

Minutes of Barningham Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 6th March 2024 at 7:00pm in Barningham Village Hall.

Present: Cllrs: C Hammond, J Chalmers, L Hebert, R Baxter.

Tony Steer has resigned from the Parish Council with immediate effect. The Council were very saddened to hear this news. He was a valued member of the Council, and his help and hard work will be greatly missed. The Chairman will send a card to express our appreciation for his hard work and dedication to the Council over the years.

1. Apologies for absence Cllr N Martineau, WSC C Bull & SCC C J Spicer

2. Members Declarations of Interest and Dispensations:

2.1 To receive declarations of interest from councillors on items on the agenda. Cllrs Baxter and Hebert declared an interest item 13.1 on the agenda.

2.2 To receive written requests for dispensations for disclosable pecuniary interests. None.

2.3 To grant dispensations as appropriate under Section 33 of the Localism Act. None.

3. Minutes – the meeting of the minutes of the Wednesday 7th February 2024 were agreed and approved as a correct record.

4. Meeting open to the public 2 members of the public present.

A complaint was received about the lack of communication from the Parish Council. A message was sent, via Facebook on a Sunday, requesting a call back from the Parish Council. A message was sent acknowledging the message with advice to contact the emergency services if necessary. A Councillor called at the residents' house and delivered a printed booklet of information on the following day. Whilst being sympathetic the Parish Council would like to make it clear that they are not an emergency service and are not able to provide emergency assistance, unless the Community Emergency Plan is activated. The purpose of this plan is to outline the organisation of our village and its potential reaction during an emergency, and to list the resources available within the community area, which could be called upon in the event of a major emergency when outside assistance from emergency services and local authorities is delayed. The plan is not there to help individuals with practical measures within their home. The Parish Council has tried hard to provide information to residents about who to contact in an emergency. This information is available on the noticeboard and the website. It was put on Facebook and will be re-published on there also. Some work will be done around making sure contact details for the Councillors is available but, as previously mentioned the Parish Council is not an emergency service and therefore cannot be relied upon in an emergency situation when 999 should always be called. **Action Clerk/All**

It was reported that a BT cover in Church Road has developed a pothole next to it and the metal of the drain is protruding into the road. Cllr Chalmers will report this. **Action Cllr Chalmers**

5. Report from Suffolk County Councillor: J Spicer

Cllr Spicer was unable to attend the meeting.

6. Report from West Suffolk Councillor: C Bull

Cllr Bull was unable to attend the meeting.

The Clerk is following up a request to have work done to a tree in the Churchyard, by a resident in Church Gardens, with West Suffolk Council. **Action Clerk**

7. Chairmans's Report

Busy time for the Parish Council with the constant bad weather, ongoing floods and Highway problems. Great threats to roads, homes and gardens.

9 Feb – took photos of the Bardwell Rd issues. The fallen school and VAS sign in Church Rd was replaced. I felt it was unsteady and not safely anchored. Reported it. It is still considered an issue re-stability.

I met a resident of Church Gardens regarding concern over a very tall tree in the rear churchyard. Explained it was a Council matter not the Parish Council, but we were aware of the problem, and it had been reported. He had a tree person give a quote of £1000 to remove the tree to a stump. An ongoing issue.

I replied to the query from Jack Fincham, a friend of Lee Chapman, the Bishops Croft teenage resident killed in a road accident, regarding a memorial tile for him He knows we are happy to oblige and that it would be a possibility to have it on the new bench planned at the entrance to the Croft. This would be going up in the Spring.

10 Feb – I checked Bardwell Rd

12 Feb – I met Vicki and Jan in the churchyard, and we checked the cemetery plots regarding a couple of proposed burials.

18 Feb - Flood worse after it poured all night before. Threat to Cricket meadow via Bobby's land

21 Feb – Met Bobby, Andrew and The Norfolk Rivers Trust chap at Aggie's Piece. Checking the drainage issues there. (Bobby to give details)

22 Feb -Communications between Clerk, PC and Highways regarding error in road diversion through Bardwell rd. Tanker came, to no avail. Road closed and signs put up.

23 Feb – Clerk updated me regarding the Cemetery issue.

26 Feb – I put up the posters regarding the *Community Transport Information*

Thank you everyone for all your contributions since our last meeting, especially those who still work. Your efforts are much appreciated by myself and the Clerk. A great team.

8. Clerk's Report

8.1 To receive any report from the Devolution seminar.

The Clerk attended a webinar on the Devolution deal being considered by Suffolk County Council. She has concerns that some of the money in the deal is not indexed linked, which could potentially result in less money in the future. Also, an elected mayor could be in contrary to the Councils political alliance, the mayor could then make a cabinet of chosen members not reflecting electorates votes. Below is some further information about the proposal.

