

Minutes of the Barham Annual Parish Meeting held on 25th April 2024, in Barham Village Hall at 7.00pm.

Present: Parish Councillors: Carolyn Hunt (Chair), Diane Tatt, Andreas Tatt, Paul Smith, John Brooks, Deborah Hart. Also present: Caroline Read, Clerk & RFO to Barham Parish Council and 18 members of the public.

1. Apologies for absence. Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Manning, Cllr Latus and KCC/CCC Cllr Sole.

2. Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting. Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting held on 20th April 2023, were signed and accepted as a true record of the meeting.

3. Matters arising from the previous Minutes. There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.

4. Presentation by Ian Rickards, Kent Wildlife Trust on their plans for the development of Covert Wood, Barham. The Parish received an excellent presentation detailing the plans for Covert Wood and what flora and fauna is present in these woods.

5. To receive the Annual Report from the Chair of Barham Parish Council. 2023/4 has certainly been a busy one with a significant turnover in membership of the Parish Council whilst continuing to ensure our beautiful parish is kept in the manner our residents have come to expect. Since last year's meeting we have three new Parish Councillors, a new Parish Clerk, a new Chair and Vice Chair. Through all that change we have still managed to meet the demands put before us and in reviewing the year, I have been amazed in how much we have achieved.

With full responsibility for our open green spaces, a great deal of the agenda is rightly spent on related topics. Starting with the Village Green, we repaired the footbridge crossing the Nailbourne to ensure it remained safe to use and more recently, the football posts on the green have been replaced thanks to the generosity of The Atherton Trust together with funding from the PC. Working together with Elham Valley Walkers, a new poster of local walks was erected on the board at the Village Green, a benefit to our visitors and residents alike. The benches originally made by the Fifth Trust have also been refurbished. Following feedback from residents, we have recommended to Canterbury City Council that the complete dog ban be lifted and replaced with permission for dogs on leads. Similarly, we have recommended a complete dog ban at the Bear Trap Football Ground (PROW excepted) and await the outcomes of both. Looking ahead there are plans to maintain trees on the perimeter of the green where the boughs are at risk of falling or overhanging the street. The old village sign will also be removed to safe storage and have some basic preservation applied with a view to finding a suitable place for display over time

With respect to our play areas, repairs were made to the safety matting and all equipment in both playgrounds checked by a professional and again periodically by Parish Councillors. Some of the play equipment in Brickfield Recreation Ground is reaching end of life and is being carefully monitored. Steps are being taken to consider replacement over time.

Jubilee Field is now the responsibility of Canterbury City Council (CCC) after the end of a 10-year lease. We understand that Jubilee Field is now designated as part of CCC's net zero action plan.

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Initials of the Chair:

We continue to pursue CCC to consider additional options for its use that would benefit the community and in particular, as an overflow carpark for the Football Club. Car parking is a challenge and the club is continuing to expand its junior teams. We have endorsed the Football Clubs request to reinstate the football pitch in Brickfield Recreation Ground which they have funded and works commenced in the Autumn. The intention is to have the ground ready for use by September this year and we look forward to seeing it completed and football played once again on our largest recreational facility.

The verge and grounds mowing contract was reviewed and put out for tender and Mr. Steve Biddolph was once again successful in securing a further two year contract starting in April.

Highways is another topic that receives a lot of attention. Working with KCC Highways we have received support for an enforceable 20mph in The Street and variable speed limit of 20mph outside the school at start and end of school day. We will need to conduct a consultation with residents on the proposed change to The Street and this will commence soon. We continue to pursue options with KCC Highways to slow down traffic in the one-way roads, esp. Rabbit Hole in consideration of recreational areas and children crossing. Slow signs were painted in the road and we have made further recommendations to the Football Club to increase awareness of children crossing when football is actually taking place.

Potholes are a continuing problem. The state of the Valley Road and Brickfield Road in particular are regularly raised by parishioners. Given the state of roads generally in Kent, our rural roads are considered less of a priority for resurfacing than others so filling holes seems to be the only option. Parish Councillors and residents are helpfully reporting problems direct with KCC Highways online or reporting to the Parish Clerk.

