

**Minutes of Barkway Parish Council Meeting
Held in the Reading Room on 17 January 2011 at 7.30pm.**

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

County Councillor Tony Hunter

Apologies: None

Councillor's Declaration of Interest: None declared.

Minutes: Approved and signed as read.

Cllr. Tony Hunter was welcomed to the meeting.

Matters Arising: Cllr. Baker announced that on a trial basis for this year, commencing on 21st May, the Police Surgeries would be combined with the Parish Council Surgeries. The dates will be published on the website.

Public Session: No-one present

Council Administration: Cllr. Baker had nothing much to report as all procedures are now up to date. The Internal Audit procedure will need to be reviewed before 31.03.11.

Parish Plan: Further to this having been published in June last year, it is now time to revisit, review and revise this. Cllr. Baker had attended a meeting with Simon Taylor who had agreed to continue as Chair of the Parish Plan Steering Group. There have been 3 more volunteers come forward. Group leaders have been informed that the Parish Councillors will give support to encourage further progress.

Cllr. Styles joined the meeting at 7.35pm.

Cllr. Cockerton asked Tony Hunter about the issue of having no safety markings outside the school. Barkway is the only school in the area which does not have these. Anybody can park outside the school and this causes poor visibility and compromises the children's safety. Tony Hunter said that legal procedures needed to get this done were ongoing and agreed to pursue this. It was suggested that a letter from the Head Teacher might assist matters. Cllr. Cockerton to arrange. **AH/JC**

Tony Hunter mentioned that he had been approached by the Royston Area Committee with a petition from residents of Barkway and Barley regarding traffic calming. This is something which is being addressed for Barkway through the Parish Plan. Highways have still not responded to our Parish Plan findings, despite numerous e-mails. Tony Hunter agreed to try and arrange a meeting with Highways in Barkway on a Monday morning in order that the traffic chaos can be witnessed. **AH**

It was reported that it was budget time at County and District level, the current government is to make huge changes but as yet it is not known exactly what these will be. Cllr. Baker asked Tony Hunter if he would be able to write a 'Message from your County Councillor' for the forthcoming Barkway Bulletin. This was kindly agreed. **AH**

Cllr. McCormick thanked Cllr. Tony Hunter for being willing to perform the opening ceremony of the Reading Room on Saturday 29th January.

Land off London Road: It was reported by Cllr. Davidson that the pile of rubble used to create a hard standing will be removed shortly.

Section 106 Projects: Cllr. Baker reported that he had been in contact with Stuart Izzard at NHDC. Mr Izzard had received the quotation organised by Cllr. Cockerton for the playground equipment. A project plan will be put together and presented to Mary Caldwell for approval. It was noted that all quotes must be directed to Mr Izzard and be inclusive of VAT.

With regards to the proposed bus shelter, Cllr. Davidson reported that Highways want to manage this and take it over, but the Parish Council must approve it.

Cllr. Terry was still investigating the costs of a 5-a-side football facility for the Rec.

Cllr. Alsop had completed some costing options for creating the new Village Green by the pond. The equipment would include a picnic bench and a seat and a life buoy and possibly a new dog bin. The bench and seat would be made from strong, hardwearing, recycled materials that would require minimal maintenance. The costs, to include installation, delivery and VAT ranged between £1,925 and £2,113.

Cllr. McCormick had received a quote of £2,400 for secondary double glazing units for the Reading Room.

Portfolio Reports:

Planning – There had been no planning applications received.

Cllr. Davidson reported that the signing of the S106 agreement between the Parish Council and NHDC relating to the Wheatsheaf Meadow House Development was being held up due to 2 clauses relating to the proposed village garden. This was being resolved and it was due to be signed in the forthcoming week. £20,000 was being allocated to the Pavilion Project, with a 10 year time limit to spend. As a result, it was noted that the Parish Council had to order a legal embosser at a cost of approx. £80.

Cllr. Davidson was due to meet up with the Project Manager at Wheatsheaf Meadow House to see what might be reclaimed from the site prior to demolition. Possible items could include weatherboarding, cupboards and worktops, windows, awning, 3 benches and some fencing that could be used by the pond.

It was noted that if the work does not start in March it may be delayed for a further year. The Parish Council will meet with the Contractors and ask for timetable of events and will then inform local residents. It is thought that the project will take up to a year to complete.

Young Persons Affairs – there was not much to report, however Cllr. Cockerton mentioned that she had spoken to Mary Webb with regards being able to have use of the Chapel toilet on 29th January. This regrettably was not possible as the water had been turned off.

Environment – Cllr. Alsop reported that notices had been put up around the pond and wagon wash, warning of ice.

He was due to have a P3 meeting with Countryside Management Services in the next week.

The collapsed pavement in Church Lane was cordoned off and had been programmed in for repair imminently. The Clerk to chase this up. **CT**

The land registry work was still to be finalised. **SA**

Police – Cllr. Styles reported that there had been an attempted theft from a motor vehicle in the High Street in mid-December, followed by a similar incident involving theft of vehicle parts. There had been a reported theft of land rollers from a farm in Nuthampstead in January.

Village Emergency Plan – Cllr. Styles asked if there were funds available for the VEP. It was noted that a budget may be available in the next financial year.

