

**Minutes of the Meeting of Barnham Parish Council held on  
Tuesday 9th January 2024, commencing at 7pm  
Venue: Barnham Village Hall, Mill Lane, Barnham IP24 2NG**

**In attendance:** Cllr John Bauer (Chair), Cllr Ed Wyer (Vice Chair), Cllr Martin Belsham, Cllr Helen Beck, Cllr Matthew Hawthorne, Cllr Susan Watson, Cllr Adrian Webb. Suffolk County Councillor Joanna Spicer MBE, West Suffolk District Cllr Andrew Smith. Chair of West Suffolk Council, Cllr Roger Dicker; Members of the public: 2  
Clerk/RFO: Mrs. P Smith

During his opening remarks Cllr Bauer welcomed Cllr Roger Dicker, Chair of West Suffolk Council and members of the public to the meeting.

**1 Apologies for absence**  
None

**2 Declarations of Interests**

- 2.1 To receive declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests, other registrable interests and non-registrable interests as detailed in Appendix B of the LGA Model Code of Conduct:  
**None**
- 2.2 To consider requests for dispensations relating to matters on this agenda: **None**

**3 Approval of Minutes of the Meeting** held on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> November 2023  
Following an amendment: Pg 3, 5.2 para 2 NRG “...*application* replaced by *appeal*: It is understood that an **appeal** has been submitted to the Planning Inspector.....”  
**Acceptance of the minutes as an accurate record:**  
**Proposed** Cllr Hawthorne **Seconded** Cllr Watson: **Unanimously Agreed.**  
**The minutes were duly signed by the Chair, Cllr Bauer**

**4 Public Forum:** Members of the public are welcome to make comments and ask questions in relation to items on this agenda. Any other matters raised may be permitted at the discretion of the Chair.

- 4.1 Concern raised about damage to Byways by off-road vehicles believed to be “Green Laning”, causing damage to fences, resulting in them no longer being stock proof. Current weather conditions has caused the area to be very muddy

Question: Could this specific byway be temporarily closed whilst the ground is waterlogged.

**Action: Cllr Spicer** will visit location and request temporary closure with SCC Rights of Way, plus will discuss with Estate.

Cllr Hawthorne highlighted that is part of a recognised 86-mile route used by off-road vehicles.

- 4.2 Cllr Dicker, Chair of West Suffolk Council was introduced by Cllr Smith. Cllr Dicker is District Cllr for the Ward of Kentford and Moulton and so has a good understanding of, and is passionate about protecting the rural parishes, whilst acknowledging the valuable work that parish councillors do with little money and little power.

He explained his role as Chair of West Suffolk Council with 64 councillors.  
In response to a question about the proximity to Thetford (Breckland District Council), Cllr Dicker acknowledged a lack of liaison between the neighbouring councils in recent years but confirmed that a good relationship has now been re-established between the two.

The Chair thanked Cllr Dicker for his contribution to the Barnham Parish Council meeting.

## 5 Reports from Suffolk County Councillor and West Suffolk District Councillor

### 5.1 Suffolk County Cllr Joanna Spicer MBE

**School Crossing Patrol Request:** Knowing of other villages where a school crossing has been requested and refused, whilst willing to be supportive Cllr Spicer is doubtful that the request from Barnham will meet the necessary criteria.

Councillor Spicer advised that there hasn't been crossing in Barnham for at least 30 years (whilst she has been a councillor).

A potential alternative might be for SCC to train volunteer parents for crossing patrols.

Number of pupils at school: 168.

Whilst some walk from St Martin's Lane and along The Street, from Barnham Heath others are driven/collected by car; some come from Thetford, Euston and Ingham.

**Cutting back of the verge/encroaching vegetation along footpath,** The Street/Euston Road  
Cllr Spicer has generously agreed to provide £250.00 towards this work; Euston Estate has generously agreed to the work using their contractor and to pay the costs of the vehicle and removal of vegetation/soil (£500).

### **Traffic Lights at Station Road/A134 crossroads**

There was a difference of opinion as to the improvements that have occurred here. Though it is clear that the period of time available for traffic to cross from the Barnham side remains totally inadequate (approx. 2-3 vehicles);

**Action Clerk** is continuing to chase: During previous conversation with SWARCO she was advised that SCC is considering an upgraded installation at this location.

### **Suffolk County Council Budget**

Suffolk County Council are having to make significant savings (cuts) whilst at the same time ensuring that the care of you children and the elderly are adequately maintained: £74m is required over 2 years for these services.

The increased living wage will cost over £5m due to the significant number of low paid staff employed whether directly or indirectly by SCC.

wef 1 April 2023 23yrs and over £10.42; 21-22yrs £10.18

Wef 1 April 2024 21yrs and over £11.44

SCC element of Council tax will be increased by 3% plus 2% social services levy.

### 5.2 West Suffolk District Cllr Andrew Smith

**Honeysuckle Farm – Planning application:** Cllr Smith advised that Officers are minded to approve this application subject to conditions, due to statutory consultees (other than the parish council) not submitting objections.

