

Barnham Parish Council

Chair: John Bauer. Vice Chair: Ed Wyer

Minutes of the Meeting of Barnham Parish Council held on
Tuesday 14th November 2023, Commencing at 7.00pm
Venue: Barnham Village Hall, Mill Road, Barnham IP24 2NG

In attendance: Cllr John Bauer (Chair), Cllr Ed Wyer (Vice Chair), Cllr Matthew Hawthorne, Cllr Susan Watson, Cllr Adrian Webb.

Suffolk County Cllr Joanna Spicer MBE, West Suffolk District Cllr Andrew Smith

Members of the public: 1

Clerk/RFO: Pauline Smith

1. **To receive apologies** for absence and requests for approval of absence.
Apologies were received and accepted/approved from Cllr Martin Belsham and Cllr Helen Beck.
2. **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.
To consider requests for dispensations relating to matters on this agenda:

Disclosable pecuniary interests: Planning: item Cllr Wyer 11.1 Cllr Belsham (not present) item 11.2
Dispensations: None requested.
3. **To approve minutes of the meeting** held on Tuesday 12th September 2023
Proposed: Cllr Hawthorne. Seconded: Cllr Watson
Resolution: The minutes of the meeting were unanimously approved and signed as an accurate record by the Chair.
4. **Public Forum:**
Mr Telfer was welcomed to the meeting.
He was pleased to hear about progress of the new noticeboard intended for the bus shelter at the junction of The Street/Salmond Drive. Anticipated time frame of c.6 weeks.
Tight hand side of notice board will be publicly accessible, left-hand side will be locked with keys held by Mr Telfer and the Parish Council (Clerk).
This is being funded by the parish council together with grants of £500 each from the locality budgets of Cllr Spicer and Cllr Smith, who were thanked for their generosity.
5. **Reports**
 - 5.1 **Suffolk County Councillor, Joanna Spicer MBE**
Suffolk County Council signs requiring repair or replacement:
Further to the information circulated 03/11/23, Cllr Spicer explained that she has a budget which will enable her to pay for 1 possibly 2 signs per parish.
The large damaged sign on the A134 approaching the traffic lights is scheduled for replacement.
Action: Cllrs were asked to submit details of any signs that they consider fit the brief for needing repair or replacement for consideration to the Clerk
Road signs obscured by dirt or vegetation which can be easily resolved by washing or cutting back: If the parish council organises a work party clean signs, Cllr Spicer will be pleased to receive an invitation to come along and help.
Grants: Barnham Primary School Cllr Spicer has provided a grant of £500 to Barnham Primary School for the Barnham Bunnies, a pre-school service providing a 'stepping stone' into school for young children held on a Friday morning.
Noticeboard: £500 has been agreed towards noticeboard (see 4): Cllr Spicer was thanked.
Traffic lights at Station Road crossroads continue to be out of sync: The Clerk is continuing to liaise with SWARCO who have promised to follow up urgently. **Continuing action Clerk**

Potholes at Station Road: Road is in a seriously bad condition. To be reported via highways online reporting system. **Actioned Clerk**

Large dead trees opposite Copper Beeches, The Street: Cllr Watson raised concern about the potential danger of falling branches. It is likely that these trees are the responsibility of Euston Estate. **Actioned: Clerk to Contact Euston Estate. Update: Estate will evaluate the situation**

Cllr Watson raised concern about the high weeds on the verge close to the road at the turn off into Barnham Heath (from Rose Cottage), together with rotting leaves/debris cause the pavement to be slippery.

Action: Cllr Spicer will evaluate the situation with the Community Engineer.

Actioned: Clerk to ask Euston Estate for quote to clear the path

Overhanging Trees and hedge: Water Lane – Cllr Webb described issues being caused to delivery vehicles caused by the overhanging tree, particularly in the summer when weighted down by leaves and fruit (crab apple tree). Plus difficulties resulting from overhanging hedge/other trees:

Report to be submitted to Suffolk County Council. **Actioned Clerk**

Request Euston Estate for quote to cut back vegetation along the bank: Actioned Clerk

Update: Euston will cut back lower vegetation: Also willing to cut back hedges under private arrangement with land owner: Action Clerk to inform landowner with contact details.

