

Barton Mills Parish Council

Clerk to the Council:

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Chairman: Mr R Lewis
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Minutes of the Meeting of Barton Mills Parish Council

Held in the Village Hall on Friday 9th December 2011 at 7.00 pm.

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

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

Pippa Poitras, on behalf of Janet Carters asked what other sites were considered and why they had been disregarded, what benefit to the village would the development bring, the date of the planning application, the number of applications for housing received at the open meeting in November and whether the entrance, if not the whole development could be moved to the Bell Lane side of the field. Cllr R Lewis explained that the development must adjoin existing developments, that the Parish Council had started with more than ten possible sites which had been reduced to five by Hastoe when they toured the village. These included the end of Grange Lane, the corner of the playing field, land on Mildenhall Road but the Church Lane site was the only land where the landowner was prepared to sell. Cllr Boura added that this had been the preferred site. Cllr R Lewis said dialogue would continue with all parties, that the Parish Council hoped to approve the plans in January so that the application could be made in March but that nothing had been decided yet. He thought the path to the allotments was too close to the junction with the old Newmarket Road but that Hastoe could be asked to clarify this point.

Pippa Poitras observed that 17 new dwellings have been approved and expressed concern that the proposed development could serve as a springboard for other landowners to develop further. She asked if consideration had been given to local employment opportunities. She expressed concern that the exteriors were not in keeping with surrounding properties and asked if consideration had been given to bungalows. Cllr R Lewis explained that most existing developments were filling in plots within the development line (since 1986; the review of this is currently stalled so no changes are envisaged) and that this would be likely to continue. This scheme was aimed at fulfilling the Parish Council's intention to provide affordable housing for local people. The Parish Council has little or no influence over the Flagship scheme on Church Lane Close. He assured Mrs Poitras that this scheme, outside the development line, would not set a precedent; Cllr Mullender described this as an "exception site". Cllr Boura said any other proposal would have to show a housing need etc. Cllr Mullender said the housing needs survey had shown a need for first time buyers rather than the elderly, hence the preferences for houses over bungalows. Cllr R Lewis said the Parish Council had a preference for a range of appearances as is the current fashion.

Sarah Marsden expressed concern about safety with the junction in front of existing properties; also quality of life with headlights shining into houses and loss of visual amenity as views of open spaces would be lost. Cllr R Lewis thought some of these concerns would be better put in response to an actual planning application but made the point that the open field could not be seen from the ground floor and that a landscaped hedge may be more attractive. He said the Parish Council could insist on mature trees being planted for a better visual shield. He said the small road into the development would service only the six properties and would be owned by Hastoe. He thought bollard lighting would be used here. He said the Parish Council could apply for yellow or white lines along Church Lane to prevent parking there.

Nick Wilson asked if there had been any attempt to place Barton Mills residents wanting affordable housing in the Bridge Farm site.

Teresa Plested said her concerns were broadly similar to those expressed by Sara Marsden. She was also concerned that there is no proposed footpath from the site entrance until 21 Church Lane. Cllr R Lewis said this would need to be put to Hastoe to ensure compliance. Cllr Harji pointed out this would mean siting the development further back; Cllr R Lewis was concerned it may detract from the visual appearance of the area. Cllr Harris suggested a middle ground of plastic matting with grass growing through.

Dan Poitras suggested looking at the end of Church Lane on the other side of the road as a possible site; this would touch onto Manor View so not infringe this requirement. It was thought this is Tilbrook-owned land and that they would not want to sell but the Parish Council agreed to look at this suggestion. He asked how much affordable housing is needed; Cllr R Lewis said more than the development would provide. He raised the desirability of the development; Cllr Peachey said there was a benefit to keeping families and communities together; Cllr Harris asked why there needs to be further justification. Cllr F Lewis said there was a benefit to the community in increasing the number of younger people living here. Mr Poitras also asked, if the development is to proceed, if certain stipulations could be agreed such as building times; this was thought to be standard.

Nick Wilson asked if criteria for eligibility had been agreed; Cllr R Lewis said it would be on the basis of connection to the village and need.

1. Courtesies. Apologies and Signing of the Register. Declarations of Interest.

Apologies: PCSO Rowan

Declarations: Cllr F Lewis (6g, 8)

2. Police Matters

PCSO Rowan had provided a report.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 9th December 2011

Cllr Boura proposed agreeing the minutes: all in favour.

