

**Minutes of Barkway Parish Council Meeting  
Held in the Reading Room on 14 March 2011 at 7.30pm.**

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

**Apologies:** K McCormick

**Councillor's Declaration of Interest:** None received.

**Minutes:** Approved and signed as read.

**Matters Arising:** Victorian Water Pump – the two possible site locations had been checked. It was decided that the site near Star Instruments would be the better site as this was common land whereas the other location opposite 11 High Street was land belonging to Highways, which would mean they would also have to be involved. It was also agreed that a plaque would be needed.

Red telephone box – to date British Telecom had not been back in contact with the Parish Council regarding the adoption. Cllr. Davidson agreed to chase this up. **RD**

Post Box at the Pavilion – Cllr. Terry to arrange for this to be installed as this was needed in order to gain a postal address code for the site. (A requirement for some on line Grant Applications for the Pavilion and Youth Project.) **AT**

Cllr. Alsop asked if a letter had been written to Mr Walsh regarding parking along Royston Road. Cllr. Davidson informed the Council that this had not been done as we were in contact with Highways, seeking further advice.

The Milestone – it was reported that Mr John Cliff had agreed to finish the refurbishment.

**Public Session:** No one present.

**Council Administration:**

**(i) Freedom of Information** – The Clerk's course had highlighted that a policy should have been in place by Jan 2009. Cllr. Baker had addressed this and copies had been sent out to all Councillors for approval. This was agreed by all and duly adopted.

**(ii) Risk Assessment** – The policy had been reviewed and was adopted.

**(iii) Clerk's and Employee's Contracts** – new regulations from HM Revenue & Customs require that from 6<sup>th</sup> April 2011, the Clerk can no longer be self employed. The Parish Council will now have to register as an Employer and operate a staff payroll to include the Clerk and the Street Cleaner. **CT**

**(iv) Internal Audit Review** – A review of the effectiveness of the procedure had been carried out and Mr Richard Atkins reappointed as the Internal Auditor for the coming year.

**(v) Asset Register** – due to a change in regulations, the Asset Register had to be reworked to show Asset values at their acquisition cost without depreciation.

**(vi) Fidelity Guarantee** – it was agreed that the current level of cover at £2,000 was not sufficient in view of the higher amount of Precept requested for 2011/12. Following a re-negotiation of the Parish Council insurance policy with Zurich, it was reported that the

Fidelity Guarantee cover would now be £100,000 as standard, which was agreed by the Councillors to be more than adequate.

**Election: 5<sup>th</sup> May.** The Election packs had now been received and distributed to all current Parish Councillors. The deadline for submitting these is 4<sup>th</sup> April by 12 noon. Election posters were due to arrive from NHDC which would need to be displayed prominently from Friday 25<sup>th</sup> March.

**Parish Council Surgery:** Due to be held on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> March between 10 and 11am. Cllr. Alsop agreed to be present. **SA**

The next proposed Surgery was to be held in conjunction with the Police Surgery on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> May. Cllr. Terry agreed to be present. **AT**

**Section 106 Projects:** Cllr. Davidson reported that he had heard from Stuart Izzard at NHDC that all proposed projects had been approved. The new bus shelter would be done in conjunction with Highways. The secondary double glazing for the Reading Room, once paid for, the balance of monies allowed here could then go towards the Pavilion Project.

Cllr. Baker had been told by NHDC that Barkway Parish Council was considered to be a truly excellent example of a Council working tirelessly and enthusiastically to benefit as much as possible for their village.

**Fundraising:** Cllr. Davidson reported that tickets were now being sold for Casino Night. It was suggested that a flyer delivered to households might be needed to promote the event further.

Cllr. Terry reported that he had attended a recent Village Hall meeting for the forthcoming Music on the Rec., it had been agreed that the Parish Council could sell glow sticks at the event on 18<sup>th</sup> June to raise money for the Pavilion Project.

The Village Hall had now been booked for 17<sup>th</sup> Sept. for the Quartet Evening. Cllr. Davidson was to finalise the booking with the musicians. **RD**

Cllr. Terry suggested a children's disco / karaoke evening, Cllr. Cockerton was to check with the school to see if it could be combined with the end of summer term event. **JC**

### **Portfolio Reports:**

**Highways** – Cllr. Davidson reported that the massive hole in the High Street had now been fixed. The problem had been due to a drain not being diverted when the gas main had been put in.

Cllr. Davidson had had a meeting with Gary Henning from Highways where a number of issues had been discussed, including the ongoing problems with the drains, which jetting alone was not solving. He was also aware of the continuing problems of the parking on Royston Road and also the impact of what the WSMH development will have on this. It is aimed to put double yellow lines along both sides of the road if the problem manifests. The school markings were also discussed and Gary Henning was to check on progress of this. It was noted that school markings are not enforceable. We are still awaiting the date of the 1<sup>st</sup> of the quarterly meetings proposed by Highways. Cllr. Davidson had written to Rob Smith at HCC with proposals of how the various identified problems in Barkway could be resolved.

**Planning** – A planning application had been received relating to Bond's Garage. The Council fully support this proposal. It was noted that Section S106 monies are likely to be due for allocation from this development.

A Draft Design Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) had been received from NHDC. Cllr. Davidson had found 34 errors on the map, which he requested to be corrected. There were also 2 items that needed correcting in the design statement. The importance of this document is that it will help define how planning will take place from now on.

NHDC had also written to the Clerk for assistance with the Local Development Framework (LDF) consultation. They needed to know our views on the infrastructure of the village. In response to this Cllr. Davidson had produced a 6 page document for their information giving the facts as they currently are.