The Nailbourne flow this year has kept us on our toes and the KCC Highways Team and Environment Agency busy. They have done a great job in monitoring the flow and taking expedient action. We issued a request for additional Parish Flood Wardens resulted in a further two volunteers coming forward. We recognise that the road closures do cause inconvenience to residents and their visitors. The Nailbourne has risen 4 out of the last 5 years and so it would seem a more regular occurrence than in decades past. We are grateful to Mike Sole in his support on this and other highways issues and especially in relation to the challenges at Out Elmstead and the junction with the A2.

Turning to planning, there have been a number of applications with objections represented by residents at meetings throughout the year which the PC has guided and supported as appropriate. The PC has limited powers in terms of planning but can still provide advice and represent objections as a council. We await outcomes of the planning application for the development of Barham Court Farmyard, now almost three years since the application was made. We were consulted by CCC in the summer with regards to S106 monies for this development. S106 funds are contributions sought from developers towards the cost of providing community and social infrastructure. We consulted residents for ideas at that time which were all taken into consideration. The public consultation by the developer of the Old Nursing Home was well received and we await outcomes of this planning proposal with interest. Highland Court also invite input from us and other neighbouring parishes as their development proposals evolve.

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Initials of the Chair:

Barham has a strong sense of community with its community run village shop and many active groups lead by volunteers. We have recently been successful in receiving an award of £1000 from the KCC Winter Support Scheme which is there to support residents with rural isolation and the cost of living crisis. Planning for use of this grant is being ably led by Councillor Hart. The Barham and Kingston Babies and Toddler Group received a grant of £1000 from the Parish to pay for hall hire and refreshments which had been supported by Kingston PC the year before. That strong sense of community is also demonstrated by those taking part in the organised village litter picks twice annually. The October event saw 14 residents and the recent April event 16. Our thanks to all who took part to collect a great deal of rubbish that regrettably others leave behind. Please do take time to read the village group reports that will also be available on our website after this meeting.

Our finances are being well managed and we have created a new reserves policy along with a list of projects earmarked and allocated to reserve funds. There has been a focus on street lighting due to the on-going shortfall in funding received from CCC to run them which then requires funding by the parish precept. We are one of only two villages in the district with responsibility for street lighting which we are endeavouring to hand over to CCC in full. Councillor Smith has actively pursued this and together with the Clerk, are continuing in an endeavour to reach agreement for the next financial year

Looking ahead we have resolved to revisit and refresh the village plan which was created initially in 2016 via a survey to residents with the last revision was conducted in 2020. The current thinking is to conduct a professionally facilitated field based workshop responding to questions in respect of our green spaces, building design, facilities and surrounding landscape that will ultimately result in a report that will objectively inform planning applications and the projects we prioritise for funding.

Finally but by no means least, I'd like to thank all of our Parish Councillors for the time and attention they give on a volunteer basis to ensure the smooth running of our parish, we all have our allocated responsibilities and play our part and it shouldn't go unrecognised. I'd also like to recognise our new Parish Clerk, Caroline, who has made an impressive start with a speedy handover, investing personal time getting to know the village and the issues in hand with proficiency and addressing matters so proactively.

And to all Parishioners, I encourage you to participate in our PC meetings and with your Parish Council generally, raising concerns, bringing forward suggestions and helping to find solutions to problems that continue to support this wonderful village we live in.

6. To receive the Annual report from KCC & CCC Councillor Mike Sole. I have now been the Kent County Councillor for Canterbury South for 3 years, and Canterbury City Councillor for Nailbourne for 5 years.

Last May started with the city council elections and I was delighted to be re-elected, and indeed humbled by the number of people that turned out to vote for me. Achieving 84% of the vote was a record for Canterbury, and may have even been the highest vote share of any Councillor elected in the country last May. Thank you.

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Initials of the Chair:

It was all change at the city council with a new Lib Dem/Labour administration replacing the previous Conservative run council. I was delighted be asked to join the cabinet. As cabinet member for finance I was very pleased to be able to deliver the council's budget which included reopening the Sturry Park & Ride, bringing back the market and the introduction of a lower residents parking rate in many car parks. At the councils AGM in May I shall be taking on the role of leader of the Lib Dem Group.

The new draft local plan is out for consultation. This includes a number of significant changes from the previous draft including scrapping the zoning scheme and eastern by-pass, removing the proposed new settlements at Cooting Farm, Adisham and Aylesham South in the Womenswold Parish. Please take the time to take part in the consultation.

