

BARLING MAGNA PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL, held Thursday, 11th January 2018 in the Barling Magna Parish Hall, Barling Magna, Essex, commencing at 7:00pm.

Present: Councillors Ashdown, Bond, Cohen (Chairman), Edmunds and Steptoe (Vice-Chairman).

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

Attending: County and District Councillor Steptoe
I. King (Parish Clerk)
33 residents of the parish (to item 18.7c)

MINUTES

18.1 The Chairman to declare the meeting open.

- a. An announcement was made by the Clerk concerning fire exits, following which the Chairman declared the meeting open at 7pm. She welcomed residents attending the meeting.

18.2 To receive apologies for absence.

- a. Apologies for absence were noted, as set out above.

18.3 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. Councillors Ashdown and Cohen, relying upon advice received from the Deputy Monitoring Officer, were not required to declare an interest in relation to item 18.7a, the proposed development of Rosedene Nurseries.
- b. Councillor Steptoe declared an interest in any matters relating to Essex County Council and Rochford District Council. As a member of the RDC Development Committee, he reserved the right to change his mind from any decisions reached by the Parish Council regarding planning matters.

18.4 To agree and sign as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held 14th December 2017

- a. Proposed by Councillor Steptoe, seconded by Councillor Cohen that the minutes be agreed. For 5; against 0; abstained 0.

18.5 The meeting will stand adjourned to permit Parishioners of Barling Magna to address the Council.

- a. There were 33 residents present specifically for the item on planning application 17/01136/OUT. There were occasional comments from several residents but the main contributions and questions were offered by Ms C. Osborne; Ms L. Carter; Mr D. Davy; Mr Searl; Mr L Reeve; Mr & Mrs Carlow-Bunton; Mr T. Sheern.
- b. The Chairman invited contributions in support of the application but there were none.

- c. The following is a summary of the main points made in opposition to the application:
- (i) The land is designated as greenbelt.
 - (ii) There have been two previous applications for semi-detached bungalows on that site, (stated as 05/00708/OUT and 06/00287/OUT) both rejected at committee and on appeal because the site was confirmed as greenbelt.
 - (iii) Contributors felt that the greenbelt has already been compromised in the recent Star Lane development, Star Lane to Alexandra Road and the approved Barrow Hall Road development. There was a strong feeling that the greenbelt has been pushed back too far already.
 - (iv) Several applications to add a second storey or dormer windows to existing bungalows in Stonebridge hamlet had been declined. The current application sought buildings of a height which have previously been declined.
 - (v) If this application is granted, residents were concerned that it would set a precedent for other similar sites in the parish.
 - (vi) The hamlet of Stonebridge has a defining rural character. The proposal is for high-density dwellings which are completely at odds with the existing pattern of development and which would increase the number of dwellings by approaching 50%.
 - (vii) The proposed new dwellings will overlook established houses and bungalows.
 - (viii) The creation of 24, 3-bedroom houses will overwhelm existing drainage, sewers and other services. There have been two power cuts in the past 6 months and emergency repairs were currently in hand to restore power to parts of Barrow Hall Road. An additional 24 houses would add a further load onto the electrical supply, jeopardising the supply for all residents.
 - (ix) Car ownership would be a necessity given poor bus services locally and the distance to schools, GP and employment. There might reasonably be an additional 48 cars on the site. With the addition of visitors' cars, it was likely that parking allocations on the site would be insufficient, resulting in parking spilling over into the one partially paved road, Barling Road – already crowded with on-street parking.
 - (x) The probable additional car ownership, as well as heavy construction traffic, would lead to an increase in noise and emissions. Both Barling Road and Barrow Hall Road were essentially country lanes, incapable of handling substantial increases in traffic.
 - (xi) Barrow Hall Road was already expecting a new development of 120 dwellings close to the junction with Little Wakering Road. The developers of that site were obliged under the terms of their planning consent to deter motorists from that new development from turning left on to Barrow Hall Road (towards Rosedene), because of the incapacity of the road to take a regular increase in traffic.
 - (xii) It was queried whether there should be a give-way notice on Barrow Hall Road at the point where it meets Barling Road (i.e. a change to existing priorities).
 - (xiii) The use of the local roads by horse riders and an increasing number of recreational cyclists would add to the risk of injury.
 - (xiv) A proposed access road for heavy construction vehicles would be on a

blind bend. Were the two proposed access roads necessary?

