

Earsham Parish Council Minutes

of a meeting of Earsham Parish Council held at the Village Hall
on Wednesday 18th February 2025 at 7.30pm

Present: Councillors: Richard Randlesome (Chair), Tony Leech (Vice-Chair) Jim Bennett, Dave Clark and Stephen Revell

Also present: One member of the public and Lynda Ling (Clerk)

1. Welcome – The chairman welcomed those present at the meeting

2. To receive and accept apologies from members unable to attend – Apologies were received and accepted from County Councillor Barry Stone, District Cllr. Brendan Bernard, Parish Councillors Keith Reeve and Nick Meade

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

Cllr. Randlesome – Item 10 – Allotments

Cllr. Clark – Item 6a – Speed Watch

Cllrs. Bennett and Revell – Item 8 – Planning Applications – NCC Earsham Quarry

4. Approval of minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 15th January – Agreement proposed by Cllr. Randlesome and seconded by Cllr. Bennett **ALL AGREED**

5. Reports

- **Police, District and County Councillors** – County Councillor Barry Stone had sent in his February report previously which was circulated to members and is uploaded onto the website
- **Chairman and Parish Councillors** –
Cllr Bennett reported that the crashed car on Hedenham Road (and has since has been impacted by several vehicles), has not been removed. The incident happened on the bend of the road around 23rd/24th December, it seems that as it is an electric vehicle there are some issues around getting it removed. Although not in this parish, the Parish Clerk will report to the appropriate authority. **ACTION – CLERK**
Cllr. Revell apologised for not inspecting the play equipment recently, but will do so in March

The Chairman reported that he had purchased more frames for the VE80 exhibition at The Mill as previously agreed and will get more photo's/maps/information photocopied at the local stationers soon.

- **Clerks Report** – previously sent out with the agenda pack which included the following items: -
 1. Update on the damaged path near the War Memorial – NCC have inspected the damaged surface is now on the schedule for repair.
 2. GNLP – The Call for Sites will be open from 9th February until 23rd March 2026, as this is evidence gathering rather than a consultation, there is the possibility that the call for sites may reopen later in the year. More information can be found on <https://gnlp.oc2.uk/>
 3. Toasty Toes – The Norfolk Library and Information Service host Toasty Toes events for older adults they can pick up a free pair of slippers.
 4. Information on Assertion 10 – this will be a new digital compliance requirement for external audit – information included was free online training videos
 5. Bungay Town Council have contacted the Parish Council to ask if the PC would like to have their surplus of Christmas Lights, which are in the form of reels of white, multi-colour, green, red and blue string lights. After a short discussion, it was agreed to accept the kind offer of the lights free of charge, Cllr. Clark offered to pick them up at a mutually convenient time.
 6. The Clerk advised that the annual subscription for CPRE was pending at a cost of £36, agreement to renew was agreed by all.

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

- a) **Report from the Speed Watch group** – Cllr. Clark reported that the group had not been out since the last meeting, and the contact at NCC has been ill, so no warning letters have been dispatched to any speeding offenders.
- b) **Best decorated house at Christmas competition** – It was unanimously agreed that Keith Penn had won the competition for an outstanding display of Christmas lights and his fundraising efforts. Agreement to award the £25 prize money for Keith's charity of choice was proposed by Cllr. Clark and seconded by Cllr. Bennett **ALL AGREED**
- c) **Update on signage for basalt stone** - Cllr. Meade emailed the Chairman his report on the basalt stone to say that an interpretation panel had been erected beside the stone along with an explanation of what the stone is, however, this is currently covered up while the glue is drying. Cllr. Clark asked Cllr. Bennett if some edging work could be done around the stone to prevent overgrown grass spoiling the overall view, Cllr. Bennett agreed to get costs for the materials. **ACTION – CLLR. BENNETT**
- d) **Update on community meet-up project** – Information on the dates was given to the members, the first date being Tuesday March 17th 10am – 2pm – the Chairman encouraged everyone to attend if at all possible and flyers had been printed and distributed around the village.
- e) **Update on bus shelter and cycle rack works** – The Clerk has been in contact with the Public Transport Development Officer to ask for an update on the works. The response was that NCC were waiting for a traffic management quote, however the project is scheduled to be delivered April/May.
- g) **Discussion on email from SNC regarding the recycling centre and any actions arising** – The Chairman had previously received communications from South Norfolk Council, advising that the recycling lorry, which collects the bottle bank contents, was having issues with overgrown tree branches impeding their progress. The Parish Council has had work done on the trees to cut back branches, but there still remains an issue according to SNC. The Parish Council considered other options e.g. relocating the recycling centre or using the main car park for lorry access, but these were not considered viable. Members were of the opinion, that as residents can put glass bottles in their recycling bins at home, it would be no great loss if the Parish Council asked for the bottle bins to be removed from the recycling area completely. It was also believed that the damage to the pathway was being caused by the recycling lorry driving over it, so that recurring issue would no longer be a problem. The Chairman will respond to SNC and inform them of the Parish Council's decision. **ACTION – CLLR. RANGLESOME**

7. Finance, Governance –

- a) **Finance** - Approval of items of expenditure invoiced since the January 2026 meeting and note balances – Agreement proposed by Cllr. Randlesome and seconded by Cllr. Clark **ALL AGREED**

