

**MINUTES OF ANNUAL PARISH MEETING ON
THURSDAY 18TH MAY 2023 IN BARROW VILLAGE HALL**

PRESENT: Mr J Pearson – Chairman, Mr R ford, Mr D. Holmes, Mr P. Wesley,
Mr R Rawlings, Mr T France, Mr T. Bragg and Mrs J Steer
Cllr Soons, Suffolk County Council
Clerk in attendance: No Clerk; Minutes taken by Cllr Steer
17 Electors

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 on 28th April 2022

The minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting, held on 28th April 2022, having been previously circulated, were taken as read and were signed by the Chairman as a correct record. This was proposed by Councillor ford and seconded by Councillor Bragg.

2. Parish Council Report

Councillor Pearson gave his report. The Parish organised 3 events – the Jubilee Celebrations, The Firework Night and the Coronation Celebrations. All have been very successful.

The Firework Night is a great fund raiser for the Village Hall; it raised £4,500 last year – it funds the village for the entire year; whilst not everyone appreciates the fireworks nor the parking - it is very well attended and is only for a short while.

The Jubilee was well attended; the sole firework at the end upset several dogs; if we do fireworks at the end of events, they must be well publicised. This was funded by the Parish Council, enabling children to enjoy the bouncy castle. Well organised by Councillor Wesley and Kat Bowe.

The Coronation Event was also a great success; this was completely funded by the West Suffolk Council (WSC).

These successful events, all well attended with great numbers lead to consider that we should be organising an annual event, such as a Fete in the village in future.

Last year we reported that we were hoping to improve the access road to the Green. This has been carried out; funded by Parish funds.

Highways have re-aligned and improved the pavement outside the doctors. The result is successful. In Barrow we do suffer from poor drainage, which causes flooding. Suffolk County Council are only really interested in flooding when it enters a property.

We are working with Hopkins and are waiting for a quote from them to re-surface the pavement from the new pavement to the shop. This should be able to be funded from Parish funds.

Cllr Pearson confirmed that the PC were still working on the Neighbourhood Plan (NHP) And that Cllr Rawlings would be giving an update later in the meeting.

Cllr Pearson reiterated the importance of the plan and reminded the audience that they are not voting for or against development. Development will happen; the NHP will influence the sites selected and the type of housing. The NHP gives the village an element of protection.

There are planned 170 new houses between 2031 and 2041; the 2031 plan was completed by 2021, plus another 75 extra houses. WSC gave permission for those extra houses. We thought that those 75 houses would go towards our housing needs number; but no! WSC informed us that over delivered numbers are a windfall for the council.

If we were in East Suffolk, we would receive money from the Govt. for each new house built in the village; unfortunately WSC policy is to keep that money and put it into their reserves to help balance their budgets! If they did give us the money, we would have received approximately £300,000 to spend in the village.

There was a call for sites; 13 sites were put forward by landowners; these have been whittled down to 2/3 sites by WSC which we are considering; the site beyond the school was deferred by WSC, so we are not able to consider that site. We cannot conflict with the District Council plan. This leaves us with 2 options – Barrow Hill and Bury Road. Developers for these sites have carried out presentations for the village, these are not Parish presentations.

Highways – speeding issues in the village.

Colethorpe Lane – 40 mph was introduced to make the 30 mph more effective; it is better respected.

We are investigating the possibility of purchasing another VAR sign; we have one and share one; the one we ^{purchased} ~~own~~ collects data which tells us some surprising speeds – such as a ~~regular~~ driver ^{speeds} along Barrow Hill at 75 mph at 4am!

There are to be more repairs to potholes on Barrow Hill. The roads generally are in an appalling state!

Please can I appeal to you to report any potholes individually; we can as a council, but we are only one voice, one report; if lots of people report, then these are counted as multiple reports and more likely to generate action.

Newslink was not published in March; but we will be publishing shortly and this will have some information about the NHP.

3. Finance Report

The report will be available on the website. Over half of our precept is spent on village maintenance. We did have a large expenditure last year on the Green access road improvement.

4. Neighbourhood Plan Report

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

Cllr Rawlings also gave a timeline for the NHP. It is planned that the village consultation will take place from 3rd July for 6 weeks. There will be a presentation in the Village Hall.

5. Question and Answer Session

Karen Soons introduced herself. County Councillor with Suffolk County Council(SCC). SCC is responsible for Highways, Education and Social Services.

Ques: There are 2 sites being considered. Where are they?

Cllr person explained where Barrow Hill site is and the Bury Road site; The Bury Road site is more off Bury Road; it wraps around the village from Sharpes Lane, behind Dale Tree Road and then up to Lion Green.

Ques: Is the NHP only considering Barrow Hill?

