

BARHAM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD IN BARHAM CHURCH HALL, ON MONDAY 15th JANUARY 2024, 7.00pm

PRESENT: Vice Chairman Casey Woollorton, Cllr Brenda Mitchell, Cllr Paul Fenn, Cllr Marilyn Lesley, Cllr Bonnie Head, Cllr Graham Head, Cllr Ian Woods & Cllr Julie Gregory.

Also present: BMSDC John Whitehead, the Clerk and 5 members of the public.

OPEN FORUM – The street cleaner present at the meeting is not happy with the actions of the PC street cleaners working party. The couple have both worked for the PC since February 2008 and have received numerous praise from the village, previous Chairmen and Clerks for the good work which they have done. The village is spotless of rubbish. Their contracted hours were 5 hours a week until July 2019 when the previous PC asked them to agree to an extra 2 hours to include Woolner Close and Coopers Way estate to their workload. Then the Chairman had asked outside of the meeting for the street cleaners to litter pick along Norwich Road to the Sorrell Horse as and when needed as extra. They now give in a timesheet once a month and it lists the areas where they have litter picked. A statement in the minutes of October 2023 8.10 “it is hard to see what and where they have worked”, this is upsetting and damaging to the street cleaners, it is untrue and they would like the comment reversed as it is damaging to both of them. She understands that the PC is going to be asking for Tenders to carry out the street cleaning work and for a new contract to be drawn up which will be for 5 hours work a week.

A member of the public asked the PC if they are unhappy with the work of the street cleaners, is this the reason why they are putting the work out to tender after 15 years of service?

The Vice Chairman informed that the current contract is very old, it has no way of policing where the street cleaners have litter picked. The PC has an obligation to the community to get the best value and they are allowed to put the work out to tender annually and to get 3 quotes. The current street cleaners are welcome to put in a bid for the work.

Member of the public informed the PC that she has reported Cllr Woollorton to the monitoring officer as on the 12th December 2023 he stated that he had spoken to Brian Prettyman at the SCC Legal department and that Brian Prettyman had stated that it was ok for Barham Parish Council to give the Barham Country Park to the BPSCP and this is confirmed in the minutes of that meeting. It was false information as the member of the public has communicated with Brian Prettyman and his reply was “I am concerned at the suggestion the parish council may have relied on me for legal advice, I am not a lawyer and my role is to advise and act for SCC not the parish council or individual councillors”. This false information was misleading by the Vice Chairman to his fellow members and the general public.

I have also reported to the monitoring officer that the parish council has breached its code of conduct under its standing order 13h i. Which means that the amount of people with a dispensation on the same subject must not be more than without the Chair has given 7 members of the parish council dispensation on the Barham picnic site and there is 2 who haven't been given dispensation. Bearing this in mind the PC has broken the law and used its government role incorrectly for their own gain. They as a Parish Council cannot vote or discuss anything involving Barham picnic site so all previous meetings relating to the subject are void. I have also reported Cllr Mitchell and Cllr Lesley for their behaviour towards me at the meeting on 12th December trying to intimidate me.

The Vice Chairman informed that the PC has not broken any rules and the above has all been carried out prior to advice and discussions with SALC who have confirmed that the 7 councillors can have a dispensation to act and to vote on the Picnic Site.

The Vice Chairman confirmed that in a meeting with Brian Prettyman it was noted that land can be transferred under the community assets transfer regulation.

BMSDC John Whiteheads report has been distributed to all prior to the meeting, it contains information including the recent storms, Cosy Homes and council tax.

SCC Chris Chambers, in his absence his report has been forward to all prior to the meeting.

1.01 APOLOGIES

a. Apologies for absence. Chair Gail Cornish – unwell. SCC Chris Chambers & BMSDC Dave Penny at other meetings.

b. Consent/non consent to absence. Consent was granted to the Chair.

Chairman's initials.....

2.01 COUNCILLORS DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

a. Declaration of interests with regards to any item on the agenda – None.

3.01 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 4th DECEMBER 2023.

The minutes were approved correct, proposed Cllr Mitchell seconded Cllr Gregory, minutes signed by the Vice Chairman.

4.01 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING, TO INCLUDE WORKPLAN

No matters arising.

Workplan, Cllr B & G Head informed that the hedge and footpath clearing along the Norwich Road to Pesthouse Lane has started today.

5.01 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE EXTRA ORDINARY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 12th DECEMBER 2023.

The minutes were approved correct, proposed Cllr Mitchell seconded Cllr Lesley, minutes signed by the Vice Chairman.

6.01 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE EXTRA ORDINARY MEETING.

The Vice Chairman reported that the Picnic Site is now in the hands of the solicitors who are dealing with the transfer of the Freehold to BPSCP.

Cllr Fenn informed that he is not happy with the dispensation which the PC granted to the trustees of the BPSCP councillors, he is also not happy with giving the freehold to the BPSCP. He would be happier if the PC had given a lease.

7.01 REVIEW OF PARISH COUNCIL PLANNING LIST DISCUSS NEW PLANNING APPLICATIONS RECEIVED. No planning applications as yet for January.

8.01 PUBLIC TRANSPORT IN BARHAM – How to improve this?

Cllr G Head reported that the bus stop by the Sorrell Horse is in a bad state, 2 panes of perspex need replacing and there is no bus timetable displayed. Both he and Cllr B Head are happy to tidy up the bus shelter and will get a price to replace the perspex and will ensure a time table is displayed. Suggest also advertisements could be displayed. Cllr Mitchell thanked Cllrs Head on behalf of the PC for their work on this and the hedges/footpath.

