

Minutes of the “virtual” Barham Parish Council meeting held on Thursday 04 March 2021 at 7.30pm.

Background to this “virtual” meeting:

Regulations enabling town and parish councils to lawfully conduct virtual meetings by video and telephone conferencing until 07 May 2021 have been published. The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 legislation came into force on 4 April 2020 and allows for virtual meetings to 07 May 2021.

This meeting was held using Zoom as a virtual hosting platform. Agendas were posted on the village noticeboards as usual and also to the parish council's website. This clearly explained that members of the public are still able “attend” a parish council meeting and provided the details of the meeting link or phone number and the PIN code for access to enter.

Present:

Parish Councillors: David Wood (Chairman), Liz Minter (vice chairman), John Brooks, Ernie Mullett, Andreas Tatt, Stuart Eccles, Diane Tatt, Gary Graham and Carolyn Hunt.

Kent County Cllr, Cllr Michael Northey

Canterbury City Cllr, Cllr Mike Sole

Clerk to the Council, Amanda Sparkes.

Two members of the public - one Barham resident, and the Clerk designate Joanne Pannell.

1. The Chairman's opening remarks and apologies for absence

Cllr Wood welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were no apologies for absence. Cllr Wood introduced Joanne Pannell, the newly appointed Clerk designate, whose official start date would be 15 March 2021.

2. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of the last meeting

Cllr A. Tatt proposed and Cllr Graham seconded and all councillors agreed that the Minutes of the last meeting held 04 February 2020 were a true record of the meeting. (NOTED that these will be sent to the Chairman by post to be signed.)

4. Use of S101 delegation to the Clerk since the last meeting:

None.

5. Adjournment of the meeting for parishioners' questions and comments.

A resident congratulated the council on its new website, commenting that it is easy to navigate and has a lovely fresh feel.

The meeting continued.

6. Resident report for cycle path improvements

A resident's report and proposal for cycle path improvements between Kingston and Barham was presented at the November 2020 parish council meeting. Cllr Minter commented that there was now a need to seek financial assistance from the county councillor to apply to move the paths across the fields. KCC Cllr Northey advised the parish council that it should approach the new KCC Councillor from the May 2021 elections who may choose to use some of their KCC Member grant.

7. KCC Cllr Michael Northey report

KCC Cllr Northey had sent two reports prior to the meeting which had been circulated to councillors, about a coronavirus information update, and the pothole blitz 7 currently also being promoted elsewhere including the BBC today, where residents are encouraged to report potholes to KCC highways. Cllr Northey also offered congratulations on the website and reiterated that the KCC company has given apologies again for letting down several parish councils.

8. Canterbury City Councillor Mike Sole's report

Cllr Sole had sent the following report for March 2021, which was circulated to parish cllrs prior to the meeting:

Bin collections (or lack of them) have rather dominated my inbox in February. The triple whammy of Covid absences, the end of the Serco contract and a few days snow have made things very difficult for the council's new waste collection company Canenco. I have spent many hours helping residents get their bins collected. As at today, things are much better, but I am still aware of some homes locally that have not had their bins emptied for weeks and I am chasing these up. Things have obviously gone very wrong. I have had it confirmed that the council will be seeking to recover money from Serco for not hitting their key performance indicators before their contract ended. Despite all of the problems of recent weeks, I remain hopeful that Canenco will, once things have settled down, be able to offer a more proactive and improved service.

It is a relief to see the Nailbourne levels slowly dropping. I am pleased that Highways England agreed to put in a temporary 50mph limit on the A2 that will have made is a little easier for residents in Out Elmstead Lane.

The council has recently agreed its budget. This was not without controversy and I opposed the proposals to reduce the numbers of public toilets in the district and also to reduce free disabled blue badge parking from 3 to 2 hours, but in the end these changes were voted through. As it was not possible for the local community to upgrade and improve the Mill Centre in Bridge, the city council will now be looking to dispose of this as part of its capital disposal programme.

The A2 is again full of litter, as are the lay-bys. Litter bins were also recently overflowing with rubbish. I have chased up the clean of the A2, as only one took place last year. I recently visited the A2 laybys in the ward with a council enforcement officer. The council is contacting all landowners to try to see what action can be taken to clean up the areas. In one layby we were able to trace back some flytipping to the offender who will now be contacted with a view to receiving a penalty.

