



**MINUTES OF BARNHAM AND EASTERGATE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING  
HELD VIRTUALLY ON TUESDAY 26<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2021**

Due to the COVID19 Pandemic this meeting took place virtually using Microsoft Teams following government legislation allowing Parish Councils to undertake meetings in this manner.

**Present:** Chris Allington (Chair): Dick New (Vice-Chair): Paul Ayling: Phil Cramp: Andy Earwaker: Heather Kilroy: David Phillips: John Robinson: Ella Simmons: Isabel Thurston: Sue Wallsgrove:

**In attendance:** Alison Crabb (Clerk): Nina McMaster (Assistant Clerk): 1 member of the public

1. **Open Public Session – The member of the public present only wished to listen**
2. **Apologies – Parish Councillor, Rob Bates: County Councillor, Derek Whittington:**
3. **Declarations of Interest**  
None declared at this point on the agenda.
4. **County and District Councillor Inputs**

County Councillor Derek Whittington had given apologies and had nothing specific to report.

Isabel Thurston, in her capacity as District Councillor, mentioned there was lots going on and the only thing worth noting was that the Local Plan as currently being revisited, mainly in view of the lack of a 5-year land supply.

5. **Minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2020**

**Resolved:**

**That the minutes of Barnham & Eastergate Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> December 2020 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting and be signed by the Chair of the Council.**

6. **Finance**
  - 6.1 The Clerk had circulated a list of payments made since the last meeting. All payments were **noted** and no issues were raised.
  - 6.2 The end of the third quarter accounts were presented and it was **noted** that other than the major expenditure budget line all other areas were keeping on budget.
  - 6.3 Payroll Service Provider – The Clerk had received notice from the Council's payroll service provider that she would cease to provide the services at the end of the financial year. The Clerk had investigated alternatives and recommended to Council the appointment of R S Hall & Co (the internal auditor) to provide payroll services to the Council from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 at a cost of £120 + VAT per annum. The Council **approved** the Clerk's recommendation.

#### **6.4 Felling of 1 no. Ash Tree located on Eastergate Recreation Ground**

Following receipt of the biannual tree survey report undertaken on behalf of the Council by Arun District Council the Clerk had had to organise quotes for the felling of 1 no. Ash Tree located on Eastergate Recreation Ground due to the danger it posed. The quotes received were of significant enough cost to warrant agreement of Full Council to award the contract.

The quotes received had different solutions to the felling process and therefore significant different costs. The main difference being the proposal on whether to immediately remove the tree from site or to stack it until it could be removed when the weather improved.

Following a discussion the Council **agreed** to accept the quote submitted by John Bentley, but that at this time they would only ask that the tree be felled and stacked. The costs to potentially remove the wood in due course would not currently be approved as it was felt there might be other ways to remove the wood such as offering residents to come and take away amounts for their personal use. The Council also agreed that they would not contract the work to grind out the stump, but would leave the stump in place as it was situated in such a position to cause no danger to users of the Field.

#### **Resolved:**

- 1. To note the payments that had been processed since the last meeting**
- 2. To note the end of quarter 3 summary of accounts**
- 3. To appoint R S Hall as the new Payroll Service Provider to the Council**
- 4. To award the contract to John Bentley to Fell and stack 1 no. Ash Tree on Eastergate Recreation Ground.**

#### **7. Consideration of the draft budget for 2021/22**

Following consideration of a draft budget for 2021/22 at the last meeting of the Full Council in December, and following notification of the Council's taxbase for 2021/22 by ADC, which was lower than anticipated, the Clerk had revisited the budget and prepared a paper with options on the levels of precept to be requested to meet various potential budget scenarios, based on the assumptions discussed in December, as follows:

- a. Approve a precept that enables the Council to achieve it's budget as set out in the draft document i.e. £130,043 a 3% increase per Band D household to £60.91 per household
- b. Approve a precept of £133,543 that enables the Council to restart the build-up of it's reserves to £10,000 which would result in a 5.77 % increase per Band D household £62.55 per household
- c. Approve a precept of £139,043, which enables the Council to make up it's bank balance deficit from the start of the financial year and achieve the E10k reserves build-up in 2021/22 which would result in a Band D Council Tax figure of £65.13
- d. Approve a precept of £144,043 to include the £5k grant to ABE CLT which would result in a Band D Council Tax figure of £67.47

The following points were noted in the discussion that took place before a decision was reached:

- Option a. was dismissed as the potential end of year deficit would mean no build-up of reserves.

