

## Bardwell Parish Council

Chair: David Ruffles. Vice Chair: Margaret Berrill

DRAFT Minutes of the Meeting of Bardwell Parish Council held on  
Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> July 2023, commencing at 7.00pm

Venue: The Tithe Barn, Bardwell Village Hall, Up Street, Bardwell IP31 1AA

In attendance: Councillors: David Ruffles (Chair), Margaret Berrill (Vice Chair), Mike Allum, Karl Ives, Andrew Smith (also West Suffolk District Councillor), Karen Witton, County Cllr Joanna Spicer.

Clerk/RFO: Pauline Smith. Members of the Public: 8

### 1. Apologies

- 1.1 To receive apologies for absence: Lenka Lelakova
- 1.2 To consent to accept apologies received: Approved – Work related absence.

### 2. Declarations of Interests

- 2.1 To receive and approve declarations of disposable pecuniary interests, other registrable interest and non-registrable interests as detailed in Appendix B of the LGA Model Code of Conduct.  
*Ongoing declaration received: 1. Cllr Smith: Pecuniary interest ref Finance: clerk's salary*
- 2.2 To consider requests, not already received and determined, for dispensations relating to matters on this agenda: None

### 3. To Approve minutes of Meetings

- 3.1 To Approve the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held 6th June 2023  
The Minutes were approved and signed as an accurate record by the Chair.
- 3.2 To Approve Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting (AGAR) held on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2023  
The Minutes were approved and signed as an accurate record by the Chair.

### 4. Public Participation Session

To receive questions and comments from members of the public relating to items on this agenda.

Mallard View: Neighbours concerns - details included at item 5

Quaker Lane/Havebury land: Update from residents see item 6

Other matters: A resident raised concerns about:

the Highway in front of Church House (previously raised: will be dealt with when drainage work is carried out);

Grips beyond Blackwater Farm/over the bridge need clearing. (Reported by Chair: 411345)

**Grass cutting complaint: Response** - Grass is cut on a 3-week schedule. Weather conditions have resulted in strong growth of vegetation; there is a balance to be met between the expectations of residents who want to see all grass kept short and those who prefer to let it grow longer for environmental reasons/benefits.

Where vegetation is impeding visibility (causing a danger) at junctions, this should be reported to SCC, who will take appropriate action.

**Footpaths:** Grass has been allowed to grow over footpath from Church Road to closed bridge and the hedge on other side of bridge to Ixworth Thorpe Road is encroaching onto footpath. **Response** - when the new bridge is installed, the parish council will review the footpaths and take appropriate action if necessary.

**5. Report from West Suffolk District Councillor, Andrew Smith**

Mallard View planning issues (update) including the recent installation of gates.

*(Discussed during the public participation session):*

Ongoing issues have been raised by the neighbours of Mallard view via the Chair who has passed the information to Cllr Smith in his role as West Suffolk Councillor.

Cllr Smith contacted WSC Enforcement Officer for an update and has been advised that a site visit is scheduled for Monday 24<sup>th</sup> July.

The latest issues raised relate to gates which appear to be inappropriate and detrimental to the Conservation Area together with two outbuildings.

The neighbours also raised other matters which are not in the jurisdiction of either West Suffolk Council or the Parish Council regarding the electricity and water supplies.

The residents accepted Cllr Smith's offer to contact UK Power on their behalf to try to establish an appropriate contact.

The neighbours continue to be frustrated at the length of time that it is taking for any enforcement action to be taken and the fact that a vehicle recovery business is being operated from the address with activity at all hours.

Cllr Smith advised that the Enforcement Officer is working diligently to ensure that the matter is dealt with properly.

Enforcement Officers have between 150 –200 active cases covering West Suffolk Council's area. It is therefore inevitable that this will take time to resolve. In the meanwhile, it is understood that - in accordance with the enforcement action already carried out - construction work on the building is in abeyance.

