

Chairman: David Ruffles

**Minutes of the meeting of Bardwell Parish Council held on Tuesday 7th December 2021
commencing at 7pm. Venue: The Tithe Barn, Bardwell's Village Hall, Up Street, Bardwell IP31 1AA**

The meeting was attended by:

Parish Councillors: David Ruffles (Chairman), John Babraff, Ali Compton, Peter Sanderson,
Andrew Smith (also Ward Cllr), Tony Stokes

Suffolk County Councillor Joanna Spicer, MBE (for part of at the meeting)

Clerk/RFO: Pauline Smith

No members of the public attended the meeting.

1. **Apologies for absence** were noted from Cllr Clough.
2. **Declarations of interest**
Ongoing pecuniary interests: Cllr Smith in finance item 21: (approval of Clerk's salary payment)
No other interests were declared.
3. **Approval of the minutes** of the meeting held on Tuesday 2nd November 2021.
The minutes, previously circulated were taken 'as read', no amendments were requested. The minutes were therefore unanimously approved and duly signed as an accurate record by the Chairman.
4. **Public participation session:** No members of the public were present.
5. **To receive reports from County and District Councillors**

5.1 Suffolk County Councillor Joanna Spicer

Closed Footbridge across river Black Bourn at Church Meadow: Information relating to the requisite work required and length of time this is expected to take, continues to be awaited.

Temporary permissive footpath along the river, Church Road (Church Meadow) side of bridge: Confirmation is awaited from the Rights of Way team with regards to whether or not agreement has been reached with the land owner to implement a temporary permissive footpath within Church Meadow whilst the footbridge is out of commission. The existing right of way is solely along the designated footpath from Church Road across Church Meadow to the footbridge.

The Chairman believes, having had a conversation with the landowner, that permission will be granted for a specific alternative temporary permissive footpath.

MP Matthew Hancock had briefly visited Bardwell on Friday 26th November, as part of a planned visit to meet with a number of his constituents across the Ward. The Chairman met with him (together with Suffolk County Cllr Spicer and Ward Cllr Andrew Smith, at the Community Field where he was appraised of progress, and whilst Mr Hancock did not have time to visit the playing field he was appraised of the success of the Pavilion/Grumpy Goat.

Cllr Spicer advised that the changes to the speed limit/buffer zone along the A143 at Stanton are progressing.

5.2 Ward Councillor Andrew Smith

West Suffolk Local Plan Review

Cllr Smith explained that West Suffolk need to make provision for approximately 3000 homes.

He has been working hard in support of Bardwell and Sapiston's submissions and preferences and considers that progress has been made. There is no suitable available land for development in Barnham due to presence of Stone Curlew nesting sites.

Next year (likely mid March 2022) there will be an opportunity to respond to the next West Suffolk Local Plan consultation, on the 'preferred' sites.

If the consultation outcome confirms the School Lane site is suitable for development then it may be possible to propose some form of public parking. However, the actual development is some years away. It is thought unlikely that Suffolk County Council would agree to fund a public car park: a more realistic alternative may be to suggest a small number of lay-bys to be constructed along School Lane in association with a footpath.

Parking enforcement outside Bardwell School: WSC are not currently able to formally carry out parking enforcement at Bardwell Primary school because the requisite signage has not been installed by Suffolk County Council: This is being progressed with SCC. (See attached information)

6. Highways: Matters for consideration

6.1 Ixworth Thorpe Road: To determine whether to proceed with an application to SCC for the 30mph limit to be extended from Church Road along Ixworth Thorpe Road to beyond Place Farm.

The costs of an application would be the responsibility of the parish council - see attached details.

It was agreed that an application to extend the limit as proposed would be unlikely to succeed due to the road not meeting the necessary criteria. In addition, even if it was successful, police enforcement would be unlikely. The suggestion of a 40mph buffer zone would not sufficiently address the concerns along the prior section of road and therefore that suggestion was dismissed.

