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BARKHAM PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes** of the annual meeting of the Barkham Parish Council held on 8th March 2022 in the Studio Hall, Arborfield Green Community Centre at 7.30pm.

Strict following of Covid Guidance was adhered to during the meeting.

**Present**: Mrs Stubbs (in the Chair), Mr Scott, Mr Bundred, Mr G Dexter, Mr Heyliger, Mr Wrobel and the Clerk.

**22/023 To receive and accept any apologies for absence** Local Government Act 1972 Sch12

Cllr Kaiser – On holiday

Mr Barker – Family Matter

**22/024 To receive any declarations of interest on items on the agenda** (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012 (SI 2012/1464)

None

**22/025 Minutes of the Council Meeting** LGA 1972 Sch 12 para 41(1) **–**

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 8th February 2022 were approved and signed as a true record.

**22/026 Public Participation (allotted time 15 minutes)** Public Bodies (admissions to meetings) Act 1960 s.1 extended by the LG Act 1972 s.100

Adjournment of the Meeting will be called if any members of the public wish to address the Council on any matters or concerns relating to Barkham.

The new chairman of the BVRA attended the meeting to meet the councillors. He raised a question for the council regarding the possible electricity supply at Barkham Fields.

**Question:** Will the proposed power supply lead to further planning applications or is it only for events?

**Answer:** It will only be used for events approved by the Council. It will be a contained in a locked cabinet, and the key will be kept by the parish council, it is not planned for anything other than local events.

**22/027 Planning**:

1. **Planning Applications –** Council discussed and agreed comments or objections on planning applications received before 8th March 2022. As follows:

**220391 - Parcel P, Arborfield Garrison, Arborfield, Reading**

**Application for approval of Reserved Matters pursuant to Outline Planning Consent O/2014/2280 dated 02/04/2015. The Reserved Matters (access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale) comprise details of 46 dwellings within Parcel P with access via Princess Marina Drive, associated internal access roads, parking, landscaping, open space, footpaths and drainage.**

Barkham Parish Council objects to this proposal on the grounds as there are insufficient facilities to support current residents let alone an expanded population.

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BPC is very much aware of the growing frustration and resentment expressed by some 50 residents regarding the delay in providing promised facilities.  Aspirations need to be managed by a clear statement as to when construction of the District Centre will begin and when the facilities will be available.

Follow up questions to raise at future meeting with WBC:

To provide such clarity, BPC would invite WBC to confirm:

1. What was agreed re how many dwellings need to be completed before the construction of such facilities would commence?
2. How many dwellings have been completed?
3. How does the actual rate of build compare with the anticipated rate of build?
4. When will the construction of these facilities commence?

**220294** - Honeysuckle Lodge, Commonfield Lane, Barkham, Wokingham, RG40 4PR

**Application to vary conditions 2, 4, 5, 8, 9, 12 and 13 of planning consent 203626 for the proposed subdivision of existing 3 no. pitch gypsy traveller site to provide 8 no. pitches (net increase of 5 no. pitches), with ancillary day rooms, storage buildings and parking following demolition of existing buildings. Condition 2 refers to the approved details; condition 4 to landscaping and boundary treatment; condition 5 to submission of an Arboricultural Method Statement; condition 8 to cycle parking; condition 9 to drainage details; condition 12 to a lighting scheme and condition 13 to bin storage. The variation is to change the internal road layout of the site, to alter the wording of condition 4 to be prior to occupation, and to submit information required by conditions 5, 8, 9, 12 and 13.**

* Condition 2 appears to vary the original layout and Conditions 5,8,9,12 and 13 seem to be seeking reporting back on how these conditions will be met.  BPC should rely on the LPA to decide how well these meet the intentions of the conditions originally imposed
* For the sake of avoiding confusion at a later date, it is perfectly reasonable for landscape plans to me made available PRIOR to commencement of any work.  BPC sees the extent and quality of the proposed landscaping as very important and this be agreed in advance.

**220426** -26 Sandy Lane, Barkham, RG41 4DB

**Householder application for the proposed erection of a replacement garage with additional habitable accommodation following demolition of the existing garage.**

No comment

**220165** -Bearwood Park, Mole Road, Sindlesham, Wokingham, Berkshire

**Full application for an entrance gate at the access adjoining Mole Lodge for a temporary period of 3 years from the date of determination (of this application). (Retrospective)**

Barkham Parish Council Object to this application on the grounds that the design of the gate is inconsistent with the surrounding environment.

