

Minutes of Barkway Parish Council
Held in the Reading Room on 9 October 2007 at 7.30 pm

Present: K McCormick - Chairman
G Penning
A Young
R Atkins
J Cockerton

H Marshall

Apologies received from I Sanders, T Terry, Tony Hunter, S Neilson

Minutes of the last meeting

Councillor Young explained that as no approach had been made to the Council, the item reference the hot air balloonists installing a gas tank should be removed from the last minutes.

Defer signing the last minutes until I Sanders is available to sign as the acting Chairman.

Matters arising

No matters arising from minutes.

Presentation by District Councillor Howard Marshall

A presentation was given by Howard Marshall concerning the possible siting of Traveller sites within our area. This will be in the local press this week. The Government has given all District Councils a requirement to supply/grant space for traveller families to live. Consultants have been looking at areas/locations. Criteria are that they should be near schools, bus service, shop, medical facilities, easy sewerage, electricity and water. The investigation has taken place over the last year and areas have been graded one to three with one being very suitable and three being barely suitable.

There are 45 traveller families to be sited in total which could equate to 15 in each district. All grade three locations and green belt areas are eliminated. This leaves nine locations in North Herts – Whitwell, Ashwell, Kings Walden, Pirton, 2 x Sandon, Reed and 2 x Barkway.

There is an existing site at Codicote that may be interested in expanding by 6-10 families. One pitch will be equal to one family (but this may mean two caravans).

The next sequence of events will be that the East of England Regional Assembly will tell the L.A. how many sites they will have to provide. The "best" sites will then be put forward and will then be open to discussion with the public.

Councillor Marshall stated that he would be happy to do a presentation on the issue, possibly at the Village Hall.

Landowners have been approached by NHDC in writing to see if they will sell the land.

The following points were made by Councillors:-

Councillor Atkins - Most villages do not have ALL the criteria

Councillor McCormick – What criteria have been given to consultants?
Defra have been given the criteria. Is the environment suitable? Not near to housing (although it is not clear what this distance is)

Councillor Young – Would a rural area work for these people where their work is not close by?

There would be an exception to development area such as affordable housing. It may be possible for the travellers to buy the land but if not, the council and council tax payers would have to pay for land and services.

Next Steps – Our next steps must be to calm nerves. We are at a very early stage and we must make sure residents have the same degree of knowledge that we do. A possible presentation to the public would be beneficial to help understanding. A package of information for each household to be put together with a covering letter done by Councillor McCormick and H Marshall.

- Copy Development Policy 16 to all Councillors
- Copy They Work ForYou.com article to all Councillors

Meeting Temporarily Adjourned

Meeting Reconvened

P3 – Parish Map

Councillor Penning reported that there has been a long delay putting the map onto CD. This has now been sent to FP.

3 gates across FP13 are difficult to open & shut – this is the responsibility of the landowner. However as they have recently been installed, the county council will have a look.

Recreation Ground - Rospa

Deferred to next meeting.

Wooden Fence – Arthur King is in agreement that the money raised can be used in another way. He said that we must make sure that people who donated are informed as to what the money has been used for. A bench would be fine.

Youth Extension – There is a potential problem with the police raising objections to places where youths can loiter. Councillor McCormick to speak to PC Marina.

Milestone Cleaning

Liz Martin (North Herts) has said to go ahead with this. Use lime based paint. Fired Earth paint recommended by Councillor McCormick. Councillor Penning to report back to John Cliff requesting an action plan.

Royston Road Mail Box

We have not heard back from the Post Office. To be chased on Sue's return.

Dog Bin

Awaiting re-installation.

Bus Shelter Tiles

Councillor McCormick to speak to Arthur King and advise.

Duck Crossing

Awaiting signs. It was noted that it would be better to have a 20mph zone past the school.

Planning

34 High Street

Councillor Penning declared an interest and is concerned re the parking not being very well planned and which may lead to extra cars parking on the High Street.

Councillor Young said it will not fit in very well with the rest of the neighboring properties.

Councillor Atkins was concerned with the raised roof being a problem and on the new plans there is no fire escape shown.

Councillor Atkins to write letter reference the aesthetics of the building not being in keeping with the High Street. Also to phone and register our strong objections (due to postal strike) on behalf of Parish Council.

Tally Ho Extension

Councillors Atkins, Young, Terry, Cockerton in favour of this application. Councillor Atkins to inform planning of no objections.

CORRESPONDENCE

Items were placed in the box for perusal by the Councillors.

Reference letter from Earls Wood Cottage concerning the installation of a telephone line – there are no objections to this. A letter needs to be done to BT. To be completed on Sue's return.

FINANCE

The following cheques were approved and signed:

G Bentley Street Cleaning Chq No 101309 £60.00

Councillor Cockerton to pass cheque to Mr. Bentley

We need to get an electric meter reading from the pavilion as the bill, which is estimated, seems disproportionately high.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- Councillor Young voiced concerns over Highfield Farm. This property has an agricultural planning permission but the new building currently under construction appears to resemble a house. We must go through Planning Enforcement to voice our concerns. Letter to Enforcement Officer to be done by K McCormick and S Neilson.
- Councillor Atkins reported that the village website will be up and running in a couple of weeks when he has got a new processor.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.53pm

Signed
K McCormick, Chairman

Next meeting date: 13th November 2007.