### BARLING MAGNA PARISH COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL,** held Thursday, 8th November 2018 in the Barling Magna Parish Hall, Barling Magna, Essex, commencing at 7pm.

Present: Councillors Ashdown, Bond, Cohen (Chairman), Gardiner, McKillop, Pearmain and Steptoe (Vice-Chairman).

Apologies: Councillors Clark and Edmunds.

James Duddridge MP; District Councillor Efde; G. Gates.

Attending: County and District Councillor Steptoe, District Councillors Lucas-Gill, Mcpherson and Williams; I. King (Parish Clerk)

**MINUTES**

* 1. **The Chairman to declare the meeting open.**

1. The Chairman declared the meeting open at 7pm.
   1. **To receive apologies for absence.**
2. Apologies for absence were noted, as recorded above.
   1. **To receive Declarations of Interest in accordance with the Council’s Code of Conduct and with section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.**
3. Councillor Cohen declared an interest in item 18.192a.
4. Councillor Steptoe declared an interest in any matter relating to the District or County Councils and, in any planning matter, he reserved the right to change his mind when the matter was considered by the District Council. In his report on the recent Flood Forum (18.189 d), he declared an interest as a property-owner affected by work on a local watercourse.
   1. **To sign as a correct record the Minutes of the Extraordinary Council Meeting held on 25th October 2018**
5. Proposed by Councillor Cohen, seconded by Councillor McKillop that the minutes be approved. For 7, against 0, abstained 0.
   1. **The meeting will stand adjourned to permit Parishioners of Barling Magna to address the Council**
6. No residents were present on this occasion.
   1. **To receive a report from the District and County Councillors for the area**
7. District Councillor Mcpherson congratulated the parish on its successful quiz night in October. She had been impressed by the publicity for the Photography Competition and Barling in Bloom and she commended the Parish Council for arranging these activities. She had volunteered to assist with Barling in Bloom. She and Councillor Steptoe would be making a visit to Little Wakering House to talk to residents. She asked County Councillor Steptoe if he planned to raise the proposed traffic arrangements arising from the Barrow Hall Road development with the Deputy Leader of the County Council; Councillor Steptoe confirmed that he would do so.
8. District Councillor Lucas-Gill informed the meeting that the District Council faced a sizeable shortfall in income in financial year 2019-20, up to £1.8 million, owing to changes in central government funding for local authorities. The District Council would need to respond with some significant changes to spending. He was involved in the District’s Asset Review and Development Programme which would investigate some options. He would report back when the situation was clearer.
9. County Councillor Steptoe had attended a coastal protection briefing, including aspects relating to the Thames Estuary and the River Roach. The County Council also faced a reduction in income next year, in the region of £58 million. Councillor Steptoe had briefed the Parish Council previously on the A127 Economic Corridor Initiative, in which all the affected MPs had now shown interest. He would shortly have a meeting with the Deputy Leader of the County Council and would raise the matter of why there had been no highways report available to the District Development Committee on the outline planning application for the Rosedene Nurseries site.
10. District Councillor Steptoe briefed members on a recent Flood Forum. He enquired if his reports to the Parish Council addressed issues relevant to members and residents. He would welcome some indication of alternative or additional topics.
11. District Councillor Williams commended the Parish Council’s Chairman who had spoken at the Development Committee considering the Rosedene application, which it had subsequently refused. The Chairman’s 5-minute address had been a model of concise argument which had drawn applause from members of the committee and residents.
12. Councillor Pearmain asked County Councillor Steptoe to verify a report on a recent BBC Look East programme, claiming that the A127 would be redesignated as a motorway from the M25 junction through to Southend. Councillor Steptoe said that while the redesignation of the A127 as a trunk road was a long-term possibility, there was no truth to the motorway claim.
