

Minutes of Barningham Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 1st October 2025 at 7:00pm in Barningham Village Hall.

Present: Cllrs J Chalmers - Chair, C Hammond -Vice Chair, S Baker, L Hebert, R Baxter, Y Martin, N Martineau, & West Suffolk District Council (WSDC) Cllr Bull.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Suffolk County Council (SCC) Cllr J Spicer.

2. Members Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

2.1 To receive declarations of interest from councillors on items on the agenda. None.

2.2 To receive written requests for dispensations for disclosable pecuniary interests. None received.

2.3 To grant dispensations as appropriate under Section 33 of the Localism Act. N/A

3. Minutes

The minutes of the Barningham Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 3rd September 2025 were agreed, approved and signed as a correct record.

4. Meeting Open to the Public

Mike Millet, Hopton and District Royal British Legion (RBL) Branch Chair, came to the meeting to speak about the RBL and the work that they do. The Hopton and District branch has 32 members and are always looking to recruit new members. They cover the parishes of Market Weston, Barningham, Coney Weston and Hopton. You do not need to have any military connections to join, membership is open to everyone. Although the RBL is known mainly for its work with ex-forces personal and the Poppy Appeal, locally they do much to help people in the villages. Mike Millet has been involved with the Poppy Appeal for many years. It would be helpful to have some more volunteers to help with the Poppy Appeal collections. Cllr Baxter, although away on that day, will do all she can to ensure that the church clock is as accurate as it can be for the Remembrance Service.

Action Cllr Baxter

5. Report from Suffolk County Councillor (SCC): J Spicer

Cllr Spicer was unable to attend the meeting. She sent the following update regarding the re-surfacing work to the A143, between Stanton and Ixworth.' The SCC Construction Manager has undertaken a site visit to assess the surface dressing and agrees that this does not meet their usual standards for quality of works. As a short-term measure, they have implemented some immediate actions to address this issue, such as the implementation of signage on site to advise of the slippery surface. They are currently finalising some longer-term solutions to rectify the defects on site and have met on site with their subcontractor to discuss the implementation of these as soon as possible. This includes remedial repairs, such as applying a specialist treatment to the areas which have fattened up, to rectify this. These works will, of course, be undertaken at no additional cost to the taxpayer. They would also like to provide reassurance that the site continues to be inspected weekly to monitor any further deterioration, and the current assessment is that it is safe for road users with the warning signage in place. They asked that once again we accept their apologies that these works have not met their usual standards, as well as their reassurances that this is being addressed appropriately with the contractor.

6. Report from West Suffolk District Councillor (WSDC): C Bull

Cllr Bull apologised that she had not received an update regarding the works at Old Hall. She will speak to the planning department tomorrow and provide us with an update as soon as she is able. A local resident has been in contact about planting some bulbs on the green at Church Gardens. Cllr Bull has spoken to the officer at West Suffolk, who can authorise this, and they are very happy for the resident to do this. There is going to be Community Governance Review (CGR). West Suffolk Council carried out a CGR in 2021/22 prior to the elections to parish/town

councils in May 2023. The next CGR process will formally start in December 2025, and all parish and town councils will be contacted in December with an invitation to put forward any issues that they wish to be considered and resolved as part of the review process. In the meantime, we may wish to start thinking about any issues or small anomalies that we would like to be included as part of the review. West Suffolk have submitted their proposal to meet the Government's deadline of 26th September 2025, for a unitary council.

7. Chairman's Reports

7.1 To receive any update from the Support our Buses project.

We have been in contact with the Support our Buses group to ask for an update on next steps. So far we have not heard anything back. We will contact the group again to find out what their plans are moving forward.

Action Clerk

7.2 To receive update on traffic calming options for Hepworth Road.

With regards to the traffic survey for Hepworth Road, the invoice for the Parish Council for one Tube speed survey, at a cost of £465.00, is being raised by SCC. Cllr Spicer will pay 50% and Hepworth Parish Council have agreed to pay £100 towards the costs. This means we will be paying £132.50 for the survey. Once payment has been made the order for the works will be raised. It was agreed to send the payment for this as soon as we receive the invoice. This commitment for these monies has already been approved at a previous meeting.

Action Clerk

7.3 To discuss any works required to the ditch in Bardwell Road and associated drainage issues. The Chairman and Clerk met with the owner of the ditch and two Highway Officers from Suffolk County Council (SCC), in Bardwell Road. The Officers were both of the opinion that the issue is more likely to be linked to the drainage system on the opposite side of the road although further investigation is needed. SCC will lead on this matter moving forward.

7.4 To receive feedback from defibrillator/CPR training.

This was an informative and successful event, with 32 members of the public attending. We collected £125 in donations for the East Anglian Air Ambulance. It was agreed that we would round this donation up to £200.

Action Cllr Chalmers/Clerk

8. Clerk's Report

8.1 To discuss option to carry 'bleed kits'.

It has been suggested, by a local resident, that we have a bleed kit in the village. The Clerk is looking into this.

