

BARKHAM PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of meeting of the Barkham Parish Council held on 11th May 2010
in Barkham Village Hall at 8.00 p.m.

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

Apologies: Dr. R. Loader (attending a NALC Meeting)

Declarations of Interests

None

10/457 **Minutes** of meeting held on 13th April 2010 were approved and signed as a true record.

Meeting adjourned in order that any members of the public could address the Council on any matters or concerns relating to Barkham

10/458 Election of Chairman

Proposed: Mr Postlethwaite

Seconded: Mr Heyliger

Mrs Stubbs was duly elected as Chairman.

Unanimously.

10/459 Election of Vice Chairman

Proposed: Mr Scott

Seconded: Mr Burges

Mr. L. Heath was duly elected as Vice-Chairman.

Unanimously.

10/460 Appointment of Representatives

All appointments by unanimous vote

Barkham Village Hall Management Committee - Mr. Oxbrough

District Parish Liaison Conference - Dr. Loader and Mrs Stubbs

BALC - Dr. Loader and Mrs Stubbs

WDALC - Dr. Loader and Mrs Stubbs

Parish Planning Control - Mr. F.A. Scott, Mr. S. Goldring, Mr. C. Heyliger, Mr. L. Heath,

Mr F. Postlethwaite and Mr G. Burges

Finance Committee - Mr Goldring, Mrs. P. Stubbs and Mr. C. Heyliger

Parish Footpaths - Mr. D. Oxbrough, Mr. L. Heath and Mr. C. Heyliger

Trustees for Barkham Charity Trust - Mr. Clark, Mrs Stubbs. Dr. Firth, Rev Bickersteth and Mr. C.

Barrows.

Neighbourhood Action Group - Mr. Newman, Mr. D. Carter (BVRA) and Mr. D. Hogg

Area Youth Committee - Mr F. Postlethwaite and Mr G. Burges

Veteran Tree Project - Mrs J. Firth, Dr Loader, Mr J. Shepherd

10/461 Report from the Villages Youth Project Worker

Louise was unable to attend the meeting and had not sent a report. Mrs Stubbs updated the Council on the Playbuilder scheme. A meeting was held on 27th April with WBC Officers which included Allan Tiplady, Jane Stevens, Louse Morris, Mrs Stubbs and the Clerk. The plan is to erect a gazebo/marquee to house a display at The Junipers in order that residents can view the plans, submit ideas and see what has been installed at other sites. The date suggested is 6th June from 11.00 - 1.00 p.m. unfortunately this will be before the BVRA Newsletter can be distributed therefore BPC will do a leaflet drop to those residents on Elizabeth Park, Barkham Road, Bearwood Road, Sandy Lane, Limmer Close. The area suggested for this equipment to be sited is the overgrown area behind the existing playground as this land has natural contours, it is not too low and therefore not liable to flood and will not be in the way of the goal post. There will be a four week consultation period. This project will be Borough led with the installation taking place at the end of September.

10/462 Planning

The planning issues of importance which were referred to the full Council were:-

F/2009/1947 & F/2009/1701 Barkham Manor Farm, Barkham Road
Proposed erection of agricultural buildings, both planning applications have been refused. Jenifer Jackson (Development Manager at WBC) has now advised that since the refusal WBC have had a meeting with the applicant to explore voluntary compliance with the plans submitted for the agricultural determination, which is in accordance with the Council's adopted enforcement procedure. She states that this would appear to be a reasonable possibility and is therefore being pursued currently. Mr Steepe has now informed BPC that on 29th April 2010 WBC received notification of an appeal against the Council's decision to refuse the application(s) on the site.

F/2009/1701	Land rear of Barkham Manor Farm Retrospective application for the erection of 2 farm buildings (units 2 and 4) and change of use of Unit 4 to B2 (slaughterhouse).	Appeal Lodged with the Planning Inspectorate
F/2009/1947	Barkham Manor Farm, Barkham Road Proposed erection of two agricultural buildings (part retrospective).	Appeal Lodged with the Planning Inspectorate

Clerk to write one letter to the Planning Inspector covering both appeals. This will explain why both appeals must be considered as a whole. The four buildings which have been constructed should never have been split into 2 planning applications, this is an attempt by the applicant to breach the conditions of the determination of "agricultural permitted development" granted in February 2006. Letter to be circulated to councillors for consideration (deadline is 2nd June).

