

# 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 14<sup>th</sup> March 2014 at 7.00 pm.

**Attendance:** Cllr Robert Lewis (Chairman)  
Cllr Amin Harji (Vice Chairman)  
Cllr Pamela Boura  
Cllr Garry Flack  
Cllr Frances Lewis  
Cllr Charlie Peachey  
James Bercovici (Clerk)

**0. Opportunity for members of the Public to speak (3 minute limit, not statutory part of meeting).**

**1. Police Matters**

None reported.

**2. Courtesies. Apologies and Signing of the Register. Declarations of Interest.**

Apologies: Cllr Kay Blanchard, Cllr Steve Mullender, County Cllr James Waters

Declarations: none

**3. Minutes of the meeting held on 14th February 2014**

Cllr Boura proposed agreeing the minutes: all in favour.

**4. Matters arising and pending** (italicised text refers to historical background)

a. Church Lane Close development. Flagship has selected a contractor and has an update for the Parish Council. Lee Webster attended the meeting for Flagship. Cllr R Lewis outlined the current position: the consent to develop will expire in May, that Lee Webster had attended an earlier meeting with residents well represented where there had been a general acceptance that the development would take place but concerns were raised. He asked if priority would go to Barton Mills residents. He also asked about two and three bedroom properties in light of recent problems with the Hastoe development and the so-called bedroom tax.

Lee Webster explained that this development is different and the requirement for a local lettings policy is uncertain. He advised that FHDC considers that Barton Mills has covered its housing needs. Cllr R Lewis observed that this will be better know with factual evidence to support or refute this once all Hastoe applications are in. Lee Webster did advise, in any case, that the aim will be to fill the new properties to their full potential.

He gave an update: seven tenders had been shortlisted to two or three. Interviews had been conducted to discuss concerns and planning conditions. He advised that the favoured developer will employ a Tenant Liaison Officer who will liaise directly with residents of Church Lane Close. All delivery drivers are to enter the village along Church Lane and deliveries will be planned and timed with none to arrive at peak times (8-9.30am and 2.30-4pm). There will be a local depot for surplus supplies and a newsletter to local residents prior to commencement with regular updates. Cllr Harji asked how long the development would take; probably 10-12 months. Lee Webster then gave details of the plans.

b. Affordable Housing. *Cllr R Lewis had learnt that single people and couples are only eligible for one bedroom properties and, consequently, they are ineligible for the rental-only houses being built for Church Lane although the restriction is not applicable to shared ownership properties. However, he learnt that Hastoe could apply to have the restriction lifted and suggested that the process be stalled whilst this amendment is sought. Paul Turner of Hastoe confirmed that Hastoe has requested that FHDC readvertise the rental properties and consider applications from households under-occupying by one bedroom against the standard needs assessment. Cllr R Lewis said the intention was for Hastoe to*

*let no more than one additional bedroom per household so, for example, a couple would be eligible for a two-bedroom property (there will be two 3-bedroom homes and four 2-bedroom homes). Cllr Boura pointed out that if applicants were on benefits they would not receive enough to cover the rent.*

Hastoe has received three new application forms for the shared ownership properties, two from residents of Barton Mills. They are closing this round of allocations on Friday 14<sup>th</sup> March and hope then to be able to allocate to the strongest local connection who pass the affordability checks.

Cllr Boura thought it would be interesting to know the statistics of the applications - for example, how many applicants needed only one bedroom. Cllr R Lewis said the Bury Free Press wants to do a feature and that the Parish Council could be involved.

- c. Car parking. Cllr Boura had asked to review the subject of matting on the field for the overflow car park and around the tree seat. Note: at the February meeting, the Parish Council rejected the idea of replacing the Jubilee gate; Cllr Waters had already allocated £1,000 of his locality budget to this and needs to be able to allocate it for another Parish Council project.

The Clerk has learnt that the contractor intends to build the soakaway in the next two weeks. Work has been delayed until now because of the weather.

Cllr Boura said matting is needed to prevent further deterioration of the field where overflow parking occurs. She was concerned about the entrance to the car park but the Clerk was able to advise that this is included in the soakaway job so should be done soon. Cllrs R Lewis and Boura agreed to plan the area. Cllr Boura said she thought the cost would be around £350 but would get an up-to-date price. Cllr Harji suggested getting a double strip as originally planned.

Cllr Peachey suggested field repairs for the locality budget. The Clerk thought this could be problematic as the grants are usually for capital projects. Cllr R Lewis suggested upgrading of the playing surface. The Clerk agreed to pursue prices for seeding and fertilising. Cllr Peachey thought more should be budgeted for the maintenance of the field.

