

Earsham Parish Council Minutes

of a meeting of Earsham Parish Council held at the Village Hall,
on Wednesday 26th November 2025 at 7.30pm

Present: Councillors: Tony Leech (Vice-Chair) Keith Reeve, Jim Bennett, Stephen Revell, Dave Clark

Also present: District Councillor Chris Brown and five members of the public

1. Welcome

2. To receive and accept apologies from members unable to attend – Apologies were received and accepted from Parish Councillor Randlesome, District Cllr. Brendon Bernard and County Councillor Barry Stone

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. Clark – Item 6a - Speed Watch
- To consider any dispensation requests - None

4. Approval of minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 24th September 2025 - Agreement proposed by Councillor Bennett and seconded by Councillor Reeve **ALL AGREED**

5. Reports

County and District Councillors

County Councillor Barry Stone – A report had been received from Cllr Stone earlier in the month outlining news from Norfolk County Council – the report is available on the Earsham PC website.

District Councillor Chris Brown –

- The outcome of the submission to Government on the proposal for two Unitary Councils is expected in March 2026 and there will be elections in May 2026 for the election of Mayors.
- The formal public consultation on the draft Design Code Supplementary Planning Document and supporting documents remains open and runs until Monday 8th December. This sets design requirements for achieving the key design principles that have been identified locally as being important.
- Essex & Suffolk Water are holding consultations on two new reservoirs, the nearest being near Geldeston.

Police – The quarterly Neighbourhood Policing Meeting information has been received in the form of Powerpoint slides.

Chairman and Parish Councillor's – The Vice-Chairman read out the Chairmans report in his absence: -

- The Chairman thanked Prof. Rob Liddiard at a recent Norfolk Archaeology Historical Research Group meeting, for the five USAAF maps which he supplied for the VE80 exhibition.
- The Chairman queried the appearance of an old cart which had appeared on Old Harleston Road recently and wondered if anyone had any knowledge of it. Cllr. Revell commented that it was a case of it having broken.
- East Pye Consultation – The Chairman is of the opinion that as the development is outside the parish boundaries, any comments should be made as individuals and not as the Parish Councillors.

Parish Councillor reports – None

Clerk's report – Broken SAM2 – This is currently with Westcotec, and as it cannot be part exchanged or repaired, they want to know what the PC wants to do with it. It was agreed to ask Westcotec to dispose of the machine and if there was a charge attached to that, Cllr. Clark would collect.

SNC – Confirmation has been received that the Public Spaces Protection Order for dog control has been extended for a further three years and is available for viewing on their website. Posters have been put on the parish noticeboard, and solid board signs for putting on posts have been received asking people to be responsible with their dog waste. Cllr. Bennett will fix onto appropriate posts.

Sovereign – Log Climber delivery – Cllr. Bennett asked if the delivery could be rerouted to his address rather than the playing field (delivery scheduled for Thursday 27th November).

POST MEETING – This has been actioned and delivery rerouted

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

a) Report from the Speed Watch group – Cllr. Clark reported that a recent meeting it was confirmed that nothing much can be done about changing the speed limit in the local area. The Speed Watch group will be out again in January.

In answer to a couple of questions about the process of catching a speeding motorist, Cllr. Clark explained that the first time someone is caught, they will receive a letter, if caught again within 6 months of the first letter, a second letter will be sent, and if there is a third offence, a police officer is sent out to visit the perpetrator.

b) Unveiling of memorial discussion update – The Vice-Chairman reported that the unveiling had gone ahead as planned and was well attended by Violet Hewitt's family and some residents.

c) HGV's in the village – Information had been received from a resident regarding an HGV travelling through the village a couple of times a week, to access the flower shop in Bungay. Although this Parish Council does not have any Powers to deal with this issue, the information has been passed onto Bungay's Lorry Watch Team and noted on their record of highway infringements via Bungay Town Council. The local Police have also been informed, however, it appears that nothing can be done unless the lorry is caught in the act, the Clerk will continue to keep the Beat Manager informed.