**6. Havebury Land, Quaker Lane – update (see attached).**

*(This was discussed during the public participation session.)*

Residents are satisfied with the repairs carried out as an interim measure by Havebury, which were required to satisfy immediate health and safety concerns.

Havebury are reviewing options including suggestions provided by residents for a permanent solution with the intention of attending the September parish council meeting to present an update.

It was disappointing to note that an Amazon driver had damaged a section of the edging. A resident has carried out a repair and temporary signage has been made advising that access is for residents only.

Cllr Smith has spoken to Havebury requesting formal signage.

Residents have been asked to inform Havebury if any future damage occurs.

The residents expressed their appreciation for the parish council's support.

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

**Double Yellow Lines in School Lane:** Not yet implemented

Cllr Spicer asked to be reminded of names originally involved (Actioned Clerk)

*Details sent:* George Firth, David Chenery, David Stiff. More recent involvement (March 2023) Andy Moore Community Highways Engineer has been at location marking up.

**8. Highways Matters for consideration**

Updates relating to issues discussed during June meeting are included in information pack. (previously circulated)

9. **Traffic Calming** – deferred from previous meetings  
**To consider whether suggestions such as 20mph zones or village entrance gates would be appropriate.**

Cllr Spicer explained the constraints of 20mph zones, which could work in the centre of the village, would initially require traffic counters on all four roads into the village prior to submitting an application at a cost of c. £1200 (£300 each). In the event of a successful application the costs would be in the £thousands due to legal orders required, signage, and if objection were submitted there would also be the costs associated with the hearing. The parish council would be expected to provide funds towards the costs.

In Cllr Spicer's experience, parked cars act as a traffic calming measure, and the police are likely to object due to not having the capacity to enforce the limit within villages. In addition these limits are not normally agreed for conservation areas due to the proliferation of signage required.

In summary: Cllr Spicer is not certain that the investment would 'pay off'.

**RESOLUTION: September agenda** - The parish council will consider whether to fund the costs of the traffic counters with a view to determining the benefits of proceeding with an application.

Councillor Spicer raised the matter of the Jaynic site in Stanton. Whilst the proposed relief road and roundabout on the A143 included in the Copart planning application will benefit Stanton, there is great consternation by Hepworth, and other villages, at the inability to regulate vehicles on trailers and low-loaders which will be unaffected by lorry bans – and may be the main method by which vehicles will be transported from the site.

Another company has now expressed an interest in moving to another area of the same site – this is believed to be warehousing. The increased traffic which this site will generate both along the A143 and through villages is a cause of concern.

10. **Suffolk County Council Community Self-Help Scheme** (see information pack)

**To consider whether this would be beneficial to Bardwell Parish Council.**

Only Barningham Parish Council in Cllr Spicer's Ward has become involved in this scheme. The scheme trains volunteers, provides appropriate equipment and provides insurance cover for appropriate activities, however Cllr Spicer considers this to be quite a cumbersome process, with many activities that can be carried out by volunteers generally.

**RESOLUTION: NONE**

**Outcome: The parish council did not take a vote on whether or not to proceed and the matter was left in abeyance for possible future consideration should councillors so decide.**

11. **Overgrown Trees/Hedges impacting access along roads and footways** (see information pack)

11.1 Overgrown vegetation on the bank/verge along Low Street from The Old Green Man towards the junction of Low Street/Quaker Lane.

**Proposal:** That the parish council should a.) request Suffolk County Council to remove overgrown vegetation along this stretch of bank or b.) the parish council should engage a contractor to cutback the vegetation at the appropriate time in the season.

The parish council considered the options. It was determined that no immediate action is required, as the stray brambles have been cut back recently.

**RESOLUTION:** That the parish council will engage a contractor to cutback the vegetation along this section in the Autumn as it did during December 2022.

