

BARKHAM PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of meeting of the Barkham Parish Council held on 9th May 2017
in Barkham Village Hall at 8.00 p.m.

Present: Mrs P. Stubbs (in the Chair), Mr F. A. Scott, Dr. R. Loader, Mr L. Heath, Mr. D. Oxbrough, Mr. C. Heyliger, Mr K. Lane, Mr R. Rowe, Mr G. Dexter, Mr A. Crook, Mr J. Kaiser (Borough Councillor), one member of the public and the Clerk.

Apologies:

Declarations of Interests

None

Presentation from Reading Football Club and Barton Willmore (agents) regarding the planning application 163547 for the proposed development of the Hogwood Training Ground for up to 140 dwellings plus a SANG.

17/702 **Minutes** of meeting held on 11th April 2017 were approved and signed as a true record.

Meeting adjourned in order that any members of the public could address the Council on any matters or concerns relating to Barkham

17/703 Election of Chairman

Proposed: Mr Heath

Seconded: Mr Heyliger

Mrs Stubbs was unanimously elected as Chairman

17/704 Election of Vice Chairman

Proposed: Mrs Stubbs

Seconded: Mr Rowe

Mr Heath was unanimously elected as Vice Chairman

17/705 Appointment of Representatives

All appointments by unanimous vote

Barkham Village Hall Management Committee - Mr. Oxbrough, Mr Rowe and Mr Heyliger

District Parish Liaison Conference – Dr. Loader and Mrs Stubbs

BALC – Dr. Loader and Mrs Stubbs

WDALC – Dr. Loader and Mrs Stubbs

Parish Planning Control - Mr. F.A. Scott, Mr. C. Heyliger, Mr. L. Heath, Mr G. Dexter

Finance Committee – Mrs. P. Stubbs, Mr. R. Rowe and Dr Loader

Parish Footpaths - Mr. D. Oxbrough and Mr Heath

Trustees for Barkham Charity Trust - Mr. Clark, Mrs Stubbs. Dr. Firth, Rev Bickersteth and Mr. C. Barrows.

Veteran Tree Project – Mrs J. Firth and Mr Oxbrough.

Community Liaison Group with Crest – Mr Heath

Community Steering Group – Mr Heath

Parish/Town Forum Meetings with WBC – Mrs Stubbs (Mr Heath to act as deputy)

Neighbourhood Plan – Mr Heath, Mr Rowe and Mr Dexter

Infirmary Stables Future Use - Mr Crook

Community Centre at Arborfield Green – Mrs Stubbs, Mr Rowe, Mr Lane

17/706 Planning

The Planning Meeting was held during the full Council Meeting.

Minutes of meeting held on 11th April 2017 were approved and signed as a true record. The Planning Meeting due to be held on 25th April did not take place as there were no applications for consideration.

162120	1A Bearwood Road Householder application for proposed erection of two storey front extension and two storey side extension to dwelling plus new driveway access from Barkham Road	Approved
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A meeting was held with Marcia Head and Chris Easton (Highways) from WBC at the site to discuss the proposed new access from Barkham Road. It would now appear that a new building has been constructed in the garden that does not comply with the approved plans, Marcia has agreed to visit the property and check the agreed plans with the development and whether they fall with General Permitted Development rules. Mr Easton was adamant that the proposed new access meets with all the current guidelines for sight lines and visibility distances for traffic travelling at 30 mph. and declined an offer from BPC to demonstrate its concerns and refused a request from BPC for WBC to demonstrate why they thought these concerns were wrong. When asked by BPC if they could receive copies of site visit reports made by WBC reviewing the new access, Mr Easton advised that no such reports were made. It would be beneficial to have a traffic survey done to get an accurate account of the volume of traffic on that section of road and the average speed per vehicle once the road works are complete but again WBC declined to assist. Also need to consider putting in place a Vehicle Activation Speed device to slow down the traffic and to have a large 30 mph sign at the start of the hill and Mr Easton advised we would have to discuss this with the Traffic Department. It was agreed that WBC's handling of this application was unsatisfactory, particularly in not listing the application for the Planning Committee, and that the attitude of both the planning officers and the highway officer since BPC had complained had been both complacent and unhelpful. It was agreed that this situation should be referred to the ombudsman.

