

Bardwell Parish Council

Chairman: David Ruffles
bardwell.onesuffolk.net

Vice Chairman: Andrew Smith
bardwellpc@gmail.com

Minutes of a meeting of Bardwell Parish Council held by video conference, on Tuesday 26 May 2020 commencing at 7.00pm

Present

Bardwell Parish Councillors: David Ruffles (Chairman), Andrew Smith (Vice Chairman also Ward Councillor), Ali Compton, John Babraff, Geoff Clough, Peter Sanderson, Tony Stokes
Suffolk County Councillor: Joanna Spicer MBE
Members of the Public: 6
Clerk: Pauline Smith

Note: The Agenda stated that this meeting would be recorded.

As each person was admitted to the meeting, they were automatically notified that the meeting was being recorded.

1. **Apologies and approval of absences:** None
2. **Declarations of interest:** None
3. **To confirm minutes of the meeting held on 3rd March 2020:**
The Minutes were 'taken as read' and unanimously approved.
Action: Chairman - File copy requires signature outside of meeting.

4. Public participation session

It was agreed that members of the public wishing to comment on planning matters (agenda item 8) would be asked to speak at that point.

Mrs Williamson attended the meeting on behalf of the church ref agenda item 10.
For clarity the details have been included at that point within these minutes.

5. To receive report from Suffolk County Councillor, Joanna Spicer MBE

Suffolk County Councillor, Joanna Spicer, has been keeping the Parish Council updated with how the County Council has been working in partnership with the NHS, District Councils and Voluntary Sector to support vulnerable people.
County Council staff (c.4000) are all working from home or are frontline staff; there have been less requirements for road closures due to far fewer cars being on the road, enabling more resurfacing to be carried out.

Highways/Flooding: On the day of the meeting work had commenced at The Green. It is understood that work to resolve flooding along Ixworth Road in the vicinity of the Bardwell Manor Equestrian Centre - installing new pipe work - is scheduled to be carried out in June, following work at the Green.
Resurfacing has been completed from the Spring Road junction through Lankets Grove/ Bardwell Road crossroads.

The Green The Chairman highlighted that the reinstatement of the road following the repairs has been a marvellous job and stated that he had no complaints.

Bardwell School: is not one of those that that has remained open for key workers or special needs.

As Mrs Williamson (Chair of Governors) was present at the meeting, Cllr Spicer asked whether she could provide an update on arrangements for reopening the school: Mrs Williamson outlined the communication process with management, teachers and parents being undertaken in preparation for re-opening the school, and the cautious plans for a phased approach with small groups.

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Double yellow lines Cllr Spicer mentioned that progress is being made on the revised arrangements for double yellow lines outside the school (discussed at a previous meeting). Once in place West Suffolk Council wardens will have the authority to take appropriate action re parking enforcement.

Boundary Commission for England new boundary proposals: Due to Covid-19 it is unlikely that the Boundary Commission will be in a position to consult and implement decisions on any new proposals re local boundary changes in time to be brought into force prior to the May 2021 County Council elections.

The Household Waste Recycling Centre which had been closed under government guidance, has now reopened. It is necessary to book but is working very well.

Virtual Meetings Cllr Spicer has attended c.8 parish council 'Zoom' meetings. The County Council is using Microsoft Teams Meetings that are open to the public, whilst officers of the council often use Skype. People are determined to carry on and Cllr Spicer suggested that should be an opportunity to look very carefully at how SCC remain efficient.

Cllr Smith added that West Suffolk Council is also using Microsoft Teams for its meetings. The first virtual public meeting was the development control committee on the 13th May involving 17 Ward Councillors, 12 Officers, 3 public speakers. The meeting was broadcast live and was watched by 70 people.

6. **To receive report from Ward Councillor Andrew Smith: Report attached for noting.**
See Appendix A: Cllr Smith had nothing to add and no questions were raised.

7. **Chairman's report**

The Chairman highlighted recent positive activity within the village: the Facebook page set up to support the community during covid-19 has been very successful with lots of genuine offers of help and information sharing. There have been very few problems with the page and as well of the more regular names there are many who have not previously been involved; the prescription service to Ixworth and Stanton surgeries benefitting vulnerable residents; the newspaper delivery services - whilst not considered a parish council arrangement - is working well, with papers being delivered early in the morning; the foodbank and book/games library loan at Bardwell Church; as previously mentioned, work to alleviate flooding issues in the vicinity of The Green is in progress.

The Chairman recorded the parish council's condolences to the family of Mrs Rena Cooper from Quaker Lane who sadly died recently (26th March 2020). Mrs Cooper was Clerk to Bardwell Parish Council for many years until 1991.

