BARNHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Chair: Cllr John Bauer Vice Chair: Cllr Martin Belsham

DRAFT Minutes of the meeting of Barnham Parish Council held on
Tuesday 8th September 2026 at **7.00pm** in **Barnham Village Hall**, **Mill Lane, Barnham IP24 2NG**

Present: Cllr John Bauer (Chair), Cllr Martin Belsham (Vice Chair), Cllr Matthew Hawthorn, Cllr Susan Watson, Cllr Ed Wyer.
Suffolk County Cllr Harry Richardson, West Suffolk Cllr Andrew Smith. Clerk/RFO Pauline Smith.
Members of the public: 2

1. **Apologies for Absence**
   Apologies were received from, and approved for, Cllr Helen Beck and Cllr Adrian Webb.

2. **Declarations of Interest**
   To receive declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests and any other interests in items on the agenda: None received.

3. **Minutes of the Previous Meetings**
   The minutes of the meetings held on 14th July and 28th July were taken as read.
   Proposed: Cllr Watson. Seconded Cllr Belsham. Unanimously approved.
   The minutes were duly signed by the Chair.

4. **Public Participation**
   No questions or comments were raised.

5. **County and District Councillor Reports**
   5.1 Suffolk County Cllr Harry Richardson
   Cllr Richardson's written report had been received and circulated in advance of the meeting (copy attached)
   Barnham Primary School: a comprehensive risk assessment is currently under review by Suffolk County Council. As a directly maintained school, Suffolk County Council is responsible for any costs incurred and has given assurances to the Head Teacher that it will fully support any required expenditure."

   Local Government Reorganisation (LGR): A further update with regards to the government's intentions regarding LGR for Suffolk is expected at the end of October.
   District elections will be held May 2027
   Mayoral elections are expected to be held 2028

   5.2 West Suffolk District Cllr Andrew Smith
   MoD Barnham: Cllr Smith is in regular contact with WSC in regards to MoD Barnham and referred to his latest meeting with the Cliff Waterman, Leader of WSC and Mike Pursehouse (Director - Housing, Communities and Regulatory), regarding progress and likely timetable. Details are included within item 7.
   WSC continues to provide support for the community engagement meetings with an AV company providing and setting up AV equipment for each session and a Security company (2 security personnel provided on each occasion to-date).
   Further details regarding the next community engagement meeting "Focus on Planning" and the presenters WSC Directors, Marie Smith and Penny Mills, are provided within item 7.

   There is a lot of media interest: both Cllr Smith and the Chair have been interviewed for TV, radio, press. Reporters have also visited the village and interviewed residents.

Local Plan: Following the Call for Sites (now closed), a list of the submitted sites (328) will be published by the end of September. To-date a few have already been screened out due to being within flood plain 3.
Enforcement: No updates at present.
Gerda: No application has been received to date.

6. **Highway matters**
Footpath at St Martin's Lane: Improvements have been made, although not to the extent anticipated.
Traffic Lights: Damaged/Sheared verges/highway highlighted **Action**: Report submitted.

7. **MoD Barnham**
7.1 Update - Barnham Parish Council continues to work closely with Cllr Smith and West Suffolk Council.
A written update /overview from Mike Pursehouse, WSC Director (Housing, Communities and regulatory), has been received – see below.

Key dates:

25 June Informed by Home Office
01 July Extraordinary Council meeting (West Suffolk Council)
03 July Letter to Minister of state informing outcome of meeting
28 July letter to Minister of state informing restriction of site 23 July Informed by Home Office of intention for Urgent Crown Development application.

Key facts:

- **What is happening at MoD Barnham?** The UK government is considering using this former military site to accommodate people seeking asylum.
- **When would the site open?** This site is subject to detailed feasibility assessments and will be part of an urgent crown development application, they have given an indication of approval by Christmas.
- **How many people would be accommodated at MoD Barnham?** The Home Office have stated up to 1,250 on site at any one time.
- **How long will the site operate as asylum accommodation?** The site would be used for a minimum of 10 years.
- **Who would preside at this site? T**he site would accommodate single adult males between the ages of 18 and 65 who have **applied for asylum**.
- **What facilities will there be on site?** The site will provide functional accommodation and would be designed to be as self-sufficient as possible including laundry facilities and communal spaces as well as health provision.
- **Would all those accommodated at MoD Barnham end up living in the local community?** No—asylum seekers would be accommodated at the site during the initial processing stage of their asylum claims and then dispersed across the Country.
- **As many of the proposed cohort would have arrived in the UK by an illegal route, why are they not detained?** In accordance with current legislation, people with a valid pending claim for asylum are permitted to remain in the UK while their claim is being processed, and as they have permission to remain in the UK during that time, they cannot be routinely

detained. Detention is primarily used to facilitate removal of those who have no lawful right to remain in the UK, and who refuse to leave voluntarily.