The Nailbourne had kept me busy over the winter and although we have seen a little flooding of basements, the impact of the flooding, despite the high levels of water, has been much lower than previously.

The knock on impact of the closure of Railway Hill and Out Elmstead Lane have caused access issues. I will be taking up the issue of bin collections which did not materialise as they should have done. I continue to discuss Out Elmstead Lane with KCC to get a permanent solution.

I was very pleased to at long last get a 30mph limit in Woolage Village, and this year another will follow in Woolage Green. We will shortly also see improved signage in Union Road, Bridge to deter large vehicles and improve safety.

I continue to work with KCC on Highway Improvement Plans for all 16 parishes in my KCC division. The small amount of Combined Members Grant that I have for Highway and Community projects must be allocated by 30 September, so please let me know soon if support is needed.

Whilst KCC does not run buses, the start of the last school year was incredibly difficult with Stagecoach removing a bus without considering the consequences. I was able to agree a timetable change with Stagecoach to improve the situation, and I remain in contact with Stagecoach to try to reinstate the 17 evening service that was cut when the KCC subsidy was removed.

It isn't possible for me to attend all parish council meetings due to diary clashes, but I do try to rotate my attendance and make a special effort when there are relevant items on the agenda that I may be able to assist with. I am always happy to meet up with parish councillors and clerks outside of formal meetings to discuss things.

7. To receive Annual reports from Representatives within Barham Parish.

Barham Village Hall Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) Trustees' Annual Report– 6th November 2023.:

Conversion to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO): The village hall was converted to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) on the 19th November 2021. Following this, the assets of the old unincorporated charity were transferred to the new CIO on 21st March 2022. Since then the assets of the charity (land, buildings and equipment) have been formally transferred to the CIO via a novation agreement. The shop and bowls club leases have been amended to reflect this

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Initials of the Chair:

transfer. The formal notification of the land transfer by the Land Registry is still awaited (due to delays resulting from the Covid lockdown).

Trustees' Responsibilities for the Financial Accounting Statements: The trustees (who are also the directors of the company for the purposes of company law) are responsible, as set out in the Charity's financial compliance procedures (which are available online), for keeping proper accounting records, safeguarding the assets of the Charity, and the preparation of (annual) financial accounting statements. As the charity's gross income does not exceed £250,000 the trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) but that an independent examination is needed, and this is attached to the accounts for the year under review.

Projects and Improvements 2022-23: The hall trustees considered that the hall would be a good location for a 'warm space' during the winter of 2023. Due to the dramatic rise in energy costs many local residents were struggling with heating costs. The Coffee Stop and other 'warm space' initiatives were organized and gained a Kent Community Foundation grant. The Knit & Natter initiative is likely to continue in the coming winter.

The creation of a shop store in the old kitchen was completed and a timber lobby subsequently erected. The barge boards on the gable above the store were renewed with uPVC boards in August 2023. The shop also created side door and window to the former store room. The paving to the side of the hall that provides access to the new store was improved and widened during September/October. The hall has agreed to contribute £1,000 towards the cost of this hard landscaping.

The shop's broadband contract with Plusnet ran out at the beginning of September. The shop decided to utilise a new fibre to the premises connection. The hall's broadband had been provided via a link to the shop's supply because the hall did not have its own phone line. The hall trustees considered that with the availability of fibre broadband it was more appropriate that the hall had its own broadband provider. Orbital installed a new supply in August/September 2023. Playing recorded music in the hall has been an issue for several years and it has not been clear if the hall itself needed a music licence or if individual hirers' licences were sufficient. After negotiation with the PPL/PRS (Phonographic Performance Ltd and the Performing Rights Society) we have purchased an appropriate music licence.

The hall car park was given a top-up of gravel in February by a group of local volunteers. This car park was extended northwards in June. The overgrown area of snowberry was cleared and has usefully created a couple of additional spaces.

Caretaking duties at the hall have been carried out by a number of volunteers, each tackling one or two of the jobs. This has been unsatisfactory at times and consequently the trustees have appointed Andy Brookman as a 'caretaker' and IT expert.

The Barham Downs History Society (BDHS) heritage room (the Atherton Room) was fitted out during the year and opened in August 2023. The heritage room is open on Wednesday mornings and by appointment on other dates.

Lastly some Thank yous: Thanks to:

- all the regular hirers for returning to the hall.

