

**Minutes of Barkway Parish Council Meeting**  
**Held at the Pavilion, Barkway on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2026 at 7.30pm.**

**1. Attendance:** Cllrs:  
Mr W Dennis (Chair)  
Mr P Baker (Vice Chair)  
Mr G Swann  
Mr N Stuart  
Ms J Cox

**Also present:** Mrs C Toms (Clerk/RFO)

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

**2. To receive and accept apologies for absence:** Cllrs. L Fletcher (on holiday) and D Marchant (work commitment). District Cllr. Martin Prescott and County Cllr. Ruth Brown (both attending another meeting). The Police (on rest days). 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 – Cllr. Dennis – item 10.5.**

**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 meetings – None.**

**5. To receive report from District Councillor – No report.**

**6. To receive report from County Councillor – No report.**

**7. To receive report from the Police – No report.**

**8. Public Session – to receive representations from members of the public –** An email received a few minutes before the meeting from a resident was read out. He apologised for not being able to attend but wished to raise concern about the Reserved Matters application 25/03149/RM and omission of the shop. He also put forward the suggestion that one community hub might work better for the village than the three community buildings currently in use and maybe Redrow could be approached about a different deal than providing a standalone shop, (which would be a tough commercial proposition for anyone with Barley shop so nearby).

**9. Council Administration – To discuss plans/actions to host the Q&A session with MP Chris Hinchliff on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> February –** Cllr. Dennis reported that the date had been confirmed with Mr Hinchliff's Office. Attendance numbers would need to be obtained ahead of the event in order that sufficient seating could be prepared. People would be invited to arrive and be seated by 19.15pm in order that the session could start promptly at 19.30pm. It was now advertised on the website as 'latest news' with a link to register interest in attending. Cllr. Stuart volunteered to Chair the meeting. The Clerk to enquire as to availability of the Village Hall in order that attendance numbers were not so restricted. **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 –** It was reported that the promised monthly update from Redrow had not been forthcoming for some months now. In the meantime, Redrow had submitted a Reserved Matters Application 25/03149/RM which was now out for

consultation from North Herts Council (NHC). The Clerk had requested additional time for the Council to make comment but the extension of time had not yet been agreed by the Case Officer. Cllr. Swann had spent considerable time looking through the planning documents and had circulated a detailed draft response to the consultation. A3 copies of the new proposed layout were handed out for Cllrs. to examine.

The response proposed was to object to the Reserved Matters Application as there were concerns that the proposal did not reflect the approved masterplan or provide a balanced, safe or policy-compliant development.

Issues raised were:

Layout – There were too many straight lines of sight, resulting in lack of visual interest and permeability and failed to reflect the original design intent of the scheme.

Inadequate Northern Boundary Planting – The proposed planting appeared sparse and insufficient and seemed primarily to benefit the residents rather than protect neighbouring Newsells Stud from disturbance. It also went against the Inspector's recommendations and modifications.

Removal of the Local Shop from the Main Site Plan – The shop was now proposed as a separate Reserved Matters Application. This is strongly objected to as the outline permission granted was specifically to include a shop. To remove the shop at this stage undermines the approved development concept, reduces local sustainability and risks the loss of an essential community facility.

Unequal Distribution of Visitor Parking - this imbalance would likely lead to on-street parking pressure, poor accessibility and conflict within the higher-density western area of the development.

Lack of Affordable Housing in the Eastern/Northern Area – This absence was contrary to good placemaking principles and local and national policy objectives aimed at creating mixed and balanced communities.

Hedgerow Alignment Along the Bridleway – The proposed hedgerow was located too close to the edge of the road. Consideration should be given to moving this back to avoid startling horses and improve safety for users.

Cllr. Swann was thanked for his hard work on this.

Other matters discussed were the fact that there was nothing on the NHC Planning Portal to indicate whether Thames Water had provided enough information yet to satisfy Condition 10 (formerly Condition 9) of the outline permission granted.

It was understood that Bridleway 18 would need to be closed for a period of time. It needed to be established if works around there could be done as quickly as possible in order that it could then be re-opened.