F/2008/0172 Coppid Hill House, Barkham Road
In respect of the Dismissed Appeal for the extension of the garden, to date the fence still has not been moved back and the land returned to agricultural/equestrian use. Jenifer Jackson (Development Manager at WBC) has advised that the site adjacent to Coppid Hill House may have other matters which require investigation and she will have to ask the Enforcement Officer to visit the site again in the next week or so. An enforcement notice was served and non-compliance with the notice could result in prosecution, this will have to be considered in line with the Council's enforcement policy (paragraph 4). It may be that evidence has to be collected in accordance with the Police and Criminal Evidence Act. Ms Jackson will ask John Steepe the Enforcement Officer to update us following his site visit. Clerk to ask Mr Steepe for an update before our next planning meeting on 25th May.

10/463 Core Strategy - Mr Heath

Mr Heath reported that he had sent a response to WBC regarding the **Arborfield SDL Environmental Impact Assessment – Scoping Report SO/2010/0611.**

The main comments were:

- It covers only part, not all, of the SDL area, it is therefore an unrealistic assessment of environmental impacts. The excluded area includes the 1,500 pupil secondary school, one primary school and the employment land.
- It contains significant variations from the Master Plan (including the Arborfield Garrison SDL SPD) even before these documents have been finalised and adopted. This at the very least confuses the picture and gives the impression of riding roughshod over local communities.
- It contains many factual errors and statements of dubious veracity.
- There is great reliance on out of date data.

In view of these shortcomings, we believe that the developer should withdraw this document. A revised scoping report covering the whole SDL should be submitted once the Master Plan documents are adopted by WBC. In the meantime BPC expects the developer to address important issues such as pollution of the land by chemicals waste products and ammunition, traffic and noise levels. These should be surveyed as a matter of urgency, and specific mitigating action should be proposed. BPC expect WBC in due course to enforce the appropriate mitigating actions.

Response was also sent Draft scoping report for Sustainability of Managing Development Delivery DPD.

The problem with this paper, and indeed many similar papers is that they are full of fine words but it is highly questionable whether WBC can in practice deliver much of what is suggested. Remarkably WBC bravely answers "Yes" to the question whether the MDD DPD can deliver a whole series of sustainability objectives. That is just wishful thinking! In practice there will be major forces at play including the national and regional economic conditions, Government economic, environmental and social policies, public attitudes, developers' requirements, funding from Government, the Borough itself, developers and the private sector. The Borough can make a difference with the right policies and management, but it is in no position to deliver many, if any, of these objectives.

Southern Parishes – Two meetings have been held, Mr Heath and Mr Burges attended the first one but were unable to attend the second. General thrust is that there are signs that WBC will cave in to developer demands rather than risk any planning appeals. It is therefore considered imperative that the Ward Councillors should give greater scrutiny to the proposals presented by the officers and not nod them through without proper examination. Crucially the Master Plan documents are supposed to be adopted on 25th May 2010. The intention was to write a letter to ward councillors highlighting key issues.

- Transport and Traffic – is provision adequate?
- Floods and drainage – are safeguards adequate, including water retention measures?
- Sewage – is a plan for upgrade in place?
- Phasing – will 750 limit be enforced until such time as bypass complete?
- Costings/Developer Contributions – are these adequate?

If these points have not been properly addressed, then the documents must not be adopted.

Professional Support

It was suggested that the Southern Parishes should contribute towards employing a planning consultant to assess the strength of our case. It was suggested that it might be possible to make a legal challenge. This does not seem a wise course of action, not least on grounds of potential cost but also because judicial review will only consider whether the correct procedures have been followed, not whether the proposals are sensible. However, it might be of some value to get a view on how far we can push WBC on some of the crucial issues. The proposal was an initial budget of £500 plus £500 contingency, weighted by size of parish. BPC ought therefore to be a smaller amount. It is not clear where this proposal currently lies but BPC councillors did not support this idea.