**220380** -102 Bearwood Road, Barkham, Wokingham, RG41 4SR

**Householder application for the proposed erection of a single storey side extension, and changes to external materials.**

No comment

**220421** -Parcel V2n, Biggs Lane, Arborfield Garrison, Arborfield

**Application for the approval of reserved matters pursuant to outline planning consent O/2014/2280 for the erection of 73no. dwellings within parcel V2N with associated internal access roads, parking,**

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**landscaping, open space, footpaths and drainage. (Access, Appearance, Landscaping, Layout and Scale to be determined).**

Barkham Parish Council feel the layout is, in the most part, regimented, unimaginative and this impression will be compounded by all the cars parked between the dwellings and roads.

The level of affordable housing appears to be very low (approx. 15%) – is this correct?

**220490** -Half Acre, Coombes Lane, Barkham, Wokingham, RG41 4SU

**Householder application for the proposed erection of rear extension.**

No comment

**220485** -25 Bearwood Road, Barkham, Wokingham, RG41 4TB

**Householder application for the proposed erection of a single storey rear extension.**

No comment

**220686 -** 13 Bearwood Road, Barkham, Wokingham, RG41 4TB

**(Retrospective) Householder application for the proposed erection of a boundary wall.**

No Comments. The Council will review nearer the comment deadline date to see if residents have any concerns

**220618 -** 5 Broom Grove, Barkham, Wokingham, RG41 4TX

**Application to vary condition 5 of planning consent 211180 for the Householder application for the proposed conversion of existing garage to create habitable space, and the erection of a first floor extension. Condition 5 refers to Restriction of permitted development rights and the variation is to Remove the wording North-East elevation within the condition 5, so instead windows and openings are only restricted at first floor level**.

BPC feels unable to comment on this proposed change of condition and believes WBC is in a better able to comment whether this revision is compatible with the original intent of the condition.

1. **Approved and Refused Applications**

**13928 -** 31 Barkham Ride, Barkham, RG40 4EX

**Full application for the temporary stationing of a sales office for a period of one year. Renewal of 202615**

This application was approved by WBC

**214097 - 1 Barkham Manor, Barkham Road, Barkham, Wokingham, RG41 4DQ**

**Application for Listed Building consent for the proposed dismantling, repair and rebuilding of the upper timber part of the front external entrance door canopy.**

This application was approved by WBC

**220129 - 18 Field Place, Wokingham, RG41 4EU**

**Householder application for the proposed erection of a single storey rear extension, including the insertion of 4no. roof lights.**

This application was refused by WBC

**214059** - 2 Bramshill Close, Arborfield, RG2 9PT

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**Householder application for the proposed development of a first floor rear extension, loft conversion, porch construction, canopy roof to the side elevation and internal alterations.**

This application was approved by WBC

**214151** -Chloes Cottage, Highlands Avenue, Barkham, RG41 4SP

**Application for a certificate of existing lawful development for the use of an existing structure to be used as a residential dwelling**.

This application was refused by WBC

**214166** -Silver Birches, Highlands Avenue, Barkham, Wokingham, RG41 4SP

**Full application for the change of use of residential curtilage (Use Class C3) to parking for a recycling centre (Use Class B2). (Retrospective)**

This application was refused by WBC

1. **Any Other Planning Business**

**Woodlands Farm / Instalcom Traffic –** Council discussed the traffic issues on Wood Lane at Woodlands Farm / Instalcom. It was agreed that the Clerk would contact the planning officer to see if and how further information can be submitted to the inspectorate.

**School Road Closure –** A letter has been sent to WBC Assistant Director for Highways to find out where the scheme is at, and whether the necessary permissions have been obtained, a response is awaited to be received. A follow up email will be sent to enquire about a Traffic Regulation Order for the closure.

**22/028 Clerks Report**

**Land at Highlands Avenue**

No progress has been made. The Clerk has had contact from the solicitors, the department that the Clerk spoke to has no record of this plot of land, and so was unable to help with any further information. There is still no information on the Land Registry site.

**Item ongoing**

* A question was raised as to whether this should continue due to not being able to progress. It was agreed that there would be one more attempt to contact the solicitors to find out the information about the site. If this is unsuccessful a decision on whether to continue will be made. Mr Dexter has a copy of the will and will send this to the Clerk, to aid enquiries with the solicitors.

