

Barton Mills Parish Council

Clerk to the Council:

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Chairman: P Boura
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Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of Barton Mills

Held in the Village Hall on Wednesday 17th May 2017 at 7pm.

Parish Councillors Present: Cllr. P. Boura, Cllr. A. Harji, Cllr. F. Lewis, Cllr. R. Lewis, Cllr. K. Fuller, Cllr. A. Dawson, Cllr. S. Mullender & Cllr. G. Flack.

Also Present: Clerk, Vicky Bright. Cllr. B. Harvey – FHDC & Cllr. L. Busuttil - SCC

8 Members of the Public were also present.

Attendance Record See Appendix 1.

1. The Chairman, Councillor Boura, welcomed everyone.

Apologies: None.

- 2. Resolved APM17/05/2.01**

The minutes of the last Parish Meeting held on Wednesday 20th April 2016 were proposed as a true record by Cllr. Fuller and the Minutes were duly signed by the Chair, Cllr. P. Boura.

- 3. Parish Council Chairman's Annual Report – Cllr. P. Boura**

My second year as chairman has been very busy with a heavy agenda and three months when we were without a clerk. Abi Davies had to resign rather suddenly, for personal reasons, after just a few months in the job. I covered this role as well as my own until Vicky Bright, an experienced clerk, took on the job at the beginning of October.

We started the year with a very successful village party to celebrate the Queen's 90th Birthday. Although the weather was rather uncertain, we had a very good crowd attending and, thanks to the hard work of a dedicated team of volunteers, the arrangements went very smoothly. Our new picnic area was opened that afternoon by long standing residents Joy Willis and Brian Crowder who are both older than the Queen, and this has been a popular addition to the facilities on our playing field.

Also at the field, we were able to hold some well supported free football coaching sessions for children thanks to locality grants arranged through our district and county councillors. More recently, Barton Mills Football Club signed a new 10-year lease for the Football Pavilion. We also have a new field maintenance contractor. We have re-built the turning area for traffic in Grange Lane and have improved the car park.

Unfortunately, litter is a perennial problem both on the field and elsewhere in the parish. However, several volunteers now collect litter regularly. In March, a larger team of willing helpers participated in the Great British Spring Clean. We can all appreciate the difference that these volunteers make to the appearance of our village.

During the year, a noticeboard has been installed for the benefit of our Worlington Road residents. We have also purchased a Speed Indicator Display which will rotate between a site there and other sites in Church Lane and Mildenhall Road. Hopefully, when working properly, this will help to reduce the speed of traffic through the village.

Signed (Chairman).....

During the year, Forest Heath District Council have been finalising some of their planning documents. We are classified as a secondary village which means that no growth is proposed here. However, there will be some small changes to our settlement boundary. We welcome many of their planning policies but regret that they were not able to support some further small adjustments to our settlement boundary that we had suggested.

A project which is launching currently is the Barton Mills Good Neighbour Scheme which arose directly from the parish meeting last year. This has just become an independent organisation and will become fully operational in June.

Unfortunately, a project that has not yet progressed is the defibrillator which will be sited in our redundant phone box. BT received planning permission to remove the phone in December but we are still waiting for this to be done and for the phone box to be handed over to the parish council.

Another project which has not yet been completed is the re-surfacing of the footpath to Mildenhall. The County Council now has sufficient funding to resurface the path with path Hoggin without any contribution from the parish. However, the job was delayed in March by emergency gas works and should now be completed later this month.

Another ongoing matter is improvements to the A11. However, this and Local Needs Affordable Housing will be discussed later in the meeting this evening.

A successful parish council depends on team work. I would like to express my appreciation to all the team and especially to the vice-chairman, Amin Harji, for his support. All the parish councillors have attended meetings regularly throughout the year and their work has been aided by the hard work of our clerk. Richard Hayward joined the parish council nearly two years ago but has now resigned. The valuable contribution that he made during his term in office will be greatly missed. This leaves a vacancy for someone else to join the team and we would be pleased to discuss this opportunity with anyone who is interested.

We appreciated the support that our outgoing County Councillor, James Waters, gave to us during his time in office and we welcome our newly elected County Councillor, Louis Busuttill, to our meeting tonight. We also appreciate the support of our District Councillor, Brian Harvey, of our families, and of all those who contribute to making Barton Mills a lively, caring and successful community.

4. Financial Overview for Year Ending 31st March 2017

See Appendix 2.

