

BARHAM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD IN BARHAM CHURCH HALL, ON MONDAY 15th May 2023, 7.00pm

PRESENT:

Cllr Wayne Allen, Cllr Brenda Mitchell, Cllr Casey Wooltorton, Cllr Gail Cornish, Cllr Paul Fenn, Cllr Marilyn Lesley & Cllr Julie Gregory.

Also present: SCC Chris Chambers, BMSDC John Whitehead the Clerk and seven members of the public.

1.5 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN – To RECEIVE NOMINATIONS

The district councillor John Whitehead took the Chair and asked for nominations of Chairman, Cllr Allen proposed Cllr Mitchell, she declined the role. Cllr Wooltorton proposed Cllr Cornish, Cllr Mitchell seconded. All agreed, Cllr Cornish elected as Chair.

The new Chair thanked the hard work of the previous Barham Parish Councillors and that she would like an opportunity to go through the Country Park work plan with the previous Chairman. He declined the opportunity.

Training is available through SALC for the new and existing councillors. She congratulated the work of the district and county councillors and for the re-election to the district councillor.

2.5 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN – TO RECEIVE NOMINATIONS

The new Chair asked for nominations for Vice Chairman. Cllr Allen proposed Cllr Mitchell as Vice Chair however she declined. Cllr Lesley proposed Cllr Wooltorton, seconded Cllr Gregory. All agreed, Cllr Wooltorton elected as Vice Chairman.

Declaration of Acceptance to Office forms were signed for both roles.

3.5 APOLOGIES

a. Apologies for absence. Cllr B Head & Cllr G Head – on holiday.

b. Consent/non consent to absence. Consent was granted to the above councillors.

OPEN FORUM – The Chair welcomed the public. She reported to all the protocol to conduct parish council meetings and reminded of the 20 minutes given for the open forum.

Member of the public would like to hear how the new Chair proposes to deal with the issues for Barham over the next year and a plan moving forward. When is the date of the next PC meeting? The Chair advised that this has not yet been addressed as this is the first meeting of the parish council since the elections. The current PC work plans will be reviewed and will take into consideration the work the parish council has already done.

Member of the public would like to know how previous areas which the parish council had covered will be dealt with eg; Speed watch, road signs, digital road signs, village signs, security during covid and Barham Country Park. The Chair informed that all will be looked at in due course and will report back in a few months as to where it is all at. Date of next meeting to be discussed under item 13 on the agenda. Member of the public would like to know what the proposals are for the MUGA and would also like to know costs and see a work plan before the PC commits.

The Chair again advised that this will all be looked at in due course and will report back.

Member of the public would like it to be known that a comment has been made publicly about the previous Chairman, that he has been a dictator Chairman, this comment should be declined as he was not a dictator Chairman. The reason he does not have the keys to the village noticeboards is that they were stolen with his car. The chair asked for a copy of the police report if council property was stolen. The community speed watch equipment will be handed back to the police as he is not prepared to continue to volunteer and no longer prepared to take on the role as trainer.

The previous Chairman is not happy with a pre-election leaflet edited by the election candidates and distributed to the households in Barham as it listed untrue facts about the previous parish councillors, SCC Chris Chambers informed that he did have to speak to a few members of the public about the leaflet, who were confused about forthcoming elections and did not know who to vote for.

Member of the public reported that the pre-election leaflet had not mentioned the hard work of the previous parish councillors. They believed the pre-election leaflet has led to a fixed vote of the new parish council.

Chairman's initials.....

Member of the public reported that the pre-election leaflet has been referred to the electoral commission and the police but does not know the outcome of this as yet. He also gave credit to the retiring Chairman and Vice Chairman for the work they had done, including getting the new Kirby Rise play area up and running. Hopes a new key holder will be found.

Report from SCC Chris Chambers.