Canterbury City Councillor, Cllr Mike Sole

Cllr D. Tatt questioned how many staff are actually working in the Military Road office and whether service had been affected. Cllr Sole advised he did not have an exact number but not many staff are office based. Service has altered with most working from home, such as waiting for call backs, but a lot of work from home is likely to continue for officers who wish to. He explained that in his view the problems with the bin collections had not been because of staff working from home.

Cllr Hunt commented that litter build up on the A2 starts again the day after a clearance. Cllr Sole explained that the A2 litter picks require Highways England permission and there is a budget issue but it's important to have a clean district. CCC is issuing penalties to landowners to clean up too.

9. Financial matters

- The cheque payments since the last meeting were noted.
- The bank statements and bank reconciliation for February, March and April 2021 will be sent to Cllr Graham after the year end internal audit inspection for scrutiny and signature before the new Clerk takes over as the Responsible Financial Officer.

Flint wall between the Churchyard and The Spinney

The Clerk was contacted by the owner of The Spinney about the condition of the wall between the churchyard and The Spinney. As reported at the last meeting, the Chairman and Clerk did a site visit and the Clerk took several photographs which have been circulated to Cllrs. They inspected all four boundaries of the closed churchyard. There are some serious cracks in places and most walls have repointing repairs requirements. A tree growing on The Spinney side of that boundary wall is causing an issue.

Cllr Brooks explained that although he is waiting on definitive replies, it appears that the walls (pending extraordinary exceptions) belong to the Church so are under the Grade I listing curtilage. Cllr Brooks, as a Church Warden will seek an update from the vicar Reverend Stefan Thomas.

10. A capital grant to CCC for 2021-2022

The CCC application process is now open until 26 April 2021. The parish council will apply for a replacement village sign on the village green. Cllr Minter explained she had emailed the original

heraldry details from 1997 by email to the councillors and clerk. It was agreed that the sign should be full colour and with intricate detail, and have two bears at the top, and one at the bottom on white bands, with a gold fleur de lys on a red band through the middle. Cllr Minter offered to research the heraldry details.

The choice for full colour will require a solid sign rather than a cut-out. And preferably double-sided so that it may be seen from both directions of travel.

Cllr Hunt has been sourcing options and will now obtain a firm price for the various options. The Clerk will then draft an application form to be ratified at the 01 April parish council meeting in time for the deadline for submissions.

11. The future of Concurrent Function Funding

There is no update as yet on the audit CCC will undertake to determine the current levels of provision in parishes compared to urban areas and subsequently consider the funding options for 2023/24.

12. Publicity & Communications including website

Cllr A. Tatt advised that he has now put an auto-reply on the Facebook page that posts are not monitored and to direct people to the Barham Parish Council website and contact.

13. Highways

Further to the virtual meeting held 04 February 2021 with Kent Highways, The Simpsons, BPC Chairman and Clerk – two improvement options for Church Lane from junction with Grave Castle Road to existing 30mph signs near Simpsons Vineyard access:

It is agreed that the existing signage on Church Lane at the junction with Gravel Castle Road is excessive and could be confusing to motorists. The key theme here is that less signage would probably be better, if HGV drivers wishing to reach the vineyard or neighbouring farm do not use this route then they will end up carrying on down Gravel Castle Road and may try to access the vineyard site via The Street. There is often a language barrier for foreign drivers which means signs with wording may be confusing. There were two options:

OPTION 1: KCC recommend that they remove the blue unsuitable for long vehicles signs, and instead place these and / or some additional No HGV signage on the 30mph speed limit posts near the junction of Church Lane and The Street.

OPTION 2: A more substantial scheme would be to relocate the 7.5t weight limit gateway signage and instead start the weight limit just west of the vineyard access. This will ensure HGV drivers are aware that they can turn right into Church Lane, but that they cannot enter The Street. This could be supported with advanced warning signs with metric information from the Gravel Castle Road / Church Lane junction. This would require consultation and amendments to the legal order (TRO) that underwrites the weight limit.

The parish council resolved Option 1 as its preferred option and the Clerk will KCC Highways.