**Enforcement Issues**

Land by Coppid Hill House – The Enforcement Officer has not managed access yet but will be doing soon.  However, he is aware (from evidence that he has obtained) that they have not complied with the notice.  The Officer will have to make a full inspection inside the building in order to follow with prosecution proceedings.

For information, the Officer will be creating a new RFS for this in order follow through with non-compliance with the notice and enable to him to put all the evidence and paperwork under a new reference case for ease.

* A question was raised as to why the enforcement officer has not been able to gain entry to Coppid Hill House to check compliance. The Clerk is to enquire this with the officer, and the Clerk will raise the point that if the owner is preventing access, this is contempt of court, and this can be reported to the

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judge. The Clerk is also to check that the 4 year period is not applicable due to the enforcement case being ongoing.

The Coombes –

* Land adjacent to White Heart Grove – No updates have been received regarding these cases since the last meeting
* Plot B. – No updates have been received regarding these cases since the last meeting
* Beech Wood – No updates have been received regarding these cases since the last meeting

**Items ongoing**

**Phone box Adoption**

No further progress has yet been made. The Clerk is not able to be given a point of contact at the MOD, and the requests for the MOD to contact the Clerk are going unanswered. Council needs to decide if they wish to continue looking into adopting the phone box.

**Item ongoing**

**Queens Platinum Jubilee**

The working group has met to discuss the event and identify possible activities for the day. The possible activities are being looked into further for costs and availability. A poster has been issued asking for volunteers / stall holders, this has gone into both the BVRA and Council magazines, is on both websites and is on the council notice boards.

**Item ongoing**

**School Road / Langley Common Road Junction**

The road Safety Group have requested an update from Highways on the traffic monitoring that WBC was to undertake at School Road / Langley Common Road, and are awaiting a response.

**Item Ongoing**

* Mr Heyliger received an update from highways. The junction is still to be assessed, which will hopefully occur in April.

**Bus Shelters**

The Clerk is obtaining quotes to have the bench at the Langley Common Road shelter repaired or replaced, and is obtaining quotes to replace the bus shelters, with new modern shelters. The insurance claim for the bus stop by The Bull, that was damaged by a car hitting it, resulting in the shelter’s removal is progressing.

**Item Ongoing**

**Trees at Barkham Fields (possible CIL Project)**

The Clerk informed WBC that the preferred option for tree planting at Barkham Fields is native trees. Wokingham will look at getting the trees planted in March, but this will depend on how quickly the trees can be sourced etc, and may be postponed until October, due to the time of year that is suitable for tree planting.

**Item Ongoing**

**Litter Pick**

WBC have confirmed that the annual litter pick will go ahead this year on the weekend of the 2nd and 3rd April. The Clerk will organise the litter pick for Barkham to take place on Sunday the 3rd April, but will require

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volunteers from the Council to put up the signs in advance of the litter pick and to help on the day. The litter pick will be organised to take place from the Village Hall.

**Item Ongoing**

**Village Hall Window Replacement – CIL Expenditure**

The Vice-Chair of the Village Hall has provided an update for the progress of the replacement of the windows at the Village Hall. The order has been placed along with a deposit. The first instalment for the payment is due to be paid, and the windows are due to be replaced the week of the 19th April (during the Easter holidays). Once the replacement has been completed the final balance will be paid.

**Item Ongoing**

**22/029 Delegated Authority Report**

The following decisions were made via Delegated Authority in February 2022 as the decisions were required to be made before the Council was due to meet in March.

**Response to Appeal**

A response to the below appeal needed to be submitted by 2nd March 2022. The below response was agreed by the Council to be submitted.

***Linked Appeals: APP/X0360/C/21/3289003 & APP/X0360/C/21/3289004***

***Planning Reference Numbers: 220186 & 220187***

***Land at The Coombes, Coombes Lane, Barkham, RG2 9JQ***

***Alleged breach of planning control consisting of – without planning permission - the material change of use of the Land for storage purposes.***

This location within The Coombes has a difficult and fractious planning history which stems from an unrealistic expectation of what could be achieved on the site since it was purchased by the current owners in 2018/19.

Barkham Parish Council (BPC) is aware of the resulting sensitivities of this case as described in Appendix A to the Appeal Statement and reported in the local press. However, regardless of how this case has been progressed, or not progressed, BPC is steadfast in its conviction that this area of The Coombes should be afforded the full and justifiable protection of the National Planning Policy Framework and Local Planning Policies as cited in the current Enforcement Notice dated 18 Nov 2021, effective 20 Dec 2021 and, where appropriate, provided by Wokingham Borough Council’s (WBC) Article 4 determination.

