

## **BARLING MAGNA PARISH COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting for the Parish of Barling Magna held on Thursday, 24th April 2014, in the Barling Magna Village Hall, 432 Little Wakering Road, Barling Magna, SS3 0LP commencing at 7.30 p.m.**

**Present:-** Councillors Bines, Edmunds, Gardiner, Jones (Vice Chair), Knight (Chair), and Steptoe.

**In attendance:-** J. Watson (Clerk)

- 1. To appoint the Chairman of the Annual Parish Meeting.**  
In accordance with the Local Government Act 1972, Councillor Knight, being the Chair of the Parish Council for 2013/2014 presided.
- 2. To receive the Chair's opening remarks.**
  - a. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting
- 3. To receive, consider and approve the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 9th May, 2013.**
  - a. Proposed Councillor Steptoe, seconded Councillor Jones that the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 9th May, 2013 be approved. Carried.
- 4. To receive the report of the Chair of Barling Magna Parish Council.**
  - a. The Chair gave her report for the year (*copy attached*).
- 5. To permit Parishioners to address the meeting.**
  - a. No Parishioners address the meeting
- 6. To close the meeting.**
  - a. Meeting closed at 7.40 pm

**Retiring Chairman's Address  
Barling Magna Parish Council May 2014.**

**Ivy E Knight**

This year appears to have gone very quickly, I came back to the Chair in order to attempt to help move things along so that we did not have the constant disappointment of appearing to be sometimes going round in circles. When John joined us as clerk I explained that I would have a bucket list of items, long outstanding which I would endeavour to bring to a conclusion so that we could move on with new projects. Of these 12 items only 6 of them have come to completion.

These were:

- a) The PA system for use in and outdoors for events.
- b) The Wifi connection to the village hall site.
- c) After 5 years effort, the heavy duty tractor mower for the Wildlife Reserve, although less than half the mower was 50% grant funded, and we agreed to take the lesser equipment rather than lose our grant for the bigger machine. This is now on site.
- d) Resurrection of the Citizen of the Year, after almost three years absence. In spite of the debacle and difficulties arising, this was eventually completed and effort must be made to ensure that deserving citizens continue to win it in future..
- e) Completion to date of the honours boards, again over 3 years adrift.

Some of the items remaining on that list could still be achieved with a minimum of effort if the will is there. Namely the seat for the elderly on the green, adjacent to the village sign, The maintenance of the private hedges shrouding our site lines on the village corner. The New Notice boards to keep residents posted on fund raising activities.

The famous Borrodyke Bridge. I think climbing Everest would have been easier. It has been fraught with problems, hold-ups and aggravation from day 1 and I personally, have been working on it for 5 years, and will not give up until I see some proper answers to the questions. A Land Title Deed to prove ownership for the land we are supposed to be buying and a site visit from the EA, at which we are present to clarify once and for all their responsibility. Every day I hear from knowledgeable people that they cannot understand the difficulty since it is a recognised bonus to the footpath network of the area. This was confirmed recently with many top executives from RDC on site at the WLR on a volunteer day.

2014 has seen the completion of the purchase of the Village Hall Freehold and this has given us a new and mighty ambition – to rebuild the Village Hall and give our village a new and important stance offering greatly improved facilities for our residents. This will not be easy or soon, it will be hard work and sacrifices will have to be made by many. It is important that those at the sharp end are given all the support and encouragement they need to succeed. It will not happen overnight but success is only as far away as we make it. We must resolve, as a parish council, to aim high with our aspirations, to work as a team, with positive views and ambitions and avoid unnecessary negativity which sadly is all too often present around this table.

Although we have had to get used to a different way of working to that which we were accustomed, I would like to thank our clerk for his forbearance in certain areas and hope that in the coming year with our ambitions set so high he will be able to support our enthusiasm and help us move forward.

It is a pity that certain individuals felt it necessary to create an incessant run of FOI's, the answers to which can mostly be found in old minutes and were common knowledge at the time. This unnecessary spitefulness and aggravation needs to be treated with the contempt it deserves and we need to rise above it and proceed on our course. It has necessarily given the clerk extra work and cost the council funds it does not have, at a financially bad time.

Barling Magna is a lovely village, with good people; we must learn to listen, particularly now that the Parish Plan is going out, to what our parishioners want and need. No parish council can always rely on their efforts succeeding, *but at least if we can seem to be trying* I am sure they will be satisfied.

I would like to thank those councillors (you know who you are), and their families, who have supported our fund raising activities this year, both on the ground in their availability and on site assistance and in their generosity at raffles.

I shall of course give the incoming Chairman all the support I can and hope that we can continue to adopt a positive and friendly stance with fellow councillors, with less criticism, more gratitude, and the good behaviour, tolerance and respect for each other that we need in order to build a firm base for the future. Whatever our personal views, that is what we owe to the people we serve, and why we are sitting here at all. Thank you, and I wish Barling Magna success in this next 2014-2015 year.

24th April, 2014