

Bardwell Parish Council

Chairman: David Ruffles Vice Chairman: Andrew Smith

Minutes of the meeting of Bardwell Parish Council held on Tuesday 1st December 2020, commencing at 7pm, via Zoom video conferencing.

All entering the meeting were advised via an automated message that the meeting was being recorded.

Councillors present:

Cllr David Ruffles; Cllr Andrew Smith (also West Suffolk Councillor); Cllr John Babraff, Cllr Ali Compton; Cllr Peter Sanderson; Cllr Tony Stokes; Cllr Geoff Clough; Suffolk County Cllr Joanna Spicer MBE.

Also present: Pauline Smith, Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer

9 Members of the public. Not all remained for the entire meeting.

The majority left the meeting following the discussion by parish councillors in relation to the Local Plan consultation response

1. **To receive and approve apologies for absence:** None
2. **To receive and approve (if applicable) declarations of pecuniary or non pecuniary interests**
Cllr Smith, ongoing pecuniary interest finance item 7.2 approval of Clerk/RFO salary.
3. **To confirm minutes of the meeting held Tuesday 3 November 2020**
The minutes were 'taken as read' and unanimously approved as an accurate record by those who had been present at the meeting. (Cllr Clough was absent from that meeting)

4. **Public participation session (20 minutes)**

To receive comments and questions from members of the public relating to items included within this agenda. No questions were raised at this point in the meeting.

It was explained that those wishing to comment or raise questions in relation to the West Suffolk Local Plan Consultation (item 10) would be invited to do so immediately prior to that item.

Detailed notes of the questions asked and answers provided re the WS Local Plan Consultation are included within attachment 1.

5. **Report from Suffolk County Councillor, Joanna Spicer MBE**

Low Street Roundells: Cllr Spicer advised that there is no date for implementation. As advised last month, SCC will be carrying out a review of the proposed locations.

Flooding: Work to resolve flooding issues previously carried out at both sites (The Green/vicinity of Bardwell Equestrian Centre) appears to be successful to-date.

Question re Tree Planting: Is it true that Suffolk County Council is doing a tree planting scheme at the moment?

Response: £228,000 has been allocated to tree planting and healing woods. However whilst the headlines have been produced, decisions will not be made until early 2021.

This is not about single tree planting, but hedgerows and woodland. Cllr Spicer would be happy to talk outside of the meeting to anybody who may have ideas or an interest in this project.

(Explanation: Healing Woods are memorial woods to those who have died in Suffolk from Covid-19 - see attachment.)

WS Local Plan: Councillor Spicer explained the circumstances surrounding the inclusion of the School Lane site and potential options should the site be accepted. Due to the extensive discussion relating to this item, details are included with attachment 1.

6. **Report from Ward Councillor, Andrew Smith**

- 6.1 **Covid-19:** Information about lockdown and how it affects the local community is circulated directly to parish councils from a number of sources/organizations and so he would not be repeating the information this evening.

- 6.2 West Suffolk Local Plan:** Please see attachment 1 where detailed information is provided by Cllr Smith together with the questions and answers raised by and given to members of the public during the public participation session.

7. Finance

7.1 Financial report

The financial report had previously been circulated: No questions received. Copy attached.

- 7.2 Invoices for approval:** invoices for payment were unanimously approved: See financial report.

7.3 Budget: To consider and, if agreed, to approve budget proposals for 2021/22

The tax base has reduced, this will adversely impact the precept request.

The various budget proposals, provided/previously circulated by the Clerk/RFO were discussed. It was determined that the precept request will be £15,306 which will ensure that the parish council element of the council tax bill for residents is not increased. This will require a number of changes to the budget and reserves will be utilised.

Councillors agreed that sum currently in the budget to elections should be removed.

Salaries/wages budget will be increased in accordance with the proposal at 1% which equates to Litterpicker: proposed annual increase £7.00 pa; Clerk/RFO proposed annual increase £26.00 pa. (Cllr Clough objected to the proposed increase to salaries: there were no other objections)

The Clerk expressed concern at the suggestion to reduce the training budget explaining that the cost of a councillor's course alone is c.£140 (Current budget figure £250.00)

Resolution: The Clerk will review the budget in accordance with the parish council's requirements and ensure that the precept request submitted is £15,306: 0% increase.

