

**MINUTES OF ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
ON THURSDAY 28th APRIL 2022 IN BARROW VILLAGE HALL**

PRESENT: Mr J Pearson – Chairman, Mr R Ford, Mr D Holmes, Mr Z Kronbergs, Mr P Wesley,
Mr R Rawlings, Mr T Bragg

Cllr Soons, Suffolk County Council
Cllr Ian Houlder, West Suffolk Council
PC Lee Andrews-Pearce

9 Electors

Clerk in attendance: Mrs K Bowe

Mr Pearson, Chairman of Barrow cum Denham Parish Council welcomed everyone to the Annual Parish Meeting of the Parish Council.

1. To approve Minutes of the last meeting, held Thursday 29th April 2021

The Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting, held on 29th April 2021, having been previously circulated, were taken as read and were signed by the Chairman as a correct record. This was proposed by Cllr R Rawlings and seconded by Cllr Wesley.

2. Parish Council Report

Cllr Pearson gave his report. Improvements have been made to the village hall, the kitchen in the hall has been updated, new outdoors lights have been installed and there is a new ramp to the side door. The bookings are back to where they were.

There has been an ongoing issue with surface water on the pavement opposite the Doctors Surgery. Highways have confirmed they will fund improvements to this section of the pavement and drawings have been done. The Parish Council (PC) are hoping these works will be completed by the end of the year.

The PC have been seeking quotes to improve the access road on The Green. The road is uneven and suffers from poor drainage. Once the last quote has been received the PC will choose a contractor. It has been agreed that the work will be carried out, hopefully later this year.

The Parish Council are hoping to put a changing facility on the Village Playing field. The plan is to install an anti-vandal building for clubs and organisations to use. The building will also have toilets. The PC should be able to use so S106 money for this alongside fundraising and grants.

Cllr Pearson confirmed that the PC were still working on the Neighbourhood Plan (NHP) and that Cllr Kronbergs would give an update later in the meeting. Cllr Pearson expressed his surprised that West Suffolk Council (WSC) had published details on the new Local Plan without speaking to the PC first. The PC had been trying to arrange a meeting for months.

Cllr Pearson reiterated the importance of the NHP and reminded people that they are not voting for or against development. Development will happen, the NHP will influence the sites selected and the type of housing.

There is a new team organising the fireworks and the event was a tremendous success.

There are extensive jubilee plans. Every child at Barrow School will receive a jubilee mug. These will also be for sale in the Post Office.

Cllr Pearson confirmed the PC had objected to the planning application for the pub garden and it had now be passed the planning inspectorate. Cllr Pearson encouraged people to make their own representations to the planning department.

The school remains very popular and has now fully transferred across to the two tier system. The majority of the children offered a place for September live within the village of the schools catchment area. If the village sees additional development then the school will have to expand and the local authority have indicated they would try to acquire additional land. Full report on website.

Cllr Pearson expressed his disappointment about the recent Barrow Hill litter pick. The only people who attended were three Councillors and a Councillors wife. This was advertised on social media and notice boards. The PC continues to publish a quarterly newsletter called Newslink which is delivered to every household in the village. There will be a Jubilee Edition Newslink.

The Parish Council also held a drop in event for residents to meet PC Lee Andrew-Pearce and sadly no one turned up. Again this was well advertised.

3. Finance Report

The report will be available on the website. The precept for 2021/2022 was £25,472, almost half of this is spent on village maintenance (grass cutting). There was a surplus of £4k at the end of the year. The PC has some planned expenditure including dredging the pond which could help to resolve some of the drainage issues. Unfortunately, contractors are not prepared to do it. The PC is in discussions with Highways to try to come to a resolution.

Expenditure has remained largely the same, there has been an increase in administration costs and general maintenance.

4. Neighbourhood Plan Report

Cllr Kronbergs gave an update on the NHP. The report will be available on the website.

The NHP can do many things, including specifying sites/design/type of properties. It can not say no to further development. WSC preferred sites are 150 dwellings on Bury Road (BD13) and 20 dwellings on Denham Road (BD9). WSC's preferred sites are open for consultation.

The PC do not agree with WSC's method for strategic housing requirement and are challenging this.

The final stage of the NHP will be the referendum. WSC plan to have their local plan in place by the end of 2023/early 2024. The aim is to get the NHP agreed first.

