

**MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF BARLEY PARISH COUNCIL
HELD AT THE TOWN HOUSE ON MONDAY 6th NOVEMBER 2017**

1. Present

Cllr Jerry Carlisle, Cllr Ian Turner, Cllr Yvonne Lee, Cllr Peter McPartland, Cllr Mel Chamblings, Cllr Bill Sterland, Cllr Gerald Morris, County Cllr Fiona Hill, Cllr Tony Hunter, Mrs Laura Childs (Clerk), Mr Tim Martin (RFO)

2 members of the public

Mr Graham Clark, Mr Brian Haughey

2. Apologies

None

3. Councillor's declaration of interest

There were no declarations of interest made.

4. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 2nd October 2017 were read and approved.

Proposed by Cllr Chamblings and seconded by Cllr Sterland.

The minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 15th October 2017 were read and approved.

Proposed by Cllr Turner and seconded by Cllr Chamblings.

5. Matters arising

Mr Graham Clark, who acts as police liaison on behalf of the Parish Council, reported on his most recent meeting with Sgt Guy Westwood. The increase in Fly Tipping around the village was discussed and whilst this is ultimately a District Council responsibility Sgt Westwood advised that if anyone were to witness Fly Tipping in progress then they should call 999 and take down any number plates if it is safe to do so and report these to the Police. He additionally advised that if the Fly Tipping is a danger to motorists or pedestrians by obstructing the highway they should also be called, otherwise this is a Council issue and the responsible people, the "Enforcement Officers" Jane Lombardi her contact details JANE.BETHELL-LOMBARDI@NORTH-HERTS.GOV.UK. Mr Clark requested that where possible increased road checks are undertaken especially at night. Sgt Westwood advised me that this is on their list of actions, also the PCSO's will do additional checks.

Sgt Westwood advised that speed checks are still a priority and further checks were undertaken by Specials on Tuesday 31st October. This was part of a village speed check program by Hitchin Specials.

Discussions took place regarding a camera box sited in Lower Stonden, Henlow Camp, on the Shefford to Hitchin Road. This is a box without a camera, but all the necessary road markings are in place and for all intents and purposes it looks like a camera set up. Sgt Westwood had made enquiries with Traffic Management for Hertford and was advised that there are no dummy boxes available and this is not a scheme they run. If the Parish Council were interested in setting up such a dummy box then Sgt Westwood advised that they should make their own enquiries however he confirmed that the Police would have no objections to such a set up in the village, subject to Highways agreement to install. The Clerk was asked to make enquiries to Lower Stonden Parish Council.

Mr Clark left the meeting at 8.15pm

Following the recent drain clearance works undertaken to the drains at the bottom of the High Street, close to the Doctors Surgery, Cllr Carlisle has spoken to Mr Derek Jerrard, of Ringsways, Herts County Council Highways contractors, who hasn't yet received any written report however he understood that the drains were now shown to be running clear however there are blockages in the ditches that take the surface water outfall from the road drains. Mr Jarrard advised that it is the responsibility of the individual property owners who border the ditches to ensure that these are kept clear. Mr Brian Haughey reported that he had seen the gully guzzler on three separate occasions so it was fair to say they had a thorough 'go' at clearing them.

Cllr Carlisle advised that the regular gully clearance of the other drains around the village had not yet taken place but this was expected to take place before Christmas. A full list of the gullies and grips in the village has recently been compiled so it is hoped that all of them will get cleared this time.

Cllr Carlisle asked Cllr Tony Hunter to investigate the 'ownership' of the trees on Bankside to enable the responsible party to cut them. Cllr Carlisle requested that some pressure is applied to this situation to bring this matter to a conclusion.

Discussions took place regarding possible grants available to assist with the improvement and cutting back of footpaths around the village. The Clerk was asked to contact Herts County Council Rights of Way officer Julia Clarke.

Cllr Carlisle agreed to speak with Mr Tony West of the British Legion and find out what level of renovation they would like to be done to the War Memorial. Cllr Turner agreed to liaise with Messrs Richmonds who had agreed to arrange for the Memorial to be pressure washed ahead of the Remembrance Service.

6. Planning

Case ref: 17/02530/1 – Full Planning Permission: One detached 4 bedroom dwelling with detached double garage and new access off Pudding Lane. Land to rear of Hilltop, Pudding Lane, Barley.

This application was discussed and it was unanimously agreed to respond as follows:

Barley Parish Council objects to this application and in arriving at their decision wish the District Council to take the following comments into account:

The site of the proposed development forms part of the garden of an existing residential property. The whole of that property including the site of the proposed development lies outside the main area of the village (village envelope) of the Barley Selected Village Policy Area of the current 1996 NHDC Local Plan and the Barley Selected Village Policy Area of the Preferred Options Draft Local Plan approved by NHDC in September 2016 and which, following a final public consultation, was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for examination on 9th June 2017. The proposed development is therefore contrary to both the provisions of Policy 7 of the current Local Plan (Selected Villages Beyond the Green Belt) and its replacement policy in the proposed new plan. It should therefore be refused.