5. Barton Mills Good Neighbour Scheme

With the support of John Eaton from CAS, a meeting was coordinated in October 2016 to set up a Good Neighbour Scheme, and to look for volunteers. The meeting was well attended and a steering group was formed, which has now met several times. A Public Meeting was held in May 2017 and the group is now formed as an independent organisation with 7 Committee members and 25 volunteers. The Scheme is proposed to start in June 2017, offering Free Help such as company and a chat, pension collection, shopping, DIY and odd jobs and pet walking etc.

6. Proposals for the A11

A meeting in September 2016 with representatives from SCC Highways, Highways England and stakeholders etc. to discuss proposals for the RIS2 (Road Improvement Strategy) expected to begin 2025, explored options for proposals for the A11 and Fiveways roundabout improvements. Consultants came up with several proposals, Option 1 was for a proposed Bypass, other options were discussed and consulted upon but are unsatisfactory, although cheaper.

The proposed bypass would run from the bottom of Chalkhill, east of the existing development on Tuddenham Road, over the river to a junction with the A1101 and then re-join the present line of the A11 north-east of Fiveways roundabout. This is similar to the proposal previously presented to the public enquiry

Signed (Chairman).....

A proposal to include an improvement scheme for the A11 around Fiveways will be put forward this Autumn for possible inclusion in the RIS2 programme. If this is successful then all options for improvement will then be considered.

In the short term traffic lights at Fiveways Roundabout have been approved and funding has been secured for this. The trunking is in place for the traffic lights. They are expected to be 'Peak Time' Traffic Lights.

The next meeting to discuss the A11 was meant to be held in April, but was postponed until June 2017. Other options to be looked at are speed enforcement & speed limits, changes to signage/lane markings. Any changes or improvements to the Barton Mills junction are still to be confirmed. There are no plans to close the central reservation crossings.

Residents raised their opinions that there had been concerns with the safety of the roundabout ever since the A11 dualling to Thetford, it was agreed that there is a divisional boundary so interest in the South of the A11 has been overlooked. It was discussed that concerns were that a Bypass too close to the roundabout would cut the community off. It was discussed and agreed that the A11 Southbound backs up and there is difficulty with access on and off Fiveways at peak times, therefore the timing and operation of the traffic lights is critical to improve flow of traffic.

It was confirmed that SCC and Highways England are modelling improvements very carefully and Department of Transport requires evidence to push through to get approval and funding.

It was discussed that the Chalk Hill and The Bull junctions had inadequate slip roads, with adverse cambers and was poorly maintained. With it appearing that no Agency was taking on responsibility for the maintenance and repair. It was suggested that the Clerk contact Highways England and ask for Engineers to do a site visit to look at the issues of the potholes etc.

It was discussed that the 50mph speed limit signs needed to be more visible, with perhaps permanent speed cameras, or to consider a 40mph speed limit.

7. Local Needs Affordable Housing

In March 2016 the Parish Council based on verbal evidence proposed looking at more affordable housing, especially smaller homes. Talks were started with Hastoe Homes and FHDC. It was agreed in Autumn 2016 that a Local Housing Needs Survey was needed. This survey was distributed to all residents in March 2017, with a closing date in April 2017. 20% of paper forms were returned, with 20% of online submissions also being submitted, equalling 40% response in total. CAS have started to process the survey this week and we are hoping to have the results to report soon.

Residents raised concerns that all potential sites needed to be looked at and considered. The Chairman responded that the Housing needs must be met and would depend on land sale and permission. Until the survey results there was no confirmation on rental need, size or amount of properties needed. The Worlington Road development was discussed and it was confirmed that this was not suitable as it did not meet local housing needs and would only cater for those at the top of the Housing list.

It was discussed that it was important to attract new residents and keep young in the village with Housing Support as needed.

8. Fiveways Farm

At the last meeting the Leader of SCC, Cllr. Colin Noble and Guy Smith from Highways explained that it was a complicated issue with several threads, with a history of lack of communication between agencies. That the agencies were now working together and it was hoped action would take place as soon as Summer 2017.

Signed (Chairman).....

Cllr. Busuttill proceeded to explain the complexities of the agencies working together, including; Forestry Commission, SCC, Highways England, FHDC and the Environment Agency. A claim has been made by the gentleman at Fiveways Farm for ownership of unregistered parts of the land. Guy Smith is now convening a meeting between Highways England, SCC and the Forestry Commission and stakeholders to proceed with legal action. Cllr. Busuttill is to Chair this meeting and promised to keep the Parish Council updated.

