

BARLING MAGNA PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Barling Magna Parish Council held on Thursday 13th April 2017, in The Front Room, Great Wakering Community Centre, Great Wakering, Essex commencing at 7.00 p.m.

Present: Councillors Ashdown, Bond, Cohen (Chair), Gardiner, Knight and Steptoe (Vice-Chair).

In attendance: County Councillor C. Seagers
District Councillors N.Hookway, M.Lucas-Gill, T.Hughes and A. Williams
I.King (Parish Clerk)
Two members of the public

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 Edmunds and Pearmain.
- 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 11.
- 4. To sign as a correct record the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 9th March 2017.**
 - a. Proposed by Councillor Steptoe, seconded by Councillor Bond that the minutes of the full council meeting held 9th March 2017 be signed as a correct record. For: 3, against: 0, abstained: 3.
- 5. The meeting will stand adjourned to permit Parishioners of Barling Magna to address the Council.**
 - a. Mrs S. Glover drew the Council's attention to the repairs needed to the bus shelter located outside the Parish Hall. The Chair informed Mrs Glover that the Council was seeking contractors to make the necessary repairs.

6. To receive a report from County and District Councillors for the area on any matter of interest to the Parish.

- a. County Councillor Seagers reported that he had inspected the width of the road near the Star Lane housing development, including the combined pavement and cycleway, and that he had concluded that there had been no significant narrowing of Star Lane at that point.

- b. County Councillor Seagers responded to an email from the clerk on the Parish Council's behalf, seeking his endorsement to a referral to the Local Highways Panel regarding the risks associated with speeding cars in Church Road and Mucking Hall Road. He was not inclined to support the application. Councillor Seagers enumerated various options open to the Panel: he did not believe that any of these were applicable in this instance. In his opinion, this was an enforcement issue and the responsibility of both the Essex Police and the South-East Essex Parking Partnership. He had spoken to the council officer serving the Local Highways Panel and the 2017/18 budget of £2,500 was fully committed. He did not believe that there had been any incidents of large livestock or dogs being killed and that it was impossible to save all pets from road-related risk. Councillor Bond responded that the Parish Council was due its fair share of the Panel's budget. Councillor Cohen pointed out that, by their very nature, speed bumps will slow down road users and are in place in other parts of Rochford district. She was concerned that it seemed that harm must occur before any action can be taken. Councillor Seagers suggested that a more productive approach would be to log known offenders, so that the Police had a basis upon which to catch repeat offenders. District Councillor Williams drew the Council's attention to the Rochford Community Speed Watch. Both he and Councillors Edmunds and Steptoe were trained in logging speeding incidents and volunteers were available 3 days per week. Speeding motorists were sent a first letter, then a second letter after which the Police were informed. The site would need to be subject to a risk assessment. The clerk was requested to explore this matter with the clerk of the Rochford Parish Council.

- c. Councillor Steptoe raised a point of order concerning a political badge being worn by District Councillor Hookway. The Councillor removed the badge.

- d. District Councillor Hookway reported on a review committee which was examining possible improvements to both the Rayleigh Leisure Centre and the Clements Hall Leisure Centre. He also noted the usefulness to councillors of the recent Essex County Council Highways presentation.

- e. District Councillor Lucas-Gill informed the meeting that he was the project leader for the Old House in Rochford, which would become a wedding venue and would, it was hoped, attract much use.

- f. District Councillor Hughes was concerned about the scheduled closing of the public toilets in Great Wakering, which she felt would adversely affect

the residents of Barling Magna too. She would welcome email contact from Parish Councillors with ideas to help her resist the closure.

- g. District Councillor Steptoe reported that an application to the Local Highways Panel for Barling Road by the Olde Shoulderstick had agreed to the installation of both chevrons and a footpath, subject to the availability of funding. He also said that was continuing to press for improved parking through the South-East Essex Parking Partnership.
- h. District Councillor Steptoe reported on opportunities for shared training, including on standards issues.

7. Financial matters

- a. A revised schedule of cheque payments for April was tabled by the clerk. Proposed by Councillor Ashdown, seconded by Councillor Knight that the payments be approved. For: 6; Against 0; Abstentions 0. Carried. The auditor's recommendation on affixing the Council's stamp to each invoice had been implemented from this cheque run onwards.
- b. The clerk reported that he was unable to offer a bank reconciliation to 31 March 2017, owing to continued delays in receiving the latest HSBC bank statements. He outlined steps being taken to rectify the situation and would supply members with a reconciliation as soon as it was possible to do so.
- c. The clerk reported that VAT claims for the full year 2015/16 and for the half-year to 30 September 2016 had been submitted.
- d. The clerk had circulated by email a draft progress report following the internal auditor's report after the 2015/16 audit. This was noted by the Council, along with an oral report on plans to meet the 2016/17 audit.
- e. The clerk recommended that the Council should:
 - i. increase the number of authorised signatories to its two HSBC accounts; and
 - ii. either close or reduce the balance to £1 in both the Santander accounts.