His report had been sent to all in advance of the meeting. It highlighted that 99.18% of children were offered a place on National Offer Day at one of their three preferred primary schools. Adult care services and children's services received £47m more funding as part of Suffolk County Council's £685m budget that was passed by Council in February. Solar Together Suffolk, a scheme which has helped over 1,500 homes to install solar panels and batteries, opened for new registrations on 22 August 2022. On October 11th the Council's Cabinet agreed a new wave of funding to continue its programme to provide places for children and young people with SEND.

The Chair would like to know where he is at with investigating the outstanding issues relating to Barham Country Park? Cllr Chambers reported that he has met with Suffolk County Council Brian Prettyman who deals with legal. There are restricted covenants for the whole site and this covers the workshop, all must be for recreational use. The current change of use planning application for the workshop is currently being considered by the district council. However, the restricted covenants will be relevant in the outcome of the application. Suffolk County Council is not willing to change the use of the workshop for a mechanical workshop, it must remain for recreational purposes. This will now cause the PC difficulties should they proceed to grant a lease to a new tenant.

The Clerk informed that a new lease has not yet been signed, it is still with the solicitor.

Member of the public is disappointed to hear what Cllr Chambers has said. Cllr Chambers informed that at the last PC meeting he had reminded that there are restricted covenants on the whole site.

The retiring Vice Chairman stated that this is not history, this is current, when the parish council took over the picnic site the workshop was not included in the covenants. The workshop has the potential to bring in revenue to run the country park.

Cllr Chambers agrees about the revenue, however the issue which SCC has is that the change of use application falls outside the restricted covenants.

Member of the public would like Brian Prettyman to apologise, as he had been communicating via email with the previous PC indicating that change of use for the workshop would be approved by SCC. Would also like Cllr Chambers to find out what the state of play is now that the change of use has been submitted.

Cllr Chambers is happy to arrange a meeting for the public and the PC to clarify the restricted covenants.

The retiring chairman is extremely unhappy he has received no respect and has been given false information.

After this heated debate the Chair asked the PC if they are happy to continue the meeting? All agreed to continue.

Cllr Allen would like to commend the county council for the annual payment they give to the Citizens Advice Bureau.

Report from BMSDC John Whitehead.

His report had been sent to all in advance of the meeting. It highlighted district elections and that the Claydon & Barham ward elected both a new Green Party councillor, David Penny and a returning Conservative councillor, John Whitehead. Also reported on planning applications throughout the year, finance and localities grants.

The Chair asked if he has any news on the MUGA and change of use planning applications which the PC has submitted. He advised that the 2 separate applications both had objections raised. The applications are on the district council website for the public to see. No outcome has yet been made.

4.5 COUNCILLORS DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

a. Declaration of interests with regards to any item on the agenda.

The Chair declared an interest in item 5c recreation ground. Cllrs Mitchell, Woollorton, Lesley & Cornish all declared an interest in Barham Country Park. All signed the declaration of interests book.

b. Councillors to Review their Declaration of Interests annually and to submit Election Expenses Forms back to the District Council.

The Clerk reminded of the process and will return the completed forms to the district council.

Chairman's initials.....

5.5 TO REVIEW AND APPOINT PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES;

- a. **Claydon & Barham Village Hall Committee.** Cllr Mitchell happy to continue.
- b. **Community Trust (Claydon & Barham Community Centre)** – Cllr Woollorton will carry this out.
- c. **Recreation Ground Committee** – Cllr Allen happy to continue.
- d. **Parish Liaison/MSDC Meetings** – The Chair will carry this out.
- e. **Suffolk Association of Local Councils (SALC)** – The Chair and Cllr Woollorton to carry this out.
- f. **Babergh East, Police & Parish Forum** – The Chair to carry this out.
- g. **Planning** – The Chair would like to propose the following for the PC to consider, would the PC like to form a sub-committee to look at all planning applications and report back to the PC? Or would the PC like to take full responsibility for all planning applications? However, the frequency of PC meetings will need to be taken into consideration. The Chair suggests that the PC revert to monthly meetings until it is happy with the work going forward. Cllrs Gregory & Woollorton are happy to take responsibility of planning applications and will present all applications and decisions at Parish Council meetings.
- h. **Finance** – Cllrs Mitchell & Lesley happy to do this.

