

BARMING PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

HELD ON WEDNESDAY 14th FEBRUARY 2024 at 7.30pm

AT THE PARISH HALL, TONBRIDGE ROAD

PRESENT: Cllr Gooch in Chair, Cllr Vizzard, Cllr Brotherwood, Cllr Ilsley, Cllr Passmore, Cllr Pepper and Clerk Mrs N Attwood.

IN ATTENDANCE: There were no members of the public present

1. APOLOGIES

Cllr Doe

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

No intent to record any items.

3. COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS

Cllr Gooch declared an interest in item 6.3 online payments & 5.2 Parish Hall: Landscaping the front garden

4. MINUTES of the Meeting held on 10th January 2024

The minutes were **Agreed** as an accurate record with all members in favour.

5. RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT MATTERS

5.1 Parish Hall & Pavilion: Disabled Facilities

Cllr Gooch had previously circulated quotations for the suggested extension at the parish hall to accommodate a new disabled toilet. However, one of the contractors came up with an alternative solution which would involve internal alterations: adding a doorway and changing the existing female toilets into gender neutral toilets and then making the existing male toilets the disabled one. Cllr Gooch applied for funding of £10,000 for this project and £25,000 for solar panels at the parish hall and the pavilion from the Rural England Prosperity Fund. The day before this parish council meeting, Cllr Gooch received an email confirming that her application had only been partially successful i.e. a grant for £16,500, but only for solar panels at the pavilion. The parish hall did not qualify for any funding as it narrowly fell outside the rural area as defined by DEFRA.

The grant will only be issued when a project timeline has been submitted by BPC along with the preferred quotation by 11th March deadline. It was agreed that due to time constraints, members would discuss the pavilion solar panel quotations via email and ratify at the March meeting, to ensure that the funding is not missed. The parish hall solar panel quotations will be discussed at the same time.

Cllr Gooch and Cllr Pepper will also obtain three quotations for the alternative configuration of the parish hall for the disabled toilet for discussion at the March meeting.

ACTION: ALL

Cllr Gooch left the room for the next agenda item.

5.2 Parish Hall: Landscaping the front garden

At the January meeting Cllr Gooch informed members that the handyman has offered to tidy the front garden at the parish hall as a one-off job. He can clear the area and lay gravel down at a cost of £250.00. Cllr Passmore proposed to go ahead with the work. This was seconded by Cllr Pepper with all members in favour. The Clerk informed Cllr Gooch of the decision when she re-entered the room.

Cllr Gooch re-joined the meeting.

5.3 Allotments: Western Boundary

Cllr Gooch gave thanks to Cllr Pepper and Cllr Brotherwood for their hard work on this major project. The Western Boundary Allotments project scope is to tackle the overgrown 2m (approx) wide bank along the western boundary as well as to replace the fencing between the gated entrance and the NW corner which is damaged in areas along the public bridleway. Ground clearance needs to take place outside of bird-nesting season and with minimal disruption to allotment holders.

Cllr Pepper went on to explain the process that had been followed to obtain various quotations. The bund has been created over several decades and it gets higher towards the North West section. Quotations for ground clearance, levelling and fencing were requested from four contractors. Unfortunately, one contractor dropped out as the job was too big for him. It was then realised that to close the bridleway would take up to eight weeks, which would therefore delay the project further. With this in mind, it was felt that the most effective way to carry out this project was to clear via the allotments side. The access would be from the main gates which would be removed to allow machinery access and minimise disruption to allotment holders. We would then need skips for any rubbish and a grabber lorry to collect contaminated soil for processing. Members felt that dividing up the clearance work and the fencing work was the best way to tackle the project as this would enable clearance to be carried out immediately and the fencing could be dealt with later on in the year.

The quotations from the three contractors were then discussed by members.

Quote A:

Ground clearance. Supplying 5 tonne excavator & 6 tonne dumper for 5 days. 2 machine operators, delivery & fuel. All mixed soil waste moved and piled in the car park area. Carpet, wood, metal, plastic to be placed in skips (to be provided by BPC). Removal of leaning silver birch tree at NW corner. Site security (temporary fencing overnight). **Total: £5,900.** **Fencing:** Supply and install 90m of 1.8m high green palisade fence adjacent to bridleway. Delivery, labour and cost of machinery. **Total: £17,885.**

Quote B:

Clearance: To tidy carpet covered areas along edge of allotment, grading topsoil subject to findings under. Waste for removal will be left in car park area. Unfortunately, no waste can be removed from site. JCB and driver for 2 – 3 days. **Price £495.00 excluding vat (£594.00 including vat) per day.**

Fencing: To supply and erect approximately 110mtrs of 2mtrs high Protek 1000 fencing, to match the northern boundary. Fencing to be erected on metal posts, concreted into the ground. **Price £6,795.00 excluding vat (£8,154.00 including vat).**

Quote C:

