

Bardwell Parish Council

Chairman: David Ruffles

Draft Minutes of the meeting of Bardwell Parish Council held on Tuesday 7th March 2023, commencing at 7.30pm.

Present:

Parish Councillors: Cllr David Ruffles, Cllr Geoff Clough, Cllr Ali Compton, Cllr Peter Sanderson, Cllr Andrew Smith (also West Suffolk District Cllr), Cllr Tony Stokes;
Suffolk County Councillor Joanna Spicer MBE
9 Members of the public
Clerk/RFO Pauline Smith

1. **Apologies for absence:** Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Babraff
2. **Disclosure of interests:** Cllr Smith declared an ongoing disclosure of pecuniary interest in item 21, Financial report (re Clerk/RFO salary payment)
3. **Approval of Minutes of the meeting held 7th February 2023:** The minutes were approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

4. **Public Participation Session**
 - i. Concern raised about the ongoing closure of the footbridge over the River Black Bourn.
Response: This is dealt with at item 5.
 - ii. Footpaths: Concern raised about the poor surface of footpaths around the village particularly a section of the gravel public footpath through the church yard.
Response: Cllr Smith will speak with Dinkie Williamson about the possibility of assistance being provided by the parish council to alleviate the problem section using additional shingle. Cllr Spicer is willing to provide a small amount of funding (£50.00) towards costs. (This is a section of public footpath but due to its location requires church permission and possibly a faculty from the Diocese before any work can be carried out).
Action Cllr Smith to speak to DW/Church
 - iii. Concern was raised about the large barn to the rear of Bardwell Hall which looks to be in a perilous state. It is believed that there may be a preservation order on the building but there does not appear to have been any remedial work carried out for several years.
Response: Cllr Smith (as Ward Cllr) will make enquiries with WSC. **Action Cllr Smith**

5. **Report from Suffolk County Councillor Joanna Spicer MBE**

Bridge: Unfortunately, there is no good news regarding the bridge, which was closed on 8th October 2021.
Cllr Spicer has received details of the survey and report detailing the necessity for the closure of the bridge.
There is no possibility of repairing the bridge in the short term.
The superstructure needs to be replaced.
The bridge is estimated to be between 30 – 40 years old years old and is 13.55 metres long, the costs of replacement are estimated to be c. £100,000. There is no indication of when construction of a new bridge for Bardwell will be included in the SCC programme of works. Funding will come from the capital budget for structures and bridges.
Cllr Spicer has put forward the parish council's suggestion to SCC of RAF Honington being approached to provide a replacement: this was not accepted (by SCC) due to size and nature of the construction required.

The new bridge is likely to be a 'Ranger' type steel truss with timber deck. New foundations will be required and either screw pile or rudimentary concrete ones are likely to be suitable.

Barriers to prevent unauthorised access are in place.

Resolution: Letter to be written to Cllr Paul West, SCC Cabinet Member for Operational Highways and Flooding, inviting him to a site visit and expressing the grave concerns of the parish council and residents over the failure to move this project forward, since the closure of the bridge in October 2021, particularly given the dearth of footpaths available in the village. **Action Clerk**

Milestone Infrastructure takes over the Suffolk Highways contract from Kier wef October 2023.

6. **Report from West Suffolk District Councillor Andrew Smith**

There are two enforcement matters to report on since the last meeting (February):

i. **Glassfield Road:** The Ward Cllr has been advised by a near neighbour that the residents at the Glassfield Road site vacated on Sunday evening: He has reported this to West Suffolk Council enforcement team. The nearby neighbour is keen that WSC should continue to pursue action should they return, however this is unlikely: Every time there is an alleged breach of the injunction WSC Enforcement Department is required to restart their investigation.

ii. **Mallard View:** West Suffolk Council have issued a planning contravention notice, part of which has been investigated and found to be acceptable but tidying up of the site remains under scrutiny, with a deadline of July, when a formal visit will be undertaken.

With regards to construction of the extension to the existing workshop which has currently ceased: Cllr Smith will confirm whether or not this is lawful when he receives written confirmation from WSC.

At the present time there has not been any documentary evidence provided to prove that a business is being run from the premises. Anecdotal evidence is insufficient for WSC to proceed with any action. Firm documentary evidence can be submitted to WSC via the Clerk.

7. **King's Coronation – Village Picnic at the Bardwell Playing Field (KH/MB)**

The organisers Kit Harding and Margaret Berrill have been working hard to progress plans.

