

Earsham Parish Council Minutes

of a meeting of Earsham Parish Council held at the Village Hall,
on Wednesday 30th July 2025 at 7.30pm

Present: Councillors: Richard Randlesome (Chair) Keith Reeve, Jim Bennett, Dave Clark, Stephen Revell and Nick Meade

Also present: Two members of the public, County Councillor Barry Stone, District Councillor Chris Brown and Lynda Ling (Clerk)

1. Welcome

2. To receive and accept apologies from members unable to attend – Apologies were received and accepted from Parish Councillor Cllr. Leech and District Cllr. Brendon Bernard

3. To receive any declarations of interest, in particular matters to be raised at this meeting

- To note any declarations of members pecuniary and/or non-pecuniary/other interests pertaining to items on the following agenda – The following interests were declared: -
Cllr. Dave Clark – Item 6a
Cllr. Richard Randlesome – Item 9a
- To consider any dispensation requests - None

4. Approval of minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 28th May 2025 - Agreement proposed by Councillor Randlesome and seconded by Councillor Clark **ALL AGREED**

The meeting was adjourned at 19.35pm and reconvened at 19.47pm for public participation

The County Councillor asked if he could speak during the public session as he had to leave the meeting as soon as possible. This was agreed and the following was reported: -

- Norfolk County Council are debating a proposal from the government for local government reorganisation, which will be discussed in detail at a meeting in September. The County Council will recommend what they would like to see, either 1, 2 or 3 Unitary Authorities.
- The purpose of the reforms will be to create a more efficient, money-saving and less fragmented system.
- Devolved powers to Mayors of the Unitary Authority will include Housing and Strategic Planning, Transport and Infrastructure, Economic Growth and Regeneration, Skills and Employment support, Health and wellbeing, Police and Fire, Climate and Environment
- Councillor Stone answered questions from those present, regarding parish boundaries, the future number of wards and whether Parish Councils would be affected by the changes.
- Funding - NCC have launched a new fund for local community projects through the Norfolk Community Fund. The fund offers grants between £200 and £2,500 to support projects that promote social inclusion, volunteering, and community engagement.
- There are still funds available from the Members Allowance if anyone would like to apply.

5. Reports

District and County Councillors –

District Councillor Chris Brown –

- South Norfolk Council are proposing two unitary authorities, with a maximum number of councillor of 100, currently there are 399, the government's aim is to save money and deliver better services.
- Planning – The Village Clusters proposed Plan, along with supporting evidence has been forwarded to the Planning Inspectorate for independent examination. Self/custom build planning has also been reviewed.

- East Pye Solar - Cllr. Meade asked if South Norfolk Council have a policy on solar farms, as in his opinion, they do raise concerns that they are spoiling the countryside due to size. District Cllr. Brown acknowledged that there is concern over the scale of the proposals.

Chairman and Parish Councillors

Chairman's report – The Chairman commented that cars are parking on the road at the Bungay end of the village which is causing a hazard. Vehicles leaving the village must pull out to see if anything is coming towards them, can anything be done? The Clerk said she would contact Highways to advise but doubted anything could be done to mitigate risks. **ACTION – CLERK**

Councillor reports –

Cllr. Meade raised the concern of the proposed East Pye Solar Farm again and asked if the Parish Council should submit an objection to the plans and stated that although he is not against smaller solar development projects, this proposal was out of proportion for the area. After further comments had been made by other members, it was agreed that councillors would submit their concerns to the Clerk to be collated and then submitted by the deadline of 6th August 2025

ACTION – CLLRS/CLERK

Cllr. Revell raised the issue of increased traffic from Park Farm through to Hedenham Mermaid and asked if anything could be done to reduce the risk of a bad accident. Cllr. Meade commented that there had been eight accidents along that stretch of road in three years. It was agreed that County Councillor Stone should be informed of this as well as Highways. **ACTION - CLERK**

Clerk's report – Street Signs – The new Kingsway cul-de-sac sign has now been fitted, thanks to Tony Barton for bringing this to the parish council's attention.

VAT for first quarter of the financial year – A VAT return for the months April – June 2025 was submitted on 1st July due to the high expenditure during these months. £4,156.07 was spent on reclaimable VAT in the first financial quarter of the year. This has now been received from HMRC.