8. **Planning Applications.** Bardwell Parish Council has been consulted on the following planning applications: To consider the Parish Council's response.

8.1 **Ref. No: DC/20/0714/OUT Street Farm Low Street Bardwell IP31 1AR**

Outline Planning Application (Means of Access to be considered) - 4no. dwellings and associated garages. Representations from 3 members of the public concerned about this proposal were received.

Decision: Object: See appendix C: Response to West Suffolk Council.

Vote: 6 objections In favour: 0

Abstention: 1 Cllr Smith abstained from the vote due to his position as Chairman of the Development Control Committee.

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- 8.2 **DC/20/0731/LB Bell Cottage Church Road Bardwell Bury St Edmunds Suffolk IP31 1AH**
Application for Listed Building Consent - (i) Extension of chimney (ii) replacement of windows (iii) removal of cement renders pointing and non-traditional infill to timber frame and replacement with earth and lime-based, vapor-permeable materials (iv) removal of UPVC and modern painted softwood bargeboards and various window and door surrounds of modern design with replace with painted softwood (v) painted timber canopy over entrance door and (vi) replace plastic rainwater goods with painted cast iron

The Parish Council discussed this proposal and agreed that the works detailed are necessary and appropriate.

Decision: Support (Unanimous decision)

9. **Community Field:** To discuss the water supply beyond the allotments See appendix B
The water installation at the community field is a Field Supply and deemed by Anglian Water to be 'high-risk'. This requires the parish council to adhere to the constraints as imposed by the water regulations, which includes the provision that there should be a percussion tap at the point of supply or to grind the threads off the tap which is what has been done here. Both options are to prevent a hosepipe being connected to the supply. These provisions were clearly explained by the AW inspector during his visit is it to the community field c. 18 months ago re the water installation: The inspector adamant that the regulations must be adhered to, and this information was provided to the parish council.

Concerns were raised that the significant number of young trees are suffering badly from a lack of water and in danger of dying unless water is made available imminently. Although it had been previously agreed and budgeted to extend the water supply provision, some councillors consider that this is an unnecessary cost because after the trees have established - in a few years time - it will be unnecessary to manually water them. *(The agreed plan had been for two supplies - one close to the school fence/play area and the other in the wetland area)*

In the interim period, a bowser could be used or alternatively, as considered most appropriate by some councillors, a hosepipe would be the most appropriate way of managing the situation when necessary during the next few years.

Resolution/Action: It was agreed that Cllr Smith will discuss the situation with Anglian Water to find a way forward that will enable a hosepipe to be used whilst the trees become established.

Update/Outcome: Cllr Smith discussed with, and then submitted, a proposed method statement to Anglian Water to enable the use of a hosepipe for the purpose detailed above. Anglian Water has agreed the method statement: See attached appendix 3

10. **Bardwell Church:** Churchyard maintenance (grass). To consider content of correspondence received from Bardwell Church, previously circulated, re financial assistance.

Churchwarden, Mrs Williamson explained that the church is extremely grateful to all volunteers who assist with churchyard maintenance. She explained that all voluntary work must be pre-authorised by the PCC, following Diocesan guidance.

Current Diocesan guidance does not presently permit volunteer work in the churchyard.

When deciding on work to be carried out by volunteers this is considered alongside the terms of the maintenance contract which the Church holds with its Contractor.

Churchyard grass cutting last year totalled £2,500. However, wildlife considerations (as well as for reasons of economy) have changed the maintenance arrangements for the old churchyard area which is now only cut at the beginning and end of the season, thereby reducing the overall cost to

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c.£2000. If weather conditions are hot and dry this may also reduce the number of cuts required, resulting in a further financial saving. Currently, it is likely that there could be a shortfall of c£900 in the grass cutting budget.

Cllr Babraff's opinion is that a tidy and smart churchyard is appreciated by relatives who visit the graves of loved ones. He, Cllr Ruffles and others are very willing to volunteer their time to ensure that the churchyard is well maintained.

At the present time as well as those tending relatives graves, many people are visiting the church porch to leave donations at the food bank and using the book/games library.

During 'normal' times, as well as those attending the church the footpath through the church yard is well used by residents including parents and children going to and from the school. As well as general churchyard maintenance, grass cutting and strimming, a number of trees need attention.

Bardwell Church is a valid part of the covid-19 response within the village.

As a consequence of covid-19, as well as church services, all fundraising on which the church is heavily reliant, such as the monthly coffee mornings and open gardens event have been cancelled.

The Ward Councillor has provided a grant of £750 towards necessary tree work

The annual grant of £800 towards grasscutting has not been reviewed since it was initially agreed (prior to 2010).

The original agreement was that the annual grant would be matched by Bardwell church.