Date: Sunday May 7th, 2023, at Bardwell Playing Field

Event: Picnic – residents to bring their own picnics.

Licensing laws do not permit residents to bring alcohol on site.

Mike Allum is organising a BBQ

Music: MB/KH are discussing music with Suzy Coombes

Face painter, Games, Competitions, Tug of War

The school is very supportive and wishes to help.

Flags and banners: MB/KH will send details of what is required to **Clerk to order**

Event will be promoted in Bardwell Village News, Facebook. Volunteers will be needed for setting up in the morning, during the event and afterwards to clear up litter.

- 8. King's Coronation: Lamp post signs** (details previously circulated).
To consider suggestion of purchase of 25 x Coronation lamp post signs @ £112.00 plus vat.
Resolution: Councillors unanimously agreed this purchase.
Cllr Spicer offered to provide £150.00 funding to cover the cost of the purchase plus an amount toward the cost of the flags/banners being purchased for the picnic.

9. Chairman's Report

Fencing along Spring Road (adjacent the footpath in front of Hastoe properties)
The fencing was primarily installed for safety reasons due to an open ditch, which has since been piped. The fencing has one railing missing, others are showing sign of damage/rot. The fence requires ongoing maintenance by the landowner, Hastoe Housing Association.
Proposal: That the owner (Hastoe Housing?) be contacted with a request for the fencing to be removed.

Councillors discussed the possibility that the fence may be the responsibility of County Farms. However, it was unanimously agreed to establish who is the owner and then to request removal of the fencing. **Action Clerk**

10. Highways

To consider installation of village gateways:

Councillors discussed in general terms the likely costs associated with the installation of village gateways and that if the suggestion was to proceed that three would most likely be needed: (Stanton Road, Spring Road, Ixworth Road).

Cllr Spicer is of the opinion that village gateways do have a beneficial effect of slowing traffic down as motorists enter villages, and is likely to be able to assist with the costs from her highways locality budget.

Action: It was resolved that the Clerk will investigate likely detailed costs and provide the necessary information to the new council for consideration after the May elections.

School Lane: Double yellow lines

The Clerk reported that she has not received a response to her latest correspondence. The correspondence that Cllr Spicer has received is only concerned with the school parking regulations and does not take into account the previous agreement and reasons relating to the double yellow lines included within the legal documents published at the time.

David Chenery, Head of Safety and Speed management has retired this week.

George Firth was involved at the beginning (March 2020).

Resolution/Action: Clerk to identify who is now responsible and to write again.

Posts remain in situ in School Lane. Following removal of the signs the posts remain in the ground albeit the concrete base is now exposed.

Can these posts/concrete base be removed?

Cllr Sanderson raised an issue of damaged drain/s underneath the highway, Quaker Lane opposite The Old Farmhouse, which was previously reported a number of years ago, but nothing further carried out to rectify the problem. Whilst jetting appears to have been beneficial, problems are now arising during short periods of rainfall when puddles are not draining away and during heavier rainfall water runs down the road towards The Green.

It was resolved to report this on the SCC portal. Action Clerk

11. Planning Application consultation documents for consideration (see attached)

DC/23/0056/FUL: No objections

DC/23/0269/TCA: No objections

DC/23/0268/TPO: No objections

DC/23/0289/FUL: No objections

DC/22/1731/HH: Object: There does not appear to be any significant difference to the previous application. The comments provided in the previous application continue to apply.

12. To note: Planning applications determined since February meeting (see attached)

DC/22/1814/LB: Approved

13. Copart Planning Application.

To consider request from Walsham le Willows Parish Council for a contribution towards the costs of the report provided by planning consultants in respect of this application, suggested amount £20.00. (Details previously circulated.)

Whilst accepting that the requested amount is a nominal sum, it was considered that in principle, prior to engaging a consultant Walsham le Willows should have determined the costs of doing so and asked parish councils whether they would be willing to contribute at that stage.

Bardwell's response had been written prior to receiving the copy of the consultant's report. **Resolution: Decline request.**

Whilst there may be highways infrastructure gains due to the relief road and roundabout (benefitting Stanton) and transporters delivering vehicles to the site will be restricted from using village roads, councillors continue to express concern about potential issues arising from this application including the increase in traffic along the A143 and via village roads, e.g. The Street, Hepworth. Whilst most of the 80,000 vehicles arriving at Copart for processing will arrive on transporters. The majority will leave the site individually on trailers, able to travel along village roads with impunity (as evidenced by residents in villages affected by other Copart sites.)

