

# Barnham Parish Council

## Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Barnham Parish Council held on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2023, commencing at 7pm Venue: Barnham Village Hall

All councillors signed their declaration of office forms before the meeting commenced.

### Present:

Councillors: John Bauer, Martin Belsham, Helen Beck, Mathew Hawthorn, Susan Watson, Adrian Webb, Ed Wyr.

Locum Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer: Pauline Smith.

Members of the public: 1

Prior to commencing the formal business of the meeting, a brief period of silence was observed in memory of former Barnham Parish Councillor Peter Keast.

### 1. Election of Chair and signing of Declaration of Office

Cllr John Bauer was proposed as Chair by Cllr Ed Wyr

Proposal seconded by Cllr Susan Watson. The proposal was unanimously agreed.

**Cllr Bauer was duly elected as Chair:** He signed the Declaration of Acceptance which was countersigned by the Clerk.

The Chair expressed his gratitude to the previous Chair, Cllr Wyr, for his dedication and hard work for the parish during his time in this role and welcomed the newly elected council.

### 2. Election of Vice Chair

Cllr Ed Wyr was proposed as Vice Chair by Cllr Bauer

Proposal seconded by Cllr Hawthorne

The proposal was unanimously agreed.

**Cllr Ed Wyr was duly elected as Vice Chair.**

### 3. To receive apologies for absence and requests for approval for absence

Apologies for absence were received by Suffolk County Cllr Joanna Spicer MBE and West Suffolk District Cllr Andrew Smith.

### 4. 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, not already received and determined, for dispensations relating to matters on this agenda.

It was agreed that although Cllr Hawthorne is a member of the Village Hall Committee, to exclude him from the discussion in relation to item 12.2 would be detrimental to the discussion which may benefit from his input. It was also established that whilst he has a valuable presence on the village hall committee it is as a non-voting member. Cllr Hawthorne has not been involved in the conversation leading to the suggested proposal to increase the financial support to the Village Hall.

(Councillors' attention was drawn to LTN 21 Local Council Help to Village Halls.)

**Whilst Cllr Hawthorne will not vote on the proposal, a dispensation to remain within the meeting and discuss the proposal was unanimously agreed.**

5. **To approve minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> March 2023.**

The clerk advised that an amendment had been made to the draft minutes since circulating: Item 5.ii The subheading **Phone box** has been added. At the meeting: page 4 item 7.vi, 'Jess' amended to 'Jez Blackburn'.

**The minutes were then unanimously agreed as an accurate records and signed by the Vice Chair who had been Chair of the meeting to which the minutes relate (14<sup>th</sup> March 2023).**

6. **Public Forum**

A member of the public explained that the letter circulated to business owners/the local farming community (see 9.1) had caused a lot of confusion and concern. Tractor operators do not want to break the law and many have (or will be) contacted SCC to clarify the details and to purchase a permit if considered necessary.

Cllr Wyer explained that the letter was asking those who do not need to traverse the village to reach their destination to use an alternative/appropriate route.

Lorry Watch had originally been set up on the C633 due to an abuse of the one-way restriction. (Vehicles going to or from the industrial sites have permission to drive in both directions).

7. **Reports**

7.1 **Suffolk County Councillor**, Joanna Spicer – See report provided to Annual Parish Meeting.

7.2 **West Suffolk District Councillor**, Andrew Smith – See report provided to Annual Parish Meeting.

7.3 **Police Report**: None

7.4 **Play Park** (Cllr Watson)

It was suggested that removal of the large tree on the boundary between the swings and the road would provide clearer visibility into the play park and across to the village hall resulting in improved security. **Comments were noted/no action required at this time.**

It was agreed that the current arrangement of cutting back the branches to ensure they do not interfere with the swings remains an appropriate solution when necessary.

7.5 **Speed Watch**: No report.

Mark Hirst has stood down from his role as co-ordinator of the speed watch team. His work during this time has been greatly appreciated.

In order for the good work to continue another volunteer is required for this important role, but as yet nobody has volunteered.

Cllr Bauer outlined the role and responsibilities which includes scheduling a rota of times and dates for the volunteers.

**Action: Cllr Beck undertook to have a discussion with Mark Hirst and to report back.**

Additional Comment: It would be helpful to new councillors to have an understanding of the roles such as this and others identified in item 8, prior to being expected to give consideration to taking them on.

7.6 **Clerk's report**: to include updates and outcomes from March minutes.

Please see attached.

The Clerk asked Councillors to consider setting up email addresses specifically for the purposes of Parish Council work (as recommended during the recent SALC course for councillors).

There are various options for parish councils to set up the email addresses, for example through office 365 (£4.65 per councillor per month), but ideally the parish council would have a gov.uk domain or other appropriate domain and email addresses associated with this. Councillors consider that the additional costs cannot be justified at this time.

