

# BARLING MAGNA PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes** of the meeting of the Barling Magna Parish Council held on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2017, in The Great Wakering Community Centre, High Street, Great Wakering, Essex, commencing at 7.00 p.m.

Present: Councillors Bond, Edmunds, Knight, Pearmain and Steptoe (Acting-Chair).

In attendance: I. King (Parish Clerk)

## MINUTES

- 1. The Chair to declare the meeting open.**
  - a. The Chair declared the meeting open.
- 2. To receive apologies for absence.**
  - a. Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ashdown, Cohen and Gardiner.
- 3. To receive Declarations of Interest in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct and with section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.**
  - a. Councillor Steptoe declared a non-pecuniary interest in respect of Agenda Item 13.
- 4. To sign as a correct record the Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2017.**
  - a. Proposed Councillor Pearmain, seconded Councillor Bond that the minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2017 be signed as a correct record. For 5; Against 0; Abstained 0.
- 5. The meeting will stand adjourned to permit Parishioners of Barling Magna to address the Council.**
  - a. No parishioners were present to address the meeting.
- 6. To receive a report from the County and District Councillors for the area on any matters of interest to the Parish.**
  - a. No County Councillors were present.
  - b. District Councillor Steptoe reported on the planned A127/A130/A1245 Fairglen Interchange proposals. A consultation document was available.
  - c. District Councillor Steptoe reported on plans by the South-East Essex Parking Partnership to address problems arising from parking outside schools at peak times.
  - d. District Councillor Steptoe outlined changes to the collection and retention of National Non-Domestic Rates by District Councils, which collects rates on behalf of the County Council, Parish Councils, the Police and the Fire Service. It is not yet clear whether changes currently in-hand would benefit parish councils although the situation would be clear ahead of precept-setting for 2018-19.

## **7. Chair's Matters**

- a. There were none.

## **8. Financial Matters**

- a. Proposed by Councillor Pearmain, seconded by Councillor Knight that the schedule of cheque payments for March 2017 be approved. For 5; Against 0; Abstained 0.
- b. Proposed by Councillor Pearmain, seconded by Councillor Edmunds that the bank reconciliation to 31 January 2017 be approved. For 5; Against 0; Abstained 0.
- c. The Clerk reported that good progress was being made in bringing the current year's accounts up to date. Mr J Watson was thanked for his work on these and in preparation for the annual return.
- d. The Clerk reported that the 2014-15 VAT claim had been submitted. He had had a telephone conversation with HM Revenue and Customs and expected that the claim would be paid imminently.
- e. There was no emergency expenditure to report.
- f. The external auditor had contacted the Clerk to request sight of documents he wished to examine ahead of the audit visit. The Clerk reported to Council on the documents that had already been supplied.
- g. The Clerk reported the transfer of £5,000 from Co-op Bank account No 65592773 to account No 65592760, to ensure adequate funds to meet expected payments.

## **9. Vacancy for councillor**

- a. No signatures claiming an election had been received by the Elections Officer at Rochford District Council by the deadline; therefore, there would not be an election.
- b. Proposed by Councillor Knight, seconded by Councillor Edmunds that the Clerk should post notices inviting candidates to apply in writing for co-option as councillors. For 5; Against 0; Abstained 0.

## **10. Fundraising ideas**

- a. Councillor Bond proposed a fundraising idea to benefit the Village Hall and/or the Wildlife Reserve and invited other councillors to make similar suggestions for fundraising ideas. He had undertaken further exploration of a possible Mud Race, similar to that held in Maldon, but had concluded that this would be too complex to organise for the time being.
- b. Other suggestions made by councillors were:
  - (i) Open Garden days, possibly with walks around the village with plant sales and treasure hunts;
  - (ii) The current Solstice Day Walks;
  - (iii) Scarecrow Competition, based upon an idea seen in Stondon Massey;
  - (iv) Nature walks;
  - (v) "Gruffalo Woods" for children and families;
  - (vi) Shared events with The Castle public house, for example karaoke on a theme;
  - (vii) A Dog Show, with fun activities as well as more serious categories;
  - (viii) Pony and Trap Racing, as seen previously in Great Wakering;
  - (ix) A 4x4 off-roading event, preferably after harvest.

## 11. Traffic-calming measures in Church Road and Mucking Hall Road

- a. Councillor Bond proposed that the council should consider seeking the introduction of traffic-calming measures on these roads, as some drivers were driving at excess speed and there was a possible risk to life or to pets. The lack of a footpath in Church Road compounded the problem. It was noted that traffic-calming was an Essex Country Council responsibility. Proposed by Councillor Bond, seconded by Councillor Steptoe that the Council would make an application to the Local Highways Panel to ask it to assess the need for traffic-calming measures in Church Road and Mucking Hall Road. For 5; Against 0; Abstained 0. It was noted that, if approved, the work would be executed in the following financial year.