d) Speeding issues on A143 – No update

e) Placement of basalt stone update – The Parish Council's insurance company has been contacted regarding insuring the stone however their response has been that they will need a reinstatement value confirmed by an evaluator before any further action can be taken. Councillors confirmed that the stone did not have any great monetary value but wanted to ensure that it was covered under public liability in case of anyone slipping or falling and injuring themselves on it.

f) To discuss the Winter Warmer's grant from 2024 and ideas for its use this winter – SNC were happy to carry over the grant to this year if a community use could be found for it. A member of the public has submitted an idea to start a community café in the village hall and suggested the £500 grant could be used to kickstart this project. Members agreed it was a good idea and good use of the funds. The Clerk will contact SNC and advise that the grant will be used for this purpose this year.

ACTION - CLERK

g) Consideration to use the Community Payback Scheme – The original idea had been to look at using this service to get jobs done such as cleaning the wooden bridge handrails, however, there is a lot of criteria which has to be met, so in this instance, not appropriate for this purpose, (nowhere nearby that has rest, toilet and handwashing facilities). It was suggested that other work around the village may be better suited with access to the village hall being made available. There is also the NCC's Highway Rangers service to consider for smaller jobs.

h) Bus Shelter Grant Scheme –

- To agree to contribute 20% of the total cost and to adopt the shelter and cycle rack as a community asset and take responsibility for its ongoing maintenance.
- To agree bus shelter design, which NCC approved contractor to use and agreement for application for funds

An informal meeting was held the previous week to go through the requirements for the funding grant, agree the design of the bus shelter, go through the quotes received and approve a contractor. It was agreed to purchase the bus shelter and cycle rack through Westcotec who were very competitively priced with delivery and installation included at a cost of £6,204.00 for the bus shelter and £1,475 for the cycle rack.

The breakdown of the cost is NCC grant £6,143.20 and the Parish Council contribution is ££1,535.80 The Clerk has asked County Councillor Barry Stone if he has any funds left in his Members Allowance to help offset the Parish Council's contribution.

Agreement to item 6h was proposed by Cllr. Clark and seconded by Cllr. Revell

ALL AGREED

i) Parish Partnership Grants 2025/26 –

- To agree to apply to the PPS for 50% of the cost of the bicycle racks and agree contractor – **This is no longer required under the Parish Partnership Scheme as the funding will be applied for through the Bus Shelter Improvement Scheme**
- To agree to apply to the PPs for 50% of the cost of a new SAM machine, agree which type of machine is preferred and agree contractor

At the previous week's meeting, it was suggested that just the basic machine would be required to replace the redundant SAM2, as no peripherals were needed for the new SAM3 machine. This will be purchased from Westcotec, at a cost of £3,445. Under the Parish Partnership Scheme, Norfolk County Council will pay half the cost, which leaves the Parish Council to pay £1,722.50 if the bid is successful.

Agreement to Item 6j was proposed by Cllr. Clark and seconded by Cllr. Bennett

ALL AGREED

7. Planning Applications – None

8. Finance, Governance and Training –

a) Finance - Approval of items of expenditure invoiced since the September 2025 meeting and note balances

Payments made since the last meeting –

Parish Council - £2,512.35 (streetlighting electricity, dog bin servicing annual invoice, HMRC, clerk salary, TT Jones Electrical streetlighting maintenance contract) 30% deposit for log climber)

Playing Field - £1,386.30 (Pavilion electricity for Oct and Nov, contribution towards the servicing of the tractor and grass cutter)

Payments for approval at this meeting –

Parish Council - £1,161.16 (annual renewal of SLCC membership, precept and recycling payment to playing field, tree works around the recycling area)

Playing Field - £1,932.95 (Earsham Estate rent, interim and final payment for new item of play equipment)

Allotments - £79.21 (deposit refunds)