Cllr Pearson explained that our consultants preferred Barrow Hill; there are arguments for and against both sites. Such as Pavements, Drainage. Environment

Ques: Why are the PC against the Bury Road site?

Not against; simply Barrow Hill is preferred. The decision of WSC to prefer the Bury Road site was a surprise, along with the numbers; we read about it in the Bury Free Press; we were not consulted not were we part of that decision.

Cllr Soons explained that the local District Councillor (Ian Houlder) can call it in and the decision can be voted by other councillors; there could be more scrutiny and more debate. You need to speak to Ian.

Cllr Rawlings asked Cllr Soons about the road closure from Saxham.

Cllr Soons stated they were unable to do 2nd phase concurrently with 1st phase. This has been to benefit Table Foods not residents. 90% of the time she has driven through, the road has not been closed.

SCC have re-surfaced 150 miles of road. She has met with Matt Fox to resurface the pavements - £96,000 quote.

SCC Highways is up for renewal; Kier have been embedded with SCC; we should see a significant improvement in highways. This area has the highest % of defects reported.

Please if you feel you are not being listened to, please email me at karen.soons@scc.gov.uk ; this is also on the notice board.

SCC are planting 2,000 trees.

They have allocated 15.9m for SEND (Special Educational Needs) places in existing and some new centres across the county.

Cllr Soons report will be published on the website.

Ques: what is WSC policy on cutting verges?

The grass cutting schedules are published; they cut 1 or 2 cuts per year.

Will the new trees be looked after? Watered etc.

Ques: Are any other sites in the running?

Yes, there is a site on Denham Lane for 20 houses.

Cllr Rawlings stated that he had visited the site with the planning consultant and they both felt that the site was too small for 20 houses; the egress would be onto a quiet road and was too close to Denham.

Several residents mentioned the Fleur Homes site north of the village, which has been deferred by WSC and cannot be considered by the NHP. Residents were told that if they wanted that site to be developed, they must lobby their council.

Ques: this was regarding the 121 meetings arranged by Bloor Homes specifically for Bury Road residents; they were told that they would start work next year and were being encouraged by WSC.

How can that happen?

Cllr Soons explained that if they have applied for planning permission, you can ask for that to be called and scrutinised.

Cllr Rawlings explained that he has written to Bloor Homes for confirmation. He also plans to meet with WSC to go through schedules.

Planning permission would have to go through the Parish Council – how can it be adopted in time?

Cllr Pearson explained that if Bloor put in an application early, and were looking for support from WSC at an early stage, they may be successful.

Cllr Rawlings stated that it is important to get our NHP in early.

Ques: Please can you clarify what we can write to Ian Houlder about?

Can we write to him about the site North of the village? 52% of residents wanted development north of the village; 12% wanted Barrow Hill; 82% did not want Barrow Hill.

Various discussions about housing in Barrow and the NHP decision to promote Barrow Hill site.

WSC have said that if they went ahead with Barrow Hill there was a potential that the village could end up with 340 houses.

Ques: Have you got guarantees that this would not happen?

Cllr Pearson stated that we cannot give any guarantees. He has no confidence in WSC to stick to their own numbers. We will manage the risk. If the risk is too great, we will publish the NHP without any numbers.

Ques: What benefits do you see for Barrow Hill over Bury Road?

Cllr Pearson: We have a report from AECOM^M which shows that Barrow Hill has benefits over Bury Road. Bloor have not engaged with us what they are offering. Barrow Hill development has physical offers to bring to the village. So far, the village has not benefitted from any of the developments. There may be £170,000 for improvements to the village hall, which does not belong to the Parish Council, or to pavements.

Discussion around the deferment of the site north of the village.

Ques: What swayed you towards Barrow Hill?

Cllr Pearson: ^{Community} Leisure facilities, ~~personal opinion~~, the risk of coalescence between Bury Road and Burthorpe, only exit from Bury Road is opposite a listed building, there are bats on the site.

One resident commented that there are 5 species of bats; Bloor have suggested Bat houses, but this will ruin the bat colony.

There is documentation about the NHP on the website now; there will be a presentation for the consultation in July.

One resident wished to thank the councillors on the events; they have been fantastic and lovely for the village. Thanks all the members and the clerk.

Ques: What about other elements of the NHP?

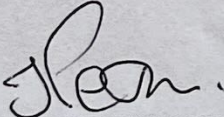
Councillor Pearson: yes, there are environmental elements, areas we can designate not to be developed; increased facilities we want to see – sports, leisure.

The NHP is much bigger than just housing numbers; hopefully in the consultation period we can highlight the benefits.

The referendum is a yes/no to all of the NHP, not just to houses.

Cllr person thanked everyone for their interest.

The meeting was closed at 9.05 pm.

Signed  Date 