- (xv) Although roads running past the proposed site had 30-mph speed limits, these were frequently exceeded by motorists.
 - (xvi) This proposed development, in addition to the recent development in Star Lane, the development between Star Lane and Alexandra Road and the expected Barrow Hall Road housing, would add an intolerable burden on already inadequate local infrastructure: school places; GP surgery and others. Several contributors related stories about difficulties in securing GP appointments. Others noted that local children had to travel some distance to King Edmund School. It was thought dangerous for parents and children to walk to primary schools in Barling Magna or Great Wakering, already overcrowded with parking at peak times.
 - (xvii) The topography of the site, if developed, would be expected to lead to a substantial rainwater run-off on to both Barling Road and its dwellings. The junction of Barling Road and Barrow Hall Road is already prone to flooding.
- d. The Chairman thanked all those who had contributed their views in such a clear and good-natured way. It was noted that, although the Parish Council had the right to be consulted, it had no powers in respect of planning matters.

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

- a. Regarding the Rosedene application, District Councillor Steptoe explained the planning system and how residents might make their views known. He asked residents to note that he had a legal obligation to keep an open mind on any application and to vote according to the evidence presented to the Committee. The key guiding policies were the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the local planning policies. The Committee could only take account of material objections, which are those covered by these two documents. The meeting of the Development Committee is open to the public and, if residents wished to address the committee, they would need to register with the District Council to do so. If the application is declined, the applicant can appeal, following which an inspector will decide on behalf of the Secretary of State.
- b. Officers of the District Council were taking legal advice and examining case law on the matter of whether the site in question remained greenbelt or could be considered 'previously developed'.
- c. District Councillor Steptoe commented on some of the points raised by residents:
 - (i) Rainwater run-off: a baseline reading would be taken and any new development would not be allowed to exceed that.
 - (ii) Water, drainage, sewerage and utilities: the planners would consult the utility suppliers on these matters and the Development Committee would follow their advice.
 - (iii) Schools: the County Council will be asked to say if local schools could cope with any expected rise in demand for places. In similar situations, there was a programme of expanding schools to cope.
 - (iv) Roads: Essex Highways would be consulted and the District Council would rely on their findings about any expected increases in road usage.
 - (v) Speeding: the Local Highways Panel will shortly be asked to consider speeding issues in Barrow Hall Road. It was noted that the developer of

the other Barrow Hall Road site is obliged to deter residents from using the westward direction of that road after those properties are built.

- (vi) Lorries: draft legislation will oblige lorry drivers to use a dedicated satellite navigation system which deters them from using country roads.
 - (vii) Planning designations: legislation has undergone much change in recent years and it may be that previous designations no longer hold.
- d. In response to questions, District Councillor Steptoe said that the applicant need not be the owner of the Rosedene site. If granted, the applicant could not add further homes to the site without a separate application although, as in Star Lane, a detailed planning application might see a reduction in the number of dwellings from the original outline application. He would keep residents informed on this matter through Facebook. Ms Osborne also offered to act as a conduit for communications among concerned residents.
- e. County Councillor Steptoe advised that it was possible to make GP appointments online rather than make repeated telephone calls to surgeries.
- f. County Councillor Steptoe also referred to the Essex Lottery, the largest council-run weekly lottery, which would benefit local charities and good causes.

18.7 To consider planning applications received and to agree any action to be taken:

- a. 17/01136/OUT, proposing the demolition of existing dwellings and buildings at Rosedene Nurseries in Barrow Hall Road and the building of 24, 3-bed houses. Proposed by Councillor Cohen, seconded by Councillor Ashdown that the Council submit a summary of residents' concerns to the District Council's Development Committee. For 4; against 0; abstained 1 (Councillor Steptoe). Carried.
- b. 17/01148/FUL, in respect of a front extension proposed to Oak House, Barling Road, SS3 0LZ. The Parish Council had no comments to offer on this application; the deadline for which had passed.
- c. The Chairman suspended the meeting for 5 minutes at this point, to allow residents to leave if they wished.

