

BARLING MAGNA PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL, held Thursday 11th May 2017 in the Front Room, Great Wakering Community Centre, High Street, Great Wakering, Essex.

Present: Councillors Ashdown, Clark, Cohen, Edmunds, Gardiner, Knight, Pearmain and Steptoe.

Apologies: Councillor Bond; District Councillors Lucas-Gill and Williams.

Attending: I.King (Parish Clerk) and 2 local residents.

MINUTES

- 1. The Chair to declare the meeting open.**
 - a. The Chair declared the meeting open at 7:12pm
- 2. A newly-appointed Co-opted Councillor to make the Statutory Declaration of Acceptance of Office.**
 - a. Councillor Malcolm Clark made the Statutory Declaration of Acceptance of Office and was welcomed to the Council.
- 3. To elect a Chair of the Barling Magna Parish Council for the 2017/18 Term of Office.**
 - a. Councillor Cohen was nominated by Councillor Steptoe, seconded by Councillor Edmunds. For 8, against 0, abstained 0.
- 4. To elect a Vice-Chair of the Barling Magna Parish Council for the 2017/18 Term of Office.**
 - a. Councillor Steptoe was nominated by Councillor Ashdown, seconded by Councillor Cohen. For 8, against 0, abstained 0.
- 5. The elected Chair and Vice Chair of the Parish Council to make the Statutory Declaration of Acceptance of Office.**
 - a. Councillors Cohen and Steptoe made the Statutory Declaration of Acceptance of Office.
- 6. Individual Councillors to update their register of interests.**
 - a. The Clerk had invited all councillors to review their entries, which the Council was obliged to publish on its website either in full or by means of a link to another site. There was just one addition recorded to one member's register entry.
- 7. To receive apologies for absence.**
 - a. Apologies were received from Councillor Bond and from District Councillors Lucas-Gill and Williams.

8. 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 planning matters and any relating to Essex County Council.

9. To agree Committees, Sub-Committees and Working Parties of the Parish Council to be formed for the 2017/18 Council Year.

- a. Proposed by Councillor Steptoe, seconded by Councillor Gardiner that the following list of Committee memberships be approved for 2017/18, noting that the Chair and vice-Chair were members ex officio of all Committees and Working Parties. For 8, against 0, abstaining 0.

Finance: Ashdown, Bond, Clark, Cohen and Steptoe.

Personnel: Ashdown, Cohen, Edmunds, Gardiner and Steptoe.

Wildlife Reserve: Bond, Clark, Gardiner, Knight and Pearmain.

Events Working Party: Ashdown, Bond, Gardiner and Knight.

10. To agree representation on outside committees and bodies for the 2017/18 Council Year

- a. Proposed by Councillor Steptoe, seconded by Councillor Gardiner that the following list of representatives on external bodies be approved for 2017/18. For 8, against 0, abstaining 0.

Parish Plan Steering Group: Cohen and Knight

Rochford Hundred Association of Local Councils: Cohen (substitute Ashdown)

Crime Prevention / Local Community Police: Edmunds (substitute Clark)

Sea Wall / Flooding matters: Pearmain (substitute Clark)

11. To agree meeting dates for the 2017/18 Council Year

- a. A draft calendar of Council, Committee and other meetings and events for the year had been circulated by the clerk and this was considered.
- b. A number of amendments were discussed. The dates as set out on the revised calendar attached to these minutes were proposed by Councillor Steptoe, seconded by Councillor Gardiner. For 8, against 0, abstained 0.

12. To sign as a correct record the Minutes of the Extraordinary meeting of the Council held on 2nd May 2017.

- a. Proposed by Councillor Gardiner, seconded by Councillor Ashdown that the minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Council held on 2nd May 2017 be approved. For 8, against 0, abstained 0.

13. The meeting will stand adjourned to permit Parishioners of Barling Magna to address the Council.

- a. Mr Barry Ashdown addressed the Council on the matter of his concerns arising from the discussion of the Dog Show event at the Council meeting held 13th April 2017. He said that he had asked the Clerk to circulate his email to members (the Clerk had a different recollection). Mr Ashdown felt that some councillors had not been open to discuss the possibility of alternative options to the use of the Wildlife Reserve for this event. The Chair thanked Mr Ashdown for his willingness to share his concerns with

the Council. However, she felt that although councillors had expressed their different views with some strength of feeling on that occasion, this was an example of the democratic process at work. The decision to hold the event at the Wildlife Reserve had been taken in accordance with the Council's standing orders.