It is accepted that due to current circumstances the church will not be able to meet this requirement during 2020/21.

Resolution: As previously agreed via email, it was reconfirmed that the annual grant towards grass cutting in the churchyard of £800, normally paid in arrears, is to be paid now.

An additional sum of £360 (equivalent of 2 cuts including strimming) is to be paid immediately.

As previously agreed, the balance of the BEST funding £120.73 is also to be paid to the PCC

Actioned/payments transferred/Clerk.

The Parish Council agreed to

1. Review the 2020/21 funding situation again later in the year (c.August or sooner if the church considers it necessary) to consider providing additional financial assistance towards grasscutting subject to available funds.
2. Review the level of the annual grant when the budget is set for 2021/22

- 11. To consider date for next meeting:** Not yet arranged. This will be determined based on requirements. Councillors will be consulted/notified and details publicised accordingly.

The meeting ended at 8.40pm

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Agenda item 6: Appendix A: Ward Councillor's Report (circulated prior to meeting)

Annual Parish Report – 2020

Covid 19 seems to have dominated our lives since the turn of the year and I would like to use this annual report to provide a brief update to you on how West Suffolk is involved in some of the issues relating to this matter.

Testing

West Suffolk continue to work alongside the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) as well as the Army as they use our car parks in Haverhill and Newmarket for COVID-19 testing by appointment.

Services

Our main priority remains to support our communities and businesses (processing business grants) while keeping the public and staff safe while following Government guidance. We are actively looking at our markets and how they might be reintroduced in a limited way to provide essential food produce. West Suffolk is of course known for its vibrant markets, which will hopefully before too long again help our recovering high streets. But paramount is still the safety of the public, and that the necessary measures can be introduced in a way that is both enforceable and keeps the required social distancing. We are, and will, be working with traders to look at how we might best do this with the capacity we have.

Bin Collection

We intend to reinstate the brown bin service from 1 June. This will include changes to rounds to help make it more efficient and robust to cope with any further reductions in staff. It also reduces mileage and fuel use so is more environmentally friendly. The announcement that the service is being reinstated has so far been well received by the public and we will be contacting subscribers to let them know of the 1 June date and any changes they may see. To compensate existing customers the subscription year will be extended by the period of the suspension.

Meetings

I am glad to say that we held our very first public virtual meeting 10am on 13th May. This was the Development Control Committee meeting, which I Chair. Whilst challenging, not least because individuals, whether supporters or objectors were able to “dial in” and speak on a particular application, it was well received.

We plan to be using virtual meetings to maintain necessary decision making and in doing so remain open, transparent and accessible to our residents as more meetings are broadcast live.

Support for Community

Our helpline to support the most vulnerable people during the coronavirus crisis has received more than 1,000 calls in West Suffolk.

Andrew Smith

Ward Councillor for Bardwell Ward

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Agenda Item 9: Appendix B (circulated prior to meeting)

AWA Water Supply to the Allotments and Community Field

Water Regulations:

The regulations as they apply to our AWA “Field Supply”, and specifically the type of tap and not being able to use a hose, have been reported/discussed in PC meetings.

Background:

Given the constraints imposed upon us by the AWA Water Regulations, and as I briefed the PC, there was still a purpose in proceeding to install additional standpipes because this would have made the job of getting/carrying water to where it was needed less physically onerous. Cllrs should recall that I originally proposed two additional standpipes one near the play equipment and one in the “wetland area” the latter being to enable watering of any new trees/plants in this area when necessary. Pipes would have been laid as far as possible under any paths that Ollie would be constructing. If my memory serves me correctly, Cllrs Sanderson and Babraff suggested alternative arrangements, firstly that there was no necessity for a standpipe in the “wetland area”, and secondly agreeing to an alternative route for the water pipe under the footpath, which has just been constructed, due to concern over any future pipe repairs damaging the hoggin surface, both proposals gained PC support. I believe, that is the last formal decision on this matter at a PC meeting.

Funding:

After extensive negotiations with AWA (including me making direct contact with the CEO) the quoted installation cost for the “Field Supply” was reduced from approx. £7k to approx. £2.4k. Additionally, AWA gave the PC approx. £700 to pay our contractor costs because of an error on their schematic plan, which subsequently came to light i.e. indicating that the point of supply was to be inside the allotments boundary rather than as AWA intended roadside of the ditch.

The installation of the “Field Supply” was funded as follows:-

1. Andrew Smith - West Suffolk Locality budget £1,250
2. Joanna Spicer – SCC Locality budget £500
3. Bardwell PC - £650
4. Additionally, Pauline and I – donated a bespoke standpipe housing c/w hasp and combination lock.

Cllr Andrew Smith

22nd May 2020