Key next steps:
WSC met with the Crown Development Team at MHCLG on 12 Aug, a summary of the key points.

Timetable

- Validation: The casework team is still validating the application and will still don't know a timetable at this stage. They are currently reviewing the submitted documents and seeking clarification, as well as additional information, from the Home Office. Based on this, we anticipate that the application will come in September, but this is just a guess, we have had no confirmation.
- Consultation period: MHCLG still haven't confirmed the length of the consultation period but acknowledged the significant public interest and complexity of the site. They advised that the consultation period would need to balance these considerations against the claimed urgent need. MHCLG confirmed that they first need to establish whether an Environmental Statement is required. They are awaiting a screening opinion and advised that, if an EIA is required, a minimum 30-day consultation period would follow.

Consultation Process

- WSC will be required to publish the application on its planning portal and undertake the necessary public advertisement. MHCLG will allocate its own planning application reference number.
- Representations will be submitted directly to MHCLG via a dedicated email address.
- The MHCLG Crown Casework Team will assess the application and all representations before making a recommendation to the Secretary of State (Angela Rayner), who will make the final decision.

7.2 Arrangements for the next Community Engagement Session

Next Community Engagement Meeting: Wednesday 16th September 2026 at Barnham Village Hall, 7pm
Planning Masterclass: "Focus on Planning". Marie Smith, Director - Planning and Growth together with Penny Mills, Head of Planning, will be leading this session. Both are extremely knowledgeable professionals.
The session will explain and reinforce the requirement for consultation responses to be based on material planning constraints. There will also be a question and answer session.

As previously, AV equipment and Security will be arranged by West Suffolk Council. This meeting will be recorded (audio only) by the AV company and provided to the Clerk for access via the parish council's website.

7.3 Next newsletter: Newsletter 3.
Chair to provide content (page 1) for submission to WSC who will provide content for page 2. Then to be distributed as soon as possible week ending 11th September

7.4 Any other matters requiring consideration
- Councillors have been invited to an online meeting with a person from the Humans for Rights Network. (17th September)

- A covenant on the land previously provided that if the land was to be resold within 21 years after the death of the 10th Duke of Grafton then the current Duke would have had first refusal: Charles Alfred Euston Fitzroy, 10th Duke of Grafton died 11th November 1970. Therefore the covenant does not apply.

8. Planning Matters

8.1 To consider planning applications received: None at the time of issuing agenda
8.2 To note planning decisions and appeals: see attached

8.3 SCC/0205/25FH – Land North of Barrow clump Farm, Elveden *(re Biodigester)*
Email 4th September 2026: from Jonathan Frost, SCC Planning Officer, Growth, Highways and Infrastructure *(circulated in advance of the meeting)*

Thank you for your email. In response to the Parish's comments, I have received the following response from the applicant:

"I can confirm there is not reference to the use of the C633/4 in the Transport Statement as we do not anticipate vehicular movements associated with the proposal using either of the roads mentioned.

The C633 and C634 link to the B1106 via London Road. London Road joins the B1106 from the east at a junction in Elveden. The Transport Statement submitted with the application makes clear that all distribution to and from locations east of the B1106 can be made via the Estate's private road network without accessing public highways.

Further to this the 'Highways Response Report' submitted on 11 May sets out the anticipated southbound vehicle movements along the B1106 that will be generated by the proposed development. The report demonstrates that where the destination or origin of this journey is within the Estate, the B1106 will be accessed via the Estate's private road network. Where the destination or origin is a third-party site outside Elveden Estate it is anticipated that the B1106 will be accessed from the A11, avoiding both the C633 and C634".

Hopefully this addresses the Parish Council's concerns. Please can it be confirmed if this is the case, or if you wish to make further comments.

