



## Minutes of the Barrington Annual Parish Meeting

held Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> May at 7.30pm 2023.

Present: Cllrs Rhodes-Kemp (Chairman), Walker, Hopewell, Kemp and Cooper  
In attendance: The Clerk, 3 members of the public.

**1. Apologies for absence.** There were apologies from Sally Walmsley ( RFO)

**2. To receive the Minutes of the last Meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2022.** The Minutes were accepted as a record of the previous meeting.

**3. Update from the Chairman of the Parish Council, Cllr Rhodes-Kemp.** All Cllrs and the Clerk were introduced. The work of the Council was highlighted and help of residents requested.

An update was given on S106.

**4. Parish Council Reports were taken as read.**

### **4.1 Chairman's Report to the Annual Parish Meeting 2023 Cllr Rhodes-Kemp**

Thank you all for coming.

I keep residents informed throughout the year but to summarise.

In my 13 years on the council, this year has been the busiest I can remember, and I would firstly like to thank my fellow Councillors for all their contributions.

#### **S106**

As you might imagine trying to progress the Implementation of the Community Facilities has been a main theme once again. And the momentum has leapt into 1<sup>st</sup> gear.

After nearly 3 years the Deed of Variation (the final tweaks to the original agreement) was finalised last April and since then a lot has happened.

Together with representatives of the Village Hall and Sports Clubs, we have been through a rigorous selection process for Architects and appointed Mills Power. We have facilitated numerous consultations and amazingly are looking towards designs to present to the village on June 24<sup>th</sup>.

Once agreed, these will have to go through the Planning process and contractors chosen after another tender exercise.

Suffice to say there have been many slips and trips along the way and there will no doubt be many more-a bit like snakes and ladders- but we are finally getting there.

There has also been the application by Redrow for 40 more houses on the All Saints site which we opposed but for which planning permission has now been granted. The plus side of this is that we will be allocated more s106 monies on a pro rata basis, confirmation of which is awaited.

At this point, it is worth thanking James Fisher at South Cambs -the S106 officer for his unfailingly good patience, advice, and support.

The other works under the S106 such as Traffic Calming, Archer Bridge, the Cycle Path to Foxton (still a distance away I am afraid) are in the pipeline.

Importantly, large sums are starting to hit the Parish Council's S106 Bank Account.

Cllr Walker, Chair of Finance, will explain the steps that are being taken to safeguard this.

## **Staff**

As you know, our Clerk left in December which was just as the S106 accelerated.

We have been so lucky to have been able to appoint Sally Walmsley as our RFO.

I am sure John will join me in saying that her good advice, calm and cheerful approach to all our queries and concerns (particularly from John and self) has seen us through many a wobbly moment.

On top of this, she generously agreed to be our named Clerk to assist us with Parish Council meetings.

I cannot thank Sally enough for all her help.

Having been unable to attract a Clerk, we decided to advertise for an Administrative Coordinator and have been blessed by the arrival of Karen Clark who is herself a Parish Clerk elsewhere and has extensive project experience.

Welcome Karen and thank you so much for joining us at such an exciting and busy time.

Thank you to the Personnel Group for all the hours you have put into recruitment and appraisals this year.

And to Cllr Hopewell who stepped in to monitor the Parish Clerk's inbox.

## **Other Activities**

There will follow the various reports on our activities but a huge amount of Ditchwork has been carried out (under Budget as you will hear from Cllr Walker) alongside the regular maintenance.

New Heritage lights are in place albeit not without some issues which are being resolved and not in our subdued orange glow, but they are in place!

Plus the flood risk assessment which was carried out. Thanks to Cllr Hopewell, former Cllr Peter Bird, Ken Stapleton and Luke Woodall Site Manager at Redrow for their time.

We have responded to myriad residents' queries, attended meetings re Foxton Hub, East West Rail and with the Redrow liaison group and Cemex.

In addition, the Parish Council has also sadly had to deal with several incidents of vandalism and I cannot stress enough how exasperating it is to be spending our precept and time on making good the damage done by a few feckless youngsters.

## **East West Rail**

An announcement is due in May as to the preferred route. As I explained in a previous Newsletter the original consultation seems to have been buried/lost. This latest round of consultation is a process in legitimisation and not a legitimate process-a mere tick box exercise after key decisions have already been made. The Parish Council have continued to represent the village at meetings and to try and mitigate against the more ghastly options under consideration.

