

# **BARLING MAGNA PARISH COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**, held Thursday, 9<sup>th</sup> November 2017 in the Barling Magna Parish Hall, Barling Magna, Essex, commencing at 7.05pm.

Present: Councillors Bond, Clark, Cohen (Chair), Knight, Pearmain and Steptoe (Vice-Chair).

Apologies: Councillors Ashdown, Edmunds and Gardiner  
District Councillors Lucas-Gill and Williams.

Attending: County and District Councillor Steptoe; District Councillors Hookway and Hughes (from item 8i to item 16).  
I. King (Parish Clerk)

## **MINUTES**

- 1. The Chair to declare the meeting open.**
  - a. The Chair declared the meeting open at 7.05pm.
- 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, any others concerning Essex County Council or Rochford District Council and under minute 6(b) below.
- 4. To sign as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2017.**
  - a. Proposed by Councillor Steptoe, seconded by Councillor Bond that the minutes be approved. For 6, 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. County Councillor Steptoe shared information about forthcoming roadworks that would directly affect the parish and surrounding area over the next 18 months. There will be temporary traffic lights at the junction of Havenside and Little Waking Road; Star Lane and Pointers Lane and Silchester Corner. He also reminded the council of the forthcoming waterworks which would require the temporary closure of Mucking Hall Road near Roper's farm.
  - b. District Councillor Steptoe reported that work was in hand to determine the ownership of the ditch at the point where Kimberley Road meets Barling Creek.

- c. District Councillor Steptoe referred to a recent report commissioned by the Police and Crime Commissioner for Essex, a copy of which he would send to the clerk. One of the matters arising from this was a question posed to residents on whether they would accept an uplift in the precept for the police if this could be shown to increase police effectiveness.
- d. Councillor Cohen asked about the timescale for the creation of the cinder path near the Shoulderstick. District Councillor Steptoe would be able to clarify the matter after a meeting of the Local Highways Panel scheduled for 21 December.

## **7. Financial Matters**

- a. The Clerk tabled a revised schedule of cheques for authorisation in the amount of £9,376.15. It was proposed by Councillor Steptoe, seconded by Councillor Clark that the schedule be approved. For 6, against 0, abstentions 0.
- b. A satisfactory bank reconciliation to 31 October 2017 was presented. This showed an adjusted balance at that date of £60,659.82. It was proposed by Councillor Steptoe, seconded by Councillor Cohen that the bank reconciliation be noted. For 6, against 0, abstentions 0.
- c. The clerk reported that the £15,000 CIF grant had now been received and banked. Although the VAT office had not responded to recent correspondence on the larger than usual VAT refunds, the second quarter's claim for of £8,841 had now been received. The donation of £600 towards the Playspace made by the organisers of the Village Fair had now been banked. The clerk anticipated that there would be one more sizeable VAT claim in the financial year and that any new income beyond that would need to be from lettings of the parish hall.

## **8. Parish Hall**

- a. The Clerk reported on the following:
  - i. The Hall's former Entertainments Licence had been renewed but now required the transfer of the operator of the parish hall from the charity to the council. The approved sketch layout of the hall was also noted to be inaccurate. The clerk would raise these matters with the licensing authority. The Performing Rights Society licence would be renewed shortly. A visit from the environmental health inspectors had been booked for 15 November. Broadband and telephone would be installed on 14 November. 10 sample chairs had been ordered to test their suitability; these would arrive on 10 November. Subject to any comments by members who would wish to look at the chairs on the morning of the 13<sup>th</sup> November, the clerk would then place an order for a further 110 of the same model.
  - ii. The clerk reported that, under delegated authority, the chair and he had awarded the gas supply contract to E.on, which was already our electricity supplier at the hall. Their quoted rates per kilowatt hour were broadly competitive. It was acknowledged that considerable savings had been achieved on expected meter installation costs and that after an initial period with E.on, it would be possible to test the market once again.
  - iii. A report had been circulated ahead of the meeting setting out an item by item review of the works contracted through Wheeldon and Deacon. There remained minor pressure problems with the new central heating which were still to be resolved. Members asked the clerk to look again at whether the work to the concrete ramp at the entrance had been carried out satisfactorily. The chair proposed that the item be deferred to the next meeting and this was agreed.

- iv. A fire risk analysis had been conducted by the hall manager and clerk, using the self-assessment template and guidance published by the Essex County Fire and Rescue Service. Copies would be emailed to all councillors. Council noted that this review had been carried out. All hirers would be acquainted with fire and evacuation information, to be declared ahead of any gathering in the hall. It was proposed by Councillor Steptoe, seconded by Councillor Knight that the maintenance of the combined fire and intruder alarm system proposed by MPE Alarm Systems Ltd, along with the monitoring system set out in their quote of August 2017 should be approved. For 6, against 0, abstentions 0.
- v. There are currently two firm bookings for the hall and several enquiries. An advertisement for the hall had appeared that day in the GWCA News; a banner for the front of the hall advertising its availability would be completed within a week or so and there would be some handbills for visitors to take away in the Frost fair event.
- vi. The clerk was asked to ensure the removal of the bolts on the inner door to the main hall and the positioning of a finger plate on same door. It was agreed to dispose of the mobile table holders: these would be offered firstly to the church and then to Great Wakering village hall. One cubicle in the ladies' toilet lacked a bolt.
- vii. The work that various councillors had put in as volunteers to repair and begin the preservation of the perimeter fencing was noted with thanks. It was agreed that the greatest priority would be to ensure a solid path from the highway to the entrance ramp. Subject to confirmation of the public liability insurance of anyone assisting with a mechanical digger, it was proposed by Councillor Clark seconded by Councillor Bond that up to £1,000 be spent on bringing this about, to include the cost of the concrete and the disposal of any waste. Various contacts with diggers were discussed and the councillors who knew them would be responsible for following these up.

