

Minutes of Barningham Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 7th August 2024 at 7:00pm in Barningham Village Hall.

Present

Cllrs: C Hammond, J Chalmers, L Hebert, Y Martin, S Baker, & WSC C Bull.

8 members of the public present.

1. Apologies for Absence

The Parish Council accepted and agreed the reason for apologies for the absence from Cllr. R Baxter, N Martineau and SCC C J Spicer.

7:00 PM

2. Members Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

2.1 To receive declarations of interest from councillors on items on the agenda. Cllr Baker declared an interest in item 15.1 on the agenda.

2.2 To receive written requests for dispensations for disclosable pecuniary interests. Cllr Baker declared an interest in item 15.1 on the agenda.

2.3 To grant dispensations as appropriate under Section 33 of the Localism Act. A dispensation was granted to Cllr Baker regarding item 15.1 on the agenda.

3 Minutes

The meeting of the minutes of the Wednesday 3rd July 2024 were agreed and approved as a correct record.

4. Meeting Open to the Public

It is requested that this item does not exceed 16 minutes, and that any member of the public does not speak for any longer than 4 minutes.

The Chair agreed to bring item 11.2 up the agenda. Martin McCleary, who is leading the project to look at taking The Royal George on as a community pub came to the meeting to give an update on progress so far. He had a viewing at the pub recently and as he anticipated there is a lot of work that needs to be done. A rough estimation of cost, including the purchase price and monies required for required works, could be in the region of £650,000. He is in the process of asking interested parties to make a commitment to the amount of money they may be willing to put towards the project at this time, but stressed that this is purely speculative and does not commit them in any way. It is anticipated that we would need in the region of £150,000 from residents for the project to be viable in relation to match funding. Martin has asked for a response to be received by Friday of this week. The Parish Council thanked Martin for all the work that he is putting into this project and will await a further update.

A number of residents, from Mill Road, came to discuss the issue of vehicle speeds, and their concerns for pedestrian safety in the road. As discussed previously a number of options have been explored and unfortunately, we have not so far been able to find a satisfactory solution. The Chair had suggested we explore the option for a 'quiet lane' an initiative supported by Suffolk County Council previously in the region. The Clerk has made some inquiries to see if this is still an available option. The residents did not feel that this would be an option as they did not support the installation of any more signage as, they felt, that this would not be effective. The Parish Council suggested the option of having the vehicle activated sign in Mill Road as a means to collect data to inform officers at Suffolk County Council and also to potentially act as a deterrent to speeding drivers. To this end the Parish Council will look for an option, using an existing post, to mount the vehicle activated sign in Mill Road, to facilitate this.

Two residents came to the meeting to raise concerns about the potential destruction of the Bee Orchids, by the grass being cut on the public footpath, off Coney Weston Road. The Area Rights of Way Manager for Suffolk County Council previously said that the plants should have already seeded by the time their contractor gets round to that area. It would appear however that the

farmer, when cutting his field, may have inadvertently cut them. One of the residents will speak to the farmer to let him know that the Bee Orchids are in situ and ask that he is mindful of that when cutting the adjacent field in the future.

5. Report from Suffolk County Councillor: J Spicer

Cllr Spicer was unable to attend the meeting. Cllr Spicer had brought to the Parish Council's attention the issues with the bus service, being discussed under item 7.1. We were grateful for her prompt action organising a public meeting at short notice.

6. Report from West Suffolk Councillor: C Bull

Cllr Bull has just been informed that Wain Estates have put in a formal outline planning application for 40 houses, on part of the land off Hopton Road. It has only just been received by West Suffolk Council, and still has to be validated before it goes up on the planning portal which could be up to two weeks. The Parish Council will get a notification in the usual way with an opportunity to comment. The Parish Council will discuss this application once it has been formally received.

7. Chairman's Reports

7.1 To receive a report on the public meeting regarding the reduction of bus service.

We received notification, via our SCC Councillor Joanna Spicer, that there is going to be a massive reduction in the bus service provided in Barningham, and some of the surrounding villages. Simonds, who did provide the service, have been taken over and the new owners are making big changes to the timetable. These changes will mean that the smaller villages, off the main route along the A143, will have their regular services reduced to only one bus Monday to Friday, this will be mid-morning allowing a maximum stay in Bury of two hours. This will have a significant impact. There will be no bus from Barningham for people to get to and from work. There will be no bus from Barningham to take students to and from Thurston school or into Bury for college. There will be no bus on Saturday preventing visits to markets.

