BARKING PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held at Barking Village Hall at 7.00pm
on Thursday 16th April 2025

PRESENT:
Cllr Marcus Tabberer– Chairman, Cllr Rosamund Fellowes, Cllr Ann Ross and Cllr Mike Bailey

IN ATTENDENCE:
Mrs L Rogers - Clerk
4 members of the public

BPC 01/25 APOLOGIES
Cllr Mike Anderson, Shaun Cochrane, Natasha Gleach, Mike Smith and Sue Marsh

BPC 02/25 MINUTES
The minutes from the meeting held on 8th May 2024 were approved by the councillors and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

BPC 03/25 BARKING PARISH COUNCIL –*Cllr Marcus Tabberer (Chairman)*
To begin with we should recognise the collective effort that goes into running the parish council and those who contribute to this. To reiterate my thanks from previous years I'd like to thank all the PC councillors for collective dedication and efforts over the last 12 months. My thanks to Rosamund (vice-chair) for often covering for me when time-based decisions are required and work commitments prevent my input. I make no excuse for again highlighting the work done on behalf of the Parish by Dan Pratt (District Councillor) and Kay Oakes (our County Councillor). Their support for the Parish and input into many areas is invaluable. As a Parish we are lucky to have access to their knowledge and experience. Their collective & positive input and contribution to the Barking Parish is hugely appreciated. Again, thanks to our Parish clerk Lucinda. The Parish council thank her for all the effort and diligence over the last year. Her efforts minimize the impact of much of the administrative burden on all the councillors, and especially me. As always this is hugely appreciated and without this support, I would not have been able to chair the PC over the last 12 months. We have maintained a healthy financial position despite the financial challenges around costs and that have continued over the last 12 months. I can confirm that we have managed to operate within out set budget for the last 12 months and have successfully completed all relevant financial audits. The rise in the precept this year, as always and rightly so, generated much discussion around increasing funding in line with costs and trying to keep the rise as low as possible. The PC default position remains to keep any precept rise as low as possible. The PC has continued to lodge, and coordinate, its objections with National Grid plans for the new pylon infrastructure that is likely to impact the parish. as this is of particular concern to so many who live within the parish. Over and above the standard round of maintenance on our grass, trees and hedges in the last year the Parish has implemented a review and action plan around issues of drainage and flooding. This has included coordinating with landowners and wider bodies for the clearance of ditches and the reinstatement of the pond outside the village hall. The footway infrastructure project has commenced with surveys and evaluations of likely positioning. A discussion and display of the plans at the village hall also took place with a large majority of those attending in favour of this project progressing further. The feedback gained has been invaluable. Next

steps will be submission of planning application, resolution of all compliance matters and issuing of tenders for the work before a final decision to implement the footway.
Finally, although stating I would hand over the duty of Chair for the PC last year clearly this has yet to happen. Although my intent to handover remains, I will coordinate with the PC councillors and projects we have inflight to make this as smooth as possible.

BPC 04/25 INVITED REPRESENTATIVES:

St Mary's Church, Barking – *Susan Marsh read by Cllr Rosamund Fellowes*

Monthly Communion Service with Hymns continues at the Church with a small but welcoming congregation and is open to all. The infrequency of services is because our Rector Daniel Harrison is responsible for all eight parishes in the Benefice, so special services were held at Eastertide, Harvest and a well attended Nine lessons and Carol service on Christmas Eve followed by tea sausage rolls and mince pies This year we have had one wedding, and three funerals, two for ex residents of the village and one for a Darmsden resident Sadly our organist of many years , Brenda Dickerson retired this autumn but we are very grateful that Phil, the bell tower captain has volunteered to play for services as well as mastering his wonderful team of ringers of our beautiful bells. Fund raising occupies a considerable time of the PCC in order to pay our Parish Share to the Diocese, heat, light, insure and maintain this historic Church. We are extremely grateful to all that support us in different ways, whether Gift aided donations, helping at or attending the events and sponsored walking around the whole Benefice. Also to the Parish Council for again giving us a grant towards the grass cutting in the Churchyard, the Needham and Barking Charities for their grant towards the resurfacing of the paths leading to the Church, and David Bates for laying down the extra piece of asphalt free of charge. Also those who decorate the Church for special occasions. We did our usual take away Valentines tea in February, in June had a most interesting talk from Mrs Smith a local tennis umpire and Wimbledon Line Judge, appropriately accompanied by a strawberry cream tea. Our usual Harvest supper was less well attended but with the raffle raised a generous sum. Also in the Autumn we were pleased to welcome the Suffolk Churches choir who sang beautifully for us in the Church followed by tea. Now even more serious fund raising will be required following our five yearly (quinquennial) inspection of the Church fabric and interior facilities, as further urgent work is required on the South roof as well as repair to the rendering to the flint exterior walls and modification of the external drainage to help lessen damp ingress and an update of the electrical installation. This is only the beginning of a longer programme estimated, at current rates as costing, at least a quarter of a million pounds. We hope that you will feel able to support us in this daunting endeavour, necessary if Barking is to continue to have its lovely and important Church, which is open daily for all to visit whether for interest, refuge from the weather, or quiet contemplation.