Band D parish element of the council tax bill for 2021/22: £50.74.

Action: Clerk's note: Since the meeting the precept request has been submitted. Copy attached.

Budget re grass cutting in churchyard: Mrs Williamson did not attend the meeting on behalf of the PCC as relevant details had already been provided relating to expenditure, via email and via discussion with the Chairman.

Councillors considered that the grass cutting grant to the church has remained the same £800 for more than 10 years. It was agreed to increase the annual grant to £1,200 with a review period of 5 years.

7.4 Audit 2019/20

The Parish Council noted receipt of the External Audit report from PKF (previously circulated to councillors). No issues of concern were raised and the certificate had been signed and received. Notice of conclusion of audit, Annual Governance & Accountability Return for the year ended 31 March 2020 has been uploaded to the parish council website, together with all requisite documents. (Copies attached).

8. Highways: Any matters of concern for consideration

Quaker Lane: Blocked drain causing flooding during heavy rainfall:

Location: grid on boundary of Trezelles causing flooding in vicinity of access road across to 1 Sunnyside Cottages. This has been the subject of previous investigation and jetting. It is believed possible/likely that the drain under the road may be blocked or broken. Cllr Spicer will, at an appropriate time raise the matter with the flooding team.

Note: Clerk has requested jetting on SCC report-it website. 4/12/20

9. Planning Applications

9.1 To consider new planning application consultation documents received from West Suffolk Council DC/20/1995/HH 8 Legion Rise, Bardwell

Householder planning application - Single storey rear extension

The parish council considered this application and heard from Cllr Clough that: It does not extend

beyond the building line; it is not considered to overlook or be detrimental to the neighbouring property; it will utilise similar building materials to existing and will be in keeping with existing property and those neighbouring it.

Note: Cllr Clough is a near neighbour of the applicant: He has a non pecuniary interest in this application

Resolution: No objections: The parish council supports this application

Action: Clerk to respond to WSC Planning Dept Actioned 3/12/20

9.2 To note planning applications decided since meeting of 3 November: None.

10. West Suffolk Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation: Deadline 22 December 2020

To consider and agree the Parish Council's response.

Discussion document/draft proposals previously circulated.

There are three Bardwell sites included within this consultation document at: Low Street (Street Farm, Knox Lane and School Lane.

Residents representations and questions were made during the public participation session. Those who spoke expressed their views, concerns and reasons opposing the inclusion of sites at Knox Lane and Low Street, the parish council discussed its response to the consultation. The parish council's views have not changed to those previously submitted i.e. it opposes the inclusion of the identified sites at Knox Lane and Low Street, but agrees that, in principle, a small development in School Lane would be acceptable.

Bardwell is classified as a 'Local Service Centre' within the Rural Vision 2031 document. This has a bearing on the criteria used to measure its suitability for growth. The parish council considers that this category is now inappropriate for the facilities available in Bardwell (compared to other villages in this category such as Barningham and Hopton which are also classified as Local Service Centres).

All three of the sites present infrastructure issues including, but not limited to, roads, transport, sewerage, and surface water drains. Whilst our school currently has some placements, others in the area are full. GP practices and healthcare services are oversubscribed.

It is believed that anything other than a small development in Bardwell would quickly overrun what is available, and that excludes other existing or planned development locally. A small development in School Lane would fulfil the needs of Bardwell, without diminishing the current services or adding to traffic problems.

It is believed that Bardwell should be classified as a Type A village, which would ensure that this can be achieved within the structure of the new Local Plan.

Affordable housing was also discussed: Cllr Smith will be providing an update clarifying planning policy at the February meeting.

Action Cllr Smith

The Parish Council's response has been previously circulated

Please also see attachment 1: detailed notes of the discussion, together with questions and concerns raised by members of the public and answers given.

11. Sunnica Project

To receive an update re any additional information requiring attention.

A detailed response will be submitted at the relevant time.

Cllr Stokes is liaising with representatives of affected villages.

12. Bardwell Community Field

12.1 Grant application: The application to Havebury Housing Association has been successful and includes an element towards the cost of the provision of bases and allotments sheds.

The Allotments Association have submitted an application to West Suffolk's Community Chest Fund re bases and sheds: an answer is expected in the New Year.

