

BARLING MAGNA PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL, held Tuesday, 8th August 2017 in the Barling Magna Parish Hall, Barling Magna, Essex, commencing at 7:15pm.

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

Apologies: Councillor Edmunds
James Duddridge MP and District Councillor Williams.

Attending: I.King (Parish Clerk)
District Councillors Lucas-Gill (to item 15), Hookway (from item 7 to item 15) and Hughes (from item 7 to item 15), Steptoe (also Essex County Council, for the full meeting)

MINUTES

- 1. The Chair to declare the meeting open.**
 - a. The Chair declared the meeting open at 7:15pm
- 2. To receive apologies for absence.**
 - a. Apologies were recorded, as listed above
- 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 planning matters and any relating to Essex County Council or Rochford District Council.
- 4. To sign as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 13th July 2017.**
 - a. Proposed by Councillor Steptoe, seconded by Councillor Ashdown that the minutes be agreed. For 8, against 0, abstentions 0.
- 5. The meeting will stand adjourned to permit Parishioners of Barling Magna to address the Council.**
 - a. No parishioners were present.
- 6. To receive a report from the District and County Councillors for the area on any matters of interest.**
 - a. District Councillor Lucas-Gill reported on district-wide matters, including the scrutiny of the proposed football stadium.
 - b. District Councillor Steptoe briefed the council on Operation London Bridge – preparations against the announcement of the death at some point of a senior

member of the royal family. Different tiers of local government would have different roles to play. He invited the parish council to consider at some point what steps it might take to enable the local community to show respect at such a time. For example (but not exclusively), a public book of condolence; flags to be flown at half-mast; etc.

- c. District Councillor Steptoe reported on recent discussions within the South-East Essex Parking Partnership. A Rural Clearway would be introduced near Bradley Road and West Road in Rochford. He also reported on steps being taken to address inappropriate parking on verges. If cars were so parked where there were yellow lines then this would be an enforcement issue for the district council. If there were no yellow lines, cars might be considered by the police to be obstructing the highway. Members of the public could report such incidents online, using steps described at previous meetings. Councillor Clark asked about parking adjacent to white lines in various local places. He felt that the Highway Code guidance on the matter was inconsistent. It was thought that white lines adjacent to verges simply served to guide motorists at night and had no relevance to parking but Councillor Steptoe offered to check and report to a future meeting.
- d. Once again on the matter of grass verges, this time in Little Wakering Road, the district council's contractor had withdrawn from mowing some of these which were now deemed unregistered land.
- e. County Councillor Steptoe had received some advice for local authorities and their use of social media. He recommended the council should review its policy considering forthcoming changes in data protection law.
- f. Upon request, it was agreed without a vote that a councillor might use the public-address system for a one-off non-council event.
- g. Councillor Knight enquired about the status of a public footpath which begins on the right-hand side of the Olde Shoulderstick in Barling Road. A little way down the footpath there is a wooden bridge crossing a deep ditch. The timbers of the bridge were in a dangerous condition. County Councillor Steptoe would be glad to pursue the matter with the County Council if he was given the full details of the matter and to whom it had been reported.

7. Financial Matters

- a. The clerk tabled a schedule of cheques for authorisation in the amount of £12,200.60. It was proposed by Councillor Ashdown, seconded by Councillor Gardiner that this schedule be approved: For 8; against 0; abstained 0.
- b. Owing to a minor bookkeeping issue with the remaining HSBC (Hall Operations) account, there was no bank reconciliation to report this month. However, given the building project and demands upon the finances, it was important that the clerk reported on the two main current balances, which were as follows at the 1st August:

| | |
|------------------------|------------|
| Co-op current account: | £65,161.08 |
| Co-op deposit account: | £32,729.92 |

8. Banking

- a. Having begun the year with 6 bank accounts, the number had been reduced to 4 by the July meeting. The clerk informed the council that one of the HSBC accounts had now also been closed, with a successful transfer to the Co-op Deposit account.