While not responsible for the Church at Darmsden we are responsible for the graveyard and which is like Barking old grave yard designated as a conservation area to be managed to encourage wild flower and animal habitat. This year as well as limited grass cutting after the flowers have seeded a leaning conifer tree close to the Church was felled.

Again thank you all for your continuing support.

Barking Chapel –*Pastor Graham Steward:* As we give thanks to God for the past year, in many ways little seems to have changed. We continue to run our regular services and activities. A few faces are missing. One or two have died and others now need to be in a care home. A few others have moved on to pastures new. There is one thing which has definitely changed. Although the same people may do things in the same way, our little church is

technically a new entity. Since our building was purchased by Battisfird Free in around 1970, Barking Chapel has been under the same trust as Battisford free Church. Changing Charity Commission requirements have meant that it was necessary for the Church to become a new Charitable incorporated Organisation. This means that our church is now an entirely separate charity in its own right. Whilst in practice, most people will see no difference, this has made quite a lot of work and involved considerable expense, which seemed quite daunting at the time.

Looking back over more than 25 years – I really have been Pastor that long – I realise that the church of today is not the one my wife and I began with. Of those who attended our meetings in the beginning there is only one who regularly attends the Chapel now. Over the years the number has fluctuated up and down. Just at the moment there are not quite so many again but we hope that may change in the future. Our mission statement is 'Proclaiming the Good News of Jesus' and we believe that this message is just as relevant today as it ever was. We are looking forward to Easter Sunrise Communion on the Tye when it is always good to share with friends from the Anglican Benefice. Those who turn out at such an unearthly hour on a Sunday morning can have the reward of breakfast in the Chapel if they wish. The annual service of Remembrance at the War memorial is also another occasion when we value coming together with other congregations and members of the wider community. It is also good to have regular opportunities to take assemblies at Ringshall school and we have recently started conducting a short service at Barking Hall once a month. A recent You.gov poll suggests that there has been a significant rise in overall church attendance national, particularly amongst younger age groups. We have yet to see this in Barking but I live in hope.

Village Hall Management Committee & Community Council –*Cllr Bailey* A brief report as Maria Dalby is away. Pre-school is the main user of the hall. Financially the hall is holding its own. It is not used as much as hoped. Soon a leaflet with activities is to be distributed to all the houses in Barking to encourage people to use the hall to get together. There has been no flooding since the nearby pond was dug out. The new kitchen iws working well and looks good.

Barking Pre School – *Elisha Raynham –report read by Cllr Tabberer*

Staff – 7; Bank staff – 2

Children currently on the books- 34 (we still have availability for every session)

