

## BARMING PARISH COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING

HELD ON WEDNESDAY 13<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2021 at 7.30pm

ONLINE VIA ZOOM

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

**IN ATTENDANCE:** One member of the public was present.

1. **APOLOGIES:** None.
2. **NOTIFICATION TO BE RECEIVED FOR INTENT TO FILM, PHOTOGRAPH OR RECORD ANY ITEMS.**  
The Clerk recorded the meeting through the Zoom application for security purposes.
3. **COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS**  
No declarations were recorded.
4. **MINUTES of the Meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2020**  
The minutes were **Agreed** as an accurate record.
5. **RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT MATTERS**

#### 5.1 Continued Delegated Powers for the Clerk

Due to the current pandemic, it was recommended that delegated powers continue for the Clerk. All members are in favour to continue with the current system as they feel that it is functioning extremely well.

#### 5.2 Covid-19 Decision and Payment Log

The Clerk has kept a log of all payments and decisions that have been made during the pandemic. Members have been updated on other news as well. This was purely done for peace of mind and so that there is an audit trail for future reference. It also has given the Clerk the opportunity to ensure everyone is fully aware of everything that is being done whilst we cope with this challenging time. Members formally noted the receipt of log numbers 010 & 011. The Clerk will continue to produce the log until physical meetings resume.

**ACTION: Clerk**

#### 5.3 Parish Hall and Pavilion Maintenance: Windows, Decorating & Flooring

The windows and flooring have been installed and the decorator has started working on the hall. Members will be kept up to date with all completed work. Cllr Manser will be going to the hall this week to see how it is all going. Cllr Vizzard suggested that once the decorating is completed, photos are taken so that we can use them to advertise in future. Cllr Williams volunteered to organise the advertising when we are ready.

#### 5.4 Allotments Northern Boundary

Cllr Gooch clarified that the Northern boundary is the Rede Wood Road side. Fencing contractors have confirmed that single panels would not be stable enough to overcome the security issue and a full run of fencing would be extremely expensive. With this in mind, Cllr Gooch suggested that she meets with Cllr Doe on site to discuss hedge options. All members were in favour of this idea and Cllr Muthana added that it was the most environmentally friendly idea as it would encourage nesting birds and suggested that allotment holders could help with the watering. Cllr Gooch went on to say that before any work was started, allotments holders would need to move their equipment away from the boundary for access purposes. Cllr Vizzard asked whether the paling fencing would need strengthening, but it was felt that it is sufficient.

Cllr Gooch reported that the hedge cutting on the South East/Roberts Orchard boundary was now completed and the adjoining resident has requested permission to infill with whips; there were no objections to this request.

**ACTION: Cllr Gooch, Cllr Doe**

#### 5.5 Annual Subscription to Campaign to Protect Rural England

Cllr Muthana proposed to continue the annual subscription at the same cost as last year (£36.00) this was seconded by Cllr Doe with all members in favour.

## **5.6 Highways Requests:**

### **South Street Double Yellow Lines**

Cllr Gooch received a complaint regarding the parking of vehicles at the top of South Street and has since requested yellow lines to be installed. Unfortunately, as no crash data has been recorded at this particular road, the yellow lines were initially refused. Cllr Gooch then asked Highways to re-investigate as fire engines and refuse vehicles can't get through when a vehicle is parked at the narrowest point by the stone wall. The Schemes Project Manager explained there is a minimum length for yellow lines and that 'Keep Clear' road markings might be more effective and would not require a traffic regulation order to be advertised. Due to backlog of work and limited resources it will take a while before a site visit can be carried out.

### **Heath Road Speeding Issues**

The Clerk received a complaint regarding speeding in the area and contacted the PCSO who suggested that he would make a visit with a speed gun as a deterrent. Unfortunately, after discussing the matter with his sergeant, this was not authorised. The PCSO does not have the powers to stop any vehicles and it was felt that the parish council should set up their own speed watch. The Clerk contacted the Highways Steward to find out if extra signage could be installed to remind drivers of the speed limits and again, as there has not been any crash data recorded, it is highly unlikely. Cllr Vizzard suggested that speed watch is added to next agenda for members to discuss. Cllr Gooch added that someone would have to take responsibility of the whole project by being organised and committed and also enrol volunteers.