Proposed by Councillor Steptoe, seconded by Councillor Gardiner that the clerk's recommendations should be approved and that he be authorised to act upon them. For: 6; against 0; abstentions 0. Carried. The clerk was also asked to establish what level of bank account holdings were covered by the government's guarantee scheme.

8. Barling Magna Parish Hall – proposed works.

- a. Members noted, with approval, the successful outcome of the application to the Community Initiatives Fund Response Grant programme for £15,000 towards the costs of repair work at the Parish Hall. Proposed by Councillor Steptoe, seconded by Councillor Ashdown that Members' thanks to Councillor Cohen for preparing the bid should be recorded. Carried unanimously.

- b. The Council received a report from the clerk regarding the proposed works to the Parish Hall. The funds had been secured to enable the work to begin based on recently confirmed contractors' tenders, subject to confirmation about the most favourable VAT position.
- c. Councillor Steptoe proposed that the repairs to the Parish Hall should be carried out as soon as possible, subject to confirmation that the VAT status is in the Council's favour and that any shortfall in funding is met from the Council's reserves. Seconded Councillor Ashdown. For: 6; against 0; abstentions 0.

9. Fundraising ideas – progress

- a. The clerk apologised to Councillor Ashdown for the omission of her suggestion from the March 2017 meeting. This was for a football and/or cricket match between Barling Magna and Great Wakering. Further suggestions were also tabled: an art trail and a treasure hunt.
- b. Progress in the organisation of a Dog Show was reported.
 - i. This would be a fun occasion, not a pedigree event. Councillor Steptoe had ascertained that, should the Parry recreation ground be sought as a venue, the District Council would be amenable, as well as willing to permit parking and concessions subject to satisfying health and safety and public liability checks.
 - ii. Councillor Gardiner reported on an informal meeting he had attended to help develop ideas for the dog show and he proposed that this should be held at the top meadow of the Wildlife Reserve on Saturday 15th July 2017 in aid of the Parish Hall. He requested that the clerk should confirm the insurance cover for this event. Permission to park would be sought from Mr Tabor, the landowner of the field opposite the entrance.
 - iii. Councillor Steptoe was concerned about the possible adverse effects of the presence of a large number of dogs on the wildlife. Councillor Gardiner said that Reserve was used daily by dog-owners without any difficulty and that dogs would be required to be on a lead.
 - iv. Councillor Ashdown wondered whether more money would be made if the Parry was to be used and if parking on the verge of the road outside the Reserve would be safe.
 - v. Councillor Bond had sounded-out the landlord of The Castle public house and it was likely that some prizes would be donated. He had heard good reports of the dog show at Canewdon and requested that the clerk should consult the parish council there for any advice they might offer.
 - vi. Councillor Knight queried whether there would be adequate toilet facilities near the Parry: people would have to use those in the pub. She felt that it would be inconvenient to have to transport tables and chair to that site: a trailer would be needed. She enquired whether anyone had a vehicle equipped with a tow bar.

- vii. Councillor Steptoe remained concerned about safety, if the event was to be held at the Wildlife, not least from adders. He was also concerned about the effect on water voles and rare plants. Overall, he felt that there was a safety risk to people, dogs and cars from using and parking at the Reserve and he could not support that plan. Councillor Gardiner said that it was nonsense to talk of threats from adders as the Teddy Bears Picnic has been held in the Reserve twice.
- viii. At the invitation of the Chair, County Councillor Seagers mentioned that insurance claims had proved an insuperable difficulty for the Great Waking Fair. In a more light-hearted vein, he proposed that one sideshow should be a local councillor in the stocks. Councillor Steptoe felt that one award might be to the dog that looked most like the mayor.
- ix. With the Chair's permission, District Councillor Williams related the experience of Rochford Parish Council which had had to seek the permission of the Department for Food and Rural Affairs for their dog show. They had had to produce an events management plan and insurers no longer permitted them to hold pony rides or dog shows or to use petrol generators.
- x. The Chair requested the clerk to ascertain the view of the Council's insurers. She also expressed concern that it seemed that the key points of the debate had been discussed and agreed by some Members outside the Council meeting.
- xi. Councillor Steptoe proposed, Councillor Ashdown seconded that the event would be held at the Parry. For: 2; against 3; abstention 1. The motion was lost.
- xii. Councillor Gardiner proposed, Councillor Bond seconded that the event be held at the Wildlife Reserve. For: 3; against 2 (Councillors Ashdown and Steptoe), abstention 1. Carried.
- xiii. The Chair sought nominations for a working party to organise the event and Councillors Ashdown, Bond, Gardiner and Knight volunteered.
- xiv. In response to a question from Councillor Steptoe, it was clarified that this event would be run by the Parish Council in aid of the repairs to the Parish Hall.
- xv. The proposed date being disputed, Councillor Gardiner proposed the 15th July 2017, seconded by Councillor Bond. For:4; against 0; abstentions 2. Carried.