## **9. Neighbourhood planning**

- a. Following discussion, it was agreed to postpone a decision about whether to engage with the neighbourhood planning process until there had been a chance to consult residents at a drop-in event to be held at some point in February or March 2018. It was noted that the former parish plan working party continued to hold a grant of £400+. It was agreed that the clerk would now write to the members of that working party to acquaint them with the decision of the council and to request further information about the source of the grant, to recommend what to do with it.

## **10. Discussion items requested by members**

- a. Consultation on the War Memorial. The consultation document contained some inaccuracies. It was agreed that this should be redirected to the parochial church council.
- b. Rough Sleepers survey for 2017: this was scheduled for 23 November and all councillors were invited to notify the clerk if they were aware of anyone sleeping rough in the parish on that date.
- c. Barling Playspace - Councillor Ashdown had done some work on the future of the Playspace and it was agreed to defer the matter until she was able to contribute to the discussion at the next meeting.

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

- a. A detailed report by the Clerk on progress with work in-hand had been circulated. It was noted that there was quite a backlog of work which had built up while attention being diverted to managing the Hall refurbishment. It was hoped this would now begin to reduce.
- b. Members had been circulated with further briefing on the General Data Protection Regulations and an electronic link to the most authoritative guidance on the subject. Councillor Steptoe advised members that the regulations extended to the personal computers and records of all parish councillors. He also reminded members of the council of importance of notifying their car insurance companies that they were engaged in parish council duties as there was some evidence that these would not be covered by social and domestic insurance policies alone.
- c. Since the publication of the agenda, guidance had been received from NALC on the archiving of papers. The clerk would examine this and report to a future council meeting.

### **12. Planning Matters.**

- a. 17/01063/DPDP6 - relating to an agricultural cattle building. This was a consultation rather than a planning application and the council simply noted the matter.
- b. Stonebridge Paddocks: was agreed that there should be a space between the proposed wall and the boundary. The clerk would notify this comment to the planners.
- c. The application for the siting of a metal shipping container to the north of Barrow Hall Farm: council's comments had been noted but the application had been approved. District Councillor Steptoe had ascertained that container would not cross the footpath on that land.

### **13. Correspondence.**

- a. The following correspondence had been received since the previous meeting:
  - (i) concerns about severed electricity cables to two local streetlamps. One appeared to have been severed intentionally and the other through wind or friction by adjacent trees. The clerk was taking steps to ensure that the relevant body restored power to both, although this might take some time. Concern been raised by a local resident that the lack of street lighting on Barling Road opposite Little Acre cottage was a hazard to road users.
  - (ii) The annual general meeting of the Rayleigh, Rochford and District Association for voluntary service would take place on Thursday, 7 December at Rayleigh Town Museum.
  - (iii) The Essex Heritage trust was inviting applications for buildings related projects of between £100 and £10,000: applications needed to be received by 25<sup>th</sup> of January 2018. Members were asked to consider what small items we might apply for.

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

- a. The chair reported that she continued to pursue the possibility of the installation of new dog bins with the district council.
- b. The chair had gathered a great deal of information on options for new bus shelters. There was anecdotal evidence to commend transparent shelters.
- c. Councillor Cohen had attended the Rochford Hundred meeting and had circulated her usual summary. EALC might be persuaded to offer training modules in Rochford

rather than in Dunmow, subject to agreement on the training required. Councillor Clark would be interested in exploring this further.

- d. Councillor Steptoe advised that there were non-functioning streetlamps to houses to the North of Little Wakering Road opposite the bowling club; on the corner of Carpenters and Little Wakering Road and opposite the phone box.
- e. There had been no nominations so far for the Citizen of the Year award.
- f. Councillors Bond and Knight had attended a full day briefing on the Anglia in Bloom initiative, which seemed to offer many positive options for Barling. The matter would be on the next agenda so that it could be explored in greater depth.

**15. Date of next meeting**

- a. The next full Council meeting is scheduled for Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> December 2017. The Finance Committee would meet on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> November and the Wildlife Reserve Committee in the first week of December.

**16. 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.

**17. Contractual matters**

- a. There being no alternative to unmetered supply of electricity for street lamps, it was agreed to renew the street-lighting electricity contract with E.on.
- b. The Clerk has looked at members' queries about the Green Gateway grounds maintenance contract. There was no significant deviation from the contract terms.

**18. Employment matter**

- a. The clerk reported on resolving a pensions matter between the Council, a former employee and the Essex Pension Fund. It was hoped that, after a considerable amount of effort, this was now resolved to the satisfaction of all parties. This work had brought to light a minor discrepancy in the handling of hours, pension and salary for the current clerk, resulting in a small overpayment of salary which had been corrected in the current month and the excess since the matter had come to light had been repaid. The clerk asked that the chair and vice-chair review the steps he had taken, to ensure transparency.

**The Chair declared the meeting closed at 9:45pm.**

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