

Minutes of Barningham Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> November 2024 at 7:00pm in Barningham Village Hall.

Present: Cllrs J Chalmers, C Hammond, Y Martin, N Martineau, L Hebert, R Baxter & S Baker, WSDC Cllr Bull & SCC Cllr J Spicer.

### **1. Apologies for Absence**

No apologies received.

### **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.

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

### **3 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting for Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2024 were agreed and approved as a correct record.

**4. Meeting Open to the Public.** No members of the public present.

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

Cllr Spicer has sent the Clerk information about the best way to get permission for a grit bin in Bardwell Road. The Clerk will follow this up. **Action Clerk**

Cllr Spicer shared the contact information, for the replacement officer, to speak to regarding the application for a new gateway in Bardwell Road. The Clerk will follow this up as well. **Action Clerk**

Cllr Spicer reported that the works, to the bridge at Stowlangtoft, have been delayed. This is because SCC has identified some issues with the concrete piles which have been installed. They are currently investigating and discussing these issues with the company who supplied the concrete, as well as other key stakeholders, to assess the impact of these issues and determine the best course of action to resolve them. Works have been temporarily paused for a brief period whilst this happens. This is consequently likely to have an impact on the duration of their programme of works and this work is now looking likely not to be completed until the New Year. Cllr Spicer further reported that Kiln Lane, Stowlangtoft has now become one way.

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

WSDC are required to do annual reports on air quality. All sites tested are showing as being significantly below the national average, which is good for our region. WSDC has worked hard to try and reduce emissions, and the anti-idling campaign has undoubtedly helped. Cllr Bull reported that the Communities Capital Grant fund is taking applications. It was suggested that the Village Hall may benefit from some funding, perhaps for Wi-Fi or to help with disabled access. The Clerk will forward the information to them for consideration. WSDC are making some changes to bin collection times. This will not affect the day the bins are collected. The examination of the Local Plan is being held at West Suffolk House this week.

### **7. Chairman's Reports**

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

At the most recent Task Force Meeting, at Bardwell, the group discovered that they were expected to produce two separate bids for funding. One for the 'shoppers' bus and one for the 'education/training' bus. The Chairman, Cllr Spicer, Julie Surridge and the Clerk were tasked with completing the bid for the 'education/training' bus. This came as a bit of a surprise and there is a considerable amount of work that will need to be undertaken in order to meet the November 15<sup>th</sup> deadline. We have been told that we should get a quick answer regarding the grant. The Task

Force have concerns over what will happen, following the cut off of the temporary service, at the end of December, if our bid is unsuccessful.

7.2 To complete Connecting Communities Transport Survey (circulated).

This questionnaire was circulated. Those who wished to can submit their own responses.

7.3 To note single fare cap rise to £3.

It was noted that the fare cap will go up from £2 per journey to £3 from January next year.

7.4 To receive feedback from West Suffolk Forum, to include public consultation on Suffolk's next Local Transport Plan to 2040.

The Chairman and Clerk attended the West Suffolk Forum at Haverhill. There was a session on the Suffolk County Council Transport Strategy, led by Lewis Boudville – Principal Strategic Transport Planner. They are launching the public consultation on the Local Transport Plans and Area Plans for West Suffolk in October. The timing of this was not felt to be great, bearing in mind the issues we are having with our local bus. The plan was focused on the towns, and a few rural areas. Our area was not even on their map. There was mention of multimodal transport, which was something that we will include in our bid to SCC, discussed under item 7.1.

There was also a discussion about Community Land Trusts. Sue Downs, Rural Housing Officer - Community Action Suffolk and representatives of Lavenham Community Land Trust provided an insight into what can be achieved and the opportunities that these schemes can bring to their communities. This was very interesting.

## **8.Clerk's Report**

8.1 To consider adoption of Grant Policy for the Parish Council.

The Clerk has started work on this.

**Action Clerk**

8.2 To confirm order of 10 Suffolk Care Services Directories for 2025.

The Clerk has ordered 10 copies of the 2025 Suffolk Care Services Directories. More can be ordered if required. We will ask for an electronic copy to share on Facebook and the website.

**Action Clerk**

8.3 To note attendance and receive any feedback from Streetlight briefing and Flooding and Drainage forum.

The Streetlight briefing was interesting and informative. It was reported that the change to part night lighting offered savings of over £750K (over 4m at current energy prices) SCC is recognised internationally for their streetlighting programmes.

The Flooding and Drainage forum included an Interesting 'map' that shows the route of funding for drainage works.

