### BARLING MAGNA PARISH COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL** held Thursday, 12 November 2020, through online conferencing under s78 of The Coronavirus Act 2020.

Present: Councillors Ashdown, Cohen (Chair), Edmunds, Glover, McKillop and Steptoe (Vice Chair)

Attending: County and District Councillor Steptoe, District Councillor Efde, M Power (Parish Clerk)

Apologies: Councillors Bond, Bright and Gardiner. District Councillors McPherson and Williams.

**MINUTES**

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

The Chairman declared the meeting open at 7 pm.

**20.168 To receive apologies for absence.**

Apologies were noted, as recorded above.

**20.169 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.**

Councillor Steptoe declared an interest in any matters relating to the County or District Council. In any planning matter, he reserved the right to change his mind when the issue was considered at District Council.

* 1. **To approve the minutes of the Council meeting 8 October 2020**

It was proposed by Councillor Edmunds, seconded by Councillor Ashdown that the minutes of the meeting held 8 October 2020 be approved.

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

No parishioners attended the meeting on this occasion.

* 1. **Financial matters**

1. The Clerk reported that she was working towards managing all the utility company accounts online, rather than relying on paper billing, which could be cumbersome.
2. It was proposed by Cllr Edmunds, seconded by Cllr Ashdown, that the bank reconciliation as at 31 October 2020, which had been circulated to Members, be approved.
3. The following table of payments had been circulated to members. It was proposed by Councillor Glover, seconded by Councillor Edmunds that the schedule be approved.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Payee** | **Description** | **£** |
| Direct Debit | E.on | Street lighting power | 321.11 |
| Direct Debit | E.on | Parish Hall electricity | 0 |
| Direct Debit | E.on | Parish Hall gas | 0 |
| Direct Debit | Wave | Water bill |  |
| Direct Debit | British Telecom | Combined broadband and mobile | 95.42 |
| Direct Debit | PWLB | Loan repayment | 2,479.95 |
| BACS | G Gates | Salary | 424.42 |
| BACS | M Power | Salary | 1,053.66 |
| BACS | M Power | Expenses 8-10-20 to 11-11-20 | 13.60 |
| BACS | P Shaw | Tyre sealant | 19.40 |
| BACS | Essex & Herts Air Ambulance | Donation | 100.00 |
| BACS | Eurolube Oil | Gas oil | 19.43 |
| Debit Card | Lemon Fencing | Materials for wildlife reserve bridges | 348.80 |
| BACS | P Shaw | Gloves and screws WLR | 41.03 |
| BACS | M J Steptoe | Items for Christmas hampers | 233.32 |
| BACS | M Cohen | Items for Christmas hampers | 214.72 |
| BACS | The Window Man | Parish hall replacement window units | 396.00 |
| Debit Card | Post office | First class stamps (x6) | 4.56 |
| Debit Card | Post office | First class stamps (x12) | 9.12 |
| BACS | W&H Romac | Street lighting repairs | 115.80 |
| BACS | SLCC | Clerk budget training | 36.00 |
| BACS | Royal British Legion | Donation | 100.00 |
| BACS | Brunel Computer Services Ltd | Support time for clerk 21/10/20 | 78.00 |
| BACS | Brunel Computer Services Ltd | Website hosting for one year | 54.00 |
| Debit card | Zoom | 1 month subscription due 2.11.20 | 14.39 |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  | **Total payments** | **£6,172.73** |

(Cllr Cohen declared an interest in this item by virtue of receiving reimbursement for purchases she had made for the Christmas hampers. Cllr Steptoe declared an interest by virtue of his wife receiving reimbursement for purchases she had made for the Christmas hampers.)

1. It was noted that income of £453.50 from hall bookings had been deposited in the bank since 1 October 2020. However, because of the second lockdown in the country due to the coronavirus, payments for November bookings that had been cancelled had been transferred to December’s bookings.
2. A comparison of the bank reconciliation (approved at 20.172 b.) and cash book entries had been circulated in advance of the meeting. It was proposed by Cllr Ashdown, seconded by Cllr McKillop that this be approved.
3. The Clerk advised that the VAT claim for Quarter 2 2020 of £1,188.23 had been credited to the bank account on 6.11.20.
4. It was proposed by Cllr Glover and seconded by Cllr Ashdown that funding of £30 plus VAT be approved for attendance by the Clerk at an SLCC budget setting course on 24.11.20.
5. Further to a request from the trustees of the Barling Magna Parish Hall Committee, it was proposed by Cllr Edmunds and seconded by Cllr Steptoe that a grant of £1,000 be made to the Barling Magna Parish Hall Committee to assist in counteracting the adverse effects of the coronavirus upon its fundraising endeavours during 2020/21.   
   (Note: All Councillors declared an interest in this item by virtue of being trustees of the charity).

