



**Barley Parish Council meeting: 4th March 2024 at 8pm,  
Town House, Church End, Barley.**

### **Meeting Minutes**

#### **PRESENT**

1.1 Cllr Brian Haughey (Chair), Cllr Jerry Carlisle (Vice Chair) Cllr Alan Cayford, Cllr Ali Hearn, Cllr David King, Cllr Ian Turner, County Cllr Fiona Hill, District Cllr Gerald Morris, Parish Clerk Alice Robertson, RFO Lynn Brett

#### **IN ATTENDANCE**

5 members of the public.

#### **1. Apologies**

1.1 Cllr Fiona Hill arrived late due to a Town Council Meeting. Nick Shaw sent his apologies.

#### **2. Declarations of Interest**

2.1 No declarations of interest were made.

#### **3. Minutes**

3.1 The minutes of the Barley Parish Council meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2024 were approved as a true and accurate record of proceedings. Proposed Cllr Cayford, Seconded Cllr Carlisle.

#### **4. Public Participation**

4.1 No items raised.

#### **5. Planning**

5.1 **Ref: 23/02948/FP – Full Planning Permission:** Terrace of three 3-bed dwellings including creation of vehicular access off Picknage Road, parking and landscaping. Land North of 2 Millers Close, Picknage Road, Barley, Hertfordshire, 2024.

Barley Parish Council (BPC) considered this application at its meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2024, and unanimously resolved as follows;

Barley Parish Council objects to this planning application and asks North Herts Council in arriving at their decision to take the following comments into account;

- It is noted that the application is predicated on pre-application advice dated 11<sup>th</sup> April 2021 and planning policies, or lack of them, in place at that time. Since then, the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 was adopted in November 2022. It is our view that this application should therefore be considered having regard to the new Local Plan and its various policies and not the position in April 2021.
- It is also noted that the application site lies within the Barley Conservation Area (BCA) and that Barley is identified as a Category 'A' village where general development will be permitted within the defined village boundary. While the application site lies within the defined village boundary for Barley, the site was originally put forward as suitable for development as part of the Local Plan Review but was rejected by NHC along with most others put forward for the village at that time.

- Under the new Local Plan there are no sites allocated for residential development in Barley beyond those where planning permission has already been granted, e.g. Draytons Garage site on the High Street where 10 new houses are under construction, and Butterfields - behind the Doctors surgery where 8 new houses have recently been built. Addressing the applicant's assertion in both the Heritage Statement and the Design and Access Statement that the village has seen relatively little modern development limited to Crossways, Westfield, Greenbury Close, and occasional individual buildings, we would reiterate observations made by another objector that this statement is untrue and completely misleading in the applicants attempting to justify this development. Namely, in addition to the schemes already mentioned above there have been;
  - 2 schemes on land owned by the applicant comprising some 15 units in Church End, the High Street, and King Edgars Yard.
  - Pudding Lane – 3 units.
  - Land at Fox & Hounds – 2 units.
  - Land to the rear of The Forge, Church End – 3 units.
  - Land to the rear of Fox Acres, High St – 2 units.

That totals some 43 units excluding individual plots that represents an increase of some 22% in the number of dwellings in Barley over recent years. Barley is not an urban conurbation; it is a small rural village.

- The site is currently used for grazing and has been for many years. The applicant's statement in the planning application that it has not been used for over 5 years, is just not true. Cattle have been grazed on the site as recently as 2023 before being moved to winter quarters. The site has been in constant use for grazing for at the very least, 40 years.
- The application is also incorrect in a number of other respects;
  - The plans for the proposed development purport to show a Water Main along one side of the site. This is not a Water Main. It is in-fact the Main Foul Sewer serving the majority of the village.
  - The plans also ignore/do not show, the Highway Surface Water Drainage pipework which is located under the grass verge running the length of the frontage of the site. This particular Highway Surface Water is not the Highway Surface Water drainage serving Picknage Road, but rather the Highway Surface Water discharging from an open ditch the other side of No's 1 & 2 Millers Close, which adjoin the site, and this water is discharged from the High Street into the open ditch. This is the principal cause of the flooding referred to in the various objections to this application from residents on Picknage Road.
  - With reference to the proposed plans accompanying the application we would make the following observations:
    - i. Inadequate on-site turning provision is made for the 9 parking spaces – 6 dedicated and 3 visitor spaces.
    - ii. The entry/exit arrangements shown for waste and emergency vehicles cannot be achieved without those vehicles passing over or overhanging the pavement on the opposite side of the road as demonstrated by the tracking shown on the plans. With the cars and other vehicles that are often parked on Picknage Road these manoeuvres cannot be achieved at all.
    - iii. There are no footpaths or other pedestrian access arrangements shown on the plans for the new access.

