

# BARLING MAGNA PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes** of the Wildlife Reserve Committee Meeting held on Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> February 2017 in Community Centre, Old School, High Street, Great Wakering, Essex commencing at 7.00 p.m.

Present: Cllrs. M. Cohen (Chair of the Council and ex-Officio Member of the Committee), R. Gardiner (Vice-Chair of the Committee), I. Knight (Chair of the Committee), M. Pearmain.

In attendance: Cllr. A. Ashdown, Mr. P. Shaw (Volunteer) and 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. There were no apologies for absence.
- 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. There were none.
- 4. To agree the Minutes of the Wildlife Reserve Committee held on 1st September, 2016.**
  - a. It was proposed by Cllr Knight and seconded by Cllr Gardiner that the minutes be agreed and this was carried unanimously.
- 5. The meeting will stand adjourned to permit Parishioners of Barling Magna to address the Committee.**
  - a. No parishioners addressed the Committee.
- 6. Charitable Status**
  - a. Members were concerned that they did not possess up to date, authoritative advice on the potential benefits and drawbacks of seeking charitable status for the Wildlife Reserve as an alternative to it remaining under the direct control of the Parish Council. It was proposed by Cllr Knight and seconded by Cllr Cohen that:
    - (i) the Clerk should seek to obtain such advice; and
    - (ii) the matter should be referred back to the Parish Council in order to seek clarity about a way forward in the light of any advice received.This was agreed unanimously.

## **7. Green Flag Ltd.**

- a. The Committee noted that Green Flag Ltd had requested documentation showing the income and expenditure directly relating to the Wildlife Reserve and any committed financial support from the Parish Council. It was thought that the financial report presented to each meeting of the full Council might be sufficient and this would be made available, although the deadline for submission of paperwork had now passed.

## **8. Future Financial and/or Other Support**

- a. The Committee received an oral report from Mr Shaw on his review of the funding position of some other wildlife reserves. Following an extensive discussion, the following was proposed by Cllr Knight and seconded:
  - (i) Sponsorship might be sought from some local companies and that Cllr Knight would consult Cllr Bond on suitable companies to which an approach could be made;
  - (ii) The Clerk would provide a copy of the former management plan for the reserve;
  - (iii) The Committee would invite the Parish Council to consider creating a sub-committee to facilitate a more flexible and swift response to funding opportunities;
  - (iv) That, in the event of the creation of the aforementioned sub-committee, the Wildlife Reserve Committee would recommend to the Full Council that an invitation be extended to Mr Shaw to join as a co-opted member.

This was carried unanimously.

## **9. Memorial Plaques**

- a. Cllr Knight reminded the Committee of the Council's policy that no plaques should be affixed to trees and that the preferred alternatives would be either the donation of native species trees as a living memorial or the offer of a new bench. More benches were needed. The Committee would continue to decide all matters relating to memorials on their merits. The practice of declining the use of the reserve for the burial of pets was restated.

## **10. Car Park Fencing**

- a. It was proposed by Cllr Knight, seconded by Cllr Pearmain and agreed that, drawing upon the specification prepared by the late Cllr Street, the Clerk should invite new tenders in respect of the car park fencing.

## **11. Perimeter Fencing**

- a. It was proposed by Cllr Knight, seconded by Cllr Pearmain and agreed that the Clerk should invite new tenders in respect of the perimeter fencing.

## **12. "Brown" Signs.**

- a. The Committee had not yet received a report from Councillor Steptoe as to whether planning permission would be required to fix Wildlife Reserve signs to the Parish Council bus shelters. In discussion it was thought that the cost of installing such signs would probably outweigh the possible benefits and it was proposed by Cllr Knight and seconded by Cllr Pearmain that the matter be shelved. This was agreed.

### **13. Teddy Bear's Picnic.**

- a. The Committee noted a report from Cllr Gardiner on the success of this event, despite the weather. No cooked food had been available on this occasion and the party had worked well as a picnic. He suggested that future events of this type might benefit from greater publicity. Cllr Gardiner was thanked for his report.

### **14. Open Days.**

- a. The Committee discussed the merits of making a modest charge for some possible future open days but it was felt that the location of the reserve (requiring access by car or minibus), the lack of passing traffic and problems associated with charging to access an otherwise free facility militated against making a charge. However, small-scale fundraising through raffles, etc., at special events was thought to be both acceptable to the public and likely to raise sufficient funds to offset the costs of renewal of gardening gloves and other minor items of equipment. If the Parish Council resolved to create a Wildlife sub-committee, this would be a matter for that to take forward.

### **15. Exchange of Information.**

- a. Cllr Knight offered to post future agendas for the Wildlife Reserve Committee on the noticeboard in the reserve.
- b. Some concern was expressed by Cllrs Cohen and Ashdown at adverse comments on social media sites relating to both the Wildlife Reserve and the Parish Council. It was noted that these sites were not under the control of the Council.
- c. The matter of whether dogs should be kept on leads was raised and this would be an item on a future Committee agenda.
- d. Cllr Cohen informed members of the new Rochford District Council tendering application which would be available from 1 March 2017.
- e. Cllr Cohen reported that work would commence on the coastal path in the area of the parish in late summer 2017.

### **16. The Chair closed the meeting at 8.30pm**