

Bardwell Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Bardwell Parish Council held on Wednesday 8th May 2019, commencing at 7.30pm Venue: The Tithe Barn, Up Street, Bardwell IP31 1AA

Present: Councillors David Ruffles (Chair), Andrew Smith (Vice Chair), John Babraff, Geoff Clough, Peter Sanderson, Tony Stokes.

Clerk/RFO: Pauline Smith

Members of the Public: 3

1. **To receive signed Declaration of Acceptance of Office** and Register of Interests Forms from all Councillors
All Forms were duly received.
2. **Election of Chair**, including signing the Declaration of Acceptance of Office
Councillor David Ruffles was nominated as Chair
No other nominations were received.
Proposed: Cllr Sanderson Seconded: Cllr Clough Unanimously elected.
Cllr Ruffles signed the Acceptance of Office.
3. **Election of Vice Chair**, including signing the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.
Council Andrew Smith nominated himself for the position of Vice Chair
Cllr Babraff Objected to the nomination: His opinion being that Cllr Smith has not shown the respect or support that he considers the Chair deserves. He referred to a disagreement that had occurred during the February meeting (at which he, Cllr Babraff, had not been present) and similarly the April meeting. He cited respect, trust and loyalty as being the no.1 priorities for this Parish Council.

Councillors were asked whether there were any other nominations for the position. There were none. Cllr Smith had offered to withdraw his nomination – this was not considered necessary.
Cllr Stokes Seconded Cllr Smith's Nomination
There were no further objections and Cllr Smith was duly elected as Vice Chair
Cllr Smith signed the Acceptance of Office
4. **Apologies**
 - a. Parish Council to receive apologies for absence: Cllr Compton, Suffolk County Councillor Joanna Spicer MBE
 - b. Parish Council to consent to accept reasons for apologies received from Parish Councillor/s: Cllr Compton's reason for absence was accepted. (Conflicting engagement due to change of date for May meeting.)
5. **Declarations** of pecuniary and local non-pecuniary interests and to receive requests for dispensations: Cllr Smith has a pecuniary interest in finance items relating to Clerk/RFO's salary.
No dispensations requested.

6. **To consider approval of the Minutes** of the Meeting held 2nd April 2019
Following a correction in grammar at item 11. V to read:...to involve members (previously ...to involve members...), the minutes were duly accepted as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.
7. **Public Forum:** To receive comments and questions from members of the public in relation to items on this agenda. Other matters may be raised at the discretion of the Chair and, if considered appropriate, will be considered for inclusion on a future agenda for discussion:
No questions were raised by members of the public
8. **Suffolk County Councillor**, Joanna Spicer MBE: Report
If available: To include update re outcome of village flooding investigation
No report received.
9. **District Councillor**, Andrew Smith: Report
The Chairman congratulated Cllr Smith on his re-election as Ward Councillor for Bardwell Ward.

Cllr Smith was extremely grateful to all who had supported him during the election and had voted him into office.

He confirmed that the Conservatives have retained an overall majority (albeit much reduced) on West Suffolk Council.

In relation to Lammas Close antisocial behaviour issues: Neither Havebury Housing or the Police have received any further reports of antisocial behaviour in relation to those about which the Parish Council has made representation via the Ward Councillor and Chairman.

No further concerns have been raised with Councillors.

[Resolution: The Ward Councillor/Parish Council will not pursue this matter further unless additional issues arise.](#)

10. **Annual Business**
- a. To confirm appointment of Parish Council nominated persons to the following organisations/charitable bodies:
The following nominations were unanimously approved.
- Bardwell Playing Fields Association (2)
Cllr Peter Sanderson; Cllr Geoff Clough
 - Bardwell Village Hall Committee *Tithe Barn* (1)
Cllr Andrew Smith
 - Bardwell Charity Trustees (2) - 4 year term
Cllr Tony Stokes; Cllr Andrew Smith
- b. To confirm the following appointed Parish Council Positions
- SALC Representative
Cllr Tony Stokes

- Tree Warden
Barry Felton (not a Parish Councillor)
- Bank Signatories
Cllr David Ruffles, Cllr John Babraff,
Cllr Peter Sanderson, Cllr Tony Stokes

11. **Finance – Financial Report**

Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2018/19: *following approval the relevant documentation will be submitted to PKF Littlejohn LLP.*

The dates for the period of exercise of public rights will be 17th June 2019 – 26th July 2019 inclusive.

