

BARHAM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD IN BARHAM CHURCH HALL, ON MONDAY 22nd SEPTEMBER 2025, 7.00pm

PRESENT: Chairman Casey Woollorton, Cllr Julie Gregory, Cllr Brenda Mitchell, Cllr Marilyn Lesley & Cllr Paul Fenn.

Also present: BMSDC Cllrs David Penny and John Whitehead, Suffolk County Councillor Chris Chambers the Clerk and 3 members of the public.

OPEN FORUM

BMSDC David Penny September report has been distributed to all ahead of the meeting.

The local government reform continues to progress and the district council has debated if to approve the 3 unitary approach.

Chairman informed that Barham and the surrounding villages does not wish to be part of an Ipswich Borough Council. They wish to remain part of a rural environment and not of the greater metropolis of Ipswich. More benefit to having the one council. Unhappy that the district councillor does not represent Barham to the potential.

Cllr Mitchell is unhappy that Barham gets labelled at "Claydon & Barham", Barham never gets part of any joint deal. Also questioned why the district council has given funding to Stowmarket Food Museum for £1 million and given £5.2 million to Chiltern Fields pavilion in Stowmarket. Whilst Barham has new housing developments being built yet losses out to funding which is desperately needed for infrastructure in the village.

Suffolk County Councillor Chris Chambers report to follow.

Reported that SCC has launched a new control room for the fire service and that it is now "in house".

An extraordinary full council meeting has recently taken place to sign off the "One Suffolk" business case, for one unitary council.

Orwell Bridge road works continue. There is currently no live business case for a Northern Bypass, other major road infrastructure is currently more important.

He will fully fund the 2 new Barham village signs which will replace the 2 old signs that did not meet highway standards. To be replaced within the next 12/14 weeks.

An open presentation at the Bretts Quarry is to take place on 16 & 23 October, he would encourage feedback.

Cllr Mitchell asked when will the road verges get cut back along the Norwich Road in Barham, it is long overdue. The Claydon verges have been done! He will look into this.

The Chairman informed the county councillor that the damaged 30mph speed limit sign has still not been replaced in Church Lane. Cllr Chambers will chase this up also.

Presentation from Port One Technology Park leadership team, regarding the planned expansion of the existing site at Great Blakenham – Maxwell Hembry and Jack Payne, Curzan De Vere Developers.

Port One is entering an expansion phase to create Port One South to help put Suffolk "at the heart of UK technology, industry, and sustainability. Timescale for the expansion work is 8 years. As part of the expansion, Port One has said it will pay for surrounding roads and highways to undergo a multi-million pound upgrade. This will include improvements to junction 52 of the A14, which will see the existing junction/roundabout upgraded with signalisation in a bid to reduce congestion. The roundabout will have an increased capacity of 25% more traffic.

Also propose to widen the road to give an extra carriageway from the junction at Barham Church Lane along the Norwich Road and out to the roundabout.

Councillors highlighted the issues which Barham experience from hold ups on the A14 and surrounding roads. Ensure that the Port One developers have factored in the proposed new houses which will be in Barham and Claydon over the next 20 years.

1.09 APOLOGIES

a. Apologies for absence. Cllr Ian Woods – prior engagement. Cllr Tim Carr – Prior engagement. Cllrs B Head & G Head – holiday.

b. Consent/non consent to absence. Consent was granted by the PC.

2.09 COUNCILLORS DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

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

(Councillors who are on the Barham Picnic Site Community Charity have previously been granted dispensations relating to Barham Picnic Site, to July 2028.

3.09 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 19th MAY 2025

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

4.09 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING.

a. Work Plan

Further to the updates raised with SCC Chris Chambers the following also;
Repair of steps leading down to the Barham Lakes is being dealt with by the PROW officer
Barham Green 30mph speed sign knocked down, Chris Chambers is dealing with this.
Bus Shelter cleaning is now being carried out every 4 months by Elite Aqua Cleaning.
Taylor Whimpey will carry out the re-turfing of the area at the bottom of Church Lane at the junction.
Various overgrown hedges through the village still need cutting back by Highways, SCC Chambers to chase this up.
Cllr Chambers advised that replacing white lines in Coopers Rd is not a priority for Highways and will not get done anytime soon.
He also noted that once the Ely Road development has been completed the issue of Tipper trucks coming down Church Lane will no longer be an issue.
Barham village sign to be repainted in the spring.

