

BARKING PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting held at Barking Village Hall Annexe at 7.00pm on Thursday 17th January 2019

Present: Cllr R Fellowes (Chair), Cllr A Smith (Vice-Chair), Cllr A Ross, Cllr M Lillie, Cllr M Bailey and County Cllr K Oakes

Attending: Lucinda Rogers (Clerk) and five members of the public

Bpc152/18 Apologies for Absence

District Cllr A Killett and Cllr M Smith(working) – apologies accepted

Bpc153/18 Declaration of Interest and Requests for dispensation

No declaration of interests declared or requests for dispensation had been received.

Bpc154/18 County Cllr Kay Oakes

Citizen's Advice Bureau – reduction in SCC grant – Cllr Oakes is part of a group against cuts to this service. There is a survey to measure the strength of feeling about the service.

Additional funding for Highways was announced in the Autumn budget and Suffolk got £9.67m that has to be spent by 31 March. Highways has hired three thermal packing machines and crews which will be used for major patching on roads across Suffolk. Highways are assessing B roads for work – separate to the 250 miles that will be surfaced dressed this year. The machines can work in wet and cold. Additional money will also be spent on clearing filtration tanks at A1120 Cedars link in Stowmarket and major long term flooding sites, signs and lines on major routes and on repairs to town centre pavements in Stowmarket, Haverhill and Felixstowe

Bpc155/18 District Cllr John Matthiessen on behalf of District Cllr Anne Killett

Budget Proposals and Council Tax for 2019/20

The draft budget for the next financial year has been discussed by MSDC Cabinet. Despite a projected underspend of just over £1.6 million, the Council is proposing an increase in Council Tax of 2%. The Council is also proposing further borrowing of around £25 million to invest in commercial properties; this is in addition to £25 million borrowed and invested in commercial properties such as a car showroom in Milton Keynes and Marks and Spencer in Brentwood. There are already concerns that the current value of existing investments may be below the total purchase price; the wisdom of further borrowing to invest in commercial properties outside of our district is being questioned. The draft budget proposes transferring the £1.6 underspend from 2018/19 to a commercial risk management reserve to mitigate risks associated with the borrowing and commercial investment.

The Green Party opposition councillors are not in favour of borrowing further huge sums of money but would support borrowing to build homes for sale and rent. We could provide energy-efficient high-quality homes to help alleviate the housing shortage, bringing in income through New Homes Bonus, Council Tax and Rents and helping towards securing a five-year supply of housing land, meeting our commitments for housing completions and providing homes for social rent. **Joint Local Plan and Five-Year Land Supply for Housing Development** Members are being led to believe that work is in progress and, when complete, an accurate and defensible figure for housing land supply will be available. A briefing has been arranged for Wednesday 16 January to give members up-to-date details, and to explain why there are further delays to the Joint Local Plan. **Refuse Collection Contract** Cabinet have agreed in principle to extending the current contract with Serco for a further 7 years, from 2021 to 2028. **Joint Communities Strategy** Cabinet have approved a draft Communities Strategy for public consultation. The community strategy is a means to achieving the aim of community capacity building, with the aim of all communities thriving, growing, healthy, active and self-sufficient. A key principle is that the District Council has a role of facilitating rather than directly providing, such that individuals, families and communities are empowered. The strategy aims for prevention, in order to reduce demand on all District Council services. The strategy may well be looking to enhance the role of Parish Councils, so it would be interesting to know your views on this. Do look out for the consultation. **Joint Parking Plan** Consultants, on behalf of Babergh and Mid Suffolk Councils, have drafted a policy for consultation and future consideration by the two Cabinets. Policies and parking charges in the separate districts are currently very different and it will be interesting to see whether or not a

compromise can be reached which is acceptable to both districts. **Locality budget** I have now allocated my locality budget, with funds for Barking Village Hall, Offton and Willisham Village Hall, Somersham Community Pub, Somersham and District Community Association, Nettlestead Church car park and The Mix in Stowmarket.

Bpc156/18 Public Forum

No members of the public present

Bpc157/18 Co-option of New Councillor

Mark Lillie was welcomed to the Council and signed his declaration of Acceptance of Office and will complete and return his Register of Interests to the Clerk

Bpc158/18 Correspondence

Request for grants to be considered later on the agenda

Confirmation from The Planning Inspectorate that if a footpath is constructed on the Tye, substitute land is not required

Bpc159/18 Grass Cutting Contract

Two quotes for the grass cutting for the next year have been received £4322 and £6400. The Council agreed to choose the lower quote and remain with Vertas. Clerk to ask for one less cut per year to reduce the price further.

To help reduce the damage from strimming to the play equipment Cllr Smith has offered to place metal collars around the base of the play equipment posts.

Bpc160/18 Tree Work

The trees at The Fox have been reduced but there is one tree which is leaning and needs to be removed. Agreed to ask James Firmin to carry out the work as per his quotation.

Trees at Willow Cottage – not an urgent matter – Clerk to inform the occupants that they may have permission to carry out the work they wish to do

A tree has been felled on the Tye without the Council's permission – Clerk to write to explain that permission must be sought.

Agreed for Cllr Smith to cut the hedge at Cameron Croft and clean the ditch at £25 per hour

Bpc161/18 Planning Matters - APP/W3520/W/18/3216827 and APP/W3520/W/18/3216828

The two planning appeals are linked and agreed to continue to reject any development of the sites. Clerk to re-send the response given to the previous appeal and to check that is the correct procedure.

Bpc162/18 Boundaries of The Tye

Bridge Cottage laurel hedge – has been removed

Land to the North of The Tye easement request – due to the strength of opposition from the village it was decided to not offer an easement for this development. Clerk to write.

Bpc163/18 Village Beacon

Cllrs agreed to consider possible locations and to defer a decision to the next meeting

Bpc164/18 Village Hall Cupboard

The cupboard has been emptied and some of the contents are to be stored in the village hall and some at the Clerk's house. Cllr Bailey to ask the Village Hall Management Committee for locked storage at the hall for some items.

Bpc165/18 Grants

Agreed to offer grants to the following organisations: CAB Stowmarket, SARS, Neighbourhood Watch, Needham Market 1st Responders and St Mary's Church. The amounts to be decided at the March meeting

Bpc166/18 Finance

Unfortunately no Financial Report was available

Cllrs agreed to accept the budget.

Cllrs agreed to maintain the Precept at £9,000 = £53.16 Council Tax and no change on the 2018 Band D figure

Bpc167/18 Traffic VAS Signs

Cllr Fellowes to follow up with Dan Burke to discuss positioning of the camera posts. There is a tree obscuring the sign at the Nursing Home bend.

Bpc168/18 Defibrillator and Weeding Village Hall Carpark

Cllr Fellowes has generously given time to clean the kiosk. Decided to defer the formation of a weeding party for the village hall carpark until the next meeting.

Bpc169/18 Village Hall Management Committee

Cllr Bailey reported that the new taps have been installed in the kitchen and the worktops need to be replaced. The storage cupboards in the hall are to be removed in time for the pantomime and the stage to be set up.

Bpc170/18 Questions to the Chairman

Cllr Lillie offered to combine giving the welcome pack to new people to the village with his Neighbourhood watch role.

Potholes outside the village hall need to be filled.

Pond by the village hall to be cleared by Tim Edwards and Cllr Smith to cart away the rubbish. Hopefully this will reduce flooding.

BP171/18 Date of the Next Meeting

Date of next scheduled meeting will be on Thursday 21st March 2019 at 7pm

Meeting closed at 9.25

ChairmanDate