

# **BARLING MAGNA PARISH COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**, held Thursday, 14<sup>th</sup> December 2017 in the Barling Magna Parish Hall, Barling Magna, Essex, commencing at 7:04pm.

Present: Councillors Ashdown, Cohen (Chairman), Edmunds, Knight and Pearmain.

Apologies: Councillors Bond, Clark, Gardiner and Steptoe.  
District Councillors Hookway, Hughes, Lucas-Gill, Steptoe and Williams.  
James Duddridge MP.

Attending: District Councillor Efde (to item 9c).  
I. King (Parish Clerk)

## **MINUTES**

- 1. The Chair to declare the meeting open.**
  - a. The Chair declared the meeting open at 7.04pm.
- 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. There were none.
- 4. To sign as a correct record:**
  - a. The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2017. It was proposed by Councillor Knight, seconded by Councillor Cohen that the minutes be signed. For 5; against 0; abstained 0 – carried.
  - b. The minutes of the extraordinary meeting of the council held on 20 November 2017. Proposed by Councillor Ashdown, seconded by Councillor Knight that the minutes be signed. For 5; against 0; abstained 0 – carried.
- 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. District Councillor Efde had attended a training session about standards in public life. He drew the attention of the parish council to the current district council consultation on strategic options for the next 20 years, with the encouragement that as many as possible should participate in helping to shape the strategic future of the communities across the district. Finally, he commented upon a recent report which had appeared in the Echo which suggested that the district council was expected to oversee the creation of 7,000 new housing units over the next 20 years. Although this figure might not be attained in practice, he advised the parish council to consult on how section 106 planning gain funding might benefit the work of the council.

## 7. Financial Matters

- a. The Clerk had circulated the following table of cheque requests for authorisation. It was proposed by Councillor Ashdown, seconded by Councillor Pearmain that requests be approved and that £5,000 should be transferred from the Co-operative deposit to the current account. For 5; against 0; abstained 0 – carried.

Cheque No	Payee	Description	Initial	Initial	£
200535	Barling Magna Parish Hall	Transfer (cheques from November Quiz Night)			380.00
200536	Dogs Trust	Donation from Fun Dog Show			56.00
200537	Staffordshire Terrier Rescue	Donation from Fun Dog Show			56.00
200538	Wheeldon & Deacon	Professional services in managing the hall refurbishment			10,427.53
200539	I.King	Reimbursement and expenses 1/11/17 - 1/12/17			357.13
200540	M.Pearmain	Tool hire			27.30
Standing Order	G.Gates	Salary			360.00
200541	I King	Salary			534.36
200542	Essex Pension Fund	November payments (incl some top-ups from Aug-Oct)			153.70
200543	HM Revenue & Custom	PAYE deductions			466.46
200544 *	Green Gateway (GM) Trading Ltd	Grounds maintenance (our cheque 200518 is missing in post)			-
200545	A. Golab Esq	Reimbursement			30.02
200546	Rochford District Council	Fee for change of premises licence			23.00
Direct debit	E.on	First hall gas bill			22.67
200547	M. Pearmain	Reimbursement for weed control membrane			7.50
200548	Hair & Son	Insurance valuation of the parish hall			330.00
			Total payments		£13,231.67

- b. The chairman thanked all those who had made the recent quiz night a success. In particular, the clerk was requested to write a letter of thanks on the council's behalf to Mr and Mrs Bunton for all their hard work. The event yielded a net income to the Barling Magna Parish Hall Committee account of £824.10.
- c. A bank reconciliation to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2017 was tabled. This showed an adjusted balance at that date of £54,247.17.
- d. The clerk had been instructed previously to arrange the renewal of the E.on unmetered street lighting power supply. He confirmed that this had been done and that a 24-month contract was now in place, to expire 30<sup>th</sup> November 2019.
- e. The clerk reported on urgent action he had taken, in consultation with the chairman and vice-chairman, to ensure the continuation of the sewerage service to the hall supplied by Anglian Water and its successor.