14. Community Field

Signage: For a second time signage at the community field has been vandalised.

To consider whether to install more substantial signage, such as interpretation signs, lectern type (beneficial for wheelchair users) or noticeboard.

It was resolved that the alternative suggestions were too expensive and unnecessary.

A similar sized sign to the previous one on a steel post and steel powder coated sign will be sourced. Clerk to enquire re signwriting from Coastline Graphics. **Action Chairman/Clerk**

Thorn hedge at the end of the football pitch adjacent to Skinners Lane. Unfortunately, on average about two footballs each match are punctured by the thorns. Each ball costs about £30.

Proposal (Cllr Sanderson): It is proposed to remove the thorn plants in the hedge and replace them with new non thorny species. The BPFA/Football Club will carry out the necessary work. **Resolution: The parish council has no objection to this proposal**

15. **Allotments:** A request has been received for permission to attach a latch and handle to one of the sheds to keep the door sturdy while working:
Proposal: To consider whether these should be paid for by the parish council from existing allotment funds for all sheds. Specific details are awaited.
Resolution: It was unanimously agreed that the cost of these items should be paid from remaining funds. **Action Clerk**
16. **BPFA (Cllr Sanderson)**
The insurance for the Playing Fields is due shortly and, as last year, the BPFA wishes to use some of the funds held by the Parish Council for this expenditure.
Proposal: That £1500 be transferred from the PC BPFA account to BPFA bank account.
The proposal was unanimously agreed. Action Clerk
- A meeting of the BPFA management committee had been held a few weeks prior to the pc meeting. (*1st February - date for inclusion in minutes confirmed after pc meeting*)
1st March: Very successful quiz, attended by c.75 people
2nd March: First planning meeting for the summer fete with representatives from the church and PTA. Volunteers/helpers are sought.
24th June 2023: Summer Fete.
17. **Charity Trustees (Cllr Stokes)**
19th April: Dead tree on the green will be felled and cut up into logs for local people to take.
Felton Landscapes has been awarded the grasscutting contract for 2023/24
Fair will be arriving from 1st/2nd May.
18. **Village Hall (Cllr Smith)**
Planning application is in the process of being prepared for submission (will be submitted by Bardwell Parish Council).
4th April: Velveteen Rabbit (Children's Easter play) A number of generous people have provided funding towards this production which will be free to attend. Children from Bardwell School are being given priority booking.
Warm Spaces events on Tuesday mornings 10am – noon are receiving a good number of attendees.
19. **Speed Watch (Cllr Compton):** Nothing to report.
20. **SALC area meeting:** 2nd March 2023 (Cllr Stokes)
Fairly good turnout with a lot of questions for the guest speakers from West Suffolk Council.
The Executive board have begun to look at making meetings more relevant to councillors to encourage them to come along. Councillors don't have a network themselves and the area meetings are a useful resource for this.
21. **Financial Report (Clerk/RFO)**
i. Arrangements for audit: Peter Chapman is willing to carry out the 2022/23 audit, however this will be his final year.
The Clerk/RFO suggested that SALC be engaged as auditor for the 2023/24 financial year. **Resolution: It was agreed that SALC should be engaged as auditor for the 2023/24 financial year.**

- ii. Bank statements and reconciliation of accounts were provided to councillors
- iii. Payments were agreed as per the attached schedule of payments
- iv. CPRE Membership: It was agreed to continue membership at the cost of £36.00 and to consider revising this sum to the suggested higher rate (£60.00) indicated on the renewal notice next year (see attached)

22. Clerk's report:

Quiet Lanes: The Clerk and Cllr Smith collected the signs for Stanton and Bardwell from Ipswich on 6th March 2023

23. Litter pick: 25th March 2023 (Clerk)

Arrangements are: 9.30 – 11.30am

Meet at the Tithe Barn 9.30am. Tea and coffee will be available for volunteers on their return.

24. Annual Village Meeting: Saturday 20th May (Clerk)

10am – noon: Village Hall booked.

25. Elections: The Clerk has an appointment to take papers into West Suffolk House on 29th March, for anybody who wishes her to do so: The Clerk will require all papers no later than 28th March. (It is not a requirement for the clerk to submit papers on behalf of candidates: candidates may make their own arrangements.)

26. Correspondence of note requiring attention not previously circulated: None

27. Questions to the Chair: None

28. Next Meeting: Tuesday 4th April 2023, 7:30pm