

## BARMING PARISH COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING

HELD ON WEDNESDAY 12<sup>th</sup> MAY 2021 at 7pm

AT THE PARISH HALL, TONBRIDGE ROAD

**PRESENT:** Cllr Gooch in Chair, Cllr Doe, Cllr Manser, Cllr Vizzard, Cllr Williams and Clerk Mrs N Attwood.

**IN ATTENDANCE:** County Councillor Webb.

**1. APOLOGIES**

None

**2. NOTIFICATION TO BE RECEIVED FOR INTENT TO FILM, PHOTOGRAPH OR RECORD ANY ITEMS.**

No intent to record any items.

**3. ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

Cllr Manser proposed Cllr Gooch as Chairman this was seconded by Cllr Vizzard; all in favour.

Cllr Manser proposed Cllr Vizzard as Vice Chairman this was seconded by Cllr Gooch; all in favour.

The Clerk reminded members to return the relevant paperwork so that it can be submitted to Maidstone Borough Council. The email will be circulated again so that members have it to hand.

**ACTION: ALL**

**4. APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES**

It was agreed with all in favour not to appoint any committees.

**5. APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES**

Cllr Doe will continue as the Internal Auditor; all in favour.

Cllr Manser will continue as the Booking Clerk; all in favour.

Cllr Gooch will contact the Allotment Secretary regarding the allotment representative; all in favour.

Cllr Gooch will continue as the editor of the Barming News; all in favour.

Cllr Williams and Cllr Doe will act as the KALC representatives; all in favour.

Cllr Gooch and Cllr Vizzard will act as the Medway Valley Community Rail Partnership Representatives; all in favour.

Cllr Gooch and Cllr Vizzard will act as the representatives for the police liaison meetings; all in favour.

Cllr Williams will act as the speed watch representative; all in favour.

**6. COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS**

Cllr Manser, Cllr Gooch and Cllr Doe declared a pecuniary interest in agenda item 9.4 (cheques to be signed).

**7. MINUTES of the Meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> April 2021**

The minutes were **Agreed** as an accurate record proposed by Cllr Vizzard and seconded by Cllr Doe, with all in favour.

**8. RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT MATTERS**

**8.1 Covid-19 Decision & Payment Log**

Members noted the safe receipt of the log and the Clerk highlighted the online payments list. Cllr Gooch will note down the steps taken to authorise online payments so that Cllr Manser can become familiar with the system.

**8.2 Continued Delegated Powers for the Clerk & Future Meetings**

The legal challenge into the Government's decision not to extend the Covid Flexibility Regulations (allowing council meetings to be held virtually) beyond the 7<sup>th</sup> May has been unsuccessful. This means that after the 7<sup>th</sup> May local authorities can no longer hold Council meetings remotely, and have to revert back to what it was before the pandemic i.e., face to face. This is why the BPC meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> May was held face to face. It follows that the Clerk's emergency delegated powers cease with effect from 12<sup>th</sup> May meeting. The Clerk's own audit system of Covid -19 Decision and Payment Logs should also cease.

The Clerk had previously circulated the urgent emails received from the Kent Association of Local Councils and the National Association of Local Councils and reminded members of the advice: "As we have previously advised in our guidance on preparing for the possible return to face-to-face meetings, local councils should take steps to address this

issue through measures such as delegation to clerks, deferring controversial decisions or holding meetings later in the year, after the 21<sup>st</sup> June roadmap date"

Cllr Gooch recommended that BPC continue with face-to-face meetings and revert back to the pre covid arrangements; all members were in favour.

### **8.3 Reopening of the Halls**

Cllr Gooch noted that the cleaners had done a wonderful job of the halls in preparation to them opening. New signage has been displayed to remind visitors to use the hand sanitisers and shelving will be installed for the touch free soap dispensers.

The water heaters in the toilets need to be replaced, possibly in both halls. Cllr Doe proposed for the work to proceed with a preapproved sum of up to £1,000.00 this was seconded by Cllr Williams with all in favour. Cllr Gooch has contact details for a plumber and Cllr Doe will pass on details for another two companies.