**20.173 Management Matters**

a. Council considered and noted a review of the programme against annual targets.

b. It was proposed by Cllr Steptoe, seconded by Cllr McKillop that the annual review of bank standing orders and direct debits (circulated) be noted. The Clerk advised that she planned to set up a direct debit for the payment to British Telecom for combined broadband and mobile services. This would be reported back to the December meeting of Council.

**20.174 Governance matters**

1. Further to the resolution by Council on 10 September 2020 (Minute 20.145.a.) statutory notice has now been given that the Clerk to the Council, Michelle Power, will be eligible for membership of the Local Government Pension Scheme operated by Essex County Council. The public notice has been displayed for the required 7 days on the Parish Council notice board. It was proposed by Cllr Cohen and seconded by Cllr Edmunds that Michelle Power be admitted to the Local Government Pension Scheme operated by Essex County Council.

**20.175 Events and projects**

1. **Beautiful Barling Calendar 2021.** The Clerk reported that copies of the calendar had been sold by the Barling village stores and Splett Butchers and she would be delivering additional copies to replenish their stocks. Cllr Cohen would contact the Gossip Café and post office in Great Wakering to see if they needed additional copies. If the scaled down Frost Fayre due to take place on 5 December goes ahead, copies of the calendar could be available for sale there.
2. **Citizen of the Year Award.** One nomination and three requests for application forms had been received.
3. **Photography Competition.** There had been entries from four people in the adult category and one from the children’s category. The competition would be readvertised on social media.
4. **Christmas hampers.** Cllr Cohen reported that she and Mrs Steptoe had now purchased most of the goods needed for the hampers. There was a request from a Councillor that another resident be added to the list of recipients; details would be given to Cllr Cohen.
5. **Christmas lights.** It was confirmed that the Christmas lights competition would go ahead this year as usual.
6. **Defibrillator**

The Chair reported that she had sourced a price from St John’s Ambulance of £1065 for a defibrillator (with a five-year battery pack) to be installed outside the village hall, plus £375 for the unit to house it. Cllr McPherson had provided contact details for the company in Norfolk who had installed the defibrillator outside the Gossip Café in Great Wakering and the Chair had emailed them for an approximate cost. A local electrician could provide a cost for installation but would need the specification. The Clerk at Foulness Island Parish Council would be contacted as he may be able to provide information on sources he had used. An application could be made to the Heart Foundation for part-funding. The deadline for an application to be made to Cllr Steptoe’s county councillor fund was January. The Council confirmed that it would not be accepting the kind offer from a local resident of the donation of a telephone box to house a defibrillator at the suggested Stonebridge site both by reason of the cost of moving the telephone box to the site and the absence of a suitable power supply at the site which is necessary to maintain the defibrillator. **A request for £2,000 would be made to Cllr Steptoe’s County Councillor fund to cover the cost of purchase and installation of a defibrillator to be placed on the outside of the Barling Magna village hall. Further information when available could be provided as requested.**

The Chair had made enquiries as to the cost of a freestanding wooden story tellers chair that could be sited in the Wildlife Reserve on the grassy area in front of the barn. The cost would be £650 plus the cost of stools, although WLR volunteers could potentially be asked to fashion some stools; the Chair would contact the head volunteer in this respect. The Chair would send pictures of the chair to Councillors for consideration at a future time.

The Chair had made enquiries regarding options for resurfacing the pathway at the WLR.  Although a rubber mix solution (as used on golf courses and play areas) would be ideal the cost would be prohibitive. The Barling Magna Community Trust is currently under review, updating and modernisation and it may be that once this is complete more grant funding would be open to the Trust, which may in turn be available to benefit the Reserve.  In the meanwhile, as an interim measure, covering the path with bark or chippings would be considered in conjunction with the head volunteer.

**20.176 Report from Outside Bodies**

1. Council received a report from the Chair following her attendance at the Rochford Hundred Association of Local Councils, which had been circulated to Members.
   1. **20.177 Planning matters**

None received.

**20.178 Clerk’s report**

The Clerk reported as follows:

1. GDPR forms emailed to Members needed to be returned for the Council’s records. A further copy would be sent to Members.
2. In respect of the proposed meeting with W H Romac to discuss the options for adjusting the brightness of the LED lights in some parts of the Parish, the Clerk had been advised that it would be more useful to speak to a designer and manufacturer of street lighting columns. The clerk would be provided with contact details for DW Windsor Ltd, who design lighting in various areas, including Essex County Council, and should be happy to advise on choosing an LED lantern for use in Barling Magna.
3. There were currently three block bookings in the parish hall, but only the Kung Fu class on Friday nights is likely to continue past Christmas. The Hall Manager has had to carry over the November payments to cover future bookings.
4. The Clerk had been in contact with the Headteacher at Barling Magna Academy to arrange a discussion on how to progress the defibrillator. However, because of the second coronavirus lockdown, this had not yet been able to take place.
5. The Clerk had not had a response to her request to Rochford District Council’s planning policy team for a meeting on the Local Plan. She could contact the Portfolio Holder for Planning or the Planning Manager.
6. The green flag award pennant had been delivered to the WLR for display. The Clerk would discuss publicity of the award with the head volunteer.

