

Bardwell Parish Council

Chairman David Ruffles

Draft Minutes of the Meeting of Bardwell Parish Council held on
Tuesday 4th October 2022, commencing at 7pm.
Venue: The Tithe Barn, Bardwell Village Hall, Up Street, Bardwell IP31 1AA

The meeting was recorded.

Councillors in attendance:

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

Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer: Pauline Smith

Members of the Public: 7

Prior to the commencement of the meeting, the Chairman read the letter of condolence sent to HM King Charles III following the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, all present were invited to stand and a minute's silence was observed.

1. **Apologies for absence:** None.
2. **To receive declarations of Interest** relating to items on the agenda.
One ongoing declaration of interest was received from Cllr Smith in relation to an item within agenda item 14 re Clerk's salary approval.
3. **To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 6th September 2022** (previously circulated).
The minutes were taken as read and approved, and signed as an accurate record by the Chairman.
4. **Public participation session**
 - 4.i A resident raised detailed concerns about the ongoing situation of the vehicle recovery business at a premises on The Green (Mallard View next door to Cleveland House) and the detrimental impact on the surrounding area. They requested that the parish council take action to bring the issue to the attention of the relevant authorities.
Response: This issue has been previously discussed and following the September meeting an enquiry was submitted to West Suffolk Council: a response is awaited.
 - 4.ii **Fireworks:** Serious concerns were received about a fireworks display planned to be held at the Bardwell Playing Field (item 14): Last year's display had caused extreme distress to animals at the neighbouring Manor Farm Equine business: details can be read in the attached letters.
Those present suggested alternative solutions, which could enable the event to go ahead whilst not causing distress to others.
 1. **To move the event** to a more appropriate location within the village for example the Church Field where Bardfest is held; the owner/representative from Manor Farm Equine also suggested that he has land that could be utilised and
 2. **To use 'silent' fireworks**, which are apparently used with success at other displays. Quiet fireworks may be a better description as they are not fully silent. However, the reduction of chemicals which cause the explosive sound is reduced to a level that enables the brilliant colours and patterns to be enjoyed with a whooshing sound whilst removing the excessive explosive sound which causes such distress to animals.
Objections were raised about the potential of public money being used to fund a free

fireworks display that whilst it is being held in the village, is not specifically for the village. The BSCC's business, The Grumpy Goat, within the pavilion would be the beneficiary: selling drinks food and drinks to those who attend.

The owner/representative of Manor Farm Equestrian Centre has discussed his concerns and made suggestions for an alternative location/silent fireworks with the Chairman of the BPFA, who is also a member of the BSCC. He has since also submitted the attached correspondence directly to the Chairman of BSCC.

Cllr Sanderson advised that whilst exact numbers were not known, it was estimated that last year's event (postponed from Halloween October 2020 due to ongoing covid restrictions at the time) had been greatly enjoyed by 400-500 attendees.

The organisers of that event were David Ruffles in a private capacity, together with the BPFA. The application for funding (£400) had been submitted to the parish council by BPFA.

The distress caused to the animals - despite the owners having taken every possible action to mitigate potential issues prior to/during the event - was subsequently brought to the organisers' attention following the 2021 event. The owners of the equine business, believing that they had received sufficient assurances that this was a 'one-off' event decided against pursuing matters further.

During last year's event some parents ensured that their children's ears were protected, although not all. It was confirmed by two councillors who were present and helping in a private capacity that they had been surprised at the loudness of the fireworks.

Item 14. Was moved up the agenda to be determined at this point:

Request from Bardwell Sports and Community Club BPFA for financial support/grant towards fireworks display: To consider response.

Note: This item had been incorrectly published on the agenda as being a request from BPFA: The request has been submitted by Stephen Larder, as Chairman of Bardwell Sports and Community Club. No precise details or financial information was provided.

The intention to hold the event was noted within the BPFA report at the September parish council meeting.

In response to a question during the public session, Cllr Sanderson explained that the parish council has a rule that no village organisation may submit a grant request in 2 consecutive years. Therefore, as the grant request was submitted by BPFA for the 2021 event, it could not do so again during 2022. Hence the request being submitted by BSCC.

The parish council does not have the power to prevent the BSCC (or BPFA) from holding the fireworks event.

When agreeing to provide a grant towards the previous event, the majority of councillors had understood this to be a one-off grant due to the special circumstances arising from covid and that there would not be any further request for funding for a similar future event.

It was noted that Stanton Parish Council puts on an annual fireworks display (as did Honington and Sapiston until this year), however, those attending are required to pay to enter the event/tickets are sold in advance.

There were many people in attendance last year who derived great enjoyment from the event, and a suggestion was made that it would be disappointing if the event, that was enjoyed by so many children last year, was not reprised. However, from an alternative point of view, it was suggested that if the children were given the opportunity to witness the resulting distress caused to the animals they would likely understand and accept the reasoning.