11.2 **To determine how Parish Councillors wish to respond to future complaints received regarding overgrown hedges/trees encroaching upon roads, pavements, footpaths.**

The previous 'policy' when receiving complaints has been for two councillors to visit the

homeowner or 'phone the landowner. However other options such as a letter (e.g. template from SCC) providing information about overhanging trees/hedges is available if councillors consider this might be appropriate.

**RESOLUTION: Following a brief discussion**, councillors considered that the most appropriate/effective action is to continue with the previously agreed policy of two councillors calling on residents whose hedges are causing issues due to impeding access along pavements/footways/roads. **Action: Cllrs Ruffles and Berrill**

**RESOLUTION:** A list of hedges to be compiled with a view to contacting owners.

**Action:** September meeting – List of hedges for consideration **Action: Cllr Ruffles**

**11.3 Complaint (phone call) received by Clerk (27<sup>th</sup> June) regarding hedges encroaching on road:** To consider response.

One of the property owners is already aware and has stated their intention to take appropriate action c.September – outside of bird nesting season. Other owners will be contacted to bring the issue to their attention.

**RESOLUTION:** As 11.2 above.

**Action Cllrs Ruffles and Berrill**

It is noted that reports can be submitted to Suffolk County Council by the parish council or individual residents: Where appropriate SCC will issue notices to owners requiring that necessary work be carried out. In these circumstances there is a process which enables SCC to carry out the necessary work if the owner does not respond or comply within a set period of time, with the bill for the work being sent to the owner. However, SCC will not issue letters until September, outside Bird nesting season.

*Note: Before undertaking work on Trees/hedges in a conservation area or trees covered by a TPO contact West Suffolk Council/see information at <https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/protected-trees.cfm>*

**Hedge from rear of Hastoe properties** over hanging into Community Field:

**RESOLUTION:** Clerk will report to Hastoe - *Actioned 5<sup>th</sup> July 2023/email with photos.*

**12. Chairman's Report:** None – all matters included with other items.

**13. Village Fete and Coronation picnic held this year:** Following on from previous feedback from the picnic held in May, it was suggested that the picnic could merge with the annual fete held each June at the playing field, and that if necessary parish council funds could be made available to make this a community event for all the village to enjoy. Chair suggested that this would improve the fundraising prospects for all organisations involved.

**Proposal (Chair):** That two/three councillors arrange a meeting with the fete committee to discuss this idea, to see if this is possible and if the parish council could assist financially to help make this merger a success and become a reality, then report back to full council for further discussion.

**RESOLUTION/Action:** Cllrs Berrill/Lekova and Witton to contact the Chair of the Fete Committee to discuss this proposal and to report back at September meeting.

**14 Planning Applications**

**14.1** Planning applications on which the parish council has been consulted for consideration and response: None outstanding at the time of issuing the agenda.

**14.2** To note: Planning applications - Decisions since meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2023:

DC/23/0748/TCA - Bardwell School, School Lane, Bardwell: Decided/No objections

DC/23/0522/FUL - Tithe Barn, Up Street, Bardwell: Decided/Approve

DC/23/0800/TCA – Brook Cottage, School Lane, Bardwell: Decided/Approve

**15. Community Field**

Benches- Painting: Three of the four benches are now complete.

Wildflower area: Will be cut in July

Apple Tree: Aldeburgh Beach has apparently failed. Clerk will purchase a replacement.

Play equipment: climbing block and bolts are missing – replacements to be ordered:

Actioned/Clerk (from Wickstead)

A new 'virtual' parish council contact telephone number for signage on the community field is now available: 0333 335 5292 - included on background information (12)

**16 Finance**

**16.1 Financial report and invoices for approval/payment**

The financial report was approved and invoices totalling £ 1,179.47 were authorised for payment

**16.2 Signatories: progress – Awaiting update from Barclays Bank who claimed to require additional information, but when Clerk 'phoned it was then confirmed that this was wrong and Barclays would now process the mandate changes.**

**16.3 Financial controls throughout the year, including Councillors access to Scribe, the accounting package.**

**ACTION:** The Clerk/RFO advised that she will be providing councillors with access to Scribe. A schedule of non-signatories will be drawn up to carry out checks on the accounts during the year.

