

Bardwell Parish Council

Chair: Cllr David Ruffles Vice Chair: Cllr Karen Witton

Minutes of the meeting of Bardwell Parish Council held on Tuesday 3rd February 2026

Time: 7.00pm Venue: Tithe Barn (Bardwell Village Hall) Up Street, Bardwell IP31 1AA

Present: Cllr David Ruffles (Chair), Cllr Margaret Berrill, Cllr John Gilson, Cllr Karl Ives, Cllr Andrew Smith (also West Suffolk District Cllr), Karen Witton (Vice Chair), Suffolk County Councillor Joanna Spicer MBE
Clerk/RFO: Pauline Smith Members of the public: None

1. **Apologies** were received from **and approved** for: Cllr Mike Allum (holiday)
2. **To receive Declarations of Interests and requests for dispensations in relation to items on this agenda.**
Cllr Andrew Smith – ongoing declaration of interest re any matters in relation to Clerk’s Salary/approval (finance - 11.2).
No other declarations were received
3. **Approval of the Minutes of meetings held on**
2nd Dec 2025 Proposed Cllr Berrill 2nd Cllr Gilson.
24th Jan 2026 Proposed Cllr Ives 2nd Cllr Berrill.
Resolution: Both sets of minutes were unanimously approved and duly signed as an accurate record by the Chair.
4. **Public participation** – No members of the public were present.
5. **To receive reports from:**
 - 5.1 **Suffolk County Councillor Joanna Spicer**
Police Speed Cameras have been in position on A143 Stanton – Ixworth.
The damaged section (A143) will be resurfaced once conditions allow (Drier weather)
County Council elections are not happening in May 2026. Statutory instrument will need to be laid Feb to confirm arrangements.*
Elections for the Unitary authority or authorities will then be during 2027.
Elections for a Mayor have now been delayed until 2028.
(*Note: Since the meeting, the Government has announced that Suffolk County Council elections **will** be held in May 2026.)
 - 5.2 **West Suffolk Councillor Andrew Smith.**
Dog Fouling: Following comments and concerns raised regarding dog fouling at the previous meeting, Cllr Smith confirmed that West Suffolk Council does not have a dog warden.
Allowing a dog to foul in an area open to the public without picking up could result in a Fixed Penalty Notice of £80 rising to £1,000 if not paid and taken to court.
Eye witness statements and photographic evidence would be required to progress action.
Better Recycling: There will be a lot of publicity circulated to residents shortly, in advance of the scheduled start date of June 2026.
Glass banks and business/commercial waste collections: Further information is awaited.
Low Street Homes destroyed by fire: Cllr Smith has contacted the structural engineer for an update regarding planning application (previously expected by the end of January).

Bardwell Solar farm: Cllrs Smith and Ruffles have met with members of the Bardwell Objectors Group, to explain the parish council's position regarding a potential discussion with the developer of the solar farm about a possible financial payment in the event that the application is successful.

Members of the group asked whether receiving a financial payment would be linked to the pc changing its position.

Response: Unlikely that pc would change its mind in favour of the solar farm, although it is feasible (but not as a result of a financial incentive).

[REDACTED], has offered to act on behalf of the Parish Council to negotiate a potential community benefit financial package with [REDACTED] (**the developer**).

█████ has suggested that the Parish Council formally write to ██████ to introduce him as the Parish Council's representative. He has confirmed that he would be willing to meet for preliminary discussions with the developer at ██████

Any positive outcome is **entirely speculative**, and would depend on the **goodwill of the developer**.

It was noted that this is **not a material consideration** in the planning process and **does not influence planning decisions**.

Resolution: It was proposed and **unanimously agreed** that **Cllr Smith** will write to [REDACTED] through the **Clerk** introducing [REDACTED] as the Parish Council's representative for the purposes of exploratory discussions.

6. Highways Matters for consideration

6.1 Knox Lane: Resident's suggestion one way system.

In view of proposals for housing developments at Stanton as well and the solar farm, a resident has suggested “that Highways look at controlling the traffic in Knox Lane. One suggestion would be to leave the residential part of Knox Lane as it is but change the top half of Knox Lane to one way, exiting Bardwell only.

This would prevent Knox Lane from being used as a rat run during peak hours.”

Councillors discussed this suggestion, taking into consideration that changes to improve issues in one area generally results in displacement to another area. It was also suggested that a one-way system may result in increased speeds along Knox Lane.

The main issues result from emergency closures: When A14 is closed then A143 is the official diversion.

It was highlighted that many locals from Stanton cut through Bardwell to Ixworth, due to the weight of traffic on the A143.

Low Street Cottages: Whilst the work to rebuild the properties is ongoing, a traffic management plan will be required.

Outcome: Whilst not unsympathetic, any such proposals to create a one-way system would need to be funded by the parish council, which would be extremely costly and is therefore unrealistic.

Action: Cllr Spicer will enquire with colleagues within SCC for advice regarding roadworks/signage and how this can be improved.