Road classification: The resident has suggested that the road - currently classified U - should be reclassified as C and is awaiting a response from Suffolk County Council.

The speed watch team is not able to carry out monitoring along Ixworth Thorpe Road.

Councillor Spicer suggested that she would be prepared to pay for a traffic counter/survey to be carried out during late spring 2022, in order to obtain factual evidence: Councillors considered that this would be an appropriate action. Following on from this, if appropriate, slow markings painted on the road and other potential traffic calming measures could be considered.

It is was agreed in principle that when applications open for the next round of Quiet Lane designations, that an application should be submitted for Ixworth Thorpe Road. In the meanwhile an expression of interest has already been submitted to ensure that Bardwell Parish Council is notified when applications open. There is not currently a time frame for this.

Resolutions:

1. The parish council will not submit an application to extend the 30mph limit due to the costs (circa £1350 - £1500), because it is unlikely to succeed.
2. Traffic counter/monitoring to be carried out late spring 2022 to establish factual evidence, with the potential for 'slow' road markings if then considered appropriate.
3. Quiet Lanes application to be submitted when feasible.

6.2 Suffolk County Council: Lorry Route Plan review. To consider parish council's response. This item was omitted at the meeting: Action to be determined outside of meeting due to deadline.

6.3 Low Street, blocked drain - update

Action awaited: The work is shown under report 340768 which is on a drainage matrix: investigation is to be carried out but there is no scheduled date at this time. Works are being carried out in order of priority.

The resident at Hill House has advised that he is using sandbags to protect his property.

(10.12.21 Since the meeting it is noted that work is to be carried out at this location by SCC on 15th December. It is unknown at this time whether this will be an investigation or work to resolve the issues)

6.4 School Lane Parking Concerns - See attached response from School

Parish Councillors appreciated the detailed response received. An additional suggestion was proposed, ie that if/when school vehicles are unable to park in the Tilian House car park, perhaps they could park in the public car parking spaces in front of the car park for 25-43 School Lane, as there is frequently space here during the day.

See also 5.2 Ward Cllrs report penultimate paragraph.

It was noted that a previously agreed Traffic Management Order includes for double yellow lines to be installed in the location of, and to the same extent as, the previous school markings/zigzags, which have been removed.

Action: Cllr Spicer to enquire why the yellow lines, along with the necessary signage to enable enforcement has not been implemented. *(8.12.21 Since the meeting a response has been received. See attached)*

Resolution: Clerk to respond with the suggestion of utilising the public car parking spaces as detailed above.

7. **Grit bin - The Croft/Junction with Quaker Lane:** To consider request from resident that a grit bin be installed at this location.
It was noted that there is another bin a short distance away on the opposite side of Quaker Lane.
Prior to installing a grit bin the parish council would be required to submit an application form to SCC - details attached.

Resolution: The parish council does consider that this request is financially or practically viable and therefore does not support the request.

8. **Planning Application Consultations for parish council consideration/opinion**

8.1 DC/21/2278/TCA - Beech Farm, the Green, Bardwell IP31 1AW

Trees in a conservation area notification: a. two Sycamore crown lift to five metres, b/ one Conifer: fell;
c. one Lime pollard at 5 metres

Resolution: Parish Council response - No objection

9. **Planning Application decisions by the planning authority. To note:**

DC/21/1996/HH: Frimley House Quaker Lane – single storey rear extension: Approved

DC/21/1617/FUL: The Cottage, Up Street, Bardwell – one dwelling: Refused

DC/21/1618/LB: The Cottage, Up Street, Bardwell – application for listed building consent – demolition of existing building: Approve

10. **Play equipment on Community Field: To consider Chairman's proposal** that the asset of, and responsibility for, the play equipment on the community field should be transferred from the Bardwell Playing Fields Association to Bardwell Parish Council. (see attached details).

Cllr Stokes proposed that the parish council should require an independent inspection and that rectification of faults should be carried out prior to the transfer taking place.

