

BARMING PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE 118TH ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

HELD ON WEDNESDAY 19TH APRIL 2017

AT THE PARISH HALL, TONBRIDGE ROAD

PRESENT: Cllr F Gooch in the Chair, Cllr S Manser, Cllr B Vizzard, Cllr F Willson, Cllr B Vizzard, PCSO Greaves and Mrs Nicola Attwood

IN ATTENDANCE: 36 members of the public and The Mayor and Mayoress of Maidstone

APOLOGIES: Cllr James, Colin Finch, Rev W North, Mrs Grice, Warren Lindley.

1.	<p>WELCOME FROM THE CHAIRMAN</p> <p>Cllr Gooch welcomed all present and gave apologies for Colin Finch as there were a number of residents from Barming and East Farleigh who had taken the time to attend in order to voice their concerns regarding the towpath.</p> <p>The Mayor and Mayoress Cllr Derek and Mrs Butler were thanked for their attendance.</p> <p>Cllr Gooch reported the sad news that ex councillor Peter Hurrell had recently passed away. The funeral will take place on the 3rd May 2017 12pm at St Margaret's Church; Cllr Gooch will attend on behalf of the Parish Council.</p> <p>Cllr Gooch then reported on the Parish Council's year and gave thanks to the Allotment Secretary, the Booking Clerk and the Clerk.</p>
2.	<p>GUEST SPEAKER – Colin Finch</p> <p>As Colin Finch was unable to attend, Cllr Gooch gave an update and a handout was circulated around attendees. The towpath has been designed for the next 50 years of use with sustainable transport in mind, with the help of KCC and Heritage Lottery Funding. There is a delay with the tarmac production for the section by East Farleigh lock but once this is completed planting of trees will be carried out. Nine areas of river bank repair have been carried out, sealed surface of towpath completed and motorbike inhibitors have been installed.</p> <p>The Secretary of the Riverside Park Residents Association spoke on behalf of a number of residents to voice strong concerns and raise serious issues that they have encountered since the new towpath was installed. Residents have suffered physical and verbal abuse from cyclists; elderly residents can't hear, are scared by cyclists approaching at speed and have nearly been knocked over. Residents added their concerns that the area between the Maltings and the Pump House at Riverside Park must be a 'walk and push' zone to avoid accidents because this section is not wide enough for dual usage anyway. Furthermore this section is still private property and residents have riparian rights with responsibilities for banks and overhanging trees. Residents do not feel that KCC have kept to their promises: signage is totally inadequate and the K frames that have been installed are not stopping cyclists as they just cycle around them onto private property. The residents are being pushed out of the way by users of the path and one incident resulted in the police having to be contacted. KCC have created a race track and a 'BMX track dream' which will potentially affect the local business. Residents take a pride in their moorings but if hirers cannot get off of their boats, or decide that due to the increase of traffic they will not use the moorings, income will be affected. One mooring has already been cancelled.</p> <p>Local residents are extremely concerned regarding the security to their properties and potential increase in their insurance.</p> <p>Residents were told that after the 2010 feasibility study, someone would be in contact with land owners but nothing came of this and no consultation was ever completed. The area between the Pump House and Malt House, where the footpath has been changed to a cycle path, has gone unchallenged for the past 20 years and land owners feel that the cycle path is unlawful as there has been no consultation with residents. On the 20th May the Clerk received an email from Desiree Home stating that she would like to clarify: "this is a footpath and that for the past 20 years cyclists have always been</p>

challenged as it has always been a no cycling MBC bylaw. And that as such it is still a dismount section of the towpath and this needs to be enforced as cyclists are still disobeying No Cycling signs and even more so now the footpath has been resurfaced”

Residents are not against cyclists and understand that the river can be used by all but this should not be at the detriment to the local land owners.

PCSO Greaves, who has recently taken over the area, asked all residents to report any future problems so that she can investigate and also suggested holding a residents meeting to discuss the matter further. She will try and walk the area from time to time so that there is a police presence and challenge anyone not adhering to the signs. PCSO Greaves was informed that the last aggressive altercation had been reported to the police and has since been escalated to the serious crime squad.

Local residents are desperate for Colin Finch to arrange clear and meaningful signage, as previously promised; the ‘Cyclist Dismount’ sign at the barrier is not sufficient and they feel that their request should be arranged as soon as possible. Also any damage that has been caused i.e. to the laurel trees (which Colin Finch is aware of) needs to be rectified.

A resident from South Street also added that she has walked the river daily for the past 30 years with a disabled family member and always found it a delight; walkers should have priority and should not have to jump out of the way of speeding cyclists.

Others points made were: There is no signage to say where the towpath ends and cyclists are going beyond Barming Bridge; the cycle path has not been widened by the Pump House so cannot cope with the increased use and the motorbike inhibitors will not allow a double buggy or wheelchair through.

2a Cllr Gooch assured everyone in attendance that their concerns would be recorded in the minutes and sent to Colin Finch. Cllr Gooch asked to be informed of the Riverside Park Annual Meeting details and any resident meetings regarding the towpath so that she can attend.

3. The secretary of the Riverside Park requested a copy of the minutes which the Clerk will forward.

THE MAYOR

The Mayor reported on the highlights of his year in office.

KENT ASSOCIATION of LOCAL COUNCILS COMMUNITY AWARDS SCHEME 2017

4. Cllr Manser gave a short speech to thank the winner of this award, Peter Gooch, for his continued support to the Parish Council, from setting up the speed watch initiative to helping with the Remembrance Service arrangements and litter picking at no extra cost to the Parish Council; a well-deserved award for all of his dedicated work.

A framed certificate was then presented to Peter by the Mayor.

REPORTS BY LOCAL ORGANISATIONS – Each group’s opportunity to say a few words about their past year

5. Barry Plummer did a superb job of representing four organisations (History Society, Horticultural Society, Village Hall and Allotment Holders) and gave informative talks for each of them. The Barming Youth Football Club, Friends of St Margaret’s and Barmara also took the time to produce wonderful reports of their year and plans for the future.

OPPORTUNITY TO Question your Local Councillors

6. A resident asked what measures were in place for the amount of dust that is created from the quarry, as if the wind is in a certain direction a significant amount of dust ends up on cars. Cllr Gooch explained that many measures are in place and Gallagher’s do wash down all of their lorries before they leave the quarry. Concerns regarding air vibrations were also raised and Cllr Gooch confirmed that the KCC as the Authority for Minerals and Waste Disposal do check the results from the testing that Gallagher’s perform. Comments raised at the meeting will be passed on to Quarry Manager Bill Bowley and Chief Executive Nick Yandle. Barming Parish Council keeps in contact with Gallagher’s, who are always happy to help with any concerns. Residents were asked to register any interest of a visit to the quarry with Cllr Gooch and she would approach Gallagher’s to see if they could facilitate it.

Traffic issues on Hermitage Lane were discussed and Cllr Vizzard confirmed that plans for improvements were being processed.

	CLOSE AND LIGHT REFRESHMENTS
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	Cllr Gooch then concluded the formal part of the meeting at 9.10pm for refreshments.
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