

Minutes of the Meeting of Bardwell Parish Council held on Tuesday 7th September 2021, 7pm
Venue: The Tithe Barn Bardwell (Bardwell Village Hall), Up Street, Bardwell IP31 1AA

Present

Councillors: David Ruffles, John Babraff, Ali Compton, Geoff Clough, Peter Sanderson, Andrew Smith (also Ward Councillor), Tony Stokes.

County Councillor Joanna Spicer MBE (part of the meeting)

6 Member of the public (part of the meeting)

Clerk/RFO: Pauline Smith

1. **Apologies for absence:** None

2. **Declarations of interest:**

Cllr Smith: Pecuniary Interest (ongoing) item 10.1 Finance: approval of Clerk/RFO salary - Cllr Smith excluded from voting re approval for this item.

3. **Approval of Minutes** of the meeting held on 6th July 2021: The minutes were approved and signed as a true record by the Chairman.

4. **Public Participation**

Concern was raised about speeding motorists along Quaker Lane, highlighting the dangers faced by pedestrians due to the lack of a footpath.

Response: Cllr Compton has looked into the feasibility of the community speed watch team monitoring this area on a number of occasions but, as has previously been explained, it is not currently possible due to the criteria which must be met to ensure the volunteers operate safely. This includes: specified distances re sight-lines and junctions, ability to locate equipment/signage appropriately.

Speeding through the village is regularly recorded at speeds in excess of 40mph in areas monitored by the VAS (Spring Road and Ixworth Road/Low Street). Speed limit is 30mph.

As previously reported: It is hoped that when the temporary/mobile ANPR (automatic number plate recognition) equipment visit takes place that this will provide irrefutable evidence that can be 'acted upon' by the police. It is not yet known when the visit will take place.

5. Planning Matters: To consider planning application consultation documents received from West Suffolk Council.

5.1 DC/21/15876/EIASCRC Land East of Firsfield, Bardwell, Suffolk.

EIA screening option under Regulation 6 (1) of the Environmental Impact /assessment Regulations 2017 on the matter of whether or not the proposed development is considered that there are likely significant environmental impacts for which an environmental statement would be required - proposed installation of a solar photovoltaic farm, plus ancillary infrastructure and equipment, landscaping and access.

The Estate Director for the Euston Estate attended the meeting and provided a detailed overview of the proposed plans and answered questions raised by councillors and members of the public.

The site covers 95 hectares.

The Estate Director explained that one of the main concerns is mitigation of any potential negative visual impact. Over the past 10 years the hedgerows have been permitted to grow higher and thicker. Where necessary new hedges will be planted and existing gaps filled in, copses of trees and flower rich meadows planted. Sheep will graze beneath and between the panels to keep the grass down with occasional mowing if necessary.

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When operational there will be minimal traffic activity to and from the site, with twice a year visits to clean the panels. The likely life expectancy of the panels is assessed as c.40 years.

Improvements in technology over the last few years now enables the panels to absorb - not reflect - light.

Noise: no noise is emitted from the panels. The inverters make a buzzing sound which is barely audible until close up.

Technological advancements enable the batteries to store excess energy until it is required.

A concern about the numbers and height at which the cameras surrounding the site would be installed and their potential visibility was raised as being significant: The Estate Director considered that the details/height stated were incorrect (too high) and would check.

A formal public consultation will be held prior to the planning application being submitted.

This application is part of an initial process prior to a formal planning application begin required for the land detailed.

The Estate Director offered to host a site visit for councillors to the Honington Solar Farm.

(Additional information circulated to councillors prior to the meeting is attached.)

Resolution: (Action Clerk)

Councillors unanimously agreed that an Environmental Impact Assessment should be required.

Note: Cllr Smith abstained from the vote due to his role as Chairman of the WSC Development Control Committee and also because his property has been identified/named within the application.

5.2 DC/21/1181/HH Brecks Farmhouse, Bowbeck, Bardwell Suffolk IP31 1BA

Householder planning application - a. front porch b. increase pitch to two front table dormer roofs c. single story side extension d. detached single storey annexe (following demolition of existing stable).

5.3 Associated application: DC/21/1182/LB Brecks Farmhouse, Bowbeck, Bardwell IP31 1BA

Application for listed building consent - a. front porch b. increase pitch to two front gable dormer roofs c. single storey side extension d. detached single storey annexe e. demolition of existing stable block f. creation of new access to new kitchen through altered window opening g. re-opening of covered over fireplace h. opening up and reinstatement of doorway to stud partition between existing pantry and kitchen and new stud partition below low beam

Discussion: Comments were raised with regard to the access to the ground floor layout proposed new kitchen - and fire regulations - and also about the proposed addition of a porch to a listed building. However, it was considered that these were matters for the fire officer and conservation officer to determine.