## **5.7 Donation Requests:**

### **Kent Community Railway Partnership**

Cllr Gooch proposed a donation of £100.00 which was seconded by Cllr Vizzard. This was a vote of 5 members in favour and 1 against.

### **Heart of Kent Hospice**

Cllr Doe proposed a donation of £50.00 which was seconded by Cllr Williams. This was a vote of 5 members in favour and 1 abstention

## **5.8 Budget 2021/22**

The Clerk circulated the base rate information, draft budget and notes prior to the meeting. The Clerk confirmed the Maidstone Borough Council base rate of 763.1 residents paying council tax. Keeping the current band D precept of £38.49 at the level for next year will generate a precept of £29,371.56 which would be an increase of funding of £451.56 (1.56% funding increase) at a 0% increase for the residents. Cllr Vizzard proposed to accept the draft budget and precept recommendations. This was seconded by Cllr Muthana with all members in favour. Due to the pandemic, it was felt that an increase in the precept would not be appropriate at this time as many individuals could be facing financial challenges. Cllr Gooch and the Clerk will sign the relevant paperwork to submit to Maidstone Borough Council.

**ACTION: Cllr Gooch, Clerk**

## **5.9 Future BPC Meeting Date Changes**

Due to the meeting time constraints, members agreed for an email exchange to take place to organise future meeting dates. Cllr Gooch will send available dates to the Clerk as soon as possible.

**ACTION: Cllr Gooch, Clerk**

## **6. FINANCE**

### **6.1 Budget Monitoring**

The Clerk circulated the papers prior to the meeting.

### **6.2 Income received and any unpaid invoices**

Natwest interest 0.52

Barming News Adverts 334.00

The Clerk emailed the Barming News tracker to Cllr Gooch. There is one outstanding invoice and one payment has been made with 50p still owed.

### **Confirmation of payments made**

MBC Rates 264.00

Parish Hall WIFI 27.99

Castle Water parish hall 8.63

Castle Water Allotments 28.45

Business Stream Parish Hall Waste Water 37.95

EDF Energy parish hall 66.00

EDF Energy pavilion 38.00

Business Stream Pavilion Water 70.54

Unity Trust Charges 18.00

### 6.3 Cheques for signature

Payments were previously confirmed on the Covid-19 log sheets circulated by the Clerk.

## 7. PLANNING

### 7.1 Applications received prior to the meeting

KCC/TM/0289/2020 – Hermitage Quarry, Hermitage Lane, Aylesford ME20 7PX – No objections

## 8. MATTERS OF REPORT

### 8.1 County Councillor

Cllr Stockell was not present.

### 8.2 Borough Councillor/ Chairman

Cllr Gooch reported that Maidstone Borough Council has received over 2,000 responses to the Regulation 18B consultation on the Local Plan Review. It is still intended to carry out the Regulation 19 consultation in June this year.

Residents are urged to apply for postal votes ready for if the May elections go ahead.

Services such as recycling and refuse services have been maintained despite staff self-isolating and staff illness. Revenues and Benefits staff continue to work tirelessly, issuing business grants and grants for those in particular need.

Cllr Gooch has received three complaints regarding an item in Barming News which have been promptly attended to.

Cllr Gooch has been regularly checking the hall and pavilion, flushing the toilets and running the taps.

### 8.3 Individual Councillors Report

Cllr Vizzard gave thanks to Heath Ward Cllr Ashleigh Kimmance for all of his hard work regarding the Oakwood Hospital Cemetery Off Oakapple Lane and the footpath there which will also be used by Barming residents.

Cllr Doe reported that he had found and disposed of a number of nitrous oxide canisters at the parish field car park; the Clerk will inform the PCSO.