18.8 Financial Matters

- a. Payment requests for January 2018. Proposed by Councillor Steptoe, Seconded by Councillor Edmunds that the schedule of cheque payments set out below be agreed. For 5; against 0; abstained 0

Cheque No	Payee	Description	£
200549 *	Allied Westminister Insurance	Hall insurance - annual premium	300.00
200550 *	Stackhouse Poland Ltd	Increased cover on main council insurance	146.15
200551	R.Gardiner	Allowance	42.53
200552	I.Knight	Allowance	53.13
200553	M.Pearmain	Allowance	42.53
200554	M.Steptoe	Allowance	42.53
Standing Order	G.Gates	Salary	360.00
200555	I.King	Salary	534.36
200556	W&H (Romac) Ltd	Street lighting - repairs	195.84
Direct Debit	E.on	Parish Hall - electricity	67.16
200557	GWCA	Advert	70.00
200558	G.Gates	Reimbursement of minor spending on hall items	22.26
200559	I.King	Mileage and expenses	82.55
Direct Debit	E.on	Street lighting - electricity	316.46
200560	M.Cohen	Reimbursement: Citizen of the Year and Lights	41.50
200561	W&H (Romac) Ltd	Street lighting - repairs	195.24
200562	Essex Pension Fund	Employee's and employer's contributions - 2 months	365.18
		Total payments	£2,877.42

- b. A satisfactory bank reconciliation to 29th December 2017 had been circulated. This showed total adjusted funds at that date of £40,229.78.
- c. CCTV at the Parish Hall (Minute 12e of 14.12.17 refers). It was agreed to defer this item to the February meeting.

18.9 Christmas awards – to thank those who took part, report on successes and to agree any changes for future years.

- a. Mr Peter Shaw had thanked the Parish Council for its award to him of Citizen of the Year 2017-18.
- b. The Christmas Lights competition had been very hard to judge, owing to the range and excellence of the displays. The winners had received their prizes and details would be in the forthcoming community newsletter.
- c. The clerk would write to thank Mrs Dobson for undertaking the Christmas hampers again this year. Council would be asked to review the budget for this and to release it in September, to ensure best value.

18.10 Future events - to discuss and agree any action to be taken

- a. Future Projects and Funding Committee: Proposed by Councillor Cohen, seconded by Councillor Steptoe that the following draft terms of reference be approved. For 5; against 0; abstained 0. "To consider future community projects likely to enhance the quality of life for residents, along with exploration of possible sources of funding and to make any recommendations for action by the Council." The Clerk would discuss arrangements for a first meeting with Councillor Clark.
- b. Barling in Bloom – to include the dinghy now located at the Hall. Owing to the absence of some councillors most concerned with this matter, it was agreed to defer the item to the February meeting.
- c. Councillor Bond had asked the Council to consider how Barling Magna might mark the Royal Wedding, to be held on Saturday, 19th May 2018. Given the day also included the FA Cup Final, it was thought unlikely that any local event would command much support.
- d. Travelling Trends Fashion Show: it was agreed to arrange this for Tuesday, 22nd May although some other dates were available as alternatives. We would need to sell 40 tickets. Various options for marketing the event were discussed.

18.11 Matters raised by Councillors

- a. Proposed by Councillor Steptoe, seconded by Councillor Ashdown that a 400-litre salt bin be purchased at a cost not to exceed £200, to be located close to Barrow Hall Farm and to explore relocating the salt bin by Barling Church, which had become inaccessible. For 5; against 0; abstained 0. The clerk would liaise with Essex Highways and the landowners about the specific location of the bins, as well as with Mucking Hall Farm regarding the 'spent' salt held by them.
- b. Councillor Cohen raised the matter of dog waste bins in Barling Road. It was reported that Mr Hotten of Rochford District Council was exploring the placement of new bins near Councillor Ashdown's home and near the Stonebridge bus shelter. The matter would be kept under review.
- c. Councillor Bond raised the matter of whether surplus logs might be sold by the sack-load to members of the public at the Wildlife Reserve. It was agreed to go ahead with this, if receipts were issued and cash passed to the clerk for banking. The clerk would discuss the practicalities with the volunteers and provide them

with a receipt book.

