

Minutes of Barningham Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 2nd August 2023 at 7:00 pm in Barningham Village Hall.

Present: Cllrs: Cllr Hammond, J Chalmers & L Hebert

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies received from: Cllrs N Martineau, R Baxter, T Steer, D Cllr Bull & C Cllr Spicer.

2. Members Declarations of Interest and Dispensations:

2.1 To receive declarations of interest from councillors on items on the agenda. None.

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 minutes of the Wednesday 5th July 2023 meeting were agreed and signed as a correct record.

4. Meeting open to the public

None present.

5. Report from County Councillor: J Spicer

Cllr Spicer was unable to attend the meeting.

6. Report from WS Councillor: C Bull

Cllr Bull was unable to attend the meeting.

7. Chairman's reports

Some research to try to find the meaning of 'drou' as in the Drouts Lane in the village. Spoke to some residents who are local. Still a puzzle. Decided it is either to do with lack of water or a name of a resident/s and family in the past.

Looked at many censuses and historical research used for the Neighbourhood Plan as well. No luck

12 July – N. Plan Zoom meeting with consultant. Update and new time schedules to inform the next steps.

Contacted Lance Hebert regarding the best way to trim the Church Rd hedge in front of his house – for wildlife preservation, road safety and the clearing around the telegraph pole which is hidden by the undergrowth.

29 July – report of damage to gate at Aggie's Piece. Sorted by Councillor Janice and her husband.

29 July - the Church Accountant told me that on 25th July there was evidence in the church again of some young lads having been in on Monday 24th. As her and her husband were going into the church on the 25th to see Secretary in the church tidying up, they saw three lads divert from going in the church gate and go past the entrance. Inside there were: lights on; sweet and crisp packets; the piano lid was lifted up; as was the lid of the organ and knobs and switches altered on the organ; the boxed up new sound system lid had been taken off. The church organist came to check the organ which was not damaged – the trip switch had gone off. The decision was made to shut the church at this time. Notices giving reasons why were put up on the church gate and on the main noticeboard with a contact number of how to get into the church when required. Ahead of a wedding the carpet was pulled up and some plants uprooted, with their pots tipped over, in front of the bench. There has been a lot of instances of anti-social behaviour in the village the Clerk will make sure that our local police officer is aware of the problem in the village. **Action Clerk**

8. Clerk's Report

8.1 To receive feedback from Parish Conference.

This was a good networking event but not much content. Hopefully going forward this will change.

8.2 Councillor Training.

Following on from the discussion at the last meeting, Cllrs Hebert and Chalmers will attend session one on 29th November and session 2 on the 8th November. The Clerk will check with the councillors not present at the meeting to see if they want to attend on these dates. **Action Clerk**

9. Finance.

9.1 The following accounts were approved/noted.

Receipt	East of England Co-op	Burials	£110.00
Payment	Various	Admin	£2,047.78
Payment	Countryside, conservation and tree services	Grass Cutting	£316.80
Payment	Barningham village Hall	Donation	£500.00

9.2 Bank reconciliation and budget report

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

9.3 AGAR

At the time of the meeting the Clerk had not received confirmation from PKF Littlejohn that the accounts have been signed off for YE 2023. She will continue to monitor the situation.

Action Clerk

10 Village matters.

10.1 To receive update of traffic calming measures, Coney Weston Road.

Steve Wilson has painted the railings, on the bridge, in Coney Weston Road. It is hoped that this will increase visibility. The councillors thanked Steve for the excellent job he did on the railings and noted that visibility has been improved dramatically. We are waiting for further details from Cllr Spicer regarding the other traffic calming measures for Bardwell and Coney Weston Road.

10.2 To confirm works to overgrown hedges.

The overgrown hedges in Coney Weston Road have been reported to SCC and they will be dealing with it within the next 10 days.

10.3 To discuss bench repair/replacement, Bishops Croft.

The Clerk has obtained prices for a replacement bench at the entrance to Bishops Croft.. It was agreed to replace the existing bench with a recycled Witton bench. The Clerk will speak to Peter Kerry about installation.