5. Police report

PC Lee Andrew-Pearce introduced himself as Community Engagement Office. He stated that the number of police officers has significantly reduced and it had been decided to reintroduce police officers back into the communities, where they should be. PC Andrew Pearce has been working closely with Cllr Rawlings, with message cascading and speeding motorists.

PC Andrew-Pearce also spoke about the importance of crime prevention in the village, locking sheds and cars and securing property. Leaving backdoors open is the biggest cause of domestic burglaries, people don't tend to break in they walk in. There had recently been an incident in the shop. CCTV was handed over to police but unfortunately the wrong CCTV was given and the correct CCTV had been overwritten in error.

Crime has changed. There is still the 'bread and butter' crime like robberies and burglaries however, the darker side of crime is increasing such as exploitation, child/adult slavery, county lines, drug dealing all of which often happens in plain sight.

The police are trying to have a bigger presence in the communities with speed watch, in schools, coffee mornings, fetes etc, in an attempt to re-establish community links.

Cllr Kronbergs asked about internet and phone scams. These have increased in recent years. It is fraud. People are very clever. Fraudsters are treasure hunters, posing as well known organisations such as HMRC, BT, TV Licencing, Banks and are very convincing. It is important to check the email address and report anything suspicious.

PC Andrew-Pearce recommended keeping valuable in the car out of sight and locking the doors. So many people leave their cars unlocked when they are home.

6. Question and Answer

What's going to be done about Bury Road, from Mill Lane to Sharpes Hill, it is not fit for purpose. Cllr Houlder stated they were speaking to the converted. Everyone should have their say and give their opinion at the consultation. The infrastructure for the village, including roads is not adequate. Puddles everywhere, drivers soaking pedestrians. Suffolk County Council are responsible for Highways and they need to be aware if any additional development is going to take place.

The more people that say something the better. Developers should be partly responsible for improving the infrastructure. Extreme sums of money are paid to education and Highways and Barrow should see some on this money, not be told there is no money available.

When the next development is approved improvement to roads should be included in the contract. The money paid to Highways is not within our control.

It is important not to just focus on area near the development, the school isn't big enough, an additional 170 houses will impact the school, school may need additional land.

Cllr Houlder felt that allowing developers to come and build in villages can have a negative affect on the village.

Cllr Pearson encouraged residents to make representations to the planning department. The Parish Council have been berated for decisions they are not responsible for. There is a fear that the years of work that have gone into the Neighbourhood Plan could be voted down.

The latest development included a brilliant cycle path which then stops, joined up thinking was not used. Developers make vast contributions and unfortunately the village does not see the benefit of these.

Developers can have conditions written into contracts however they can appeal these to the planning inspector and in some cases have the conditions removed.

It was stated that the slightest bit of rain and the road from Mill Lane, down Bury Road floods. This water is coming from the field proposed for development.

The Parish Council were asked if they would encourage residents to make representations. It was confirmed that there will be a special edition Newslink for the NHP encouraging residents to have their say.

Cllr Houlder was asked when WSC would be open for people to walk in and ask questions again. Cllr Houlder confirmed that he didn't know. They are still not letting go of COVID restrictions.

A resident stated that as Colethorpe Lane had been deferred by WSC the NHP cannot go to conflict with the local plan.

Cllr Pearson stated that the Parish Council considered cancelling Newslink as no one wanted to contribute. The Parish Council received a grant and started accepting advertising to fund it but it is increasingly difficult to get people to contribute.

WSC have included the whole of Bury Road site in their proposed sites. The Parish Council would only favour part of the site, nearest Dale Tree Road and Lion Green.

The Parish Council are considering a number of options for the NHP.

The WCS local plan will not be finalised until late 2023/24

The Village has lots of ponds and newts have been found at many of these ponds. Highways are not helping with the dredging of the ponds, despite many meetings. Highways need to help with adequate drainage and consider re-engineering the drains.

7. Any Other Business

Cllr Steer gave an update on the Jubilee plans. Starting with the Lighting of the Beacon event, free family event with food, music, bouncy castle. There will also be a royal tea party, tickets £5 per head. On Saturday, Radio Suffolk are spending the morning in Barrow, attending the breakfast, planting of the tree, unveiling of the bench and the family event at the Three Horseshoes Pub. On Sunday there is a civic service at the church, followed by a big lunch on the green. There is also a royal themed scarecrow festival all weekend.

The meeting was closed at 9pm

Signed..... Dated.....