- 6.2 **Up Street Footpath:** A detailed report has been submitted via the Highways reporting system: Decision awaited.
7. **Planning – New applications to consider responses to planning application consultation documents received from West Suffolk Council**
- 7.1 DC/25/2048/TCA Trees in a conservation area notification – a. one Sycamore (T4 on plan) fell. B. one Poplar (T6 on plan) height reduction by two metres
Location: Bardwell Hall, Ixworth road, Bardwell IP31 1AU
Proposed Cllr Gilson. 2nd Cllr Berrill Unanimously approved.
(Clerk's Note: Tree Warden confirmed no objection)
Resolution: No objection *(subject to Bardwell Parish Council's Tree Warden being satisfied)*
- 7.2 DC/25/2025/FUL Planning application – Pétanque pitch and siting of shelter.
Location: Sports Pavilion, Bardwell Sports Club and Committee,
Spring Road, Bardwell Suffolk IP31 1AB
Proposed Cllr Gilson 2nd Cllr Witton Unanimously approved
Resolution: Support
8. **Planning decisions** - see attached
9. **Chair's. Report:**
River: The Chair reported that the river is flowing well, with a good current and clear water. Otters have been observed.
Post lady: Sally's leaving do had been held at the Grumpy Goat, shortly before Christmas and was very well supported.
10. **Clerk's report: Training Documents**
Training documents received from SALC are being circulated on receipt.
Councillors are asked to confirm when read and the Clerk will update the training records.
11. **Finance**
11.1 Financial Report – See attached
11.2 Invoices for payment totalling £579.06 were approved for payment
11.3 Precept request 2026/27: £21,196 This has been submitted to West Suffolk Council.
11.4 Budget 2026/27: The sum of £236.01 has been ringfenced/allocated to an earmarked reserve (from the general reserve) for the purposes of the Peace Arch.
Action: Clerk to write to Church and BPFA to confirm agreement re grants awarded and review period.
12. **Bardwell Village News: Matters for Consideration**
Andrew Akehurst has advised that it is very likely that the Community Workshop will be relinquishing the lease on the printer used for village newsletters in the near future.
The most likely scenario is that the final print run will be in April (printing the May issue).
He will be able to continue to print smaller jobs on his colour printer.
Bardwell Village News has been printed by the Community Workshop (and prior to that by Realise Futures at the same location) for over 20 years.

Action: Editor (Cllr Gilson) and Clerk to investigate alternative printing options/obtain quotes

13. **Community Field:** It is disappointing to note that the footpath has been damaged by youngsters with bikes and ramps.
Hedge near the school requires attention. (This will most likely be carried out during a village work party.)
14. **Footpaths:** meeting 26th Jan.
Progress is being made with possibilities to expand within and connecting to Bardwell.
We have a volunteer footpath warden (Andrew Seddon), who will be introduced to residents in the March issue of Bardwell Village News
15. **Peace Arch:** To be an agenda item for March.
16. **Support Our Buses:** It is hoped that 'new government money', which is anticipated shortly, will enable existing services to continue.
73A is most likely to continue due to it being a well-used service for school children

A bid for a Saturday service is currently being worked on. This is receiving positive support both from SCC and Cllr Spicer.

Timetables remain unchanged. If a Saturday service is successful there will be a different timetable.

Incentive scheme in December: There is a lack of information at present but appears that numbers were not increased significantly. Nobody claimed a voucher

It has been agreed that the incentive vouchers will be retained by the bus company and used for a future scheme.

Bus usage figures/data for December have been received and will be analysed by Cllr Berrill.

17. **Volunteer Work Force:** 2026 season will commence 21st February.
Cllr Witton will be emailing volunteers.
Some of the trees planted at the end of 2025 along Low Street are to be moved from their current location (near the ditch) due to the quality of soil and water. Following discussion with the village tree warden an appropriate solution has been found.
There continues to be a good number of volunteers and positive reactions from residents, who are appreciative of the work being carried out.
18. **Annual Village Meeting:**
It was agreed that the date of the Annual Village Meeting will be 11th April commencing at 9.30am. **Clerk to book TB - Actioned**
It was suggested that Mr Middleditch's map and book could be displayed. **Action KW/MB**
Clerk has invited the Ixworth Youth Club to submit a written report of their activities.
In view of this meeting being held 11th April, the litter pick will now be on 7th March.
19. **BPFA** - nothing to report
20. **Community Speedwatch**
The speed indicator sign at Spring Road has been looked at with a view to making the unit tamper proof. Cost awaited (Chair).

Written report received from Speedwatch lead – Ali Compton

“After a well-deserved Christmas break the Bardwell Speed watchers were out again in January. Unfortunately, the inclement weather meant that we had to cancel several sessions though we did manage some chilly and damp hours. We are pleased to report that a new site on the Green has finally been agreed by the Police. Along with the new gateway on the Stanton Road we hope this will help reinforce the need to slow down on entering the village. This means that we now cover all the main entrances into Bardwell.”

21. **Bardwell Village Hall – The Tithe Barn.** Progress is being made with plans for the refurbishment of the village hall, with assistance from two non-committee members, which is greatly appreciated.
22. **Correspondence** – Letters of thanks for donations have been received from Ixworth Youth Club and Suffolk Tree Warden Network
23. **Diary Dates:**
Tuesday 10th February: Parish and Town Forum at Honington Village Hall
Cllr Smith and Clerk are booked to attend. Add Cllrs Berrill and Witton. **Actioned Clerk**
Saturday 7th March: Litter pick: 9am - 11am. Meet at the Tithe Barn (*booked*)
Cllr Ruffles has spoken to Manager of Goat Café who will provide discount vouchers to volunteers.
Saturday 11th April: 9.30am - Annual Village Meeting. Venue: Tithe Barn (*booked*)
24. **Questions to the Chair**
Mallard View: Anonymous information received from via Barningham Chair (social media message) re Mallard View. The information, together with updated photographs has been forwarded to WSC Enforcement Team.
Age Friendly Town and Parish Guide: Living a good later life.
SCC are in the process of signing up. The publication has been endorsed by NALC and SLCC. Relates to Engaging with older people. Agenda item for March meeting (MB).
BVN team members: Request for BVN team members to be to be written **Action Clerk**
25. **Next meeting** 3rd March 2026, 7pm: Venue Tithe Barn, Bardwell

Minutes confirmed as an accurate record by

..... Date 3rd March 2026
Chairman