It is possible for councillors to set up additional email addresses for themselves at no additional cost for example via gmail, or in many cases their own internet providers. Councillors are asked to consider these options and notify the clerk accordingly.

8. **Allocation of responsibilities and representation to/liaison with other organisations for agreement:** the following roles were agreed.

RAF Honington	Cllr Wyer
Village Hall Committee - liaison	Cllr Hawthorne
Emergency Plan	Cllr Wyer
Play Park	Cllr Watson
Lorry watch	Cllr Wyer
Speed watch Co-ordinator	Volunteer required: This role does not have to be held by a councillor. See 7.5
Suffolk Association of Local Councils	Cllr Bauer
Police Liaison	Martin Belsham
Ex RAF Housing residents - liaison	None at present, but see below.

Cllr Beck expressed disappointment about the lack of community engagement with residents of the ex RAF Housing area.

It was highlighted that a representative from the ex RAF Housing has previously attended meetings, though not for some while. Following a recent conversation between Rob Williams and Cllr Wyer it is hoped to welcome a representative again in the near future.

**Action: Councillor Beck will provide a proposal for the July meeting re community engagement.**

### Highways

9.1 **Traffic Concerns:**

To note Correspondence from Suffolk Trading Standards re letters to the local farming community regarding the weight restriction/Lorry Watch.

The contents were noted (copy previously circulated). See also item 6 public forum.

9.2 **To consider approaching SCC to extend the 30mph limit** through the village and implementing a 20mph zone.

Deferred to July meeting: Agenda item for discussion with Cllr Spicer.

9.3 **A number of Highways issues were raised:**

**Traffic lights at Barnham Crossroads:** Concerns were expressed about the timing of the lights and poor visibility when turning onto the A134 from Barnham. A question was asked about whether the priorities had changed?

Action: Clerk to contact SCC Highways to request review: Reported/awaiting outcome.

9.4 *Other matters to be reported to Highways*

**Hedges/Vegetation at crossroads** creating visibility difficulties.

**Drainage/Soakaway at crossroads** blocked/require attention.

**Entrance at East Farm:** 2 large trees cause vehicles to have to swing onto the path, damaging the verges and creating a muddy mess on the path, which is particularly bad during wet weather. Entrance could do with being widened which would need the trees to be removed.

**Footway alongside public highway** is of varying widths and extremely narrow in various areas as a result of encroaching vegetation, which needs removing. It was noted that Barnham PC has previously engaged a contractor (one occasion) to carry out this work, with the permission of Suffolk Highways, for which parish council paid. The parish council may consider taking this action again depending on the response from Suffolk Highways.

**Damaged sign** on A134 Thetford Road

Action: Clerk to contact Highways: All items detailed above reported. Outcomes awaited.

**10. To review and confirm the following documents**

10.1 **Standing Orders** Reviewed: No changes required – signed by Chair.

**Next review date May 2024**

10.2 **Financial Regulations** Reviewed: No changes required – signed by Chair

**Next review date May 2024**

10.3 **Risk Assessment** Cllr Beck queried the methodology for determining the levels of risk: L/M/H. This is a document, previously drawn up to the satisfaction of SALC. No other queries were raised.

**Action: The clerk will discuss this document in more detail with Cllr Beck outside of the meeting. Action Clerk/Cllr Beck**

10.4 **Assets Register** Reviewed – no comments – accepted. Next review date May 2024

**11. Financial matters**

11.1 **To receive draft accounts** year ending 31 March 2023:

An EGM will be convened to approve the accounts towards the end of June when audited by the internal auditor.

EGM will also include discussion to confirm contract re Clerk/RFO's employment.

Actioned Clerk/Chair: Date set for EGM 20<sup>th</sup> June

11.2 **To receive financial report** and payments for approval:

Payments totalling £497.17 were unanimously approved:

04/05/23 Cheque no: 101186. E2E Bus shelter repairs. £216.00

23/05/23 Cheque no: 101187 SALC Membership. £281.19

11.3 **Authorised signatories:**

The Parish council requires three authorised signatories. These were confirmed as:

Cllr John Bauer, Cllr Ed Wyr, Cllr Martin Belsham

Action: Clerk/RFO – In progress.

The parish council is extremely grateful to former Councillor Ian Heading who has continued to act as the second signatory and enabled the parish council to continue to pay invoices.

11.4 **To review contingency fund** for clock (£500per annum) and Village Hall (£1,000per annum)

**Clock:** It was agreed to contact Smith of Derby and establish whether the parish council is locked into a contract for a specified period of time. If not, then it was decided that the clock will be serviced on an as needed basis, thereby retaining the annual sum allocated in the budget within the earmarked contingency fund.