Some councillors expressed serious concerns about the issues that had been described and hope that if the event does go ahead that it does so in consultation with those who are/have been affected by the fireworks and that mutually acceptable arrangements can be agreed.

It was agreed that an event with silent/quiet fireworks in an appropriate location would be acceptable, however, this is not within the parish council's power to determine.

The view was strongly expressed by a number of councillors that particularly in these times of financial hardship and worry for so many people, a grant towards a fireworks display is not an appropriate use of parish council (public) funds.

Following the detailed discussion

Cllr Smith proposed: That the request for financial assistance by BSCC towards a fireworks display should be refused.

Seconded: Cllr Stokes

A recorded vote was requested by Cllr Smith.

Six Cllrs voted in support of the proposal:

Cllr Ruffles

Cllr Babraff

Cllr Clough

Cllr Compton

Cllr Smith

Cllr Stokes

One Cllr voted against the proposal: Cllr Sanderson

Resolution: The request for financial assistance towards the fireworks display was refused.

5. To receive reports from District and County Councillors

5.1 County Councillor Joanna Spicer congratulated Bardwell School for receiving a Good Ofsted report.

Bird flu: Three local outbreaks have been recorded. One at a commercial premises in Fakenham Magna resulted in 39,000 birds being culled. Another outbreak has been recorded in Honington.

There is a new community highways engineer for Bardwell, who has been well briefed about the local issues in Quaker Lane and Legion Rise. Church Road ditch: he considers that an additional 2 safety markers are required. *(Note: since the meeting the safety markers have been installed.)*

The 'rodding work' carried out in Low Street/Church Road has been effective so far, (this area is now included as part of a larger plan of works), but hopefully the work carried out will suffice in the meanwhile.

Closed bridge over the river at Church Field: This work has not yet been prioritized. If the situation remains unchanged by the November meeting, Cllr Spicer will discuss how the situation can be progressed.

Knox Lane: The Chairman raised the poor state of the road surface: Cllr Spicer will follow up. Cllr Spicer advised that every road is checked annually with a machine.

Overhanging hedge: adj Low Street/Addison's Farms field: the Chairman explained that several Low Street residents had been maintaining the hedge for a while but it is not their responsibility: brambles etc which grow rapidly over the footpath. He has contacted SCC who have attended site but deemed no work necessary: they have said that they will monitor the location.

5.2 District Cllr Andrew Smith

Bardwell Solar Farm: The decision is still somewhat off whilst awaiting the outcome of specific unresolved matters relating to Archaeology, Ecology, and Highways.

Local Plan: The first meeting of the WSC local plan working group has taken place.

Glassfield Road: The matter is now in the hands of the WSC solicitors to consider the implications of the injunction.

Resolution: It was resolved that 1. Cllr Smith will continue to have a watching brief;
2. The matter is in the hands of solicitors, there is nothing further that the parish council can do except to await the outcome and advice from WSC, via the District Cllr.

6. Cost of Living Support for Residents.

Cllr Spicer referred to the information issued by Suffolk public sector leaders for residents. It was agreed that including information in Bardwell Village News is an appropriate way to help to 'signpost' people to relevant support.

7. Chairman's Report

Tim Cavell: The Chairman sadly reported on the recent death of Tim Cavell, which has come so soon after the loss of his wife, Jan. Tim, who had been the editor of Bardwell Village News for many years will be greatly missed.

Crime: Suspicious activity noted in and around the vicinity of the community field car park and also in the church yard has been reported to the police.

Action : Chairman to contact Bardwell's Community Police Officer to discuss the parish council's concerns.

8. Highways matters for consideration: Dealt with at 5.1

9. Planning Application received from West Suffolk Council for consideration and response.

9.1 New applications for consideration received after the agenda had been issued:

- a. DC/22/1578/ADV Bardwell Playing Field: Signage – See attached. This will be included within November agenda. Received too late for consideration on this agenda.
- b. DC/22/1731/HH The Warren, School Lane – see attached. This will be included within November agenda. Received too late for consideration on this agenda.
- c. DC/22/1698/TCA Trezelles, Quaker Lane, Bardwell: No objections
(Note Cllr Smith abstains from planning application votes as he is Chairman of the Development Control Committee.)

9.2 **Planning Applications received and responded to since September meeting.**
DC/22/1569/TCA : Bardwell Primary School : **See attached.**
Response submitted No objections raised. Bardwell Parish Council concurs with the response from the WSC Tree Officer and would like an appropriate replacement tree planted.

9.3 **To note: Planning Application decisions by WSC since September meeting:** None

9.4 **Other Planning Matters**

Enquiries were submitted to WSC following the September meeting relating to

a. Land and workshop at Mallard View (next door to Cleveland House)

An acknowledgement has been received – no further information available.