4. Matters arising and pending

a. Affordable housing. The open day in November saw a good turn with lots of enthusiasm for the project. There were some concerns which Hastoe is looking into.

1. The possibility of changing the weather boarding on the house from black/grey to a lighter colour. (Probably cream to match the rendered property). The architect has advised that weather boarding can be cream but thinks mid grey would be better or white. He advises that black is a traditional Suffolk boarding colour. He suggests rendering as another option; Cllr Mullender said he would like to see the drawings.
2. Concerns about the position of the access road and the possibility of moving it slightly further up Church Lane to reduce the impact on numbers 42 and 44. The architect is concerned that if the access is moved, there would be complaints from numbers 48 and 50 instead. Also, more existing hedgerow would have to cut back and maintained in the future (at the moment the trimmed back section of hedge is within the site frontage, if moved it would not be). Furthermore, bin collection points are central at the moment; if access is moved they would still need to be in the same place but new pedestrian access would be required. A slightly longer access road would also be necessitated and Plot 3 would have to be turned 90° or redesigned to face onto Church Lane.
3. The possibility of moving the properties back slightly so they are further away from the road. This may require further negotiation with Suffolk CC as more land would be needed. The architect has said he could move the houses back but it would entail increasing the site area as gardens to plots 2/3/4 and 5 are about the minimum size required by NHF Standards. The distance from the front of plot 3 and the road is 13.8 metres; the front of number 44 to the road is 10.2 metres. The new dwellings are on the building line.
4. More trees to screen the development from neighbours opposite. The architect will add tree planting to the front of plots 1 to 3.
5. More visitor parking to the rear of the development. The architect has add a couple of visitor spaces within the car parking area. There are two spaces per property and four visitor spaces; further, it would be possible to add more along the access road, Cllr R Lewis thought. Cllr Harris asked if restricted parking could be imposed along Church Lane. Cllr Boura said tenants would not be permitted to park on Church Lane.

Additionally, it has been confirmed that the freehold for the land it is developing will be sold to Hastoe after planning permission is granted.

Currently there are two lenders lending on rural shared ownership: Nationwide (15% deposit required) and Halifax (20% deposit required).

The Clerk has application forms for anyone wanting to apply for one of the properties. Some of these had been taken away from the November open meeting where Church Lane residents had also been encouraged to express concerns and propose changes.

- b. Village green: the Clerk is continuing to try to obtain quotes for this work. Deferred.
- c. Play area safety surface. The Clerk has received two replacement mats for the play area free of charge. Proludic has advised that, as the damaged area is in excess of 1.5 metres from the equipment, they are not necessary and the council is advised to tidy up the damaged matting and reserve the two mats as spares for later use.
- d. Car Park. Cllr Boura previously said that, if the intention is to extend into the field, she thought it would be better to use plastic reinforcement, not tarmac. She had ascertained that to tarmac half the car park would cost up to £2,500 (£70-£80 psm), protector mat on the grass would cost £700 per 4m x 20m; she felt that 40m would be appropriate. A light at the gate, nine metres from the closest post would cost around £2,000 for the light and connection. The total budget would therefore be around £6,000.
- e. Parking cones: the Clerk has approached the 100 Club for support with this. 30 cones will cost around £135 plus VAT. The committee had agreed this in principle but asked where they will be stored. Cllr F Lewis suggested the back end of the passageway between the hall and the fence near to the kitchen but not locked up so they can be used as needed.
- f. Diamond Jubilee 2012. The Clerk has booked the village hall for Tuesday 7th February and invited organisations to send representatives. He has also put up posters advertising this. It was agreed to leave discussion about this to the January meeting.

Church clock – the church has stated concerns about health and safety and proposes to electrify the clock next year. It is promoting this as a possible way to mark the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and is seeking donations from the community including the Parish Council. Cllr Peachey said the clock was paid for by public subscription and is merely housed in the church. Cllr F Lewis said the budget for the upgrade is around £4,800 and that a grant from the locality budget had been applied for; she said it was hoped the Parish Council would agree to donate £500. Cllr Boura thought the Jubilee celebrations could include an element of fundraising for the clock. Cllr R Lewis said the budget committee could include a possible donation so that, if the Parish Council agrees, the money would be available to donate. Cllr Harris asked if it would be possible to set the clock not to chime at night.

