

**Minutes of the meeting of Barnham Parish Council
held on Tuesday 14th March 2023, commencing at 7.00pm.
Venue: Barnham Village Hall.**

Present:

Parish Councillors: Ed Wyer (Chair), Peter Keast, Susan Watson, Matthew Hawthorne, Martin Belsham, John Bauer,
Suffolk Cllr Joanna Spicer, West Suffolk District Cllr Andrew Smith. Clerk/RFO: Pauline Smith
4 Members of the public.

1. **Apologies for absence:** Cllr Heading: Apologies received.
2. **To declare any interests relating to matters on this agenda** None received.
3. **To confirm the appointment of Pauline Smith as Locum Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer.**
Unanimously approved
4. **To approve the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 10th January 2023.**
The Minutes, which had been previously circulated were unanimously approved and signed as an accurate record by the Chairman.
5. **To discuss progress of actions from the previous meeting.**
 - i. **Great British Spring Clean**
Due to Cllr Heading's absence no report was available for the meeting.
(Clerk's note: Information circulated to councillors following the meeting: Cllr Heading advised that the proposed litter pick will take place on 22nd April - posters to follow shortly.)
 - ii. **Barnham Heath: Provision of notice board/location:** No update received
Phone Box: Repair of broken glass.
It was noted that the bottom of the door is also broken.
Action: Clerk has requested Paul Woollard to assess the work required: Awaiting response
6. **Public Forum**
 - i. A resident raised detailed concerns about the number and frequency of HGV vehicles and over-weight tractors transiting the village, causing potential damage to the historic fabric of the village, (walls and buildings, particularly the church wall) as a result of vibration, as well the dangers caused by those who do not adhere to the speed limits.
He asked whether the parish council would support the suggestion of removing the conservation status from the centre of the village which would allow less decorative and more substantial modern repairs which would be less costly than repointing flint walls.

The resident suggested reducing the speed limit at the narrow zone for a small stretch for safety purposes which would have an effect on the agricultural vehicles as well as the general users and reduce speed, vibration and improved stopping distances.

Response:

It is considered unlikely that a request to remove the conservation status of the village would succeed.

The Chairman offered to visit locations with resident to see evidence of where flints have fallen from walls due to vibration caused by vehicles.

HGV Permits are required for individual vehicles: HGV's transiting the village which do not have permits, and are not accessing property within the village are not legally permitted to use this route.

Cllr Spicer advised that there is a permit scheme but also an understanding that a genuine agricultural vehicle on agricultural business does not need a licence (albeit this may be open to some discussion.)

It is an enforceable regulation if it has been breached and the only way to identify this is to report to trading standards

The Chairman advised that he has had a conversation with Claire Fisher, Trading Standards Officer responsible for monitoring the traffic that comes through Barnham. The problem is identifying who owns the tractors because they don't always have a registration plate, although they should have. Trading Standards are going to write a letter to all farms and businesses in the area reminding them of their responsibilities about the 7.5 tonne weight restriction through the village. However, as most of the traffic this complaint relates to is local traffic this may need some means of addressing that locally.

Change to speed limit: A 20mph speed restriction has previously been considered. Cllr Spicer suggested including this on the next agenda. However, it would have to be for a substantial stretch. If there is agreement to pursue this then the next stage would be to submit to Suffolk County Council for consideration, before deciding how this would be paid for.

Mark Hirst explained that the traffic restriction order for traffic accessing the village specifically says that heavy commercial vehicles and trucks etc are only allowed to use the said length of road, ie the C634, for the purposes of agriculture if they're accessing land adjacent to that road: Whilst it is suspected that a lot aren't, it is very difficult to prove.

Tractors over 7.5 tonnes are included in the restriction and should not be going through the village, but as is known from experience: having tried to report them, identifying them and getting them dealt with by Trading Standards has become almost an impossibility: As the last correspondence from Claire Fisher, Trading Standards Officer explains: without being able to identify those tractors, they are unable to send letters to the appropriate owners.

Although a manufacturer's website will provide a weight for tractors, Trading Standards can only go forward if there is a weight given on the DVLA site: Unfortunately, this is not a mandatory requirement when the vehicles are first registered and so in these instances Trading Standards are unable to pursue.