18.12 Bus shelters – in view of research carried out by the Chairman, to review the current situation and to decide on action to be taken.

- a. Council noted that it had an unspent allocation of £5,250 in its current year budget for repairs/replacement to bus shelters, along with an agreed budget of £2,000 for 2018/19. The Mucking Hall Road shelter was most in need of action. Proposed by Councillor Edmunds, seconded by Councillor Steptoe that a 3-bay replacement steel and Perspex shelter be commissioned, subject to the agreement of District Council planners and Essex Highways and the total cost of purchase, installation and site clearance not to exceed £5,200 excluding VAT. For 5; against 0; abstained 0. The Clerk would email County Councillor Steptoe about the possibility of crowdfunding lighting for the new shelter.
- b. The condition of the three other shelters was reviewed and contractors might be engaged to refurbish the Parish Hall shelter in the new council year.

18.13 Parish Plan Committee - to agree action to be taken

Proposed by Councillor Cohen, seconded by Councillor Steptoe that Council should:

- (i) Agree a vote of thanks to all those who took part in the work of the Parish Plan Committee;
 - (ii) Formally request that the balance of funds held in the separate Lloyd's Bank account should be transferred to the Parish Council's account and that the Lloyd's account be closed;
 - (iii) The Parish Plan Committee be dissolved.
- For 5; against 0; abstained 0.

18.14 Correspondence received

- a. Essex and Herts Air Ambulance – request to site a clothing bin in the parish (probably at the parish hall). It was agreed that there were no suitable sites in the parish for this. The clerk was asked to invite the charity to apply for a donation, to be considered (among others) at the May meeting.

18:15 To receive a report from the Clerk on progress with work in-hand

- a. The clerk presented an oral report, which included the preparation of a VAT claim for £4,900; the recovery of the risk management software and the preparation of the annual risk analysis which would be presented to the February meeting, along with the annual review of the asset register.
- b. The new layout of the agendas with unique numbering (and minutes to follow the same pattern) had been recommended as best practice as part of the CiLCA qualification the clerk was undertaking, along with the inclusion of the monthly payments as part of the minutes.

18:16 At the Chairman's discretion to exchange information and items for the next meeting.

- a. Councillor Edmunds requested that street lighting be considered at the next meeting, as the number of failing lights and those obscured by vegetation was growing. The clerk was asked to enquire about screw-in LED bulbs, not requiring the replacement of the entire lighting unit. Members notified the clerk that the following lights were currently out:

- (i) The junction of Shopland Road and Barling Road;
- (ii) Outside 6a Church Road; and
- (iii) Opposite the telephone Box

18:17 Date of next meeting - scheduled for Thursday 8th February 2018.

18:18 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.

18:19 Suppliers matters – to receive a report and agree any action to be taken

- a. It was agreed to revert to the variable E.on electricity tariff for the parish hall while alternatives were sought.
- b. The Green Gateway grounds maintenance contract would reach its halfway point at 31 January and would automatically renew for the following 12 months, subject to an inflationary increase in fees. The specification would be reviewed early in the new council year ready for a future re-tendering process.

18:20 Legal matters – to consider and agree any action to be taken.

- a. A poplar tree at the Wildlife Reserve had fallen on to a fence owned by Roper’s Farm. The volunteers had done a superb job in speedily clearing the detritus. The clerk would write to Roper’s Farm to acknowledge the damage and to explore ways of meeting their repair costs. At the same time, it had become apparent that other trees on Mucking Hall Road might be prone to wind damage. The clerk was asked to write to the Woodlands Team of Rochford District Council to invite them to conduct a safety survey of the trees on the verges along the length of the road. Those on the verge by the Reserve were owned by the Parish Council but, according to Councillor Steptoe, some others were owned by the District Council.
- b. A neighbour dispute was discussed. It was acknowledged that the Parish Council had neither duties nor powers in respect of such matters. Any further enquiries should be directed to District Councillor Steptoe.

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

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