

Barnham Parish Council

Chair: Cllr John Bauer Vice Chair: Cllr Martin Belsham

**Councillors are summoned to attend a
Meeting of Barnham Parish Council to be held on
Tuesday 14th July 2026, commencing at 7.00pm
Venue: Barnham Village Hall, Mill Lane, Barnham IP24 2NG**

Members of the Public and Press are welcome to attend.

AGENDA

1. **To receive apologies for absence** and consider requests for approval for absence
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, not already received and determined, for dispensations relating to matters on the agenda.
3. **To approve minutes of the meeting** held on
Tuesday 12th May 2026
Tuesday 30th June 2026 (Finance)
4. **Public Forum**
To receive comments or questions from members of the public relating to matters on this agenda. Other matters may be raised at the discretion of the Chair.
5. **To receive reports from**
 - 5.1 **West Suffolk Councillor, Andrew Smith**
 - 5.2 **Suffolk County Councillor Harry Richardson**
 - 5.3 **Mr R Childerhouse, Euston Estate Director**
West Suffolk Council: Local Plan – Call for Sites.
An overview of sites submitted by the Estate for consideration within the parish of Barnham
6. **MOD Barnham:** Proposal by the Home Office to accommodate up to 1,250 single male asylum seekers, aged 18 yrs – 65 yrs at the site known locally as RAF Barnham Camp.
 - 6.1 Proposal to formally ratify the Parish Council's stance that:
Barnham Parish Council Objects to this proposal on the basis that the site is wholly inappropriate for this purpose, as detailed within the attached document as presented to the meeting of West Suffolk Council on 1st July 2026.
 - 6.2 To provide details of the actions taken by the Parish Council to date, and in association with West Suffolk Council, report of progress to date and future plans, including arrangements for community engagement drop-in sessions
7. **Barnham Village Hall: Wifi**
To receive information from the Treasurer of Barnham Village Hall to enable a discussion and decision regarding available support from Barnham Parish Council to assist with this project.

8. Financial report and invoices for approval

To Approve payment of Clerk/RFO Salary

(figures are inclusive of PAYE - work from home allowance is identified separately)

May 2026	£234.00 plus work from home allowance £26.00	Total £260.00
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June 2026	£234.00 plus work from home allowance £26.00. Total £260.00
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9. Clerk's Report

10. **Suffolk County Council Community Self Help Scheme:** To note that Cllr Webb has successfully passed the requisite examination to enable Barnham Parish Council to carry out work under the auspices of this scheme.

11. Reports from Barnham Parish Councillors relating to their areas of responsibility

12. Highways Matters: for consideration

13. Planning

To consider the parish council's response to planning application consultation documents received from West Suffolk Council. See attachment

See attached

14. Planning Other:

14.1	Planning Application Decisions since May meeting	See attached
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See attached

14.2 Enforcement Matters: Meeting with the West Suffolk Council Principal Enforcement Officer, Andy Smith and members of the parish council held via Teams on 30th June 2026. MB/JB

MB/JB

14.3 Local Plan Scoping Consultation – ends 28th July 2026

15. Diary Dates

16. Questions to the chair/items for inclusion on next agenda

17. To confirm date of next meeting

Tuesday 8th September 2026

Agenda issued 9th July 2026

P Smith, Clerk/RFO

Email: clerk@barnham-pc.gov.uk

Tel: 07801 550153

1st July 2026

Statement by the Chair of Barnham Parish Council to a meeting convened by the Leader of West Suffolk Council

Thank you chair, good afternoon.

I am grateful for the opportunity to speak, and I would like to begin by thanking West Suffolk Council for the leadership it has shown in bringing forward this motion. The people of Barnham appreciate that their concerns are being heard.

Barnham is a quintessential Suffolk village. At the 2021 Census our population was just 584 people. It is a small rural community whose character has been shaped over generations. Our concerns are not simply about the principle of asylum accommodation, but about the process, the suitability of the site, and the scale of change being proposed.

Residents first became aware that something was happening when significant works began at RAF Barnham. West Suffolk Council then sought clarification from the Home Office and was told that RAF Barnham was not among the sites under consideration. Yet within days, national media were contacting us ahead of an embargoed announcement. At no point were our MPs, county councillors, district councillors or parish council formally informed. That is not meaningful consultation. It is not transparency. Decisions of this scale should not arrive as a surprise to the communities expected to live with them.

We recognise the Government's objective of reducing the use of hotels for asylum accommodation. However, replacing unsuitable hotels with an equally unsuitable rural military site is not a sustainable solution. The scale of this proposal is wholly disproportionate. The Home Office proposes to accommodate up to 1,250 single adult male asylum seekers in a village of 584 residents. That is more than two people for every resident of Barnham.

By comparison, other former military sites operate on a very different scale. At Crowborough, around 500 people are accommodated in a town of approximately 22,000. At Wethersfield, around 1,000 people have been accommodated alongside a village of roughly 1,300 residents.

Those figures matter because they show what is normal elsewhere — and how different this proposal is. This is not simply a question of whether RAF Barnham can physically accommodate 1,250 people. It is whether Barnham can absorb them. Those are not the same question.

The suitability of the site itself is also a serious concern. Barnham has virtually no local amenities. There is no shop, no pub, and very limited access to services within walking distance. The surrounding roads are not designed for pedestrian use, and there is no safe or continuous footway to larger centres. Public transport is limited. This is an isolated rural location with very little infrastructure to support either the existing community never mind a large additional population. In practical terms, the camp is

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Statement by the Chair of Barnham Parish Council to a meeting convened by the Leader of West Suffolk Council

not a location where residents can reasonably access services, or where services can easily reach them.