The 1996 Local Plan states that the Council will not normally grant planning permission for development proposals outside the defined areas (village envelope) of Selected Villages unless the exceptions of Policy 6 apply. However in our view the proposal does not comply with any part of that policy either and should be refused accordingly.

The site falls within Landscape Conservation Area LC2 of Policy 12 of the current Plan and in respect of which we consider the proposal to be contrary to both paragraphs (i) and (ii) of Policy 12 which generally requires proposal to add to the character of North Herts landscapes. The proposed development would not in any way comply with this requirement and should be refused. Although not actually within the Barley Conservation Area the site immediately adjoins it and in particular Visual Area 5. The access road, Pudding Lane, is wholly within the Conservation Area up to the edge of the site. The extent of the proposed development will have an adverse impact on the quality and character of the area. The proposal is for a two storey thatched house which because of the elevated nature of the site compared to the land and properties to the north of the site and the high roof line of the proposal will in our view compromise the Conservation Area and the Landscape Area adversely impacting on the visual quality of the site and its surroundings. The form and scale of development does not give sufficient regards to its immediate environs and the adjoining properties.

Access to the site is very poor. Pudding Lane is a long narrow single track, un-adopted private road, which is a dead end leading nowhere other than to the very few (7no.) properties it currently serves and where there are no passing places. Although the surface of Pudding Lane has recently improved it remains in our view most unsuitable to accommodate the additional vehicular traffic that would result if this proposal were to be approved. It is already wholly unsuitable to commercial vehicles much larger than a transit van or flatbed and we understand that NHDC household waste refuse lorries are no longer allowed to use Pudding Lane. Emergency vehicles such as fire engines or even ambulances would struggle to reach the site. The proposal refers to 4 additional car spaces. This with the additional vehicular movements consequent upon the recent planning permission for the redevelopment of the builders yard opposite the entrance to this site will lead to an increase of in excess of 50% in vehicle movements along virtually the whole length of Pudding Lane. This is in our view a highly unsatisfactory situation for such a narrow road where there is virtually no scope to increase its width and hence capacity. The junction of Pudding Lane with Church End has extremely restricted visibility being completely 'blind' to the north-east due to a substantial brick retaining wall obscuring the view. The increase in vehicular traffic resulting from this proposal both during and post development would place an unacceptable burden not only on Pudding Lane itself but would also compromise the safety of the many users of Church End including the school and village shop and post office.

We note that there is no Design & Access Statement to support the application which we consider regrettable and the application refers to pre-application advice dated 25th August 2017 which merely states "Submit Planning Application". This suggests that a new additional dwelling on the site – in the garden of the existing property was acceptable in principle despite the factors outlined above and in particular the policy issues. If this is a correct assumption we find that to be a most unsatisfactory situation when the proposed new NHDC Local Plan and the existing plan clearly provide that permission should be refused.

The previous application ref no. 16/01211/1 for this site was we understand withdrawn by the applicant. That application was for a bungalow in the same general position as the current application. We commented adversely about the design of that proposal. This application proposes a two storey thatched dwelling with windows to the first floor of the north elevation. Because of the elevated position of this site compared with the land and buildings to the north we consider that major overlooking issues will arise in respect of existing properties to the north.

Taking all these factors into account we ask that NHDC refuse this application.

7. Town House

In the absence of Mr Nick Shaw, Chairman of the Town House Management Committee, Mr Tim Martin advised the meeting that the document setting out the operating requirements of the Barley Town House Management Committee has been reviewed and slightly revised. For the benefit of those councillors who had only recently been appointed the role of the trustee and the management committee's responsibilities were discussed. The next meeting date for the management committee is set for 20th November and everyone was encouraged to attend.

8. Financial Officers Report & Signing of Payments

Mr Martin reported that the following payments are now due:-

Parish Council

Mrs Laura Childs	Clerk fees (October) and office expenses	£ 354.00
Mr Tim Martin	RFO (October)	£ 163.20
Mr Jeff Booth	Grass cutting (September)	£ 205.00
Steward Bullard	Grass cutting of the Plaistow (7 cuts)	£ 630.00
Hardcastle Burton	Payroll services	£ 111.00
HAPTC	New councillor training for Cllr Sterland	£ 40.00

It was agreed that all these payments should be made
Proposed by Cllr Turner and seconded by Cllr Sterland

Town House

Mrs Alison Stacey	Letting Officer fee (September)	£ 220.50
Mrs Alison Stacey	Letting Officer fee (October)	£ 75.50
Mrs Carole Robinson	Cleaning (October)	£ 92.25
Mrs Vanessa Martin`	Caretaking (October)	£ 50.00
Mr Ian Turner	Sound system cables	£ 44.89

It was agreed that all of these payments should be made
Proposed by Cllr Cllr Sterland and seconded by Cllr Lee

Wedding deposit cheque returned to Chloe Harrison at £150.00

Mr Martin has circulated via email details of the cover listed in the new insurance documents, it was agreed that cover for terrorism should be added to the new policy and with that inclusion he could instruct the brokers to go ahead.