171158	Square One, Barkham Road Householder application for the proposed erection of a two storey rear extension to dwelling, following demolition of existing conservatory, erection of a front dormer extension and conversion of existing workshop/store to additional habitable accommodation with lantern roof.	Proposed No Comment
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171099	31 Barkham Ride, Finchampstead Full planning application for proposed change of use of land for the stationing of 8 mobile homes for residential use with associated landscaping and infrastructure following relocation of existing mobile homes, demolition of existing stabling and removal of existing all weather manege. Adjoining Parish Consultation	Proposed Opposed
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Clerk to reply to WBC, this is a residential site located in the countryside, the additional mobile homes will more than double the occupancy of the site, since for some of the proposed new mobile units are double units, and hence increase traffic on this already busy road. The site can be seen from the adjoining SANG Rooks Nest Wood and is not in keeping with the countryside location. WBC has already a 5 year land supply and further units are not justified.

171174	Pickwick, School Road Householder application for the proposed two storey rear, side and front extension plus single storey rear extensions to dwelling following demolition of existing garage. Mr Kaiser to list for consideration at the Planning Committee.	Proposed Opposed
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Clerk to reply to WBC stating that this is over development of the site and will be out of character with the local area. The proposed development will be extremely tight to the adjoining boundary.

171333	Parcel U2, Arbrofield Garrison Application for approval of reserved Matters pursuant to Outline Planning Consent O/2014/2280 for 79 dwellings with access from Biggs Lane with associated internal access roads, parking, landscaping and open space, footpaths/cycleways, Sustainable Urban Drainage sub station and gas governor.	Proposed No Comment
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170845	1,2 & 3 Coppid Hill, Barkham Road Application for a certificate of lawfulness for the proposed erection of a single storey rear extension across the existing dwellings.	
	<p>The planning officer Stefan Fludger has replied stating that the comments submitted by BPC are not required and cannot be considered as part of the determination for Certificates of Lawful Development. The Clerk also contacted Giles Stephens the Conservation Officer at WBC regarding the possibility of Local Listing for preservation purposes 'It does not place additional requirements for obtaining planning permission and has no impact on permitted development' in the 'Implications'. Inclusion on the TB26 list does not place any additional planning controls on the building. It does however flag it as a locally important heritage asset and that this local importance is a material consideration in any planning decision making.</p>	
170328	37 Almond Close Householder application for the conversion of loft to additional habitable accommodation plus the erection of a rear dormer extension and the installation of 5 roof lights on front elevation and 2 double roof lights on rear elevation. Retrospective.	Approved
170784	16 Bearwood Road Householder application for the proposed erection of a two storey side extension, single storey rear extension, single storey front extension to form porch, rear facing dormer extension, installation of 3 front facing roof lights and conversion of existing loft space to additional habitable accommodation, following demolition of existing garage.	Approved
162896	Land Off Coombes Lane, Coombes Lane Full Planning application for the proposed installation of a 27.5m lattice tower with 6 antennas and 9 microwave dishes, 1 paging antenna and a paknet antenna, an equipment cabin and development ancillary thereto within a fenced compound.	Approved
170396	Land Adjacent to Vine Ridge Farm, Sandy Lane Outline application for the proposed erection of 1 detached dwelling following demolition of existing outbuilding (access to be considered).	Refused
	<p>The Decision Notice was not available on the web site. Clerk to find out the reasons for refusal.</p>	
153323	Brook House, Barkham Street Proposed demolition of existing single storey dwelling and garage/store room and erection of single storey two bedroom replacement dwelling.	Granted At Appeal

The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area, with regard to the setting of the host building and the Area of Special Character.

Reasons:

1. The appeal site is an L shaped parcel of land which forms part of the garden of Brook House. It is occupied by a timber garage/store and an existing single storey dwelling, formerly a stable building. The site is outside of any defined settlement area and is in the countryside for development plan.
2. Brook House is a traditional 19th Century brick built farmhouse which fronts onto Barkham Street. Adjoining the site is a complex of converted farm buildings formerly associated with Brook House. The site is within a small cluster of development but the overall character and appearance of the area is rural.
3. The replacement dwelling would be single storey and would be of a similar height to the building it would replace. It would be sited further to the east than the existing building but it would still be within the property boundary. It would not be significantly higher than the existing building. The outbuilding would be removed which would consolidate the built form from two buildings to one. The development would not result in inappropriate increases in scale, form or footprint of the original building.