It is difficult to see how this site meets the needs of either the local community or the individuals who would be housed there. If people are awaiting asylum decisions, they should be accommodated where they have access to basic services, transport, and community facilities - not in an isolated former military establishment.

There are also understandable concerns about the capacity of local services. This is not a secure facility. Residents will generally be free to leave during the day, and there have been well-documented cases nationally of individuals leaving asylum accommodation and not returning. We fully accept that the overwhelming majority of people will comply with the system and present no issues. But in a village of fewer than 600 people, even a very small number of incidents has a disproportionate impact.

It is therefore reasonable to ask whether policing, safeguarding, and emergency services have been properly assessed and resourced for a change of this scale. The proposal is already having consequences. Parents have told us they are considering withdrawing their children from Barnham Primary School due to its proximity to the site. Even a small reduction in pupil numbers could threaten the long-term viability of a highly valued village school. Once lost, that is an asset that cannot be replaced.

Perhaps most concerning is that there appears to be no published assessment of the impact on infrastructure, services, or the host community. If this were a conventional housing development for 1,250 people, it would require extensive consultation, transport assessment, environmental review, and infrastructure planning. Yet because this falls outside the normal planning framework, those safeguards have not been applied in the usual way.

Whatever views people hold on national asylum policy, one principle should be common ground: communities deserve to be properly consulted before decisions of this magnitude are made.

Barnham has been a thriving rural community for generations. The decision before you today will shape whether it remains one. This is not simply a question of whether RAF Barnham can accommodate 1,250 people. It is whether Barnham can absorb them. Barnham is asking for fairness, transparency, and proportionality in decisions that will define its future for years to come.

I therefore respectfully ask members to support the motion before you, without amendment, and to send a clear and united message to the Home Office that this proposal is neither proportionate nor appropriate for our village.

Thank you.

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Statement by the Chair of Barnham Parish Council to a meeting convened by the Leader
of West Suffolk Council

Paper number: COU/WS/26/014

Proposed use of RAF Barnham as asylum accommodation

Motion

Proposed by: Councillor Cliff Waterman

Seconded by: Councillor Andrew Smith

This Council notes:

That the Home Office has identified RAF Barnham as a potential site for asylum accommodation as part of its wider programme to reduce the use of hotels and to consider former Ministry of Defence sites for temporary accommodation.

The rural nature of Barnham and the surrounding area, the limited local infrastructure and facilities creates practical issues for the community, public services and any people who may be accommodated on the site.

That residents, parish councils, local councillors, public services and partner organisations have legitimate questions and concerns about the suitability of this site.

RAF Barnham is within the Special Protection Area and Special Area of Conservation Buffer Zone which restricts what developments can be built or used for. This has restricted the base being developed in the past and wider housing development in the area.

That West Suffolk Council has a responsibility to represent its communities clearly, calmly and robustly, while ensuring that public debate is respectful and does not use divisive, inflammatory or discriminatory language.

This Council believes:

That while the Council recognises the national need for safe, lawful and properly managed asylum accommodation, RAF Barnham is the wrong site for a facility of this nature and scale.

That due to the rural nature of Barnham and the surrounding area, the limited local infrastructure creates practical issues for the community, public services and any people who may be accommodated on the site.

That the Council's position should be rooted in representing the community, protecting local services and ensuring good decision-making, not in hostility towards people seeking asylum.

This Council resolves:

1. To state clearly that RAF Barnham is not a suitable location for the Home Office proposal, because of the site's rural setting, limited local infrastructure, constrained transport links and the likely impact on local services and communities.

2. To engage urgently and constructively with the Home Office to set out a strong and robust evidence-based case against the use of RAF Barnham for this purpose.
3. To work with local communities to ensure that their concerns are heard and represented accurately, while making clear that the Council will not support or amplify divisive language, discrimination or hostility.

**Barnham Parish Council:
Planning Matters 14 July 2026**

13. To consider the parish council's response to planning application consultation documents received from West Suffolk Council, the planning authority.

DC/26/0991/TCA

Trees in a conservation area notification - one Ash (T1 on plan) fell
Hill View Euston Road Barnham Suffolk IP24 2NJ
Deadline 21st July

DC/26/0847/TCA

Trees in a conservation area notification - two beech (marked T1 and T2 on plan) overall crown reduction by two metres, one beech (marked T3 on plan) overall crown reduction by 2.5 metres and four lawson cypress (marked G1 on plan) overall crown reduction by three metres

Ridge House Euston Road Barnham Suffolk IP24 2NJ.
Expired – "No comment" response submitted

DC/26/0814/HH

Householder planning application - a. widening of existing access including partial demolition and re-build of flint and brick wall b. installation of entrance gates

Cargill House The Street Barnham Suffolk IP24 2NF
Deadline: 9th July by Neighbour expiry date: 13th July

14.1 Decisions by West Suffolk Council since May meeting

DC/26/0625/HH

Householder planning application - single storey extension to side of dwelling
Jubilee Cottage Euston Road Barnham Suffolk IP24 2NJ
Decision: Approved 23rd June 2026

DC/26/0740/HH

Householder planning application - a. loft conversion with flat roof dormer to rear and two pitch roof dormers to front b. front porch

Half Acre Water Lane Barnham Suffolk IP24 2NA
Decision: Approved 9th July 2026