However, due to the parish council's stance (objection), the application will be referred to the Development Control Committee for a decision.

**NRG Oil:** Cllr Wyr queried the validity of the appeal on the basis it was understood that the applicant was out of time.

Cllr Smith advised that WSC has not yet received confirmation as to the content of the appeal, though the anticipation is that it will be hours of operation, days of operation, number of vehicle movements.

A Start letter will only be issued when a Planning Inspectorate (PINS) have appointed a planning inspector (date currently unknown). West Suffolk Council will notify Barnham Parish Council and other interested parties at the relevant time enabling them to comment directly to PINS

**Action (completed):** Cllr Smith will check the validity of the appeal/date with the planning officer and report back.

**Update from Cllr Smith 10.1.23:** West Suffolk Council Principal Planning Officer has confirmed that the appeal to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) was made by the deadline (they are allowed 6 months from the date of the decision notice 20<sup>th</sup> March 2023). PINS, by confirming that the appeal is valid means they were satisfied that it was submitted in time. *Email circulated to councillors.*

### **West Suffolk Strategic Priorities**

Details of the West Suffolk Strategic Priorities are provided within a document available via [this link, which has previously been circulated to councillors.](#)

Cllr Smith highlighted the population changes since 2011 in West Suffolk following the 2021 Census. In West Suffolk since 2011 0-19 age range has fallen by 0.4%; 20-64 age range has increased by 2.6%; 65+ has increased by 21.88%. The 65+ age group is the only age group projected to increase over the next 20 years. The proportion of people of working age is projected to decline. (Office for National Statistics).

**Sources of funds from West Suffolk and Housing Development:** Cllr Smith explained that the S106 monies and CIL required from developers towards infrastructure projects, schools, roads, village halls play areas etc are relevant to the areas in which the developments are to be constructed. Development in and around Barnham is constrained by designations protecting the natural environment.

**Affordable housing:** There are stipulated percentages of affordable properties required when developers put forward plans. However, the costs and requirements of necessary infrastructure can impact on the decision to impose the stated quotas:

40% affordable housing on developments of 100+ dwellings

30% affordable housing on brownfield sites

20% affordable housing on flats.

**Blacksmith's Lane:** A question was asked with regards to whether there was any further information available: Cllr Smith advised that there is nothing more that Enforcement can do at this time and that he had provided full details to the resident concerned. Please see minutes of November meeting 5.2.

(Cllrs Dicker, Smith, and Spicer left the meeting at this point.)





In order to meet the Parish Council's budget requirements for 2024/25, a budget of £9,944 was proposed (details attached).

This equates to an increase of £5.56 for a band D property over the year (15.37%)

Band D 2024/25: £41.74 per annum                      (Band D 2023/24: £36.18)

**10 Appointment of Internal Auditor 2023/24:  
To consider the appointment of Mr A Stokes as internal auditor for Barnham Parish Council.**

As an ex parish councillor Mr Stokes has an in-depth knowledge of parish councils. He has also been a Chairman of Suffolk Association of Local Councils.

He has many years finance experience as a business owner; he clearly comprehends the financial requirements and legislation which govern parish councils and specifically the requirements for internal audit of smaller parish councils such as Barnham. He will have access to view the accounts via Scribe (read only).

**Resolution: Cllrs unanimously agreed** to appoint Mr Stokes as Barnham's internal auditor for the financial year 2023/24 for which a payment of £150.00 will be made.

**11 Biodiversity Policy:** To consider initial draft policy  
Deferred to next meeting. Action Clerk  
Cllr Watson detailed the excellent work being carried out in the churchyard.

**12 Clerk's Report:** Updates, actions from previous meeting together with other information relating to items as stated on this agenda. See attached.  
Village Clock: The Faculty is in the final stage: public consultation.  
Following this stage, applications can be submitted for grant funding.  
The question of whether planning permission has been obtained for the lighting of the clock is currently unresolved. (Clerk following up).

**13 Fit Villages:** To consider whether Councillors wish to progress to survey stage  
There is no commitment at this stage and no cost to the parish council.  
**Resolution:** It was agreed to proceed to the survey stage which will invite residents to inform Fit Villages of activities they would like the opportunity to participate in locally.  
Details to be posted on notice boards on Facebook Pages Action Clerk

**14 2024 Diary Dates:** to consider arrangements where required

|                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| 12 <sup>th</sup> January    | Defibrillator Awareness Training, Barnham Village Hal          |
| March – date tbc            | SALC meeting   |
| Spring Litterpick           | 23 <sup>rd</sup> March   |
| 11 <sup>th</sup> May        | Annual Village Meeting to follow on from Annual Parish meeting |
| 18 <sup>th</sup> March, 7pm | Town and Parish Forum, Mildenhall Jubilee Centre               |

**15 Correspondence** not previously dealt with requiring consideration: None

**16 Requests for items to be included on next agenda: None requested**

**17 Next Meeting:** Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> March 2024, 7pm. (note change of date)  
Venue Barnham Village Hall

**The meeting closed at 9.10pm  
Minutes signed as an accurate record**

Chairman.....

Date: 19<sup>th</sup> March 2024