Clearance: To supply haulage to and from site for a 3-ton excavator mounted with a mulching flail, all fuel, operator as well as any handheld machinery required. To flail all vegetation along the existing fence line down to ground level, all arisings left to waste on the floor. There is no provision for any waste removal within this cost. To supply haulage to and from site for the excavator, dumper and all required attachments such as buckets and a land rake. All fuels and operators supplied, to excavate along the length of the fence the surplus material and move to a location via dumper, to a designated area by the main gates ready for stockpiling and removal from site via grab lorries. Please note, grab lorries will only remove clean inert waste such as soil and stones, on no account can plastic, timber, green waste, carpet etc be placed into the grab lorries. I have allowed for a maximum of 20 loads to be disposed of, this will not be enough to clear the entire surplus bund but will enable the level to be reduced sufficiently to determine the fencing requirements, and leave a much smaller bund. This work should take approx 7 days and as mentioned on site. Skips will be provided in which to place the excavated waste like carpet, plastic sheeting, old timber and other non-recyclable waste. We will need an assurance that these skips will not be filled by allotment holders trying to get rid of their own waste. **Total £16,230.00 plus VAT.**

Fencing: did not quote, believes existing fencing is adequate.

Cllr Pepper proposed to accept the quotation from contractor A for the clearance (£5,900) as they had met several times and he really wants to work with the parish council. He is thinking of contingency plans, which none of the other contractors discussed and his pricing is good. He is also professional and friendly. Cllr Gooch seconded the proposal with all members in favour.

The rubbish and carpet on top of the bund will need to be placed in skips therefore two 12-yard skips would be required at a cost of £335+vat. One for timber and one for plastic. Cllr Gooch proposed the expenditure for the skip hire. This was seconded by Cllr Passmore with all members in favour.

The grab lorry quotations were as follows

Quote D: £350 - £450 depending on waste type. Vegetation top layer first load would be a separate pile to the rest of the soil waste and would be at the higher price end. 14 tonnes capacity.

Quote E: £300 + VAT. They can only take the soil waste - plastic/rubbish removed, we would need to arrange disposal of the vegetation top layer.

Quote F: £300 - £400 + VAT depending on waste type. Clean soil & hardcore is £300, vegetation & roots etc. is £400. The guy I spoke to suggested rather than trying to separate out piles and potentially not be done properly for removal, to put in one pile and pay the higher cost so it can all be accepted by the waste site for processing. 18 tonnes capacity.

Cllr Gooch proposed accepting the quotation from Quote F as it was an 18-tonne lorry and could be mixed waste. This was seconded by Cllr Vizzard with all members in favour.

Cllr Gooch then proposed a contingency plan of one extra skip and one extra grab lorry. This was seconded by Cllr Pepper with all members in favour.

Cllr Pepper will now inform Environ Solutions that they have been successful with their quotation for the clearance and AVA Grab Hire for the waste disposal quotation. Cllr Gooch, Cllr Brotherwood, Cllr Pepper and the Clerk will keep all of the allotment holders informed regarding the stages of the project and co-ordinate any necessary remedial work on plots. Cllr Brotherwood will also invite all plot holders to the Whatapp group to keep good lines of communication open.

5.4 Allotments: New Notice board

Members were all in agreement that the notice board requires replacing as the current one is in a state of disrepair and wish to have the same man-made wood type as in the rest of the parish. The Clerk has applied for funding through Maidstone Borough Council and will keep members updated on the outcome.

ACTION: Clerk

5.5 Pavilion/Parish Hall Hire: Refundable Deposit Charge

Currently, BPC has a process that one-off hirers pay a £100.00 refundable deposit when hiring the premises and regular hirers pay a £50.00 deposit which is refunded when they terminate their sessions. This is providing that the hall has been left in a good condition and there have been no other issues with the hiring sessions. Cllr Gooch proposed a £50.00 deposit system for both regular hiring and for one-off users. This was seconded by Cllr Passmore with all members in favour.

5.6 Highways Improvement Plan

Members agreed to update the Highways Improvement Plan to include a pathway on the Tonbridge Road by the Barming sign to Seymours, a footpath on the west side between Rectory Lane and the Walnuts, help to stop cars going around the war memorial the wrong way at the bottom of North Street and remedial hedge planting along the Tonbridge Road (this has been an ongoing complaint from a resident just outside of the current parish boundary, which Highways are yet to rectify) Cllr Passmore also mentioned the pathway from Heath Road to Silverdale as there have been complaints regarding the speed of the cyclists on this stretch. Members agreed that there could be another metal restrictor placed in the middle of the pathway, but this could then inconvenience other users. Cllr Gooch will contact MBC regarding this issue. Cllr Gooch and the Clerk will arrange a meeting to update the Highways Improvement Plan at a later date.

ACTION: Cllr Gooch, Clerk

5.7 Parish Field and Tonbridge Road Tree Work

Cllr Gooch had obtained three quotations for the boundary work at the parish field. Contractor A £800.00, Contractor B £1,344.00 and Contractor C £1,620.00. Cllr Gooch proposed to accept the quotation from Contractor A. This was seconded by Cllr Passmore with all members in favour. The Clerk will inform Mr Doe that his quotation was successful and instruct him to proceed with the work. The Clerk had also received a quotation from Mr Doe to reduce the yew tree on the Tonbridge Road for £200.00. Cllr Gooch proposed to accept this quotation which was seconded by Cllr Passmore with all members in favour. The Clerk will inform Mr Doe of the outcome.