- Picknape Road has a 30mph speed limit. However as with the rest of the village this speed limit is regularly exceeded with many vehicles recently recorded exceeding 40-50mph in this actual location. The road is quite narrow and is a 'B' road with buses and heavy articulated vehicles also using it. The proposed development will add an estimated additional 15-25 daily vehicle movements to and from the site adding to the already seriously problematic and accident-prone junctions at either end of Picknape Road, but particularly with the High Street/Cambridge Road/Royston Road junction.
- The application site lies within the BCA, where the characteristics of the BCA were captured very well in recent planning appeal decisions (appeals refused) where the inspectors commented on the overall degree of openness within the BCA and indeed concluded that such openness is a defining part of the significance of the BCA. Decisions regarding development proposals within the BCA should take into account the desirability of maintaining an area's prevailing character and setting. The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not prevail where the harm of a development outweighs the benefits. In this case the proposals constitute a change of use from open grazing fields (agriculture), of which this site forms part, to residential use. The development of the site for the proposed scheme is not, by any stretch of the imagination, an enhancement or improvement to the character of the BCA. These open fields which have never in living memory been used for anything other than open grazing are together with the area around the recreation ground known collectively as The Plaistow, are the heart of the open character of the BCA. Contrary to the assertions of the application of both the Heritage Statement and Design and Access Statement, this site does in our view contribute to the quality, character and amenity of the BCA. Visually it is physically connected to and forms part of, the central open space of the village being viewed in conjunction with the adjoining paddocks and allotments, and whilst it may be screened in part by hedges and an open ditch, the perception is still one of openness and is also read as such in the streetscape to Picknape Road.

The applicant states that the design of the scheme 'represents high quality sustainable design' that 'respects and enhances local architecture.....in setting, size and form'. In our view there is nothing about the design that would enhance the BCA, it is uninspiring with proposed materials totally at odds with the BCA. The Housing Association properties on the opposite side of the road facing the proposed development may not be architectural wonders but that is no justification for similarly poor design on this site.

- The application together with the Design and Access Statements and Heritage Statement refer quite extensively to external lighting. By and large Barley does not have any street lighting and the village generally remains opposed to its introduction. Any proposals for this development to introduce such lighting, even external 'local' lighting, should be resisted.
- We note that comments from North Herts Council's Ecologist raise some concerns about the proposals which would require to be addressed should the scheme ultimately progress.

For all the above reasons Barley Parish Council consider that this application should be refused, and we urge North Herts Council to do so.

We are also aware that as of the date of our meeting (4<sup>th</sup> March 2024), all other comments received by you from village residents object to this application and we hope that you will also take these comments into account.

**5.2 Ref: 24/00126/LBC Listed Building Consent: Internal alterations under ref: 20/01751/LBC granted 15.04.2021**

**CLlr Carlisle advised this is a** repeat application for consent already received previously with no changes. The Council agreed there were no objections.