Its been a very hard year for the staff with change of management. Emotionally and financially. When Clare handed in her notice the staff were led to believe they would have to close permanently as they would have no manager or deputy. In Clare's leaving we had a loss of approximately £5,000 due to having to shut for an extra week and invoices not being chased, resulting in them not being payed. Then another £2,000 for general running of the Preschool with everything increasing. Apart from the loss occurred due to invoices not being paid and the extra week off we are still looking as though we will be working at a loss this year. Especially with new rules from the Government and Department For Education limiting what we can charge for and only giving us £7.57 an hour for 2 year olds and £5.40 an hour for 3 &4 year olds. This barely covers providing the basic equipment needed for day to day cost let alone the bills and staff wages. We are relying heavily on fundraising and looking into applying for grants. Staff wages do not reflect on the roles and responsibilities the staff have to do day to day and the difference between the pay of management and staff is very minimal as it is all we can afford. There is a lot of worries with many early years settings and the new rules being put into place on whether Preschools and nurseries will survive. We are fundraising as much as we can to stay afloat. Luckily at the moment we are scrapping by and surviving, which I strive to maintain. Any grants or

financial support is very much appreciated. We would love to buy new toys for the children as ours are very dated and have been about years so are braking. We are also looking at purchasing outside equipment to make it more appealing and fun for the children, for example, ride on toys, sand pits, water tray, easels etc. This will help with their learning and development. However unfortunately funding does not cover this and we have to fundraise to get small things at a time.

Needham Market and Barking Welfare Charities

OUR PURPOSE - The “Town Lands” and “Almshouse” charities are restricted by charity law to make grants that only benefit residents in Needham Market town and the parish of Barking. They are registered with the Charity Commission and managed by 11 local trustees. The principal objectives are: to relieve residents’ need, hardship or distress, and to provide relief for old age or sickness in the area, including convalescence, and for Town Lands, to use any balance of income for such charitable purposes for the general benefit of the inhabitants as the trustees think fit.

CURRENT ACTIVITIES

Town Lands focus on individuals and families distressed by cost of living issues, which remains an on-going issue. This includes supporting the Citizens' Advice Bureau to sign-post local help available, plus the food-bank needs of St John's "Pantry" at the Ark church hall. Key other grants this year include £5,000 to Barking Community Hall, to modernise the kitchen after flooding issues, and £4,000 to Bosmere Primary School to provide computer equipment. Trustees continue to support the local minibus, and administer the historic Camping Land as a public amenity. Trustees have also supported the new Scouts hut on the Camping Land, which is now under construction. The major Almshouse project to build 6 new charity units on their Creeting land was completed in the year, costing £1.67 million. They are now fully occupied, and complement the 4 flats within Orwell Housing's Drift Court sheltered housing scheme. So we now administer 5 houses with 10 tenants.

The project had a very unique approach with the appointed developer, Ruby Homes, part of the local DAB Group. We agreed a fixed-price exchange of the charity's land for freehold buildings, thus minimising cash flows. As reported last year, it has become increasingly complex over the last decade to administer the allotments. Our land should be regarded as an investment (as per historic trustees) to generate income that can be used for the charity's Objects. Trustees continue to wind down their direct involvement in day-to-day allotment operations, which they feel is not their remit. Full details can be found in the latest independently-examined Annual Report and financial statements, available from the Charity Commission website.

Theobald’s Foundation – *No report*

One of our representatives, Mike Smith has stepped down

BPC05/25 Neighbourhood Plan – The new The Government announced significant changes to the National Planning Policy Framework in December 2024 which will impact us all. This is what it means for us here in Mid Suffolk: Barking will need to have a further 48 houses built in the village over the next ten years to allow Mid Suffolk to meet the revised government housing targets. Planning rules will also change which makes having a Neighbourhood Plan the only way a community can have any influence over planning applications in their parish.

Barking parish Council have prepared a survey to ask people how they see the future of Barking which is the first step in creating a Neighbourhood Plan. The parish need form a team to create the plan so please come forward if you want to help with this project.

BPC06/25 Proposed Footway on the Tye

The meeting for the public to decide which route the path should take was held and a large majority chose the red route on the Fox Meadow side of the Tye. Now the parish council need to submit a section 38 application for permission to install an unbound path along the Tye. The parish council expressed their thanks to district Councillor Dan Pratt for this help and support with the path.

BPC07/25 Public Forum

Concerns were raised about an extra 48 houses to be built in Barking and the lack of infrastructure to support it, particularly the water supply as it is felt it has already been a reduction in water pressure since the last few houses have been constructed. A large number of house all needing water will put further strain on this.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.00pm

Chairman…….. Date……..