8.2 To receive feedback from WSDC briefing on the Local Government Re-organisation

This session was set up to workshop concerns for West Suffolk District Council to feed into their consultation. Ultimately the final decision regarding the re-organisation will be made by Central Government.

8.2(i) Planning Training.

This was a whistlestop session, with Paragraph 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) featuring heavily. This paragraph tilts the planning balance back in favour of the development plan where Neighbourhood Plans meet certain criteria, notably where the plan has been made within the last five years and contains policies and allocations to meet its housing requirement. During the session it was suggested that we engage with developers at the pre-app stage if possible. We were informed that the government is implementing reforms to speed up the planning process by introducing accelerated systems and processes, which aim to achieve quicker decision-making and increase the number of homes built annually. There will not be an opportunity to submit further comments if an application goes to appeal. This means that any

comments made at the application stage should cover all areas of concern as additional comments will not be permitted.

8.3 To receive feedback from Clarity on SAPPP 2025 Practitioners Guide Assertion 10 training, to include the use of .Gov email address for Councillors and adoption and updating of policies. The Clerk attended the session looking at the key updates in the 2025 edition of the Smaller Authorities Practitioners' Guide (SAPPP) with a focus on Assertion 10 of the Annual Governance Statement on how it now extends to councils' IT governance and data integrity. We need an IT Policy (see under item 8.4), to check our accessibility compliance and check and update if needed our accessibility statement. This will form part of the audit, for 2025/26. We will not be permitted to use non dedicated emails for Councillors. It was strongly recommended that we use . Gov. email addresses. There are currently £24 per year per mailbox. The Clerk has factored the cost of these in to budget.

8.4 To agree and adopt. IT Policy. Circulated.

Due to the complexity of this policy it was agreed to postpone the decision to adopt until a further meeting. This will give the councillors more time to consider the implication, particularly around the use of dedicated email addresses. The Clerk will include this on the November agenda for further discussion.

Action All/Clerk

8.5 To note purchase of PDF software.

It was noted that the Clerk has purchased some PDF software.

9 Finance 9.1 To consider the following payments/note receipt:

Grant writing training	Payment	SALC	£43.20
External audit	Payment	PKF Littlejohn	£252.00
Aggies trimming	Payment	Countryside, conservation and tree services	£330.00
Grass cutting	Payment	Countryside, conservation and tree services	£665.28
Grass cutting	Payment	Countryside, conservation and tree services	£120.00
Village hedges	Payment	Countryside, conservation and tree services	£330.00
Trye disposal	Payment	Caretaker	£18.00
Pressure washer etc	Payment	Clerk	£279.98
Staff costs	Payment	Various	£2,209.97
Bank interest	Receipt	Barclays	£157.22
recycling credit	Receipt	Alford Storage	£9.00

Cllr Chalmers carried out the additional accounts checks at the meeting.

The Schedule of payments were agreed and signed by the Chair.

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

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

9.3 To note Conclusion of Audit and receive any comments from PKF Littlejohn.

The following has been received from PKF Littlejohn: 'On the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.'

'Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:
The smaller authority has confirmed that it has not complied with the governance Assertions in Section 1, Boxes 5 and 7 and it has provided the appointed auditor with an adequate explanation for non-compliance and details of the actions necessary to address weaknesses identified. The internal auditor has drawn attention to the same matters in the Annual Internal Audit Report and their detailed report.' The matters in the Annual Internal Audit have been or are being addressed.

9.4 To consider items for 2026-27 budget and agreed date for Zoom working party.
The Clerk has produced a basic draft budget for consideration and a Zoom working party meeting will be held, ahead of the November meeting, to assist the discussion at the Parish Council meeting in November.

Action All/Clerk

10. Village Matters

7.45PM

10.1 To receive any update on VAS, to include purchase of replacement batteries.
It was decided that we do not need new batteries at this time. It was thought that the issue with the time the batteries are lasting is due to the volume of traffic on that stretch of road, which reduces battery life, and not an issue with the batteries.

10.2 To note request for funding for equipment for the caretaker.
The Caretaker has made a request for have costs agreed, of approx. £130, to facilitate the painting of the play area fence. The Councillors were happy to approve this.

10.3 To discuss concerns identified with the new definitive map for Barningham.
The Clerk has been sent an updated definitive map for Barningham, from SCC. The purpose of the definitive map and statement is to provide a conclusive legal record of public rights of way. The Clerk has raised concerns that the Village Boundary shown is incorrect. On contact with SCC she was told that there is a good possibility that she has found an issue with the parish boundary. Over time SCC know that the boundaries between some parishes have been changed and in places no longer correspond to the parish boundaries shown on the definitive map and they understand that this can be frustrating for the affected parishes. SCC are now starting work on a legal process to update the affected parish boundaries on the definitive map and amend path numbers and edit the path descriptions in the definitive statement accordingly. SCC will get in touch to let all parish clerks know when this update has happened in their area, however, given that they will be checking and updating the whole of Suffolk (approx. 500 parishes), this will likely take a considerable amount of time. It's taken 15 years to complete the consolidation process. The Clerk will keep a watching eye on this matter.

