

**DRAFT Minutes of the Meeting of Barnham Parish Council  
held on Tuesday 11th November 2025, commencing at 7pm  
Venue: Barnham Village hall, Mill Lane, Barnham IP24 2NG**

Present: Cllr John Bauer, Cllr Helen Beck, Cllr Adrian Webb. Cllr Susan Watson, Cllr Martin Belsham, Cllr Edward Wyre, West Suffolk District Cllr Andrew Smith.  
Clerk/RFO Pauline Smith  
Members of the public:3

1. **Apologies for Absence** were received from Cllr Matthew Hawthorne (approved) and Suffolk County Cllr Joanna Spicer.
2. **Declarations of Interests & consideration of requests for dispensations**  
No declarations of interest were declared.
3. **Approval of Minutes of meeting held 9<sup>th</sup> September 2025**  
The minutes of the meeting were unanimously accepted as a true record and duly signed by the Chair.
4. **Public Forum**  
**Barnham Heath - Multi-purpose Bin**  
It was reported that the multi-purpose bin at Barnham Heath was overflowing, resulting in dog waste bags being left on the ground beside it.  
**Action:** Clerk to report the issue to WSC.

*Potential Inappropriate Use:* It was noted that a large, full green plastic bag of unknown contents had been deposited in the bin. It was highlighted that these bins are not intended for household waste.

*Update: the bin was emptied soon after the meeting*

5. **Reports**

5.1 **West Suffolk Councillor Andrew Smith**

i. **Bottle Banks**

Cllr Smith referred to the letter received by Barnham Parish Council, detailing the arrangements known so far regarding the intended phasing out of the bottle-bank collections from village halls during 2026.

Further details will be provided when available. The Village Hall committee will wish to consider its arrangements in view of these changes and take any necessary action in relation to events held at the Village Hall.

Barnham Parish Council will receive the equivalent of the 2025/26 credit (£393) during the financial years 2026/27 and 2027/28, reducing to nil in 2028/29, regardless of actual collections.

**Note:**

*The Clerk has provided a copy of the letter to the Village Hall Chair. In addition, Councillor Smith and the Clerk attended the Village Hall AGM on 25th November, during which Councillor Smith provided a verbal report on the matter.*

## ii. **West Suffolk Local Plan**

The West Suffolk Local Plan 2024- 2041 was adopted by West Suffolk Council at its meeting on 15 July 2025.

The plan now forms part of the statutory development plan for West Suffolk and supersedes all previously adopted local plan documents.

### **Requirement for a New Local Plan**

The Government now requires councils to commence preparation of the next Local Plan, with a requirement that it be completed within 2.5 years. This contrasts with the five-year timescale taken to prepare the current plan.

- Government guidance is expected in December 2025
- Work on the new plan is anticipated to begin in early 2026
- It is understood that the Government will require additional housing allocations to be included

As with previous plans, there will be a “call for sites” inviting landowners to submit land for potential development.

Note: While the adopted plan originally included a policy requiring solar panels on all new-build developments, this requirement was removed following examination, having been rejected by the Planning Inspector.

### **Devolution: Mayoral Elections**

Elections for the Mayor of Norfolk and Suffolk were originally scheduled for May 2026. It had also been suggested that Suffolk County Council elections might take place at the same time, although this was not confirmed.

### **Update - Since the meeting:**

*The Government has since confirmed that Mayoral Elections will be delayed until 2027.*

*It is not yet known whether or not Suffolk County Council elections will take place or be similarly deferred until 2027.*

## iii. **Local Government Reorganisation**

Information on local government reorganisation has previously been circulated and discussed at meetings, including updates provided by County and District Councillors.

During the current consultation, councillors and residents are invited to express their views on the preferred structure for future local government in Suffolk:

- One single unitary authority for Suffolk (proposed by Suffolk County Council), or
- Three smaller unitary authorities (proposed by the District and Borough Councils)

*Note: The consultation period opened after this meeting - documents available at:*

<https://consult.communities.gov.uk/local-government-reorganisation/norfolk-suffolk/>

### **Consultation Period**

- Opened: 19 November 2025
- Closes: 11 January 2026

## **Planning Enforcement Matters**

### iv. **Gerda**

Cllr Smith has discussed the lack of progress with the Senior Enforcement Officer. A planning application is expected; however, the timescale remains unclear.

The Chair highlighted that the noise from the site is continuous and intrusive between 6.00am and 2.30pm, particularly noticeable when outdoors. The impact was described as comparable to “Chinese water torture”.

### **Actions**

Cllr Smith to report back to the Senior Enforcement Officer.