9. Parish Hall

- a. The council meeting had been called for 7:15pm to allow members to inspect progress in the repairs and renewals for themselves ahead of the meeting. The builders were ahead of schedule. Subject to good weather, the roofer would finish within 5 or so working days. The boiler had been installed and the radiators were being fitted. The new front doors would be fitted once the fire-proof glass arrived. It was noted that since the Grenfell Tower tragedy, anything relating to fire-proofing (expertise and materials) was under tremendous pressure owing to understandable public interest in making homes and other premises as safe as possible. This had led to some minor delays in supplying glass and fire-retardant doors.
- b. Following their tour of the building, councillors were requested to email the clerk by the end of Friday 10th August with items they had seen for snagging. The clerk would collate the items and work through them with the project manager.
- c. The costs would overrun the original baseline budget. All significant changes had been notified to councillors. The clerk would email members with the full breakdown of additional costs, currently estimated at £5,183 + VAT, although this did not include work on the fire alarm system. The council had made provision for an overrun on costs in its budget and the clerk advised that extra spending of this level could be accommodated.
- d. The clerk was asked to check about the need for a carbon monoxide detector near the boiler and whether this would must be mains powered.
- e. Members had received information about quotes for the various options for a renewed fire alarm system. It was proposed by Councillor Steptoe, seconded by Councillor Ashdown that the chair and clerk be given delegated authority to consider a quote from the firm fitting the burglar alarm and to decide if that was more beneficial than the alternative quote – to a ceiling of £2,600. For: 8, against 0, abstentions 0.
- f. Councillor Pearmain asked the clerk to check that any external light, strobe or klaxon for the fire alarm would be hard-wired. He also asked about whether self-closing hinges should be fitted to the Council Room doors.
- g. It was generally agreed that the kitchen cupboards and work surfaces were in poor condition and did not reflect the high quality of the current refurbishment. It was agreed to replace them. The Barling Magna Parish Hall Committee (registered charity) would be requested to make a grant towards the kitchen renewal and the replacement of the stacking polypropylene chairs which were showing their age. If there were to be a delay in replacing them, new end-caps for the legs would be purchased to avoid damage to the flooring.
- h. Councillor Bond introduced options for new floor coverings, which were

generously to be offered as a donation to the hall. Following discussion, the following choices were made:

- (i) Main hall floor: Poly Floor Mystique Bianco
- (ii) Kitchen: Blizzard finish
- (iii) Lobby and Council Room in grey Modena carpet
- (iv) Toilets in another Poly Floor Mystique colour

Members were wholehearted in their thanks to Councillor Bond for what was proposed.

- i. District Councillor Hookway asked about dust-control matting in the entrance to the lobby. This would need to be recessed to avoid becoming a trip-hazard. As the fitter would lay 4mm plywood first, it might be possible to make a shallow recess for some coconut or sisal matting there.
- j. Noting with approval the trimming of the vegetation on the eastern border of the site, Councillor Steptoe now thought that attention needed to be given to reducing the height of the laurel, elder and other trees, as well as replacing a stretch of missing fencing again on the east side and possibly some of that adjoining Mrs Claydon's property (to the south of the site). Councillor Ashdown had previously offered to replace parts of the fencing.
- k. Councillor Knight suggested that roller blinds would suit the windows in the Council room and toilets. The main hall, where the reduction of echoes was important, would be better served by curtains.
- l. The clerk ran through some other items which would be brought back to council after the completion of the building project: flagpole; external sign; Wi-Fi and telephone.
- m. The clerk had been in email communication with the insurers about cover while the work is in progress. It was understood that the building remained the council's responsibility to insure. The clerk holds a list of the public liability cover of each of the contractors.
- n. The clerk had drafted an operational budget for the hall post-repairs and this would come to the next meeting of the council for discussion. There would need to be a strong and sustained marketing plan to bring in adequate income to meet fixed costs and overheads and the clerk would propose a blend of use: some community use, balanced with some commercial lettings.