10. Clerk's report

The clerk had circulated an update on work in-hand, including:

- i. Neighbourhood Plan
- ii. Concerns regarding traffic in Church Road and Mucking Hall Road
- iii. Streetlamps – currently we are searching for the location map. It was agreed to defer action for the time being. Councillor Steptoe noted that the lamp outside Abbots Hall Farm was still out of action. He would enquire of Green Gateway Trading (GM) Ltd if they would address the ivy problem.
- iv. Play equipment - The annual inspection of play equipment at our play area has been scheduled for May. The clerk continued to await a

meeting with Helen Galley of Rochford DC to consider how we might work together on the renewal of play equipment on the two sites in the parish, one of them owned by the district council.

- v. Removal of archives for safe-keeping – this was kept under review.
- vi. Pension – administration problems were outlined by the clerk.
- vii. Parish hall and insurance - Our insurers have acknowledged the Council's direction to the caretaker not to enter the parish hall, owing to fears for health and safety of staff. They have amended the schedule of insurance to that effect and no longer require a regular internal inspection. Also, it was agreed to defer the installation of a chain at the Parish Hall car park.
- viii. Health & safety equipment at the Wildlife Reserve – a first list of equipment had been supplied.
- ix. The clerk notified his leave dates of 20-27 May and 15-22 July 2017. His 3-monthly review would be due on 30.4.17.

11. Planning matters

- a. On planning applications 17/00261/FUL and 17/00328/FUL, the Council had no comments.

12. Correspondence

- a. The clerk advised on a future consultation meeting regarding highways.

13. At the Chair's discretion, to exchange information on matters of interest to the Parish

- a. Councillor Ashdown had received a brochure regarding new play equipment which was passed to the clerk
- b. The Chair advised that Great Mistley Parish Council had a playground roundabout in good condition, available to any parish that wished to claim and transport it.
- c. Councillor Steptoe requested that the clerk contact him to discuss the Data Protection Act.

14. To agree future dates

- a. It was agreed that the Annual Parish Meeting would be held at 7pm on Thursday 11th May 2017, concluding no later than 7:30pm, to be followed immediately by the Parish Council's Annual Meeting.

15. Exclusion of the Press and the Public

- a. Pursuant to section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, it was resolved that, in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, it was advisable in the public interest that the press and the public be excluded and they were instructed to withdraw.

16. Co-option to the Parish Council.

- a. The clerk reported on applications received. As it had not been possible for both the applicants to attend the present meeting, it was agreed to seek a separate meeting on Tuesday 2nd May 2017 at 7pm to invite applicants to make a short statement and respond to any questions councillors might have. If this date proved inconvenient to both candidates or if the room was not available, the item would be held over until the next Council meeting.

17. Staffing

- a. Council consider an options paper which had been circulated by the clerk in advance of the meeting. It was agreed to take no action.

18. Financial matter

- a. The clerk drew Members' attention to an invoice received for £250 in relation to work commissioned on the 2015/16 annual accounts. The Council's internal auditor advised that the Council should consider not paying the invoice on the strength of the incomplete work submitted by the contractor. The clerk was requested to seek the withdrawal of the invoice.

19. Tenders

- a. The Council had gone out to tender in February for the following two pieces of work:
 - i. Fencing at the Wildlife Reserve
 - ii. Repairs to four bus shelters

The clerk reported that only one tender had been received, opened in the presence of the Chair and Vice-Chair on 10th April. This was partially illegible. It was proposed by Councillor Steptoe, seconded by Councillor Cohen:

- (i) to go out to tender once again on both contracts, using where possible, the Essex County Council and/or Rochford District Council tendering websites;
- (ii) to explore the offer of the Wildlife Reserve volunteers to make repairs to the car park fencing, replacing like-for-like and making available up to £100 for any additional materials needed to complete this work.

For: 6; against 0; abstentions 0. Carried.

20. Closure of the meeting

- a. The Chair declared the meeting closed at 9:55pm