- a. **To receive and approve the Annual Internal Audit Report** for the year ending 31st March 2019:

The internal audit report was duly received. This had been completed and signed by Peter Chapman, Internal Auditor on 5th May 2019

Action: Submit to Auditors (part of AGAR) – Completed/Clerk

- b. **AGAR:** To consider and approve the completion of the Annual Governance Statement 2018/19

The Annual Governance Statement was approved and duly signed by the Chairman, Cllr David Ruffles; and Clerk, Pauline Smith

Action: Submit to Auditors – Completed/Clerk

- c. **To consider and approve the Accounting Statements 2018/19**

The Accounting Statements were signed by the Responsible Financial Officer, Pauline Smith on 8th May 2019, before being presented to the Parish Council for approval.

The Accounting Statements were approved and signed at the meeting by the Chairman, Cllr David Ruffles.

Action: Submit to Auditors – Completed/Clerk

- d. **To receive and note details of the assets list to 31st March 2019** – see attached
Councillors were advised of a change to the assets register previously circulated, relating to woodland/orchard trees previously included - but now removed.

- e. **To note that all items of expenditure for the financial year 2018/19** are listed on the Bardwell Parish Council website: Noted

- f. **To consider and approve payments made via Direct Debit** to the year ending 31st March 2020: SEBC Dog Bin emptying monthly £46.18
Information Commissioners Office (IC) Annual registration fee £35.00 subject to confirmation – due 6th August 2019

- g. **To approve the invoices** awaiting payment – See attached for details from PC community account : £679.11

Receipt of Sport England Grant to be transferred to BPFA Development Fund
£47,501.00

- h. **To note invoices paid** since the last meeting – see attached

- i. **To receive details of the Bank reconciliation** to 3 May 2019 – see attached
- j. **AGAR – significant Variances;** A question was raised about the validity of having to provide the information required re significant variances: i.e. where there are variances either –/+ 15% between the figures for 2017/18 and 2018/19, and where this figure is in excess of £200.
There is a requirement this year to explain 1. the budget increase, 2. total other receipts (e.g. Mainly relating to grant funding received or not in each year)
There was discussion about the significant amount of work required in producing these explanations due to the small sums involved, and whether the Parish Council could simply refuse to submit the information on the grounds that it is clearly detailed within the R&P summary.
The Clerk explained that this is not possible, nor is this a new requirement .
The R&P statement document is not required/sent with the AGAR; failing to submit the information required will result in a letter/penalty notice to the Parish Council requiring the relevant form be submitted and possibly a ‘Qualified’ Audit: *A qualified audit would cause the Parish Council to be included within an online accessible list.*
Action: Submit details of significant variances to Auditors – Completed/Clerk
- k. **Unity Trust Bank Account :** Opened to receive grant funding from Sport England in respect of New Pavilion at the Bardwell Playing Field. *This was necessary to avoid the PC’s accounts with Barclays from exceeding the threshold for free banking, which would have triggered a regular monthly charge going forward of £6.00 per month per account.*
A significant proportion of the £50,000 grant has now been received into this account and will be transferred to the BPFA Development Fund (see 11g).
Sport England is withholding 2.5% of the grant until the project is complete.
Once transferred, this will leave £482.00 in the Unity Trust Account, which will continue to attract a bank admin charge of £6.00 per month.
It is considered that it would now be more appropriate to transfer the current balance back to the PC BPFA account, close the Unity Trust account and notify Sport England that when the remaining grant payment becomes due it should be paid into the PC BPFA Account.
Proposal: That the Unity Trust Bank Account be closed in accordance with the details above
Proposed: Cllr Sanderson Seconded: Cllr Clough Unanimously agreed
Resolution: it was unanimously agreed that the Unity Trust Bank Account be closed following confirmation of
a. transfer of £47,501 to the BPFA Development Fund.
b. confirmation from Sport England that the change of bank account details has been received/their records have been updated.
Action: Clerk – In progress