12.2 Fencing around play area: The fencing around the play area has been installed.

12.3 Work to be progressed: The Country Life Landscapes will be asked to reserve a date to proceed with extending the paths. **Action Cllr Babraff**
Paths: Following installation, it is suggested that the paths will need protection: to be discussed at February meeting.
Wildflower seeds and trees will be planted Feb/March. A resident has offered daffodil bulbs.

12.4 Planning application relating to community field:
A planning application has been submitted for 8 sheds within the allotments area, together with fencing around the allotments and play areas.
(The parish council does not have permitted development rights for the community field: Retrospective permission is required for the fencing: this has been discussed with a planning officer at West Suffolk Council)

Reports

13. Chairman's report - to include

13.1 Update re overgrown area at The Croft (item 6 November meeting refers)
It was noted that an email had been received from one of the residents on the day of the meeting and circulated to all councillors. The resident although present at the meeting did not make further comment.

Resolution: Cllrs Sanderson, Babraff, Clough and Stokes consider that as they have not visited the site personally they do not have a full understanding of the complaint. A site visit on Saturday 5 December, attended by Cllrs Ruffles, Compton, Babraff, Clough, Sanderson and Stokes. (Cllr Smith and the Clerk were not available). It was not considered necessary to inform the residents of the site visit.

13.2 Overgrown hedges (item 16 November meeting refers):
Hedge along Low Street that had previously been raised as a concern has been trimmed back.
Action: outside of meeting to arrange to look at overgrown hedges across the village Chairman

13.3 Remembrance Service attended 8 November:
The Chairman had attended the service which, although different due to the requirements of the current pandemic, had been very well attended.

14. Clerk's report
Defibrillator training will be arranged when feasible. In the meanwhile the Clerk has a DVD which she can loan to Cllr Clough.
(Since the meeting the Clerk has forwarded relevant links to Cllr Clough from the BHF site which provide online training (updated/similar to that on the DVD).

Reports from village/other organisations

15. Suffolk Association of Local Councils *Cllr Stokes*
Cllr Stokes provided details of an additional meeting arranged re board members for SALC:
Cllr Stokes was elected as Chairman for West Suffolk (former St Edmundsbury area)
Maggie Dunn elected as Vice Chair for West Suffolk (former St Edmundsbury area)
Andrew Appleby elected as Vice Chair for West Suffolk (former Forest Heath area)
A vacancy remains for a Chairman of former Forest Heath area.

16. Bardwell Community Speed Watch: *Speed data previously circulated Cllr Compton*
Concerns continue to be expressed. Speeds of 70mph noted early morning and after 10pm.

68mph recorded at 1pm one afternoon and regular speeds of c.40mph.
Cllr Compton will follow up/enquire re suggestion of ANPR cameras although previously she has been informed by the police that this equipment would not be permitted.

- 17. Bardwell Playing Fields Association** *Cllr Sanderson*
MUGA will be reopened 2nd December
- 18. Tithe Barn (Bardwell Village Hall):** Remains closed - Nothing to report *Cllr Smith*
- 19. To receive reports from meetings attended**
4 November Town and Parish Forum *Cllrs Stokes, Smith. Clerk*
The meeting had been poorly supported by parishes.
Ian Gallin had explained the Council's arrangements and involvement during Covid-19
Rachel Mann explained how the council tax base is calculated/assessed
Vince Williams (new in post) spoke about emergency planning and his involvement in promoting and encouraging parish councils to have their own emergency plans.
- 8 November Remembrance Service *Chairman see 12.3*
12 November - West Suffolk Local Plan and Issues *Cllr Sanderson/report previously circulated.*
- 20. Diary dates: None**
- 21. Correspondence**
To consider responses to any correspondence received but not previously circulated dealt with or discussed elsewhere within this agenda: None
- 21.1 Email circulated directly to all councillors from the company Safe Speed** re ANPR cameras: Do councillors consider that this should be 'followed up' by either the parish council or the speed watch team? *copy attached. - Cllr Compton following up - see item 16*
- 22. Questions to the Chair to include** matters for consideration as agenda items for next meeting.
Cllr Babraff expressed his appreciation to the school for circulating the school's newsletter.
- 23. Next Meeting: Tuesday 2 February 2021 via Zoom**

Meeting ended 21.27pm

Issued: P Smith Clerk/RFO
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