders and cyclists must give priority to pedestrians, particularly as they may be using mobility scooters or be visually or hearing impaired.*

In response to whether warning signage could be installed, *HCC does not install warning signs on Rights of Way to warn about specific hazards as this would set an unrealistic and unachievable precedent, as well as having the potential to deter legitimate users from using the Right of Way.*

10.4 Sports and Recreation

10.4.1 To receive update on football activities – The Clerk reported that the football season was coming to a close and the pitches could soon be rested to allow time for recovery.

10.4.2 To consider and agree quotation for pitch maintenance – The recommended pitch maintenance of topping up the bald spots and re-seeding, then overseeding the bottom pitch as wide as the 6 yard box had been quoted at a price of £850.00 + VAT. It was proposed, seconded and agreed to proceed with this work.

10.5 Community Property

10.5.1 To receive update on progress with improving security measures for the Pavilion and Recreation Ground – Cllr. Baker had made some preliminary enquiries and cost varied between £500 and £4,000. The Clerk to forward contact details for the company who had installed a security camera at the Village Hall. **Action: Clerk/PB**

10.5.2 To receive update on refurbishment works for the interior of the Reading Room – It was reported that most of the items from the Reading Room had been moved across to the Pavilion and the new container was now being utilised for storage. The interior decorating was progressing slowly. The Clerk to enquire as to when it would be finished. **Action: Clerk**

Cllr. Baker had arranged a meeting with the Barkway Local History Group (BLHG) on 27th May to discuss options for the fitting out of the interior with the now more limited budget available. He had submitted a grant application to NHC for £1,300. The BLHG would be asked if they could contribute towards the cost of display boards and if they could also apply for grant funding as a group.

Cllr. Baker to bring back a proposal to be considered at the June meeting. **Action: PB**

10.6 Environment - To receive update on progress with Carriage Wash Restoration Project – There was little progress to report. It was agreed that it needed a group of people to work together and think hard about how to raise money and move the project forward. Initial ideas included setting up a Just Giving page or starting a ‘Buy a Brick’ campaign, which had been successful when raising funds to build the new Pavilion. Cllr. Cox volunteered to assist Cllr. Fletcher.

It was understood from Cllr. Cox that there was a possibility of grant funding being available through Nature Space and Network Rail. It was all to do with finding mitigation ponds that could be restored and re-wilded with newts whilst allowing Network Rail to build through and damage other areas. It was agreed that she should investigate this further and report back at the June meeting. **Action: JC**

In addition, Fiona Hill suggested contacting Stansted Airport as they were awarding Community Grants to organisations within a 20 mile radius. **Action: LF**

10.7 Media and Communications

10.7.1 To receive update regarding the new website – nothing to report.

10.7.2 To receive report on progress of production of the Summer edition of the Bulletin – Cllr. Cox to produce a template to make production of the Bulletin easier going forward.

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 13.05.2025 was £45,609.33 (of which £11,881.03 is ring-fenced in the Carriage Wash Fund A/C)

Petty Cash £9.28

Receipts since the last meeting:

CR £460.00 – Buntingford Cougars – Hire of Pitches

CR £150.00 – Abrahams – Deposit for Hire of Community Room

CR £21,861.24 – NHC – Half Year Precept

CR £50.00 – Cooper – Hire of Community Room

CR £210.00 – Johnson – Hire of Community Room (Incl. Deposit)

CR £50.00 – Izod – Hire of Community Room

10.2 To authorise payments to be made

Approval of payments since last meeting:

DC £15.59 x 2 – Zoom – Software Subscription

DD £91.97 – Nest – Pension

DC £3.99 – Amazon – Cable Ties for goal nets

BP £80.00 – The Diary – Annual Advert for Pavilion

BP £459.60 – Rogersons Removals – Removal goods from Reading Room to Pavilion

DD £12.00 – Sage – Payroll Software

DD £32.89 – EDF Energy – Electricity Pavilion

DD £15.38 – Castle Water – Water Pavilion

DD £170.56 – NHC – Quarterly Waste Collection Charge

DD £61.94 – BT – Broadband Pavilion

DC £422.40 – Sage – Annual Accounts Software Subscription

DD £47.00 – Information Commissioners Office – Data Protection Licence

Approval of payments to be made at meeting:

By bank transfer:

BP £1,252.28 - Catharine Toms – Clerk's Monthly Salary

BP £43.25 - Annie McPherson – Litter Picking Apr

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

BP £10.00 – The Hundred Parishes Society – Annual Subscription

BP £325.00 – Glamour Concept Company Ltd – Cleaning at Pavilion Apr

BP £187.50 – R Bonfield – Maintenance Pavilion & Rec. Mar

BP £490.00 – Tim Drake – Line Marking & Grass Cutting Apr

BP £280.97 – The Printed Page – Printing of BNNP Referendum Version

BP £144.07 – Peter Baker – Purchase of replacement Walkie Talkies

BP £84.00 - Playground Facilities Ltd – Quarterly Play Area Inspection

BP £150.00 – Julian Wesolowski – Refund of Deposit for Hire of Community Room

BP £150.00 – Joanne Abrahams – Refund of Deposit for Hire of Community Room

Reading Room Accounts:

Bank Balance at 13.05.2025 was £4,522.77

Receipts since last meeting: None

Approval of payments since last meeting:

DD £27.40 – British Gas – Electricity

DD £52.03 – NHC - Rates

Payments proposed, seconded and approved by all. Resolved.

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

13. Items to be deferred to the next meeting – Carriage Wash restoration project, Survey of Seats and Benches, Reading Room interior re-fit and funding, Open Space tidying, Open Space agreement with NHC, Barkway Bulletin, Village Pond, Security measures for the Pavilion and Recreation Ground, Traffic speeding.

14. Date of next meeting – Tuesday 10th June 2025.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 9.15pm