Action Clerk

11. Aggies Piece

11.1 To receive update on wetland project progress.

The Clerk has written to the previous landowner to ask if they have any more information about the drain under Aggies.

11.2 To discuss option to cut the meadow.

The Clerk has contacted the normal contractor to ask if they would clear the meadow, keeping any hay as payment. Unfortunately they are too busy to do this this year.

Norfolk Rivers Trust would like to hold an event aiming to put on a scything workshop to engage landowners and managers and provide knowledge and skills for managing wildflower habitats.

They have funding which will cover the fee a participant would typically pay to take part in such a course (£70 per participant). The Clerk has asked the Parish Council if they would be interested in doing this and Cllr Baxter and her husband would like to volunteer. Despite asking on Facebook no other residents have come forward. The organisers have said that two volunteers is absolutely fine - they have four people who have expressed interest in a scything workshop in the Brecks and

they would advertise the event with their contacts and partner organisations, so they are confident that they would have enough people to fill around six places, which is the ideal number of participants (usually a maximum of eight). Ideally, they would like to run the workshop before the end of September (and when appropriate to the site's management). The Clerk will pass this information on to Cllr Baxter so she can liaise directly with the Rivers Trust.

Action Cllr Baxter/Clerk

11.3 Damaged gate.

The gate to the meadow at Aggies was taken off and left the meadow vulnerable. Cllr Chalmers and her husband managed to re-instate the gate. The Councillors were grateful for the prompt way that Cllr Chalmers and her husband dealt with the issue and secured the meadow.

Aggies is very overgrown at the moment. The Clerk will contact Peter Kerry regarding this matter.

Action Clerk

12. Caretakers report Circulated.

The war on brambles has continued on the village's pavements this month and it has been extended into the Cemetery. On a related topic I have had to cut back hedges and shrubs which threatened to engulf the litter bins on the Cricket Meadow and at the entrance to Church Road. I had to make a return visit to the matting on the Cricket Meadow to deal with one or two weeds which had not responded to last month's treatment. I have removed graffiti from the youth shelter on the Cricket Meadow and from a road sign close to the pub. The pedestrian gate at the Play Area has been without a rubber buffer for some time now so I have bound a length of cord around the lug in an attempt to reduce the noise nuisance.

The major item of the month has been an attempt to improve the conspicuity of the railings on the sharp bend in the Coney Weston Road. I initially cut back the vegetation, cleaned the reflectors and refreshed the white paint on the vertical rails. I have since painted the flat surfaces of the concrete posts white as these are most visible to oncoming motorists.

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

13.1 To discuss options to replace damaged ladder on the cricket meadow.

Hags no longer make the ladder unit, as we have it, so are unable to replace just the damaged part. The Clerk has arranged a meeting with the area manager, on Friday at 10.30 to discuss options going forward. Cllr Chalmers and the contractor undertaking the repair will also join the meeting.

Action Cllr Chalmers/Clerk

14. Churchyard/Cemetery

14.1 Update on works to Cemetery.

The Clerk has contacted the registry office to try and obtain contact details for some of the deed holders in the Cemetery. They were unable to help and they suggested contacting the records office. The Clerk has done this and unfortunately, they are also unable to help. Cllr Chalmers and the Clerk will visit the cemetery on Friday and decide about how best to move forward with this matter.

Action Cllr Chalmers/Clerk

14.2 To receive update on Lychgate replacement.

The replacement gate is complete and should be re-installed shortly, weather permitting.

14.3 overhanging branches

The Clerk has asked Peter Kerry to cut back the overhanging trees in the Cemetery.

There are a couple of things around Barningham that could do with some attention. We will discuss these when we meet on Friday.

Action Clerk

15. Neighbourhood Plan.

15.1 To receive feedback from the latest meeting.

Ian Poole reported that it was good that we secured funding in the last round of grants as the grant scheme has not yet re-opened this year. This meant by securing funding previously we have enough money to complete the plan.

Due to Central Government proposing changes to some of the National Planning Framework, West Suffolk are delaying the publication of their plan, and this will not go for consultation until early next year. Despite this delay it was agreed that we need to move forward as quickly as we can with our plan. If necessary, we can make adjustments, to meet any changed national policies, later down the line.