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Initials of the Chair:

- to the Coffee Stop and 100 club for their contributions (financial and social).
- to Geoff, Steve, Roger and Andy for their help looking after the hall and grounds
- to Linda, Kim and Alison for doing a great job cleaning the hall
- to Deb and Kay for sorting out the warm spaces initiative
- to Alison for carrying on looking after the bookings, and
- to the trustees for their help and advice, in particular to Alison for taking over the treasurer role and Delia for being secretary.
- to Kay Greig who is standing down as a hall trustee (representing Coffee Stop and the Parochial Church Council). Kay has been a trustee for several years and her inputs and knowledge will be missed.

The Barham Wives Club Annual Report:

The Barham Wives Club have had another successful year with 37 members. Various speakers have kept us entertained throughout the year. We also meet once a month for a walk followed by lunch. The meetings are held at the Village Hall on the first Thursday of the month at 2pm. New members are most welcome.

Anyone wishing to join should call: Rosemary on 01227 830872

2024 Annual Report from the Poppy Appeal Organiser:

During the past year the Poppy Appeal total for the Barham district reached £1117.52, slightly less than in 2023. I'd like to say a massive thank you to everyone in Barham who has so generously supported the Poppy Appeal. It is as important now as it was back in 1921 when the Royal British Legion first began. Last year nearly £2 million were spent on welfare for our veterans and their immediate dependents and it is expected that figures like this will only grow as needs become increasingly complex.

Barham School always makes a wonderful contribution in financial terms, with collections in October/November amounting to £276.75. I assume from this that the children are made fully aware of the cause they are supporting and this is very encouraging as it is so vitally important to make members of the younger generation aware of who and what has gone before.

I'm also very grateful to Barham Post Office where donations totalled £444.42, a record high. To me, this shows that the Village Shop and Post Office truly are at the heart of the community. The Service Station on the A260 also always make a significant collection and last year this totalled £247.59. I'm grateful that they also home an all-year collecting pot which I regularly empty and replace.

Since the unfortunate theft of the collecting pot from Barham Church in 2016, there have been no collections at the Church, and no remembrance collections from the church congregation, even on Remembrance Sunday. I would like to be able to support the Church in any way they feel is appropriate but previous emails have always remained unanswered.

Equally, I'm very happy to support Barham Parish Council, particularly if there are plans to mark D-Day and the Normandy campaign this summer.

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Initials of the Chair:

If there are any residents of Barham who would like to carry out house-to-house collections during the fortnight immediately preceding Armistice Day, I would be delighted to hear from you, either on 07734 383691 or by email to susanfoster61@btinternet.com

Finally, Thank you so much to each and every one of you.

Bell Tower Report 2024 - from Jan Kincaid, Tower Secretary:

The following can be reported:

- The bell ringing team are not getting any younger and the time is approaching when some of our band will wish to retire. We already struggle to get a full complement of 5 ringers for regular services and the future of the tower will need to be addressed at some point in the near future.
- The tower has to be swept out several times a year and the battle with pigeons is ongoing.
- As well as ringing at services, the team are pleased to be asked to ring at weddings and several are booked for the coming year. We have visiting ringers (youngsters from Wales) coming on August 2nd so listen out for some impressive ringing!

Neighbourhood Watch Report - April 2024 from: Jane Graham, NHW Coordinator:

Back in December 2023, the decision was made for the Canterbury and District NHW Association Charity to be closed. The decision was made because membership of the schemes was declining and new Coordinators were not coming forward to take on existing schemes.

The individual NHW schemes were encouraged to continue to operate and are still listed and recognised by Kent Police. I currently have 27 members included on my e-mail list.

Communications have been revised and now include an 'e-watch.co newsletter. This newsletter lists very interesting crime appeals and links to various helpful sites. The newsletter can be accessed by anyone by searching 'e-watch.co' You can also subscribe to receive it by email by clicking on the link in the webpage and completing your details.

I put some of the recommendations on the Parish notice board at the village hall, along with my details for any new residents. Unfortunately, I have made the decision to stand down as Barham's NHW Co-ordinator at the end of June. Of course, if someone else is interested in taking over the scheme please let me know. My e-mail is: jane.graham19@gmail.com

Coffee Stop Report For Barham Parish Council April 2024:

Every Tuesday morning throughout the year you will find Coffee Stop open for two hours from 10a.m. in the Grabham Room of the Village Hall unless the weather is severe. Coffee Stop is not a club it is a meeting place where you can come and go as you wish, we welcome anyone of whatever age to come along and meet up with friends or make new ones.

