

Barton Mills Parish Council

Clerk to the Council:

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Minutes of the Meeting of Barton Mills Parish Council

Held in the Village Hall on Friday 9th March 2012 at 7.00 pm.

Attendance: Cllr Robert Lewis (Chairman)
Cllr Amin Harji (Vice Chairman)
Cllr Pamela Boura
Cllr Tim Harris
Cllr Garry Flack
Cllr Frances Lewis
Cllr Steve Mullender
Cllr Charlie Peachey
County Cllr Stephen Frost
PCSO Dawn Rowan
James Bercovici (Clerk)

0. **Opportunity for members of the Public to speak (3 minute limit, not statutory part of meeting).**
Cllr R Lewis introduced Kay Blanchard who lives at the Old Dairy site and who has expressed interest in joining the Parish Council as a co-opted member. She told the council that she has been living in Barton Mills for four years and was interested in being more involved in the community.
1. **Courtesies. Apologies and Signing of the Register. Declarations of Interest.**
Apologies: District Cllr Tim Huggan
2. **Police Matters**
PCSO Rowan gave her report (filed with the minutes) and outlined concerns about burglaries from sheds and garages. Cllr Harji asked what people should do if they saw anyone they thought looked suspicious. PCSO said they should call 101. Cllr Boura enquired about on-the-spot fines for dog fouling; PCSO Rowan said these required by-laws. The Clerk was asked to investigate this.
3. **Minutes of the meeting held on 10th February 2012**
Cllr Boura proposed agreeing the minutes: all in favour.
4. **Matters arising and pending**
 - a. Affordable housing. Following the open day in November and subsequent Parish Council meeting, several issues were raised with Hastoe
 1. Weather boarding
 2. Position of the access road
 3. Moving the properties back slightly so they are further away from the road
 4. More trees to screen the development from neighbours opposite
 5. More visitors parking to the rear of the development.

Previously Cllr R Lewis had summarized the position: the Parish Council had identified its preferred site and drawings had been prepared and everything put to public consultation. He asserted that no final decision had been made. He said the open meeting had been well attended and that the concerns raised by Church Lane residents were being listened to. He said there had been some confusion between this and the Flagship scheme at the Church Lane Close garages. Church Lane residents had requested dialogue with Hastoe concerning the Church Lane scheme, especially in respect of its siting. Cllr R Lewis had attended a meeting between the residents and Hastoe who are now looking at design changes, most of which are acceptable although some are more problematic.

The question of the site is the main concern; the residents had identified two other sites for consideration, both privately owned (end of Church Lane and the field behind Mildenhall Road and Church Meadow). Hastoe subsequently provided an interim report stating Forest Heath considers the two alternative sites unsuitable. The Clerk is waiting to learn the reasons for this. Cllr R Lewis thought it necessary to know the reasons before discussing the matter further. He suggested considering this at the next meeting along with the suggested changes to the scheme under consideration and whether to agree and pursue the scheme.

At the March meeting, Cllr R Lewis summarized the current position and acknowledged a potential conflict of interest. He then read out an update provided by Isobel Wright of Hastoe which detailed FHDC's reasons against the alternative sites put forward by the residents of Church Lane. He asked if any councilors wanted to propose to look further into any alternative sites saying that, if not, the council would revert to its default position of looking at the Church Lane site only. Cllrs Peachey, F Lewis, R Lewis and Mullender asked for the minutes to record a possible prejudicial interest in respect of this. However, no proposal was forthcoming so it was assumed their interests were irrelevant.

Cllr R Lewis outlined the remaining issues. As far as the access road is concerned, Isobel Wright's email stated that moving the road would simply move the problem and, additionally, would necessitate a larger site. She said the properties could be moved back further to reduce the impact on houses opposite and, also, more trees could be added. Cllr Mullender wondered whether the road should be in front of the houses so that the houses would be positioned further back from Church Lane. Dan Poitras (a resident) said the residents were against this design and reiterated that the access road in the middle would be directly opposite 46 Church Lane. Cllr R Lewis mooted the idea of moving the whole development along so that the access road would be opposite a garage, for example, rather than a window. Cllr Harji said that if the access was to the side then fewer car movements would be in front of the properties opposite. Cllr Boura said she could see advantages to putting the access road to the side of the development.