Resolution: (Action Clerk) : No objections

Note: Cllr Smith as an 'immediate' neighbour, abstained from the vote.

To note that the Clerk responded to WSC (under delegated authority) re the following two applications prior to the meeting, confirming that Bardwell Parish Council had no objections to the proposals following circulation of the details to and unanimous responses from Councillors received via email.

5.4 DC/21/1587/TCA St Peter and Paul's Church, Church Road, Bardwell

5.5 DC/21/1552/TCA Bardwell CEVC Primary School, School Lane, Bardwell

6. Report following site visit to School Lane re the potential for a small housing development on land owned by Suffolk County Farms

and submitted to the West Suffolk Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) as part of the Local Plan Process.

Attended by SCC Matthew Lee, Rob Hancock; Suffolk County Cllr Spicer; West Suffolk District Cllr Smith; Bardwell Parish Council Chairman Cllr Ruffles.

Having followed due process and identified that of the sites proposed for potential development, only one of those sites - that at School Lane - is, in the Parish council's view, appropriate for potential small scale development to suite the village needs.

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Andrew Berry has confirmed that Bardwell School is also supportive of development on this site.

At the request of Suffolk County Farms, a site meeting was held on 2nd September to view and aid SCC's understanding of the impact of a small housing development on the land if the application for inclusion within the 2024 local plan is successful.

The stunning views currently enjoyed by residents across the open land from various points were highlighted, together with the amenities provided by the school and community field and the success of the windmill. The impact of additional traffic and parking issues along School Lane could create safety issues and would require resolution; the type of dwellings to meet the needs of residents would need to be carefully considered, for which a housing needs survey may be beneficial.

Rob Hancock (SCC) suggested that he will provide sketches to the parish council as proposals for discussion. It was explained that the pc is keen to explore the inclusion of lifetime bungalows and affordable homes.

Cllr Smith explained that currently, as a local service centre, development in Bardwell is limited to 10 properties per site. Whilst the land at School Lane is not currently within the development boundary, if agreed, the boundary will be extended to encompass the relevant area. However, nothing will happen until at least 2024 when the new plan comes into force.

7. To receive reports from County and District Councillors

7.1 Suffolk County Councillor, Joanna Spicer reported that following the Boundary Commission Review, Bardwell remains in the Blackbourn division and Pakenham has been brought into the Blackbourn division. **Flooding in Low Street/Blocked Drain:** Cllr Spicer explained the correspondence that she has had with SCC in relation to this location. The intention is that this work will be undertaken but as it is not considered a priority currently there is no specified date, but it will continue to be monitored.

Cllr Spicer explained that work to resolve flooding is complex and expensive. SCC is addressing some very serious issues in other locations.

Cllr Spicer will escalate the Low Street issue.

Legion Rise: The poor workmanship at this location will be corrected: No date as yet.

Speeding: Cllr Spicer is currently involved in progressing a complex resolution to reduce speeding through Hepworth. Potentially the eventual outcome may assist in providing a solution for Bardwell.

Whilst there are regular records of a significant number of drivers travelling though the village at speeds in excess of the speed limit, the speeds/numbers are - as the parish council has previously been informed - below the threshold at which the police will take action.

It was suggested that if the police would prosecute several of the speeding drivers this would be a deterrent for others.

It was noted - from the reports - that the highest proportion of speeding occurs in the periods around the start and end of the school day.

Afghan Crisis SCC are already supporting a number of Afghan children and are working with partners to ensure that when the need arises that they are able to offer the necessary support to Afghan refugees.

Cllr Spicer gave her apologies for the October meeting.

7.2 West Suffolk Councillor, Andrew Smith reported on his visit to Bardwell with 2 Case Officers working on the local plan.

They visited the sites submitted within the SHELAA and Cllr Smith reiterated the objections of the Bardwell parish council to the Knox Lane and Low Street sites, and made it absolutely clear that the parish council will only support a small development on the School Lane site. He has reiterated the parish council's opinion that Bardwell should be designated a type A village which could further limit the number of properties that could be built.

8. Highways Matters

Consideration of a policy for responding to complaints re overgrown vegetation/hedges/trees

The Clerk had provided details of a potential draft policy drawn from details used by another parish council. However, councillors considered that was not necessary and that the current policy of a personal approach/two members of the pc visiting householders to request their assistance in maintaining their hedges/trees is sufficient.

Action: Councillors Ruffles and Babraff will visit a resident in Low Street re a hedge which is encroaching on the footpath.

Resolution/Action: Clerk It was agreed that a leaflet providing information about owners' responsibilities for boundary trees/hedges could be included within the welcome pack for new residents.