Coffee and tea is the liquid refreshment, we serve a variety of biscuits often supplemented by kind donations of home-made cakes, sweets and other goodies. Proving popular is toast with Marmite or marmalade. All of this for a small donation. After expenses we pay the balance to our Village Hall it being a vital community centre.

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Initials of the Chair:

On a quarterly basis the Hi Kent organisation run a clinic for re-tubing NHS hearing aids and supplying batteries on production of a NHS Card. Monthly we welcome the Parish Clerk, Caroline Read, giving parishioners the opportunity to confidentially ask questions or comment on parish matters.

Earlier this year some 32 of us enjoyed breakfast at The Duke of Cumberland , a gift from Hattie and Zaf, in appreciation a collection was taken and £165 was given to the Greenbanks Community at the request of our hosts.

We, the members of the team, enjoy and look forward to Tuesdays when we know that the morning will be filled with laughter, caring and a sense of community. We would like others to come and help, on a rota basis, to set up tables and chairs, make and serve refreshments and there's always the washing-up !

We are in our 20th year which we will celebrate in July. By Kay Greig on behalf of the Team.

Barham Tennis Club 2023/24 Season Report:

The focus of the Tennis Club is to provide and maintain a quality facility for the benefit of the residents of Barham and the surrounding villages to play tennis.

It is pleasing to report that the membership continues to grow, year on year. The Club is investigating ways to encourage increased usage of the courts and the mini-tennis courts. One possibility is to convert one mini-tennis court over to the game of Pickleball, which originated in the USA, and which is played with a hard bat and an aerated plastic ball; a game that is increasingly being played in the UK. More research is being carried out.

Members' views are being sought in order to find more ways to facilitate additional playing opportunities, such as specific social tennis sessions, where individual members can turn up and join in and establishing a media link to help co-ordinate attendance.

Membership subscriptions are being kept at a low level to avoid 'cost' being a barrier for people to play, but high enough to ensure that the courts are well maintained into the future. This includes the complete resurfacing which is financially being planned for 2028, but which hopefully can be put back for even a few more additional years.

All we need now is a bit of sunshine and warmth. By Simon Cavalier.

8. Residents' Participation and Questions.

Residents raised their concerns over the material state of the **Methodist Chapel**, the Chair acknowledged that the building is in very poor condition with self-sown trees getting established in the fabric of the building, damaged railings and broken windows, etc. Residents were informed that the Parish Council along with the assistance of CCC Cllr. Mike Sole endeavour to engage with the owners, in an attempt for them to take responsibility of this Grade II Listed building. Residents were assured that the Parish Council will continue to pursue all available enforcement powers and provide updates as they occur.

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Initials of the Chair:

A resident asked if there had been any consideration to providing further **low-cost housing** to the Parish. The Parish Council advised that other than the small proposal at Barham Court Farmyard, and the field (adjacent to Valley Road) near Barham Court Farm as detailed in the Local Plan, no further development for low-cost housing was currently anticipated.

Residents raised their concerns regarding **parking in the vicinity of the Primary School** at peak times. The Parish Council noted these concerns, but unfortunately due to the limited amount of off-street parking in this area, it is unlikely a solution could be found. The Parish Council highlighted that although there is plenty of free parking in the Parish, it was clear the majority of parents on the school run feel the need to park as close to the school as possible. The Parish Council advised that there are potential development opportunities, where consideration to kerbs and barriers, etc. could be used, but unfortunately due to the high cost of these improvements it was unlikely to happen. The Parish Council advised that as no enforcement officers are regularly present, to create a safer parking environment, the residents, the school and the parents would need to continue to work together to find suitable parking solutions. The Parish Council assured the residents that they would continue to engage with KCC Highways, to find a positive solution for this area.

9. Chair of Barham Parish Council to close the meeting. The Chair of the Parish Council thanked everyone for attending, and closed the meeting at 8.25pm

Caroline Read
Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer
Barham Parish Council
Clerk@barhamparishcouncil.gov.uk

Signed as a true record:
Chair, Cllr Carolyn Hunt

Date:

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Initials of the Chair: