### BARLING MAGNA PARISH COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL** held Friday, 13 December 2019 in the Barling Magna Parish Hall, Barling Magna, Essex.

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

Attending: County and District Councillor Steptoe; District Councillor Efde; I. King (Parish Clerk)

Apologies: Councillors Bond, Gardiner, Glover and McKillop; District Councillors Lucas-Gill, McPherson and Williams.

**MINUTES**

* 1. **The Chairman to declare the meeting open.**

1. The Chairman declared the meeting open at 7.07pm.
   1. **To receive apologies for absence.**
2. Apologies were noted, as recorded above.
   1. **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.**
3. All councillors present declared precautionary interests as council taxpayers at this meeting when the precept for 2020-21 would be approved.
4. Councillor Steptoe declared an interest in any matters relating to the County or District Councils. In any planning matter, he reserved the right to change his mind when the matter was considered by the District Council. He further declared an interest in item 19.187a.
5. Councillors Ashdown and Cohen declared an interest in items 19.184a, as two of the payments for approval would be to reimburse them for expenditure.
6. Councillor Edmunds declared an interest in the Church Road lights competition.
   1. **To approve the minutes of the following council meetings:**
7. Meeting held 14 November 2019. Proposed by Councillor Ashdown, seconded by Councillor Steptoe that the minutes be approved once the following change was made to minute 19.165a: delete the words “subject to” and substitute “considered for”. For 5, against 0, abstained 0; carried.
8. Extraordinary meeting held 2 December 2019. Proposed by Councillor Ashdown, seconded by Councillor Cohen that the minutes be approved. For 5, against 0, abstained 0; carried.
   1. **The meeting will stand adjourned to permit Parishioners of Barling Magna to address the Council**
9. There were no parishioners wishing to address the Council on this occasion.
   1. **Financial matters**
10. Payment requests for December 2019.Proposed by Councillor Steptoe, seconded by Councillor Edmunds that the schedule of payments be approved, as set out below. For 5; against 0; abstained 0. Carried.



1. Proposed by Councillor Steptoe, seconded by Councillor Ashdown that the bank reconciliation to 29 November 2019 be noted. For 5, against 0, abstained 0; carried.
2. Proposed by Councillor Steptoe, seconded by Councillor Bright that Council should purchase emulsion paint to add a coat to the interior main hall wall in a shade to best match the current colour. For 5; against 0; abstained 0. Carried.
   1. **Recommendations from Finance Committee**
3. Banking, payments, charge card and electronic payments. Proposed by Councillor Edmunds, seconded by Councillor Ashdown that the following recommendations from Finance Committee be approved. For 5; against 0; abstained 0. Carried.

That the Council note the current banking arrangements, their safety and efficiency;

The Chairman and Vice-Chairman be authorised to sign an instruction to close the HSBC account at the point where it has ceased to be in use;

To resolve to apply for a Co-op Bank charge card, as described in the report;

To adopt a trial of the SquareTM card payment scheme, including authorising a Direct Debit on the Co-op bank account and the cost of the equipment;

In due course, proceed to open a separate account with another clearing bank covered by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme.

1. Draft budget for 2020-21. A draft budget had been circulated and the Clerk was thanked for preparing it. The following recommendations from Finance Committee were proposed by Councillor Ashdown, seconded by Councillor Edmunds. For 5; against 0; abstained 0. Carried.

The draft budget dated 13.12.19 be approved.

The Council would apply for a further Public Works Loan Board loan to pay for the replacement of the three older bus shelters within 2020-21;

The precept would be increased for 2020-21 by 20% (estimated at £14.31 annually / 28p per week, per household), to reflect new work and facilities for the parish.

* 1. **Recommendations from Wildlife Reserve Committee**

1. Proposed by Councillor Steptoe, seconded by Councillor Edmunds that the following recommendations from Wildlife Reserve Committee be approved. For 4; against 0; abstained 1. Carried.
2. To use the occasion of the presentation of a donation from the Parish Council to the Royal British Legion to promote volunteering among its members;
3. To accept Councillor Bright’s offer to make a short promotional video which might aid the search for volunteers;
4. To purchase two solar panels to allow for trickle charge of the batteries to equipment in the container and for cameras at the barn at approximately £25 each and 3 new cutting heads for the mower, at approximately £60;
5. To request a report within 2 months on costed options for a review of current flora and fauna by an appropriately qualified agency, along with a thoroughly consultative forward development plan for the Reserve, with the aim of commissioning this review within the current financial year;
6. To launch a social media consultation in the spring, explaining the tension between the facility as a nature reserve and its attractiveness for dog-walking and seeking residents’ insights and views on how these two uses might be resolved;
7. To resolve that all dogs should be kept on leads throughout the Reserve.
   1. **Events and projects**
8. Most Christmas hampers had been successfully delivered. If there was a spare one, District Councillor McPherson would be invited to deploy it. Two appreciative letters of thanks were read aloud. It was unanimously agreed that letters of thanks should be sent to all volunteers involved.
9. The Frost Fayre had been very successful and enjoyable, with a significant uplift in the number of residents and guests visiting the hall, enjoying the hospitality and participating in the vote on the photography competition. The Clerk was requested to pass the thanks of the Council to its volunteers and to the organising committee of the Fayre.
10. Photography competition 2019: there had been 94 entries: a large increase on 2018. The winner of the popular vote in the 16+ category was Dave Knight for his photography “Barling Hall sunrise”. Highly commended were Kelvin Read’s “Marbled white” and Lauren Osborne’s “Does this mean she’s a unicorn?”. The winner in the under-16 category was “Barling Wildlife Nature Park” by Charlie Cantwell, aged 9. The Clerk would explore opportunities to award the prizes. Photographs would be displayed on the Council’s website when possible. The Clerk was asked to write a letter of thanks to the Head of the Primary School, acknowledging her help in shortlisting the 94 entries to 30 for judging and for choosing the junior prizewinner.
    1. **Planning matters**
11. 19/01100/FUL in respect of a proposed single storey extension at New Buildings Farm. The development history of this site was considered. The Council’s comment on the application would be that it had reservations about the scale of the proposed building in a rural area.
    1. **Clerk’s report and correspondence received**
12. Incidents at or near the Parish Hall. Visitors has lost their footing on the entrance ramp at two separate events over the previous weekend. When the weather allowed, a line would be painted at the edges, as a precaution. The importance of logging incidents was reaffirmed. Accidents on the pavement in the street outside the hall were the province of the highways authority.
13. It was noted that there was further deterioration to the exterior aspect of the fire doors in the main hall, despite 3-4 coats of preservative.
14. The noticeboard on the Mucking Hall Road bus shelter was not suitable and the Clerk would bring forward options for its replacement. It was unanimously confirmed that while agendas and official notices were legally required to be displayed on the website and on noticeboards, an exception was permissible where there was inadequate safe access to them.
15. The supplier of the flagpole had offered to install this as a goodwill gesture. It was decided that this should be affixed to wall of the parish hall at the corner to the immediate left of the entrance ramp when seen from the street.
16. Members notified faulty lights in Barrow Hall Road (the first on the southern side after the 30mph sign), at the junction of Barling Road and Barrow Hall Road (by the post-box) and outside Barling House in Barling Road. The Clerk had notified the contractor of a tried and acceptable model of LED lamp with adjustable wattage used by Hawkwell Parish Council and was awaiting a response. The option of going out to tender in January would be considered.
    1. **To receive a report from the District and County Councillors for the area on any matters of interest.**
    2. District Councillor Efde reported in the recent successful Peer Review of the District Council. He spoke about two recent Development Committee meetings. A councillors’ surgery would be held at Gossip on 21 December. The Asset Delivery Plan was still going ahead. He had undertaken training for members on banners and had attended the Standards Committee. He wished members of the Parish Council a happy Christmas and peaceful new year.
    3. County and District Councillor Steptoe reported on a continuing investigation of missing yellow lines at the junction of Church Road and Barling Road. He had reported the damaged poplar trees in Mucking Hall Road to highways. The outcomes of recent parliamentary elections were reviewed. Residents should be encouraged to participate in the current budget survey for the District Council and the Parish was asked to promote it on social media. He wished members a merry Christmas and a happy new year.
    4. Councillor Ashdown enquired about a blocked gully in Barling Road, affecting a disabled local resident. Councillor Steptoe was looking into the matter. The use of a disability scooter in Shopland Road was causing some concern.
    5. The Chairman thanked district councillors for their reports.
    6. **At the Chairman’s discretion to exchange information and items for future meetings:**
17. The Chairman would circulate notes from the recent EALC meeting. The new CEO would be Charlene Slade, promoted from her previous role. Councillor Steptoe would be attending a future EALC meeting.
18. The Essex Fund was open to applications relating to carers, the environment, young people and community resources.
19. The Chairman had finally received required documentation from the Charity Commission relating to the Parish Hall trustees.
    1. **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.

* 1. **Awards**

1. Citizen of the Year. Proposed by Councillor Cohen, seconded by Councillor Steptoe that Martin Tippin be chosen as the Citizen of the Year. For 5; against 0; abstained 0. Carried. The award made at The Castle Inn on Friday, 20 December.
2. Christmas Lights competition. Mr Daniels, the previous year’s winner, had been glad to be asked to assist in the judging this year. Councillors Cohen and McKillop would compare notes with him on 18 December. It was agreed that The Castle should have a certificate of recognition for the contribution to the lights.
   1. **The Chairman to declare the meeting closed.**
3. The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.55pm.

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