Resident:

The majority of agricultural businesses use the road without any problem, and a blanket ban would cause more problems than simply communicating with the businesses that are involved in the slightly heavier use of that road, and just see whether they could contribute to repair and maintenance of the village or whether they could perhaps fund 20mph zone, or perhaps communicate to their contractors or subcontractors that they want them to drive at an appropriate speed through the village. Resident claims that it's pretty easy to identify those really heavy users and that everyone knows who they are.

Chairman suggested to resident that if he is prepared to draft a letter and say to whom they should be sent the pc can consider this.

Resident stated that: Ultimately, the concerns are around the speed that people drive through the village, people have to walk to take their children to school and he is trying to find positive solutions working with the parish council and landowners.

Chairman: Outcome:

In the meantime we should pursue as best we can through the lorry watch programme and report vehicles that are considered to be illegally driving through the village.

Mark Hirst was asked to liaise with the resident.

- ii. **Lorry Watch:** (MH) reported that Tractors cannot be followed up as part of lorry watch. Lorry Watch had a six month trial which is being extended for another 3 months. If they are able to 'capture' number plate, date, time and direction vehicle is travelling this information will be forwarded on.
- iii. Suffolk County Council was thanked for repairing the broken slabs going towards the traffic lights
- iv. West Suffolk Council was thanked for clearing the leaves.

7. Reports:

i. **Suffolk County Council** (Cllr Joanna Spicer)

To include updates from matters raised at January meeting.

Cllr Spicer was thanked for all her work in relation to The Quarry application, which was refused by one vote. The previous consent runs out 31st March 23. Cllr Spicer highlighted that the entire site (80 hectares) is in the county council's minerals plan. Waiting to hear if there will be an appeal: The company has 6 months to submit an appeal. It was noted that an appeal could 'drag on' for 2 or 3 years.

The Telegraph Pole: Andy Moore, Community Engineer, in his own time, has dug away against the bank and put down turf from his own garden resulting it in being much easier to pass by.

Once the ground has settled it could be gravelled/shingled to help it stay dry.

(No charge to anybody.) Mark Hirst will ask a wheelchair user to assess the location.

Action: [Letter of thanks to be sent to SCC A.Moore/Clerk](#)

Cllr Spicer thanked Mark Hirst for carrying out the lorry watch and speed watch sessions.

It was noted that the road sign on the main road has not been repaired.

ii. **West Suffolk District Council** (Cllr Andrew Smith)

NRG Planning Application The applicant was trying to vary the conditions granted at the Development Control Committee meeting in 2021, one of which was to reduce the height of the acoustic fence. But following a report from public health and housing, and the company's desire to go ahead with HGV fleet size, movements and hours of work, it is hoped that they will adhere to the advice of the planning officer that it needs to be returned to the height of 2.5 metres. Cllr Smith hopes that the excessive delays in resolving this issue will not continue. (It was reported that lights continue to be on throughout the night.)

Blacksmith Lane: Matter has now been passed to the enforcement team.

Local Plan: Next round of consultation is likely to be late autumn/winter 2023. This has been delayed due to introduction of new legislation by the government.

iii. **Village Hall**

To consider request for grant towards repair of wall and new hand rail

Chairman's proposal that the parish council should fully fund the repairs of the wall and hand rail in full, as detailed on the estimate, was agreed in principle.

This requires a full rebuild of the wall and rails to adhere to disability access.

However, it was further agreed that 2 additional alternative quotes will be sought prior to a final decision.

Resolution/Action: [Clerk will contact Village Hall to explain](#)

WiFi: Cllr Hawthorne advised that the Village Hall Committee has requested that the parish council pay the monthly cost of wifi (£28.00) for the village hall.

Resolution/Action: To be included on May agenda for consideration/Clerk

iv. RAF Honington (Cllr Heading) - No update provided at meeting.

(Clerk's note. Since the meeting the Clerk has circulated information from Cllr Heading advising: Flying from Honington: Nothing specific to Barnham but there will be more gliding activity this summer.)

v. Play Park (Cllr Watson)

To include update re arson at playpark 5th March 2023 and to determine further actions required.

Having reviewed the location of the damage with the West Suffolk Parks Inspector, the damage is (fortunately) considered superficial. It is thanks to the vigilance and quick actions by residents that the damage was not more severe.

(Clerk's note: Since the meeting a letter of thanks has been written to the residents.)

Consideration was given to proceeding with a complaint against the youths who set the fire.