As soon as a route is announced we shall let you know.

Thanks are due to former Cllr Peter Bird for his watching brief, excellent analysis of the options and advice on strategy. Also, to Cllr Hopewell for attending meetings.

## **Foxton Car Park**

There has been no more mention of this but that does not mean the plans have gone away and if and when they resurface, we shall let you know and again do our best to argue the case for Barrington

## **Public Meeting 24<sup>th</sup> June**

A further reminder that all the options for redesign of our Community Facilities will be on display for residents input and discussion on Saturday June 24<sup>th</sup>

## **PLEASE DO ATTEND!**

Years worth of work and time have gone into this and at last you can have your say. We look forward to seeing you all on the day.

At the Public Meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> June there will be a survey asking you all what more you would like your Parish Council to do or what we could do better. Do take the time to fill it in.

## **Thanks**

### **Councillors**

So, thank you again to the Working Groups:

**Finance** Chaired by Cllr Walker for his sins, assisted by Cllrs Anscombe and Cooper, self and our RFO.

**Personnel** Chaired by me, assisted by Cllrs Quincey and Walker

And to all the Parish Councillors for their input. Not least for the laughs we have had despite the workload.

A special mention for Cllr Kemp for his sterling work on the 51 planning applications that have had to be considered not least Redrow ones and the many hours these take to look through in order to advise the Parish Council.

My personal and heartfelt thanks go to the Vice Chair Cllr Walker who has been an absolute star and without whom so much less would have been achieved.

Thank you also to Aidan and Sebastian our District and County Councillors who are also here tonight.

### **Consultees**

From mid-year there have been monthly and latterly more frequent meetings between ourselves and the Sports Teams, Village Hall User Groups, the Social Club. More recently all these individuals have also met with the Architects. So huge thanks to you all for your time and patience. And for allowing us to meet in your facilities. Thanks to every one of you.

### **Volunteers**

But I would be remiss in not also thanking the myriad volunteers who do so much for our beautiful village. I did arrange a Thank You event for you all, but it was minus 11 and clashed with the World Cup semi-final so was poorly attended but we will sort out another date. We were blessed with cakes donated to the event by Hot Numbers -possibly the best Carrot Cake I have ever tasted!

### **4.2 Playgrounds - - Cllr Cooper**

The Play Area on Challis Green and the Under 5's Play Area adjacent to the Church Car Park have been monitored monthly by Herts and Cambs Ground Maintenance Ltd and a report presented to the Parish Council. Cllr Cooper also inspected them weekly. We received an Annual inspection from ROSPA which took place last April and we are currently expecting another report imminently. All action points are monitored and acted upon with due diligence. Annual maintenance work is due to commence shortly.

Our equipment is robust and generally valued and respected. There have been instances of low-level vandalism, in particular the removal of safety caps, which have a financial implication when replacing them. Luckily this year a wasp's nest was found during a weekly inspection and removed immediately. Cllr Cooper enjoys the rapport that is being gained during her regular inspections. Feedback from users is always appreciated.

We are grateful to Herts and Cambs Ground Maintenance Ltd for their continued care in grass cutting and to the Ranger for monitoring of the sand in the Under 5's and raking it to keep it clear of weeds and tree debris. We request that the people using this area for dog walking do not let their dogs out near this facility.

Please note that the play areas should be dog free zones.

### **4.3 Footpaths – Cllrs Buchanan & Cooper**

### **4.4 Ditches and ponds**

#### **Ditches - Cllr Hopewell**

Residents of all ages enjoy the space in the Woodland but we continue to see damage to the picnic benches. These are monitored regularly to ensure any damage is repaired as it appears.

The Orchard has continued to flourish and the Eco Group with volunteers continue to manage this area for all to enjoy. A seating area has been made from dead trees from the Woodland and the school use this as an outside classroom on occasions. There is also a 'bug hotel' so that the children can watch what makes it their home.

The Orchard is a space for everyone in the village. If you enjoy being outdoors and perhaps don't have much garden space do get in touch and get involved. Any input and ideas are very welcome.

Following requests from some residents several areas of the Green were left to grow long last season to encourage wider biodiversity. Cowslips on Heslerton Way green have continued to be left to flourish before mowing. These areas have continued to thrive and we hope that the wildlife is starting to return.