- Option c. was also dismissed as it was felt that at this time such a large increase in Council Tax would not be the right option to pursue.
- Option (d) had been added to potentially provide the funding to cover the expected request from ABE CLT for a £5000 towards costs for provision of affordable housing the Parishes of Aldingbourne and Barnham and Eastergate grant (the Council had given an 'in principle' agreement to provide this funding subject to detailed information on what it would be spent on and the direct benefits to the Parish). However, the request had arrived earlier than anticipated but failed to give the information required to enable the Council to release funds at this time.

The discussion that followed concluded that the decision not to release funding at this time was the correct one and that the ABE CLT be encouraged to seek sites and developments within the Barnham and Eastergate Parish which would enable the Council to release funds. It was also agreed that the funds would be taken from reserves if/when required and therefore option d would not be considered in the precept decision.

- Option b. was felt to be on the right course but even the 5.77% increase was felt high and was not in line with the proposed County Council increase of 5%.

In conclusion, a recommendation was put forward to agree a 5% increase which would result in a precept figure of £132,455 and the Clerk be asked to adjust the budget using the approved figure and submit the figure to ADC.

**Resolved:**

- 1. That the Council approve a precept figure of £130,455 which will result in a 5% increase in Band D Council Tax households to £62.04 from £59.14**
- 2. That the budget be approved subject to minor adjustments following approval of the precept figure**
- 8. Vehicle Activated Signs for the Parish**

The Clerk had circulated on behalf of Isabel Thurston a list of 5 potential locations for the deployment of the 2 Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS) for the Parish that had been approved for purchase at the last meeting. The sites were: two along the Barnham Road, two along the Yapton Road and one on Fontwell Avenue. The Clerk confirmed that, subject to approval of the potential sites by the Council, the next step would be assessment by WSCC as to the suitability of the sites. It was noted that identification of the exact lampposts would be required and that one site on Yapton Road involved a telegraph pole. Purchase of the signs had not yet been set in motion so funding would almost certainly be rolled forward to 2021/22.

**Resolved:**

**The Council approved the list of potential sites and it was also agreed to consider an additional site near Elm Grove South (the Chair agreed to identify a suitable location). The Clerk would now contact WSCC to look to move to the assessment of sites stage of the process**

## **Planning Matters**

**9.1** The Council noted the minutes of the Planning & Environment Committee held on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2020.

**9.2** In addition the Chair of the Committee, Sue Wallsgrove updated Council on the strong objection that had been submitted in relation to the potential development on Land South of Barnham Station (Tars Farm) and the Chair of the Council also highlighted the key points of objection that he felt had been strongly made and should be taken into account in the decision to be made by ADC. She also made mention of the excellent engagement that they had had with developers involved in the Warwick Nurseries development (part of the Strategic Development) and that they had put them up as a beacon for other developers to follow.

### **10. Revised Barnham and Eastergate Neighbourhood Plan**

The Council **noted** that the closing date for Reg 14 consultation responses had recently passed and that the responses were currently being analysed by the Neighbourhood Plan Team. Once the Team had undertaken their analysis an opportunity for all Councillors to discuss their findings would be arranged prior to a formal discussion on the final proposals and agreement on the next steps coming to Full Council for approval in March.

### **11. Community Facilities Update**

**11.1** The Assistant Clerk informed the Council that football might return to Eastergate Field in February and that Richard Timlick was doing an excellent job keeping the Field tidy following approval to task him to undertake additional duties.

**11.2** The Assistant Clerk informed the Council that both Community Halls were currently closed except for the operation of the pre-school at Barnham. Also ADC had released further government grant funding to both Halls.