## 8. Budget for 2018/19

- a. A recommended draft budget from the finance committee held 20 November 2017 had been circulated to members. The clerk responded to one or two queries about the draft budget, including the budget lines on data protection. Proposed by Councillor Cohen, seconded by Councillor Pearmain that the draft budget for 2018/19 be approved, subject to the inclusion of a further £700 allowance for enhancing security at the parish hall: For 5; against 0; abstained 0 – carried.
- b. Some matters arising from consideration of the draft budget would be taken forward in future agendas:
- (i) Mr Paul Cohen had offered to carry out security works still to be specified at the parish hall, at cost rate. CCTV would be on the next council agenda and Mr Cohen might be invited to explain his proposal further, at which point Councillor Cohen would declare an interest.
  - (ii) The clerk was requested to include bus shelters on the next council agenda.
- c. Finance Committee's recommended precept for the 2018/19 of £41,756 excluding the LCTS grant had been circulated with the draft budget. Proposed by Councillor

Ashdown, seconded by Councillor Edmunds that the council approve the precept for 2018/19: For 5; against 0; abstained 0 – carried.

- d. Council received a recommendation from the Finance Committee that it should create a subcommittee to identify potential sources of external funding for council projects. It was noted that council had created a subcommittee earlier in the year with the intention of some forward planning to recommend strategic priorities for the council for the next 2 to 5 years. It was agreed to combine the work of these committees and the clerk was requested to bring forward draft terms of reference. Councillor Ashdown expressed an interest in serving as a member of the subcommittee.

## **9. Events**

- a. Frost Fayre: the opening of the parish hall to accommodate visitors to the Frost Fayre held on Saturday, 9 December had been a success.
- b. Anglia in Bloom: it was agreed to defer consideration of this item until Councillor Bond could be present.
- c. Neighbourhood planning: the council had postponed a decision about whether to participate in neighbourhood planning until it had had an opportunity to consult residents on the topic. Its preferred means was to hold an informal drop-in at a date to be agreed in the spring. It was decided to add this topic to the next council agenda so that firm plans could be made. The clerk reminded members of his concern that the council did not have sufficient capacity to proceed with neighbourhood planning with full confidence of a successful outcome, either alone or in partnership with another council.

## **10. Wildlife Reserve**

- a. Members had been circulated with the recommendations for expenditure arising from the Wildlife Reserve Committee held on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2017. These comprised spending of up to £200 on both maintenance of the barn and measures to prevent the disturbance of the pond by dogs. Proposed by Councillor Edmunds, seconded by Councillor Cohen that the expenditure be approved: For 5; against 0; abstained 0 – carried.

## **11. Playspace**

- a. Councillor Ashdown had investigated some options for the provision of new children's play equipment and adult exercise equipment at the Playspace; these had been circulated to members by email. It was agreed that this would be a good initial project for the consideration of the new subcommittee agreed at 8d above.

## **12. Parish Hall**

- a. The chairman proposed a vote of thanks to the volunteers who had undertaken work on the pathway to the hall front door and this was agreed unanimously.
- b. It was unanimously agreed that the chairman should have delegated authority to prepare and submit a CIF application for funding to refit the kitchen and the toilets at the parish hall.
- c. The clerk reported on recent problems with the heating system, which had been caused by a faulty joint in the pipework and had now been rectified. The heating system was currently working smoothly.
- d. The clerk reported on the different aspects of insurance cover for the hall held by the parish council as leaseholder and the charity trustees as freeholder. He

reported on the withdrawal of Aon as providers of one of these insurances, which would expire on 7<sup>th</sup> January 2018. It was unanimously agreed that the clerk should ensure continuity of cover and report to the council that this had been done.

Finally, thanks to a surveyor's report obtained by Councillor Cohen from Hair & Son, it was now clear that the hall was underinsured at £275,000 against current rebuilding cost estimated at £425,000 including VAT. The clerk had now instructed our broker to ensure cover at this higher level.