The Clerk provided advice obtained from the Council's insurance company which had detailed that before any agreement to take on the play area and equipment is confirmed, it is recommended that a thorough safety inspection is carried out by an independent company such as RoSPA for their professional advices which should be followed.

It was further explained that, in the event of an incident requiring legal representation, unless DAS were satisfied, having carried out a detailed investigation, that there was a high probability of success in defending the claim, that they would not take it on. Matters that would be detrimental to the parish council's case would include where it has failed to take appropriate action to rectify a known issue; equipment which fails to adhere to the necessary standards.

Cllr Sanderson, as Chairman of the BPFA, advised that following the installation of the play equipment there was a post installation report to say that the installation was compliant. An independent annual inspection is carried out by the Play Inspection Company (no cost). The monthly inspections were initially carried out by RoSPA (chargeable), but are now carried out by a qualified inspector from West Suffolk Council (free of charge).

Discrepancies between the annual report and the monthly reports were highlighted, along with a number of outstanding issues particularly in relation to the roundabout which is identified within the annual report as being non-compliant. A detailed discussion about the roundabout ensued: A previous attempt to rectify the problem of the taper due to ground not being level was unsuccessful. **It was agreed**/is believed that an alternative and satisfactory way forward to resolve the issue does exist, but before going to the expense of implementing the work that it would be appropriate to discuss the suggested method with Wicksteed, as the manufacture of the roundabout.

It was agreed that the majority of the outstanding items identified within the reports are minor and can be easily rectified at minimum cost.

With regard to the nails being used as bird guard on top of the swings: as well as the potential for harm if one or more of the nails became loose, there is the potential issue that the guarantee may have been invalidated. Cllr Stokes described alternative solutions - none of which are expensive and are known to have been effective elsewhere. **It was agreed** to replace nails with an alternative solution.

The exceptional work and valuable time given by the BPFA and other volunteers to dismantling, refurbishing and installing the generously donated pre-used play equipment during 2016/17 is not underestimated and is greatly appreciated. Likewise, subsequent maintenance and repair work to the play area has been carried out by the BPFA and volunteers, which has enabled costs to be kept to a minimum.

The pre-used play equipment is from the former USAF housing area in Stanton (precise age of equipment unknown).

The swings were purchased from/installed by Fenland Leisure Products.

The parish council is obliged to ensure that prior to the transfer of this significant asset, that it has carried out the necessary due diligence.

Following detailed discussion it was resolved that

The play equipment will be transferred from the Bardwell Playing Fields Association to Bardwell Parish Council (date to be agreed) subject to an independent report by Wicksteed and actions being followed up to rectify all faults.

The Parish Council will pay the costs of the Wicksteed Inspection costs of £65.00 plus vat.

11. The Queen's Jubilee: To review progress to date and decide further actions required.

No progress has been made regarding the previously proposed suggestion of a concert in the church.

It is expected that Bardwell school will be participating on stage during Cars on The Green, but there is no information detailing what this will entail.

12. Chairman's report

The Chairman had laid the wreath on behalf of Bardwell Parish Council at the Remembrance service at Bardwell Church, which was very well attended.

13. Police report

PC Andrews-Pearce was unable to attend the meeting but advised that he would

task the proactive Kestrel team to come to the village to carry patrols and checks. They are a western area resource so cover a large area. The local SNT officers at Bury St Edmunds have a sizeable workload and patrol of the village by them is less likely. PC Andrews-Lee will continue to come to the village as and when he can. He advises that the community report ASB (antisocial behaviour) directly to the Constabulary on 101, or online (he suggests that this is probably the easier option).

Cllr Sanderson reported police presence (7 December) in the village at four locations during the day.

Cllr Stokes reported that there has been significant police presence with dogs and vehicles during the year across various areas of farmland.

Reports from organisations on which there is parish council representation:

14. Bardwell Charity Trustees: No report
15. Bardwell Playing Fields Association: The fireworks display was extremely successful.
16. Bardwell Speed Watch: No sessions have been during November, due to adverse weather conditions and restricted availability of volunteers.