Cllr Swann aimed to review the draft response once again ahead of submission to NHC. **Action: GS**

**10.2.2 To completion on transfer of ownership to the Parish Council of the land behind Windmill Close** – The completion of the purchase had taken place on 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2025. It was noted that NHC had not required the £1 peppercorn purchase price to be paid, despite it having been offered.

**10.3 Highways - To receive update on progress to implement measures to combat speeding through Barkway** - No report. Item to be deferred to February meeting.

**10.4 Sports and Recreation – To receive update on football activities** - The Clerk reported all was going well but a few matches had to be cancelled recently due to poor weather conditions.

**10.5 Community Property - To receive update on progress with the interior re-fit of the Reading Room** –

Cllr. Baker took over to Chair the meeting.

The Barkway Local History Group had recently enquired about two matters:

- 1) Whether it would be possible to use the noticeboard outside the Reading Room to advertise their events. (The Clerk reported that she was already placing posters on that board for them),
- 2) Whether planning permission would be required to put an external sign on the building. (The Clerk responded that planning permission was more than likely required as it was

a Listed Building. She also raised concern that a sign outside indicating that it was a museum might invite security issues.)

Cllr. Baker would be forwarded the email and respond. **Action: PB**

Cllr. Dennis resumed as Chair of the meeting.

**10.6 Environment – To receive update on Carriage Wash Restoration and set a date for next meeting of Working Party** – In Cllr. Fletcher's absence, Cllr. Cox had taken a lead on the project. She reported that some progress had been made.

She had managed to arrange for Mr Ed Morton from The Morton Partnership (Structural Engineers) to come along with his representatives to conduct a visit to re-survey and produce a detailed schedule of works needed for the restoration. He would then be able to produce his report within the following 2-3 weeks. The cost of this would be £3,220.00 + VAT. This would enable the project to be put out to tender. However, it needed to be clarified if this price would include suggestions of suitable companies to approach to tender and if it would also include assessment of those tenders. Once the project was underway the works would also need to be project managed, so costs needed to be ascertained for that aspect too. Cllr. Cox aimed to try and arrange for Steve from Ecology Solutions to also be present with the Structural Engineers in order that the Ecology aspect could also be taken into consideration at this stage. **Action: JC** It was still uncertain whether planning permission would be required and a definitive answer was still awaited from Mark Simmons at NHC. An informal opinion had been obtained suggesting that if the project didn't constitute as Development then planning permission may not be needed but Permitted Development Rights may not apply as the structure was Grade II Listed. The advice was to submit a Pre-Application to NHC, the cost of which was reduced by 50% for Parish Councils, or it could be free as it was a conservation project, but all to be confirmed.

It was hoped that the project could be put out to tender by mid-March, with total costs known by May. At the same time Planning Permission would be being sought. This would line everything up in time to go back to The Pilgrim Trust in August before the grant offer expired. The adjacent landowners would be contacted again to give them an update and request permission for access onto their land for the Structure Engineers to conduct their survey.

**Action: JC/Clerk**

At this point it was not considered necessary to arrange another meeting of the Working Group until after the site visit in mid-February and subsequent report had been received.

Cllr. Cox was thanked for all her hard work on this.

**10.7 Media and Communications** – Cllr. Stuart reported that he was keeping the website updated and was working on a 'latest news' banner for the front page and a link to take visitors to a BK3 page where regular updates could be placed. It was aimed to redesign the Planning page to look more like the layout for the Agendas and Minutes page.

Cllr. Cox enquired if the Parish Council would like to plan a quarterly Bulletin, to be distributed before Easter. This could take the form of an Easter card with updates on three key items, The Reading Room (**Action PB**), the Carriage Wash (**Action JC/LF**) and BK3 (**Action: GS**). A seasonal image of the Carriage Wash could be on the front page (**Action: NS**).