The Government currently controls where and how certain funding is spent in Suffolk.

In December 2022, Suffolk County Council signed an in-principle agreement with the Government to transfer some of that control and funding to Suffolk:

- Level 3 deal
- Additional funding
- More local decision-making
- Greater profile and influence with Government

This is part of the Government's Levelling Up agenda.

Additional Investment Fund worth **£16m** per year for 30 years, not index linked.

Local control of **£9.4m** Adult Education Budget each year, not index linked.

£5.8m one off funding to develop brownfield housing sites

£3m one off funding to expand Suffolk's Greener Homes 0% Loan Scheme to improve energy efficiency and renewable generation.

An integrated multi-year transport settlement

Control of £9.4m annual Adult Education Budget from 2025 (currently centrally allocated)

Responsibility for commissioning adult education in Suffolk:

- Better targeted
- Closer, more focused collaboration with business and other partners
- Focus on the skills we need in Suffolk.

Suffolk County Council's leader would be directly elected by residents.

First election in **May 2025** in line with next county council elections

No new levels of bureaucracy:

- The directly elected leader would be part of Suffolk County Council
- Existing decision-making arrangements would apply.
- Devolution is a journey, not a one-off event.
- Experience shows devolution opens the door to greater powers and funding over time.
- 4th level of devolution already announced offering multi-year funding and more influence.

A public consultation on the proposed deal will launch in March 2024, giving residents and businesses an opportunity to have their say.

8.2 To discuss items included in SALC magazine.

The Clerk had provided the Councillors with some information and advice from SALC about dedicated email addresses. As previously agreed, it was proposed we do not pursue this as an option at this time. Also, SALC sent out some information about Martyn's law, a bill that will impose requirements in relation to certain premises, village halls and events to increase their preparedness for, and protection from, a terrorist attack by requiring them to take proportionate steps, depending on the size and nature of the activities that take place at the premises. This was an item that had been previously raised by Cllr Steer and, as the Village Hall has a capacity of less than 100, it was agreed that this would not be a concern at this time.

There is an opportunity to get a free portrait of the King. The Clerk will obtain one and see if the Village Hall or School would like to have it. **Action Clerk**

8.3 Police contact details.

PC Reeve would prefer that only the Councillors have her direct email address and any issues raised can be passed on through the Clerk, Councillors or the online reporting tool. Her contact information will be shared with the Councillors. Kathy Cummings is happy for her email details to be added to this list so that the Councillors are able to contact her directly if the need arises.

Action Clerk

As mentioned previously PC Reeve said she would be happy to come to the village to discuss any matters of concern.

8.4 To review and update as required: Standing orders, Financial Standing orders, Risk Assessment, Asset Register, Code of Conduct, Environmental Policy and Clerks contract. The above documents were reviewed, updated where required and agreed. It was agreed that Cllr Baxter and the Clerk would do some work on recording the Parish Councils Carbon Footprint.

Action Cllrs Baxter/Clerk

8.5 To discuss questions for SCC Highways to be asked at the West Suffolk forum. We have an opportunity to put some question to SCC Highways ahead of the upcoming West Suffolk forum. It was proposed that we would ask why issues are recorded as closed on the SCC reporting tool when they are still outstanding. This practice has led the flooded Bardwell Road being proposed as an official diversion route as well as other reports being closed before they could have been realistically inspected. These questions will be put forward for consideration.

Action Clerk

9.7 Damaged to verge, Village Hall

Some work, carried out by Anglian Water, has caused considerable damage to the area between the Village Hall and the Children's Play area. The Clerk will contact Anglian Water to report the damage their team have done. **Action Clerk**

9. Finance.

9.1 The following payments/receipts were approved/noted.

Payment	Various	Admin	-£2,673.61
Receipt	interest	interest	£46.54

9.2 Bank reconciliation, schedule of payments and budget report.

The Clerk provided a schedule of payments, bank reconciliation and a budget report for the Councillors' information.

9.3 To confirm arrangements for internal audit review and external audit.

We are no longer able to use our external auditor as he is reducing the number of smaller Councils he works with. The Clerk is in the process of making arrangements with SALC to carry out our external audit. It is understood that the price is on par with our previous accountant at an estimated £274. Cllr Chalmers will carry out an internal audit review.

Action Cllr Chalmers/Clerk

10 Village matters.

10.1 To discuss the flooding in Bardwell Road and the plan going forward.

At the time of the meeting the flood had abated. The Clerk has done some work about identifying adjacent landowners and has now spoken to a landowner, further up Bardwell, near Bramble Cottage and they said they would be doing some work on their ditches, including piping in the summer. The Clerk will seek advice from SCC to see if this work is more urgent or if it is OK to wait until Summer to carry out this work.