WSC to be asked to send mechanical road sweep vehicle to Barnham: Actioned Clerk

5.2 **West Suffolk District Councillor Andrew Smith**

Blacksmiths Lane: Issues raised by residents have been discussed with the West Suffolk Enforcement Officer who has advised that:

West Suffolk cannot deal with historical issues or those issues that relate to the developers alleged behaviour and criminal damage which he advises are matters for the police.

However, the Enforcement Officer (EO) has been pursuing the working on Saturdays after 12pm and Sundays on site with the use of machinery or powered equipment.

“The requisite condition states Demolition or construction works shall not take place outside 08:00 hours to 18:00 hours Mondays to Fridays and 08:00 hours to 13:00 hours on Saturdays and at no time on Sundays, public holidays, or bank holidays.”

EO advises that West Suffolk would normally determine construction works to be the building of the dwelling. Interior and secondary works would not necessarily be held to such limits.

In conversation with the applicant the EO was told that bricklayers have been turning up at 7.30am and by the time he arrives at 8.00am they have generally already mixed up a batch of cement and started, and that no works are carried on after hours as the bricklayers go home. He has reminded the applicant about the need to comply with the planning condition.

With regards using land adjacent to Forge Cottage for the storage of materials and machinery and cement mixing with no current planning permission on site and the position of the toilet. EO advises that such a use is deemed to be permitted development and this does not constitute a breach of planning control.

As Cllr Smith has previously advised: in these circumstances it is good practice to keep a log of perceived breaches. He would also encourage any concerned neighbour to submit complaints using the online planning enforcement reporting tool. By using this link, it helps the West Suffolk Enforcement Team build a picture, they may not always be able to actively assist but may be able to signpost you to the responsible authority. It can also be used to let West Suffolk know if you have a different perspective to what they have been told.

Complaints about damage to the verges opposite the development have also been raised with SCC who have visited but do not consider that remedial action is required at this time. SCC will continue to monitor as part of routine inspections.

NRG: Despite being asked to turn off the floodlight light they haven't done so. Concerns were raised that this is dangerous to drivers.

It is also understood that an ~~application~~ appeal has been submitted to the Planning Inspector to overcome some of the conditions, but at the time of the meeting the details were unknown.

The acoustic fence has not been completed.

Cllr Smith will continue to liaise with the Enforcement Officer.

Grounds Maintenance Review: West Suffolk Council was unable to meet expectations re grass cutting due to the weather conditions combined with lack of resources during 2023, leading to a significant rise in complaints. A grass cutting and wider grounds maintenance review group has been set up, which includes Cllr Smith. A high level of complaints have also been received relating to a failure to deal with what many consider to be excessive weed growth, which has been exacerbated by the ban on glyphosate which was introduced by Suffolk County Council and followed by West Suffolk in December 2022. The use of this product is a contentious issue, but there may be a limited reintroduction of glyphosate at some point.

The aim is to ensure that the three weekly grass cutting schedule is adhered to.

5.3 **Play Park** (Cllr Watson)

Proposal to consider using the services of a play park contractor to resolve all the ongoing minor issues regularly raised on the monthly report.

The monthly playpark report had been received and comments noted.

Clerk to seek quotations to rectify the regularly reported issues: Actioned – quotes awaited.

5.4 **Suffolk Association of Local Councils** (Cllr Beck)

29th November: SALC Conference to be attended by Cllr Beck.

5.5 **Village Hall Report** (Cllr Hawthorne)

No Actions required.

Repairs to wall are expected to progress in the near future (see clerk's report previously circulated)

5.6 **Emergency Plan Final** (Cllr Wyr)

Awaiting response from West Suffolk Council relating to several queries.

