

# BARLING MAGNA PARISH COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**, held Thursday, 12<sup>th</sup> October 2017 in the Barling Magna Parish Hall, Barling Magna, Essex, commencing at 7.00pm.

Present: Councillors Ashdown, Bond, Cohen (Chair), Edmunds and Steptoe (Vice-Chair, from item 8a viii).

Apologies: Councillors Clark, Gardiner, Knight and Pearmain  
District Councillors Efde, Lucas-Gill and Williams.

Attending: I. King (Parish Clerk)  
County and District Councillor Steptoe  
One local resident

## MINUTES

- 1. The Chair to declare the meeting open.**
  - a. The Chair declared the meeting open at 7pm.
- 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 (upon joining the meeting at item 8a viii) declared a non-pecuniary interest in planning matters and any other concerning Essex County Council or Rochford District Council.
- 4. To sign as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2017.**
  - a. Councillor Ashdown asked for a correction to item 5a. Although the figure of £720 stated was as reported to the Council at that meeting, the actual takings were approximately £1,200, from which £600 had been donated to the Parish Council for the Barling Play Area. Accepting this correction, it was proposed by Councillor Edmunds, seconded by Councillor Bond that the minutes be approved. For 4, against 0, abstentions 0.
- 5. The meeting will stand adjourned to permit Parishioners of Barling Magna to address the Council.**
  - a. No parishioners wished to address the Council on this occasion.
- 6. To receive a report from the District and County Councillors for the area on any matters of interest.**
  - a. The Chair adjourned this item until the arrival of Councillor Steptoe, who had sent apologies for late arrival.

## **7. Financial Matters**

- a. The Clerk tabled a revised schedule of cheques for authorisation in the amount of £14,557.29. It was proposed by Councillor Ashdown, seconded by Councillor Bond that the schedule be approved. For 4, against 0, abstentions 0.
- b. A satisfactory bank reconciliation to 30 September 2017 was presented. It was proposed by Councillor Cohen, seconded by Councillor Ashdown that the bank reconciliation be noted. For 4, against 0, abstentions 0.
- c. A half-yearly report of receipts and payments against budget had been circulated. The Clerk reported that, broadly speaking, the Council was underspent on general costs for the year, owing to not utilising so far the budget for replacing the bus shelter (£5,250) and the contingency fund for elections (£3,000). However the Council was overspent on the building work to the Parish Hall. It was proposed by Councillor Cohen, seconded by Councillor Ashdown that the report be noted. For 4, against 0, abstentions 0.
- d. The Clerk asked Council to note that he had submitted a VAT reclaim for £8,900 for the quarter to 30<sup>th</sup> September but this had not yet been received. He would submit the claim for the release of the £15,000 CIF award within 7 days.

## **8. Parish Hall**

- a. The Clerk reported on the following:
  - i. The most urgent priority was to get a gas meter installed and a gas supplier appointed. This had occupied a lot of time that week and would continue into next week owing to problems with National Grid recognising our new supply.
  - ii. Once the central heating system was working, the Clerk would undertake the snagging process with the Project Manager.
  - iii. The Clerk and Hall manager would conduct the fire risk analysis soon. As they reviewed the premises, they would identify signage needs, clock for hall, etc.
  - iv. The fire extinguishers would be serviced within 7 days. One had been positioned above a radiator and would have to be moved.
  - v. Councillor Edmunds was thanked for conducting PAT tests throughout. He would explore how cost effective it was to repair one or two items that had failed the test (and which now bore a warning sticker). He would also kindly obtain a replacement First Aid kit for the kitchen
  - vi. It was agreed that the matter of curtains and blinds would be deferred.
  - vii. As time allowed, the Clerk would seek quotes for a concrete 'apron' to the front of the hall.
  - viii. Councillor Steptoe joined the meeting at this point. His declarations of interest are recorded at item 3 above.
  - ix. Councillor Edmunds had secured the agreement of the organisers of the Frost Fair to be held on Saturday, 9 December, that the parish hall should be included in this event. This would showcase the hall to local residents. The hall would be staffed, displaying artwork produced by local children and we might also arrange a mince pie competition. The Clerk was asked to explore the purchase of an external projector on a Christmas theme, at a modest cost as an alternative to external Christmas lights.
  - x. The Chair was coordinating quotations for replacement of stackable seating for the parish hall. She and the Clerk were given delegated authority spend up to £2,250 exclusive of VAT on 120 attractive and stackable Chairs. If they had fabric cushions, the should be in a darker colour and to conceal any marks arising from use. Proposed by Councillor Edmunds, seconded by Councillor Bond. For 5,