5.09 REVIEW OF PARISH COUNCIL PLANNING LIST DISCUSS NEW PLANNING APPLICATIONS RECEIVED.

Cllr Gregory informed that no new planning applications have been received.

6.09 FINANCE

a. Monthly Payments – to agree the payments for July and August 2025.

July, payments £1,486.35, receipts £3,740.28, approved by all, signed off by Cllr Mitchell.

August, payments £2,898.43, no receipts, approved by all, signed off by Cllr Mitchell.

b. Monthly reconciliation – August bank reconciliation.

As at 31/08/25 the Current Account £74,574.14. Business Account £55,586.09. The accounts are holding reserves of £88,630.92 CIL money of which £80,000 is ring fenced for the picnic site and £13,753.44 for grass cutting (Brett Aggregates). Signed off by Cllr Mitchell.

c. Annual Insurance renewal paid. Also update on the Insurance/Ombudsman claim

The Clerk advised that the renewal up to 1st October 2026, £1004.02 has now been paid.
Chairman informed that the Ombudsman have informed that they cannot consider a claim from a Parish Council. The insurance company is unlikely to compensate to the cost of the legal fees paid out last year for the ND Services court case.

d. To Consider a request received from the New Local U15 Football Team, Claydon FC

The Chairman asked the PC if it wished to consider sponsoring a football club. £200 left in the budget for donations. Cllr Fenn suggest that the PC is better off supporting local recreational facilities rather than a football club. All in agreement. The Chairman asked if the PC supports giving a donation to the football club, all against. Proposed the Chairman seconded Cllr Fenn.

e. To Consider a donation to the Wombles for the provision of litter picking equipment

The Chairman reminded that a few months previously the PC had agreed to pay for litter picking equipment once an invoice has been received. A receipt for £44.95 has now been presented. Agreed by all to pay, proposed Cllr Fenn seconded Cllr Gregory.

f. To Consider the Parish Clerks Annual Pay Increase – April 2025

The Chairman informed that having studied the NALC national pay agreement and how it is calculated, it is apparent that the Clerk is not being paid the legal requirement. She meets the criteria of profile 1 and profile 2 and a couple of the criteria on profile 3 on the local government benchmarks. Therefore should be placed at level 2 – above the substantive benchmark range, SCP 29 to 32.

This would reflect the Clerks experience and meet the legal requirements. The Clerk is currently on SCP 25 which is below the benchmark. Therefore, the Chairman would like to recommend that the Clerk is placed at SCP 29 or 30. Cllr Mitchell proposed SCP 30, seconded Cllr Lesley.

SCP 30 = £21.14 per hour, salary £12,092.08 per annum. To be backdated to 1st April 2025
The Chairman recommends that when the PC budget is set in November, it should take into account the possible raise to LC3 of the NALC pay agreement.
The Clerk thanked the PC for acknowledging her experience and increasing her salary.

7.09 CONCLUSION OF EXTERNAL AUDIT – END OF YEAR ACCOUNTS 2024-2025

The Clerk reported that the external auditors PKF Littlejohn have issued their report and certificate for the end of year accounts. They conclude that the PC has met all relevant legislation and regulatory requirements. The conclusion of audit notice has been placed on the noticeboards and the PC website. Invoice received for the services of PKF Littlejohn, £378.00. Payment proposed by the Chairman seconded Cllr Gregory, approved by all.

8.09 REVIEW OF THE BARHAM PARISH COUNCIL SAFE GUARDING POLICY

The document has not been reviewed since the PC adopted it in August 2021. No changes required to the document. Reviewed and approved by all, proposed Cllr Fenn seconded Cllr Lesley.

