

**Minutes of Barkway Parish Council Meeting
Held in the Reading Room on 13 October 2009.**

Present: K McCormick (Chair)
G Penning
J Cockerton
V Styles
A Terry

Apologies: R Davidson (Vice Chair)

Minutes: Approved and signed as read.

Matters Arising:

There were no matters arising.

Rural Policing Report: PC Paul Mariner and PCSO Chris Brabrook sent their apologies and will now be attending the next meeting on 10th Nov. to give their report.

Cllr. Vince Styles had nothing to report.

Cllr. Graham Penning reported on the following:

The Walks Leaflet Project is complete after a year's work. Copies have been sent out to 250 households with a compliments slip in the Diary. The Tally Ho, the Church and both local Libraries have copies of the leaflets to hand out. Countryside Management Service have also retained a stock.

A grant of £600 has been received from NHDC for 3 metal walkway signs, which will be positioned on Buckland Road, Stockbank and Gas Lane.

It was noted that footpath 23 was overgrown (Church End to the Tunnel), the clerk (CT) to write to Cokenach requesting that it be cut.

There is one free allotment in Gas Lane. The school and Julie Styles have shown an interest. There is apparently no queue and no foreseeable demand at present, although Parish Plan did indicate that people may be interested. Query – land behind Windmill Close for potential allotments, if this land is not allocated in forthcoming planning (North Herts Homes).

Chairman McCormick reported on the following:

An e-mail has been received advising of a meeting at Letchworth with Nick Wright on 25th Nov. to discuss the initial planning concept for the pieces of land owned by North Herts Homes including Wheatsheaf. A presence there by Parish Councillors is needed.

Cllr. Jo Cockerton reported on the following:

School: All children who participated in the cycling proficiency passed and received a certificate from PCSO Chris Brabrook. Recent school outings include Cambridge Folk Museum and Wodson Park. Harvest Festival was well supported at the church followed by a coffee morning at the school in aid of Macmillan.

Future events:

Auction of Promises 17th Oct.

Youth Speaks Event 11th Nov.

FOBS AGM 19th Nov. at the school

Open Afternoon 11th Dec. 2.15 – 3.15pm

Panto Visit 14th Dec.

Xmas Performance 17th Dec. 6.30pm or 10am for rehearsal.

Playgroup: Playgroup keen to do catering again at Bonfire Night and would like to obtain a licence to sell mulled wine.

Playgroup AGM – Weds. 14th Oct @ 7.30pm in the Reading Room.

Cllr. Tony Terry reported on the following:

Dog mess is a major problem in the village. More signs will be put up. A notice to be put in the Diary aimed at irresponsible dog owners.

Roundabout in Rec. underneath to be concreted and re-tiled.

Excess rubbish becoming a problem in Rec. A wheelie bin to be obtained and stored in the Pavilion between waste collections. Clerk to arrange this. **(CT)**

There is a need to rethink the running of the Pavilion / Football Pitches as they are not covering their costs. John Penny who currently organises the use of the football pitches will be retiring at end of the season. Cllr. Terry has become more involved and will talk to John Penny to see how problems can be resolved. Cllr. Cockerton to talk to Hornead Hares. **(JC)**

Reading Room now inundated with books – more shelves are coming. Many books have been donated by one person, letter of thanks to be sent. Cllr. Styles to provide Clerk with details. **(VS/CT)**. Book Exchange is picking up. Plan to open one Sunday afternoon for those who have not yet had opportunity to visit.

Parish Plan

It is understood that the Treasurer has resigned. Gordon Baker has offered to help with questionnaire to help bring the Plan back on track.

Reading Room

This can be used for local meetings, etc. provided the room is left as it was found. Parish Council cannot accept payments for hire but donations are acceptable to help cover costs of heating, etc.

List of key holders needs to be compiled. Regular volunteers are allowed a key.

Handrails for access – English Heritage approval needed.

Request for more painted pictures for display on the walls – Cllr. Cockerton to ask the school. (JC)

It was suggested that the Village Hall could be asked to store the excess grey plastic chairs currently stacked against one wall.