It was noted that there appears to have been some action taken to remove some vehicles and it is understood that the Charity Trustees have been providing some assistance.

In response to a question from the owner of Mallard View who was present at the meeting, the Chairman explained that the complaints relate to the unsightly view caused by the vehicles on the site.

b. Glassfield Road: See 5.2

10. Financial Report

10.1 Various payments were approved totalling: £1,619.90 See attached

10.2 Budget to date: The budget is on target. See attached.

10.3 Annual Audit Report 2021/22: To receive the annual audit report from PKF Littlejohn.

The annual audit report was received and comments noted.

The Clerk/RFO explained that following a query from PKF relating to the precept figure it was realised that this had incorrectly included the Local Council Tax Support grant of £185.00 which had been consolidated within the precept figure from WSC. This sum was from the Government and therefore should have been accounted for separately within 'other income' (box 3).

The Clerk/RFO requested, and was granted, permission to amend the figures. Having done this, and with the amendment signed by the RFO and Chairman the amended documents were returned to PKF, the AGAR was then signed off without penalties.

The requisite documents were received back on 27th September 2022; posted on the website and notice board on 28th September 2022.

The External Auditor report states:

On the basis of our review Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with Proper Practices and no matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met. Dated 26/09/22

10.4 **Budget 2023/24**

Councillors were asked to consider requirements for inclusion in draft budget to be presented to the November meeting.

None standard items potentially requiring funding highlighted by the Clerk/RFO include the Coronation of King Charles III. No other comments were received.

11. **Emergency Plan:** Ongoing/Clerk

12. **Clerk's Report:** None

- 13. Community Field:** Update and any matters for consideration
7/8 people had participated in the workparty to improve the mound.
Felton's landscapes have carried out a good job in the woodland area.
The trees need 'tidying up'. Substantial tree stakes (x24) and straps are required at a cost of c.125 +vat: Purchase approved/**Action** Clerk to order.
Rubber 'stop' required for gate into play area. **Action** Cllr Sanderson to obtain
Tree stakes (x25) and protectors for small whips 25 **Action** Clerk to order.
- 14. Request from BPPFA for financial support grant towards fireworks display:** To consider response.
No precise details/financial information provided.
Resolution: Request refused.
This item was considered following the public participation section, see item 4.ii
- 15. Reports from parish council representatives to village organisations.**
- 15.1 Bardwell Charity Trustees**
The Trustees are waiting for UKPN to attend with the tree surgeons to remove the dead Willow near to Booty Hall. Having waited a long time for this event to take place, so that they could safely plant their commemorative Oak, the Trustees have been told by the West Suffolk Tree Officer that the Willow should be replaced with a Black Poplar.
The alternative plan for the Oak is to plant it in the gap created by Mike Allum's fallen Willow and this will be organised shortly.
- 15.2 Bardwell Playing Fields Association**
Retrospective planning application for signage has been registered by West Suffolk Council Planning, and will be considered on the November agenda.
- 15.3 Bardwell Speed Watch**
The ANPR project camera is currently installed in Spring Road. It is hoped to put Bardwell's own speed indicator equipment back in situ towards the end of October
- 15.4 Bardwell Village Hall Management Committee (Tithe Barn)**
The committee, will be presenting the proposed plans for the refurbishment to the owners, Bardwell PCC, on 12th October. The committee will then present the plans to the parish council. In addition, there will also be a community consultation.

It was resolved that the November meeting parish council will commence at 6.30pm to enable the plans to be presented to the parish council, leading into the ordinary parish council meeting at 7pm.

Common Ground Theatre Company will be performing 'The Raven' by Edgar Allan Poe on Thursday 6th October.
- 15.5 Suffolk Association of Local Councils**
Cllr Stokes had attended the SALC AGM (video conference). The key speaker was Terry Waite and a recording of his presentation will hopefully be available soon.
Terry Waite is a champion for housing and has been distressed about the amount of farmland being utilised for housing developments for profit instead benefiting those in need. Winners of the Suffolk Community Awards were announced and included: 'Quiet Lanes', and Honington and Sapiston parish council who won an award for 'The most active village'.

16. Questions to the Chair

1st October: The capacity audience enjoyed an excellent concert of Jazz Music performed by Chris Ingham and Joanna Eden at Bardwell Church.

This was a fundraising event organised by the Friends of Bardwell Church.

Bardwell School Ofsted Report: Cllr Babraff congratulated the school on having achieved a 'Good' report.

17. Next Meeting: Tuesday 1st November 2022, commencing at 6.30pm.

The meeting ended at 9.40pm

P Smith, Clerk

01359 221934 bardwellpc@gmail.com

www.bardwell.onesuffolk.net