

# BARLING MAGNA PARISH COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF THE WILDLIFE RESERVE COMMITTEE** meeting held on Monday 7 December 2020 by online conferencing, under s78 of The Coronavirus Act 2020.

Present: Councillors Cohen, Edmunds, Gardiner, McKillop and Steptoe.

In attendance: Mr J Goodman and Mr P Shaw (volunteers) and M Power (Parish Clerk).

## MINUTES

1. **The Committee noted the resignation of Cllr Bond as Chair of the Wildlife Reserve Committee.**
2. **It was resolved that:-**
  - a. Cllr McKillop be appointed as Chair of the Committee.
  - b. Cllr Edmunds be appointed as Vice Chair of the Committee
3. **The Chairman to declare the meeting open**
  - a. The Chairman declared the meeting open at 7.05pm.
4. **To receive apologies for absence.**
  - a. There had been no apologies received.
5. **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. Cllr Steptoe declared an interest in any matters relating to the County or District Councils.
6. **To agree the Minutes of the Wildlife Reserve Committee held on 7 September 2020**
  - a. The minutes of the meeting held on 7 September 2020 were agreed as a correct record and approved.
7. **The meeting will stand adjourned to permit Parishioners of Barling Magna to address the Committee on matters relating to the Wildlife Reserve**
  - a. There were none present.
8. **Volunteers' matters**
  - a. The volunteers requested that a socket set, a selection of screwdrivers and boxes of screws be purchased for use at the Reserve. A request would be made to Full Council on 10 December. Mr Shaw would contact the Clerk with details of what was needed.
  - b. Car park locking issues. The current sign at the entrance to the Reserve states opening times of 9 am to 6 pm. It was requested that replacement signs be purchased that state that the Reserve will open by 9 am and close at 6pm, or dusk, whichever is earlier. The signs should be durable and be placed at the pedestrian entrance and at the main car park

entrance.

- c. There continue to be reports of Bella the beagle getting into the reserve; the owner is aware.
- d. The three words that identify the Wildlife Reserve on the What3words app are 'tell.spots.laws'. A sign would be printed with these words; to be displayed at the gates to the Reserve.
- e. Mr Shaw thanked Cllr McKillop for the wooden cages and pallets that she had donated to the Reserve; they would be used to store logs and as bug hotels respectively.
- f. The Reserve was unlikely to need to hire a skip at present as the chicken wire removed from the undergrowth when the trees were felled had been disposed of as scrap metal.
- g. A 160-watt solar panel with an inverter, controllers and battery, including cabling up, would cost in the region of £500. This would be useful for charging small electrical items and powering LED lighting in the buildings at the Reserve and possibly small security cameras on the bird boxes. The viability of having a solar panel here would be dependent on the state of the existing roof. The matter would be raised at Full Council.

## 9. **Equipment and expenditure**

As discussed above.

## 10. **Current Topics**

- a. **Pathway.** Cllr Cohen reported that cost of resurfacing the pathway at the Reserve with a chipped rubber solution would be in the region of £35,000 to £40,000. At the present time, the cost of this option is prohibitive, but the suggestion can be revisited at a stage in the future should circumstances permit. Cllr Cohen had previously obtained an estimate for an alternative, being self-bonding gravel (as used at RHS - Hyde Hall) which estimate was in the order of £79 per tonne. Assuming a need for 70 tons this would work out to £5530 + vat + delivery. This company is based in Oxfordshire. Mr Shaw said that he was aware of an Essex company who supply this type of self-binding gravel and would forward details to Cllr Cohen so that she could make further enquiries. Although this option would create some dust, it is fairly solid and has a natural looking finish and it is understood can be laid over existing surfaces. Mr Shaw will also forward some photographs of the existing pathway to Cllr Cohen to assist her in her enquiries of the suppliers.
- b. **Reading Chair.** Cllr Cohen had made enquiries as to the cost of a freestanding wooden story tellers chair that could be sited in the Wildlife Reserve in a sheltered area behind the barn. The cost would be in the region of £650, but there are likely to be cheaper alternatives. However, there was concern that a wooden chair may not weather well and could be subject to vandalism. Mr Shaw would discuss other options with the volunteers and report back to the next meeting.
- c. The Council wished to record its thanks to the volunteers for their work in the repair/reinstatement of the two bridges in the Reserve. The Committee would like to recommend to full Council that consideration be given to expressions of thanks to the volunteers for their work at the Reserve.

**11. The next meeting of the Committee**

- Monday, 8 March 2021 was the next scheduled date.

**12. Exchange of Information**

- a. P Shaw advised that he had been awarded 210 hedging trees by the Woodland Trust, which could be used in the area where the conifers had been felled. The 210 wildlife saplings already promised would be planted the other side of the meadow and in other places in the Reserve.
- b. Mr Shaw would provide the Clerk with the contact details of the key holders to the Reserve. The keyholders had created a messenger group to enable communication between them in times when cover to open/close the Reserve was needed. The padlocks are operated by a code.

**The Chair declared the meeting closed at 7.44 pm, thanking members and volunteers for their attendance.**

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