Highways Improvement Template

The Clerk explained that the parish council's desire to explore some 20mph speed limit reductions would now be added to the Highways Improvement Template. There is a process to follow including active consultation with residents and the need to secure a sponsor for the scheme, usually the Kent County Councillor. This will therefore be picked up after the May 2021 KCC elections.

The Highways Steward has also suggested a review of the Highways Improvement Template and this will be conducted by the new Clerk in due course.

Annual Parking Review 2019

The Causeway & Railway Hill: Double yellow lines at the junction

Public consultation about the above proposal is now completed, and objections to the proposal were received. These objections will therefore be reported to the Joint Transportation Board on March 18th.

Resident's report of an ongoing problem with parking along Old Valley Road

Cllr Wood explained that he had received a resident's report of an ongoing problem with parking along Old Valley Road from the play park area to the Red House. Part of the road is very narrow and often drivers park with two wheels on the green which is causing damage to the ground. A sign "No parking on village green" exists on the green outside the Red House – the resident had requested a

same worded sign be put in place at the playpark end. Cllr Wood commented that he felt dubious that this would be effective and make any difference. Stones cannot be put down and a chain link fence would probably need Secretary of State permission due to the village green status. Cllr Brooks suggested creating a low level bund.

Cllr Wood explained that the parking problem is a new issue and tends to be the same few vehicles. Cllrs felt that the situation will improve when the weather improves and the ground hardens, and when the river stops flowing as some parking displacement has been caused by that. It was agreed that councillors will keep an eye on this for a while to see if the problem persists. Cllr Wood will report back to the residents and report back any further information.

14. Open Spaces

Deed of Gift and retained right of way/access

As previously reported, within the Deed of Gift of the Village Green there is a retained right to a 20ft wide access across the back of the village green, retained by The Groombridge family after they gifted the land in May 1956. Mr Groombridge asked the parish council to move the 8 trees planted within this 20ft.

Since the last meeting Cllr Hunt and Cllr Wood met to agree a plan of action to relocate the trees and then with the contractor to arrange the work. The contractor has now replanted the trees - with seven trees remaining on The Green and the eighth now situated in the picnic area on the recreation ground at the Rabbit Hole end. He has also located a donated walnut tree from the Barham Allotment Association at the same end. All trees have been well watered and the holes left filled in and made good.

As was minuted, three of the existing trees on The Green alongside The Street were struggling and so were removed and replaced. The other four trees are now placed alongside the Nailbourne. One of them is sited close to the existing village sign. The intention is that the planned new sign should be located in the space left in the corner of The Green, closer to the bridge and with greater visibility from the Valley Road. The current sign will then be taken down giving sufficient room for that tree to grow.

Cllr Eccles explained that legal advice has confirmed that technically if the landowner sell their strip of land then the right of way would pass with the sale. Cllr Minter pointed out that, should the land/field adjacent to the green be sold, possibly to a developer, then the right of access across the green would belong to the new owner.

Dogs and dog fouling

Cllr A. Tatt again asked for a No Dogs sign to be installed again by the pedestrian bridge as the old one has disappeared. Cllr Wood will organise this. No dog fouling signs would also be welcomed. Cllr Sole offered to make enquiries about sourcing some from CCC.

Coronavirus risk assessments

NOTED that the Clerk has updated the risk assessment documents to log actions taken since April.

Order for a new Zip wire

The order has been placed. Cllr Wood and the Clerk held a socially distanced meeting with the company's Area manager on site and the location in the picnic section was agreed. The ground is still too wet currently to progress this. Installation will take one day to put in the two end structures and the company then return a week or so later to put on the cable.

UKPN pole replacement at Brickfield Recreation Ground

The Clerk took a call on 24 September 2020 from a UK Power Networks officer. He was at Brickfield Recreation ground and has advised that the power pole at the bottom of Brickfield Recreation ground needs to be replaced by UKPN. There has been no further dialogue yet.

Replacement of cradle swings seats

NOTED the order was placed for the replacement of the two swing cradle seats at the Old Valley Road play area and installation has been rescheduled for week commencing 12 March 2021.