Bank Balances as of 18th November 2025

Parish Council - £37,460.99, Playing Field - £6,199.01, Allotments £1,871.44

Agreement to Item 8 proposed by Cllr. Leech and seconded by Cllr. Clark

ALL AGREED

b) Annual renewal of SLCC from 1st December 2025 – 30th November 2026 – Approval of renewal at a cost of £144.00 – Agreement proposed by Cllr. Bennett and seconded by Cllr. Revell

ALL AGREED

c) Draft budget for 2026/27 – discussion on budget and any potential projects for the financial year 2026/27 (circulated with finance report October 2025) – No questions were raised, however it was commented that there has been a lot of money spent on the village in recent years, so no new projects would be considered for the coming year. Approval of the draft budget for 2026/27 was proposed by Cllr. Reeve and seconded by Cllr. Clark

ALL AGREED

d) Policies – Review of the following policies:-

Equality & Diversity Policy
Dignity at Work Policy
Biodiversity Policy
Privacy Statement
Safeguarding Policy

Public Participation Policy
Lone Working Policy
Council Vacancy Policy
Equal Opportunities Policy

Agreement to the review of policies was proposed by Cllr. Bennett and seconded by Cllr. Clark

ALL AGREED

9. Playing Field/Play Equipment/Bowls and Football Clubs/Allotments

Allotments – Update on vacant plots, update from Councillors regarding a new gate, information regarding dog fouling on the allotment plots and agree refund of signs to allotment holder..

The Clerk informed members that there had been 8 plots become available within the last month, but 5 of these have been allocated to new tenants, no update on the new gate

The noticeboard is with one of the tenants and it is hoped to get it installed in the Spring.

Another tenant has purchased some new 'Private Property' signs to try to stop people coming onto the allotments, and signs to deter people letting their dogs foul. The Clerk asked if the cost of these signs could be reimbursed to the tenant once an invoice had been received. Members agreed.

Play equipment –

- **Update on log climber as agreed at the last meeting** – The Clerk had received information earlier that day to say that the delivery of the log climber was scheduled for the following day – delivery to the playing field. Cllr. Bennett asked if the delivery could be rerouted to his address rather than have the equipment left on the playing field over the weekend, and he will take the Heras fencing and log climber to the playing field on Tuesday for installation. The clerk will call Sovereign to ask to reroute. **ACTION - CLERK**
- **Play inspections by the Parish Council** – confirmation from Sovereign Play that these should be undertaken weekly – Amongst the agenda pack was a copy of the reworked risk assessment for Councilor's to use for the inspections. After some discussion it was agreed that:-

Cllr. Leech will undertake the December inspection

Cllr. Revell will undertake the January inspection

Cllr. Bennett will undertake the February inspection

Football Club – Correspondence had been received regarding mole activity on the playing field. The Clerk has contacted the contractor to ask them to visit to deal with the moles.

10. Significant Correspondence –

- Consultation on the East Pye Solar proposal forwarded to Councilor's 4th November 2025
- Email from resident regarding parking of vehicles on pavements
- Email from resident regarding HGVs coming through the village despite a weight restriction being in place
- Barclays Bank – received 26th November – advising that the main Parish Council account will be switched to a Barclays Business Account on 13th February 2026. This account will attract fees and charges including a monthly account fee of £8.50

11. Business for the next meeting

It was agreed that an interim meeting will be held to discuss the precept request, and after some discussion, Thursday 15th January 2026 at 7pm was decided upon.

The meeting was adjourned at 8.56pm and reconvened at 9.04pm for public participation

A member of the public commented that a car may have been abandoned, although could be taxed and MOT'd – Clerk to investigate further **ACTION -CLERK**

Another member of the public asked if a note could be included on the allotment invoices to remind tenants to mow the paths and cut hedges near their plots. The same member of public commented that with devolution, pressure would be placed on the Parish Council to undertake more responsibility locally, which was acknowledged by members.

12. Confirmation of the dates of the next meetings – Thursday 15th January at 7pm and Wednesday 28th January at 7.30pm in the Village Hall. Meeting ended 9.05pm

Signed

Date