Ian Poole has been doing some work on the plan and there will be six main themes and approx. 13 policies that will be included in the plan.

A timeline for the plan would be:

Ian Poole to start work on writing the plan over the next month. Once a draft is available Ian Poole will send it to the group for agreement on content and proofing, looking for typos etc and to query any factual information. Ian Poole will also ask WS to have a look at the plan to check for compliance with local plan policies. The intention then being a draft copy of the plan will go to the Parish Council in time for discussion at the September meeting. If agreed at the September meeting, we would then take this forward for a six-week public consultation with the residents of Barningham and other statutory bodies. This would start around one month after the meeting to allow for the Plan to be desk top published, a leaflet to be published for distribution and all the consultation arrangements to be prepared.

As a group we were asked to consider what community actions we feel are important to include in the plan. We can look back at the first household survey for information.

Examples might include:

Traffic calming on the B1111 – to work with SCC to look at what improvements could be made. To ensure existing rights of way are maintained and any new developments enhance these. NB – Ian Poole needs these by 10 August for inclusion in first draft Plan if we're going to make September Parish Council.

The Councillors asked that the document, used to illustrate the proposed plan, was shared as it was seen at the zoom meeting. **Action Clerk**

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

16.1 DC/23/1180/HH Double Cottage Bardwell Road, Householder planning application – detached outbuilding/shed (demolition of existing). **No objection.**

17. Councillors reports and items for future agenda

Cllr Chalmers and the Clerk attended the recent Town and Parish Conference. The event was opened by the new leader of the Council who spoke about the four main priorities for West Suffolk Council. These are Growth, Housing, cost of living and Sustainability. Although this was a good networking event but there was not much content.

Cllr Chalmers attended the SALC AGM. There was an interesting talk from the CEO from Suffolk Library Services who told the attendees about a move towards offering more well-being services, trying to do more NHS work and a pop-up library initiative.

Cllr Chalmers also attended a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) training session. This looked at a document that would be available to Parish Councils to help them to make informed and structured responses to significant planning proposals. For instance, the National Grid Electricity Transmission pylon proposal. Cllr Chalmers found this a very interesting and helpful event.

18. Correspondence for information.

19. Date of next meeting 6th September 7pm 2023 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.

20.2 Legal Issues.

20.1 Steve Wilson: Proposed change to contract going forward.

As you will be aware, I qualify for my state pension in October 2024 when I turn 66 years of age. If it were acceptable to the Parish Council, I would be interested in continuing my employment with them beyond that date on slightly altered terms. My ideas on the modified contract are:

1. My working hours would be reduced from eight to six per week.
2. I would visit the village no more than once per week throughout the year.
3. My core activity would be:
 - a. The emptying of the public litter bins and the dog waste bin.
 - b. A village-wide litter patrol.
 - c. The sweeping of leaves from pavements and raking of leaves in cemeteries.
 - d. Feeding back information on problems in the Play Area, cemeteries etc to the Parish Clerk.
4. The six hours would only cover my litter work so if leaf sweeping etc were required it would be accommodated by an appropriate reduction in the size of the litter round in that particular week.
5. For six weeks per year, I would restrict my work to the emptying of the bins as a means of compensating for my annual leave entitlement.

I would like to make the following observations:

1. The following activities would be dropped from my current employment:
 - a. The disposal of cemetery spoil.
 - b. The scraping of leaf mulch from the Church Road layby
 - c. The edging-back of encroaching soil on the Sandy Lane footpath.
2. Since I began my employment in 2006, I have never needed anyone to cover my duties during holidays and it would be my intention to continue that tradition, however, I do not know how retirement will affect my lifestyle going forward. It is not impossible that I may take a holiday of longer than 5 days' duration on occasion.
3. I would continue to make myself available to deal with one-off issues, but I may find myself saying 'no' more often than in the past.
4. Since 14 October this year will be my 65th birthday I would also be happy to institute this arrangement from January 2024 when my current contract period expires.

The Parish Council were happy to accept the above work proposal going forward. They appreciate that Steve Wilson is willing to stay on into his retirement and feel confident that they can find a working package that meets everyone's needs.