Clerk to liaise with the Chair and write directly to the company.

#### **v. NRG**

Vehicles continue to operate outside the agreed hours, although the noise issues previously experienced are no longer as severe. There have been no recent major pumping operations outside the permitted hours of operation.

The Chair can continue to report incidents should Enforcement require this.

During the previous site meeting, NRG management were extremely open to suggestions and willing to work with the Parish Council wherever possible. However, if required to comply strictly with the operating hours detailed within the existing planning permission, it is likely the operation would need to close.

**Lighting:** The Chair will arrange a site visit to review lighting now that the clocks have changed.

The Parish Council agreed it is content to continue working with NRG for a few months and will make enquiries with neighbouring residents regarding any concerns.

#### **vi. Vehicles Parked on Land Opposite RAF Barnham Entrance**

The situation has escalated over the past two months. It has not been possible to confirm ownership of the land or whether this use is permitted. A report has been submitted to Enforcement via the WSC portal and the outcome is awaited.

***Cllr Smith has followed up.***

#### **vii. There is a further area of land** accessed via the same entrance which appears to be used for dumping waste/hardcore. Since the original report, a significant amount of the waste appears to have been removed. It has not been possible to establish ownership has not via the Land Registry.

**Action:** Clerk to request confirmation from Enforcement regarding permitted land use.  
*Awaiting response*

#### **viii. Complaints about dog waste not being picked up** were noted and Cllr Smith referred to a competition for children organised by another local parish council in association with the local primary school. The children were encouraged to design a poster and the winning entry was printed and displayed around the village.

It was highlighted that posters have previously been put up around the village. They did have a beneficial impact for a period of time although some were removed.

### **5.2 Suffolk County Councillor Report, Joanna Spicer MBE** *Written report received*

#### **i. Bird Flu**

Cllr Spicer requested that information regarding bird flu be circulated to councillors and shared on social media to encourage wider publicity. *Actioned.*

#### **ii. Church Lane Speed Monitoring**

Speed monitoring results were previously circulated.

Cllr Spicer expressed concern regarding vandalism of the monitoring equipment. It was agreed that the results should be shared appropriately while continuing local awareness campaigns.

Following consideration of the data, the Parish Council agreed there is insufficient evidence to support a request for a reduction to a 20mph speed limit.

**Decision:** No further action.

Regarding vandalism/antisocial behaviour (equipment being turned or moved, resulting in data collection failure), it was suggested that the equipment had not have been installed securely, allowing it to be interfered with.

**iii. Request for 20mph Speed Limit Past the School (to replace 20s Plenty)**

Cllr Spicer advised that this proposal may meet the new SCC criteria (recently agreed, publication pending). However, a traffic survey would be required, and the Parish Council would be responsible for costs of c. **£12,000**.

*Comments at the meeting included:*

- The main issue relates to the difficulty for pedestrians crossing *The Street* when travelling to and from the school.
- Mill Lane was identified as a rat run, with motorists frequently travelling at excessive speed.
- Await details of SCC's new criteria. Without external funding the parish council could not meet the anticipated costs. **Decision:** No further action at this time.

**iv. Junior Road Safety Officer Training**

The school should already be aware of how to access Junior Road Safety Officer training.

Road safety contact:

Keith Sampson, Head of Road Safety – keith.sampson@suffolkhighways.org

Junior Road Safety Officer Scheme contact: Christopher Grover, Road Safety Team Manager (following Mike Motteram's departure).

**v. Road Markings**

Cllr Spicer has agreed to fund the replacement of road markings when entering the village from Barnham. She will confirm whether this includes white lining and rumble strips. Her area is transferring from Andy Moore to a new Community Liaison Engineer: further information will be provided following the handover meeting later this month.

**vi. Station Road – Extension of 30mph Speed Limit**

Cllr Spicer supports an extension of the 30mph limit and considers it potentially successful. However:

- No SCC funding is available (estimated cost c. £10,000)
- A 40mph buffer zone may be approved, but costs would fall to the Parish Council.

Parish Council Comment: It would be worth the pc contacting businesses along Station Road - at the relevant time - to enquire whether they are willing to contribute to costs.

**vii. Barnham Heath – Flooding Issues**

Two issues identified relating to ownership and precise location of flooding (see Item 8).