5.7 **Defibrillator Training** Awaiting confirmation of date, likely to be during January (Cllr Beck)

Note: This item was omitted: email circulated after meeting to councillors -

Date agreed: Friday 12th January 2024

6. **Speed watch** (Cllr Bauer)

6.1 To review data from Speed indicator device

Very detailed information has been received as an excel spreadsheet, from which the Clerk had extracted a 10 day period as an example, which highlighted a number of vehicles driving between 30 – 35 mph as well as a number over this speed. Further analysis to be carried out.

It is feasible to extract the data on a monthly basis. **To be followed up: Action Clerk**

6.2 **To consider purchase of a second speed indicator device.**

Cllr Bauer has confirmed that there is no appropriate location for a second device.

Resolution: No further action/matter concluded.

6.3 **Speed watch coordinator:** No volunteers have come forward to-date. To determine how to proceed:

It is not currently possible to run any Speedwatch sessions, due to the lack of a coordinator.

Details will be made available at the Farmers Market on 9th December where the parish council will be represented (community engagement).

Cllr Bauer has been in contact with the Police Coordinator for Speed watch and the situation is that if nobody comes forward imminently the equipment will be returned to the police and the speed watch team disbanded.

Action: Community Engagement at Farmers Market

Action: agenda item January meeting: Clerk

7. **Thermal Imaging Camera – Barnham Community Surveys: 4th January – 15th January 2024**
To confirm whether or not Barnham Parish Council wishes to be involved in this project and if so to determine how to proceed.
Resolution: The parish council does wish to be involved in this project.
Cllrs Webb and Wyr will take the lead.
Actioned: Clerk to progress, ongoing
8. **Cessation of The Voluntary Network Transport Service to Thurston School wef January 2024**
Update to the potential impact upon students from Barnham and to establish whether there is a requirement for parish council involvement. (Correspondence previously circulated):
Neither the Parish Council or Suffolk County Councillor Joanna Spicer have been approached by any of the parents of students impacted by the loss of this service.
It is thought likely that the issue has been resolved by parents with a local bus company which already transports children to Thurston School.
It was resolved that no action is required by the parish council at this time.
9. **Clerk's report and Progress of actions from last meeting:** See attached report.
Clock: Approval of a faculty is awaited. It was agreed to promote the refurbishment project, highlighting the estimated cost of £14,000. Unless/until the necessary funding is committed and community support obtained, the project will not be able to proceed. **Action in progress: Clerk**
However, please see item 10, and note that a query regarding floodlighting at the church needs to be resolved, prior to being able to progress grant applications once faculty has been approved.
Clerk has written to the church for clarification.
10. **The Biodiversity Duty of Parish Councils (A statutory duty) Environment Act 2021.** (Clerk)
To note, and then to consider how to progress, the requirement put upon local authorities (including parish councils) to identify what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
Barnham Parish Council acknowledges this duty. An initial draft policy will be prepared for consideration at the January meeting (template attached). **Action: Clerk**
Councillors highlighted the need to consider biodiversity requirements when responding to planning applications, which includes flood-lighting and impact on dark skies and wildlife.
In association with this: A question was raised about the floodlight at the church which had been installed for the King's Coronation: Was a planning application submitted to West Suffolk Council at the same time as the Faculty and if so what was the outcome?
Is the floodlight shining up towards the clock this evening an existing light?
It was highlighted that the parish council needs to be satisfied that the relevant permission has been granted prior to progressing with grant applications for the refurbishment of the clock face.
Clerk to make relevant enquiries with the church: Actioned
11. **Highways Matters**
In addition to matters raised under Cllr Spicer's report 5.1, the following were noted:
There are several issues relating to flooding and blocked drains showing on the Suffolk County Council report it map (not reported to the parish council) in Windsor Close and Newall Road, which have been submitted by residents who are proactive in submitting reports themselves.
Mr Telfer advised that crab apples blocking the soakaway drainage system are a major problem.