17. Bardwell Tithe Barn/Village Hall: No report
18. Bardwell Village News: Changes to editorial team
Tim Cavell, editor of BVN for many years, has previously advised that he would be relinquishing this voluntary position, which he has now done. Ali Compton, one of the previous deputy editors has taken over the roll with effect from the December 2021 issue.

Parish councillors are greatly appreciative of Tim's contribution to this role throughout the years and have organised a collection between themselves in order to provide a thank you gift. A copy of the thank you letter will also be submitted to the next issue of BVN (February).

Action: Clerk to write letter/Chairman to sign

Action: Cllr Babraff to organise gift.

19. **Tree Wardens:** It was noted that following the decision at the November meeting, Sue Grey and Peter Newson were invited to take on this role jointly and that both have kindly agreed to do so.

20. **Community Field; Any matters for consideration**

Trees: Cllrs Sanderson and Babraff have planted circa 200 additional trees on the mounds.

The dead apple tree in the community orchard has been replaced (same cultivar/variety).

Beam Lift: Non compliance -

The clerk is communicating the FLP - who manufactured/supplied the equipment. It is understood that as a consequence of this issue the beam lift is no longer sold by FLP. FLP have tried to resolve the issue elsewhere, but the resolution to the initial problem resulted in creating a different problem.

Cllr Stokes has proposed a potential resolution and will forward the details to the Clerk.

The Clerk is currently awaiting a call back and further information from FLP.

21. **Finance**

- 21.1 **Payments for authorisation :** previously circulated totalling £855.09 were approved.

Bank reconciliation, as at 6/12/21 previously circulated, agreed. (copy attached).

This does not include authorised payments (21.1) which are scheduled for payment on 8th December, following approval at this meeting.

- 21.2 **Budget Proposals:** Councillors considered the proposals submitted, but determined that the precept must not be increased for the forthcoming financial year. Realistically, it is not feasible to retain the budget figures at the same level as 2020/21 which will also include additional costs related to the transfer of the play area to the parish council. It was suggested that the element relating to election expenses should be removed (£400).

Resolution: Councillors determined that reserves should be utilised to ensure that the band D figure remains the same as 2021/22 ie £50.74. This is also the same figure as 2020/21.

Action: Clerk to review and amend the figures to accord with Cllrs' decision that the precept request/band D equivalent should remain at £50.74.

21.3 **£137 donations:**

Donations to 8 organisations were approved at the November meeting.

The Clerk/RFO had realised that a previous request by AF Association had been overlooked and so had delayed the payments until this was resolved.

It was noted that only 7 donations had been made during 2020/21 as a result of one of the intended charities no longer operating, therefore there had been an underspend of £50.00 against the agreed budget.

Resolution It was agreed to provide a donation to AF Association of £50.00 in addition to those already agreed.

- 22. Clerk's report :** No additional matters to report
- 23. Correspondence for consideration not previously circulated.**
Anglian Water: Received via email 7/12/21 and circulated information/posters for vulnerable residents and those with difficulties paying bills: Information posters to be included in Bardwell Village News, social media, noticeboard.
- 24. Future meetings** (other than parish council meetings)
West Suffolk Town and Parish Forum: 9th February 2022 6pm - on-line
9th November 2022 6pm
- 25. Questions/comments to the Chair**
- i. Cllr Stokes thanked all Councillors for the final decision and agreement to actions to be taken in relation to the transfer of the play equipment.
 - ii. Suffolk Association of Local Councils: Cllr Stokes sadly informed Cllrs of the death of David Wheeler, Chairman of Freckenham Parish Council and former SALC area Chairman for the St Edmundsbury area parish councils.
 - iii. Asset register: Agenda item requested for February meeting to resolve a query regarding the inclusion of the new pavilion within the parish council's asset register.
- 26. Next Meeting: Tuesday 1st February 2022. 7pm**
Venue: The Tithe Barn, Bardwell's Village Hall, Up Street, Bardwell IP31 1AA