Cllr Spicer highlighted that SCC will not take action/write letters between March and September - during bird nesting season, unless it is necessary to address a serious safety issue.

The trees/hedge along Low Street adj the field edge where the footpath was installed: There has been a dispute about responsibility for this area of vegetation in the past. It would be beneficial to ascertain responsibility for this location.

Village Handyman: Cllr Ruffles raised the suggestion, as he has done previously, of a village handyman who could be asked to undertake certain jobs on an ad hoc basis.

Resolution: This would have implications for the budget/precept - to be discussed when considering the budget.

9. Chairman's Report

Cllr Ruffles reported on the meeting with PC Andrews-Pearce, attended by himself, Cllrs Compton, Sanderson and Babraff at the Community Field.

PC Andrews-Pearce has a good grasp of village issues and would like to attend a parish council meeting at a future date, when he is available.

Various matters of antisocial behaviour were raised, one of which was in regard to footballers urinating on the community field. He advised that (generally) this is not a matter that would be considered sufficiently serious to follow up.

New waste bins: These are being well used.

Grit Bin: Knox Lane - Details of a grit bin similar to that which has been destroyed were provided to Cllrs and approval was given to order a new one:

When received Cllrs Ruffles and Clough have agreed to install.

(Note: the next day, following the meeting, Cllr Cough visited the site and also spoke to Barry Felton. It was agreed the existing location is the optimum location and therefore the new bin will be installed there.)

Action: Clerk to order

10. Finance

10.1 **Financial report** - See attached: Invoices for payment totalling 507.98 were approved

10.2 **Anglian Water: Direct form for Community Field Water Supply** - Approval was unanimously given for half yearly bills to be paid by DD: Cllrs Ruffles and Stokes signed the DD form

10.3 **Remembrance Service Wreath:** Authorisation for donation of £40.00 (S137) was granted.

11. Community Field:

Sheds Progress Update - See attached

A suggestion was put forward that (a named) alternative person should be asked to quote. *Cllr Smith*

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Additional Trees -100 saplings have been ordered from Woodland Trust *Cllr Sanderson*
Delivery expected during 2nd week of November.
Apple Tree: Childers Delight MM106 to replace dead tree: bare root Ordered - expected Nov/Dec *Clerk*

Reports from village organisations

12. Bardwell Charity Trustees - see attached
13. Bardwell Community Speedwatch - Report from VAS - Spring Road. (copy attached)
14. BPFA - Defibrillator received free of charge from the Football Association. Awaiting cabinet prior to installation. Electrical items PAT testing and fire extinguisher checks have been carried out.
15. Bardwell Village Hall - Bookings are returning. Electrical items PAT testing has been carried out.
16. **2022 The Queen's Platinum Jubilee**
It was resolved to request suggestions from residents, who will also be willing to implement the chosen suggestions. Request for suggestions to be included in BVN and Facebook page.
Action: Chairman advised that he would speak to Toolbox Marketing and ask whether they would be willing to produce promotional poster.
17. **Litter-pick: 2nd October 10am**
Chairman advised that the relevant areas requiring attention are on the outer areas of the village.
Action: Chairman will ask Toolbox Marketing whether they would produce a promotional poster to encourage participation. He will promote on Bardwell Village Hub Facebook site
The Church will provide a charity fundraising breakfast in the Tithe Barn commencing at 9.30am.
18. **Clerk's Report**
The defibrillator pads are close to their expiry date.
Unanimous approval was given to purchase replacements. **Action Clerk**
19. **Correspondence requiring attention, not dealt with elsewhere:** None
20. **Emergency Plan Review:** This is currently undergoing revision by the Clerk.
21. **Quiet Lanes Project:** It was noted that the official Suffolk County Council consultation period has commenced and will end on 13th September 2021.
Formal SCC consultation notices and associated information has been circulated by the Clerk to residents along the proposed routes, Bardwell School, and posted on: the parish council website and notice board for the duration of the consultation period. Notices were also posted at each end of the proposed routes.
22. **Reports by Councillors re other meetings attended**

14th July	Town and Parish Forum Cllrs Smith and Stokes had attended this meeting - held online via Teams
29th July	Suffolk Association of Local Councils AGM Cllr Stokes had attended this meeting during which the indirect consequences of Covid pandemic were discussed and the Warm Handover Scheme Suffolk was described.
27th August	Ixworth PC in association with other neighbouring villages The chairman was due to attend this meeting, which was cancelled: To be rescheduled.
23. **Questions to the Chair: None**
24. **Next Meeting: Tuesday 5th October 2021 at 7pm**
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The meeting ended at 9.40pm