4. The site lies within the designated “Barkham Church and Manor” Area of Special Character ASC. The significance of the ASC is attributed to the traditional vernacular architecture and the scattered 18th and 19th Century buildings. The significance of Brook House and related farm buildings is due to their historic origins as a farmstead. Although the ASC does not enjoy the statutory status of conservation areas it is considered to be a non designated heritage.
5. The development would have the character and appearance of a separate dwelling, it would not be prominent due to its siting. The scale of the building would be significantly less than the converted barn to the north. The development would not erode the significance of the farmhouse or the wider ASC or have an adverse effect on the surrounding countryside.
6. Flooding concerns have been considered and drainage conditions have been imposed.

17/707 Highways

Byway 18

Notification received from WBC that WBC proposes to prohibit all motor vehicles from entering Public Byway 18 (Hogwood Lane) between its junctions with Sheerlands Road and the western end of the adopted section of Hogwood Lane. This is part of the Bohunt School development. Comments to be submitted by 15 May. Clerk to respond stating that BPC would like it be noted that at some future date, a section of the byway could be incorporated as part of an access road to a possible development of the site of the Reading Football Club training ground. It is BPC’s view that this would be a superior solution as it would link any such development directly towards the upgraded A327. This would be a much more acceptable solution than feeding traffic straight on to Park Lane and the existing overstretched local road network. It would also have the benefit of improving the linkage to the proposed village centre and other facilities, meaning that any possible development could more genuinely become an extension of the SDL.

The Vehicle Activated Sign at Coppid Hill is obscured by overhanging trees, Clerk to request the trees are cut back.

A follow up meeting with Matthew Gould (Highways WBC) to discuss the speed limits and other highway related matters is to be arranged for early July. Clerk to arrange the date of the meeting.

Barkham Welcome Signs

BPC have now heard from WBC regarding the positioning of the additional “Welcome To Barkham” signs.

1. Langley Common Road – up by the roundabout with A327 on the opposite side of the road to the bus stop. Clerk to request that the sign is positioned on the same side of the road but closer to Rickman Close.
2. School Road – on the Parish boundary. It is possible to place a sign opposite the entrance to Wood Lane near the telegraph pole. Agreed
3. Rooks Nest Wood, Barkham Ride – sign to be placed in the entrance to the car park in front of the tree. Agreed
4. Commonfield Lane – at Parish boundary. This is not recommended, there is a large amount of vegetation growth in the area, plus a ditch running in the verge. As development of Arborfield Green is progressing it is suggested that we hold off until works are completed. Agreed

Cost for each sign will be £561.60. (3 x £561.60 = £1684.80). Clerk to clarify that the cost covers the purchase of the signs + installation. Funds have been earmarked in the Precept amounting to £5,400 for Gateway and Footpath signs.

Footpaths

BPC were contacted by Lodden Valley Ramblers who are an experienced team able to remove awkward stiles and replace with kissing gates to improve access to the countryside. A kissing gate with fixings are approx. £400. Mr Oxbrough and Mr Heath have decided that the four stiles on Barkham Way are best left as stiles due to the nature of the terrain and the frequent use of the fields involved with livestock. The Coombes is now largely free of stiles so there would be no need there. One footpath that does have two stiles is BA7, but because of the cost it is suggested that we leave this issue until we get a request from a parishioner for kissing gates or the existing stiles need replacement. The cost of installing an Oxford timber kissing gate is £200.00

Mr Oxbrough brought in the new footpath signs for the two new routes, Barkham Way and The Coombes Circular Walk also the way markers. Everyone was most impressed with the signs which are stylish, clear and robust. He asked for volunteers to help him install the signs on Barkham Way next week.

Footpath BA7 adjoining The White House off Barkham Street has over the years become narrower and narrower. The property is currently for sale. Mr Rowe to view the deeds at the Land Registry for a cost of £3.50, in order to establish the exact ownership of the land.