Self-closing new gate in line of fencing at Brickfield Recreation ground

Budget provision post 01 April 2021 has been made for a new self-closing gate in the line of fencing at Brickfield rec. A quote for a 1.2m gate has been requested. Cllr Hunt explained that its location would be between the two picnic tables.

15. Footpaths & Rights of Way

As reported to the February 2021 meeting:

The Elham Valley Walkers Group

The Elham Valley Walkers Group comprises of 7 members living in the valley. They organise an Annual Walking festival and monthly walks in the countryside stretching from Canterbury to Folkestone and encompassing the North Downs and areas of special interest.

The group is supported by the "Walkers are Welcome" organisation and the village of Elham is a member. They have links to local walking associations, Ramblers, North Downs Way and other walking festivals in the south east.

They have recently produced a "Village Map" of walks in and around Elham and this is displayed in a waterproof noticeboard in the village square with downloadable walks for use by the public free of charge. Downloadable at <https://elhamvalleywalkers.co.uk/elham-walks/>

They are keen to encourage all the villages in the valley to support this initiative and to that end would be willing to create the walks and maps for display through the whole valley and wondered if this is of interest to Barham Parish Council.

Barham councillors liked this idea but wondered if there are any costs involved. It was agreed that if there are no costs that The Elham Valley Walkers Group should be asked to move forward with this. If there are costs associated then this item will be brought back to the next meeting.

The Clerk explained that she had emailed after the February meeting and this was acknowledged with a comment that it would be discussed by the committee. The Clerk chased for information in time for this March meeting but has not heard anything.

This item was therefore deferred.

Footpath opposite the The Shrubbery

Cllr Minter explained that the Ramblers group is to walk this footpath shortly and report obstructions.

Stile on footpath alongside the care home, The Street

The new owner of the care home when known and finalised could be approached with a view to repair/replace the tatty fencing alongside the care home on the public right of way, and be asked to give permission for Cllr D. Tatt to pay for replacing the stile there with a gate.

16. Village organisations

Barham Football Club

Cllr D. Tatt confirmed that the club should be running again by the end of March. Lots of work has been done to the pitch at the bottom of the recreation ground and there are now new goal posts there.

Barham Allotments Association

As reported to the last meeting, in November 2020 the Barham Allotments Association alerted the Clerk to a water leak at the trough at the bottom of Brickfield Recreation ground. The Clerk, Cllr Wood and Cllr Mullett dealt with this through Castle Water/Affinity Water. The metal stand pipe is broken, but the water was shut off with a view to the plumber fixing this when the ground is drier. Cllr Mullett will now organise this.

The Chairman of BAA has commented that the water bill for 2020 was significantly higher than 2019 and wondered if the leak could have contributed to that and asked if some compensation could be offered by the parish council. The Clerk has looked back at historic costs for 2018, 2019 and 2020, and although the next water bill was due in February 2021 it has not been received yet. This will provide detail on the extent of the leak. This item was therefore deferred to the next agenda.

17. External organisations

NOTED the Chairman and Clerk attended the virtual Canterbury Area committee meeting of the Kent Association of Local Councils on 25 February 2021.

They also attended the CCC Parish Engagement meeting held on 01 March 2021. There is nothing of importance at this time to report.

NOTED that the next 10-year Census by the ONS is due to take place on 21 March 2021.

Cllr Wood commented that the government's COVID-19 road map out of lockdown should allow resuming activities in the village hall from the end of May 2021.

18. **Clerk report**
Items are incorporated elsewhere in these Minutes.

19. **Planning applications**

New planning applications since the last meeting:	
19.	CA/20/02912 - Breach Farm Elham Valley Road Barham Canterbury Kent CT4 6LN Hardstanding for use by vehicles
	View and comment on applications online at https://www.canterbury.gov.uk/planningsearch
Notifications:	
CA/20/02794 - 4 Derringstone Street, Barham, CT4 6QB Detached garage with utility room and garden room following demolition of existing garage. GRANTED	
CA/20/02133 - Breach Farm Stables, Elham Valley Road, Barham, Canterbury, Kent, CT4 6LN Change of use from mixed grazing land to exercise arena along with erection of fencing and gates. GRANTED	

20. **Other planning matters**

Update from CCC on Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) - Neighbourhood Portion Arrangements

i) 'Neighbourhood Portion' payments to parishes

CCC will transfer the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) 'Neighbourhood Portion' to parishes twice yearly – CCC will automatically transfer any CIL receipts which are due to be paid as the 'Neighbourhood Portion' every 6 months. These transfers will happen in April and October. If CCC is holding any CIL receipts an officer will email in April and in October to confirm the amount that has been collected to be transferred to you. (If the Clerk doesn't hear anything, CCC has not collected any CIL receipts for developments in the parish). Parishes will receive the funds as a bank transfer within the same month.