A public meeting was held on the 31st July, chaired by Cllr Spicer, which was very well attended by representatives from the areas affected. The Managing Director of the new bus operator and a representative from Suffolk Passenger Transport were there and gave us an outline of the current situation and the changes coming into force on 2nd September. Everyone at the meeting understood that the bus operator needs to cover costs and were grateful for their offer to provide us with the data on which these decisions have been made. We look forward to receiving them soon. The SCC officer, at the meeting, explained that SCC have little or no control over these services and that the traffic commissioner will almost certainly approve them. Concern was raised over the notice we have been given regarding the change-removal of service. We understand that these changes have to be lodged with the traffic commissioner and SCC with 10 weeks' notice. When questioned about this the operator assured the meeting that this requirement had been met. Further questions revealed that conversations/negotiations had been taking place for some weeks between the operator and SCC officers. We questioned why it has been left until now to inform residents of these changes. The withdrawal of the ability for people to continue with their everyday lives, going to and from work or education, attending appointments, going shopping and enjoying social activities is distressing enough, but to give them only 5 weeks to try to make adequate arrangements is not reasonable. This is compounded by the fact that we are at the start of the school holidays and many families may be away. The Chair has written to SCC to express our frustrations and concerns and to ask if SCC could find a way forward with the operator to resolve this situation. If they are not able to find a permanent solution, then to please at least allow some time for parents and other residents to find reasonable alternatives. One of our Barningham parents has suggested the possibility of a shuttle bus? Whilst we are sure it is unintentional, the timescale resulting from this lack of communication has left many people in an extremely difficult position. At the time of the meeting, we had not received a response to our letter. We will continue to keep residents updated via Facebook. A local resident will join forces with the Chair to continue to try and find a way forward regarding this very concerning issue. Enquiries are being made to Connecting Communities, a dial a ride service, to see if they are able

to help. It was understood however that this service, although less expensive than a taxi, does carry a bigger fare cost than the current bus service, and it does not accept bus passes. Also, there are some questions over the areas it covers and its capacity to support an increase in patronage.

A separate communication has been received from SCC regarding a grant that can be spent to enhance the current passenger network. SCC were granted £1.8million to spend each year in 2023/24 and 2024/25 on enhancements to the current passenger transport network. They have now received the second of these payments from the Department for Transport and are once again opening up their portal for us to submit ideas for new or improved services. It was noted that requests to fund the continued operation of existing services that, may not be covering their operating costs, cannot be considered for funding with this grant. **Action Cllr Chalmers**

7.2 To provide feedback on the medium/long-term strategic planning for village assets.

Work on a new document to plan for the ongoing maintenance of village assets is in hand. Two residents, who were at the meeting, said that they would be happy to be involved in aspects of the plan that looked at the protection of trees in the village and the ongoing maintenance of the local footpaths. The Clerk will ensure these residents are involved in any works, regarding these issues, moving forward. **Action Cllr Chalmers/Clerk**

The Chair was pleased to report that local resident, Cathy Cummings, has been nominated for a Suffolk Careers award. She is a great asset to the village and supports many local residents. We wish her luck with the nomination.

8. Clerk's Report

8.1 To confirm change of email and website to. Gov website addresses.

The website has been changed to a Gov domain name, the email address is still to be set up.

9. Finance

9.1 To consider invoices for payment/note receipts.

Admin	Payment	various	-£1,759.95
Church clock service	Payment	Maintenance	-£420.00
. Gov Domain name and SSL	Payment	Office	-£81.00
Grant	Payment	Barningham Village Hall	-£150.00
Battery	Payment	VAS Speed watch	-£156.00
Clothing bank	Receipt	Miscellaneous Receipts	£8.20
Clothing bank	Receipt	Miscellaneous Receipts	£4.00
Training	Receipt	Miscellaneous Receipts	£35.00
Training	Receipt	Miscellaneous Receipts	£35.00

Cllr Martin carried out the additional accounts checks at this meeting.

9.2 Bank reconciliation, schedule of payments, and budget report.

The Clerk provided a bank reconciliation, schedule of payments and budget report for the Councillors information.

9.3 To agree a timeframe for a Working Party meeting to discuss the current accounts format and presentation moving forward.

It was agreed that we would have a Working Party Budget Meeting, to inform the budget setting discussion to be held in October/November, and that we would also discuss the accounts format and presentation at this meeting. **Action Clerk**

9.4 To discuss the option to change bank account to Unity Trust Bank.

In principle the Parish Council support the idea of moving our bank account from Barclays to Unity Trust Bank, but it was agreed that we would wait and see how the Clerk gets on moving other councils' accounts before beginning the process ourselves.

9.5 To confirm information request and data submission to PKF Littlejohn.

The Clerk has received a request to provide some additional information, to explain the variances between income for the year end to March 31st, 2024, and the previous year to inform the End of Year Accounts. The Clerk provided the requested the information.

10. Village Matters

10.1 To receive any update on the flooding on Bardwell Road.

A request for an update has been submitted, at the time of the meeting no response had been received. The Clerk will continue to pursue this.