Accordingly, BPC opposes the storage of any materials not relevant to necessary and recognised forestry practices at this location.

We understand that the removal of *‘a shed, concrete foundations, a canvas and wood toilet, buildings materials and all the resulting debris’*, the subject of the Feb 2019 Enforcement Notice, was agreed following the Nov 2021 High Court hearing. The question regarding the storage of materials per se and implied change of use is a new concern that has yet to be dealt with.

Moreover, references in the Appeal Statement to *‘the staging of dismantled materials on the access track’* in Section 2.8 and to the access track in general elsewhere in Sections 2.3, 2.11, 3.6, 3.7 and 3.8 are confusing. If the word ‘staging’ is used as a euphemism for storage at an alternative location for an unspecified period of time, then this must also be addressed.

The Coombes is an important and popular recreational asset frequently used by walkers, cyclists and horse riders who take advantage of an extensive network of PROWs.

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They are designated as a Local Geological Site (LGS), a Local Wildlife Site (LWS) and a Habitat of Principal Importance as defined in Section 41 of the Natural Environmental and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 and were included in Natural England’s Ancient Woodland Inventory in 2020. The distinctiveness of the wooded ‘coombe’ valleys is recognised in the WBC’s 2020 Landscape Character Assessment where it is described as being particularly tranquil.

The diversity of the wildlife across The Coombes is demonstrated by a consolidated list compiled in 2020 comprising 1049 observations spanning 433 separate species which has been submitted to the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC).

BPC is concerned that the extended use of this site by allowing the storage of materials will jeopardise the appearance, ambience and tranquillity of the immediate area as well as adversely affecting the wildlife on the said location and that passing through it.

BPC very much supports the action taken by WBC in issuing this latest enforcement notice and requests that these appeals be dismissed.

**Increase in cost of Meeting Hall Hire**

The license on the meeting hall hires finishes at the end of March.  Crest have sent through the details to renew the license, however the cost has increased substantially, as they no longer do the discounted rates for the yearly bookings of the hall, so hiring will be charged £18.00 per hour for the use of the studio hall from April onwards, which for the years use, will total £594 (for 3 hours hire each month, excluding August) plus an extra half an hour in April for the parish meeting, unless this can be covered within the 3 hours.  This is more than we budgeted (£200 is budgeted), and so BPC will need to spend from general reserves to cover this, for this coming financial year.

For information, previously BPC managed to get the yearly hire rate pro-rated down to the hours it used the hall, so were only paying £17.31 per meeting (£5.77 per hour), and this is the rate that has ceased and all users now pay the hourly rate for their bookings.

A decision was needed to get the booking in place ready for April, and this was agreed under delegated authority.

**The Council agreed that the license is renewed from April at a cost of £18.00 per hour for 3 hours each month, totalling £594.00, plus an extra half hour if required for April.**

**Renewal of Phone and Broadband Contract**

The current contract for Phone and Broadband comes to an end on 13th March 2022.  The Council currently pays £18 per month line rental and £10 per month for inclusive calls totalling £28 per month excluding VAT.

The Council needed to decide whether to renew with Plusnet or change to another provider.  The Clerk researched other providers and the costs are below.  A decision to renew or change is required before before this date, so that any changes can be made before the contract ends.

Comparisons of providers from March 2022:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Provider | Line Rental  Per month | Call inclusion  Per month | Contract length | Total cost  Per month |

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|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Plusnet | £18.00 | £11.50 | 24 Months | £29.50 (Ex VAT) |
| Talk Talk | £22.45 (Ex VAT) | N/A – 5.5p per minute | 24 months | Variable |
| BT | £24.95 (Ex VAT) | N/A – 8.5p per minute | 24 months | Variable  Extra cost £30.00 set up fee |

From the comparisons, the Clerk recommended renewing with Plusnet.  They are the cheaper provider, with inclusive calls, and when The Clerk has experienced good service from them if any issues have arisen.