The Clerk has had a conversation with PC Dow who has explained that due to the ages of the youths concerned, they would not be prosecuted but could be referred to the Youth Offending Team which has programmes to educate offenders about the dangers of fire.

Councillors discussed the benefits and otherwise of proceeding down this route. The majority view was that as no major damage had occurred on this occasion, and the police have spoken seriously to the youths about their actions, that the complaint should not proceed. Action: Clerk to inform PC Dow of the Parish Council's decision - Dealt with 14/3/23

The clerk confirmed that the parish council does have a crime number, which would be required should an insurance claim be necessary. The parish council's insurance company has annotated its records to show that that a claim may be submitted, depending on the outcome of enquiries into the damage caused.

Chairman described another incident of vandalism which had occurred at the village hall, relating to the already damaged brick wall: Fortunately, the perpetrators were caught before they were able to do any further damage.

To note receipt of the monthly reports from West Suffolk Council Inspector and identify any actions required.

A number of low risk items remain outstanding, but do not appear to be of concern.

However, Cllr Watson is meeting with the WSC Parks Inspector on 16th March and will discuss these matters with him then, and also ask for his advice regarding the surface damage following the fire, as mentioned above.

(Follow up note: Having discussed that levels of risk with the West Suffolk Parks Inspector at the Play park on 16th March Cllr Watson is satisfied that these matters do not warrant urgent action.) Clerk advised that she had spoken to Wicksteed: a repair kit is available if considered necessary.

West Suffolk Council Parks Service – Service Agreement re Play Park:

To consider whether or not to continue with the service provided by WSC for a further year.

Resolution: It was unanimously agreed to continue with this service, which is carried out monthly at no charge to the parish. No action is required.

vi. Speedwatch (M.Hirst) Report attached.

A good relationship is developing with the community engagement officer PC Lee Andrews-Pearce, who carried out the speed watch training. There are now 11 volunteers.

Mark Hirst thanked Jess, who downloads the VAS data every month.

The data (report attached) shows high levels of speeding traffic: In January 2,500 vehicles were registered at 36 - 40mph and in February it was 3,000 vehicles, which is worrying. The data provides a good guide as to the most appropriate times to carry out speed-watch sessions.

Cllr Spicer advised that if PC Andrews-Pearce is presented with evidence of speeding during specific times of day he will attend with his speed gun which he can use to immediately issue a fixed penalty fine.

The speed camera van: Unfortunately, there is no appropriate location to park the van in Barnham (this has previously been discussed).

ANPR Trial results will be presented via Cllr Spicer Joanna in due course.

Cllr Spicer will enquire whether it is necessary for the parish council to reapply for the ANPR scene to visit Barnham again.

vii Police report: (See play park) The police are now included on the agenda circulation list and will attend meetings when feasible.

8. Bus Shelter: To receive quotation and report regarding requisite repairs for consideration and decision.

The Clerk has liaised with Paul Woollard and a full assessment of the work required is awaited.

Resolution: It was agreed that the sum of £500 be allocated towards the cost of repairs in order to progress. Should it become clear that repairs exceeding this sum are needed the requirements will be discussed at a future meeting.

The Clerk has also asked Mr Woollard for his assessment of the damage to the phone box: response awaited. Action Clerk

9. Planning Matters:

To consider responses to planning application consultations received from West Suffolk District Council.

i. DC/23/0298/HH : Ye Olde House The Street Barnham Suffolk IP24 2NF

Proposal Householder planning application - addition of solar panels to eastern roof slope of annexe: **No comments received.** Action: Clerk to notify WSC

ii. DC/23/0277/TCA | Trees in a conservation area notification - three Elm (on plan)fell

Mwnt Cottage Water Lane Barnham Thetford Suffolk IP24 2NA:

Parish Council Response: Barnham Parish Council has submitted a response advising that it has no comments to make in relation to this application.

iii. To note decisions by West Suffolk Council Planning Authority since January meeting.

DC/22/0424/FUL: 5 Church Lane Barnham Suffolk IP24 2NB

Proposal: Planning application - a. one dwelling adjacent to existing

b. detached garage c. associated vehicle access: Approved - notice issued 15 Feb 2023

Complete list of planning decisions January/February issued with agenda pack (attached).