- d. Street lighting. Pearce and Kemp are progressing the quote and Cllr Boura had a site meeting with them on Tuesday 11th March. They hope to have a quote in time for the April meeting.
- e. Litter pickers - *Cllr F Lewis is investigating prices which look to be around £10 each.* She said she would enquire if it is possible to buy some through FHDC.
- f. Parish Forum. Arising from the meeting:
  - i. The government is considering withdrawing the ability of parish councils to reclaim VAT. This could coincide with the expected new restrictions on raising the precept. It is suggested that parish councils should write to Matthew Hancock, SALC and NALC.
  - ii. Locality working - Manor Ward is grouped with Mildenhall and Eriswell and our locality officer is Lesley-Ann Keogh.
- g. Strategic housing land availability assessment (SHLAA). Magnus Magnusson at FHDC, who is overseeing the process, has advised that the timetables have slipped back. The Parish Council should receive notification by the end of February with an eight week consultation process (for site specific choices/options). Cllr Mullender expressed concern that, perhaps, he should not say anything in respect of this given his earlier declaration of interest in respect of development outside the development line but suggested that the village should be able to grow in a controlled way and that the Parish Council should consider whether other developments were needed.
- h. John Wiggin memorial bench - this has been delivered to Cllr Peachey's house. The Clerk has approached two local contractors but has yet to receive any quotes for a concrete base.

Matt Wilson has been asked to quote for this. Cllr Peachey enquired about the positioning of the bench as there are already six along Mildenhall Road so he suggested that the other side of the field or near the play equipment would be better. Cllr R Lewis suggested looking at this after the meeting. Cllr Peachey also thought the benches needed treatment and that John Squires could be asked to do this. It was suggested that Matt could be asked to undertake repairs to the damaged bench.

- i. Playing field. The contractor is looking at early March for filling in the trench to try insure the best start for the grass seed. He asked if the Parish Council wants a price for fertilising the whole playing field or

just the football pitch and aimed to look at it before the February meeting. Cllr F Lewis suggested the Clerk could apply to the Burrell Trust for any shortfall in funding for this.

- j. Neighbourhood Watch: Following his recent break-in, Mr Squirrel is requesting that the PC should consider reviving Neighbourhood Watch. Cllr Harji said it still exists, organised by the police. Cllr Boura said it needs a new coordinator. The Clerk agreed to put something to this effect in the Barton Miller.
- k. Annual Spring Clean. Cllr F Lewis said she would follow this up, suggesting 5th April.
- l. Co-option. The Clerk has contacted Cllr Harris who has indicated that he will write with his resignation but this has not yet been received. In addition to Keith Fuller, Claire Tilbrook has also expressed interest in joining the Parish Council.

Cllr Boura agreed that the process cannot start until Cllr Harris' resignation has been received. She said it would be necessary to advertise to see if at least ten parishioners want to petition for an election. If not, then the cooption process can start.

- m. Dog Foul bins. Cllr R Lewis reported that, at the Burrell Trust meeting, it was thought there are insufficient bins in the village. The Trust can provide bins for the playing field but the Parish Council would have to pay for them to be emptied. Cllr Boura said that, if the parish council has to pay the ongoing costs then she was not in favour of this. Cllr Peachey agreed, observing that if people are going to leave mess, more bins would make no difference.
- n. SALC Report. Cllr F Lewis outlined her report of the meeting which is filed with the minutes.

## 5. Reports from the County and District Councillors

Cllr Waters had advised that he is able to provide a flashing speeding sign and asked if the Parish Council definitely wanted this and, if so, where. Cllr Boura thought it highly desirable and suggested Worlington Road. Cllr R Lewis agreed, suggesting near the entrance to Bridge Farm Close.

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

- a. £280.00 J Bercovici (clerk's net salary, February 2014) – chq. 1279
- b. £70.00 HMRC (PAYE, February 2014) – chq.
- c. £26.26 J Bercovici (clerk's expenses February 2014) - chq. 1279

### Special payments for approval (inc. VAT)

- d. £897.60 Streetmaster (bench) - chq. 1280
- e. £709.44 Inkjets & Toners (re. Barton Miller- payable to Clerk) - chq. 1279

Cllr Boura proposed agreeing all payments: all in favour.

### Finance - other

The Clerk had been approached by Dave Traher on behalf of the village hall which needs a new cooker. The Burrell Trust had agreed to donate the cost of the cooker but asked if the transaction could be made by the Parish Council to take advantage of its ability to reclaim VAT. Cllr F Lewis suggested this could also be applied to the new tables, paid for by Cllr Waters' locality budget. She said also that the church is buying more tables and asked if the Parish Council would support this. Cllr Boura proposed agreeing to these: all in favour except Cllr F Lewis who abstained.