The above representatives were agreed by all, proposed the Chair, seconded Cllr Woollorton.

The Chair advised that the PC should consider attending the Good Neighbourhood Scheme meetings.

SCC Chambers left the meeting at 7.45pm.

6.5 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE EXTRA ORDINARY MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 18TH APRIL 2023

The minutes were approved & signed by the Chair, proposed the Cllr Woollorton, seconded Cllr Mitchell.

7.5 WORKPLANS AND PLANNING LIST

a. **Review of Workplans.** The Clerk explained that the only outstanding issue on the workplan is to proceed with new signage and road markings along Church Lane & Sandy Lane.

Barham Country Park Workplan, the Chair suggests that 2 or 3 councillors get together to go through the outstanding works needed and to get a better understanding of the jobs which have so far been paid for. The Chair to meet with Cllrs Woollorton, Mitchell & Lesley to deal with this and will report back at the next PC meeting.

b. **Review of Planning List & To Discuss any new Planning Applications Received.** The Chair informed that she has updated the planning list for May with the recent new applications, most are awaiting the decisions of the district council. The PC needs to decide what to do about the change of use application for the workshop at the country park. Should the PC take any action or leave it to run the course and await the decision of the county council and district council?

Cllr Fenn asked the PC to consider the possible income the workshop could bring in which would help to run the site.

Cllr Woollorton reminded that SCC Chambers had advised that should the workshop be granted change of use, it would only be for one year until it would have to be returned back to recreational activities.

The Chair suggests that the workshop could be rented out in the first instance for leisure purposes.

A lot of decisions need to be made regarding the country park. Does the PC want to withdraw the change of use planning application?

Cllr Fenn proposed that the PC should let the change of use application continue to go through and wait to see if it is granted by the district and county council. Seconded Cllr Woollorton, all in agreement.

The Chair informed that the outcome of the MUGA planning application is still outstanding from the district council.

BMSDC Whitehead left the meeting left the meeting at 7.45pm.

8.5 FINANCE

a. **Monthly Payments – to agree the payments for January, February March and April 2023.**

January payments £14,362.88, receipts £2287.50. February payments £29,323.53, receipts £2000.00. March payments £14,039.35 receipts £24,548.49. April payments £8,421.43 receipts £31,180.79. May payments so far £2704.10. These were approved by all and signed by Cllr Mitchell.

The Chair reserved the right to raise any concerns over invoices paid against work completed at a future meeting.

b. **Monthly reconciliation – to approve April's bank reconciliations.** As at 30/04/23 the Current Account £36481.22 this includes £8959.93 CIL money and £3693.71 towards new play equipment, country park. Business Premium Account £4725.47. The Chair advised of the ring-fenced money in the current account. Cllr Mitchell signed the bank reconciliations.

Chairman's initials.....

c Spend Against Budget for the Previous Financial Year ending 31st March 2023.

The Chair advised it would be necessary to drill down into budget lines overspend in order to expand this year's budget and to assist in when setting the next precept budget.

d Report from the Internal Auditors, Heelis & Lodge on the End of Year Accounts 2022-2023.

The Clerk report that this has been carried out and no recommendations have been raised. The receipts & payments list was approved by the PC proposed Cllr Woollorton seconded Cllr Mitchell. The PC expressed thanks to the Clerk for another successful internal audit.

e Approval of the End of Year Accounts 2022-2023. As at 31st March 2023 the Current Account £12,653.64 (earmarked reserves £3,693.71 Country park play equipment & £8,959.93 CIL Money) and the Business Account £5793.71 (General Reserves).