Cllr Harris proposed agreeing the drive to be positioned on the right hand side, the houses moved back and more foliage: six in favour, two against.

Parking for visitors was another concern. This would be dealt with by increasing parking spaces for visitors thereby reducing the need to park on Church Lane.

The appearance of the properties remained an issue. The Parish Council had discussed having a mix of styles but residents opposite would prefer all brick finishes. Cllr R Lewis said that, ultimately, this would be a decision for FHDC. Cllr Boura said she would still like to see some rendering; Cllr F Lewis agreed she would like some variation but thought the access road would break up the visual impact. Cllr Mullender acknowledged that contemporary developments have mixed appearances. Cllr Flack thought it would be more appropriate if the new houses blend in with the surrounding area. Dan Poitras said a mix of rendered and brick finishes doesn't appeal to the residents. He said that an all-brick finish would look good if the properties were stepped to give different perspectives. Cllr Boura thought brickwork would require less maintenance. Cllr R Lewis suggested Hastoe could be asked to proceed with finalizing the drawings but showing rendering/brick or all brick options so the council could decide at its next meeting. Cllr Harris said he was keen to listen to the neighbours and that, if they would prefer all brick, then he has no objection to that.

Cllr Peachey proposed all brick finishing but that the properties should be stepped for perspective: seven in favour, one abstention. Cllr Boura suggested asking for brick samples to be agreed by councillors.

Cllr R Lewis thanked the Church Lane residents for putting forward their views well and said the Parish Council had tried to take them on board.

- b. Village Green re-levelling. John Brown (of John Brown Landscapes) has advised that the job is too big for him but he estimates the cost of the work to be done at around £2,200. This compared with the existing quote of £680 but the Clerk suggested this should be confirmed; in particular he was concerned to ensure it was quoting for the same work. Cllr F Lewis advised the Burrel Trust may be able to help with this work. Cllr R Lewis suggested asking Tilbrooks for a quote. Cllr Harris asked about the timing of the work given the plans for the Jubilee weekend. Cllr Mullender proposed the Clerk accepts the best quote up to £1000 for work to start as soon as possible: all in favour.

- c. Diamond Jubilee 2012. Two meetings have been held since the last Parish Council meeting. Cllr R Lewis had prepared a report which was distributed to councillors at the meeting. There was a proposal to erect a large tree as a memorial and it was suggested that County Cllr Frost be approached for a donation from his locality budget for this. Cllr Peachey thought the tree would need to be on council-owned land and various locations were discussed. Cllr F Lewis said it would be good to have a seat around the tree. Cllr Harris thought the Clerk should apply for a grant to include this. Cllr Peachey agreed to look into the type of tree wanted.
- d. Play equipment. Previously, the Clerk had investigated the insurance position as to whether minor repairs can be carried out by volunteers and ascertained that the insurers required anyone working on Parish Council-owned property to have their own public liability cover in some circumstances. However, Cllr Boura had suggested the council needs a proper procedure for minor repairs. Cllr R Lewis proposed that Cllr Boura undertakes a risk assessment and effects the repairs as deemed necessary: all in favour. Currently, the frozen ground is preventing the repairs from being effected.

The Clerk was asked to write to the insurers stating that the usual repairman is John Squire who has a maintenance background and that the Parish Council has the manuals for the equipment.

- e. Locality Budget. County Cllr Frost previously advised that there is money available from the locality budget. The Parish Council decided (see 4c, above) to apply for funding to plant a memorial tree with a surrounding bench.
- f. Spring Clean – Forest Heath will be holding its spring clean fortnight this year between 26th March and 8th April. Cllr F Lewis said that Barton Mills usually makes an effort with support from FHDC. She suggested the 14th April and asked the Clerk to advertise this in the Barton Miller.
- g. Parish Forum report – Cllr F Lewis submitted a comprehensive report, distributed to councillors with the March agenda. She has also provided the Clerk with an update on the Future of Standards and Ethics and other reports from the meeting. She was especially keen to draw the new code of conduct guidelines for Parish Councils to councillors' attention.
- h. SALC Report – Cllr Boura said the discussions on Shared Services and the LDF were the main items of interest.
- i. Village of the Year competition – Cllr Boura agreed to look at the forms and make suggestions before passing it on for others to look at.