10. Events and fundraising

- a. Fun Dog Show: this had been a very successful and enjoyable day. It had been an opportunity to enjoy the company of neighbours and friends. £488 had been raised for the parish hall and £112 through fundraising for two animal charities. The rain had not spoilt the event and the refreshments were a great contribution to the appreciation of the day. Many of those attending had not known previously of the Wildlife Reserve. James Duddridge MP had attended.
- b. A vote of thanks was proposed by the chair, seconded by Councillor Pearmain to the following volunteers who had contributed to the success of the day: Mrs J Gardiner, Mr B, Gardiner, Mrs & Mrs Bradley of High House Farm, Mrs J McPherson, Mr J Bond, Mr P Lyons and family, Mr G Lipscomb and the lady who had brought her Malamute dogs. Members signalled their appreciation of

these volunteers and the working group that organised the event, as well as additional work undertaken by several councillors – notably Councillor Bond for the original idea, Councillor Pearmain assisted by Blake Gardiner for work on the CCTV and Councillor Edmunds for work on the PA system.

- c. For future events, the importance of long-term planning was emphasised. The clerk would bring forward the promised future events calendar to the September meeting.
- d. Ideas currently in-hand for forthcoming events included a quiz night on Saturday 18th November 2017, the Christmas Lights competition and Citizen of the Year (December), Christmas Hampers (December), Barling in Bloom (June and/or August 2018) and a Scarecrow Competition.

11. Planning Matters.

- a. To consider any Planning Applications received and to agree any action
 - (i) 17/00539/FUL - The Castle public house. This was in respect of a wooden kiosk for pizza oven and al fresco cooking. The Council had no comments to make on this application.
 - (ii) 00658/LDC – Burtons Farm. As this was seeking a Lawful Development Certificate, this was beyond the remit of the parish council.

12. Correspondence.

- a. To consider any correspondence received since the last meeting.
 - (i) Winter Salt. It was agreed to continue with the planned delivery of salt to the Parish Hall. Charles Tabor had requested the removal of both live and spoilt salt from Mucking Hall Farm and the clerk would explore the options.
 - (ii) The Council was delighted to have received notification of success once again in achieving the Green Flag award at the Wildlife Reserve. Congratulations and thanks were offered to all those who had played a part in this achievement.
 - (iii) Essex Police leaflets. These were tabled. The inclusion of some of these leaflets in the Christmas Hampers might be useful to vulnerable residents.
 - (iv) Aon, the parish hall insurer, had written to say that they were withdrawing from the parish hall market but would propose a successor by the renewal date in January 2018.
 - (v) The chair reported that she had been invited to attend and open the Village Fair, to be held at the Parry over the Bank Holiday weekend. She asked if members were content that she should represent the parish council and they indicated that they were.
 - (vi) Upon the clerk's request, the chair adjourned this item, to be resumed following item 15.
- b. Email correspondence within the Council. The Clerk respectfully reminded councillors how helpful it was if all councillors who might reasonably expect to be on email distribution lists were so included on a routine basis. This includes the chair and vice-chair, who are members of all committees and working

parties by virtue of their office.

13. At the Chair's discretion to exchange information and items for the next meeting.

- a. The chair had circulated recent Rochford Hundred and EALC reports.
- b. District Councillor Hughes shared the winning poster of a competition she had run locally for children concerned with litter.
- c. Councillor Pearmain asked that the following items should be considered at a future meeting: Christmas Tree and the illumination of the parish sign.

14. Date of next meeting

- a. The next Full Council meeting would be held at 7pm on Thursday 14th September 2017.
- b. The Wildlife Reserve Committee would meet at 7pm on Tuesday 5th September 2017.

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 invited to withdraw.

16. Correspondence (resumed)

- a. The clerk read to council an email received from the Deputy Monitoring Officer. She had completed her recent investigation into an alleged breach of the Code of Conduct and had found no evidence of this. The matter was now concluded.

17. Equipment repairs

- a. Further problems had been detected with the ride-on mower and Councillor Steptoe had discussed these with Ernest Doe (the supplier and repairer). The concerns centre on the pivoting front axle and the steering valve. These are different to the breaking of the sub-axle, the original issue notified to Doe's. With the kind assistance of keyholders, the clerk would arrange for Doe's to collect the machine for repairs once again. Councillor Steptoe would liaise with the engineers and report to council on their findings in due course. The clerk would hold the current invoice pending the outcome of the investigation. In response to a query about the robustness of the machine, Councillor Steptoe wondered if this model was better suited to domestic lawns, although it was noted that the supplier had known what uses the machine was to undergo when they sold it.

The Chair declared the meeting closed at 9:15pm.

* * * * *