

BARKHAM PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of the Extraordinary meeting of the Barkham Parish Council held on 16th December 2009
in Barkham Village Hall at 8.00 p.m.

Present: Mrs P. Stubbs (in the Chair), Mr F. A. Scott, Dr. R. Loader, Mr L. Heath, Mr. S. Goldring, Mr. D. Oxbrough, Mr. C. Heyliger, Mr G. Burges, Mrs C. Dando, numerous members of the public and the Clerk.

Apologies: None

Declarations of Interests None

The Council agreed to alter the order of the agenda to allow the adjournment to take place after the discussion around the purchase of the shelter but before any vote.

09/383 To discuss the purchase of a shelter for The Junipers open space and agree a design.

The Chairman opened the meeting with an explanation of why this Extraordinary Meeting had been called at short, though legal notice. She explained that after a meeting with Nigel Shaw (Head of Youth Services at WBC), Alan Tiplady (Parish Liaison Officer at WBC), Nick Christo (Playbuilders Scheme WBC) she was advised that to meet the timescale that WBC were being told to follow, unless BPC came to a decision before 1st January 2010 then the funds allocated to build a youth shelter on The Junipers open space, under the YOF would be lost. They explained that an order would need to be placed with a manufacturer in very early January to stop the YOF funds being lost. The meeting also included a discussion on the suitability of the Monsterplay Shelter that had been proposed by BPC, to fit in with any design proposal liable to come from the Playbuilders Scheme. It was agreed that the current metal shelter design was not out of keeping with a likely Playbuilders Scheme since recent schemes had moved away from the original natural wood designs and more towards the metal designs like the one suggested by BPC.

A general discussion took place around the design and timing of the Playbuilders Scheme implementation at the Junipers open space but it was explained that BPC had received no commitment from WBC as to exactly when the consultation would start or when construction would take place, but it would be in January at the very earliest.

To address concerns that some residents had about potential anti-social behaviour, the Police representatives were asked to comment on how this would be handled. They explained that this could be addressed by both proactively talking to any youngsters about what was and was not acceptable behaviour and if problems did occur then it could also be addressed through a new scheme that gave volunteers a confidential telephone number to ring on a Friday or Saturday evening. At all other times the public could ring the normal 0845 number. There were also a number of other measures available to them to deal with any persistent trouble makers.

Questions were raised over who was paying for, who owned, who was responsible and who would maintain the shelter. It was reiterated that WBC would be paying for and would own the shelter. They would also be responsible for constructing it and maintaining it including any liability since it is on WBC land. However BPC would pay WBC for the maintenance element. It was also clarified that under this arrangement if the shelter became a particular problem then BPC would not have authority to have it removed since they do not own it, but could make representations to WBC.

A question was raised over a comment made by the Chairman at the Public Meeting to remove the shelter if anti social behaviour became a problem. This was answered by the Chairman who explained that BPC would not own or have responsibility for the shelter so this unformalised commitment could not be delivered on, if the problem arose. BPC could if necessary make a request to WBC if it was considered that the situation was serious enough but that it would be a decision for WBC themselves rather than BPC.

After a general discussion recapping some of the concerns and merits of constructing the shelter the meeting was adjourned in order that any members of the public could address the Council on any matters of concern or support relating to the shelter.

The meeting was reconvened and the Chairman commented on several remarks relating to the statement published on the BVRA website. It was explained that Mr Carter had volunteered to Chair a public consultation but he was aware that he had no legal role in the decision making process but that he would make his summary report available on the website. The Chairman explained that Mr Carter had read the draft statement to her over the phone and she had made some comments on its contents but that this did not and indeed could not constitute a joint statement from Mr Carter on behalf of the BVRA and the Parish Council. Commitments on behalf of the Parish Council can only be made at a quorate meeting of the Parish Council or one of its committees, called with at least three clear days notice, held in a place to which the press and public had access, where the topic had appeared on the published agenda. This had not happened in this case and there was not, and never had been, an agreement as set out in the BVRA statement.

It was decided to have two votes, one for the purchase of the shelter and the other around which design should be ordered. It was explained to the Councillors that the exact design must form part of the order to the manufacturer.

The first motion was: To agree in principle to WBC's purchase of a shelter for the Junipers open space.

Votes in favour 8, votes against 1 and no abstentions. The motion was carried by majority.

Before the second vote a discussion took place over concerns about the current proposed shelter design from Monsterplay, including the built in solar light and radio. It was explained that lighting the shelter from the inside would not affect local residents and had been a Police recommendation, equally any music would be set at a level that could barely be heard outside of the shelter. The current recommendation had been the result of a great deal of research by ex-Councillors Newman and Postlethwaite, including looking at a large number of designs, visiting ten existing shelters, discussing their designs with the Parishes that had installed them, the Police and several manufacturers. This is why it had been agreed as the BPC recommendation in the 13th May 2008 meeting. Concern was expressed that despite the short time lines this process was starting again from scratch. It was agreed that a small group could look at other potential designs but that it must unanimously agree a design to propose to WBC before the 30th December 2009. If agreement could not be reached by this group then by default the Monsterplay Shelter YS001cps design that had already been approved by BPC would be ordered.

The second motion was: To create an advisory group consisting of 3 Parish Councillors, 3 residents and 2 young people to look at alternative suitable designs to the current BPC proposal. If unanimous agreement could be reached on an alternative design in time to communicate it to WBC before 30th December 2009, then this would form the BPC proposal to WBC. If agreement could not be reached in time then the proposal would default to the original BPC proposal.

Votes in favour 9. The motion was carried unanimously.

It was agreed that Louise Morris, would represent WBC Youth Services but have a nonvoting role. Also that Mr Rowe would represent the BVRA, in a nonvoting role, in addition to advertise on the BVRA website for a cross section of residents for the advisory group. It was agreed that Councillors Dando, Burges and Oxbrough would represent BPC and that Katie Sams and Charlotte Pich who secured the funds from YOF should represent the young people of Barkham on the advisory group.

It was proposed that Katie and Charlotte should have a formal vote of thanks for their initiative and hard work in both securing the funds and making the shelter a reality. Clerk to communicate this vote of thanks. A vote of thanks was also conveyed to the Chairman for her hard work in driving this project to a conclusion.

Meeting closed at 9.20 p.m. .

Next meeting of full Council will be held on 12th January 2010 at 8 p.m.