## 6. Finance RFO report

6.1. To consider and approve payments for the Council.

### Barley Parish Council

#### EXPENSES

<b>Payee</b>	<b>Amount</b>	
Alice Robertson	£712.22	Clerk Feb 24
Lynn Brett	£866.00	RFO Pay
Fowler Fencing	£7,080.00	Fencing for Plaistow
Stewart Bullard	£120.00	Cutting back TH Carpark
<b>TOTAL BPC for approval</b>	<b><u>£8,778.22</u></b>	

#### **For Information**

HAPTC	£417.83	pre-approved awaiting invoice April 2024
Peninsula	£223.45	Paid via DD
<b>TOTAL BPC for information</b>	<b><u>£641.28</u></b>	<b>PAID/PREVIOUSLY</b>

#### INCOMES

	<b>Year to Date</b>	
VAT refund	£2,048.73	
Club Room	£11,073.11	Rent & Ins BBP
NHDC precept	£29,400.00	Final precept
CTRS Grant	£586.19	
CDA Grant		
Other incomes	£275.00	Allotments
Donation from Barley Show	£3,500.00	Re Marquee
Donation from HCC	£400.00	Salt Bins
<b>TOTAL BPC Incomes</b>	<b><u>£47,283.03</u></b>	

#### Bank Balances Held

	<b>Balance</b>
<b>Barley Parish Council</b>	
Main	£34,577.92
Savings	£0.00
TH Sinking Fund	£13,742.24
<b>TOTAL BPC Banks</b>	<b><u>£48,320.16</u></b>

#### Other Sections

Barley Show Profit	£1,004.06
<b>Barley Show</b>	<b><u>£12,820.98</u></b>
<b>Barley Tennis Club</b>	<b><u>£13,019.60</u></b>

<b>Precept Requested 23/24</b>	£29,400.00
CTRS	£586.19
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>£29,986.19</u></b>

Proposer Cllr Carlisle, Seconder Cllr Cayford

**6.2** To consider and approve payments for The Town House Charity (as Sole Trustee)

**Barley Town House Charity**

**EXPENSES**

Payee	Amount	For
Nick Shaw	459.19	Jan & Feb Expenses
<b>TOTAL TH for approval</b>	<b><u>£459.19</u></b>	<b>TO APPROVE FOR PAYMENT</b>

**For Information**

PNET	£25.99	paid by DD
NHDC		paid by DD (none Feb/march)
Octopus	£274.10	Electricity supply DD monthly charge
Octopus		Electricity supply DD Est £865 outstanding
Everflow Ltd	£40.55	Water supply DD
<b>TOTAL TH for Information</b>	<b><u>£340.64</u></b>	<b>PAID/PREVIOUSLY APPROVED</b>

**INCOMES**

**Year to Date**

Town House YTD	£23,416.61
<b>TOTAL TH Incomes</b>	<b><u>£23,416.61</u></b>

**Bank Balances Held**

**Balance**

**Barley Town House**

Main	£33,341.26
Deposits	£3,410.00
Savings	£5,903.94
	<b><u>£42,655.20</u></b>

**Deposits**

Opening balance	£2,580.00
Received	£1,030.00
Refunded	-£200.00
Trf to main ac	
Closing Balance	<b><u>£3,410.00</u></b>

Proposer Cllr Turner & Cllr King

**6.3** The RFO Lynn Brett presented the Financial Risk Assessment for approval. Cllr Carlisle advised a few amendments were required. The Council agreed the proposed amendments and the Financial Risk Assessment was agreed accordingly.

**6.4** The RFO presented a revised budget following comments made by the Internal Auditor that it was not clear that it was a balanced budget. The Council agreed that the amended budget appeared to address this issue and the Council resolved that the revised budget is approved for 2024/2025. This does not affect the requested Precept. Proposer Cllr King, Seconder Cllr Turner.

## **7. Reports from County/District Councillors**

### **7.1 To receive a report from County Cllr Hill**

Cllr Hill reported that the Annual HAPTC/County Council/County Councillors' Virtual Meeting is scheduled to take place on 5<sup>th</sup> March at 5.30pm.

Barley Highway Action Plan has been updated and returned.

Cllr Hill advised that the maintenance responsibility for the two VAS units is being investigated.

Cambridge Road – gully outfall broken – investigation scheduled for 24/25.

Cllr Hill thanked the Clerk for the Locality Budget application for £150, for the delivery and installation of the new bench for the Plaistow and advised the funding would come in May, if not possible before.

HCC's Integrated Plan (Budget), £1.1bn (excluding DSG), was agreed at full council on 13<sup>th</sup> Feb. The 4.99% increase includes 2% for Adult Social Care. More details of how this is broken down can be found here:

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/about-the-council/freedom-of-information-and-council-data/open-data-statistics-about-hertfordshire/what-we-spend-and-how-we-spend-it/integrated-plan/integrated-plan.aspx>.