12. **Planning Matters** for consideration: None

13. **Highways Matters** for consideration:
Launch of Community Self Help Scheme – Details previously circulated
Councillors were asked whether anybody wishes to attend – 2 places have currently been booked.; There were no volunteers.
Therefore;, the Clerk and possibly Cllr Smith (subject to availability) will attend.
Action Completed: Clerk attended
14. **Community Field Tri-partite agreement** – For review
Councillors have been provided with a copy.
Changes were made to the original agreement in line with Bardwell School’s requirements, however, it had not been signed.
Resolution and Action: A copy for review and signing will be sent for signature. **Clerk**
15. **Community Field**
- a. **Plans for progressing project:** Awaiting revised quotation for paths
Action: Clerk to contact TCLL - Completed
- b. **Water provision to field** – Progress update
AWA have advised that contrary to their original quotation taking into account the specified location, detailed on the plan, the supply is only to the road side not to the field. Cllr Smith is meeting again with AWA and a contractor to discuss the implication/costs of the additional work required on 15th May.
There is an indication that AWA will assist with the additional cost but no details as yet.
Action: Cllr Smith meeting AWA and Contractor on site 15th May - Completed
- c. **Maintenance: New Contractor update and report**
The Parish Council is very pleased with the work being carried out by the new contractor. Cllr Babraff raised concern that the contractor is not being paid commensurate to the work being carried out. The Clerk advised that whilst not disagreeing that the hourly rate is low, the work had essentially been put out to tender and agreed.
The Clerk mentioned that she had also had a conversation with the Contractor on this matter earlier in the week, during which the importance of covering his costs was discussed. He did not raise any concerns. He was advised to contact the parish council directly if any concerns do arise.
Grass Cutting Schedule:
Resolution: It was agreed that Cllr Babraff will be the Contractor’s point of contact for determining when the grass needs cutting.
Action: Contractor to be notified: Completed
- d. **Allotments Update**
One allotment remains available.
- e. **Glass found on children’s slide**
Another serious incident of a person or persons unknown leaving glass on the slide has been reported, following a similar incident during 2018 - albeit 3rd hand and some while after the event (apparently took place over Easter weekend). It is essential that

incidents such as this be immediately reported to the police – as well as to the BPFA and PC.

Resolution:: Cllr Sanderson confirmed that the BPFA will ensure increased vigilance when carrying out checks of the area.

All Councillors are asked to do likewise.

Action taken: Details were included within Bardwell Village News June issue.

- f. **Alcoholic drinks** cans/bottles have been seen in the litterbins: Again Councillors are asked to remain vigilant. This is not appropriate on the Community Field.

- g **Meeting with Tom Hoblyn**, to include former members of the steering committee:

Due to heavy work commitments, Tom Holyn is not available until July: He has asked for a suggested date.

Actioned: Clerk will enquire whether one of the following dates is suitable:

July: Wednesday 3rd 7.30pm ; Sat 6th 10am; Wed 10th 7.30pm

Action Completed: Meeting scheduled for 3rd July.

Reports

16. **Chairman's Report**

- a. **Correspondence:** Letter from Charity Trustees

During the February 2019 meeting two lengthy statements/letters were read out during the Chairman's report (item 10) and are referenced in the Minutes. These letters were the personal opinions of the correspondents: Cllrs Ruffles and Babraff. The contents did not form part of a debate or decision by the Parish Council.

The Chairman acknowledges that this was an error of judgment.

The contents expressed within the statements/letters were personal opinions, which should not have been brought into the public domain and he apologised for permitting this to occur.

The Chairman confirmed that whilst very disappointed that the Trustees decided against the proposal for a joint working arrangement, he accepts the decision. He wishes to draw a line under the matter and move on towards a more positive future relationship with the Trustees.