## **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 13.01.2026: £25,997.50

The Carriage Wash Fund A/C balance: £13,969.60

Petty Cash £9.28

#### **Receipts since the last meeting:**

Parish Council A/C:

CR £390.00 – Buntingford Cougars – Hire of Football Pitches

CR £80.00 – J Williams – Hire of Community Room

### **11.2 To authorise payments to be made**

#### **Approval of payments since last meeting:**

DD £16.79 x 2 – Zoom – Software Subscription

DD £96.49 – Nest – Pension  
DD £13.20 – Sage – Payroll Software  
DD £34.48 – EDF Energy – Electricity Pavilion  
DD £57.54 – BT – Broadband Pavilion  
DD £27.98 – Castle Water – Water Pavilion  
BP £252.00 – Deluxe Perfect Cleaning Ltd – Cleaning Pavilion Dec  
BP £134.00 – The Printed Page – Printing of Christmas Card  
BP £1,919.12 – Foreman Laws Solicitors – Legal Fees for Transfer of Ownership –  
Windmill Close Open Space

**Approval of payments to be made at meeting:**

By bank transfer:

BP £1,280.86 - Catharine Toms – Clerk's Monthly Salary  
BP £68.00 - Annie McPherson – Litter Picking Dec & Xmas Card Delivery  
BP £42.50 – Sophie & Charlotte Anderton – Litter Picking Dec & Xmas Card  
Delivery  
BP £822.97 – HMRC – PAYE & NI Quarter 3  
BP £71.60 – Catharine Toms Expenses – Gifts for Bonfire Night and Refreshments  
for after Xmas Meeting  
BP £162.50 – R Bonfield – Maintenance Pavilion & Rec. Dec  
BP £330.00 – Tim Drake – Line Marking Dec  
BP £84.00 – Playground Facilities Ltd – Quarterly Play Area Inspection  
BP £246.55 – Francis Duncan – Planting at War Memorial 2025  
BP £55.00 – Steve Thornton – Window & Bus Shelter Cleaning  
BP £253.00 – SLCC – Membership Fee 2026

**Reading Room Accounts:**

Bank Balance at 13.01.2026 was £1,999.36  
Receipts since last meeting: None  
Approval of payments since last meeting:  
DD £48.00 – NHC – Rates  
DD £135.12 – British Gas – Electricity

Proposed, seconded and agreed by all.

**11.3 To receive report from the meeting of the Finance Working Party held on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> January** – (See Appendix A and Item 11.4).

**11.4 To consider and agree proposed budget for 2026/27 and associated Precept Application** – Further to a meeting of the Finance Working Party held the previous evening, a final draft budget for 2026/27 had been circulated to all Councillors. Having examined the financial position to 31.12.25 and the total forecast expenditure to 31.03.26, it was recommended to increase the Precept in total by £2,778 to £46,500. This would maintain a moderate level of Parish Council reserve funds, as required by good practice. It would represent an increase in the Parish Council element of the North Herts Council Tax bill to householders of +6.18% in a Band D property. As there had been no increase in the Parish Council category of the Council Tax bill for the last two years, it was considered that this would be an acceptable increase and would contribute towards the higher costs being now experienced by the Parish Council due to inflation.

It was proposed, seconded and agreed by all to approve the budget and Precept application for 2026-27. Resolved.

The Clerk to submit Precept application to North Herts Council. **Action: Clerk**

**12. Correspondence** – From Mrs Ann Bowes, thanking the Parish Council for their support in allowing her to use the Community Room once a month to host her ‘Friday Friends’ gathering.

The aim of the group was to offer support in the community to those suffering from bereavement or isolation. It was proving very successful and had been well attended. They aimed to expand this in time. She offered a possible financial contribution towards the cost of using the facility. It was agreed to respond asking whether a donation towards the cost of replacing the tea urn would be appropriate. **Action: Clerk**

**13. Items to be deferred to the next meeting** – Carriage Wash restoration project, Survey of Seats and Benches, Reading Room re-fit, Social Media Policy for 2026, Village Pond, Security measures for the Pavilion and Recreation Ground, Traffic speeding.

**14. Date of next meeting** – Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> February 2026.  
Cllr. Swann offered his apologies for the February meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 20.58pm.