Mr Martin confirmed that Cllr McPartland has agreed to take over the internal financial audit of the Parish Council accounts, previously undertaken by Mrs Georgina Northen. Mr Martin has sent copies of the accounts and bank statements to Cllr McPartland for him to review.

The bank statements and balances of accounts were distributed and reviewed.

9. Speeding

Mr Brian Haughey has previously distributed via email information on the new ANPR system that he has been investigating. Any information gathered from this camera would have to be handed over to the Police or to the Police Crime Commissioners (PCC) office to be followed up by them. The biggest advantage with this new system is to target repeat offenders and extreme cases, so for instance anyone travelling over 50mph. This system would only work with the cooperation of the police and therefore Cllr Carlisle asked if County Cllr Fiona Hill could perhaps speak to Mr David Lloyd, the Police Crime Commissioner, and ask if he would support this type of 'self help' ANPR system. County Cllr Hill agreed to try to set up a meeting with the PCC and representatives from the Parish Council.

Cllr Lee asked about the other items that may help with reducing speeds such as renewing the rumble strips, buffer zones, improving line painting etc. Mr Haughey explained the importance of trying to increase consistency with these sort of speed reducing measures through the various villages.

10. Recreation Ground

Cllr Turner reported that there remains a gate access on to the Plaistow from a house along Bankside. Cllr Carlisle recalled that the Parish Council had previously written to this house and asked the Clerk to look back in our correspondence.

Cllr Carlisle and Cllr Lee have met with the tennis club to discuss their proposal to erect a shelter at the edge of the tennis court to provide a refuge for players during inclement weather. The proposals were presented to the rest of the Councillors and following discussion it was agreed that there were no objections to a temporary structure of the type demonstrated being constructed.

Discussions took place regarding the proposed permanent changing rooms, Cllr Lee suggested that we should perhaps pursue the costing for this new building to see if this was indeed a viable proposition and how it might be funded.

11. Website

Cllr McPartland advised that the new website went 'live' on 18th October and has been well received. The cost had come in well within the expected budget set and Cllr Carlisle extended the Parish Council's grateful thanks to Clare McPartland for all her endeavours on our behalf in setting up the website. Mr Haughey requested a page on the new website for Speeding issues and Cllr McPartland agreed to look into the possibility of adding this.

12. Fox & Hounds

Cllr McPartland reported that there appeared to have been no progress made on the sale since our last meeting and that the estate agent who is handling the sale of the property would only commit to a comment that the 'sale was imminent'. The purchaser is unknown at this time.

Mr Martin confirmed that the Plunkett Foundation had agreed that they could pay monies owed into the Parish Council bank account.

13. Scout Hut

Cllr Carlisle reported that he had spoken to Messrs Curwins, the lawyers acting on behalf of the Parish Council today, who have confirmed that the lease is being taken in the name of the Scout Association but that they will not accept responsibility for the local Scout group, who will be the actual users of the building. The local Scout Group do not have any lawyers acting on their behalf and it is proving very difficult to get a satisfactory resolution to the issue.

14. Lock Up

Cllr Lee advised the meeting that she hasn't yet formally accepted the contract of works because of the need to ensure compliance with CDM requirements. However because of the size of the contract we are able to pass this responsibility back to the contractor, Between Times and upon receipt of their confirmation that they are willing to accept this responsibility, which is expected shortly the contract can proceed.

15. Health & Safety

Cllr Chamings reported that Janine Drew of Drew & Baltrap has sent through some revised documents, and she has distributed Lone Worker and DSE work station checklists to Mr Martin and Mrs Childs for completion.

16. Correspondence

All correspondence received is to be distributed amongst the councillors.

17. Any Other Business

Cllr Turner advised that he will shortly be attending a show committee meeting. Cllr Carlisle asked if Cllr Turner could request a meeting with a representative of the committee and Mr Jack Shephard to discuss the marquees and their and the Parish Councils responsibilities. Mr Martin asked if it is possible to see their accounts to see if they have enough funds to cover the insurance or repairs of the marquee. Cllr Chamings also asked that we ensure they are using the checklist that Drew & Baltrap produced in terms of Health & Safety.

County Cllr Hill advised that the possible merging of some of the schools in Royston is going out for consultation.

Cllr Lee spoke about some large dislodged branches that are hanging precariously in the trees that over hang the footpath that runs from Pudding Lane through to Smiths End Lane at the back of the gardens at Crossways. These trees belong to Mr David Phipps and the Clerk was asked to write to him to request that he attends to them.

The Clerk was asked to contact the Parish Paths Partnership to find out if they are able to assist with the repair / replacement of a number of finger boards that are damaged for missing around the village, one at the end of Smiths End Lane and the other at the entrance to Fremans Lane in Shaftenhoe End.

Next meeting date 4th December 2017

Meeting finished 22:45pm