5. Reports from the District and County Councillors

- a. District Cllr Huggan submitted a written report (filed with the minutes)
- b. County Cllr Frost said he would be pleased to help with the proposed Jubilee memorial. He said the County Council budget has been passed and that it was hoped that many of the cuts would be met by natural wastage and the closing of offices. He reminded councillors of the forthcoming road closures.

6. Finance - Standard Payments for approval (inc. VAT)

- a. £264.00 J Bercovici (clerk's net salary, February 2012) – chq. 1171
- b. £66.00 HMRC (PAYE, February 2012) – chq.
- c. £203.29 J Bercovici (clerk's expenses February 2012 including £89.79 for Barton Miller donation – half the current awarded donation – and stationery supplies) – chq. 1171

Special payments for approval (inc. VAT)

- d. £179.64 Greenside Online (parking cones – payable to the Clerk) – chq. 1171
- e. £3382.43 Suffolk CC (streetlighting maintenance and energy to 31st March 2012) – chq. 1172
- f. £25 Suffolk ACRE (membership to 31/03/2013) – chq. 1173

Cllr Harris proposed agreeing all payments: all in favour.

7. Planning.

Note - *ITALICS: Parish Council comments passed to Forest Heath DC.* **Forest Heath DC decision**

General and for consideration:

Awaiting Forest Heath decisions and pending appeals.

- a. F/2011/0762/FUL Plot 4A and 4B Bell Lane – erection of two linked cottages, garaging, parking, access road and associated site works (Departure from the Development Plan) *Cllr Boura proposed objecting on grounds of over-development of the site: one in favour, five against. Cllr Mullender proposed no objections: five in favour, one against.*

Decisions

- b. F/2011/0608/OUT 22 and part of 24 Mildenhall Road – outline application: erection of 2 dwellings (demolition of existing bungalow). *Cllr F Lewis proposed objecting to the application on the grounds that it is over-development of the site and not in keeping with other properties on the existing street scene. All in favour except Cllr Peachey. REFUSED*

8. Correspondence (including emails)

Standard items

- a. Forest Heath DC agendas/minutes (available at forest-heath.gov.uk).

Special items

- b. Coffee caravan – request to use the car park on Monday 18th June 10am -12pm and Wednesday 5th September 2pm – 4pm. Cllr F Lewis said she would advertise this in the Barton Miller.
- c. Scarecrow Torch Weekend update
- d. Big Jubilee Lunch flier
- e. EAAA and SARS – thank you letters for donations
- f. XChange Pod – request for continuance. Cllr Boura proposed allowing Youth for Christ to continue until further notice: all in favour.

9. Any other business (with consent of the Chairman)

- a. Mildenhall Road – Cllr Peachey said Suffolk CC needs to tidy up the trees on a section of this road for which it is responsible.
- b. Scarecrow Torch weekend – Cllr F Lewis said that she had applied for a grant for a Torch party on the Saturday evening of the weekend of 7th July and that a marquee and the village hall had been booked. She requested permission to use the field. Cllr Boura proposed agreeing this: all in favour. Cllr Boura asked if there would be a charge for this. The Clerk reminded the council that it had been agreed that there would only be a charge for organisations using the field for fundraising purposes; Cllr Mullender proposed no charge for this occasion: all in favour.
- c. Clock fund – Cllr F Lewis said funds were still coming in but around £900 is still to be raised.
- d. Village hall shed – Cllr F Lewis advised there would soon be a new shed for the old chairs and the new signs.

10. Date of next meeting: 20th April 2012. Cllr F Lewis gave her apologies.