ACTION: Clerk

5.8 Annual Meeting

Members felt that it would be more appropriate to leave the annual meeting for this year due to the boundary changes. Cllr Vizzard proposed to wait until next year so that new residents are aware of what the parish council does and BPC can see what new community groups and classes can then be promoted and new guest speakers invited. This was seconded by Cllr Gooch with all members in favour, Cllr Pepper then suggested a summer event to welcome new residents, which members were keen to do. Future Community Events will be added to the March agenda for discussion.

ACTION: Clerk

5.9 Draft Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2024-2039 Reg.19 Public Consultation

Cllr Gooch had previously circulated the following draft response to all members.

"Mindful that the Minerals Sites Plan and the nominated Oaken Wood site are not included in this Reg.19 draft KMWLP public consultation, Barming Parish Council does not wish to comment" All members were in favour to submit the draft response.

ACTION: Clerk

5.10 KALC: Draft Code of Conduct and Dealing with Cllr Conduct Complaints

Cllr Gooch had previously circulated the following draft response to all members.

"One single version of the Code and of Dealing with Complaints should apply across authorities to enable more efficient use of resources and consistent application of, and expectations of, behaviour. Variations would cause confusion and would give rise to complications, particularly for 'twin hatters' Both The Code and Dealing with Complaints should apply

across all tiers of authority i.e. Parish, Borough and County. No single Councillor is more or less accountable than a Councillor on a different authority tier. The public perception is that a councillor is a councillor – a key factor considering that the public's understanding of Kent's three tiers is not clear. Page 23 of the Code of Conduct- Complaints document: paragraph f) delete the phrase "with the exception of meeting rooms ... and sub-committee meetings". The subject member should be excluded. To include this phrase, weakens the sanction." All members were in favour to submit the draft response.

ACTION: Clerk

6. FINANCE

6.1 Budget Monitoring

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

6.2 Income received

The following payments received since the last meeting were noted:

Unity Trust Account

Parish Hall Hiring £663.00

Pavilion Income £709.22

Hiring Deposits £200.00

Natwest Account

Parish Hall Hiring £51.00

Interest £39.13

Outstanding Invoices

Invoice: The Clerk reported one overdue invoice that has now been cleared along with a late fee payment and an apology has been received.

6.3 Cheques for signature & Online Payments

Confirmation of payments made

The following payments were agreed

Natwest Direct Debits

MBC NNDR Rates Pavilion £278.00

Unity Trust Direct Debits

BT Parish Hall WIFI £34.30

O2 Mobile Phone Contract £44.80

EDF Parish Hall £157.06

EDF Pavilion £117.42

Castle Water Parish Hall £18.13

Hugo Fox Website £23.99

Clear It Away Field Bin £43.30

O2 Mobile Phone Contract £44.80

Employer costs

£1,915.97

Online payments authorised

JC Electrical £118.80 – defibrillator

CPRE £36.00 – Subscription

Deposit refund £100.00

Commercial Landscaping £267.85

F Gooch £14.10 expenses

A Doe £500.00 Tree work

N Attwood £61.29 expenses

CSG Global Education consumables £45.59

7 PLANNING

7.1 Any planning matters

None

8 MATTERS OF REPORT

8.1 County Councillor's Report

Cllr Webb was not present.

Cllr Passmore (KCC Cllr for Maidstone Central) reported that the KCC budget will balance, but with no room for failure. There will be no contingency and there will be more cuts next year. No information on overspends for 2023-24 has been received. Cllr Passmore then went on to ask people to make use of the mobile library in Barming, as if it is not used then there could be a risk of losing it.

8.2 Borough Councillor's Report

No report.

8.3 Chairman's Report

No report.

8.4 Individual Councillors Report

Cllr Brotherwood thanked members for attending the recent BPC communications working group and confirmed that he had circulated a few notes from the evening. A date for the next working group was arranged for 22nd February where digital communication and websites will be discussed.

Cllr Ilsley gave Cllr Gooch the QR codes that he had produced to display on the notice boards for the BPC meeting agendas and minutes.

Cllr Ilsley reported that he had contacted Persimmons again regarding the footpath at Wesley Close and is awaiting a response.

Cllr Pepper informed members that the next litter pick is arranged for Sunday 24th March at 10am, everyone will meet at the war memorial and litter pick along an allotted area of the Tonbridge rd.

8.5 Clerk's Reports

The Clerk has arranged the PAT testing, fire extinguisher testing and the annual play equipment inspection. She also reported that a number of chairs were missing from the parish hall and approximately five had been left in appalling condition with food and mud all over them. Lastly, the fencing was reported as a few more posts have become unstable around the play area. Members felt that it was important for the handyman to carry out immediate remedial to ensure that the fence does not fall down; this will be at an extra cost of £115.00.

9 CORRESPONDENCE

None

10 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on **Wednesday 13th March 2024 at 7.30pm** in the Parish Hall, Tonbridge Road for the regular Full Council Meeting.

The meeting was closed at 21.32pm.