### **Challis and West Green Ponds – Cllr Rhodes-Kemp**

#### **Challis Pond**

As you know after extensive fundraising efforts and a generous Grant from Rugby Benevolent Fund we were able to refurbish the pond-desilt it, create more efficient drainage and a far better environment for Wildlife.

This was important not just for aesthetics but also because this Pond is vital to our ditch drainage system and will help mitigate against flooding if the water in it is flowing well.

The next phase is to improve/repair the fence work around the Pond which is in a very dilapidated state and does not do the Pond and surround justice. We plan to reopen discussions with Highways on alternatives and or repairs. The last time we spoke to hem the option of renewal was not explored and it may be cheaper to do this than repair what is there.

Thanks to volunteers Sally Gilbert, Jo Houghton and Jacquie McBride for their sterling efforts to improve the habitat and appearance of the Pond.

Also to Ken Stapleton for his advice and the donation of Kingdom Lilies from the West Green Pond.

#### **West Green Pond**

Everyone has hopefully had the time to cross the Jubilee Bridge made and installed by Ken Stapleton with a small team of helpers. If you do go down to the Bridge pause and look at the water which is teeming with small fish!

A plaque is shortly to be placed on the Bridge thanking Ken and commemorating the occasion for which it was created. It is worth reflecting on how much has changed within the Royal Family since then and how glad I am that we celebrated Her Late Majesty's Jubilee.

Thanks to The Puddlers past and present including Monty Goding and Ken Stapleton for their many years of careful maintenance of this pond.

### **4.5 Planning– Cllr Kemp**

#### **Planning report – Cllr Ray Kemp**

##### **Introduction**

Barrington now has some 500 properties with a further 210 new units being built on the new Redrow site at Challis Gardens.

The Parish Council is a "Statutory Consultee" on Planning Applications and Major Development Consultations – it does not make the decisions but does have some influence.

Planning Officers generally decide the applications based on the National Planning Framework, the Local Plan and other guidance. More controversial decisions go to the SCDC Planning Committee made up of your District Councillors – where the Parish Council has the right to speak.

##### **Planning Applications**

Last year the Parish Council was asked to comment on 51 planning applications – an amazing 50% increase on 2021-22. Some of these were straight forward, others were more complex being in the Conservation Area where stricter tests apply, and a few were of real significance to the village.

##### **Highlights**

The most contentious applications were:

- “3”s proposal for “prior approval” to construct a 5G telecoms mast at the junction of Foxton Road and Orwell Road – and “towering” over the West Green pond. BPC prepared a detailed objection, and the application was refused much to our great relief.
- Redrow”s proposals to increase their housing numbers by 2 in the lower part of the site, and by an additional 38 units in the upper half – bringing the overall total to 260 units. BPC opposed the second application. Both applications were approved by the SCDC Planning Committee. However, despite opposition from Redrow, BPC made a successful bid to have additional s106 monies commensurate with the original application for 220 units. This was a significant achievement.
- Finally, Redrow has applied for additional time to construct the cycleway from the site alongside the railway line to Foxton station. BPC has responded in detail seeking to shorten the time Redrow have requested, and it is hoped construction will begin by March 2024 at the latest.

#### **Forthcoming Issues**

The Chair has addressed the new Community Facilities and the looming East West Rail proposals.

#### **4.6 Archers Bridge – Cllr Quincey**

While the approximate cost of a footbridge at Archer Bridge is estimated by the Highway Authority at £200k it is clear that the S106 allocation of £50k is inadequate. Further the estimate is based on there being no unexpected difficulties such as special foundation requirements. Given that the foundations on the Shepreth side of the bridge will be in an area regularly flooded and inflation in building costs the £200k is likely to be an underestimate.

I have discussed possible alternative solutions with the County including traffic lights (very expensive given the need for a new power supply) or an enhanced hatched area on the carriageway to indicate pedestrian priority (carriageway too narrow).

The best way forward seems to be a feasibility study to look at other steps we might take to improve pedestrian safety at the Bridge. The County estimate the cost of this could be up to £25k. Funding for a feasibility study might be available via the Local Highway Improvement process. The new funding round opens in November Between 160-190 applications are received annually and approximately 60 receive funding so this is no guarantee.

#### **4.7 Traffic Calming – Cllr Rhodes-Kemp**

As you all know a sum has been allocated for this and we commissioned a Consultant’s report.

In the meantime, we applied for the first Grant of up to 25k for safety measures outside the school and were due to hear the decision in April 2023 and I will chase this up.