Libraries – Keep an eye out for new activities.

Cllr Hill is working with the NHS and other stakeholders to establish improved services for residents in Royston and the villages.

Cllr Hill will follow up on the request for a bus shelter on London Road near Richmond's.

### **7.2 To receive a report from Cllr Gerald Morris**

Cllr Morris reported that a 4 day working week proposal for North Herts Council is no longer on the agenda and will not be going ahead.

Requirements for ensuring that there is a Biodiversity net gain of 10% improvement for planning applications became law on 12<sup>th</sup> Feb 2024.

He advised that Area Forum Grants and Hertfordshire Community Foundation are worth investigating for funding projects in the community in the future.

Road sweeping happened today and the sweeper was seen. Also Cllr Turner reported some work was being carried out on drains at the top end of London Road.

The Clerk advised the Council that Affinity Water have been installing water meters in the village along Church End this past week.

Cllr Morris was also requested to see if he could source some street cleaning plastic bags for future litter picks.

## **8. Reports from Working Parties, Committees and Portfolio Holders**

### **8.1 Town House Charity**

In Nick Shaw's absence, Cllr Cayford advised they have had companies in to quote for an electronic fob /code operated entrance pad to the main entrance door. They are also looking at quotes to replace the other TH locks to the doors at the front to ensure future security of the building.

Cllr Cayford confirmed all weekly Health and Safety checks had been carried out.

### **8.2 Plaistow & Green Areas**

#### **8.2.1 Report on Playground**

Cllr Cayford carried out weekly checks on the Plaistow and reports received. He advised the two tables in the playground were showing signs of wear on the tops and one of the seat and suggested re-proofing them. Both sets of steps leading into the tennis courts have been covered with twigs and leaves recently which could cause a trip hazard. The Clerk to notify Rebecca Sims on The Tennis Court Committee. It was also noted that there are two large tyres that need disposing. Cllr Haughey to look into this with Cllr Cayford.

#### **8.2.2 Bench Mapping for the probation Service**

Cllr Cayford has confirmed 21 need tops flipping and some others more work is required. The Clerk will liaise with the Probation Service to see what services they can provide to help complete this project now we know the requirements for the benches around the village that need attention.

## **9. Clerks Report**

- 9.1** The council agreed to adopt the new Equal Opportunities policy previously sent round. Clerk to action and upload to the website.
- 9.2** The Clerk will also draft a new safeguarding and bullying policy for approval.
- 9.3** The Clerk has written to the Drayton's Developer asking them to confirm what arrangements they propose for the maintenance of the open ditch to the side of the development where highway surface water discharges once the development is finished. Cllr Carlisle will view the site rubbish collected following a member of the public's recent complaint that maintenance of the ditch is currently poor.
- 9.4** The Clerk has emailed NH Planning Department regarding the two Victorian properties on the Drayton's site fronting High Street following a number of comments from the public about the replacement roof tiles and the plastic windows that have been installed where no planning application has been submitted. The properties are within the Barley Conservation Area.
- 9.5** A meeting with Peninsula's Area Manager has taken place and they are due to review and upload the correct Health and Safety documentation we need in place in the coming weeks.
- 9.6** The Tennis Club agreement is ongoing; we are still waiting on a response from the Tennis Club Committee. Cllr Turner agreed to follow up.
- 9.7** The Gardening Club confirmed they will be planting a flowering cherry in September in memory of Mel Chammings. The Parish Council will need to source another Silver Birch to replace the dead sapling and agreed to delay this until September also.
- 9.8** A quote to mend the allotment Fence gate post that came down in the recent wind has been received. The Clerk to source two others.

## **10. Date of next Barley Parish meeting and items for the agenda**

The date of next Parish Council Meeting which will be 15th April 2024 commencing at 8pm.

**Contact:** **Alice Robertson, Clerk to Barley Parish Council**  
**[Barley.parishclerk@gmail.com](mailto:Barley.parishclerk@gmail.com)**