Payments made since the last meeting –

Parish Council - £596.28 (streetlighting electricity, HMRC)

Playing Field - £200.84 (Pavilion electricity for January and February)

Payments for approval at this meeting –

Parish Council - £21.15 plus clerks' salary (postage costs for agenda packs to Councillors, stationery)

Bank Balances as of 10th February 2026

Parish Council - £34,794.33, **Playing Field** - £3,239.49, **Allotments** £1,374.90

- b) **Review and agree the following policies** – IT and communications, Assertion 10 and Model Publication Scheme – The draft policies had been sent out with the agenda pack the previous week and as there were no questions raised, approval was proposed by Cllr. Clark and seconded by Cllr. Leech

ALL AGREED

- c) **To note the revised PC budget based on the setting of the precept at the last meeting** - Noted

- d) **To note the increase for this financial year of the Lower Earnings Limit affecting Clerk's pension from £6396 to £6500** - Noted

- e) **To resolve to agree to engage Jackie Loveday for internal audit services at a cost of £75 -**

Approval proposed by Cllr. Revell and seconded by Cllr. Clark

ALL AGREED

8. Planning Applications –

NCC – Earsham Quarry –

- FUL/2022/0030 to allow additional time for continued use and restoration of the plant site and conveyor, and continued control of crassula helmsii
- FUL/2019/0062 to reflect proposed new access arrangements. and updated off-site highway works, and allow extraction in Area 2 prior to restoration of the existing plant site
- FUL/2025/0002 to allow additional time for use and restoration of the silt disposal area
- Former Abattoir, Hall Road, Earsham, NR35 2AB: Temporary change of use of existing workshop/storage site to provide replacement access to Earsham
- Quarry and to act as replacement sales and vehicle maintenance facility for the quarry, with offsite highway improvements.

The Parish Council responded to these applications prior to the meeting to meet the Norfolk County Council deadline. The response was ‘no objections’ due to these applications having previously been approved and only slight adjustments were proposed.

9. Village Hall –

- **Update on recent discussions regarding the village hall** – The Chairman gave an overview of recent findings which included Cllr. Clark’s discovery of copies of documents relating to the ownership of the village hall which appears to have come under the control of the Parish Council in the 1920’s. All members agreed that a solicitor would need to look over the documents to ascertain that everything was in order with the ownership of the VH before any further action could be taken. A copy of the documents is to be scanned in the meantime.

ACTION - CLERK

A brief discussion then took place on an alternative option to upgrade the village hall without an extension; this could include creating an entrance to the village hall from the car park and using the current main door as an emergency exit.

Cllr. Leech had made enquiries as to the potential cost of an extension to the VH based on the draft plans drawn up in 2013, which was quoted at between £17,500 to £21,000.

*** Post meeting - This was later corrected to a cost of between £175,000 to £210,000*

- **Agreement to add Gemma Collins and Cllr. Dave Clark as Trustees to the Earsham Memorial (Village) Hall Charity – No303938** – The Parish Council agreed to the addition of new Trustees and the removal of existing Trustees Les Merridale and John Hamps as they no longer wish to be involved with the Village Hall. Gemma Collins to be the new Chairperson, Tony Leech will remain as Treasurer, with Cllr. Clark as Trustee.

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

Allotments –

- **Updates** – The Clerk informed members that there only remained one plot to fill, and the next person on the waiting list had been contacted to ask if they were interested in the plot.
- **Discuss and agree a date to hold an Allotment Tenants meeting** – It was agreed to hold a meeting in Spring at a mutually convenient time for allotment tenants and parish Councillors.

Play equipment –

- **Update on play inspections** - Cllr. Bennett has undertaken the playground inspection for February and listed his findings which he handed to the Clerk. Sovereign Playgrounds have also undertaken an inspection and highlighted some works and replacements which need to be addressed, the quote for this was over £4,000. Cllr. Bennett suggested welding the plastic on the two cracked slides rather than paying £3,000 to replace them and the missing swing, which was also highlighted in the report, is being stored at Cllr. Bennett’s property until a new shackle is purchased. Members agreed that these were viable options and replacements were not needed.

ACTION – CLLR. BENNETT

Councillor Bennett also mentioned that a section of the chain link fence needs replacing and will take measurements to get a quote for replacement. The question was also asked if the car park sign should include the phrase that 'parking is at the owner's risk'. Quotes will need to be sought for new signs.

Football Club – updates if any - None.

11. Significant Correspondence – Noted

- Adrain Ramsey MP – Invitation to a Sustainable Communities Conference on Friday 13th March 9.00am – 3.00pm at the Corn Hall in Diss
- NCC Highways – Notice of road closure on Hall Road, Earsham – closure for one day for bridge repairs

12. Business for the next meeting – VH discussions, village items, basalt stone

The meeting was adjourned at 21.15 and reconvened at 21.22 for public participation.

The member of the public mentioned the following:-

- rubbish at the side of the road in the location of the lay-by. The Chairman thought the land was owned by the Diocese and it was their responsibility to clear any debris.
- The playing field is looked after well by the football club

13. Confirmation of the date of the next meeting – Wednesday 25th March 2026 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall

The meeting ended at 21.23