

Earsham Parish Council Minutes

of a meeting of Earsham Parish Council held at the Village Hall
on Wednesday 27th May 2026 at 7.30pm

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

Also present: Four members of the public, District Councillor Chris Brown and Lynda Ling (Clerk)

1. Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman

a) To elect a Chairman for the coming year - Cllr. Bennett proposed Cllr. Randlesome as Chairman, which was seconded by Cllr. Revell. Cllr. Randlesome accepted the nomination and agreed to continue as Chairman **ALL AGREED**

b) To receive the Chairman's Declaration of Acceptance of Office - Cllr. Randlesome signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office

c) To elect a Vice Chairman for the coming year - Cllr. Bennett proposed Cllr. Leech remain as Vice Chairman, seconded by Cllr. Revell. Cllr. Leech accepted the nomination and agreed to continue as Vice-Chairman. **ALL AGREED**

2. Apologies from members unable to attend – Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr. Dave Clark, District Councillor Brendon Bernard, and County Councillor George Boyd

3. 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 and to consider any dispensation requests

Cllr. Randlesome – Item 9 – Allotments

Dispensation requests – None

4. Resolution to approve the Minutes of previous meetings - Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 25th March 2026 – Agreement proposed by Cllr. Leech and seconded by Cllr. Bennett **ALL AGREED**

5. Reports/Protocols/Consultations

Police, District and County Councillors

District Councillors Brown and Bernard –

Local Government reorganization – the Government rejected South Norfolk Council's suggestion of 3 unitary council's and have decided on two instead. The new council will include North Norfolk and Great Yarmouth with elections taking place next May for a shadow authority, taking over completely in April 2028.

Village Clusters Proposals - a review of the plans will take place in January or February 2027

GNLP Review – The new review is scheduled to take place over 7 months; however, this may not be realistic as the last review took 7 years.

Food Waste Collection Service – is scheduled to be rolled out in July and September, dependent on available vehicles. This is part of the Government's Simpler Recycling legislation designed to ensure consistency across the country, making recycling easier.

Budget – SNC has maintained a balanced budget during 2025.

East Pye Solar Project – is a major issue for this area, covering over three thousand acres. Now at review stage 2 with a lot of local opposition.

South Norfolk Council are in decent shape generally, opportunities and several new grants available in 2026 and although Conservatives are the largest party, they do not have the majority.

County Councillor George Boyd – No report expected due to the very recent election, but it is hoped that he will be able to do so in the future.

Chairman and Parish Councillors

Cllr. Bennett – The damaged car in the ditch at Hedenham has been removed at last.

Cllr. Leech – Pothole needs to be reported on the white line one hundred yards this side of the Bungay end of the village.

ACTION - CLERK

Cllr. Reeve – Cars continue to be parked at Earsham Dam – 4 cars counted and are on a slight bend which takes you into oncoming traffic when passing. The Clerk has reported this before to the Highways Engineer but to no avail. Cllr. Bennett commented that the layby is used as a car park due to Bungay car parking charges increasing and people walking into Bungay from the layby.

The Clerk has already had emails from the new County Councillor and has reported to him about the traffic and speeding issues experienced in the local area, especially on the A143. Cllr. Revell suggested that the new County Councillor be informed of this extra issue with parked cars and the dangers whilst overtaking them.

Clerks Report – Some items covered in the report included:-

Complaint about overgrown hedges/bushes at the top of School Road/The Street – this has been mentioned in the Parish Magazine and asked residents to keep footpaths free of overhanging greenery.

Market-Wide Half-Hourly Settlement migration window – This is about a change across the electricity industry to enable all electricity usage to be settled on a half-hourly basis – this does not require any action from the Parish Council for the streetlight electricity.

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

Report from the Speed Watch group – The group will be out again very soon and may change the time to later in the day. Generally, people are responsible and Church Road has not been as bad for speeding as previously reported

Discussion on the Village Hall Condition Report recently received from Big Sky Living and discuss the next steps to remedy any issues and to discuss the Parish Council involvement both financially and practically – The Chairman commented that the report was very thorough and the easier items highlighted are moving forward with both Parish Council and Village Hall Management Committee involvement. The easier items include the emergency lighting being fixed, alarms being assessed, first aid kits being sourced and fire doors being investigated for issues.