against 0, abstentions 0. The Clerk would write to the trustees of the Barling Magna Parish Hall Committee charity to invite the charity to make a donation to offset the costs of these and other items.

- xi. Councillor Steptoe asked whether the parish hall yet enjoyed renewed licenses for all appropriate activities. The Clerk was investigating this and would report.
  
- b. Security matters – The Clerk reported that the storage sheds to the rear of the hall had been broken into. This had been reported to the Police. They were empty at the time but were now used for storing winter salt. It was agreed to leave them unsecured for the time being, to demonstrate that there was nothing worth stealing inside. Members wished to explore the possibility of installing CCTV and the matter would be on the next agenda.

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

- a. This item had been adjourned from item 6.
- b. District Councillor Steptoe reported the sad news of the death of District Councillor Chris Black.
- c. Councillor Steptoe reported an application from London Southend Airport to enlarge its terminal building as part of an overall strategy to increase capacity.
- d. Councillor Steptoe been successful in persuading the Essex County Council to include the A127 in its strategic road network. This was considered vital given the projected increase in the usage of Southend Airport, the Rochford Business Park and others.
- e. Councillor Steptoe informed members that the County Council had launched a lottery. Participants could nominate local charities as beneficiaries and he suggested that the parish hall charity could be one such. Members were invited to check the County Council lottery page on its website.
- f. The County Council had also launched a crowdfunding platform; this would promote matched funding and will be a resource from which the parish council might benefit.
- g. Councillor Steptoe asked the Clerk about progress in discussions with the District Council about assuming responsibility for the Parry play area in Little Wakering. The Clerk replied that this had not moved forward so far owing to the pressure of other priorities.
- h. Councillor Steptoe reported on the current position regard to travellers who had encamped at Cherry Orchard. Should such an incursion happen on parish council land, the process would be to contact the District Council Travellers Unit.

**10. Discussion items requested by members**

- a. Bins (minute 12b from 14.9.17): the Chair raised the issue of a dog bin, which it would be helpful to install at the end of the footpath near the waterworks on Barling Road. If the District Council were to be responsible for clearing the bin, it would need to be situated close to the road. The Chair would explore at the matter and report back.
- b. Footpaths (minute 17b from 14.9.17): Councillor Steptoe indicated that he had large-scale parish maps showing each footpath at A0 size. As time allowed the Clerk would explore whether similar plans could be mounted and displayed in the committee room.
- c. Farmers market: all agreed that it was desirable to explore whether a farmers market might return to the parish hall from the spring. Councillor Steptoe offered to

speak to District Councillor Williams organised one for the Women's Institute in Rochford and the Clerk was asked to discuss the matter with Adam Aldridge of the District Council.

- d. Options for Mucking Hall Road Bus Shelter (minute 21c from 14.9.17): the Clerk would pass the details of suppliers of new bus shelters to the Chair, who kindly agreed to explore the possibility of a new installation, as the repair of existing bus shelters was thought to be both uneconomic and unattractive. Councillor Ashdown asked about the possibility of repositioning of the Mucking Hall bus shelter.