Speedwatch – Tony Harris was still waiting for a grant to be approved for purchase of equipment and the volunteers were in the process of being Police vetted.

Grants and Communication – Cllr. Baker reported that the website had received over 10,000 hits in 2010, with 3,000 first time visitors. The most popular download was the Agenda for Parish Council meetings.

The next Bulletin was due out on 1st March, ideas were being formulated for the content.

An entry in the Diary had been made to inform people about the change of dates for Parish Council meetings.

Grants – A decision would be received from NHDC by the end of February regarding the possible grant for the Pavilion Project, however more detailed plans were needed to support the grant application and it was noted that approx. £900 would need to be spent in order to achieve this.

Leisure – A complaint had been received about litter being left on the Rec. after football matches. Cllr. Terry will try and pinpoint which teams may be causing this problem. **AT**

The plumber who had fixed the burst pipe in the Pavilion free of charge had been given 2 bottles of wine as a ‘thank you’ gift. The Parish Council requested the Clerk to write a letter to him with recommendation of his work. **CT**

Cllr. Terry mentioned that Barkway Golf Club was currently offering free Golf lessons for beginner children and ladies. Posters would be put on the village notice boards.

Barkway Forum – 2 ideas were floated: firstly a ‘Reclaim Day’, where people put outside their houses any of their unwanted items for other people to have, secondly, the possibility of organising a Royal Wedding Day celebration in the village on 29th April.

Special Projects – Cllr. McCormick reported that the Reading Room renovation works were now nearly complete and the date of the official re-opening was now set for Saturday 29th January at 2pm. County Councillor Tony Hunter had kindly agreed to conduct the opening ceremony. Invitations were being distributed to the organisations who had contributed towards the refurbishment costs and flyers were to be distributed in the village, some refreshment were to be laid on for this event.

Charles Lee was being asked to fix the new plasterwork that had dried out and cracked. The newly acquired chairs were having their cushions recovered by the Art of Interiors to match the existing sofa.

The door lock was to be changed, as recommended by the Police and a register of key holders was to be compiled.

The Welcome Pack was now being looked at again. A meeting was planned for the following week, which hoped to produce a final copy for approval. It was reported that 2 groups were back to using the Reading Room on a regular basis for their meetings.

Annual Parish Meeting – The date was set for Wednesday 25th May at 8pm in the Village Hall. The Clerk to write to the Estate Manager, Kenneth Grant at Cokenach to see if he would be willing to be our guest speaker. **CT**

The Parish Council Annual General Meeting will be held on Monday 9th May followed by the normal monthly Parish Council meeting.

Finance Report

Quarterly Finance Report to 31st December 2010

Parish Council Account:

The Parish Council bank balance at 31.12.10 was £6,861.43

The Parish Councillors were shown a copy of the accounts at this stage with projected expenditure to the end of the financial year.

An estimated reserve to be carried forward to next year was £1,041.43.

The accounts figures have now been re-sorted into defined Portfolio areas, to allow the Councillors a clearer view of the costs incurred within their areas of responsibility. A copy of this spreadsheet to be e-mailed to each Councillor for their information. **CT**

Finance Report to 17.01.2011

Parish Council Account:

The Parish Council bank balance at 17.01.2011 was £5,774.19

Receipts since the last meeting:

£20.00 – Firework bucket collection

£92.83 – Reading Room A/C for additional small items of equipment

Cheques paid since the last meeting:

£75.00 – Tom Bentley – Street Cleaning x 5 weeks

Payments since last meeting:

£21.00 – Eon - Direct Debit Electricity Pavilion

£10.00 – Veolia – Direct Debit Water Pavilion

Cheques to be signed at this meeting:

£350.00 – Catharine Toms – Clerk's agreed monthly salary

£180.00 – Clerk's agreed office costs Apr 10 – Sept 10 @ £30.00 per month.

£49.91 - Clerk's Expenses – Items for RR, gift Plumber, black sacks, key cut & postage

£21.08 – G Baker expenses – Items for Reading Room

£38.73 – Morgan Fire Protection – Annual maintenance fire extinguishers

£364.00 – NHDC – Annual bill for emptying of dog bins

£15.99 – Jewsons Ltd – Maintenance on Rec.

Reading Room Account:

Bank Balance at 17.01.11 was £375.15

Receipts since the last meeting:

£10.00 – Donation – Website advertising

£30.00 – Donation – Website advertising

Payments since the last meeting:

£92.83 – Transfer to Barkway Parish Council (re: Reading Room items purchased)

£14.00 x 2 - Eon Direct Debit for Electricity

Correspondence:

1. Letter received from Herts CC on consultation re: proposed changes to School Transport Policy. Deadline for responding 26.01.11. Handed to Cllr. Cockerton.
2. Letter received from Herts CC regarding application for a diversion order. Deadline to respond 28.01.11. Handed to Cllr. Alsop.
3. Letter received from Herts CC regarding Rights of Way Improvement Plan. Handed to Cllr. Alsop.
4. Letter received from NHDC regarding potential election costs.
5. Letter received from HAPTC regarding forthcoming training sessions for 2011.
6. E-mail received from The Letchworth Arts and Leisure Group regarding the possibility of having conducted walks in Barkway for their members.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.45pm

Date of next meeting: Monday 14th February in the Reading Room at 7.15pm for 7.30pm start.