**Action:** Clerk to provide clarification and arrange a site meeting for Cllr Spicer, the chair and Mr Telfer.

**6. Highways**

The Village Hall directional sign from the A134 via Mill Lane was reported as bent and misaligned. **Action: Clerk to report to SCC.**

*Note - Outcome: Following the meeting, SCC advised the damage did not meet their intervention criteria. This response was forwarded to Cllr Spicer. Subsequently, during a site visit to Barnham with Cllr Spicer, the new Community Engineer repaired the sign.*

## 7. Road safety

### 7.1 Speed Indicator Device -data

The Chair circulated copies of the latest data downloaded from the VAS - see attached. It was concerning to note a speed of 85mph during July at 8.40pm

Maximum speed in Aug: 92

Maximum speed in Sept: 80

Average no.s have remained at 9-10% exceeding 35mph.

However, over the year it is noted that speeds are "creeping up".

- **Action: Chair** More regular visit from the police vehicle are required
- **Action: Chair** Submit data to the police via Julie Bathgate

### 7.2 Community Speedwatch - very little progress.

Community Speedwatch lead has submitted his forms to the police: awaiting response

**Action: Chair** will request progress report from Julie Bathgate.

Volunteers: Very few to-date. Hopefully, once there is an official and trained speedwatch lead more will be encouraged.

### 7.3 Roundels Village Gateway - Cllr Smith has generously agreed to support this project with a grant of £500 from his locality budget. (Clerk has submitted necessary application form to WSC.)

### 7.4 Church Lane - unlikely to get SCC support - see details within 5.2

### 7.5 20 mph speed restriction Mill Lane - see 5.2

### 7.6 C633 Lorry watch remains active along the 633

## 8. Crab Apple Trees and Drainage Issues – Newall Road

Two (possibly three) crab apple trees have been identified as problematic, leading to a request for support from the Parish Council to have them removed and replaced elsewhere. However, during discussion it was suggested that only one tree is a genuine concern, namely the crab apple tree located outside No. 3 Newall Road.

### ***Nature of the Problem***

- Crab apples fall onto the road and pavement.
- Apples that fall into the carriageway are squashed by vehicles and subsequently pushed into nearby drains (as well as being 'walked into' nearby homes).
- This contributes to blockages, particularly during periods of heavy rainfall, which have become more frequent due to changing weather patterns.

While the crab apple tree contributes to the situation, it was strongly suggested that the tree itself is not the root cause of the flooding.

### ***The primary issue is the drainage system, specifically the soak-away, which:***

- Has known to be problematic since at least 2017.
- Is believed to be unable to cope with current rainfall volumes.
- Is located outside No. 1 Newall Road.
- Was reportedly raised with SCC in 2018 and again in 2021, but no remedial action was taken.

### **Contributing Factors**

Vehicles parking on the pavement and to the rear of the property are driving over fallen crab apples, increasing the likelihood of them being crushed and forced into drains.

Apples on grass and pavement are similarly affected by pedestrian and vehicle movement.

### **Conclusion**

The flooding is caused by inadequate drainage, not the crab apple trees alone. The trees are a secondary contributing factor, exacerbating an existing drainage failure.

### **Proposed Actions**

- The soak-away requires urgent review, as it is not considered fit for purpose under current conditions.
- The Chair, Cllr Spicer and Mr Telfer to have a site visit to assess both the soakaway and the trees.
- The aim is to identify mitigation options, particularly relating to the soakaway capacity.

*Clerk's note: A request to SCC for work (to be carried out by SCC) to reduce the size of the trees has been unsuccessful.*

## 9. **Barnham Village Oral History project:**

**Mr McConnell** (in his role as Village Historian for the parish council) has conducted a number of interviews which have been recorded and are held on a hard drive. He is considering how best to transcribe the recordings and how to submit them to the Clerk for uploading to the website.

**Action:** Clerk has transcription software.

**Mr McConnell** to submit a trial extract to Clerk.

Cllr Beck advised that the Chair of the Village Hall committee has a bundle of village hall records from the Suffolk Records Office which may be of benefit.

**Action: Cllr Beck** will liaise between Mr McConnell and Village Hall Chair.

Chair suggested another person who may be willing to be interviewed: [REDACTED] son (Chair to act as liaison).

*Clerk's note: All necessary actions will be taken in relation to GDPR/Data protection when considering uploading recordings into the public domain*

## 10. **Councillor Reports/Updates**

**10.1 NRG update** - dealt with in WSC report 5.1v

**10.2 Remembrance Day Service:** Chair laid the wreath

**10.3** Police Report Nothing to report

**10.4 Barnham Village Hall AGM:** 25th November

It is understood that the village hall committee is seeking volunteers

PC could put something on FB if committee requires this. Await await outcome of AGM.