## **11. Clerk's Report.**

- a. To receive a report from the Clerk on progress with work in-hand
  - i. The contract for supply of street lighting power with E.on would expire in November. The Clerk had requested figures for a further year and, as sole provider of such a service, the council was minded to roll the contract over for a further year subject to sight of these figures.
  - ii. Clerk reported on a training seminar he had attended from the SLCC on the General Data Protection Regulations which would come into force on 25 May 2018. He would prepare a report for a future meeting but there was no doubt that these new regulations were significantly more stringent than the current ones and would require detailed consideration by the parish council to comply.
  - iii. Was noted that anyone engaged in driving a car while on council business should ensure that their motor insurance provider was aware of their role with the parish council.
  - iv. The Clerk reported that he had begun work on the CiLCA qualification and that there was a year to complete this but that he hoped to do so sooner.
  - v. Over the past six months there had been unresolved issues connected with the Essex Pension Fund that had taken significant time and attention by the Clerk. It was hoped that these would be concluded soon.
  - vi. The Clerk had emailed councillors ahead of the meeting regarding priorities for his time. Although there was no detailed discussion of the contents of the email at the meeting, the priority areas proposed were acknowledged noting that other work necessarily needed to be shared around or deferred. The Clerk would produce another written table of his current workload so that members could review this in detail.
- b. Citizen of the Year: publicity was now on the notice boards, on the website and will be supplied electronically to all councillors. It was affirmed that previous award winners could be nominated once again. It was not yet clear whether the usual beer and carols evening at the castle would provide an opportunity to make the award: Councillor Edmunds kindly offered to find out.

## **12. Planning Matters.**

- a. Councillor Steptoe repeated his declaration of interest about planning matters and reserved the right to change his mind when the matter came up at District Council.
- b. Planning application 17/00858/FUL, regarding the demolition and reconstruction of an outbuilding at New Buildings Farm, Mucking Hall Road. After consideration, the parish council instructed the Clerk to respond that it had no comments to offer on the application.
- c. Planning application ESS/47/10ROC, relating to the Barling Landfill site. Members had no specific comments to offer about the extension of the site to 2022. However, at the point where the landfill site closed, the haul road also had to close. If there

were to be any settlement of the backfill at the site after the road had closed, there would be no alternative access for lorries except by means of Church Road or Mucking Hall Road. Councillors were invited to be vigilant and ready to protest at what might prove, at such a time, a premature closure of the haul road.

**13. Correspondence.**

- a. The Clerk continued to receive letters seeking charitable donations, for example one in hand regarding the Essex Air Ambulance – a charity that had been supported by the parish council in the past. The Clerk was requested to include a budget head for charitable donations in the next draft budget and to retain all such letters against the annual meeting of the council, when funds available could be distributed based on members’ assessment of their merits.
- b. Councillors were urged to engage with the public consultation on changes to the Mobile Library Service. One alternative would be the installation of a library service in village halls, although this would not meet the mobility needs of those served by the mobile library service.
- c. Essex Highways Stakeholder Survey - once again members were encouraged to participate in the survey. It was noted that the County Council’s Highways website was not always easy to use and, if this was drawn to the attention of authority using survey, there was some hope of improvements in future.

**14. At the Chairman’s discretion to exchange information and items for the next meeting.**

- a. The Chair reported on the Natural England coastal path meeting she had attended at the Southend Forum. Councillor Steptoe offered to share the contents of the sea wall asset register that he held, as this refuted the viewpoint put forward at the coastal path meeting that the land to the north of the wildlife park was owned by the parish council.
- b. Councillor Steptoe reported that the streetlamp outside Abbott’s Hall Farm had a loose cover.
- c. Councillor Steptoe reported that Mrs Dobson would be happy to undertake the distribution of Christmas hampers once again this year. The matter would need to be on the next council agenda to approve the release of funds by cheque. The Clerk was asked to contact Mrs Dobson, who would supply a confidential list of the beneficiaries to the Clerk in due course.
- d. The Clerk had recommended to the council that it should decide not to pursue neighbourhood planning, and this would be discussed at the November meeting.

**15. Date of next meeting**

- a. The next full Council meeting was scheduled for Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> November 2017.

**The Chair declared the meeting closed at 9:35pm.**

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