Fireplace is not in workable condition. Other heaters not working. New form of heating required.

Possibility of having internet access in Reading Room was discussed.

Co-option of New Councillor

Two people have expressed an interest. Steve Alsop and Gordon Baker. These enquiries have been acknowledged. The Clerk to organise a meeting with all Councillors present where the two candidates can be interviewed, followed by a vote, as there is only one vacancy. (CT)

Adoption of New Code of Conduct

To be sorted out at next meeting.

Fireworks Nov. 5th 6pm

Arthur King building bonfire. Cllr. Terry obtaining fireworks from Tapps, as last year (AT), in addition – sparklers will be handed out **to adults** for the children (health and safety). Better publicity required to improve turnout and enhance bucket collection. Team required to pick up debris the following morning. Cllr. Terry to ask Peter Sinclair about possibility of lights for the footpath again (AT). Parish Council happy for Playgroup to provide food and drink from Pavilion.

Insurance / Mud Humps

To insure the mud humps will cost £420 in additional premium. It would also require a safety inspection. It was decided that it was too much money involved for the Parish Council to invest in this project but Cllr. Cockerton will investigate fund raising with parents to pay for this facility. (JC)

Website

Continues to be working well.

Planning

No objections were raised to current plans.

Letter to be written to Richard Tiffin's Dept at North Herts. (KM/CT)

Finance

The Clerk is still continuing to liaise with Barclays to sort out the Bank Mandates. The Community Bank Accounts allow for 3 signatories in total. Cheques being signed by any 2 out of 3 authorised signatories.

Further queries had been raised by Auditors BDO Stoy Hayward following the submission of the Council's Annual Return for the year ended 31.03.09. The Council Minute Reference was incorrect. This has now been altered to read '89' as per the Minutes Book. The answer to question 9 in Section 2 of the Return should have read N/A rather than 'Yes'. The Council have agreed to these changes and the Annual Return was re-submitted to the Auditors. The Audit is now complete and we have had Notice of Completion of Audit from the Auditors and the both this and the Annual Return are on display for the required 14 day period. The Parish Council has approved and accepted the Annual Return. Issues arising from the Audit were discussed. More care to be taken with the referencing the Minutes. The level of Fidelity Guarantee Cover was reviewed and it was decided that the current level of cover of £2000 was considered sufficient for the risk involved. This will be reviewed annually.

Grass Cutting – Clerk to write to current supplier advising that all future payments will be made by cheque, on production of an invoice. Grass cutting on the Rec. next year will be put out for tender in early 2010. (CT)

Receipts since last meeting:

Half Year Precept from NHDC - £5815.00

Barkway Village Hall (reimbursement re: VAT Music on the Rec) - £202.17

Payments since last meeting:

Tom Bentley – Street Cleaning 8 weeks - £120.00

T Drake, Grass cutting Rec + White Lining - £390.00

Woolmer Fitzpatrick – Walks Leaflets - £1328.25

Cheques approved and signed at the meeting:

Cllr. Davidson expenses – Simon Newick (erection of notice board) - £50.00

Catharine Toms – Clerks agreed monthly salary - £287.00

Catharine Toms – Clerks expenses (stationery, etc.) - £61.03

Jewson Ltd – Parish Council Mail Box - £20.13

BDO Stoy Haward – Audit Fee - £224.25

Tom Bentley – Street Cleaning 5 weeks - £75.00

Transfer of funds to Reading Room A/C - £500.00

Lexis Nexis – Local Council Administration Handbook - £72.45

Chairman McCormick thanked the Clerk on behalf of the Council for all her efforts in the handling of this new role.

AOB:

Chairman McCormick announced that for personal reasons he plans to step down at the December meeting. He will remain a Councillor until the next scheduled election.

Chairman McCormick noted that he would be proposing Vice Chairman Davidson as Chairman at the December meeting.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.15pm

Date of next meeting: 10th November 2009, in the Reading Room 7 for 7.30pm