Mr Heath also drew councillors attention to the proposal to build a LIDL Store at the junction of Molly Millars Lane and Fishponds Road, the area of the proposed store would be 1300 sq meters. Councillors had mixed opinions, traffic congestion would be an issue at this junction especially at morning and evening rush hours when this area is already very congested. The proposed store at the Garrison site has been passed by the Inspector as being 4,500 sq meters which Sainsbury will take. It was suggested that LIDL might like to open a store at the Garrison site in competition to Sainsbury's to give residents a choice of where to shop.

10/464 Highways

The Clerk wrote to the Highways Officer at WBC regarding the fence which was erected outside The Gables, Barkham Street, this has been refused planning permission, BPC considered that the fence was actually encroaching on to the public highway. WBC have replied stating that Dave Rixon, the highway inspector will keep an eye on what is going on but at present he feels there is no encroachment into the highway. Clerk to invite Mr Rixon to our next meeting on 8th June to explain to BPC how this fence is not encroaching on to the pavement as clearly it would be impossible for a wheelchair to pass along this section.

Reply received from Craig McCrindle the Tree and Landscape Officer at WBC regarding the Scots Pine tree at the junction of Sandy Lane and Barkham Road, this tree has now been inspected and the results are:

The tree's rooting area shows no signs of disturbance or instability in the tree. The trunk is free from cavities and shows no sign of decay or disease being present. The crown has suffered from snapped branches as a result of the recent snowy conditions, which has been witnessed throughout the Borough on other Scots Pines. As a result there are several branches with large tear wounds that need to be removed and several further smaller dead branches higher up in the canopy. The remaining canopy displays healthy well distributed growth. The following works were ordered: Prune damaged branches back to an appropriate growth point (beyond the tears.) and remove all other deadwood. This work was given a priority 2 rating (to be completed in 3 months) and should be finished by mid-June.

The bus shelter roof at The Bull has now been repaired, the joints have been resealed and painted, Mr Oxbrough will test the shelter next time it rains. BPC to pay for the repair.

It was noted that in the recent bus shelter guidelines which were circulated, the new bus shelter at Langley Common Road fails to meet these guidelines as it will be situated on a bend and the pavement is not deep enough. Clerk to point this out to WBC stating that it will interfere with the sight lines and if an accident should occur then BPC will not be responsible for any damage to either persons or property.

It was noted that the hedge along Langley Common Road has at last been trimmed, ideally this should have been done earlier in the year so as not to disturb the nesting birds and their young.

The junction of Commonfield Lane and Barkham Street needs the vegetation cutting back as sight lines are being obscured. Clerk to report to WBC

The pavement opposite The Bull has been cleared and is now 18 inches wider with the removal of the soil and weeds which had encroached on to the path. The gutters and drains have still not been cleared, this has been ongoing for 3 months, Clerk to report this to WBC.

There are currently two water leaks, one outside 43 Bearwood Road and the other outside 364 Barkham Road, Clerk to report to WBC.

10/465 Litter

There is a lot of litter along Commonfield Lane, this requires clearing. Clerk to report to WBC.

10/466 A Village Plan – Dr Loader

As Dr Loader was unable to be present, this item will be added to the next agenda for the meeting in June.

10/467 Finance

Broker Network Ltd. – annual insurance premium	235	£1003.41
Barkham Village Hall – rent January – April	236	£84.00
A.J. Harland – audit fee	237	£217.38 (£185.00 exc VAT)
Neat Ideas – ink cartridges & paper	238	£140.93 (£119.94 exc VAT)

Standing Order for Clerk's salary for May	£589.43
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Standing Order to Royal Bor. Windsor – Pension Fund for Clerk for month of May (Employee & employer contribution)	£135.26
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To date 898 books have been sold, an income of £4691.24, thus leaving 102 unsold, and the Council is now in credit to the amount of £725.57.