Wheatsheaf Meadow House (WSMH) – Cllr. Davidson reported that the power had now been turned off. There was concern that the empty building may attract vandalism. The boarding around the building may be erected soon. The building works can now not go ahead until the building is declared free of bats in the autumn. Due to the withdrawal of government grants the number of affordable homes on the site has now dropped from 8 to 4 (3 x 2 bed and 1 x 3 bed homes).

**Young Persons Affairs** – Cllr. Cockerton reported Richmond's Coaches had written to Highways regarding the parking problems in front of the school, hopefully to bring pressure for the school markings to be done.

There is a planned fund raising event for the school on 8/9 July, comprising of bike riding around the Rec.

The children at the school were designing a poster for the Barkway Speedwatch Campaign.

It was noted that Cokenach had recently donated a table tennis table to the Youth Club.

**Environment** – Cllr. Alsop reported that P3 work is to start again. Some steps on FP24 and other works were to be priced up.

There has been no progress regarding saving the wild orchids near the footpath at the bottom of the Rec. Cllr. Alsop had met with Mr Edwards from Abbotsbury Estates, who were not prepared to clear the area. This has also raised an issue about the footpath not following the correct route, as it should go diagonally across the field. It was noted that there was a similar issue about a footpath in Rushing Wells.

**Police** – Cllr. Styles had spoken to PCSO Amy Rainbird. There had been 2 reported attempted break-ins at Bond's Garage. Generally crime levels around the villages were low.

It was noted that the jobs of our local PCSO's were now secure until at least 2012. It was requested that the Clerk should write to Royston Police to express our thanks for the excellent level of support that the PCSO's have given to Barkway. **CT**

Speedwatch – the launch was due to take place on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> March, with the Press, TV, Police and MP Oliver Heald in attendance. The equipment was being borrowed from Royston Police as the grant applied for from Herts in Trust in order to buy the equipment had been rejected. Two units are available to borrow in North Herts. It will however not be as convenient as having our own equipment. Community Development Officer Alan Fleck has indicated that there may be some money available through the Area Grant Scheme but this has now been deferred until June. We have asked for £2,000 but may now only get £1,000. The target is to buy the less expensive equipment which can also be used for conducting traffic surveys. This would be useful as there is currently a lack of data available on traffic speeds in the village and this would give a good indication of the level of problem that exists. It is possible that the Parish Council could fund the £2,550 needed to purchase the equipment through the under spend of this current year. It was

however proposed and agreed that the progress of the group should be monitored over the coming 3 months and if the interest from the volunteers continued and the results of the Speedwatch group activities, as a deterrent to speeding, were still looking good, then the investment in the equipment would be made.

**Grants and Communication** – Cllr. Baker reported that the website was currently being redesigned by Cllr. Davidson to make it better visually.

Barkway Bulletin – delivered to all residents at the end of Feb. Thanks were given to all those that volunteered to help with delivery.

Articles were due to be published in the Diary regarding the Forum and the Casino Night.

Grants – Cllr. Baker reported that Cllr. Davidson and he had made a presentation to the PACIF grant committee at NHDC to support our application. A decision was due to be made by the end of March. Stuart Izzard (CDO) at NHDC has offered to help us complete an application for a grant from WREN, which he thinks may be suitable with regards the Pavilion Project.

**Leisure** – Cllr. Terry reported that the roundabout had been fenced off until the repair can be carried out. A location needed to be decided upon for the new swing.

Music on the Rec. – Cllr. Terry had attended a meeting and advised the Village Hall Committee that notices should be displayed at this event stating that people left property on the Rec. over night at their own risk. The gate into the Rec. however, would be locked at midnight to prevent any vehicular access.

**Special Projects** – it was reported that the Reading Room Book Exchange was due to be back running again and that several volunteers had come forward to help.

## **Finance Report**

### **Parish Council Account:**

The Parish Council bank balance at 14.03.2011 was £5,191.23

Receipts since the last meeting:

£525.00 – Football Fees

£140.00 – Football Fees

£318.49 – VAT reclaimed.

Cheques paid since the last meeting:

£95.00 – SLCC Annual Subs

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:

£75.00 – Tom Bentley – Street Cleaning

£19.14 - Jewson – Maintenance Rec.

£70.00 – C A King – Maint. Grass Cutting 2010, Village Pond & Children's area Rec.

£28.00 – R Davidson Expenses – Keys for Reading Room

£25.99 – G Baker Expenses – Ink cartridge for printing of Bulletin.

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

£180.00 – Catharine Toms – Office running expenses Oct 2010 – Mar 2011 @ £30 pm

£227.15 – Catharine Toms expenses – A5 Printer + paper. Reference books x 2

**Reading Room Account:**

Bank Balance at 14.03.11 was £146.52

Receipts since the last meeting:

£38.61 – COIF Interest Received

£10.00 – Donation – Website advertising

£0.01 – Bank Interest Received

Payments since the last meeting:

£24.00 - Eon Direct Debit for Electricity

Cheque to be signed at this meeting:

£121.74 – Eon – Balance on account to be paid off in order to keep monthly DD low.

The Clerk mentioned that the Parish Council's insurance policy was due for renewal. Quotations had been sought. The result of this was that the premium had been lowered by our current insurers Zurich and more extensive cover was now included. There was still ongoing discussion as further items were needed to be added. **CT**

**Correspondence:**

1. Election Packs received from NHDC
2. Audit Briefing Pack received from BDO External Auditors
3. HMRC – re correct tax and NI treatment relating to Parish Clerks from 06.04.11
4. NHDC – Confirmation of 2011/12 Precept

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.12pm

**Date of next meeting: Monday 11th April in the Reading Room at 7.15pm for 7.30pm start.**