## 12. Clerk's report

- a. A written report had been circulated ahead of the Council meeting. All references below are to the minutes of the Full Council meeting held 9<sup>th</sup> February 2017.
- b. Neighbourhood Plan (item 8c refers) Great Wakering PC had indicated that it did not wish to pursue a Neighbourhood Plan; it was understood that Sutton with Shopland PC was open to an exploration of a joint plan. The Clerk would continue to explore this and also invite the Chair and Clerk of Canewdon PC to an informal meeting to discuss the strengths of their council's approach. Once it was clear that the plan was likely to go ahead as a joint venture, the Clerk would also consult the chair of the Parish Plan working group.
- c. Invitations to tender (items 11b and 22 refer) The Clerk reported that tenders were invited on fencing and bus shelter repairs in the week commencing 13 February 2017. Any tenders received are due to be opened in the week commencing 20<sup>th</sup> March.
- d. The benefits and drawbacks of charitable status for the wildlife reserve (item 11c refers). This work will be reported to Council when it is completed.
- e. Survey of streetlamps (item 12 refers) A response to our enquiry regarding a survey of local streetlamps was still awaited. It was understood that there is a map showing the positions of local streetlamps, although this was probably still in the Village Hall. The Clerk was requested to arrange for lighting engineers to attend the lamp adjacent to Abbots Hall Farm entrance and to have the old post by Barling Church removed, with the possibility of salvage and resale.
- f. Funding for new play equipment (item 13 refers) There had been a positive first response from officers of Rochford District Council and the Clerk would hold an exploratory meeting with them to see how the matter might be progressed.
- g. Removal of archives for safe-keeping (item 14a refers) This was to be arranged shortly, with Councillor Steptoe's business premises as an interim store. The Clerk would enquire of the Essex Records Office if they might offer longer-term custody of the archives.
- h. Email addresses and website Brunel had been requested to change the email addresses and the clerk's contact details on the website.
- i. Pensions Regulator – Declaration of Compliance (item 18b refers) The Council had successfully complied with its obligations ahead of the deadline. At the Staging Date of 1 October, no employee of the Council had reached the threshold for automatic enrolment. The Clerk informed the Council that a former member of staff had now applied to claim their pension. The forms sought by Essex Pension Fund were taking some time to complete.

- j. Letters of thanks to the Christmas hamper volunteers (item 18c refers) Letters of thanks to Mrs Dobson and Mrs Pearmain had now been sent.
- k. The Village Hall and insurance (item 23b refers) The Council had been in correspondence with its insurers to alert them to the fact that the Caretaker had now been instructed not to enter the village hall, owing to fears for health and safety of staff. They have confirmed that this is satisfactory and have made a change to that effect to the insurance schedule, at no charge to the Council.
- l. Staffing matters (item 23a refers) The Clerk informed the Council that a report on options would be made to the April Full Council.
- m. Administration Significant progress had been made in communicating the change of contact details for Clerk and correspondence address. The Clerk was appreciative of the guidance he had received from the Chair, Vice-chair, councillors and the former locum Clerk. In response to a query, it was reaffirmed that agendas, draft minutes and background papers should be emailed to councillors ahead of meetings; hard copies of background papers would be made available on the day.
- n. Wildlife Reserve expenditure In order to ensure the smooth continued operation of the Wildlife reserve, it was proposed by Councillor Steptoe, seconded by Councillor Edmunds that the Clerk should:
  - (i) Arrange the purchase of 10 pairs of stout riggers gloves, 12 pairs of more general purpose gloves, Eco-bleach and 6 pairs of safety goggles;
  - (ii) Set up an Amazon account for these purchases;
  - (iii) Contact the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Wildlife Reserve Committee ahead of every one of its future meetings, and not less often than every 2 months, to request a list of items of equipment or consumables to enable the Reserve always to hold an adequate stock. This list should be recommended by the Wildlife Reserve Committee to the Full Council, which might refer larger items to the Finance Committee to determine if the funds were available.

For 5; Against 0; Abstained 0.

### **13. Planning**

- a. The only planning application to be considered was 17/00190/FUL in respect of a proposed single-storey pitched roof side extension at 272 Little Wakering Road, SS3 0LA. There were no comments on the application.

### **14. Correspondence**

- a. The Community Policing Team had requested advance notice of any events in the next year which would require a police presence. Some concern was expressed by councillors that various events were taking place of which there had been no notification and that the public had assumed that these were the responsibility of the Parish Council. Councillor Steptoe reported a discussion he had held with Police and Crime Commissioner Roger Hurst. The police precept was rising to enable the deployment of a further 41 police officers and several special constables. Mr Hurst was aware of the need for local villages to have police contacts and a more visible police presence.

### **15. At the Chairman's discretion to exchange information on matters of interest to the Parish.**

- a. Councillor Knight reported that the Village Hall car park was being churned-up by vehicles parking and turning, presumably by parents collecting children from school. The Clerk was requested to secure the entrance with a chain and a No-Entry signs.

- b. Councillor Bond enquired about progress by BT in removing a faulty telegraph pole. Councillor Steptoe advised that BT had been made aware of the issue and that any work was a matter for them.

**16. To agree the date of the next Council Meeting**

- a. The next Council meeting will be held on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> April 2017.

**17. The meeting closed at 8.40pm.**