

Bardwell Parish Council

Chairman: David Ruffles Vice Chairman: Andrew Smith

Minutes of the meeting of Bardwell Parish Council held on Tuesday 3rd March 2020, commencing 7.30pm Venue: The Tithe Barn, (Bardwell Village Hall), Up Street, Bardwell IP31 1AW

Present

Parish Councillors: David Ruffles, Andrew Smith (also Ward Councillor), Ali Compton
Peter Sanderson, Tony Stokes, Geoff Clough
Suffolk County Councillor: Joanna Spicer MBE
Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer: Pauline Smith
Members of the public 6 (for part of the meeting):

1. Apologies and approval of absences

Apologies for absence from Cllr Babraff were noted.

2. Declaration of interests: Cllr Smith re finance item 13: Clerk's salary item

3. To confirm minutes of the meeting held on 4th February 2020

The Minutes were confirmed as an accurate record and duly signed by the Chairman.
The Clerk was requested to provide Minutes in a more timely manner.

4. Public participation session

Matters raised by members of the public:

4.1 Muddy area of footpath through the church yard

Response: This is a seasonal issue, which would not be a priority for SCC.

Cllr Clough said if shingle could be obtained he would be willing to spread it in the area.

Cllr Spicer indicated that she may be able to assist with funding, however it was suggested that the quantity and cost may be minimal and so locality funding would not be appropriate.

It is considered that it would be better to review in several months.

PCC to be asked whether they would agree to PC assistance to provide shingle if only a small amount required?

Action: Cllr Smith to discuss with PCC before any action can be agreed or taken by the parish council. **Action: Chairman of PCC has been provided with this information**

4.2 Request that parish council make representation with Anglian Water re barriers around roadworks impinging on ability of vehicles to pass.

Response: the barrier referred to related to safety barriers surrounding emergency work in Low Street. This work has now been completed and the barriers removed.

4.3 The Birches: Adrian Ashford was expecting a statement from the parish council.

Response: Councillors have failed to reach agreement as to the content of the statement.

Cllr Smith will provide a précis detailing the events and his involvement within his Ward report (see items 7 and 10)

5. To receive report from Suffolk County Councillor, Joanna Spicer MBE- see item 6

6. Suffolk County Council: Highways Matters

6.1 Flooding: The Green/Littlemoore Pond

Notes from Trustees had previously been circulated see attached appendix 1

Cllr Spicer explained that heavy rain and flooding have required SCC to prioritise resources around the County. However, she has had a positive meeting with Amanda Mays and John Rozier who confirm SCC's commitment to getting the work carried out. Further investigations are required to establish the depth and location of utilities.

- 6.2 Parking enforcement: With effect 6th April the District Council takes over responsibility for civil parking enforcement:
The District Council will have the authority to enforce yellow lines
Obstruction caused by vehicles, eg partially parked on pavements continues to be a police matter: however it is generally considered that such incidents are better dealt with locally and politely using a personal approach.

7. *To receive report from Ward Councillor, Andrew Smith*

Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE)

CPE will soon become a focus for West Suffolk and the recruitment of "Traffic Wardens" is now complete and training has commenced. CPE begins in earnest in April and there will be an explanatory brief issued in the next 1-2 weeks. Cllr Smith understands that Market Towns will be the focus with visits to Villages once a month, or on a request basis. The sole focus will be on "Highway" parking infringements.

Council Tax

Historically, in their respective predecessor areas Forest Heath residents have traditionally paid less Council Tax than residents of St Edmundsbury. West Suffolk District Council has now agreed to harmonise over 4 years meaning the "levelling up" process will be in the lifetime of this current administration. Inevitably, this will mean that there will be a differential between the rises needed across the new combined authority.

To illustrate the point the following **Band D** council tax levels for **2020/21**, for each of its predecessor areas, are:

- Forest Heath - £163.98 (an increase of £11.70, 7.7%).
- St Edmundsbury - £183.78 – (an increase of £1.62, 0.9%).

The Birches (*also see appendix 2*) The verbatim transcript of this item is attached - The report relating to this item by Cllr Smith, a response/comments from Mr Ashford who then left the meeting were reported under this item - Ward Councillor's Report. The Chairman's response was also given here. For the purpose of these minutes, the summary is provided under item 10. The Birches, Glassfield Road: Statement relating to the Parish Council's handling of the enquiry.