17/708 Litter

There have been numerous fly tips along Commonfield Lane which have all been reported to WBC. There is still one pile past Highbarn Farm on the right that requires clearing. Clerk to remind WBC.

17/709 Finance and to approve the accounts for the year ended 31.3.2017

G. Stevens – installation of defibrillator at Post Office (Replaces chq no 218 made payable G. Stevens Electrical Services)	223	£216.00 (£180.00 exc VAT)
Arborfield & Newland Parish Council – engagement of professional planning consultant for Neighbourhood Plan 50% of cost shared with Arborfield	224	£1640.34 (£1366.95 exc VAT)
J. Neuhofer – B.T. & Broadband 23/4/17 – 22/7/17	225	£220.41 (£183.68 exc VAT)
Berkshire County Training – D. Oxbrough Social Media	226	£12.00 (£10.00 exc VAT)
Barkham Village Hall – rent of hall January – April	227	£115.00
J. Neuhofer – purchase of Local Council Administration Book	228	£78.40 (£73.60 exc VAT)
DSC Security – keypad for office door at Community Centre	229	£118.80 (£99.00 exc VAT)
C. Connell – internal audit fee	230	£185.00
J. Neuhofer – purchase of ink cartridges	231	£113.77 (£94.81 exc VAT)
Standing Order for Clerk’s salary for May		£742.80
Standing Order to Royal Bor. Windsor – Pension Fund for Clerk for month of May (Employee & employer contribution)		£197.41

The Clerk reported that Mrs. Connell the Internal Auditor had audited the accounts and everything was in order. She recommended that the standing orders that were last updated in 2006 should be reviewed against the latest model versions of standing orders and financial regulations available from NALC.

Recommendations:

“Section 1.14 in Governance & Accountability 2016 states that “The authority needs to have in place standing orders and financial regulations governing how it operates. Financial regulations need to incorporate provisions for securing competition and regulating the manner in which tenders are invited. These need to be regularly reviewed, fit for purpose, and adhered to”.

Last year I recommended that the standing orders be updated with reference to the model template and that financial regulations should be introduced. I feel that this is important as Barkham Parish Council is seeking to expand its activities due to the growing population.

I note that during the year there was some discussion regarding the updating of standing orders but updated documents have not yet been taken to the Council for review. My advice therefore remains unchanged. As the Council starts to increase its level of activity as evidenced by the acquisition of a separate office, this becomes more important”.

She commented about risk assessment. The Clerk noted that the Council needed to minute formally the discussion regarding risk assessments that had taken place earlier in the year, when the insurance renewal was being considered. The Council’s annual return included affirmation that the Council had considered its risk assessment policies and processes, and further guidance on the ways which risks were identified and then managed was provided in the Practitioners’ Guide to the new audit process. It was acknowledged that the Council’s annual budget was small and that the Council did not have any public facilities. Most of its expenditure was on administration and enabling grants to community organisations, and income other than precept, interest and the VAT refund was minimal. Overall risk levels were considered low.

The Practitioners' Guide indicated three areas for managing risks:

1. **Using Insurance** – the Council was required to have the mandatory insurance cover for public, employer and similar liabilities, and the other principal risk to be covered was property damage to street furniture and office equipment. Insurance had therefore been effected for these areas. Fidelity insurance was considered not to be necessary as cash handling was minimal and procedures for approving expenditure and signing cheques were considered strong.
2. **Working with third parties** – play area inspection checks are to be carried out by Wokingham Borough Council.
3. **Self-management of risks** – the Council considered the internal controls in place, notably the approval of all payments by the Council; the accounting systems maintained by the Clerk; the budgetary review process; and the annual review by internal audit. The Council considered that existing controls and procedures were appropriate for the annual expenditure levels.

It was agreed that the arrangements for risk management are appropriate.

Mrs Stubbs has duly signed the annual governance statement on behalf of Barkham Parish Council and has signed the statement confirming that the accounting statements are approved by Barkham Parish Council.