6. Village Items – Update on all village items plus: -

a) Report from the Speed Watch group – Cllr. Clark reported that the Group has been out half a dozen times recently, however August will be quiet due to volunteer holidays. It is likely that Norfolk will adopt the Suffolk model from September 1st, and the Norfolk Co-ordinator may be asked if two (not three) volunteers can go out to monitor speeding.

b) Unveiling of memorial discussion update – All members agreed that this should still go ahead in September. The Chairman will contact Leigh Hewitt to find out what dates are convenient for his family, and it can be organised when that information is forthcoming. The Chairman asked if members were happy for him to purchase another three frames for the VE80 exhibition photos, maps and documents which will be displayed at The Old Mill. **ALL AGREED**

c) Community Action Plan – The Chairman asked members to look at the plan again with a view to reducing the size of the document. **ACTION - CLLRS**

d) Speeding issues on A143 – No update

e) Placement of basalt stone update – Needs checking for cracks before placement, Cllr Meade and Bennett to review **ACTION – CLLRS MEADE/BENNETT**

f) Purchase of a flagpole – All agreed that it would be a good idea for the centre of the village and the Clerk was asked to contact County Councillor Stone to see if his available funding would cover this purchase.

g) Grant funding –
Funding available to upgrade bus shelters and install bicycle rack

Ideas were put forward on how improvements could be made to the existing bus shelter and the provision of a new one outside the Queen's Head, however, further information is needed from Highways before a decision can be made, the Clerk to investigate the possibility of solar lighting for the current bus shelter, a new bus shelter canopy opposite and the provision of bicycle racks

ACTION – CLERK

Parish Partnership Grants available for 2025/26 – application deadline is 1st December 2025 – It was agreed that this could be applied for to obtain another speed machine (SAM2) as the original machine purchased in 2015 is no longer working. Clerk to get prices

ACTION – CLERK

Norfolk Community Fund – projects invited to promote social inclusion, volunteering and community engagement – this fund was mentioned by County Councillor Barry Stone earlier in the meeting. The Clerk will advertise the information.

ACTION – CLERK

7. Planning Applications –

2025/1818 - Applicant: Mr. Darren Williams

Location: Earsham Church of England Voluntary Aided First School, School Road, Earsham, Norfolk

Proposal: Install new concrete pad to house a new gas tank. Erection of gates and fence

Application Type: Full Planning Permission

To comply with the deadline for a response to this planning application, the Parish Council have responded with 'no objections or comments to make' for this application.

2025/0255 - Town and Country Planning Act 1990

Reference: APP/L2630/W/25/3367802,

Location: Earsham Mill Church Road Earsham Norfolk

Appeal By: Mr. Iain Gwynn Gwynn Blows Ltd, The Old Town Maltings, Broad Street, Bungay, Suffolk

South Norfolk Council has written to the Parish Council to advise that the Applicant for the above planning application, has submitted an Appeal against Refusal, made to the Secretary of State against South Norfolk Council regarding the Development of a glamping site with erection of 3 x timber cabins.

8. Finance and Governance–

a) Approval of items of expenditure invoiced since the May 2025 meeting and note balances:

Parish Council payments made since the last meeting - £16,731.33 excl VAT (streetlighting electricity, electrical fitting of defib cabinet, resurfacing of village car park, plants for village centre, bleed kit, streetlighting maintenance, recorded postage of audit documents, repair to village sign, wood preserve, strimming at Marston Moor, HMRC)

Playing Field payments made since the last meeting - £821.43 excl VAT (pavilion electricity, mole control maintenance contract, Anglian Water)

Allotment payments made since the last meeting - £493.73 excl VAT (allotment clearance cost, Anglian Water)

Payments for approval at this meeting

Parish Council - £217.65 (Website/managed website fee, reset key for change of ink printer pads)

Playing Field - £257.87 (Earsham FC – half share of tractor insurance, playground inspection fee)

A VAT return for the first quarter of financial year was submitted and received - £4,156.07.