9.09 KIRBY RISE PLAY AREA

a. Annual Sovereign Play Area Inspection Report – August 2025

The report has been circulated to all ahead of the meeting. The Chairman advised that a couple of minor issues have been raised and highlighted as low risk. Matting under the swings will need replacing in the future.

On the previous ROSPA inspection an issue that the gap is too big between the slide and the ladder, a solution has still not been resolved. Clerk to follow up with the inspector who carried out the inspection to get clarification on how to proceed with making it safe.

b. To Review the Kirby Rise Health & Safety Policy

The document has not been reviewed since the PC adopted it in April 2021. The Clerk asked if the PC need to consider a newer health & safety policy? However, it was agreed by all that the current policy meets the requirements of the PC. Regular inspections of the play equipment are carried out on a monthly basis by the Chairman and logged. Risk assessment is carried out annually by ROSPA. No changes required to the document. Reviewed and approved by all, proposed the Chairman, seconded Cllr Gregory.

The Clerk informed that she has been contacted by a member of the public asking why the gate at the play area cannot be closed to stop children from running out. The Chairman reminded that a previous ROSPA inspection had highlighted that children could get fingers trapped in the lock. It had therefore been agreed by the PC to remove the opening lock and to leave the gate open in a locked position. There is a notice in the play area to advise that children should be supervised.

10.09 ASSERTION 10 – The Latest Website Accessibility Regulations

The Clerk reported that she has recently taken part in training for the new website accessibility regulations which are coming into force. It will be a requirement in future on the AGAR forms to show that the PC is following the guidelines and will also need to adopt an IT Policy and review its website Accessibility Statement. Therefore, the PC website is in need of being brought up to date to meet the requirements. The Clerk has received a quote from a company who would design a whole new compliant website £499 plus VAT and to keep the website up to date on a yearly basis £299 plus VAT. The PC website provider Suffolk Cloud can carry out an audit of the current website and give an report and recommendations of issues which need to be addressed, £70.00 plus VAT. They will then update the current website to comply with the guidelines, £35 per hour, 1 – 2 hours work. The Chairman asked for those in favour of a whole new website with a new provider, none in favour. All in favour to stick with the current provider Suffolk Cloud and for them to proceed with updating for the new regulations. Proposed the Chairman seconded Cllr Mitchell.

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

The Chairman reported that he has had a meeting with the Chief Executive of Mid Suffolk Council. He complained that Barham is ignored when it comes to recommendations or objections which the PC make on planning applications. Also, that it is impossible to get hold of a planning officer at the council.

He reiterated the disappointment of the PC that the district council did not give £250,000 CIL money to Barham Picnic Site Charity, but instead awarded it to a local football club.

Chairman's initials.....

The Taylor Wimpey site in Barham will generate over £2 million CIL for the district council to be spent on infrastructure. Facilities need to be built in Barham before all of the new homes are built.

The Chairman informed that the district council is now looking at reimbursing the £250,000 to the Picnic Site Charity.

He had attended a recent meeting with 5 of the surrounding parishes regarding a joint neighbourhood plan. Barham is against doing its own individual Neighbourhood Plan.

However, he has now been made aware that Port One has offered to pay for a joint neighbourhood plan to be carried out. Consultants costing £40,000 would be brought in to carry out the majority of the work.

However, it will involve the input of the residents.

It was agreed by all that the Chairman will register the interests of Barham Parish Council into being part of a joint Neighbourhood Plan and will report back the progression at the next PC meeting.

Chairman encourage any questions which the PC would like answered by the consultants for his meeting with them in a months' time.

Village meeting to take place with the local MP Patrick Spencer, Barham Church Hall, 30th September 2025, 6pm.

2 public exhibitions to take place at Barham Church Hall on 16th & 23rd October, 11am to 8pm with Brett Aggregates regarding proposed extension works at the quarry.

12.09 DATE OF NEXT MEETING. Monday 17th November 2025.

The meeting ended at 8.55pm.

Chairman **Date**