Action Clerk

We need to ensure that SCC are going to continue to investigate the cause of the flood. The Clerk will follow this up with SCC.

Action Clerk

The road sweeper has visited Bardwell Road, to clear debris. This is important to help with stopping any debris blocking drains going forward. We are grateful to Cllr Bull for making the arrangements for it to attend so quickly. The signs, from the diversion, are still in situ. The Clerk will contact SCC regarding this.

Action Clerk

It was agreed that we should be engaging with the Environment Agency going forward, looking at the issue of flooding in the village. We may need to consider alternative ways to deal with flooding if this is going to become a regular event in the future.

Action All

10.2 To note concerns raised over flooding in the village, not including Bardwell Road.

Some residents in Sandy Lane have also been badly affected by flooding. The Clerk has put them in contact with the farmer who farms the land adjacent to their properties. He has said that he will look to see what he can do to help the situation.

10.3 To receive advice on Emergency Plan constraints and contact display information.

As discussed in the public forum it was recognised that the Community Emergency Plan is not something that is there to help individuals with practical measures within their home. A CEPG should be a focal point for warning and informing its community regarding what to do in an emergency. This could be done in peace time by sharing info on how they can better prepare themselves or what they should do in the event of an emergency. The Clerk has sought advice about information that is available in the public version of the plan. We have been advised, in regard to personal data in plans, full versions of the plan should only be shared with those involved in the plan who have a role to play, and any publicly available plans should have personal data redacted. Some CEPGs have decided to not publish their plans and have instead created a leaflet to publicly share on their website to show key info from the plan like where their local rest centre is and how they can report certain things to the right authorities. It was agreed that we would look at what information we are sharing and potentially develop a leaflet as suggested. Cllr Herbert has offered to help Cllr Martineau with any work around updating the plan. The plan needs to be checked annually. This will be included as an agenda item for the next meeting.

Action Cllr Martineau/Hebert/Clerk

10.4 To receive update of traffic calming measures, including application for entrance gates for Bardwell Road and new signage in Coney Weston Road.

The sign, erected in Coney Weston Road just before the last meeting, has had the post reduced in height so is no longer in danger of being lost in the trees. A local resident will keep the trees cut back there as much as possible. The application for the new gate in Bardwell Road is in hand.

Action Clerk

10.5 To receive any update on the application for a potential new VAS post in Sandy Lane (Nth) Consent from the adjacent householders has been received and the Clerk is submitting the application for consideration for a new post, to SCC for consideration. Once their decision has been received will consider next steps.

Action Clerk

10.6 To receive any update on the application for a new grit bin for Bardwell Road. A request has been submitted, via the SCC reporting tool for the placement of a new grit bin at the junction with Droughts Land and Bardwell Road. No response has been received so far so the Clerk has chased this up with SCC customer service. This was highlighted as another potential issue with the reporting tool.

Action Clerk

10.7 Damaged railing, opposite the shop

The white railing opposite the shop was reported as damaged. Steve Wilson was unable to deal with this but Peter Kerry quickly repaired the railing, at no cost.

11. Aggies Piece

11.1 To receive any update on the Aggies Piece Wetland Project.

Cllrs Baxter and Hammond met with Sam Hurst, from the Rivers Trust and Andrew Moore from SCC to discuss the drains at Aggies Piece. Andrew Moore confirmed that SCC do not own the drains. Some more work is needed to ascertain the route of the drains as Sam was unable to get hold of the equipment he needed for the meeting, this is in hand. Work will continue to best find where the water could come in to Aggies to form a pool. The cleaning of the pond in the moat field was also discussed, as an option to increase the flow of water into Aggies, this is something that will be considered moving forward. Cllr Baxter will continue to lead on the project.

Action Cllr Baxter

12. Caretakers report Circulated.

This month I have lopped a dead branch which was overhanging the pavement from the old cemetery. I have also removed all the Christmas wreaths from both cemeteries and I am slowly disposing of them via the grey wheelie bins. I had to make one special trip to the village with my ladder to untangle the zipwire seat.

I was unable to assist the repair of the damaged railing opposite the shop but I did manage to remove nine bucketfuls of rainwater from the grit bin there. In so doing I broke the handle of one of the Council's plastic trugs and had to repair it. I have had several conversations with the Clerk over the allocation of interment plots within the cemetery.

I have taken the first of my 'bins-only' holiday weeks this month.

There is an opportunity for training to carry out inspection of the play equipment. This will be offered to the Caretaker.