**10.5** Barnham Primary School: No report.

**10.6 Play Park:**

- Board on climbing frame - Cllr Watson considers that the board should be removed.
- Litter: it was suggested that a bin could be put into the play park area. However, keeping it regularly emptied may be a problem.
- Queries relating to risk levels: There are different levels of risk even on the low risk register. The insurance company does not give advice but recommends regular inspections – weekly – The risk matrix identifies different levels even within the low risk category – see matrix.  
Barnham Parish Council has a regular monthly visit from West Suffolk Council.
- Litter: Bin if we put a bin inside the play area it would have to be regularly emptied.
- Perhaps councillors could carry out litter picking prior meetings.
- Mortimer (contractor) expected to carry of a number of remedial repairs early spring.

*The members of the public left the meeting*

## 10.7 **Other councillor reports**

**Church:** Christmas Tree decorations: PC to participate in making stars (SW)

**Suffolk Community Fund. Surviving Winter Grant** open to charities and local groups to apply for grants up to £5,000 to deliver practical projects from warm spaces and community meals to fuel support and winter wellbeing packs.

**Decision: Unable to assist at this late stage/No action required.**

## 11. **Planning Matters**

**New: Planning Application Consultation Documents** received from West Suffolk Council, the planning authority, for response.

- 11.1 DC/25/1617/TCA Trees in a conservation area notification  
Cargill House, The Street, Barnham IP24 2NF: Decision: No comment
- 11.2 DC/25/1534/HH Householder Planning application - external builder and replacement of existing oil tank.  
Ye Olde House, The Street, Barnham IP24 2NF Decision: No comment
- 11.3 DC/25/1517/FUL - Change of use of converted barn from holiday let (class C1) to residential dwelling (class C3)  
Workshop, Walnut Tree Cottage, 4 Thetford Road, Barnham IP24 2PA.  
Decision: No comment
12. **For noting - planning decisions:** See agenda page 3
13. **Potential Planning related matters/queries:** To consider whether further enquiries are required: Land opposite Barnham RAF Camp.  
Awaiting responses: See item 5: Penultimate and final paras.
14. **Finance**
- 14.1 **Invoices for payment** totalling £843.00 were unanimously approved for payment  
Proposed: Cllr Webb Seconded Cllr Belsham
- 14.2 **Budget/precept** - Initial proposals for consideration.  
As in previous years, the parish council is concerned to ensure that any increase is kept to the minimum required. However, there are additional costs that cannot be avoided, such as the requirement for parish councils to own their own web domain and associated address for the Clerk (as a minimum), increasing insurance costs, requirement to build up appropriate financial resources to maintain the play equipment, etc.  
This item will be included on the January agenda for further discussion, responses to queries raised re salary figure and final decision.
- 15 **S137 - £60.00 Annual donation to The Link**  
The clerk had raised a query regarding this donation which has remained unchanged for a significant number of years. Cllr Beck has checked on the printing costs and confirmed that this donation is sufficient.  
**Proposed: Cllr Wyr Seconded: Cllr Webb**  
Decision: Donation of £60 **unanimously agreed.**
16. **Parish Council domain and email address/es**  
It was agreed to proceed with the minimum requirement of a change to a gov.uk domain for the website and a single email address for the clerk, remaining with OneSuffolk.  
  
Domain/web address will be: barnham-pc@gov.uk. email: clerk@barnham-pc.gov.uk  
Additional cost for one year: £45.42 + £9.08 vat  
(Standard annual website hosting cost £55.00 + £11.00 previously paid)  
**Proposed 1 Helen Seconded Cllr Webb unanimously agreed.**
17. **Data protection:** ICO site  
**Action:** Clerk to provide links to Councillors re data protection information/training.
18. **Clerk's report**  
**Community self help:** Next training session will be in March  
Clerk will check availability and precise dates and make a booking  
**Sign for Triangle:** To note that since meeting Clerk has received sign and will deliver to Cllr Webb.  
**Village Clock** on St Gregory's Church Tower: Service booked - awaiting confirmation of date.  
**Village Clock Dial:** A plaque is to be installed - details to be confirmed including decision as to whether or not a faculty is required (£cost)

**19. Diary dates**  
St Edmundsbury Cathedral Christmas Civic Service 1st December

**20. Items for next agenda:** Church Lane re difficulties turning right onto The Street  
*Note: Clerk contacted SCC requesting that the shrubs be cut back but doesn't "meet their criteria at this time". However Cllr Beck spoke to adj property owner who have said that they will deal with it.*

**21.** Tuesday 13th January 2026: 7.00pm Barnham Village Hall, Mill Lane, Barnham IP24 2NG

Signed as an accurate record of the meeting

Chair.....

13th January 2026