The Clerk informed members of a letter that had been received from a regular hirer who was disappointed in the new cashless payment arrangements. Members agreed that due to online banking not being an option for the hirer, they would make a special exception and accept cash for their future invoices. This action was proposed by Cllr Gooch and seconded by Cllr Manser.

Members agreed that the 'no use' of the pavilion toilet facilities for the football club would remain in place until after 21<sup>st</sup> June due to Covid; this will be reviewed when restrictions ease.

### **8.4 Allotments Northern Boundary**

Cllr Doe informed members that unfortunately due to Covid there are supply issues with the trees and the preferred trees will not be available until mid-June. This will obviously cause issues with planting the trees at this time of the year due to the weather conditions. We will need to purchase approximately 30 trees at a cost of between £4-£5 each, pot grown ones are available but cost in the region of £24 each. Cllr Vizzard recommended the authorisation of £500.00 pending a final invoice and planting to be carried out in autumn. Cllr Manser seconded with all members in favour. Cllr Gooch requested that the Clerk sends a letter to the Allotment Secretary to thank him and the allotment holders for clearing the area and to explain the supply issue.

**ACTION: Cllr Doe, Clerk**

### **8.5 Future Online Banking Transactions**

The auditor wishes to see transactions changed to online as we are all set up with the Unity Trust account. It was also suggested that the majority of the Clerk's wages are now paid by standing order and the remainder, due to tax & National Insurance, is claimed with the expenses. This arrangement was proposed by Cllr Doe and seconded by Cllr Gooch with all members in favour. The Clerk will circulate a list of all online transactions to members and record them in the same way as the cheques each month.

**ACTION: Clerk**

### **8.6 Electronic Communications Infrastructure Consultation**

Members declined to submit comments on this consultation.

### **8.7 Insurance Policy Annual Documentation**

Members noted the annual premium for this year of £1,279.32 and were reminded that the long-term agreement will run until 2023. The insurance documents have been circulated to Cllr Gooch and Cllr Manser so that they both have copies for future events/reference.

### **8.8 Speed Watch Project**

Cllr Williams has been in contact with Kent Police and has set up a user-friendly guide for the training, which will be circulated to all volunteers. It is hoped that all volunteer training will be completed by the end of May. Once the equipment has been checked and the Police have been informed as to which roads will be monitored, the first speed watch will be ready to proceed! The Clerk has sent the volunteer risk assessments over to Cllr Williams and will continue to liaise with her. The Clerk will also contact the insurance company to enquire if a 3-mile radius from the parish boundary is acceptable.

**ACTION: Clerk**

### **8.9 Barming Youth Football Club (BYFC)**

The Clerk reminded members that the previous increase to the annual fees had been frozen due to Covid and the increase will now be added to this year's invoice (October 2021/22 £750.00) Cllr Gooch will arrange a date with BYFC for the annual meeting in July which all members are welcome to attend.

**ACTION: Cllr Gooch**

## 8.10 Allotments

Cllr Gooch will discuss whether there is a need for an annual meeting this year when she speaks to the Allotment Secretary regarding the representative.

**ACTION: Cllr Gooch**

## 8.11 LCR Annual Subscription Renewal

The Clerk has not received any information regarding the cost for the subscription; last year was at a cost of £17.00. Cllr Doe proposed to continue the subscription providing that there is not a large increase to the fees. This was seconded by Cllr Manser with all members in favour. The Clerk will inform members of the cost as soon as she receives the information.

**ACTION: Clerk**

# 9 FINANCE

## 9.1 Annual Report and Audit 2020/21

**9.1.A** The Annual Governance Statements were approved and signed. Proposed by Cllr Vizzard, seconded by Cllr Williams with all members in favour.

**9.1.B** The accounting statements 2020/21 were approved and signed. Proposed by Cllr Vizzard, seconded by Cllr Williams with all members in favour.

The Clerk informed members that the annual audit carried out by David Buckett went well with all areas being rated green. Members then discussed some of the comments made by the auditor. The Clerk will now submit the Annual Return to the external auditor.

**ACTION: Clerk**

## 9.2 Budget Monitoring

The Clerk circulated the budget monitoring and bank reconciliation sheets to all members prior to the meeting.