13. Play area /Cricket Meadow to receive any update.

13.1 To discuss access options for potential future works.

Access is required, over the Cricket Meadow, to do some work on adjacent properties that might require the use of heavy machinery. The Clerk is aware that as part of works done many years ago, to make the Cricket Meadow a year-round usable asset, draining was laid under the field. It was understood that this would be a barrier for any heavy vehicle access. The Clerk will follow up on this to ascertain what load the field could take without damaging the existing drainage. Cllr Hebert will clear the ditch, adjacent to the Cricket Meadow, at his expense. He intends to install some deer proof fencing once the Parish Council are satisfied that the machinery will not cause any damage to the meadow. A site meeting will be held, later on in the year, to look at clearing the other ditches around the meadow.

Action Clerk

13.2 Request from circus school

8.6 Request from circus school to use the cricket meadow.

A request has been received to use the Cricket meadow for a circus school event for the school, in April. The school has been approached but have not agreed to the event, as they have said they

need to seek our permission first. The Clerk contacted the school who have said that an April date was not their choice, but that they would possibly look at an option for later in the year, after SATS. Although happy in principle for the Cricket Meadow to be use for this event, the Council felt that it is currently too wet to host an event of this nature and we will wait for an approach from the school before giving the event the go ahead. The Clerk will contact the event organiser let them know the Parish Councils decision.

Action Clerk

14. Churchyard/Cemetery

14.1 To receive any update on works to Cemetery.

The box and lock have been purchased and will be placed in the Cemetery shortly.

Action Cllr Chalmers

14.2 To discuss regulations in regard to cremated remains.

Work on this is still ongoing.

Action Cllr Chalmers/Clerk

14.3 To discuss overall cemetery plan going forward.

This is a work in progress, a local undertaker has offered advice regarding usable spaces in the Cemetery. He has offered the use of a drone, so we can better plan the layout of the Cemetery. All the councillors were in agreement to fill in the spaces and forgo the plan to have a path through the graves. The reason for this was twofold. Firstly, due to previous burials not following the existing plan, it is not possible to have the path as originally designed and secondly it was felt that by removing the path, more spaces would be made available for burials.

Action Clerk

14.4 To note application for the late Lee Chapman.

This is in hand and options for the burial space have been made to the family, via the undertaker.

Action Clerk

14.5 To note arrangements for the interment of the late Oscar Vatcher.

The Clerk and Cllr Chalmers met with the undertaker to confirm the area that could be used for the interment of CR of the late Oscar Vatcher.

Action Clerk

15. Neighbourhood Plan.

15.1 To further discuss the draft plan ahead of submission for consultation.

A very successful working party meeting took place on Monday 4th March and work was done to make the plan more accurate. There is still more work to be done, mainly around information about the Character Assessment, information relating to listed buildings in the village and what properties should be included in the special character area.

Action NHP working party.

16. Planning. to include any applications/decisions received since the agenda was posted.

16.1 DC/22/2190? HYB Full application, land at Shepherds Grove, Stanton. Notification of application going to the Development Control committee. It is understood that this is going to be recommended for refusal.

16.2 DC/24/0031/HH 1 Hopton Road, application for dropped kerb.

The Councillors raised **No objection** to this application.

17. Councillors reports and items for future agenda

17.1 To confirm arrangements for the next newsletter.

As discussed in the public forum, contact details for the Councillors will be included, once they have been agreed. Due to ongoing issues with the Neighbourhood Plan, there was very little in the way of an update that can be included in the next newsletter.

Action All

17.2 Keep Barningham Beautiful. The Clerk will check availability of the hall for the KBB event.

Once confirmed information about the event will be shared with the school and posters advertising the event will be displayed.

Action Clerk

17.3 Chapter 8, Traffic Management Training.

Cllrs Hebert, Chalmers and the Clerk would be interested in undertaking the training, to allow them to carry out works on the highway. Peter Kerry and Malcolm Chalmers would also be interested in undertaking the training as volunteers. There are currently no training dates available. The Clerk will continue to pursue this matter.

Action Clerk

17.3 Cllr Baxter has expressed an interest in carrying out the Biodiversity for net gain training for Councils.

Action Clerk

17.4 Cllr Chalmers is prepared to carry on with the administration of Facebook at the moment, but some extra help would be appreciated.

17.5 Cllr Chalmers reported that the Rural Coffee Caravan came to the village in February and was well attended with about 12 people coming along. It is due to visit the village again on 25th March between 10.00am and 12.00pm.

The next coffee morning, at the Village Hall, is going to be held on 14th March, between 10.30am and 12.30pm, all are welcome to attend.

18. Correspondence for information.

18.1 Connecting Communities, to provide information. Cllr Hammond has put information regarding this on the noticeboard. Cllr Chalmers will put this information on Facebook.

Action Cllr Chalmers

19. Date of next meeting 3rd April 2024 7pm in Barningham Village Hall.

20. To consider the exclusion of the public and press in the public interest for consideration of the following items:

20.1 Personnel Issues. None.

20.2 Legal Issues. None.