The Chair had spoken to the owner of the beagle dog and expressed the concerns that had been reported to the Council from a number of members of the public regarding the dog's unaccompanied visits to the wildlife reserve and the fact that it had frequently been seen unaccompanied on the local roads.  The owner was aware of the problem and expressed her concern but indicated that she felt that she had done everything that could reasonably be expected of her to keep the beagle in but by its very nature it was something of an ‘escape artist’.

**20.179 Street Lighting**

There were no reports of faulty streetlights.

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

1. The Chair read out a report from Cllr McPherson:-
2. She thanked the Council for sorting the streetlight (fixed yesterday) and the parish donation to the RBL poppy appeal. She stated that the poppy volunteers, and this included Cllr Shirley Glover, did a sterling job.
3. A ‘home-made’ bench had appeared at The Parry and, although it was well made, the District Council Open Spaces team had advised that it did not comply with Health and Safety requirements. Cllr McPherson has asked the District Council for a bench for the area.
4. Housing Development in Barrow Hall Road. Cllr McPherson advised that she has opposed the decision to site the entrance/exit from the estate onto Barrow Hall Road and is fighting for road improvements. The LHP has been suggested as a route for funding, but this would not be appropriate due to the length of time that the LHP process would take. Councillor McPherson requested Parish Council support to get this request revisited. Cllr Edfe supported the endeavours but reminded Members that because there had been no objection by Essex Highways to the entrance being sited on Barrow Hall Road, the planning application had had to be approved. The Clerk would draft a letter to Cllr McPherson, giving the Parish Council’s full support for any steps that could be taken to improve the safety of Barrow Hall Road, including widening the road at its narrowest points and on the bends, improved signage and lighting. Council agreed that there is grave concern that the road is dangerous, which is evidenced by the many accidents along the road, and there was urgent need for highways attention. Cllr Steptoe advised that the Parish Council could submit a written request for a meeting with the Cabinet Member for Highways and senior highways officers to raise concerns on this issue. Ward Councillors of the two wards would be invited to attend. He added that at the recent meeting the Chair and Vice-Chair had had with the developers, Sanctuary Housing advised that there would be ‘left turn’ signage at the exit on the estate, and that the design would encourage traffic to turn to the right, not the left.
5. Cllr Steptoe reported as follows:-
6. Information he receives from ECC relating to Covid19 measures and other topics is forwarded to the Parish Clerks and put on social media. He spoke of an ECC project where 160 laptops had been refurbished and provided to children who needed them. The school buses issues had been addressed; however, any further issues should be emailed to Cllr Steptoe to raise with the Cabinet Member.
7. Results were awaited for speed surveys in Barling Road, just past Clay Street and in Sutton Road. Potholes were being repaired across the parish.
8. Cllr Steptoe still had concerns about Rosedene in Barrow Hall Road, which had had a significant amount of money spent on resurfacing the site.
9. Gas pipe replacement works in LWR had been postponed and there might be short notice when the works are due to recommence.
10. Complaints had been received from people having trouble passing along the path in LWR by the old school because of a hedge, which although well maintained was encroaching across the pavement. This was being dealt with as a priority.
11. There had been an incident on the Barling Road near to the junction with Shopland Road, as a result of which the electricity supply to a number of residents had been interrupted.  Repairs had been undertaken to reinstate the supply, but the contractors had left a large, deep trench at the verge of the road which was potentially dangerous.  It is understood that the contractors will need to undertake the repairs to the roadside and ECC Highways should be made aware.

**20.181 At the Chair’s discretion to exchange information and items for future meetings:**

* It was agreed that the next meeting of the Finance Committee would be held on Monday 23 November.
* It was agreed that the next Full Council meeting would be held on Thursday 10 December.

**20.182 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.

**20.183 Contractual Matters**

Three tenders had been received for the replacement bus shelters. The tenders would be considered by the Finance Committee. The clerk would prepare a matrix to show a like-for-like comparison of the quotes received.

**20.184 The Chairman to declare the meeting closed.**

Councillor Cohen declared the meeting closed at 8.40 pm, thanking Members for their attendance.

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