Action Clerk

10.2 To confirm the completion of the Annual Clock Service.

Cllr Baxter has reported that the clock has been more inaccurate since the service - there was so much oil that it seems to have been slipping. She is addressing this and if it is not resolved she will ask Harward Horological to come back.

Action Cllr Baxter

10.3 To receive an update on traffic calming measures on Bardwell Road.

A request for a site meeting has been submitted, at the time of the meeting no response had been received. The Clerk will continue to pursue this.

Action Clerk

10.4 To receive an update on VAS issues.

There have been issues ordering replacement batteries. Hopefully, this has been resolved and the batteries should be with us soon. Malcolm Chalmers has provided some speed data. It appeared to indicate that we did not have a significant problem with speed in Sandy Lane, which was good to see. The information gathered, relating to speeds in Hopton Rand and Sandy Lane, will be shared on our Facebook page.

Action Cllr Chalmers

10.5 To receive an update on the 30mph stickers.

The Clerk will continue to pursue this matter with Cllr Spicer.

Action Clerk

10.6 To confirm works to the bench at Bishops Croft entrance.

The new bench at Bishops Croft has been installed and the memorial plaque attached. We would ideally like to have the bench concreted in sooner rather than later. However, if we are prepared to wait for the work it can be carried out alongside another job and the concreting will be free. As the cost to have the work done immediately would be in the region of £300-450 it was decided to wait.

10.7 To confirm the review of the Emergency Plan.

Unfortunately, Cllrs Hebert and Martineau have not had a chance to do any work on the plan. Cllr Hebert said they will make this a priority and get the work done as soon as they are able.

Action Cllr Hebert

10.8 To include a report from the Village Hall.

The recent Village Hall Garden Party was a great success. Thanks were extended to those who came to the event and to those who helped out. They to raised £205. This will be split between the Village Hall, Church and School. The Coffee Caravan will continue to come to the village, it was noted that attendance numbers continue to grow.

10.9 To discuss action following destruction of bollards on the B1111.

Following the destruction of the bollards on the B1111 recently, the Clerk has been trying to get a crime number so we can potentially make a claim on our insurance. The excess for this is will be £125. It was agreed that, if we are able, that we should replace the bollards. The Clerk will continue to work on this.

Action Clerk

10.10 To explore option of 'Quiet Lane' for Mill Road

Following on from the discussion in the public forum, the Clerk is finding out if this project is still active.

Action Clerk

11. The Royal George

11.1 To confirm the listing of The Royal George as an Asset of Community Value.

The Clerk confirmed that confirmation has been received and that The Royal George is now listed as an Asset of Community Value.

11.2 To receive any report from Martin McCleary.

For information see under item 4 on the agenda.

12. Neighbourhood Plan

12.1 To receive feedback from the drop-in session and consultation so far and confirm extension of the deadline for comments.

The Neighbourhood Plan consultation drop in session was held on Saturday 13th July, in the Village Hall. Residents from twenty three households in the village attended the drop in. So far, we have only had three online responses to the consultation. This is in addition to the three hard copies completed at the drop-in session. Our consultant informed us that it is not unusual to have a few responses early on, and we may need to do some more work to promote the consultation with Facebook posts etc. Cllr Chalmers will put something on Facebook to remind residents to complete the questionnaire. Hepworth, Coney Weston, and Market Weston Parish Councils have all requested an extension of time to consider any comments they want to make on our plan. This extension of time has been granted until 20th September to accommodate these requests.

Action Cllr Chalmers

12.2 To confirm submission made to Wain Estates, regarding their consultation exercise.

At the same time that we started our consultation on our Neighbourhood Plan, Wain Estate undertook their own consultation on the possible development on land in the village. The Parish Council made the following response to their consultation:

We are writing in response to your Barningham consultation. We would like to make the following points:

1. We are concerned that this proposal and consultation is not open to all residents in the village, only being available to those with access to the internet. We are a rural community with many elderly residents who you have excluded from this process. This is not full engagement with the community. We are also surprised at the very short time allowed for this; your leaflets were delivered (with a number of properties having been missed) on 1 July and the consultation ending on 17 July. We ask that, should you proceed with an application, you provide a full record of how you have sought to engage with all sectors of the community and how you have explained your proposal. We would have expected a well-advertised exhibition in the village hall with an easily accessible consultation to be a bare minimum as an example of good practice. Simply distributing a few leaflets and providing an email address is not sufficient.
2. We note that you have stated that Barningham is "well connected by bus, car or cycling". This is absolutely not the case. We have a very poor bus service and is a concern for many of our residents and the Parish Council. There are no cycle paths and limited pavements.
3. The area you have highlighted for development with around 40 new homes is only part of the area proposed by West Suffolk Council in their Local Plan. This would suggest a far greater density of housing than West Suffolk have put forward, given that they have allocated 37 homes in a larger area. This is contrary to the requirements of the Draft Local Plan, and we would object to this proposal if an application is made.