Copies of the accounts for the year ended 31.3.10 had been circulated to all councillors, two copies of the accounts were signed by the Chairman and the Clerk as the Responsible Financial Officer.

The Clerk reported that Mr. Harland the Internal Auditor had audited the accounts and everything was in order. He commented about risk assessment. The Clerk noted that the Council needed to minute formally the discussion regarding risk assessments that had taken place earlier in the year, when the insurance renewal was being considered. The Council's annual return included that the Council had considered its risk assessment policies and processes, and further guidance on the ways which risks were identified and then managed was provided in the Practitioners' Guide to the new audit process. It was acknowledged that the Council's annual budget was small and that the Council did not have any public facilities. Most of its expenditure was on administration and enabling grants to community organisations, and income other than precept, interest and the VAT refund was minimal. Overall risk levels were considered low.

The Practitioners' Guide indicated three areas for managing risks:

1. **Using Insurance** – the Council was required to have the mandatory insurance cover for public, employer and similar liabilities, and the other principal risk to be covered was property damage to street furniture and office equipment. Insurance had therefore been effected for these areas. Fidelity insurance was considered not to be necessary as cash handling was minimal and procedures for approving expenditure and signing cheques were considered strong.
2. **Working with third parties** – this was not appropriate for the Council.
3. **Self-management of risks** – the Council considered the internal controls in place, notably the approval of all payments by the Council; the accounting systems maintained by the Clerk; the budgetary review process; and the annual review by internal audit. The Council considered that existing controls and procedures were appropriate for the annual expenditure levels.

Risk management arrangements were therefore considered appropriate.

10/468 Borough Councillor's Report

Mrs Stubbs reported that with the recent election she did not have any news from the Borough but continued to assist residents with their problems.

10/469 Communication Strategy – Dr Loader

As Dr Loader was unable to be present, this item will be added to the next agenda for the meeting in June.

10/470 Correspondence

- a. WBC Request For Discussion Topic Suggestions for 2010 Wokingham Borough Town and Parish Conference to be held on 27th October. Suggestions to be submitted by 1st June 2010. Suggestions from BPC are:
 - Planning Enforcement
 - Improved communication between Officers at WBC and the Parish Councils
 - Highway Development - the roads are all in very bad repair generally and the issue of the continued congestion at the level crossing never seems to be addressed.
 - Provision of allotments throughout the Borough with the suggestion that farmland which is not currently being used could be utilised for this purpose.
 - Core Strategy – WBC seems to be only concerned about what is happening within the new development rather than the area as a whole. Major concerns are the water supply and sewage
- b. BALC – invitation to a session about allotments on 10.6.10 6.00 – 9.30 p.m. at Woolhampton Village hall. Mr Goldring or Mr Oxbrough will attend.
- c. CAB – invitation to the AGM to be held on 30.7.10. No one wished to attend.
- d. Mrs Dando – resignation of Councillor Dando.

Distribution

WBC Planning Applications Input & Decisions Issued for the period 5.4.10 – 9.4.10.
WBC Planning Applications Input & Decisions Issued for the period 12.4.10 – 16.4.10.
WBC Agenda for Meeting of the Planning Committee on 28.4.10.
WBC Agenda for Extraordinary Meeting of the Executive on 4.5.10.
WBC Planning Applications Input & Decisions Issued for the period 19.4.10 – 23.4.10.
Minutes of Rural Crime Action Group Meeting held on 11.3.2010.
WBC Planning Applications Input & Decisions Issued for the period 26.4.10 – 30.4.10.

10/471 Councillors Forum

Mr Heyliger reported that a resident had spoken to him about people shooting at birds at Barkham Manor Farm, there is no proof of this but maybe residents could be aware and report this.

Mr Heath thanked the Parish Councillors for their good wishes and the basket of fruit after his recent operation, everyone was delighted that he had made a good recovery and wished him well.

Meeting closed at 9.43 p.m.

Next meeting of full Council will be held on 8th June at 8 p.m.

Next meeting of Planning Committee will be held on 25th May 2010 at 7.30 p.m.