- e. Council had decided previously that there should be external monitoring of the intruder and fire alarms at the parish hall and this would be set up early in January 2018. The clerk had sought a quote from a qualified electrician to test and rectify any faults with emergency lighting system and bring the external lighting back into full use. The quote at £750 was thought to be too expensive and the clerk had requested that the work on emergency lighting be undertaken by the fire alarm engineers during their January visit.

### **13. Correspondence**

- a. Council noted the following:
  - (i) the current consultation on the Mid- and South-Essex STP (NHS) strategic priorities;
  - (ii) the new date (January 2018) for the Environment Agency works to Roper's Farm sluice;
  - (iii) an email response from Mr Ian Horncastle regarding the future of the parish plan committee. The clerk recommended that at its next meeting the council should agree to dissolve the parish plan committee and seek the transfer of the remaining balance of funds to the council's account. At that point, the clerk would write letters of thanks to all those participating.
  - (iv) A registered letter had been received from HSBC, setting out that the council and charity trustees had 60 days in which to respond to a request for assistance in updating the records held by the bank. The clerk would take this forward. Councillor Pearmain was concerned at the suggestion of the withdrawal of HSBC from banking in the UK; the clerk would investigate and report back to the council.

### **14. Clerk's report**

- a. A report on current work had been circulated to all members the council by email ahead of the meeting. It was noted that the PAT testing at the wildlife reserve had been carried out by Councillor Edmunds in July 2017 and this work would now be scheduled again for 12 months' time.
- b. The clerk had circulated a recommended policy on archiving council papers prepared by the National Association of Local Councils. Proposed by Councillor Cohen, seconded by Councillor Edmunds that this become the policy of the parish council and that the clerk be authorised to act upon it: For 5; against 0; abstained 0 – carried.

### **15. Planning Matters.**

- a. ESS/38/16/ROC - relating to the extension of the landfill site. No comments.
- b. RDC/17/01066/FUL – in respect of High Pines. No comments.
- c. RDC/17/01101/FUL – dropped kerb at 237 Little Wakering Road. No comments.

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

- a. The chairman had circulated by email a summary report of a meeting at EALC on 23<sup>rd</sup> November.
- b. Councillor Cohen suggested that a sign indicating the availability of toilets within the parish hall would be helpful.
- c. The chairman gave a clerk a list of papers which should be published on the council's website as a matter of good practice.
- d. The honours boards in the committee room needed bringing up to date.
- e. It was suggested that the council's website lacked attractiveness and was not as useful a tool in disseminating news, informing residents and displaying the achievements of the parish as might be wished. The topic would be on a future agenda, so that a list of requirements could be prepared for discussion with the webmaster.
- f. Councillor Edmunds asked about the identification marks on street lamps and reported that the lamp outside 6a Church Road had an intermittent fault.
- g. The clerk would be on leave between Christmas Eve and 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2018.

**17. Date of next meeting**

- a. The next full Council meeting is scheduled for Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2018.

**18. 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.

**19. Contractual matter**

- a. Proposed by Councillor Ashdown, seconded by Councillor Edmunds that the project management contract with Messrs Wheeldon & Deacon be deemed completed and their fee released. For 5; against 0; abstained 0: carried.

**20. Christmas events**

- a. Citizen of the Year 2017/18: Mr Peter Shaw had been validly nominated for his work at the Wildlife Reserve and several other community projects. It was proposed by Councillor Knight, seconded by Councillor Pearmain that Mr Shaw should be awarded the honour of Citizen of the Year; this was agreed unanimously. The chairman would contact The Castle public house to arrange the presentation of a prize which she would purchase and then be reimbursed.
- b. Christmas lights: The judging panel would comprise the chairman and Mr Cohen and, subject to their agreement, Messrs Peter and Graham Shaw. In their absence, Councillor and Mrs Clark were also invited to join the panel.

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

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