10. King's Coronation:

i. To consider the purchase of lamp post plaques

Councillor Spicer kindly offered to fund the purchase of the plaques (£115.59 inclusive of vat)

Resolution: Purchase confirmed/Clerk to order and submit locality budget funding request to Cllr Spicer

- ii. **To consider request for grant towards funding of village celebrations to be held in Village Hall.**
The Chairman proposed that the parish council fund the repairs to the village hall in full (originally a contribution was requested) as per the quotation received, and that the village hall contributes to the Coronation Celebrations. (See 7.iii). Resolution: This proposal was agreed.
- 11. Finance:**
- i. **To receive financial report and to authorise payments.**
The financial report was accepted and three cheques totalling £180.60 were signed by the signatories, Cllr Wyer and Cllr Keast: See details on attached report
- ii. **To agree arrangements for change of banking arrangements** including correspondence address and online banking.
Correspondence Address: It was unanimously resolved that Barclays Bank should be informed that all correspondence for Barnham Parish Council is now: Lavender Barn, Bowbeck, Bardwell, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP31 1BA
On-line banking: It was unanimously resolved that Barnham Parish Council should move to on-line banking and that the Clerk/RFO should have access as a signatory to input payments. This is known as a complex account requiring a 2nd signatory to access the bank account to authorise/approve all payments.
Clerk/RFO will have access to carry out internal transfers between Barnham Parish Council's accounts without the need for an additional signatory to authorise these transactions.
It was resolved that changes to the banking arrangements as detailed above should be implemented with immediate effect.
Letters to Barclays authorising the changes were signed by Chairman and Cllr Keast.
- iii. **To consider an option to utilise Scribe**, a web based accountancy package, in preference to Excel spreadsheets. Locum Clerk/RFO will provide details and benefits of moving to this package. Item adjourned until next meeting. Clerk will review and provide details in the meanwhile.
- iv. **To discuss and confirm 2022/23 audit arrangements.**
Mrs Debbie Dunning has kindly agreed to carry out the internal audit for year ending 31st March 2023.
New arrangements will be required for 2023/24: Clerk suggested moving to SALC.
Resolution: The suggestion was agreed in principle.
The need to be mindful of increased expenditure that has not been included within the budget was highlighted.
- 12. Correspondence**
- i. **Letter From Revd Sue Nutt requesting Grant towards Coronation Event in Village Hall.**
See item 10.ii Village Hall will make appropriate contribution to this event. Chairman has discussed/agreed with Revd Nutt and Judy Jordan (Village Hall).
- ii. **Letter from Ben Wright seeking support from parish councils to further a proposal to build under Neighbourhood Plan Development Order.** (Letter received after the agenda had been issued/circulated to councillors prior to the meeting.)
Councillors discussed the content of the letter. There are a number of constraints relevant to any planning application in the parish including:
Local Plan: Currently Barnham has no housing developments in the local plan.
Most of the land is owned by Euston Estate.
Much of the village is designated a conservation area.

Development around the settlement is heavily constrained by designations protecting the natural environment. Breckland Special Area of Conservation is one kilometre to the north east, areas of the Breckland Special Protection Area surround the village which is within the stone curlew, woodlark and nightjar buffers.

It was resolved that should Mr Wright identify land for this development within the parish that he should progress his application via the normal planning process with the local planning authority.

Resolution: The parish Council unanimously agreed not to progress the request.

Action: Clerk to inform Mr Wright.

- 13. Election Thursday 4th May 2023:** To confirm arrangements for candidates who wish the Clerk to take their nomination papers to West Suffolk House.
The clerk will be at the Village Hall Car park on Tuesday 28th March 10am to collect nomination papers. These will be delivered to West Suffolk House on Wednesday 29th March at 11am.
- 14. Future dates:**
To confirm date of, and arrangements for, the Annual Parish (Village) Meeting.
This meeting will be held on the same date as the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council.
See item 16.
- 15. Items for consideration for the next agenda.**
Wi Fi for Village Hall (Consideration by the parish council for monthly payment)
20mph limit
Consideration of letters to be sent to businesses re HGV's, and over weight tractors.
- 16. The next meeting of Barnham Parish Council:- The Annual Meeting of the Parish Council** would ordinarily be Tuesday 9th May 2023. However, the timing of the election may necessitate this meeting being delayed.
Resolution: Date of the Annual Village Meeting and Annual Meeting of the Parish Council will be confirmed following publication of election candidates.

Signed as an accurate record by:

Date: 230523