A parish can ask to receive the CIL 'Neighbourhood Portion' in between the bi-annual transfers for any reason (e.g. to facilitate commencement of a project).

ii) Spending the 'Neighbourhood Portion'

The CIL 'Neighbourhood Portion' can be spent on infrastructure (e.g. open space, community facilities) or it can be funded on things other than infrastructure provided that it is concerned with addressing the demands that development places on the parish (e.g. it could fund affordable housing).

If the CIL receipts are spent otherwise, Canterbury City Council, as the CIL Charging Authority, can issue a notice to a parish council requiring it to repay all or some CIL receipts.

Parishes should agree on the priorities for CIL parish spending, in consultation with the community. And through discussion on these priorities with Canterbury City Council and to check that CIL can be spent as proposed.

iii) Reporting the 'Neighbourhood Portion'

Parish councils must prepare a report for any financial year (1st April to 31st March) in which it receives CIL receipts and publish it on their website by 31st December following that financial year. So, for funds received from this April round to the next March, parishes will need to publish a report by December 2022 – and send a copy of the report to CCC.

21. **Councillors items**

Cllr Wood commented that perhaps lessons could be learned from the pandemic and the parish council may wish to revisit having a volunteer list of people willing to help others during unusual incidents.

CCC Cllr Sole and the two members of the public left the meeting at this point.

22. **Confidential Staffing Matters**

Cllr Wood explained that Joanne Pannell has been officially appointed as the new Clerk Designate with effect from 15 March 2021 and Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer with effect from 01 June 2021. She has accepted the position in writing as per the details set out in the Offer letter.

The Chairman and existing Clerk held an informal welcome on Zoom with her on 02 March 2021.

NOTED that the parish council has a duty to enrol her into the pension scheme from day one of her employment and this is in hand, Joanne is to order the Charles Arnold Baker 12th edition manual as previously ratified, and the existing Clerk has set Joanne up as a new website administrator.

Cllr Minter proposed and Cllr A. Tatt seconded and all councillors RESOLVED that as part of the conditions of service Barham Parish Council will meet the costs of: Cloud backup and antivirus software if necessary; and membership to both Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) and Association of Local Council Clerks, to enable CiLCA training and submission etc.

The Pro-Zoom account expires on 30 April 2021. Cllr A. Tatt and Cllr D. Tatt explained they both had Microsoft Teams accounts and this might be used as an alternative virtual platform. Cllr D. Tatt and Cllr Mullett will hold a trial Microsoft Teams meeting to check the process may work for Cllr Mullett.

Cllr Brooks proposed and Cllr D. Tatt seconded and all councillors RESOLVED that following the successful 3-month trial period on 15 June 2021 that delegation be given to the Chairman to finalise a Contract of Employment with Joanne Pannell based on the National Joint Councils' (NJC) Model Contract of Employment. Cllr Graham offered assistance to Cllr Wood with this.

23. Date of next meeting

The date of the next full parish council meeting will be 01 April 2021 at 7.30pm and will use the Zoom virtual platform again.

The meeting closed at 9.15pm.

Signed:
Chairman, Cllr David Wood

Date:

Please note these Minutes remain as draft Minutes until they are approved by the parish council at their next parish council meeting

Future meeting dates in person are ON HOLD due to coronavirus: Virtual meetings may be convened as required.

Provisional dates for Full Council: 01 April, 06 May, 03 June, 01 July, no meeting in August, 02 September, 07 October, 04 November, 02 December 2021.

And F&GP meeting dates should these be required: 21 April, 19 May, 16 June, 21 July, 18 August, 15 September, 20 October, 17 November and 15 December 2021.