    1. **Parish Hall – to report progress and take any necessary action**
13. Progress with kitchen and bathroom works. The clerk reported that the works would commence the next day and be completed by the end of November.
14. Update on lettings and marketing and marketing. Most current bookings were at weekends. There had been several pony parties during half-term. Gillian Gates and Ivan King continued to market the hall through posters, leaflets, adverts in the GWCA Newsletter and by word of mouth. Lettings income for the year to date were close to the current annual target.
15. Periodic review of hire conditions and rates. Copies of the approved standard hire terms and conditions were tabled and members were invited to contact the clerk with comments and suggestions for improvement. It was confirmed that there was room for flexibility on charges to suit special cases although the Council would not routinely offer a discount to registered charities as hire rates were thought to be reasonable. The Committee Room could be hired out if the staff were convinced of the suitability of the client and subject to adequate safeguards for key documents and equipment. The clerk was exploring the use of a card reader to avoid dependence upon cash and cheques for deposits.
16. PA system. It was agreed that the present system lacked capacity. The clerk was asked to explore the costs of an installed PA system for the parish hall including, if possible, an induction loop system for hearing impaired people.
17. Fire precautions, servicing of extinguishers and the kitchen hatch. The fire extinguishers had been serviced in the past month. The clerk was due to carry out the annual Hall Fire Risk Survey, which would be reported to the Council. Emergency Lighting was routinely inspected by the hall manager. Councillors Pearmain and Cohen were given delegated authority to act on the Council’s decision to install a fire proof shutter on the hatch into the kitchen (minute 18.176dii). Councillor Pearmain had kindly agreed to fit the shutter.
18. Electricity and gas contract – the clerk reported that, under delegated authority, he had agreed an advantageous fixed rate for both gas and electricity with E.on for the parish hall, for the year to 15 November 2019.
19. Vandalism to the parish hall bus shelter. The vandalism was persisting and, in such a prominent position, detracted from the attractiveness of the parish hall site. The most recent quote for a substantial overhaul and renewal was £2,600. Subject to funds the Council wished to replace the shelter but might need to make-do-and-mend in the current year. Councillor Bond would seek some current quotations for this. Councillor Pearmain offered to move the existing dummy camera from the corner of the parish hall to the bus shelter; the clerk would affix a warning notice.
20. The new parish noticeboard had been installed and members agree that it looked good. The Clerk was grateful for assistance with transport and installation.
    1. **Matters arising from the recent meeting with representatives of the District Council, to include**
21. Special constable for the parish (minute 18.182d). The clerk has contacted Great Wakering Parish Council but they were, as yet, undecided on whether to take up the option of 16 hours’ extra police time in the parish per month at an annual cost of £1,000. Proposed by Councillor Steptoe, seconded by Councillor Cohen that a formal proposal be made to Great Wakering PC to share equally the costs of a special constable. For 7; against 0, abstained 0.
22. Parish Council election on 2 May 2019 and the division of Barling Magna into two wards (minute 18.182e) Councillor Steptoe briefed members on changes arising from a Boundary Commission report which would result in Barling Magna Parish Council have 9 seats: 4 from a new Barling Ward and 5 from a new Little Wakering Ward.
    1. **Financial matters – to consider**
23. Payment requests for November 2018. The clerk reported that the cheque authorised to Mrs Dobson for Christmas Hampers would not now be presented. Instead, Council would be asked to reimburse the Chairman and Mrs C. Steptoe for expenditure. In addition to the following circulated schedule of payments he sought authorisation to reimburse Mrs Steptoe for £240.25. Proposed by Councillor Ashdown, seconded by Councillor Gardiner that the scheduled payments, as well as the payment to Mrs Steptoe be approved. For 7, against 0, abstained 0.