**17. Review of**

**17.1 Standing Orders: RESOLUTION:** Councillors will review via a share point. **ACTION: CLERK**

**17.2 Financial Regulations: RESOLUTION:** Councillors will review via a share point. **ACTION: CLERK**

**17.3 Risk Register: RESOLUTION;** Councillors will review via a share point **ACTION: Clerk**

**18. General Power of Competence**

To consider whether it would be to the benefit of Bardwell Parish Council to adopt the General Power of competence. In order to do this the parish council will need to pay the training costs of CILCA for the Clerk/RFO.

The CILCA qualification for the Clerk/RFO is a requirement for the parish council if it wishes to adopt the power of competence.

**RESOLUTION:** To defer a decision to the September meeting

**ACTION:** Cllr Smith to review the documents provided by the Clerk/RFO and provide a list of pros and cons for further consideration at the September meeting.

**19. Clerk's Report:** Nothing further to report – see information in attached background information relating to July agenda.

**20. Allocating areas of responsibility to Parish Councillors**

The following areas of responsibility were agreed:

Public/permissive footpaths: Cllr Allum

Community Field/Play area: Cllr Ruffles

**21. Communications Strategy: Engaging with residents** *Deferred to September meeting*

**22. Reports from Village Organisations**

**22.1 Bardwell Charity Trustees** (report received from Chairman of the Trustees)

Trustees will be considering whether some low hanging branches on trees around the Green should be removed.

- 22.2 **Bardwell Playing Fields Association**  
The Fete raised £1539.00, with this being equally shared between the church, BPFA and School.  
Maintenance/reseeding and harrowing has been carried out to the football pitch at the community field;  
A three day music event organised by 'Krazy Horse' in place of Bardfest takes place 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> July raising funds for Bardwell Sports and Community Club.
- 22.3 **Bardwell Speed Watch:** ANPR camera will be returning to Spring Road for one week from 5<sup>th</sup> July.  
A session was held in the week prior to the meeting: no incidents of speeding recorded.
- 22.4 **Bardwell Village Hall**  
The planning application for the work to refurbish the village hall has been approved and the committee can now progress to fund raising.  
Warm Spaces Coffee Mornings continue to be popular. Bardwell Charity Trustees have generously supplemented the funding originally provided by West Suffolk Council to enable the events to continue.  
8<sup>th</sup> October: Common Ground Theatre return with 'Hellgate House'
23. **Correspondence:** None requiring decision at this meeting
24. **Diary Dates**  
**11<sup>th</sup> July:** Town and Parish Conference at West Suffolk House: Cllrs Berrill and Ives to attend.  
**16<sup>th</sup> July: Civic Service** – Invitation received: Neither Chair or Vice Chair are available to attend. Cllr Smith will be attending in his role as West Suffolk Cllr so will also represent Bardwell PC.  
**19<sup>th</sup> July:** WSC online Planning (Development) course: Cllr Ives, Cllr Witton, Cllr Smith, Clerk
25. **Questions to the Chair.**  
Cllr Berrill as SALC representative requested that SALC be a standing item on the agenda.  
**Action: Clerk**
26. **Exempt item:**  
**To resolve that under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public be excluded from the meeting due to the confidential nature of the business to be discussed**  
*To consider employment matters and volunteer expenses.*  
Cllrs had a general discussion regarding staff/contractors employment status.  
Action: Cllr Witton will enquire with other parish councils to find out how their village maintenance arrangements are managed.  
Volunteer expenses: Not discussed: **Deferred** to September meeting.
27. **Next Meeting**  
Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> September July 2023, 7pm  
Venue: The Tithe Barn, Bardwell Village Hall, Up Street, Bardwell IP31 1AA