- 12. Planning**
- 12.1 DC/23/1647/HH** The Pink House, Station Road Barnham IP24 2PE
Householder planning application: Installation of solar panels on garage roof
Cllr Wyr left the meeting for the duration of this discussion/item.
No objections were raised. **Resolution: Support** **Actioned: Clerk has responded to WSC**
- 12.2 DC/23/1707/TCA** Jubilee Cottage, Euston Road, Barnham
Trees in a conservation area notification: one sycamore (x on plan) fell.
No objections were raised. **Resolution: Support** **Actioned: Clerk has responded to WSC**
- 12.3 SC/23/0445/FUL** Honeysuckle Farm, Thetford Road, Barnham IP24 2PA a. new access to highway. b. addition of boundary fence c. planting bunds. d. hardstanding to form driveway.
Resolution: Councillors continue to objection (unanimous decision) to this application:
Actioned: Clerk has responded to WSC
- Based on local knowledge, councillors know that this is a dangerous stretch of road and therefore continue to object to the application. The previous response/objection submitted 6th June 2023 continues to apply.
- Trees, Hedges and Vegetation: If the planning application is granted, the parish council considers the conditions and reasons as detailed within the Arboriculture Officer's report (8th November 2023) are essential and should be included in full within the planning conditions.
- 12.4 DC/23/1615/ELC** Electricity Substation, Thetford Road, Barnham **Decided/No objections**
(Note: The parish council raised no objections in relation to this application received between meetings.)
- 12.5 Any other planning matters** that have arisen requiring consideration since issuing the agenda
None
- 13. Finance (Clerk/RFO)**
- 13.1** Financial report – The bank reconciliation was approved:
Savings Account as at 14/11/23: 20,978.65
Current Account as at 14/11/23 514.91
- 13.2 Invoices for approval:**
The following payments totalling £930.00 were unanimously approved:
Clerk/RFO September/October Salary/Work from Home allowance. £520.00
Grainger Pest Control (Annual Contract) £410.00
- 13.3 Budget 2024/25:** Initial draft details for consideration were provided to councillors: see attached details.
The budget will receive further discussion for decision at the January 2024 meeting.
- 14. Diary Dates and Future Events Planning:**
29th November: SALC Conference – to be attended by Cllr Beck
4th December: West Suffolk Civic Carol Service – Invitation to Cllrs, Family and Friends
9th December 2023: Farmers Christmas Market, Barnham Church – Community Engagement opportunity. (Cllr Bauer, Cllr Webb, Clerk are available)
6th June 2024: D-Day Anniversary (Cllr Beck)
- 15. Correspondence** not previously dealt with requiring consideration: None
- 16. Requests for items to be included on next agenda**
S137 donations

17. **Exempt item:** To resolve that under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public be excluded from the meeting due to the confidential nature of the business to be discussed.
Reason: To consider grounds maintenance quotations

- 17.1 **Details of the quotes from three grounds maintenance contractors had been provided to councillors:**

[REDACTED]

Councillors considered the three quotes: All three are highly suited to the work and it was a difficult decision.

Mr Austin, the existing and excellent contractor had advised the parish council during the summer that he wished to be released from the contract. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The parish council is fortunate to have received interest from two other highly suitable companies [REDACTED], enabling Mr Austin to step away from the contract without concern.

The parish council is required to consider best value: this does not mean the cheapest.

Resolution: Having considered the three quotations, Councillors unanimously agreed to award the contract to Vertas.

Whilst one of the parish council's preferences is to employ a local contractor, Vertas regularly visits Barnham (approx. every 2 weeks during the grass cutting season) as the school's contractor.

The clerk will arrange to meet with Vertas to ensure that there have been no omissions within the quotation, which is less expensive than the two alternative quotes.

(Actioned 22/11/23)

- 17.2. **Pest control Contract (Moles):** To consider whether to continue with the annual Mole Control Contract at the Village Hall
Grainger Pest Solutions: 12 Months commencing 1st September 2023: £410.00
Resolution: Councillors agreed to continue with the Mole Control contract.
Action Clerk/RFO to notify Owen Grainger and arrange for payment of invoice (Actioned)

18. **Next Meeting: Tuesday 9th January 2024, 7.00pm in Barnham Village Hall**

Minutes signed as an accurate record of the meeting held on 14th November 2023

Cllr John Bauer (Chair).....

Date Tuesday 9th January 2024