

**Minutes of Barkway Parish Council Meeting
Held in the Reading Room on 13 April 2010.**

Present: R Davidson (Chair)
G Baker (Vice Chair)
G Penning
A Terry
K McCormick
V Styles
S Alsop

Apologies: J Cockerton

Minutes: Approved and signed as read.

Matters Arising: None.

Public Session: No-one present.

Personal Statement from Cllr. Graham Penning

After serving for 6 years on the Parish Council, Cllr. Penning has decided to retire. A letter of Intention to Retire was accepted. Chairman Davidson expressed his immense gratitude on behalf of the Parish Council and the Village for all of Cllr. Penning's hard work and dedication in this role.

Co-option of Parish Council Advisors

A motion to co-opt Graham Penning as an Advisor to the Parish Council was unanimously agreed. It was also proposed to co-opt Steve Alsop as an Advisor. This was carried by all.

Late Night HGV Movements

Following numerous complaints received, Herts Highways have been contacted. It appears that the HGV lorries are not acting illegally. The traffic was associated with a project in the Hormead Area. There have been no further reports of late night HGV movements.

A complaint about straw in the High Street. It appears to be caused by the Dimsdale's overhanging trees catching the straw lorries as they pass. Mr Dimsdale to be approached with regards cutting back his trees as the straw is also causing drains to become blocked.

KM

Red Telephone Box

Further to asking the Village for their views on the future of the Telephone Box, it was suggested that the Parish Council should consider adopting the Box for £1, after BT have reinstated it back into a safe state of repair. Cllr. Davidson to contact BT. Ideas for future use of the Box included it becoming a Village Information Point or another notice board facility. **RD**

Portfolio Reports:

Planning – Chairman Davidson reported that a Planning Application had been received relating to conversion of a barn and erection of a double garage behind Elms Farm. There were no objections raised.

It had been noted that a caravan had been sited inappropriately in a field at the south end of the village. Richard Tiffin at North Herts DC had been contacted and was sending out an Officer to investigate.

Parish Plan – Transport – this cannot go any further now until submitted and then Highways will allocate funds to investigate solutions to traffic problems identified.

Young Persons Affairs – Cllr. Cockerton, in her absence, reported that she was trying to apply for a Grant for insuring the Mud Humps as a useable bike track again. The application was being made by the Youth Club in conjunction with the Social Club. **JC Parish Plan – Village Council.** The first meeting was planned for 6th May. At this stage just the main village groups had been contacted. It was suggested that a more appropriate name would be the ‘Barkway Forum’. Cllr. Baker to communicate on website. **GB**

Environment – Graham Penning reported that he had attended an annual meeting with Herts County Council and CMS representatives. It was decided to continue with the P3 project as it will provide us with addition funding.

Mr Maxted from Keeper’s Cottage will now be repairing his gate.

It was reported that Owen Bell may be able to do the repairs needed to sort out the drainage problems at the end of Church Lane

It was commented upon that the area in front of White House Court in the High Street was dirty and untidy with abandoned wheelie bins. Cllr. Davidson to check with NHDC regarding regulations for keeping bins. Cllr. Terry to find out who the Management Company is and letter to be sent. **RD/AT**

Parish Plan – Environment Group. A document has now been produced ready for submission and one suggestion has been to support www.litteraction.org.uk which is a Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) involving local community action groups keeping the area clean.

Police – Cllr. Styles reported that a vehicle had been stolen from the Social Club car park. However, generally crime level was down.

Parish Plan – Emergency Plan – In draft stage with some issues still to be resolved, for instance – to what level this needs to go to? Who will be in charge in a time of emergency and do they need to be trained? This will require people to volunteer for the posts involved. Cllr. Styles to bring this forward to a conclusion, ready for submission.

It was suggested that a revitalised Neighbourhood Watch scheme would be of benefit to the village, making it a safer environment and that the Parish Council should have a responsibility for this, including it within a Councillor’s Portfolio. The Police to be invited to a Parish Council meeting to re-introduce the scheme. **VS**

Grants and Contributions – Cllr. Baker reported that a Grant of £1035 for the Reading Room renovation works had been received from County Councillor Tony Hunter's Locality Budget. It was possible that another similar Grant may be obtained this new financial year. An application for a Grant from Herts Grass Roots for £5000 was being completed. In order for the Reading Room to apply it must have a Constitution, so this was also being sorted out. It was noted that the Reading Room has an investment fund with COIF, which was as a result of the sale of part of the Reading Room in 1967. It amounts to in excess of £5000 but this would only be redeemed as a last resort.