**The Council agreed that the contract is renewed with Plusnet, for 24 months at the cost of £29.50 (Ex VAT) per month.**

**22/030 Finance**

* 1. **Accounts** – Council agreed the accounts and payments for February to March 2022 LGA 1972 s150 (5)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Payments for February to March 2022 authorised at Council meeting on 8th March 2022 | | | |
| S/O | Staff Wages | £1089.03 | March 2022 salary (Includes annual Green Book Increase backdated for 11 months to 1st April 2021) - LGA 1972 s111 |
| DD | Nest | £113.16 | Pension Contribution Employer & Employee – March 2022 (Includes Increase backdated for 11 months to 1st April 2021) - LGA 1972 s111 |
| DD | Plusnet | £33.60 | Internet and phone charges – February 2022 - LGA 1972 s111 |
| DD | Lloyds Bank (Credit Card) | £202.20 | Credit Card bill – January Payments  £3.00 – monthly fee. – LGA 1972 s111  £199.20 – Defibrillator Battery Purchase - LGA 1972 s111 |
| BACS | Tivoli | £59.33 | Bin emptying – January LGA 1972 s111 |
| BACS | Staff Expenses | £54.23 | Mileage and travel costs (for August 2021 – March 2022) LGA 1972 s111 |
| BACS | Rialtas | £148.80 | Accounting Software annual fee LGA 1972 s111 |
| BACS | Abracadabra Distribution | £422.28 | Magazine distribution – March issue - LGA 1972 s142 |

The bank transactions will be authorised by Mrs Stubbs and Mr Bundred.

* 1. **Report on Monies received**

No monies were received

* 1. **Plaque for the Church –** Council agreed to fund the purchase of the two plaques which the church hopes to place in the church for Barkham war veterans who are currently not remembered in the village.

The estimates for the plaques are ex V.A.T.

The smaller plaque will be Bronze with white lettering and costs approximately £170.00

The council agreed that the larger plaque should be placed inside the church, it is to be Bronze at an approximate cost of £780.00.

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* 1. **Increase in Cost of Bin Emptying –** Council agreed to the increase in the cost to having the bin at The Coombes emptied. The cost will be £52.41 excluding VAT per month, an increase of £2.97 per month. Total cost including VAT per month will be £62.90 (increasing by £3.57).
  2. **Expenditure for litter pick signage & refreshments –** The signage for the annual litter pick needs to be updated with the date and time for the litter pick. Council agreed a budget (within the overall budgeted amounts) of £120 for to update the signage for the litter pick and £100 for the cost of refreshments.

**22/031 Parish Office Operations**

1. **Queens Jubilee Celebrations -** Council received an update from the Queens Jubilee Working Group, and agreed the charges to be applied for stalls etc to sell at the event as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Stall Type** | **Charge for stall** |
| Charity / local organisation | Free |
| Village Trader | £20.00 |
| Outside Trader | £25.00 |
| Food Stall | £35.00 |

1. **Phone Box Adoption –**Council decided that the Clerk should have one more attempt to contact the DIO regarding the phone box adoption. If this is unsuccessful a decision will be made to discontinue the proposed adoption.

**22/032 Councillors Forum**

Mr Scott raised the overnight works on Langley Common Road. The first time he saw the letter informing residents of the works, was when the Clerk forwarded the correspondence to the Councillors for information. The Clerk will check with a resident on Langley Common Road and Mr Wrobel will check with someone he knows on the road to see if they received a notification, to try to gauge how many houses were missed. The Clerk will then inform WBC of the missing notification(s). Mr Dexter had spoken with a resident of the road, who had received the notification, but he was unsure where on the road the resident lived.

Mr Dexter raised the Stile replacement at the end of Sandy Lane. WBC have asked if the council would like it replaced or left as a gap for walkers. Mrs Stubbs will make enquiries with walkers at the fields to obtain residents feedback and preferences. A decision will then be agreed via email under delegated authority to submit to WBC.

Mr Heyliger is arranging a road safety meeting in April with WBC. The socket for a socketed pole for the data logger is due to be installed outside Barkham Manor Farm, to assist with speed watch activities. Speed watch sessions are on hold until more information is obtained for the new equipment and process, as it is not clear what is required. He is working with Finchampstead Speed Watch to progress this, as Finchampstead is having issues with logging registration details.

Mr Scott asked about the speed limit reduction for Langley Common Road. Mr Heyliger responded to say it is on the list to discuss with WBC Highways at the next meeting.

Mrs Stubbs raised the Library/Lecture Theatre on the SDL. It is currently empty after being used temporarily by Bohunt School. Mrs Stubbs believes it is a building that should be used, according to a source that used to

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work for the site management company, the building is owned by the DIO not WBC. The Clerk will contact Crest to find out more information on the ownership and plans for the building.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 10.04pm.