**11.3** Following the final issues surrounding the handover of Eastergate Hall to the Barnham and Eastergate Community Trust there was one last issue to be resolved between the Parish Council and the Trust and that was the agreement by the Council to enter into a Licence to Operate agreement with the Trust to enable them to run Barnham Community Hall which remains a Parish Council asset. The previous licence had now been updated and it was suggested that it be made a 5 year agreement, with the ability of either party to break the agreement with a one year notice period. There would be no monthly rent, but the Trust would be asked to contribute towards the staff cost of the Assistant Clerk for her duties as Eastergate Hall Manager.

### **Resolved:**

**The Council agreed to the terms of the Licence and approved the signature by the Chair in due course.**

### **12. Parish Council Communications**

#### **12.1 Production and circulation of a Parish Newsletter**

It was noted that a revised version of the newsletter that had been prepared but not published just prior to the pandemic had been revisited and was at a final draft stage. Subject to amendments following discussions at this meeting it would be circulated to all Councillors for

swift comment before being sent to ADC to provide the final printed document. At this point in the meeting the Annual Parish Assembly was mentioned and it was felt it should be put in the newsletter to encourage people to put forward suggestions for the agenda.

**Post Meeting Note: the Clerk has since recommended that as there was the potential that face to face meetings could resume in May the Annual Parish Assembly date should be moved to take place on 25<sup>th</sup> May prior to the Annual Parish Council meeting and this has been put in the newsletter. A fall-back position of a virtual meeting will of course also be investigated and agreed.**

#### **12.2 Parish Council Facebook page**

The Assistant Clerk updated Council on a recent course she had attended run by SSALC to show the benefits of a Parish Council Facebook page and how it could be used and run. The Council **agreed** that this should now be pursued but that a formal proposal on the details of operation, together with any associated policy documents required for approval be prepared and circulated for approval before it is launched and advertised.

**Resolved: That the Assistant Clerk:**

- 1. finalises the content and production of a Newsletter ready for delivery**
- 2. finalises a formal proposal together with required policy documents for approval of the establishment of a Facebook Page for the Council.**

#### **13. Report by Chair of the Council**

The Chair had recently circulated an update on the latest BEWAG meeting that he had attended on behalf of the Council but mentioned that ADC were now running the meetings in a much better and useful way. The Group had also received a presentation from Lichfields in respect of the southern part of the Strategic Site; and the next stage in the planning process for the norther site will come forward later this year.

The Chair also took the opportunity to formally recognise and congratulated Louise Beaton on her OBE award in the New Year's Honours List for her work with rural communities.

#### **14. Report by the Clerk of the Council**

The Clerk mentioned a few issues as follows:

Lorries accessing Elm Grove South – Highways confirmed cannot provide signage

Gulley emptying along Barnham Road being pursued

Note that the 10 year Census will take place this year and Councillors are asked to encourage people to complete it as it is a legal requirement for people to do so.

Litter problems continue to exist – the newsletter is seeking volunteers to come forward to participate in future organised litterpicks.

Tree felling at Murrell's Field required – 10 poplar trees on western boundary behind houses on Church Lane. Rob Sparrow has submitted a quote which the Clerk has accepted and confirmed the works be undertaken.

**15. Dates of Meetings for 2021/22 agreed and will now be published on website**

**All Tuesdays at 7.30 p.m. and will take place virtually until restrictions are lifted:**

**13<sup>th</sup> April**

**25<sup>th</sup> May (to now be preceded by the Annual Parish Assembly see item 12 post meeting note)**

**6<sup>th</sup> July**

**7<sup>th</sup> September**

**19<sup>th</sup> October**

**7<sup>th</sup> December**

**25<sup>th</sup> January 2022**

**8<sup>th</sup> March 2022**

**16. The next meeting will take place virtually on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2021 at 7.30 p.m.**

The Meeting Closed at 9.16 p.m.

**Signed by: .....**

**Chair, Barnham and Eastergate Parish Council**