8.4 To discuss communication with the School over parking, road safety and overgrown hedges.

The Clerk contacted the school regarding parking, road safety and overgrown hedges. The headteacher responded by saying she is happy to share our recommendations with both staff and parents. She thought our idea of contacting the local policing team would be great and asked if they may be able to visit one day at pick up. She feels pick up is worse than drop off as they don't have a staggered end to the day. The Headteacher will try and attend the next meeting in December and in the meantime she will send a report. Unfortunately, the report had not been received at the time of the meeting.

## 9. Finance

9.1 The following invoices were approved for payment.

|                     |         |   |            |
|---------------------|---------|---|------------|
| Administration      | Payment | Various                                     | -£2,839.08 |
| Grass cutting       | Payment | Countryside, conservation and tree services | -£376.80   |
| ditch works         | Payment | Countryside, conservation and tree services | -£540.00   |
| War memorial refurb | Payment | Various                                     | -£19.69    |
| War memorial refurb | Payment | Various                                     | -£8.00     |
| War memorial refurb | Payment | Various                                     | -£14.98    |
| Administration      | Payment | Various                                     | -£29.74    |

Cllr Y Martin carried out the additional accounts check 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 discuss and agree budget for 205/26, to include consultation on the West Suffolk Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

West Suffolk Council is currently reviewing its Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS) and has written to us to formally consult us on the proposed changes. As part of their collective work to support communities that are the hardest hit by the current pressures on the cost of living, West Suffolk Council is seeking views on extending, for a further year, the decreased contribution rate (maximum discount of 100 per cent) for working-age customers, which proposed support for low-income households and those facing financial hardship, in light of the current pressures on the cost of living. The Parish Council supported this initiative. It was noted however that once again, the consultation timeline did not fit in with Parish Council meeting times. An extension of time has been secured to allow time for any comments to be submitted.

**Action Clerk**

The Councillors met, via zoom, in October to discuss the budget in detail, at a working party meeting. It was agreed that, once again due to increasing costs and potential expenditure, including to but not limited to: possible works to the car park at St Andrews; works to/ replacement of village benches; play area repair works, including possible repairs to the wet pour surfaces; hedge works; future ditch works; additional VAS expenditure; potential for increase in caretaker's hour; disabled access works and audit; costs associated with the Coffee Caravan visits; possible planning expenses and the potential purchase of new grit bins, that we would precept for £45,000 for 2025/26. This would represent a 10.95% increase, which would add a £12.51 increase, per year, to the Parish Council element of the Council Tax Bill. The Clerk will ensure the request is sent to WSDC.

**Action**

**Clerk**

## 10. Village Matters

10.1 To receive any update on VAS.

We have been publishing data for some months now and residents are now understanding better the limitations we have to work within when deciding where to place the device. As noted under 10.6 a new post for Hepworth Road is under consideration.

10.2 To discuss works to the bench at Bishops Croft entrance.

The new Caretaker feels that, due to issues with obtaining the concrete, that concreting in the bench at the entrance to Bishops Croft, will be too big a job for him. Peter Kerry has said that the job he was waiting for is now going ahead and that he should be able to do the job sometime from the mid to the end of November.

10.3 To discuss works to hedge, opposite the shop, Church Road.

We have received a request, from a resident who lives adjacent to our hedge, opposite the shop, on the raised path to have the top cut back. It was agreed to go ahead with this work.

**Action Clerk**

10.4 To receive any report from the Village Hall.

The Village Hall are holding a Fish and Chip Bingo evening next week.

10.5 To look at option to carry out a Disability Access Audit.

Cllr Baker and Martin will do some preliminary work on a Disability Access Audit for the village.

The Clerk will provide assistance if required.

**Action Cllrs Baker/Martin**

10.6 To discuss option for new VAS post Hepworth Road.

The Chairman and Clerk met with a resident in Hepworth Road to look for a suitable location for a new post to mount a VAS on. Sites were potentially identified, and the Clerk has been in contact with SCC to ask for advice ahead of submitting a formal application. The Clerk will continue to work on this.

**Action Clerk**

10.7 To receive any update on grit bin for Bardwell Road.

As reported under item 5, Cllr Spicer has provided the Clerk with some information to aid with our request for a grit bin in Bardwell Road. The Clerk will follow up on this.

**Action Clerk**

10.8 Request from Havebury Housing, re resident in Hopton Road.

We have received a request from Havebury Housing to help with an issue one of their tenants have accessing their property on their mobility scooter. As the Road is the responsibility of SCC and the sounding areas is under Havebury's control we do not think this is something we can help with, as we do not have any powers in this area. The Clerk will contact Havebury with this information.

**Action Clerk**

## **11.The Royal George**

11.1 To receive any report.

The Parish Council are very pleased to see the success the pub is having. The community spirit, support and involvement of local residents is great to see. We wish them well with their venture.