17/710 **To Discuss the Standing Orders for Barkham Parish Council** – Mr Scott

Mr Scott circulated suggestions to amend the NALC Model Standing Orders, his suggestion was to create multiple documents, A Chairman's Guide, a Councillors Guide and a reduced version of the Standing Orders. After a lengthy discussion it was decided to adopt the NALC Model Version, these have been prepared by NALC and are suitable for 2017 taking into account all relevant legislation. BPC will soon be evolving to a different way of working and expanding as the number of residents in the Parish doubles its size. If ever BPC was challenged having these Standing Orders in place will be of paramount importance.

A vote was taken to adopt the NALC Model Standing Orders in their entirety.

Proposed – Dr Loader

Seconded – Mr Dexter

7 in favour, 3 against, carried by the majority.

Clerk to prepare an updated version of the NALC Model Standing Orders for BPC and circulate to all councillors.

10.00 p.m. A vote was taken to continue the meeting. All Agreed.

17/711 **To Discuss the Parish Office at the Community Centre**

Mrs Stubbs reported that the phone line was still required in the Parish Office, she will speak to Crest. The office to be used on 22nd May for a meeting with Crest and then for a Neighbourhood Plan meeting. After the election Councillor Kaiser will start to hold a monthly surgery for residents on a Saturday morning. Mrs Stubbs regularly visits the Centre and will endeavour to find out what other activities are held there.

17/712 **To Discuss the future working with Thames Valley Police**

Mr Heyliger reported that several members of BPC had attended the training session regarding the use of the SID (Speed Indication Device). All names had been noted and checks are now being carried out by the police. Volunteers can work within their own Parish and assist in other Parishes. It was unclear at this stage how often the equipment would be made available for use in each Parish. It was decided to withhold the contribution of £200 until a clearer idea of frequency of use of the equipment is apparent. Alastair Lloyd should be contacted for an update.

17/713 **Local Plan Update** – Mr Heath

Crest will give a presentation to BPC regarding Parcel Q on Monday 22 May at 1.00 p.m. at the Community Centre at Arborfield Green.

17/714 **Neighbourhood Plan** – Mr Heath

Progress is still being made with the focus groups and a draft plan is virtually complete. A meeting with WBC has been arranged. Numerous papers and documents are now available on the web site to view.

17/715 To receive the BALC report – Dr Loader

Dr Loader reported that BALC was now free from the CCB. It is still located within the same office building at Swallowfield with a new phone number under the guidance of Jayne Kirk employed full time to give advice to Councils.

17/716 Borough Councillor's Report – Mr Kaiser

Mr Kaiser reported that there had been numerous changes at WBC. David Lee is now the Chairman of the Conservative Party. Charlotte Haitham Taylor (Shinfield PC) is the leader of the Council. John Kaiser is the deputy Mayor, he will continue to sit on the Planning Committee and is involved with the Local Plan. A review of the preferred sites has now been delayed.

The Arborfield By Pass – the line of the road has now been decided and it has been agreed to purchase the necessary land required. A planning application will be submitted for approval to WBC.

17/717 Correspondence

- a. CCB – request for membership renewal 2017 – 18, the cost remains at £30. It was decided not to renew the membership of CCB.
- b. WBC Andy Glencross – request for a meeting to discuss the future ownership and management of the proposed allotment sites on the Arborfield SDL. These allotments will fall within Swallowfield and therefore no one will be attending.

17/718 Councillors Forum

Welcome Map

Mr Lane reported that Emma has almost completed the changes to the 'welcome map' having taken in comments and changes to the parish boundaries, but not quite in time for tonight's meeting. She has also been looking at the front cover. The Arborfield Green logo is seen as lasting longer than the marketing of the houses and will be used as the logo. He also reported that the Post Office has agreed that all addresses on AG will be xxx Rd, Arborfield Green, and not Arborfield. So Arborfield Green is not a 'marketing' designation for the area but the actual name. This seems a good reason to have the logo bigger on our map and Emma has been asked to amend it.

Rebecca Eytel has advised that in conjunction with WBC and the Army Welfare service, they are looking at organising a community lunch/ BBQ on the Cricket Green at Arborfield Green on Saturday 22nd July 12-3pm.

Meeting closed at 10.55 p.m.

Next meeting of full Council will be held on 13th June 2017 at 8.00 p.m.

Next meeting of Planning Committee will be held on 23rd May 2017 at 7.30 p.m.