Councillors considered the content of the above email. Whilst the applicant's anticipation is that neither the C633 or C634 will be used, there is nothing to expressly prevent this from happening whether in the near further or later. The parish council has no objection to the biodigester itself.
The objection relates to the potential implications for the village if these routes are not specifically excluded.
Resolution: That until and unless there is explicit confirmation that neither the C633 or C634 will be ultilised the objection remains unchanged. **Action:** Response submitted

9. Finance

9.1 To approve payments and receipts
Invoices totalling £333.19 were submitted for payment.
Proposed Cllr Hawthorne ***Seconded:*** Cllr Watson ***Unanimously agreed***
HMRC (PAYE re Clerk/RFO £46.80
Salary Clerk/RFO September.£213.20
Defib World Defibrillator pads £73.19 (inc.5.99 vat) reimbursed to P. Smith Clerk/RFO

9.2 To receive the bank reconciliation
- Details of the bank reconciliation, together with bank statements for the current and deposit accounts for the year to-date were provided.
- The bank reconciliation as of 8th September 2026 was approved and signed by the Chairman, copy attached.

9.3 To note budget monitoring
- A detailed breakdown of payments to-date, together with reserves balances were provided to councillors.
- Grounds maintenance invoice (Vertas) is anticipated c.October/November for work carried out during the season.
- Barnham Village Hall hire invoice is received annually: anticipated March
- There are no concerns regarding the budget to-date.
- Annual donations to The Link (£60) and for the Wreath (£50) for Remembrance Service are included within the budget (S137). Payments unanimously approved. **Actioned** Clerk

10. Contracts for Review

10.1 Insurance renewal due on 30 September 2026
Current insurance is with Clear Councils Insurance.
Renewal premium is £645.82 3 year fixed (Previous year £518.38)
Resolution: Clerk to seek/circulate alternative quotes.
Outcome: Zurich quote £570 agreed outside meeting and paid (accounts voucher 19)

10.2 Annual mole contract due on 31 August 2026:
Resolution: It was unanimously agreed to renew the Annual contract with Grainger Pest Solutions re Mole control at the cost of £440 + £88 vat (total £528)
(Paid 29/9 – accounts voucher 13)

11. Barnham Village Hall: Internet and WiFi Progress
Details of Wifi installation and monthly Direct Debit to be provided to West Suffolk Council for reimbursement. *Additional information awaited from Barnham Village Hall*.

12. Reports from Councillors

12.1 Speed Indictor Sign: Cllr Bauer expressed continued concerns about ongoing issues of some vehicles being driven at inappropriate speeds through the village.
It was noted that during November to December 2025 less that 8% were travelling over 35mph however, this increased to 10% from February 2026. Overall, the average speed remains unchanged, though there are some concerning figures of several motorists driving at 68mph and 71mph in July during the early hours of the morning

12.2 Village Hall: No report.

12.3 School: Whose responsibility is the hedge between the village hall and school? Chairman will speak to Head Teacher; Clerk will speak to Village Hall Chair.

Update: 100926: Cllr John Bauer: I spoke to Head Teacher yesterday regarding the two points that she raised before the meeting on Tuesday. She will speak to the County regarding the land alongside the bus stop. We both felt that the County might consider adopting the land if no owner can be identified. I don't know whether that is actually a possibility but it seemed like a sensible solution if it is.

The hedge is, as we suspected, the hedge between the play park and the school where the gate into the school playground is. It has become very overgrown on the play park side and the Head Teacher is keen

for it to be cut back. I am guessing that responsibility lies with the Village Hall and you may be able to confirm that. If it is, would the Village Hall make the necessary arrangements or is it something that we would ask our contractor to take on board? If we offered that to Village Hall Chair, she might be amenable regarding removal of the posts on the grass so that it could be kept neater than is currently possible.

12.4 Police: Safety concerns regarding school children. Cllr Belsham explained that the police may be able to arrange to attend at the beginning of a school day to discuss any safety concerns that parents may have. They are also available via email to answer questions.

12.5 Play Park: Cllr Watson referred to panels that she has seen elsewhere which potentially could be attached to the multi-unit (slide) to cover the previous climbing board.
Action: Clerk to source further information

13. **Clerk's report**: All matters dealt with elsewhere

14. **Diary Dates**: 8 November – Barnham Remembrance Service: Chair to lay wreath

15. **Correspondence requiring Councillors' attention:** None

16. **Questions to the Chair**
Items for next meeting: Clerk: To consider payment for additional hours worked.
It was suggested that the people who have volunteered during community engagement sessions should be invited to brief 'get together'.

17. **Date of next meeting**: 10th November 2027.

Meeting closed at 20:38

Signed as an accurate record of the meeting

..... Date. 10th November 2026
Chair