8. *Police Report for noting - detail provided in advance of the meeting on the agenda*
It was noted that André de Jongh, Bardwell's Community Engagement Officer has left this role. It is hoped that his replacement will be in post by 31st March 2020.
Suffolk Police Newsletter can be accessed on line at:
<https://www.suffolk.police.uk/your-area/snt-newsletters>
9. *Chairman's Report*
- 9.1 A vehicle has been parked outside The Old Rectory, Up Street for a few weeks.
Tax expired 21 September 2019, MOT expires 20 March 2020: It was believed to have been possibly abandoned and therefore reported to DVLA on 26 February 2020.
As at lunchtime 3 March 2020 the vehicle has been removed: It is not known by whom.
- 9.2 Bardwell Church:
A superb job has been carried out at the church: the craftsmanship, refurbished windows, renovations, repairs new toilet and kitchen facilities are all very good.
Sadly, Michael de Lotbiniere, who has been one of the main fundraisers - having been the founder of the Friends of Bardwell Church - died on Sunday 1st March.
10. *The Birches, Glassfield Road: Statement relating to the Parish Council's handling of the enquiry.*

*A verbatim transcript of this item is attached: also see appendix 2
The report relating to this item by Cllr Smith, the response/statement from Mr Ashford who then left the meeting; and the subsequent response from Cllr Ruffles were provided under the Ward Councillors report at item 7. The summary is provided under item 10*

10. [The Birches, Glassfield Road: Statement relating to the Parish Council's handling of the enquiry.](#)
cont'd

Councillors had been unable to reach unanimous agreement in relation to a statement. Therefore, Cllr Smith read out a detailed chronological statement of the circumstances as they had unfolded leading to contact by West Suffolk's planning enforcement team with Mr Ashford, the occupier (one of the two owners of the land) and the outcome. *He said that he would provide additional detailed information for reference with the minutes. ([*attached - see appendix 2](#))

Mr Ashford thanked Cllr Smith for his statement but had to leave the meeting prior to listening to Cllr Ruffles. Following his (Mr Ashford's) own statement he stated he did not wish to hear anything further and left the meeting.

Cllr Ruffles disputes the validity of areas of the version of events detailed by Cllr Smith with regard to his own knowledge and involvement (and that of the parish council) which resulted in the enquiries made by the Enforcement Officer, and responded with his own statement.

Cllr Stokes expressed the view that there were errors within Cllr Ruffles' Statement and read out the content of an email which Cllr Ruffles had omitted to refer to: Cllr Ruffles acknowledged the likely existence of the email referred to, and said he would check the details.

The Parish Council and Mr Ashford had been notified (by the Senior Enforcement Officer, West Suffolk Council) on 22nd January 2020 that no further action taken would be taken.
([Copy of email from WSC, Enforcement Officer providing explanation attached: appendix 3](#))

Proposal

Cllr Sanderson had expressed his view that matter should now be considered closed and no further discussion entered into. Cllr Clough expressed a similar view.

Proposed : Cllr Cllr Clough

Seconded: Cllr Sanderson

The Chairman asked for those in favour: Result: 4 Councillors (majority) indicated they were in favour of the proposal.

There was no call for votes against or abstentions.

Resolution: Proposal is carried.

11. [Planning Applications: Consultation received from West Suffolk Council/Planning Authority for consideration:](#) None

12. [Planning Applications: Decisions since previous meeting:](#) None

13. [Finance \(appendix 4\)](#)

13.1 Financial report: See attached

13.2 Invoices for approval: Invoices totalling £1,975-59 were approved as detailed within the financial report

13.3 Salaries/Wages/Payments: It was unanimously resolved, without further discussion being required, to accept the increases to salaries/wages/payments for the Clerk/RFO and litter picker wef 1st April 2020 in accordance with the budget figures agreed December 2019. See attached.

14. [Bardwell Playing Fields Association:](#)

14.1 BPFA Report - See attached ([appendix 5](#))

14.2 BPFA request for funding: Proposal submitted by Cllr Sanderson, Chairman of BPFA
[Background](#)

Construction of the new pavilion is almost complete and will be handed over by the contractors, Hall Contracts Ltd, very shortly.

The interior has been fitted out ready for use. However, weather conditions in recent weeks has limited any work on the external landscaping but it is intended this will be carried out as soon as drier conditions prevail.

The area in front of the building will extend the parking space available but will require additional funding in the future before the whole area can be covered with a hard tarmac surface. In the meantime some necessary work is required now to provide safe access to the building.

Proposal (Cllr Sanderson)

It is intended to provide a firm and safe hard-standing for both vehicles and pedestrians for which additional materials and relevant labour are required.

It is requested that the Parish Council releases £2,000 as a contribution towards this work from the General Capital Fund reserves.

Parish Councillors considered this request and clarification was provided in respect of a number of queries raised.

1. Cllr Sanderson explained: **The storage shed is a new building:** It was never the intention to make use of the original building. Consideration of moving the location to beside the MUGA had been discussed but was not considered feasible. Building control has effectively 'signed off' the building.