## 7. Planning.

### General and for consideration:

- a. DC/14/0286/HH - 3 Church Meadow - erection of single storey rear extension and first floor extension over garage. Cllr Boura proposed no objections: all in favour.
- b. DC/14/0146/FUL - 36 Mildenhall Road: Erection of a one-and-a-half storey dwelling and alterations to vehicular access. Cllr Boura thought this overdevelopment of the site. Cllr F Lewis agreed. Cllr R Lewis decided to declare an interest; Cllr F Lewis followed suit. Cllr Boura proposed objecting on the grounds of overdevelopment of the site and because the layout is not in keeping with the rest of Mildenhall Road: three in favour, two against.

### **Awaiting Forest Heath decisions and pending appeals**

- c. DC/13/0927/OUT - Land South Of Worlington Road: Outline application - residential development of up to 78 dwellings with creation of new vehicular access (Major Development and Departure from the Development Plan). *Note: plans had not been received in time for the January meeting. Cllrs F Lewis and R Lewis declared interests. Cllr Boura suggested that if the plans were the same as those discussed in December, the comments submitted by her and Cllr Harji could be submitted to FHDC but, if they are different in any way, an extension could be asked for. Cllr R Lewis thought the plans should be considered properly at the next meeting. He thought the public should be notified of this in the Barton Miller and that the plans should be available for the public to view from 6.45pm before the start of the meeting.* The Parish Council has received strong objections from some local residents: Leonard Laker of Worlington Road and David Little of the Old Station.

Note: this item was brought forward to the beginning of the meeting (after item 0). Cllr Boura thought there are two independent issues: the development of the field, creating a suburb of Mildenhall, linking Barton Mills with Worlington. Second, the plans themselves. Cllr Peachey said he opposes the proposal as it is outside the development line (Cllr F Lewis said the Parish Council had agreed this policy several years before). Cllr Peachey said, also, that this is good agricultural land which is needed. Cllr Harji thought that if other proposals had been rejected because they are outside the development line then this should be rejected as well; on the other hand, he could see the need for more houses. One local resident commented that she had applied for permission to develop on her land and had been told 'no' categorically. Cllr R Lewis outlined FHDC's need to build outside the development line if there is a strategically good reason. Cllr Waters said FHDC has no 5 year land supply and will find itself 700-800 houses short. The Clerk outlined Mr Laker's letter objecting to the application. Mrs Laker expressed particular concern about the pedestrian access. She said she had witnessed three accidents on Station Road in the last three years.

Cllr Boura proposed that the Parish Council objects to the application on the grounds that it would create a suburb of Mildenhall within Barton Mills, it would link Barton Mills to Worlington, there would be considerable issues with both traffic and pedestrian access and it is outside the development line: all in favour.

Cllr R Lewis encouraged members of the public to write in to FHDC with their objections. Cllr Boura offered to attend the consultation meeting to reinforce objections.

- d. DC/13/0877/FUL - Land Between 4 And 6 Wiggin Close: Change of use of existing grassed area to 2 parking spaces. Cllr Boura proposed no objections: all in favour.

### **Forest Heath Decisions**

- e. DC/13/0817/FUL - East Of England Ambulance Service, Fiveways: Erection of a single storey extension to provide a new workshop bay. Removal of existing showroom windows and replacement with smaller windows and erection of a new modular building for office/store. *Note: plans had not been received in time for the meeting. Cllr F Lewis proposed that Cllrs Boura and R Lewis consider this application and decide an appropriate response on behalf of the Parish Council. The response reported was 'no objections'. **APPROVED***

### **8. Any other business (with consent of the Chairman)**

- a. Scarecrow Festival. Cllr F Lewis advised that she had applied for closure of Grange Lane for pedal car time trials.
- b. Footpath. Cllr Flack said the flooding problem still needs to be sorted out. Cllr Peachey said this is an ongoing problem that needs a permanent solution. Cllr R Lewis asked if this is a job for the Environment Agency. Cllr Peachey said it is. Cllr Boura suggested a boardwalk along the problem stretch. Cllr R Lewis said he would look at it with Cllr Peachey before the next meeting.
- c. Barton Miller. Cllr R Lewis is concerned that there is no digital copy and said it would take someone who knows the software just 15 minutes to put one together each month.

### **9. Date of next meeting: 4th April 2014**