**ACTION: Clerk**

Cllr Manser felt that due to the high covid case numbers, as a parish council we need to find out if there are any particular hot spots and warn residents.

The local corner shop to Cllr Manser's knowledge has no sanitising station, does not refuse entry to anyone not wearing a mask, is unable to provide social distancing due to the size of the shop and therefore she feels it is not a safe place for the public. Cllr Manser has mentioned the first point to a member of staff previously but does not think that the owner has taken note. There is also a lack of space for people queuing for the Post Office counter. Cllr Manser felt that the matter should be reported or at least someone in authority should inspect. Cllr Gooch confirmed that she had reported it to both Trading Standards via the Citizens Advice helpline 0808 223 1133 under reference 16435809 and they will inform the local Trading Standards Office. Cllr Gooch has also reported it to the MBC Environmental Health helpline 01622 602205

Cllr Manser wishes to note her disappointment that BPC had not commented on the application for listed building consent at The Works, Farleigh Bridge (20/505876/LBC) BPC therefore has said nothing about exterior alterations to a listed building. Cllr Manser felt that Barming Parish Council should have made some mention to a unique listed building in its parish.

The comments that BPC submitted were on the main planning application (20/505875/FULL) as follows:

The parish council is concerned that parking on site is already totally inadequate and that expanding the number of employees will seriously aggravate the already difficult situation. Therefore, we request that a condition be imposed for a travel plan to be submitted to strongly encourage the use of the adjacent East Farleigh station and the adjacent Medway River Tow Path, noting that there must be no cycling along the narrow stretch of the towpath alongside the Empress Riverside Park.

We are also very concerned at the serious disruption and hazard to road safety during renovation works. There is a long history of congestion and bad driver behaviour caused by drivers needing to give way at the rail crossing to wait their turn to cross over Farleigh Bridge which is single carriageway. Furthermore, The Works building is on the corner of, and shares, a busy access leading into The Malt House (5 residential units), the Empress Riverside Park (35 mobile homes), The Pump House (1 residential unit) and staff accommodation and tourism facility at The Basin, Riverside Park. Renovation works at this critical point will seriously impede residents' safety and ability to access to and from Farleigh Lane. The site is also immediately adjacent to the Public Right of Way that leads to the Towpath, and provision will need to be made for pedestrian safety. Therefore, there must be an informative to highlight all these issues at this hazardous bottleneck so that sufficient precautions are put in place throughout the duration of renovation works.

Incidentally as responsibility for the access is shared between Chord Electronics, The Malthouse and the Empress Riverside Park, please ensure that they are served the appropriate certificates of notification in order that the application is properly validated.

In spite of the above concerns, the parish council is mindful of the overriding need for the retention of business in the area and the creation of additional jobs, and supports bringing a neglected building back into use. We therefore wish to see the application approved.

#### **8.4 Clerk Report**

The Clerk would like to thank Cllr Muthana, Cllr Gooch and Mr Gooch for their assistance with the issues that were raised in the recent play area inspection by Maidstone Borough Council. There seems to have been some confusion regarding the cone climber equipment, it has been inspected by the Councillors and is in working order. The Clerk has emailed Creative Play to cancel the site visit request. Mr Gooch has kindly reattached the slats that had come off on the surrounding fence.

The clerk received a report from the local PCSO Paul Vasey:

*I patrol Tonbridge Road on a regular basis to deter speeding and that I extend this into Malling Road Teston. My presence in a marked Police vehicle is a deterrent to speeding. There are not any plans to take out a speed gun as I have limited powers as a PCSO. I've been dealing with neighbour disputes re residents leaving bins in the appropriate place (Robert Orchard's Close) and have currently requested that The Borough Council refuse department send out instructions re suitable places to leave refuse so that residents can adhere to a decision.*

#### **9. CORRESPONDENCE**

None

#### **10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

As agreed, all future meetings will be arranged depending on Government guidelines. The next meeting is due to take place on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> February 2021 at 7.30pm but this will be confirmed at a later date.

The meeting was closed at 8.05pm.