9.01 S106/CIL MATTER IN RESPECT OF TAYLOR WIMPEY’S RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT ON LAND NORTH-WEST OF CHURCH LANN, BARHAM 1856/17.

The Vice Chairman informed that a meeting has taken place with BMSDC to decide what to do with the community land in question. The district council suggests that the site is not big enough for a community centre and car parking, they have suggested the site be used for community allotments.

The Vice Chair asked the PC to vote if it wished the land to be used for a community centre, no votes.

For the land to be used for community allotments with facilities for a toilet block, voted 8 in agreement.

It was agreed by all that the PC to make a bid for the land when it goes on the open market for the nominal price of £1.00.

10.01 TO CONSIDER GETTING THE KERB LOWERED AT THE END OF THE CRESCENT, COST TO COME OUT OF CIL MONEY.

Cllr G Head informed that there are no dropped kerbs to give access for disability chairs or pushchairs, making it difficult to negotiate. He is happy to get 3 quotes for a dropped kerb to be put in place. Will liase with SCC Chris Chambers, hopeful he may also give some funding towards the cost. The PC will need to also apply for planning permission to the district council. The Vice Chair along with Cllrs B & G Head will set up a working party to progress this

11.01 FINANCE

a. Monthly Payments – to agree the payments for December 2023.

Payments £5293.10, receipts £1500.00, approved by all, signed off by Cllr Mitchell.

Chairman’s initials.....

b. Monthly reconciliation – December bank reconciliation.

As at 31/12/23 the Current Account £134,399.42, this includes £108,496.48 CIL money & £3693.71 towards new play equipment at the picnic site. Business Premium Account £4764.56. Signed off by Cllr Mitchell.

c. Q3 spend against budget. All Councillors have received this in advance of the meeting for consideration. No comments.

d. To Approve the Precept Budget for the forthcoming financial year 2024-2025

This has been received by all in advance of the meeting for consideration. Cllr Mitchell explained that if the PC does not wish to increase the precept budget then it needs to shave £3000 from the draft budget. Suggests reducing the donations from £1000 to £500 and requesting that the street lighting is turned off at midnight, this will save a further £2000. Unable to make cutbacks elsewhere, cost of dog and litter bins is to increase by 23%.

The Vice Chair asked the councillor to vote, not to put up the precept from £31,249.00, all 8 agreed in favour. It was therefore agreed by all to reduce the donations down to £500 and ask the district council to switch off the street lighting at midnight to save £2000. 8 in favour that the 2024-2025 precept to be set at £31,249.00.

12.01 TO CARRY OUT THE ANNUAL APPROVAL OF STATUTORY ITEMS

a. To Approve the Internal Auditor, Heelis & Lodge to carry out the audit of the end of year accounts - April 2023 to March 2024

Having had a successful internal audit carried out on the last end of year accounts by Heelis & Lodge, it was agreed by all to instruct them again for this financial year. Agreed by all, proposed Cllr Gregory seconded Cllr Mitchell.

b To Review the Asset Register.

The Clerk advised that this is all up to date, approved by all.

c To Approve All Risk Assessments – Property, GDPR & General.

The assessments were all reviewed no amendments needed, approved by all

d To Review Financial Orders & Standing Orders

No changes need to be made to the documents, approved by all.

e To Approve the Internal Control Statement.

Cllrs Mitchell and Lesley have carried out an annual review of the document and approves that the internal controls are up to date.

All of the above documents were approved, proposed Cllr Mitchell seconded Cllr Lesley, signed by the Vice Chair, Clerk, Cllrs Mitchell & Lesley.

13.01 REPORT FROM WORKING PARTY STREET CLEANERS AND AGREE TENDER DOCUMENT.

The Vice Chairman recommends that the current street cleaners continue to work the 7 hours a week and to include cleaning Woolner Close and Cooper Way Close, until 14th February 2024. Then to revert back to the 5 hours a week, no longer cleaning Woolner Close and Cooper Way Close. The PC to invite tenders for a new street cleaning contract. The Chair has produced a draft contract for approval which is to be put into place on 1st April 2024. It states 5 hours work a week and to be reviewed after 2 months and then annually. Contract not to include sweeping roadside curbs.

The Vice Chairman asked the PC for its approval of the contract, all in agreement.

Asked to vote if the PC wishes to continue the old contract with the current street cleaners, all against.

Asked to vote to replace the old contract with the new one drawn up by the Chair and to put the contract out to tender, 8 in agreement.

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

The Vice Chairman informed that Taylor Wimpey has agreed to wash the wheels of all lorries before leaving the development site and to sweep the Norwich Road clear of mud.

The site manager has confirmed that all site traffic will go through the site and not use Church Lane and for it to remain open. At present Church Lane will be closed once 150 houses are completed but both Taylor Wimpey and Barham Parish Council are talking with Mid Suffolk District Council to get this moved until development is completed.

Chairman's initials.....

15.01 CORRESPONDENCE – to report to councillors on any correspondence recently received.
None.

16.01 DATE OF NEXT MEETING. Friday 22nd March 2024. The Annual Parish Meeting will take place on 20th May 2024, 6.30pm followed by the Annual General Meeting at approx. 7pm.
The meeting ended at 8.36pm.

Chairman

Date