It was agreed that there is now an urgency for this to be resolved due to the A11 changes needed. RSPCA had been involved previously and had felt the animals to be in good condition, with sufficient care. It was suggested that the agency's look at involving the RSPCA on any future evictions planned.

Cllr's expressed concerns that Cllr. Noble had misled the Parish Council previously with his statement of explanation that the horses were the issue holding up the eviction, and he had not provided any update on progress made as promised.

It was agreed that lack of communication by all parties when dealing with the evictions process and the application for land registration were the key issues. FHDC discovered in February 2015 that the application made by him to register parcels of the land in his name had been made in December 2014, objections have been raised regarding this. The Court empowered SCC to evict, but the fence on FHDC land needs to be removed first and there are issues with animal welfare and motor safety surrounding this issue.

It was agreed that pressure needs to be kept on to progress the eviction and it was suggested that FHDC look into any further parcels of land that they own that has not been registered.

9. Traffic Calming

The SID (Speed Indicator Device) has now been purchased and is to be rotated between sites within the village on a fortnightly basis. The Worlington Road development has begun construction and plans for a pedestrian crossing, with traffic lights are a condition of planning. Highway gates between Worlington and Barton Mills are being considered, hopefully with Parish Council input on design. The suggestion of a 40mph buffer zone before the 30mph speed limit was discussed, it was felt that Highways are not responding to the needs of the community. It was agreed that the data from the SID is critical, as Highways respond to factual evidence. Mr Richard Hayward offered his help with the SID rota.

10. Peace Garden

It was discussed at the Budget setting to look at improvements to the Peace Garden, this was deferred to the Autumn to allow input from residents as it was unsure what was wanted. This is an important asset and is used during the Remembrance Service. It was unveiled in 1995 by Roy Ponsford to celebrate 50 years of Peace. FHDC donated rose bushes, but they didn't do too well, after various successions of planting there is now a collection of shrub bushes that are doing well, with Daffodil bulbs being replaced a few years ago. Suggestions made by members of the Parish Council were; slate or bark covering, re-planting or to leave the garden to maintained as it is by INL, as part of the maintenance contract.

Residents at the meeting suggested that it just needed regular weeding, pruning and tidying. With easy care and a minimum of bare soil. With added colour for other seasons other than Spring.

The Parish Council welcomes any suggestions or opinion from residents.

11. Village Summer Event

It is usual that the village holds Open Garden events or the Scarecrow Festival on alternate years since 1999. Last year the Queen's birthday replaced the Scarecrow Festival, this year it is the turn of the Open garden event, but so far only 4 residents have agreed to open their gardens. Therefore, it is proposed to hold a Village Summer Fete on Saturday 1st July 2017, in front of the Church, with a Marquee and stalls, Cream Teas and activities for children, with the 4 houses opening their gardens, with a small entry charge. A concert is also planned at 6:30pm that evening

Signed (Chairman).....

by the Edmund Octet, members of the St Edmundsbury Male Voice Choir. Ideas and suggestions and volunteers are needed and welcome.

Public Forum:

- Cllr. Harvey FHDC advised the following; he has supported several projects this year through his Locality Budget, such as; the Worlington Cricket Club for Youth Winter Training, Friends of Mildenhall Library for Story Telling for Children, the Good Neighbour Scheme, Football Coaching, community Bulbs for Church Meadow, and the SID – Speed Watch. The Mildenhall Messenger has also received support.
- Cllr. Harvey suggested residents should sign up to Police Connect, which is an email/text service offering news and updates on incidents, events, crimes and traffic closures <https://www.suffolk.police.uk/services/police-connect> There are also Annual Police & Crime Commissioner meetings being held which are for the public to attend, the next one being Wednesday 7th June 2017 at 7pm at St Marys Academy, Mildenhall.
- Cllr. Busuttil advised that the footpath to Mildenhall was delayed by Gas works and Claire Dickson had been away, this has been chased and he will keep the Parish Council updated. An email received from Claire today has advised the works should start in May, date to be confirmed later this week.
- Residents raised concerns that the overgrown and damaged hedge and the 6 dead trees in front of the Hastoe Homes development needed removing. There has been confusion over who is responsible. The Clerk is to contact Hastoe Homes and Highways to establish responsibility and ask to get the issues and the overgrown nettles dealt with.
- One resident asked if the Parish Council would look at purchasing a new notice board for the playing field end of the village.
- The telephone box was discussed. It was confirmed that this would stay in its existing position and the Parish Council are in negotiations to adopt it. It will be smartened up and hopefully used for the Defibrillator.

Meeting closed at 8:32pm

Signed (Chairman).....