## **12. Neighbourhood Plan**

12.1 To receive any update.

We have received the results of the recent consultation. The consultation has now closed. We will upload these to the website once they are in a format to do so. The next stage will be to consider the comments and identify what changes are needed to the Plan ahead of submitting it to West Suffolk Council for further consultation and independent examination.

Given the imminent West Suffolk Local Plan Examination, West Suffolk will not have the resources to carry out the strategic environmental assessment SEA and Habitats Regulations Assessment HRA Screening Opinion until the new year. This means that we will not be able to submit the Plan until around February, as we can't submit it without those being completed.

**Action Clerk**

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

13.1 DC/24/1105/OUT Outline planning application - (means of main vehicular access from Hopton Road to be considered) for up to 40 dwellings, Land South Of Hopton Road. To note application has been **withdrawn**.

The Parish Council were pleased to see that this application, for only part of the site has been withdrawn.

13.2 DC/24/1042/FUL | Planning application - one self-build dwelling and annexe | Land Adjacent Carwood Hopton Road Barningham. This application has been **refused** by WSC

13.3 To receive any update on works to Old Hall, Coney Weston Road.

The Parish Council understood that a planning application would be coming forward for works at this property. At the time of the meeting, no application had been received. Cllr Bull will follow this up.

**Action Cllr Bull**

#### **14. Aggies Piece**

14.1 To note increase in fly-tipping.

There has been an increase in fly tipping at Aggies Piece. The Clerk will contact the landowner to see if he wants to re-visit the idea of having a gate at the entrance to try and restrict access for fly-tippers.

**Action Clerk**

Cllr Baxter has been in contact with Sam Hurst, from the Rivers Trust, and he is in the process of putting together an application for funding, for the projected Wetland Project at Aggies Piece.

#### **15. Caretaker's Report**

The Caretaker is settling in well to his new position. He made a very good job of the War Memorial refurbishment. As he is located in the village, and communicates regularly, through a dedicated WhatsApp group, with both the Chairman and the Clerk it was considered unnecessary for him to submit a formal monthly report for the minutes.

#### **16. Play Area/Cricket Meadow.**

16.1 To receive any update.

16.2 To discuss issues of overgrown hedges and receive update on ditch works.

The work to the ditches, in the corner near the rear of Church Cottage have now been completed. The hedges around the meadow need a hard cut back, as they are making cutting up to the edge of the field difficult. Peter Kerry said he could do the work for £675. Although the Councillors can see the value in having the hedge cut back, they would not like to see a hard cut back around the entire field. They would like some areas of thicket left as this is a great habitat for wildlife. The Clerk will discuss this with Peter Kerry before any work is undertaken.

**Action Clerk**

#### **17. Churchyard/Cemetery**

17.1 To receive an update on any cemetery matters. No matters to report.

17.2 To discuss works to area around War Memorial.

The new Caretaker has done a really good job replacing the post and chains around the War Memorial. The stones have also been topped up. The area looks very smart and is ready for the Remembrance Day Service.

#### **18. Biodiversity and Environment**

18.1 To receive any update including an update following attendance, by two residents, of Wildlife in the Community session.

Two Barningham residents attended a Wildlife information session, hosted by Suffolk Wildlife Trust. They found the session both interesting and informative and will use the information gathered to help with the Wildlife audit we are planning to undertake next year. Cllr Baxter is very happy to meet up with the residents to discuss taking the project forward. Concerns have been raised about some tree works in the village. We will ensure that we look at important trees in the parish and see what we can do about preserving them in the Wildlife Audit. Cllr Bull will check the criteria for adding a TPO to trees.

**Action Cllr Baxter/Bull**

## **19.Councillors Reports and Items for Future Agenda**

It was understood that a lorry is parking on the green at Bishops Croft. As this is District Council land, Cllr Bull will look to see what action can be taken.

## **20.Correspondence for Information**

20.1 Keep the Heat Event, Ixworth Village Hall, 16<sup>th</sup> November 10am 1pm. Information circulated.

20.2 To receive request form East Anglian Air Ambulance for support. Request noted, however due to our own increasing costs, the Parish Council did not feel able to make any financial contribution at this time.

20.3 To receive information for Funding Opportunity: Communities Capital Grant Fund.

As discussed under item 6, Cllr Bull's report, this information will be forwarded to the Village Hall Committee for information.

**Action Clerk**

**21.Date of Next Meeting Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> December 7.00pm in Barningham Village Hall.**

## **22.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:**

22.1 Personnel Issues. None.

22.2 Legal Issues. None

Meeting closed 20.35