The alternative proposal, if 'locked into' a contract for the clock maintenance is to increase the contingency fund to £750 to allow £275 for clock servicing and balance for contingencies.

Action: Clerk to make enquiries: Outcome to be reported to July meeting for final decision. (Next service due January 2024 – One month's notice required to exit contract.)

It was noted that a quote for the cost of automating the winding mechanism received a few years ago was c.£4,500.

Action: Clerk/RFO to identify the balance remaining in the clock and village hall contingency funds/reserves from previous years.

**Outcome**

**Clock Contingency fund:** Since meeting Clock contingency as at 31/3/23 confirmed as £385.00.

**Village Hall Contingency fund:** Since meeting Village Hall contingency as at 31/3/23 confirmed as £2,000.00

(Additional information included in email to Cllr Wyer see page 7)

11.5 **To consider purchase of Scribe Accounting Package**

The clerk had previously circulated details of the scribe package and explained the benefits. Annual cost: £228.00 plus a one off set up cost of £99.

**Proposed: Cllr Beck    Seconded: Cllr Hawthorne**

**Decision: Unanimously Approved    Action: Clerk to Order/ Actioned 24/5**

11.6 **General Power of Competence:** Cllr Belsham suggested that the parish council should investigate the benefits of adopting the General Power of Competence. Barnham Parish Council would require a CILCA qualified Clerk to proceed with this.

The Locum Clerk was asked to provide the relevant information for consideration at the July meeting. **Action: Clerk**

12. **Village Hall**

12.1 **Village Hall Report** – to include outcome re moles (Cllr Hawthorne)

Moles have been dealt with.

12.2 **To review the costs of the wall/ramp/handrail** taking into consideration the additional requirement of bollards to prevent future damage, and to consider increasing the sum that the parish council is willing to allocate to the necessary work.

**The parish council resolved that** that it will pay the additional costs relating to the bollards required to prevent future damage to the wall as per the quotation.

It was suggested that parking arrangements need to be reviewed and spaces reorientated.

**Action: Cllr Hawthorne will discuss the proposed work with Judy Jordan (VH).**

13. **Planning applications**

To consider responses to planning application consultations received from West Suffolk District Council – the Planning Authority.

13.1 DC/23/0732/TCA: Hambleden, Blacksmith Lane, Barnham IP24 2NE

Proposal: Trees in a conservation area notification – one Conifer (marked on plan) fell.

**Decision/ Response: No objections**

13.2 DC/23/0445/FUL: Honeysuckle Farm, Thetford Road, Barnham

Proposal: a. new access to highway, b. addition of boundary fence, c. planting bunds, d. hardstanding to form driveway.

**Decision/Response: Objection (Copy of submitted response attached).**

13.3 DC/23/0647/FUL: 14 St Martin's Lane, Barnham

Proposal: change of use from habitable room (class C3) to beauty therapy room (sui generis).

**Decision/response: No objections with comment (Copy of submitted response attached)**

13.4 DC/23/0774/TCA: Cargill House, The Street, Barnham

Proposal: Trees in a conservation area notification – one Beech (T1 on plan) overall crown reduction by up to two metres.

**Decision/response: No objections**

- 13.5 *Due to the importance of this matter although not on the agenda it was agreed it should be included.*  
DC/22/1960/TCA. Trees at the church yard overhanging path and obscuring the VAS. Permission has previously been obtained from WSC to carry out work to the trees to improve the visibility.  
**It was resolved that** that the clerk will request Ian Austin to provide a quote to carry out the work.  
A budget of £400 was unanimously approved.  
**Outcome/Clerk's note:** *Since the meeting* It is understood that work has been carried out on the trees prior to the contractor attending to provide estimate. Awaiting confirmation as to whether further work/estimate is required.
14. **Items for consideration for inclusion on next agenda.**
- a. Highways: To consider approaching SCC to extend the 30mph limit through the village and implementing a 20mph zone.
  - b. Village Hall: Wifi contribution
  - c. General Power of Competence: To consider benefits to the parish council
  - d. Liaison with Village Hall to consider how to encourage greater use (using the example of Warm Spaces that has been very successful in providing an opportunity to bring the community together.)
  - e. Dog bins: locations; additional requirements/costs; query about restricted opening on bin at Salmond Drive (next to bus shelter).
15. **To confirm time and date of next meeting.** Venue: Barnham Village Hall  
Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> July 2023  
EGM: Finance – to receive and approve audited accounts.  
Since meeting confirmed as: Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> June at 7pm: Barnham Village Hall

The meeting closed at 8.55pm

*In memory of former Barnham Parish Councillor Peter Keast,  
who passed away on Sunday, 30th April 2023*