## 9.3 Income received

The following payments received since the last meeting were noted:

Barming News Adverts	£ 31.50
HMRC Vat Refund	£ 1,366.00
MBC Precept	£29,371.56
EDF Energy Refund	£ 520.14
Natwest Interest	£ 0.39
Allotment Rent	£ 806.26

**Outstanding Invoices** – The Clerk reported four outstanding allotment rents which have been chased by letter.

## Confirmation of payments made

The following payments were agreed

DD – MBC Field Bin	£ 19.50
OL – KALC Subscription	£ 698.14
DD – EDF Electric Pavilion	£ 38.00
DD – EDF Electric Parish Hall	£ 66.00
DD – BT Wifi Monthly Payment	£ 27.99
DD – MBC NNDR – Pavilion Rates	£ 268.70
Employer/Employee Costs	£ 1,614.64

## 9.4 Cheques for signature

The payment list had been previously circulated on the Covid-19 Payment and Decision Logs.

# 10 PLANNING

## 10.1 Any planning matters received prior to the meeting

**21/500353/FULL – 6 Bull Orchard ME16 9EU** – Demolition of garage, erection of single storey front, side and rear/side extension – Members have no objections to this planning application.

# 11 MATTERS OF REPORT

## 11.1 County Councillor's Report

Cllr Gooch thanked Cllr Webb for attending and for his recent letter asking what we as a parish council would expect from him and how we can work together.

Cllr Webb formally introduced himself and explained that no information has been received regarding the Community Grant amounts and no decisions will be made by him for at least 6 months so that the process is fair and totally transparent. All grants that are awarded in future will be for the good of the whole community.

Members of BPC then discussed some of the issues that they would like to be addressed in the future which included: work on the Highways Plan, potholes, double yellow lines installed in problem areas, fly tipping and the impact that the booking system at the local tips has caused and garden waste disposal restrictions.

### **11.2 Borough Councillors/Chairman's Report**

Cllr Gooch is extremely pleased to be re-elected as Borough Councillor for Barming and Teston and will officially be Mayor at the annual Maidstone Borough Council meeting on the 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2021.

Cllr Gooch informed members of the MERlin project (The Medway Ecological Riverine Link) which is a group of Councillors working together to help form a green stretch/nature corridor from Barming Bridge to the River Medway at Allington. It is hoped that this group will be able to influence developers for future nature reserves, walks and limit vehicles in areas. Cllr Gooch asked whether members of BPC would be interested in joining the group, as it could make a difference on how the Pea Field will be impacted. All members were in favour and will take turns to act as the BPC representative at future meetings.

Cllr Gooch congratulated members on the recent uncontested elections and reminded members to complete the relevant paperwork.

Cllr Gooch informed members that concerns have been expressed about a resident who had a BPC owned tree cut down without any prior consent. Apparently, the branches were diseased and they thought that they would be saving BPC money by having the work completed for them. Members are extremely unhappy with the course of action and have requested that the Clerk officially writes to the resident requesting the details of the tree surgeon for insurance purposes and to request an emergency meeting with Councillors at the parish field if they deem necessary.

Cllr Gooch reported on the recent KCC blasting monitoring information which was well within the limits; the Clerk will add the details to the website.

**ACTION: Clerk**

### **11.3 Individual Councillors Report**

Cllr Manser requested that the wild flower area by Cedar Drive is left until after August; this was previously agreed but the Clerk will send a reminder to Landscape Services regarding the area.

**ACTION: Clerk**

Cllr Manser asked whether the new club who had requested to use the field in the light evenings could proceed. Cllr Gooch had contacted the Kent Playing Fields Association and there is no evidence that the field would need to be rested. All members were in favour of the new group using the field especially as fitness, health and well-being is so important for young people.

### **11.4 Clerk's Reports**

The PCSO had emailed the Clerk with no real issues to report. However, he has been made aware of recent issues with parking due the school drop off and collection times and will be visiting soon to monitor the situation.

## **12 CORRESPONDENCE**

Previously circulated via post.  
Countryside Voice – Spring 2021  
Fieldwork – Spring 2021

## **13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next Full Council meeting will be held on **Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> June 2021 at 7.30pm** in the Parish Hall, Tonbridge Road.

The meeting was closed at 8.53pm.