Interest received for first quarter of financial year – PC - £149.32, PF - £15.91, Allotments £6.00

Bank Balances as of 29th July 2025

Parish Council - £28,408.92, Playing Field - £5,657.65, Allotments £2,370.71

Approval of payments list proposed by Cllr. Reeve and seconded by Cllr Clark

ALL AGREED

b) Grant monies available and spent since last meeting – discussed earlier in the meeting.

c) Review of the following policies: -

Grievance Policy
Harassment Policy
Disciplinary Policy
Sickness & Absence Policy
Reserves Policy
Retention and destruction of documents Policy
Community Engagement Policy
Records Management Policy

Agreement proposed by Cllr Randlesome and seconded by Cllr. Clark

ALL AGREED

The Clerk informed members that there will be an addition to the 2025-26 AGAR (Audit document) which is Assertion 10 – Digital and data compliance which is mandatory. The Clerk read out a list of actions to comply with the new ruling, all of which are already in place except one item which was an IT Policy. This is to explain how clerks and members should conduct authority business in a secure and legal way when using IT equipment and software. This relates to the use of authority-owned and personal equipment. The Clerk had already prepared a draft IT and Electronic Communications Policy for members to read which will be discussed at the September meeting, a copy was given to members

9. Playing Field/Play equipment/Bowls and Football Clubs/Allotments –

Allotments – To discuss and agree the quote received from Covered in Green to clear the last remaining overgrown plot (£300) – Agreement proposed by Cllr. Bennett and seconded by Cllr. Randlesome

ACTION – CLERK

Play equipment – Discussion on further repairs and costs as discussed with Sovereign (original installers) at a meeting on 17th June plus consideration of the purchase of a picnic bench and signs for the playing field – A quote for the replacement and removal of the basket swing of £4,645.74 had been received, the breakdown being £3,860.74 for the basket swing plus £785.00 removal costs. Cllr. Bennett informed members that he will dispose of the item along with the broken picnic bench, to save money. There is £2,268.87 (plus interest) S106 money which must be spent before November, so it was agreed this was a good way of using the funding, the Clerk was asked to proceed with the order. The Clerk has already contacted Highways to request a triangular warning Playground sign from The Street to warn drivers that children may be in the vicinity. It was agreed to defer the purchase of a picnic bench until a later date.

Agreement proposed by Cllr. Bennett and seconded by Cllr. Revell

ACTION – CLERK

To discuss the Sovereign Compliance package covering safety inspections and maintenance (£399 + VAT) and ratify decision to proceed – Agreement proposed by Cllr. Clark and seconded by Cllr. Reeve

ACTION – CLERK

To discuss the content of the recent Play Inspection report by David Bracey – Covered under play equipment discussion

Cllr. Randlesome asked members at 9.20 pm if they would be happy to continue the meeting for another 30 minutes as Standing Order 3(x) resolution had now been reached. All agreed to continue.

Bowls Club – Support requested by the Bowls Club for submission of grant funding to purchase a scarifier type machine for the green, plus wood to complete a project to secure the edges of the area. This was done retrospectively with the agreement of councillors, as the deadline for submission was in between meetings on 30th June. Members were in full support.

10. Significant Correspondence – Forwarded to Councillors and were noted at this meeting -

- CPRE Norfolk email asking for support to oppose the proposal to build a new town in South Norfolk – discussion on this important subject and members to decide if they wish to support this opposition to a new town – members wished to know where the new town was being proposed to be built before committing to the proposal.

- Devolution and LGR from Barry Stone, County Councillor
- Public consultation on draft South Norfolk Landscape Susceptibility in relation to energy generation, storage, and transmission Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) 09 July – 18 August 2025
- Information received on Phase Two of the consultation for the Pye Solar Farm
- South Norfolk Council Licensing Act 2003: Statement of Policy Review

11. Business for the next meeting – Emergency Action Plan, Village items (including policies, flagpole, update on play equipment)

The meeting was adjourned at 21.45pm for public participation and reconvened at 21.55pm

- Speaking of bus shelters, a member of the public mentioned that the bus shelters at the Norfolk & Norwich Hospital did not have seats, just a rail to lean on (mentioned earlier in the meeting)
- It was reported that green cuttings have been left on the ground at the layby on the way towards Bungay – Cllr. Randlesome to investigate and speak to the owner.

12. Confirmation of the date of the next meeting – Wednesday 24th September 2025 in the Village Hall, Earsham at 7.30pm

Meeting ended at 21.56pm

Signed

Date