14. To receive a report from the District and County Councillors for the area on any matters of interest.

- a. The Chair firstly congratulated Councillor Steptoe on his election to the Essex County Council. County Councillor Steptoe would be attending his first full meeting of the County Council on Tuesday 16th May.
- b. District Councillor Steptoe reported that the first meeting of the new Rochford District Council would also be held on Tuesday 16th May, in the evening. A new school was being commissioned, for opening in 2020/21. There were discussions currently on the future operation of the Local Highways Panel. He invited Members to look out for a public consultation event to be held at the Freight House on 19th and 20th May, regarding a significant local development.
- c. The Chair queried the future of the Haul Road. Councillor Knight asked whether it would retain the same classification. District Councillor Steptoe replied that it would.

15. Financial Matters – to consider and approve.

- a. Payment requests for May 2017: the clerk had circulated a schedule of cheque payments. Proposed by Councillor Steptoe, seconded by Councillor Ashdown that this schedule be approved. For 8, against 0, abstained 0.
- b. Report from the Clerk on banking, audit and other financial matters. The clerk had prepared a letter for signature following the decision at the meeting on 13th April 2017 to close the Santander accounts. He reported on difficulties with one of the Council's two HSBC accounts which had been suspended without adequate notice being received by the Council. Despite two letters, a personal visit to the branch by Councillor Steptoe and several phone calls, the matter was unresolved. It was proposed by Councillor Steptoe, seconded by Councillor Ashdown that the bank be instructed to transfer the residual sum to one of the Council's Co-operative Bank accounts and then close the affected HSBC account. For 8, against 0, abstained 0. The clerk noted that signatories to the remaining HSBC account needed to be updated but the bank's suggested of the use of the online form was frustrated by the bank's own processes for parish councils which prevented this.
- c. The Clerk reported on the present position of both the Internal and External audits. The internal auditor had asked that we wait a further fortnight for outstanding statements to arrive before seeking his agreement to a qualified audit without them. The external auditor would be asked to extend the deadline for audit. It was a very unsatisfactory situation but the Clerk, with the assistance of John Watson, was trying to resolve the issues.

16. Appointment of Auditors.

- a. It was proposed by Councillor Steptoe, seconded by Councillor Gardiner to re-appoint Auditing Solutions Ltd as Internal Auditors to Barling Magna Parish Council for the year to 31st March 2018 at an estimated fee of £320 + VAT on the basis that the accounts would be in good order. Councillor Edmunds enquired whether one estimate was adequate and it was confirmed that the financial regulations permitted this.

17. Events Working Party.

- a. Councillor Gardiner read an update from a meeting of the Working Party on planning for the Dog Show on 15th July 2017, which meeting had taken place the previous evening. He would circulate the draft minutes of the meeting to all councillors by email.
- b. Councillor Steptoe requested that, as the Chair and Vice-Chair were members of all committees and working parties ex officio, that they should be included in future emails arranging meetings of the Working Party.
- c. The Working Party proposed that the proceeds from entries should go to the Parish Hall fund and that any income from raffles should be given to a dog/animal charity. The fee for table concessions would be £10. Councillors Ashdown and Steptoe asked that their disagreement with income from the event going to independent charities should be recorded, as the original purpose of the event was as a fundraiser for the Parish Hall.
- d. There would be one ring for all classes. Councillor Bond was arranging 1st, 2nd and 3rd prize rosettes; all entrants would receive a dog treat. It was hoped that there would be a small cup for Best in Show. It had been suggested that prizes could be given out by the Chair of the District Council or Nadia Maddox. Councillor Steptoe offered to help liaise with the District Council on behalf of the organisers. Two judges were still being sought.
- e. It was proposed that entries should be priced at £1.50 if booked online through Eventbrite; £2 on the day. Registration would be from 11am and the event would start at 1pm.
- f. Mr Jordan Bond had kindly designed a bright and attractive poster for the event and this, along with postings on websites and some flyers would comprise the publicity for the day.
- g. There had been several offers of help from volunteers. Two had agreed to take photographs. Jane Ramsey had volunteered to be commentator, using the Council's own PA equipment: Councillor Edmunds agreed to check on the condition of this on the Council's behalf. A first responder had been identified. Jo MacPherson had offered help with bookings and on the day. There would be some face-painting and other supporting and fun contributions.
- h. All dog owners would be asked to keep their dogs on leads and to clear up any mess.
- i. The Clerk was asked about public liability cover. If people volunteered their help for the event and if the clerk had a note of their names and addresses, they would be covered by the Council's £10million public liability insurance. Third parties and contractors who were there for their own businesses would be required to produce proof of their own publicity liability insurance which would need to enjoy a minimum of £10million cover. Councillor Edmunds was reassured that a risk analysis and management plan had been devised. In the event of rain, there was some shelter in a marquee and under the canopy in the reserve; it was not felt that event cancellation insurance would be required.

