

Barlow Parish Council Working Group Meeting
Thursday 30th November 2017 at Barlow Village Hall

Councillors Present: Cllrs Mrs J. Brougham, T. Crowley, D. Curtis, Mrs J. Hunter, J. Rushby, Mrs. J. Siddall and S. Woodhouse.

Also in Attendance: Lee Rowley M.P., County Councillor Mrs A. Foster, Mrs A. Jones (Clerk)

1. Apologies had been received from Cllr B. Allcock and District Cllr Mrs. C. Huckerby.
2. The Chair welcomed Lee and Angelique to the meeting and the Parish Councillors and Clerk introduced themselves.
3. The Clerk outlined that the format of this meeting would be as a working group, which meant that there was no formal public agenda, there was no allocated time for public participation, and that the meeting had no decision-making powers. If any members of the public were to attend, it would be in the capacity of observers. There were no members of the public present.
4. The purpose of the meeting was to explore issues of concern to the Parish Council and for Lee and Angelique to advise where they would be able to offer support. Also for Lee and Angelique to advise on any wider issues which they felt may be of concern or interest to Barlow Parish Council.
5. A report of the meeting would be presented to the Barlow Parish Council meeting on Monday 4th December and the Parish Council would then decide on any actions to come out of the discussion.
6. The Chair explained that BPC had recently begun a survey of Barlow residents to ask for feedback on issues of concern. Twelve responses had already been received, and two recurring themes were parking and speeding through the village. This was much as Councillors would have predicted, as both issues are long standing, and both are getting noticeably worse.
7. PARKING

Councillors gave a detailed background of action the Parish Council has taken over parking problems in recent years. A public meeting had been held at the hall which was very well attended. The most serious complaints were of parking across residents' driveways, parking both sides of the road to make access for larger vehicles, particularly farm vehicles impossible and pedestrians crossing at risk through no visibility. There had been meetings and correspondence with Derbyshire County Council where various proposals had been put by BPC for possible parking restrictions to alleviate the situation, such as double yellow lines on one side of the road, restrictions where the road narrows at the top of Hackney Lane, 'H' lines across residents' driveways (which residents themselves were prepared to pay for). BPC had put signs advising of alternative parking at the village hall, and had leafleted unsociably parked cars, also, photographs of bad parking had been sent to the police and DCC, but these actions have been largely ineffective.

It was noted that part of the issue is the success of Hackney House and The Peacock, and that BPC wouldn't want to discourage these businesses, but that there needed to be compromise for it to be workable. Cars parking around the tree outside Hackney House were parked illegally, and blocking the left-hand lane out of Wilkin Hill making turning dangerous. The café needed to do more to encourage their customers to park sensibly. However, it was recognised that customers wanted to park as close as

possible to the café, and it is difficult for a business to discourage customers from parking.

The current state of play is that DCC have advised they have no resources, and while technically BPCs proposals are still under consideration, there has been no action for over 12 months, and as any changes would take at least 12 months to put in place, there is no prospect of any resolution on the horizon. It was commented that the Public Rights of Way department has virtually 'closed down' and local government generally is restricting itself to only carrying out activities which it has a legal obligation to fulfil.

The police are not interested in parking issues unless there is an actual obstruction or illegal parking, and they have a view that congestion in itself is not such a problem, as it in fact helps to slow traffic down, thereby helping with the other concern of speeding.

From the residents' point of view, it is unsatisfactory that the proposals which were put to DCC haven't really had any response as to why these cannot be put in place. BPC understands that DCC no longer put in 'H' lines, but DCC have not explained why this is the case. Better communication would at least make residents feel that their problems had been listened to and considered.

County Cllr Foster agreed to follow up on these points with DCC and communicate back on the outcome. The Clerk will copy C. Cllr Foster in on any relevant future correspondence on these matters. Whilst Lee Rowley supports BPC's position, there is nothing in practical terms he can do, and BPC recognises that it is the government's finance policy which has reduced DCC's resources.

Residents will be encouraged to send in photographs of bad parking to the police.

8. SPEEDING

Cllrs commented that, likely due to sat navs, Barlow is increasingly a through route for HGVs going to Sheffield etc, which exceed the 7.5 tonnes weight restriction on the B6051. A lot more faster traffic is also coming through. Across the front of Rutland Terrace there seems to be an almost constant flow of traffic exceeding the 30 mph, and it is even common to be overtaken by cars on that stretch, doing well over the limit. Barlow has a number of real danger points for pedestrians crossing where there are bends and poor visibility, and the speeding cars do not allow for the possibility of encountering a pedestrian crossing the road.

BPC has asked police to bring speed cameras on numerous occasions but again there do not seem to be the resources.

Lee advised that he has met with the new commander and there are 8 new PCSOs just starting in the region, so things should improve. He will be meeting with the commander on a regular basis and will follow up on BPCs concerns. County Cllr Foster gave advice about how a voluntary speed watch group could purchase a hand-held speed gun for around £300 and work with the police in a monitored and regulated way, such that reports of speeding vehicles would be followed up by the police, with letters, visits, and ultimately prosecutions for repeated offences. It would rely on enough volunteers, who would be trained by the police. This would involve vetting and being registered, but once the system was in place, Barlow residents would at least have the opportunity to impact on the problem. Holmesfield and Unstone are known to have bought their own speed cameras and reports are positive. This will be

taken to the BPC meeting for further consideration and a decision as to whether BPC will initiate a voluntary speed watch group.

9. PLANNING & NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANS

It was noted that NEDDC Planning Department is not performing to the required standard and is at imminent risk of being put on special measures designation. Lee advised that BPC should not take for granted that the green belt status was a given for the long term, and for Councillors to be aware of the wider issues. Councillors observed that the drawing up of a Neighbourhood Plan had been considered in the past but that the undertaking was a massive one, and it was not clear how much benefit a Neighbourhood Plan would really bring. County Councillor Foster commented that there are grants available and various bodies offer support to the drawing up of a plan, and in some circumstances a Neighbourhood Plan could provide some extra protection against unwanted development. The Chair observed that the feedback from the Village Survey might give BPC a steer on residents' views and this should be borne in mind for the review meeting in January.

10. FRACKING

Lee Rowley gave the meeting a detailed update on what the implications of the current fracking proposals would mean for Barlow. We need to be clear that government policy supports fracking in principle as a safe source of fuel from the direct health perspective, but the inevitable industrialisation of the landscape could be even worse potential damage for residents' lifestyles and wellbeing. The fact that this whole area is likely to be affected, and that land values for fracking sites far exceed values for farm land, could put Barlow's currently essentially rural nature very much at risk. Whilst there is nothing directly affecting Barlow imminent, BPC will need to keep aware of developments and be prepared to respond as needed to protect the interests of the parish.

Lee will be happy to advise and support BPC in this.

11. SUMMARY

The Chair observed that it had been a very useful and informative meeting. Whilst BPC understand the limitations on County Councillors and MPs, it is still useful to know that support, information and advice is available ongoing. It was agreed that it would be useful to have a meeting of this type on perhaps an annual basis.

This report to be circulated to BPCs for review at the meeting on 4th December 2017.