2. Cllr Sanderson explained : **Car Park** At present three funders are retaining a small percentage of their grants, a total of approx. £10,000. However, it is necessary to provide an acceptable hard standing for the car park now and hence to alleviate the short term cash flow shortfall the request is for £2,000 to be released from the General Capital Fund as a contribution towards the materials and relevant labour. Others will need to raise additional funding sometime in the future before the whole area can be covered with a complete tarmacadam surface."

3. A question was raised relating to the new buildings (pavilion and storage shed) and their inclusion within the parish council's asset register. The BPFA, as an unincorporated charity cannot hold property in its own right. PC Asset register requirements to be resolved: [Action Clerk](#)

Resolution: The parish council voted unanimously to support the proposal to release £2,000 as a grant to the BPFA from the parish council capital fund reserves.

Action: Clerk to Transfer relevant funds to BPFA Development Fund **Action completed**

15. [Bardwell Community Field](#)

Bench/Table set: The Chairman will arrange purchase of necessary items to secure the set to the ground. He will arrange for a pro forma to be sent to Clerk/RFO for payment. [Action Chairman](#)

Water supply to allotments/extension across community field: separate metering will be required. AWA water regulations apply to field supply (referred to on page 33/34 *verbatim minutes*)

16. [Speed Watch Report](#)

Details provided for the period 5 November 2019 - 31st December 2019 were noted (previously circulated)

Future reports will be issued quarterly, with the next coverage the period 1 January - 31 March 2020

Questions were asked with regards to why it is so difficult to get police to attend sites in Bardwell. It was reiterated that the police do respond to requests when appropriate recorded evidence is submitted. *However, as a recent response explained following monitoring equipment installed in Low Street, additional criteria must be met before further action can be taken.*

As the days are now getting longer, it will be possible to carry out some speed watch sessions during early evening. During February the speed watch team held two sessions, during which no motorists were recorded as driving above the speed limit.

17. [Tithe Barn, Bardwell Village Hall Report](#)

Common Ground Theatre Company will be performing at the Tithe Barn on 27th September.

They had unfortunately had to cancel the performance last year due to illness.

The Bardwell Village Hall AGM had been held during February.

Coronavirus: A suggestion was raised that paper towels should be provided in the toilets in preference to proper towels. **Action:** Cllr Stokes will raise this with the Management Committee.

The area surrounding the Tithe Barn has been greatly improved following recent work/new gravel.

18. **Bardwell Annual Spring Litterpick 21 March 2020 - to confirm arrangements**
As in previous years, the Church is running a Fairtrade Breakfast during the same morning in the Tithe Barn. Fairtrade Breakfast will be available from 9.30am First Aider to be confirmed *Actd Clerk*
Tea will be available to litter pickers as they return : **Action: Cllr Compton/Clerk**
Following the meeting: Event Cancelled due to Covid-19
19. **Bardwell Annual Village Meeting 28 April 2020**
To note that details have been included within March issue of Bardwell Village News and letters or emails sent to individual organisations requesting confirmation of attendance by 31st March.
Guest Speaker: The Clerk had originally received a positive response from the Environment Agency and was awaiting further details: nothing further has been heard since. This is considered unsurprising given the serious flooding issues being dealt with across the County.
As an alternative, it was agreed to contact Victim Support, asking if they could provide a speaker. Victim Support is one of the charities included within parish council's S137 donations to charities.
Action: Clerk **Following the meeting: Event Cancelled due to Covid-19**
20. **Clerk's report:** NHS England had written asking the PC to check Defibrillator battery. Expected life span is 5 years. Clerk confirmed battery is regularly checked and currently ok.
21. **Correspondence:** Nothing to report. Correspondence received during meetings has been circulated and dealt with accordingly.
22. **Diary dates** **Since the meeting the following the meeting/events scheduled for March/April have been cancelled due to Covid-19**
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| March 10 | SALC Area Meeting, The Tithe Barn, Bardwell 7pm To be attended by TS/Clerk |
| March 17 | West Suffolk Parish and Town Forum, Newmarket 6pm – 8pm
To be attended by: AJS/TS/AC/Clerk Cancelled |
| March 21 | Bardwell Litterpick 10am – noon: Meet at Tithe Barn see item 18
FairTrade breakfast available beforehand Cancelled |
| March 27 | WS Civic Dinner: Chairman has sent apologies. Cancelled |
| April 28 | Bardwell Annual Village Meeting, Tithe Barn 7pm 9pm see item 19 Cancelled |
- September 8 SALC Area Meeting -
Cllr Stokes the pc's representative highlighted the difficulties of encouraging interest from the West Suffolk area. Mid Suffolk and Suffolk Coastal are more dominant/proactive with their involvement. Cllr Stokes is encouraging SALC to find out why so few WS representatives attend.
23. **Questions to the Chair** None
24. **Date of next Parish Council Meeting:** Tuesday 7 April 7.30pm **Cancelled**

The meeting ended at 9.16pm