Cllr Babraff, who was not present at the February meeting, had asked the Chairman to read his statement/letter during the public meeting. In retrospect he acknowledges that this was not the right thing to do and he apologized accordingly.

The Chairman advised that there would be no further discussion about the content of Cllr Babraff's letter/statement during this meeting. Should this be considered necessary, a meeting at a later date would be arranged, together with an independent third party. There was no request to further this suggestion.

Resolution: Both the Chairman and Cllr Babraff agreed that the most appropriate course action is to withdraw their statements from the public domain.

The content of neither letter had been debated, or utilized as part of a decision

making process by the Parish Council during the February meeting. Therefore this resolution was duly accepted and the matter is considered 'closed'.

Action: Clerk to respond to the Trustees accordingly: **Action Completed**

b. **Pageant**

Dinkie Williamson has asked whether the parish council would be willing to be involved. The Chairman is waiting for more information re expectations. Spinning Wheel Theatre is now working to progress plans based on the number of volunteers who turned up to two meetings. A comment was made that as plans progress and word spreads more people will become involved.

Resolution: Councillors agreed that they would be happy to hear more about how it is thought that the parish council could be involved.

Action: Chairman to discuss with DW **Action Completed:** See June meeting

c. **Skidders Lane:** Between School Fence and Footpath

The Chairman highlighted his concerns about debris left between the fence and the footpath following in installation of the new fence. Noting that there were old broken toys, broken pipe, tree trunks, branches, metal plate. He forwarded photos to the Clerk who 'phoned to explain the concerns to Bardwell School's office manager.

The Chairman highlighted the concern that the manner in which the area has been left could encourage fly tippers to see this as a convenient area, with easy access from School Lane.

Resolution: The concerns should be sent in writing to the Head of School.

Action: Clerk **Action completed:** Headteacher advised that work to clear inorganic items scheduled for 1st June.

17. **Bardwell Playing Field Association**

a. **New Pavilion :** Good progress is being made

UK Power have been extremely helpful.

The football foundation has paid 3 claims and a 4th claim has now been submitted (copy attached).

b. **Easter Tennis Coaching Sessions:** There was a very good turnout over the four day period. Coaching sessions will also be available during the summer holidays.

c. **Village Fete:** This year's fete will be held on 22nd June at Waltham House.

d. **BPFA AGM:** The AGM will be held on 21st May in the Tithe Barn.

Other matters raised

e. **Dog walking on the Playing Field:** Dogs are not permitted on the playing field. Unfortunately, there is one person who will not respect the clear signage.

It was highlighted that the act of a dog fouling on playing field is an offence. If evidence (ideally photographic evidence) is obtained action can be taken.

f. **Community Field/Playing Field overflow carpark:** A request was made for

the BPFA to put netting on the fence between the football pitch and carpark to prevent footballs damaging the trees.

Action: Cllr PS – to discuss with BPFA

18. **Community Speed Watch** – No report
19. **Tithe Barn**
17th April – A play for children – The Velveteen Rabbit - performed by Spinning Wheel Theatre was enjoyed by 55 children and parents
3rd May – The Big Blind was greatly enjoyed by an audience of c.60
1st June – Common Ground Theatre: The Hound Within The Heart (*Since the meeting this has been cancelled*)
Film Nights: The committee has decided not to have film nights in the Barn, due to the significant number of other similar regular monthly events in nearby villages, eg Stanton, Ixworth, Great Barton.
20. **Clerk's Report**
The litter pick held on 6th April had been very successful (28 residents had helped).
As in recent previous years the litter pick had been held in association with the charity breakfast arranged by the Church.
21. **Annual Village Meeting: 14th May 2019 Arrangements**
7pm: Tithe Barn
Guest Speaker: Pam Chrispin (SARS)
22. **Any other correspondence** All dealt with prior to the meeting.
23. **Questions to the Chair:** It was noted that the Fair is in situ and due to leave 12th May
24. **Next Meeting:** Tuesday 4th June 2019, 7.30pm