- j. The Clerk asked for clarification about the proposed demonstration involving Malamute dogs by Jane Ramsey. It was confirmed that this would not involve rides for members of the public but would be a skills demonstration. In his view, this was covered by our existing public liability insurance.
- k. Councillor Steptoe enquired about parking arrangements. Councillor Knight was awaiting a decision by Mr Tabor who owned the field opposite the entrance. Councillor Steptoe advised that Mucking Hall Road should be kept clear. The verges were the property of each landowner.
- l. Councillor Steptoe asked what scale of budget the event would need as working capital. £150 was mentioned. Councillor Steptoe proposed, Councillor Clark seconding a budget of £150; this was approved.
- m. The remaining discussion on this item concerned the origin of the idea for the event and subsequent developments of this. Some members felt that their hard work had not been appreciated. Councillor Pearmain congratulated the Working Party on their hard work and suggested that all members should have the draft minutes of the Working Party meeting before any new decisions were taken.
- n. In closing the discussion, the Chair emphasised the importance of a constructive approach.

18. Parish Hall

- a. The Clerk reported that project managers Wheeldon & Deacon would not schedule the works until the Council certified that it held all the funds required in its account. Therefore, he was working to seek drawdown of the Public Works Loan Board funding as a matter of urgency. The Direct Debit attached to the original application had been incorrectly completed and would be signed afresh at this meeting. The Board also required a cancelled, blank cheque on the Council's main account: this was approved. The Community Initiatives Fund grant would be payable upon invoice, possibly not until the works were completed.
- b. Proposal by Councillor Ashdown that the Council should begin planning for a grand opening of the Hall after repairs have been completed. There was general agreement of the importance of making an event of the re-opening. Ideas would be welcomed and would take shape when a likely completion date was known. A celebrity to re-open the hall would be one option. Mike Edmunds, the Star Wars actor, was known to Councillor Clark and he would explore this possibility and report to a future Council meeting. The CIF funding conditions required that the Chair of Essex County Council and/or the portfolio holder should be invited to the opening.
- c. Proposal by Councillor Ashdown that the Council should advertise now to encourage advance bookings for the hall, ready for the completion of the repairs. The Clerk had asked the Caretaker to do some research on competitive pricing and possible regular lettings and this was in-hand.
- d. Councillor Steptoe raised the matter of the temporary removal and accommodation of equipment and items of value while repairs were being carried out. The Clerk

would invite the project manager to suggest ways forward. It might be necessary to place a container on site for the time being. All councillors were asked to contact local farmers with barns who might also help.

19. Highway Ranger Service

- a. Proposal from Councillor Ashdown that the Parish Council explore possible projects for the Highway Ranger Service in Barling Magna. Referrals might be made directly through the Essex County Council website. If so, councillors were advised to note the reference number generated for their enquiry: if they gave this to Councillor Steptoe he would be glad to chase a response if needed. Councillor Ashdown asked about the village gates and Councillor Knight asked if the 'de-restriction' notice in Shopland Road would qualify and Councillor Steptoe then explained the criteria more fully.

20. Report from representatives on external bodies

- a. To receive a report from recent meetings of external bodies. The Chair had circulated by email a report from attending a meeting of Rochford Hundred Association of Local Councils. She had also circulated notes from a recent briefing that she, Councillor Knight and the Clerk had attended. Councillor Knight thanked the Chair for the notes, which had been helpful. Councillor Cohen asked that Neighbourhood Plan should be on the next Council agenda.