A further Grant for a 20mph Zone along Challis play area carrying on to Haslingfield Road and just beyond the school has also now been submitted. This was encouraged by County Highways as it would make sense to try and link these two measures together not least due to the additional traffic anticipated from All Saints Gardens and the lack of appropriate safety measures outside the school.

Once we know the outcome of both Grant applications, we shall know how much is left of the s106 monies to introduce other traffic calming measures throughout the village.

Speedwatch has proved difficult to organise over the latter part of the year as there are very few volunteers indeed insufficient to set up a rota.

We do however at last have the VAS monitor up and running. Recently we have considered purchasing another one as this would reduce the need for Speedwatch volunteers.

So, a work in progress and I shall keep you updated.

Thanks Cllrs Anscombe, Walker and Kemp -the latter has assisted greatly with the Grant applications. To Josh Rutherford at Cambridgeshire County Council Highways Dept and Cty Cllr Kindersley. Finally, to Kitt for helping set up and maintain the VAS.

#### **4.8 Finance Report – Cllr Walker**

##### **Finance report for the Annual Parish Meeting**

The Precept charged to individual properties last year reduced by 3.0% because of additional (Redrow) houses being added to existing council tax paying properties. This year the increase is 8.2% so an average increase over the two years of 5.2%.

Income exceeded expenditure in 22/23 by £11,800. The Green Charity kindly donated £5k towards the cost of £13000 for the replacement of all the new Heritage Lights on the Green (previous estimate from SCDC was £8000). This should have been paid last year but because of delays by the contractors, it will now be paid this year. Thus, the underlying situation would have been a very small deficit of £1200.

As in most years there were a number of overspends and underspends vs our budget. Overall, the council believes it has only spent on what is absolutely essential for the satisfactory maintenance of the village's assets and facilities.

The main items exceeding budget were the new A frame on the playground, an unexpected lighting bill from several years ago, additional tree maintenance work and a subsidy to the Village Hall to help with its heating bills.

Below budget items included less spent on grass cutting and ditches, unspent provision for repairs to the ditch beside the school and an unspent item for additional Speedwatch kit.

Our headline reserves at the year end, increased from £56258 in 21/22 to £73818 but, as mentioned above, there is £13000 that we expected to pay last year which would have brought the reserves to £60818. In addition, thanks to some pressure applied by our previous RFO, we received £4600 from a very old claim for a VAT refund. Without these exceptional items reserves wouldn't have moved during the year and are slightly ahead of the level recommended by the auditors.

For the rest of this year, as well as scrutinising quotes and invoices for routine work in the usual way, we are focusing on the careful selection of deposit accounts for the next substantial tranche of funds soon to be received from Redrow (on top of the £383,000 already held). These monies are to enable all the necessary expenditure on the preparatory work and implementation of all the new Community Facilities.

#### **5. Parish Council Financial Matters - To receive the Parish Council Audited Accounts 2021-22 and draft 2022-23 Accounts**

This was deferred to the AGM on the 11<sup>th</sup> May 2023 where the RFO will be able to update

#### **6. To record attendance of Parish Council Members. Between May 2022 and April 2023 inclusive.**

This was deferred to the AGM on the 11<sup>th</sup> May 2023 to allow time for the report to be collated.

#### **8. Cambridgeshire County Council – Report from County Councillor Sebastian Kindersley**

Not in attendance

#### **9. South Cambridgeshire District Council – Report from District Councillor Aidan Van de Weyer**

Not in attendance

#### **10. Open discussion for residents.**

Invites to Parish meetings to be more widely advertised and discussion around email addresses for residents/ newsletter/leaflets/spotted as the best way to gain more attendees.

#### **11. Other reports**

None

**The Annual Meeting of the Green Charity will followed.**

**THE GREEN CHARITY**

Reg N<sup>o</sup> 205 227

**Minutes of the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING May 2<sup>nd</sup> 2023**

**1. Apologies** – none

**2. Review of the year** – the report from the Chairman Cllr Julian Priddle was taken as read with the additional comments that the Green Charity Trustee protects the green for the benefits of all inhabitants of the village and that there are specific laws that apply to Village Greens.

**3. Financial Report** – this was presented and there were no questions.

**4. Attendance Record** – was noted

**5. Open Discussion** – there were no further questions

The meeting was closed at 9.10pm