Dave Traher has advised that the work has already been carried out, paid for by the Preservation Trust which has agreed to pay £1,000 towards the bill; a locality budget grant of £750 has been received as well leaving around £3,000 to be raised.

- g. Street lighting update. Light 72 has been attended and is currently working. The Clerk has drafted a wayleave for a light to be situated outside the Brothertons' house. Cllr Boura advised that Pearce and Kemp would be finishing its work in January.
- h. Strategic Plan Consultation questionnaire. Cllr Peachey suggested that Cllrs Boura and R Lewis pass comments to the Clerk by Monday for him to submit the response.
- i. Allotments – Cllr R Lewis was asked by two members of the allotments association to investigate the spending of the s106 grant which came via the Parish Council. He advised them that the Parish Council has left it up to the BMAA committee to make its own decisions but has sought reassurance that
 1. The money is being spent based on committee decisions.
 2. There are minutes recording the decision-making process.
 3. Some of the items purchased seem inappropriate and now lying unused will be put to good use in the near future.

On behalf of the BMAA, Helen Andrews has submitted a lengthy report detailing meetings and decisions and she has explained that the shed will be erected as soon as a base is laid; it will then house the polytunnel until next spring when that will be erected in a position agreed by the association as a whole.

Cllr R Lewis said the BMAA had provided minutes and documentation covering these points and that he would advise those who had raised the matter. Cllr Mullender said the Parish Council should not make further enquiries unless further concerns were raised. Cllr Boura declared an interest. Cllr Harris said he was sorry that Cllr R Lewis had become involved in this matter and encouraged those concerned to bring their concerns to the BMAA committee.

5. Reports from the District and County Councillors

District Cllr Huggan referred to the Strategic Plan saying that other councils had requested increased broadband speeds. His report was filed with the minutes.

County Cllr Frost said the county council anticipated savings of £53 million over two years. He said he had inspected the Bridge Farm crossing with Guy Smith and thought this looked possible. He acknowledged the request for a locality budget grant from the church towards the clock upgrade and said he would look into the Grange Lane potholes.

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

- a. £260.00 J Bercovici (clerk's net salary, November 2011) – chq. 1158
- b. £65.00 HMRC (PAYE, November 2011) – chq.
- c. £33.17 J Bercovici (clerk's expenses November 2011) – chq. 1158

Special payments for approval (inc. VAT)

- d. £1032.92 D Wickens Fencing (re. allotments) - chq. 1159
- e. £106.85 John Squire (park seat refurbishment) – chq. 1160
- f. £56.98 BRW (wine for Remembrance Day) – chq. 1161
- g. £21.39 Frances Lewis (refreshments for Remembrance Day) – chq. 1162
- h. £262.50 Old Parsonage Garden Services (Grass cutting: October/November) – chq. 1163

Cllr Boura proposed agreeing all payments: all in favour (Cllr F Lewis had declared an interest and abstained)

Finance - other

- i. Review of the Standing Orders. Councillors were asked to advise the Clerk of any proposed changes by the end of November. Cllr Boura proposed agreeing the changes suggested: all in favour.

7. Planning.

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

General and for consideration:

- a. F/2011/0727/HOU Seckers Cottage, 16 The Street – erection of a two-storey rear extension (removal of existing log store). *Cllr Mullender proposed no objections: all in favour.*

Awaiting Forest Heath decisions and pending appeals.

- 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.*
- c. F/11 Barton Mills Chalk Quarry – consultation on planning application to vary conditions. *Cllr F Lewis proposed no objections: all in favour.*

Forest Heath/Planning Inspectorate Decisions and Applications Withdrawn

Planning – other

8. Correspondence

Held by the Clerk – Standard items

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

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

- a. SALC meeting report. Cllr F Lewis presented her report, highlighting a request to Forest Heath DC from Beck Row to impose on-the-spot fines for dog owners who permitted their pets to foul public areas.
- b. A11. Cllr Boura reminded the council that the Highways Agency had agreed to look at a low noise surface and the safety of the Tuddenham Road junction with the A11. The Clerk agreed to follow this up.

10. Date of next meeting: 20th January 2012