

Earsham Parish Council Minutes

of a meeting of Earsham Parish Council held at the Village Hall
on Wednesday 25th March 2026 at 7.30pm

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

Also present: Four members of the public (including Jack Scrivens, Chairman of Earsham Football Club) 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 Parish Councillor Keith Reeve, County Councillor Barry Stone, and District Councillors Chris Brown and Brendon Bernard

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

Cllr. Randlesome – Item 10 – Allotments

Cllr. Clark – Item 6b – Speed Watch

Cllrs. Bennett and Meade– Item 8 – Planning Applications – The Abattoir, Hall Road, Earsham

4. Approval of minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 18th February – Agreement proposed by Cllr. Leech and seconded by Cllr. Revell **ALL AGREED**

5. Reports

Police – no updates

County Councillor Barry Stone –

1. County Councillor Barry Stone has sent in his March report prior to the meeting, which was circulated to members and is uploaded onto the website, items covered in the report include:- NCC has approved a balanced £613.8m budget for 2026-27 and have identified £42.3m in savings and efficiencies. NCC are also committing £76.3m in targeted investment to protect vital services and strengthen Norfolk's economy
2. Councillors also agreed a 4.998% council tax increase
3. Ninety-nine new highway improvement schemes for 2026-27 have been approved
4. Norfolk Fire & Rescue Service has taken delivery of six new Zodiac Milpro ERB400 rescue boats to strengthen its response to water emergencies across the county.

District Councillor Chris Brown –

1. The South Norfolk Council budget was agreed in February and includes a new Community Facilities grant fund and an increased Communities Action Fund, of £500,000 each.
2. New funding is also due to be provided for Rural Transport and Youth Services.
3. The Government has today (Wed 25th) announced their decision about Local Government Reorganisation, choosing the 3 Unitary Councils option.
4. The County Council elections will now take place on 7th May.
5. The Village Clusters planning proposals had the Planning Inspector review in January.

Chairman and Parish Councillors –

Cllr Bennett – reported that the car in the ditch at Hedenham is still there, the clerk reported that she had reported to the appropriate authorities and was told that authorities were aware.

The Chairman – reported that he had seen online that the Morningthorpe Recycling Centre was due to close in October due to the land lease not being renewed and commented that the nearest recycling centre would be Norwich.

Clerks Report – previously sent out with the agenda pack which included the following items: -

1. SNC – accepting nominations for the SN Community Awards – Nominations close on 15th May.
2. SNC has launched the SN Bloom Fund, a new initiative designed to help towns, parishes, and community groups across the district to deliver projects that improve the visual appeal and promote wildlife and biodiversity.
3. The new SAM3 machine has been ordered now that the Parish Council know their grant application for funds have been successful through the Parish Partnership Fund.
4. The external audit documentation has arrived from PKF Littlejohn in readiness for the end of year accounting and audit process
5. An email from Bungay Life Magazine has been received offering copies to put in the village hall or other appropriate place
6. An email from SNC arrived today advising that two people have been appointed as Surface Water Drainage Officers who will supporting ongoing work on surface water management and community resilience

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

a) **Report from Jack Scrivens – Chairman of Earsham Football Club** – Jack informed the members of the following problems the football club are currently experiencing: -

Dugouts – Due to a constant maintenance programme which is increasingly expensive, the club proposed reconstruction of the dugouts in the summer with an option of using different materials, these would be the same size as the current structures. The football club are open to suggestions of what colour to paint the dugouts, it was agreed by all that colours in keeping with the playing field would be preferred so as not to stand out, e.g. brown or green.

Boot Clean off area – Due to the location of the boot brushes, players have to walk in the mud after cleaning to enter the building, so the football club would like to install a small concrete pad between both boot brushes which would give a clean surface area to walk on and reduce the amount of mud being carried into the building. Questions were raised regarding the sloped area leading to the building, and it was mentioned that a couple of steps with a handrail could be considered for that area.

Both proposals would be fully funded by the Club and members were happy with the suggestions.

After a short discussion, agreement was proposed by Cllr. Clark and seconded by Cllr. Revell

ALL AGREED

b) **Report from the Speed Watch group** – Cllr. Clark reported that the group had been out three times recently and there were very few speeding motorists on the road, a request for the group to attend on School Road had taken place, however, there were no speeding motorists on that day. The group will be out again within the next month.

c) **Update on signage for basalt stone** – Cllr. Meade reported that the temporary sign is still in place, and eventually a permanent sign will be installed. Cllr. Bennett has sought some pricing on some edging to keep the area tidy, which was £50.08 + VAT, membrane material would also be required. Agreement was proposed by Cllr. Randlesome and seconded by Cllr. Meade to proceed with Cllr. Bennett's proposal.

d) **Update on VE80 display at The Mill** – The Chairman reported that more framed information had been added to the display at The Mill but the signs are not printed yet which indicate what the varying framed photo's/documents are. The family of Mr. Gilham (whose name is on the War Memorial) has kindly donated some photo's for the display.

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 from NCC was that the works were now scheduled to begin around the end of May, this is due to the NCC team being very busy.

f) **Update on the recycling Centre** – The Chairman has received confirmation that the glass recycling bins will be removed at the end of April 2026. South Norfolk Council will install notices at the recycling centre to advise of the change, plus the information is on the noticeboard and included in the Parish Magazine.

g) **Resolution to agree a date for the Annual Parish Meeting** – It was agreed that the Annual Parish Meeting would take place on the same evening as the Annual Parish Council Meeting which was on May 27th with a start time of 7pm

7. Village Hall – Item 7a and b were discussed as one item

- a) Update on recent discussions regarding the village hall and agree the way forward i.e. a working group to oversee the potential works -**
- b) To discuss and consider engaging with Big Sky Living to discuss any improvements to the village hall, progress any suggestions and to apply for any funding available under the Community Facilities Grant –**

An online meeting had been held with Big Sky Living's Development Manager Gary Waterton the previous Monday, in order to find out more about the process involved to move forward with any village hall improvements that may be agreed (subject to funding).