An initial meeting of the Village Hall Working Group took place two weeks earlier to discuss the findings of the report, and to assimilate the large amount of information, quotes and requirements needed to bring the village hall up to date with current regulations. Cllr. Leech commented that there is enough money in the Village Hall Management accounts to get the ball rolling with these smaller items and an electrician had already been contacted for quotes.

Cllr. Bennett said that an asbestos survey needs to be undertaken, for example, of old-fashioned light boxes sometimes has asbestos in them.

Cllr. Revell mentioned that it had been agreed by the working group, that they would meet monthly for discussion and progress reports, but as the Parish Council meetings are bi-monthly this would slow the process down if decisions had to wait, so would the Parish Council members allow the working group to continue moving forward with the works knowing what funds were available in the VHMC (Village Hall Management Committee) bank account. Everyone agreed that this was the best way to proceed as time was of the essence to get the highlighted issues up to date.

It was agreed to contact asbestos companies for quotes to ascertain if there is a problem in the village hall, Cllr. Meade and Bennett suggested a couple of companies - the Clerk to contact them.

ACTION - CLERK

The Clerk asked the Parish Council for their agreement with her involvement with the village hall project - she is not employed by the VHMC, nor is it in her contract to collaborate with them and ultimately, it would mean an increase in working hours. Members agreed that they were happy for the arrangement to continue and understood that more hours would be worked during the various stages of the project.

ALL AGREED

The Clerk had put together a draft consultation document on the Village Hall which she suggested should be circulated to residents to ask their opinions about the Hall, its use, improvements, or even if it is needed at all. It was agreed that this would prove useful, and Cllr. Leech, Randlesome and the Clerk would work on this together to gather resident comments. The Clerk asked John and Katie Gore if they would be happy to have some of the questionnaires at the Community Café for visitors/residents to complete. Both agreed they were happy with this.

ACTION – CLLRS LEECH, RANGLESOME AND CLERK

The Clerk will contact the editor of the Village Magazine to ask if the consultation document, once agreed by members, could be put in the centre of the magazine as a pull-out section and arrange a drop-off point for residents to leave their completed form. No personal details would be required on the document.

ACTION - CLERK

7. Planning – Application Number– 2026/0795

Applicant: Ms Christine Douglas
Proposal – Single Storey side extension
Location – Brambles, Marsh Lane, Earsham
Applicant – Ms Christine Douglas
Application Type – Householder

Application Number– 2026/1008

Proposal – Single Storey rear extension, two storey side extension
Location – 2 The Street, Earsham
Applicant – Ms Lees
Application Type – Householder

The Parish Council did not have any objections to these applications and responded to South Norfolk Council within the deadlines for comments.

8. Finance and Governance–

- a) Approval of items of expenditure invoiced since the March 2026 meeting and note balances – see attached **ALL AGREED**
- b) To resolve to agree the 2025/26 parish accounts – **ALL AGREED**
- c) To receive, agree and sign documents relating to Assertion 10 – Digital and data compliance, some forms were handed back to the Clerk **ALL AGREED**
- d) To resolve to note the Internal Auditors Report 2025/26 and note any comments - **NOTED**
- e) To resolve to agree to sign off Section 1 of the AGAR Annual Return – Annual Governance Statement 2025/26 **ALL AGREED**
- f) To resolve to agree to sign off Section 2 of the AGAR Annual Return – Accounting Statements 2025/26 **ALL AGREED**
- g) To resolve to agree to the dates for the publication of the Notice of Public Rights and Publication of Unaudited Annual Governance & Accountability Return – Monday 2nd June 2025 to Friday 11th July 2025 **ALL AGREED**
- h) Review and agree Model Standing Orders **ALL AGREED**
- i) Review and agree Financial Regulations **ALL AGREED**
- j) Review and agree Risk Assessments – General, Financial and Management **ALL AGREED**

Items 8a – 8j were proposed and seconded for approval by all **ALL AGREED**

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

- a) **Update on allotment tenant meeting and consider suggestions put forward from allotment holders –**

An in-depth discussion was held on the problems encountered running the allotments and various issues when tenants leave and do not inform the Parish Council, which leads to overgrown plots. A member of the public commented that some tenants were not in favour of the council spending money on allotment clearance by a contractor, as it was not done satisfactorily and was expensive. A few plot holders have said they would be happy to help in those situations, which was appreciated by members. Cllr. Randlesome assured members of the public that the cost encountered in the last financial year for the clearance of some plots was not passed onto the current tenants, the invoices clearly show the fees were for rent and water only. The Clerk mentioned that she had attained some grant money to help with the clearance costs.