Section 1 Annual Governance was completed and approved by all, proposed Cllr Woollorton seconded Cllr Mitchell. Signed by the Chairman & Clerk.

Section 2 Accounting Statement was approved by all, proposed Cllr Woollorton, Cllr Mitchell. Signed by the Chairman and Clerk.

The Clerk explained the variances spread sheet which has been prepared for the external the auditors. The end of year accounts to be posted on the website and noticeboards along with the dates of the period for the public to exercise public rights. Accounts to be sent to external auditors PKF Littlejohn.

f. To Approve New Councillor Cheque Signatories and Online Banking Authorisations.

Need to be updated and the previous authorities to be removed. Cllrs Mitchell & Lesley to be the new cheque signatories and to carry out online banking authorisations for Parish Council finance. Proposed Cllr Woollorton seconded the Chair. Clerk is still to carry out the online banking authorisations also.

Cllrs Mitchell & Lesley along with the Chair will make an appointment with Barclays Bank to update the banking mandate. The Clerk informed that the retiring Chairman can still authorise online payments for the Clerk until the new mandate has been confirmed with the bank. Any payments needed to be made before such time will be advised to the Chair.

g. Street Cleaners – National Wage Increase.

The Clerk apologised that she has misplaced the information needed to confirm the annual wage increase. The Chair recommended that this is deferred to the next PC meeting.

h. Contributing Third Party (CTP) Payment – SUEZ grant

The Clerk reported that SUEZ has advised of a conditional offer of a £25,000 grant towards new play equipment at the country park. Once the offer letter has been received then the PC will need to make a CTP payment of £2,875.00.

9.5 REPORTS – Councillors to report on any meetings that they have attended since the last Parish Council meeting.

Cllr Mitchell advised that she will attend the next Village Hall meeting on 20 June. The Chair hopes to attend the BMSDC Working Together with Claydon, Barham, Bramford & Gt Blakenham meeting, regarding the Port One Development, Gipping Meadow and other matters. The Chair thanked the PC members who had helped at the recent Coronation event, £1897 was raised for local organisations. The Recreation Ground report has been forward to all.

10.5. NEW KEY HOLDER NEEDED FOR KIRBY RISE PLAY AREA.

The Chair reported that the key holder has stood down. Chair to purchase a new padlock and is happy to open and close the play area until a new person is found. Recommends that 2 or 3 Councillors have a spare key. The Chair will also carry out the monthly checks on the play area.

11.5 NEW KEY HOLDER NEEDED FOR BARHAM COUNTRY PARK

Cllr Woollorton informed that he is happy to get new locks fitted and to be a key holder, spare keys will be needed and held by other councillors.

12.5 CORRESPONDENCE – To report to the Councillors any correspondence received.

Chair will deal with correspondence received regarding the electricity connection at the Country Park. The Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan hearing is in the process. Chair has reported to Highways that the Thorn Hill sign has gone missing.

Chairman's initials.....

The Clerk has received and an invoice from the retiring Chairman, he would like to be paid his Chairmans allowance and for storing PC documents over the past 3 years, £910. He would like the money to be donated directly to Barham Church. This to go on agenda for next meeting.

13.5 DATE OF NEXT MEETING.

The Chair advised that regular 4 weekly or 6 weekly PC meetings will be required for the next 2 or 3 months to get the outstanding Parish Council business sorted. Then to decide at the frequency of meetings after the PC has brought the outstanding matters up to date. Try not to clash with Claydon & Whitton PC meetings so that the district & county councillors can attend. The date of the next meeting to be on Monday 26th June 2023, 7.00pm.

Cllr Allen informed the PC that he wishes to stand down as a councillor. He is extremely unhappy that he has been getting harassment telephone calls, this is all linked to the recent election canvassing leaflet and social media posts. The Chair accepts his resignation with great regret, as he has done a lot for Barham Parish Council over the years, sorry to see him go, but thanked him for all his work.

The meeting ended at 8.55pm

Chairman

Date