4. We are aware that you were invited to a Parish Council meeting after the Barningham Neighbourhood Plan consultation period ended but you were unable to work within this timeframe. We are including a link to the Neighbourhood Plan which we encourage you to read as it may help you to put forward a more informed, and possibly acceptable, proposal. We understand that Wain Estates have now made a formal application, this had not been made available at the time of the meeting and, as discussed under item 6, the Parish Council will discuss any comments to be submitted regarding this application once it has been received. This is likely to be at the September meeting.

13. Planning (to include any applications/decisions received since the agenda was posted)

13.1 DC/24/0860/HH Conversion of outbuilding to form annexe/ancillary accommodation, Barningham Hall, Coney Weston Road.

The Parish Council made the following comments for the above application:

Barningham Parish Council only support this application on the understanding that this conversion represents an addition to the existing property and remains within the existing properties curtilage and does not create a new, separate dwelling that could be split from the existing property and sold as a separate entity.

14. Aggies Piece

14.1 To receive an update on the Aggies Piece Wetland Project.

There was no report this month.

15. Caretaker's Report

The battle against the brambles has continued this month in all the usual trouble spots. I have been back to the elevated path yet again, hand-weeding and hacking back the honeysuckle with my shears. The bin opposite the shop needed to be rescued from encroaching nettles and brambles. I have had to apply weed-killer to the mats at the Cricket Meadow again.

At the Cemetery I have cut back branches blocking the entrance and one of the benches. Two plastic bolt covers needed to be replaced at the Play Area. I have found three cases of dog mess in the Play Area recently and the dumping of domestic waste in the layby bin is continuing.

15.1 To agree the job description, advertising, and interview process for the caretaker role.

The following advert was agreed for the post of village Caretaker for the village:

Barningham Parish Council are looking for a dedicated individual to litter pick and help maintain our village assets. Responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- Conducting litter rounds within 30mph limits.
- Emptying public litter bins at specified locations.
- Sweeping and raking leaves in designated areas.
- Cutting back overgrown branches and brambles.
- Weeding and trimming shrubs.
- Inspecting gravestones and play equipment for safety.
- Performing minor repairs to public property.
- Cleaning noticeboards and benches.
- Removing fly-tipped material and applying weedkiller.
- Reporting activities ahead of PC meetings.

The ideal candidate would be someone who is self motivated and can work well unsupervised. This is a part-time, permanent role for a minimum of 6 hours per week at £11.62 per hour. Full training and equipment will be provided.

For further information and details on how to apply for the post please contact the Clerk at Barninghampc@outlook.com

It was agreed that this advert would go on the noticeboard, website, and Facebook page. The closing date for applications would be Wednesday 4th September, with interviews being held, at the Chairmans house, with the Clerk, in the week commencing 9th September.

Action Cllr Chambers/Clerk

16 Play Area/Cricket Meadow

16.1 To receive any update.

No updates to receive.

16.2 To note completion of works to replace the damaged ladder equipment.

The damaged ladder equipment has finally been replaced by Hags. Disappointingly, this took almost a year to achieve.

17 Churchyard/Cemetery

17.1 To receive an update on any cemetery.

The Chair and Clerk met with a resident and agreed that we would allow the use of a burial plot for the internment of three lots of ashes. The plot that has been allocated is too small to accommodate a full-size coffin and as such we felt that this was the best use of available space.

There will be a slightly reduce fee for this plot of £200, due to its limitations in size. The Clerk will liaise with the resident and undertakers to facilitate this request.

Action Clerk

18. Biodiversity and Environment

18.1 To review our Biodiversity Policy.

There was no report this month.

19. Councillors Reports and Items for Future Agenda

19.1 Yellow fruit is falling from the tree and landing on the pavement along the B1111 near the entrance to Lingwood Close. It makes the surface unsafe for pedestrians. The Village Caretaker has had a sweep up, but it reappears pretty rapidly. The Clerk will contact the resident regarding this and ask to get the branches shortened so they are only over the grass verge. A local resident will confirm the house number for the Clerk.

Action Clerk

20. Correspondence for Information

No additional correspondence received.

21 Date of Next Meeting

Date of the next meeting was confirmed as Wednesday 11th September 2024.

Meeting closed to the public at 8.45 PM.

The Councillors remained to discuss an item relating to the Clerks working arrangements in camera, under item 22.1 To consider the exclusion of the public and press in the public interest for the consideration of the following items: 22.1 Personnel Issues