1. Owing to continued delays in receiving Co-op Bank Deposit account statements, it was not possible to offer a bank reconciliation for this meeting. Co-op Bank had now promised to resume the supply of statements. The clerk reported that, following the approved scheduled payments above the Council’s bank balance stood at £39,963.
2. Review of Direct Debit and Standing Order payments. A report had been circulated to members. Proposed by Councillor Pearmain, seconded by Councillor Steptoe that the report be approved as satisfactory. For 7, against 0, abstained 0.
3. A first draft budget for 2019-20 would be presented to Finance Committee on 19th November. The Clerk recommended that the Council avoid all but the most necessary expenditure for the remainder of the current year.

**18.193 Events and projects – to report progress and agree any action**

1. Outcome of the recent quiz night and any action required. £905 had been raised for the Parish Hall charity. The evening had been enjoyable and had resulted in some interest in the council’s events.
2. Christmas events update / hampers / Citizen of the Year. Councillor Cohen reported in steps taken by her and Mrs Steptoe, under the guidance of Mrs Dobson. Mrs Steptoe was thanked for her efforts. Publicity for the Citizen of the Year competition was on noticeboards, in the GWCA newsletter and on the website. Flyers had been distributed at the quiz night.
3. Wildlife Reserve water installation – update and to approve the funding agreement (circulated by email). It was now understood that officers of Rochford District Council had confirmed that it would not be necessary to seek planning approval. The clerk would ensure that the planners received a detailed report of where the installation had taken place in due course. Southend-on-Sea Borough Council (the freeholder), which had previously deferred authority in the matter to Rochford District Council (head leaseholder), had subsequently contacted the clerk with a checklist of actions. It was unanimously agreed to reply upon the documentary evidence of all affected parties’ permission to proceed. Tenders from potential contractors would be opened after the November Finance Committee.
4. Future projects: It was agreed that it would be best to build up slowly to a full-scale Barling in Bloom series of events in 2 years’ time. Councillor Bond had planted some new bulbs near the village sign and along the verge of the hall. Discussion of a possible Easter Egg Hunt would need to take account of safety issues raised at the Council meeting on 11th October.
5. Discover Rochford 2020 events. The tourism forum had yielded several interesting options for events and these would now be explored further, with a report back to Parish Councils in due course.

**18.194 Planning Matters - to consider any action required, including the following**

1. There were no new applications received since the last meeting.
2. ESS/09/15/ROC/1/1 – Landfill site. The approval for 40,000 m3 of soil to restore land to the north of Mucking Hall Road would probably make this suitable for grazing. There had been no reply of substance from Great Wakering PC about the possibility of a joint working party on the future of the landfill site and haul road. It was agreed to renew the suggestion following the May elections.

**18.195 Clerk’s report**

1. The Clerk reported that he expected to have a meeting with officers of the District Council about The Parry early in December. He had met Councillor Clark that day and recovered paperwork concerning the Play Area proposals, which he would pass to Councillor Ashdown. He had also been briefed on progress so far with the new website, which would now have to be taken on by someone else.
2. The Clerk reported that he had responded to a Freedom of Information request seeking disclosure of the tenders for the currently operating grounds maintenance contract. He had taken advice from EALC before responding with all information in the public domain that was relevant to the enquiry. The unsuccessful tenders were no longer retained. On the Council’s behalf, the Clerk had declined to release the internal detail of the successful tender as this was likely to be covered by the qualified exemption under s43 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Members of the Council endorsed his actions.
3. To report on recent correspondence. The Clerk reported that a resident had asked why the Council had not displayed more poppies ahead of the forthcoming Remembrance Day and centenary of the 1918 Armistice. There were several poppies around the village for Remembrance including one on the village sign (for which Cllr Mcpherson was thanked) and displayed on several councillors' homes. In Barling all but a couple of street lighting poles were owned by UK Power Networks. The organisers of the poppy display had been advised that they would need to gain the permission of UKPN to affix poppies on them. Several councillors noted the impact of the Remembrance silhouettes of soldiers now placed around the District.

**18.196 Reports from external bodies**

1. EALC strategic questionnaire (circulated by email 29.10.18). The Chairman went through the headings of the survey and members were broadly supportive of EALC’s existing strategic priorities. Both Chairman and Clerk confirmed how helpful they had found the advice service run by the Association. Members would value more training to take place closer to home than Great Dunmow. It was agreed that the Chairman and Clerk would complete the questionnaire on the Council’s behalf.
   1. **At the Chairman’s discretion to exchange information and items for future meetings:**
2. Finance Committee (budget preparation) to be held Monday, 19th November.
3. Wildlife Reserve Committee – Tuesday 4th December
4. Full Council – Thursday, 13th December
5. Councillor Steptoe gave provisional apologies for the December Full Council meeting (subject to Development Committee that evening) and Councillor Ashdown gave apologies for the 17th January Full Council.
6. Councillor Steptoe reminded the Council about the availability of crowd funding through Essex County Council.
7. Councillor Pearmain suggested that the Parish Council explore the provision of first-aid training at the hall. The Clerk would report back.

**The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.20pm.**

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