The first step is to get a building surveyor to look at the village hall, produce a full condition survey and floor plan then a high-level cost plan can be drafted which would be required to ascertain how much funding is required. The building surveyor is booked to attend the hall next Wednesday at 10.00am (1st April), which will incur a cost of £550.00 + VAT, Councillors are invited to attend the meeting and put their views forward on what type of improvements are required. Once the improvement costs are known, funding can then be applied for. Cllr. Leech asked if the meeting with the surveyor could be moved to Thursday as the hall is booked on Wednesday morning. The Clerk to rearrange. **ACTION – CLERK**

Some ideas put forward included :- the entrance to the building from the kitchen end of the building and convert the bar area into a new kitchen, these ideas can be discussed with the surveyor next week. It was agreed that the working party would consist of Cllrs. Clark, Leech, Randlesome and Revell with the Clerk attending meetings for support.

Members were all in favour of using Big Sky Living due to their expertise and knowledge of local authority public building requirements e.g. planning, building regulations, fire and electrical tests to name but a few legalities that are needed to update the building.

Agreement to items 7a and 7b including the £550 + VAT cost for the survey, was proposed by Cllr. Clark and seconded by Cllr. Leech **ALL AGREED**

8. Planning Applications – Noted by Councillors

Appl Number : 2025/3594

App Type : Approval of Condition Details

Parish: Earsham

Location : The Abattoir Hall Road Earsham Norfolk NR35 2AB

Proposal : Details of conditions 8, 9, 12, 13 and 14 of 2024/0458 - (8) Noise and Dust Management Plan, (9) Contamination, (12) External lighting, (13) Lighting Design Strategy for Biodiversity and (14) Ecological Design Strategy

Decision : Approval of details - Approved
(Delegated)

Date of decision : 2 March 2026

Appl Number : 2025/0130

App Type : **Approval of Condition Detail**

9. Finance, Governance –

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

- b) Agreement to purchase stamps ahead of the price rise on April 7th – Members agreed to spend upto £50 on large 2nd class stamps. Proposed by Cllr. Randlesome, seconded by Cllr. Clark. **ALL AGREED**

As the cost of postage is increasingly expensive, the Clerk asked if anyone would be prepared to receive their papers by email instead of by post. Cllrs. Randlesome, Clark, Meade and Leech said that they would be happy whilst Councillors Revell and Bennett would prefer paper copies. It was agreed that the Clerk will send out the agenda and supporting paperwork by email but also have some copies in paper

form to bring along to the meetings. The Clerk will contact Cllr. Reeve to ask his preference.

ACTION - CLERK

Payments made since the last meeting –

Parish Council - £126.93 (streetlighting electricity)

Playing Field - £107.22 (Pavilion electricity for March and Anglian Water for last quarter)

Allotments - £273.28 (Anglian Water)

Payments for approval at this meeting –

Parish Council - £3.10 plus clerks' salary (postage costs for agenda packs to Councillors)

Bank Balances as of 25th March 2026

Parish Council - £33,283.78, Playing Field - £3,136.36, Allotments £1,254.23

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

Allotments – New single gate and posts – To discuss a quote received for the replacement of the single wooden gate and posts at a cost of £250 including fitting. Agreement to proceed with the replacements was proposed by Cllr. Randlesome and seconded by Cllr. Revell.

ALL AGREED

Play equipment – Update on play inspections and discuss Sovereign Playground's quote for remedial works - Cllr. Revell informed members that he had done three inspections recently and felt that the Parish Council will need to have a discussion on the long-term viability of the play equipment. The costs for maintenance and repairs are very expensive and the play area doesn't appear to be used very much. A member of the public commented that the equipment tends to be used after school has finished, another member of the public commented that it is not really used on Saturdays. Further discussion followed on the upkeep of the wooden structures and that some of them are rotting. The Clerk gave some background on how the play equipment was chosen and funded for the benefit of members who did not know and commented that three ROSPA play inspections had taken place over 18 months.

Cllr. Bennett suggested at the last meeting, to plastic weld the slides which were cracked in one or two places; however, this has proved not to be possible, another suggestion was to insert foam through a hole to strengthen the cracked area and pull the two edges together. This option to be investigated further.

11. Significant Correspondence – Information on Local Government Reorganisation

12. Business for the next meeting – Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman, VH discussions, Village items, Agreement of Parish Accounts, Agreement of AGAR external audit documents, Review of Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Risk Assessments both general and financial.

The meeting was adjourned at 21.05 and reconvened at 21.13 for public participation

A member of the public who lives close to the Village Hall is a landscape gardener and has offered to fill in the potholes on the roadway next to the hall with shingle. It would be done over a period of time and be fully funded. It was agreed that this would be a good idea and was appreciated by all, the member of the public would speak with Cllr. Meade after the meeting.

Other items brought up for discussion were:- Oil stains from a car on a footpath on Princess Way, an abandoned car with no tax, Marston Bridge footpath is overgrown and needs cutting and the debris at the end of the village near what is thought to be Diocese land. The Clerk to follow up with these items and report as necessary to appropriate organisations.

13. Confirmation of the date of the Annual Parish Meeting and Annual Parish Council meeting – Wednesday 27th May 2026 at 7.00pm for the Annual Parish Meeting and at 7.30pm for the Annual Parish Council Meeting in the Village Hall

The meeting ended at 21.15

Signed

Date