Parish Plan - Communication – the website has had 1500 hits with 800 1st time visitors. The Barkway Bulletin next edition date is 1st June. Ideas for content were discussed.

Leisure – Cllr. Terry reported that he had successfully purchased a mower with a view to hiring it for a minimal charge to the Parish Council for grass cutting on the Rec. It was mentioned that an area around the swings had been half dug up and left, no-one knew why this was.

Archery – Parish Plan Recreation and Leisure – 20 people have expressed an interest in the Archery lessons. The Tutor has indicated that he could arrange 2 sessions of 2 hours initially, with a view to continuing in the future. Minimum age would be 10 years old. The cost per person would be £10 for a 2 hour session, it was agreed that the Parish Council would subsidise the children taking part by 50% for this initial session.

The Parish Plan draft still needed a few bits added but had some good ideas e.g. inter-village activities.

Pavilion – plans have already been drawn up that could be submitted. It was agreed that the fee of £200 could be spent in order to progress this further. Naomi at North Herts would be contacted to come down and look at the site. **AT**

Cllr. Davidson to speak to Planning at North Herts to find out more information regarding Clause 105 relating to the Wheatsheaf Meadow House Development and whether this could lead to funding for the Pavilion Project. **RD**

Parish Council Surgery – held Saturday 27th March between 10-11am. Cllr. Penning reported that Mrs Jean Pritchard of 1, Royston Road, had enquired whether the Parish Council would now be able to take responsibility for the cutting of the old boundary hedge outside her house.

The proposed date of the next surgery is Saturday 15th May. Cllr. McCormick volunteering to be present. The Clerk to display poster. **KM/CT**

Special Projects – Reading Room - Cllr. McCormick expressed grateful thanks to Cllr. Baker for progressing the Reading Room renovation works in his absence. The loft has now been insulated. NHDC were sending a Conservation Officer to inspect the Reading Room and check that proposed works would be acceptable for a Listed building. The damp proofing will now be costing £1068. A revised quote for the re-wiring has been requested. Heating and dry-lining would be the final stages of the works. It is aimed to complete by the Autumn. It is hoped to obtain a Grant for £5000. Cllr. Terry will organise help to move the books out. **KM/AT**

Risk Assessment Plan and Internal Audit Procedure – Approved at the Extraordinary Meeting held on 29th March.

Finance Report

It was proposed that the Clerk, being the Responsible Finance Officer should become a signatory on the bank accounts. This was agreed by all. **GB/CT**

The Parish Council bank balance carried forward as at 31st March was £2,758.42 of which £2158.42 is actually available taking off a contingency of £600 relating to the P3 Project.

At 13th April the Account balance is £7292.15.

Parish Council Account:

Receipts since the last meeting:

£6105.00 – NHDC - Half year Precept

Payments since last meeting:

£51.00 – Eon - Direct Debit Electricity Pavilion

£15.00 – Veolia – Direct Debit Water Pavilion

Cheques to be signed at this meeting:

£433.97 – HAPTC Annual Subs

£75.00 – Thomas Bentley – Street Cleaning

£287.00 - Catharine Toms – Agreed monthly Clerk’s salary

£160.30 - Clerk’s Expenses

£200.00 – Transfer of funds to the Reading Room Account.

Reading Room Account:

Bank Balance at 31.03.10 = £1549.04

Bank Balance at 13.04.10 = £1392.76

Receipts since the last meeting:

£138.40 – Donation from the Village

£5.00 – Donation

£1034.50 – Grant NHDC Locality Budget.

It was agreed to transfer £200 into the Account from the Parish Council Account to pay for day to day running costs of the Reading Room.

Payments since the last meeting:

£22.00 - Eon Direct Debit for Electricity

Cheques to be signed at this meeting:

£157.50 – Interglow – Loft insulation

£176.78 – NHDC - Rates

Donations in total to date amount to £1348.50

Amount spent to date on renovation works: £157.50 which leaves balance of £1191.00 in renovation fund.

Correspondence:

E-mail received from Mr David Such re: his permission to inflate, tether, launch his 2 hot air balloons from the Recreation Ground. He has provided us with copies of insurance cover valid until 24.09.10.

Letter received from Zurich Insurance confirming receipt of information from the Parish Council regarding Mr Lee.

Audit Pack for year ending 31.03.10 received from External Auditors BDO.

Letter received from Mary Webb of Barkway Chapel, confirming attendance at the APM and asking for financial help towards their cemetery maintenance this year.

Telephone call from Dave Standen at Herts Highways. They hope to sort out all the drains in the High Street this month.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.25pm

Date of next meeting: 11th May 2010, in the Reading Room 7 for 7.30pm