21. Clerk's Report.

- a. A tabular report from the Clerk on current work had been circulated to members in advance. Members said that they had found this approach helpful.
- b. In response to a query, the Clerk reported that 3 unsuccessful tendering processes had been carried out in the past 9 months seeking the repair the four bus shelters. The shelter on Mucking Hall Road was not in a good state of repair. Although there was no evidence of imminent collapse, the repair or replacement could not be deferred indefinitely. Councillor Steptoe had furnished him with the details of both the County and District online tendering platforms, which might make the process easier. However, there were many competing claims on the Clerk's limited allocation of time and, given the failed processes hitherto, he suggested that the approach needed to be reconsidered. There were various suggestions offered by councillors for funding for a new shelter: Community Initiatives Fund; charitable trusts and crowdfunding although the clerk pointed out that, however useful and supportive of the local economy, a bus shelter was not a very attractive fundraising proposition. He was requested to explore the cost of a new steel and Perspex construction and report back.

22. Planning Matters.

- a. Councillor Steptoe repeated his non-pecuniary interest in planning matters.
- b. The only application pertaining to Barling Magna since the last full Council meeting was 16/00939/FUL relating to the demolition of a garage block by The Evergreens in Kimberley Road. Councillor Ashdown had related her concerns to Councillor Steptoe by email. There was a general view in the meeting about it tending towards over-development of the site. Parking had been reduced to 2 spaces in order to secure approval.

23. Correspondence.

- a. The Clerk reported on two letters delivered to the Parish Hall, from Mrs and Mrs Long of Shoeburyness, who wanted to buy the Parish Hall site to build a house. They had also been in touch with Councillor Steptoe on the matter. The Clerk was asked to write to explain that this would not be possible owing the importance of the Hall to the village and the restrictive covenants on the site.

24. At the Chairman's discretion to exchange information and items for the next meeting.

- a. Councillor Steptoe reported that the street light outside Abbots Hall Farm still needed repairs and that the lamp outside his home was now faulty.
- b. Councillor Steptoe asked who was the nominated and qualified first-aider for the Wildlife Reserve? There was no clear nominee at present. The Clerk was asked to investigate the legal requirements for having a first-aider regularly on site when volunteers were working there.

25. Date of next meeting

- a. There would be a Wildlife Reserve Committee meeting on Tuesday 6th June and the next full Council meeting would now be on Thursday 15th June, to avoid clashing with the general election. Both meetings would be in the Great Wakering Community Centre.

26. Exclusion of the Press and the Public

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 about to be transacted, it was advisable in the public interest that the press and the public be excluded and they were instructed to withdraw.

27. Legal matter

- a. At Councillor Steptoe's suggestion, Councillor Clark – as a candidate in the recent co-option process – declared an interest.
- b. The Clerk advised the Council of some issues arising from the recent process for co-option to fill the vacant seat. He offered some observations on the recent process, which were noted by the Council. The Clerk was thanked for his observations.

28. The Chair declared the meeting closed at 9:40pm

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BARLING MAGNA PARISH COUNCIL – ANNUAL CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2017/18

This version dated 12.5.17

All dates agreed by Council on 11th May 2017, except those in italics.

Month	Council / Committee
May	Annual Parish Meeting ⁱ Thursday, 11 th May Annual Council Meeting ⁱⁱ Thursday, 11 th May
June	Wildlife Reserve Committee - Tuesday 6 th June Full Council - Thursday, 15 th June Trustees meeting – Wednesday, 28 th June
July	Full Council - Thursday, 13 th July Dog Show - Saturday, 15 th July
August	Personnel Committee - Tuesday, 8 th August [any recommendations from this committee to be presented to the September Council meeting] Full Council - Thursday, 10 th August [if required]
September	Wildlife Reserve Committee - Tuesday 5 th September Teddy Bears Picnic – Saturday 9 th September Full Council – Thursday, 14 th September
October	<i>Finance Committee – early October [date to be agreed]</i> Full Council - Thursday, 12 th October
November	Full Council - Thursday, 9 th November
December	Wildlife Reserve Committee - Tuesday, 5 th December Full Council - Thursday, 14 th December
2018	
January	Full Council - Thursday, 11 th January
February	Full Council – Thursday, 8 th February

Month	Council / Committee
	Wildlife Reserve Committee – Tuesday, 27 th February
March	Full Council – Thursday, 8 th March
April	Full Council 12 th April

ⁱ Must be held between 1 March and 1 June

ⁱⁱ Must be held in month of May