10.4 To receive any report from the Village Hall. To include decision regarding VH grass and vegetation maintenance.
The Parish Council has been paying for the grass cutting at the Village Hall in recent times. It was agreed that we would continue to do this and in addition, in lieu of making a grant to the village hall, will include a budget, within their own budget, to pay for hedge and tree maintenance at the hall. Currently the village hall is not making much, if any, profit and any monies they have in savings are earmarked for the ongoing maintenance of the building. The hall is an asset for the village that is available for use by all of the residents in the parish. To this end, and considering that the Parish Council are Custodian Trustees of the hall and the immediately adjacent land, it was agreed that it would be appropriate for the Parish Council to finance the hall's garden maintenance in this way. We will revisit this decision annually, when agreeing the budget.

10.5 To confirm arrangements for laying the Remembrance Day Wreath.
It was agreed to make a donation of £50 to the Royal British Legion. Cllr Chalmers will lay the Parish Council wreath at the Remembrance Day Service.

Action Cllr Chalmers

11. Disability Audit 11.1 To receive any update on progress.

Cllrs Baker and Martin are arranging to meet with a representative from the Church at the end of October to progress the document. With this in mind it was agreed to revisit this document at the December meeting.

Action Cllrs Baker/Martin

12. Neighbourhood Plan 12.1 To receive any update.

Following our agreement at the last meeting to approve the submission of the Plan, as amended, to West Suffolk Council together with all the necessary documents including the Consultation Statement and Basic Conditions Statement, the consultant has now rebuilt the original draft Plan to conform with West Suffolk's Accessibility standards and taken in to account the considerable changes as a result of the adoption of the new Local Plan. He is now making the amendments agreed in response to the comments and is hoping that he can submit the Plan this week or very early next.

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

13.1 Affordable Rural Housing. To consider option to carry out a Housing Needs Survey (HNS) West Suffolk District Council is currently funding Community Action Suffolk (CAS) to carry out Housing Needs Surveys (HNS) in rural parishes. The Parish Council discussed the option of commissioning such a survey. It was noted that affordable housing delivered through new developments is available to anyone, whereas affordable housing identified through an HNS and built on an exception site would be only available to local residents. The Parish Council last carried out a Housing Needs Survey in 2010. It was agreed that further information is needed before making a decision, so, to that end, the Clerk will invite a representative from CAS to speak to the Parish Council to help them decide whether to take this initiative forward.

Action Clerk

14. Aggies Piece, Biodiversity and Environment

14.1 To receive any report from the Biodiversity and Environment group.

The Biodiversity and Environment group are about to undertake a tree survey, as part of the survey they will measure identified trees and collate the information. The Clerk will set up a page for the group on the website where they can upload information and any survey results. Cllr Baxter approached Cllr Bull about some funding for bird feeders. Cllr Bull was happy to make a donation towards these. Cllr Baxter will submit an application on behalf of the group. The feeders will be filled with the donated feed that Cllr Baxter has managed to secure.

Action Cllr Baxter/Clerk

15. Caretaker's Report. 15.1 To receive any update from the Caretaker

The Caretaker has received the new pressure washer and leaf blower. The costs of these pieces of equipment is being reimbursed by SCC as part of the Self-help Scheme. He has been carrying out work in various locations in the village and has requested some more bin liners. The Clerk will arrange for these to be delivered from West Suffolk Council. The Chair will ask the Caretaker to oil the sign at Aggies Piece.

Action Chair/Clerk

16. Play Area/Cricket Meadow

16.1 To receive any update.

The 'no fires or Barbecues' signs have been received. The Chair will ask the Caretaker to put these up at Aggies Piece and on the Cricket Meadow.

Action Chair/Caretaker

16.2 To receive quote for repairs to play equipment in Children's play area.

A quote to repair and reinstate the damaged play equipment has been received from Peter Kerry, CCTS for £382.70. the quote was accepted and it was agreed to ask him to go ahead with the works.

Action Clerk

17. Churchyard/Cemetery. 17.1 To receive any update.

17.2 To receive update on request to alter a name on the War Memorial.

Following the decision, at the last meeting, to allow the incorrect initials to be changed on the War Memorial, the stone masons have said they will now send the quotation across to the client. If they accept the quote the stone mason will then do their best to get the work completed in time for the Remembrance Day Service.

18. Councillors Reports and Items for Future Agenda

Cllr Baker requested that we include a plan for a potential pollution initiative, that she has been working on, on the next agenda.

Cllr Martineau reported that Jonathan Lodge gave a very interesting report following the publication of his book, documenting clergy in Barningham. It was suggested that the Parish Council should purchase a copy of the book to be kept on file. Cllr Martineau will follow this up.

Action Cllr Martineau

19. Correspondence for Information

There was no additional information for this meeting.

20.Date of Next Meeting. Wednesday 5th November 2025, 7.00pm Barningham Village Hall

21.Exclusion of the Public and Press To consider the exclusion of the public and press in the public interest for the consideration of the following items:

21.1 Personnel Issues. None.

21.2 Legal Issues. None.