- **Leaking taps** – Cllr. Randlesome has spoken to the plumber who has looked at the taps, and there are some taps that need changing, this will be at a cost of £60. Gary (plumber) has kindly said he will complete the work at no extra cost to the Parish Council for which he was thanked. All agreed to the £60 spend.
- **Rats** – A quote had been received from Command Control (currently under contract for mole control on the playing field) following a visit from an inspector on the reported rat problems. Councillors felt that the quote was too expensive at £860 + VAT plus a one-off charge of £432.00 + VAT for 24 rodent external bait boxes which will be the parish councils property. The feeling generally was that there is not enough of a major issue to warrant spending that amount of money.
- **Suggestions from tenants** – It had been suggested by an allotment tenant that a few allotment holders could take a more active role in the management of the plots, so they do not have to wait months for decisions or actions to be taken due to the

bi-monthly council meetings. Cllr. Revell commented that it may be the way to go and have someone to act as a go between, providing any financial requests are decided by the Parish Council. It was agreed to proceed with this suggestion to test the waters on whether it would work. In the meantime, it was proposed that Cllrs. Randlesome, Leech and the Clerk would undertake an audit of the plots at an agreed convenient time. **ALL AGREED**

b) Update on items relating to the Playing Field and Football Club

- **Discussion on the two dead trees on the playing field and consider who will remove them if agreed** – Cllr Meade told the members that he would get the trees removed by Earsham Estate free of charge. Cllr. Meade was thanked for his offer.
- **Playing Field** – Cllr. Revell informed members that there was an issue with his attempt to remove the old picnic bench due to the gates being locked, but this will be resolved even if the bench falls apart. A conversation was held on the Parish Council holding a key for gates and whether a key safe could be used or if it could be held by an individual – further thought needs to be given to this. Cllr. Revell has undertaken the play inspections for the last three months and will continue to do so. He has had the opportunity to speak with parents to find out how well used the area is, and suggested it may be useful to produce a questionnaire on how important the play area is for local children, the concern is that the maintenance of the area is expensive and will become a burden on the Parish Council as time goes by as the wooden structures deteriorate.
- **Play Inspection** - The annual play inspection is due, and a reminder received from David Bracey, at a cost of £110 plus VAT. Cllr. Revell said that he would welcome the opportunity to meet with David whilst he is undertaking the inspection. Agreement was proposed by Cllr. Randlesome and seconded by Cllr. Bennett.

**ALL AGREED
ACTION – CLERK**

The Clerk to arrange.

The Chairman asked if everyone was happy to continue the meeting, as it was now 21.31 hrs. – all agreed to continue.

10. Significant Correspondence – Forwarded to Councillors previously, plus emails of introduction from the new County Councillor and an update on street naming from SNC.

11. Business for the next meeting – Village Hall, Highways, Playing field, allotments

The meeting was adjourned for public participation 21.35 and reconvened at 21.40. Items mentioned - oil on the road on Princess Way plus large a pothole on School Road.

12. Confirmation of the date of the next meeting – Wednesday 29th July 2026 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall, Earsham

13. To resolve to exclude the press and public [Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, Sec 1 (2)] due to the confidential nature of the following item:

- To discuss Clerk's accrued overtime – Agreement to pay the overtime was proposed by Cllr Randlesome and seconded by Cllr. Bennett.

ALL AGREED

Meeting ended at 21.52

SignedR. Randlesome
Date29th July 2026

Payments list for meeting - 27th May 2026							
Payments shown exclude VAT - VAT element shown separately							
Payments already made since last meeting	Payment Method	Earsham PC excl VAT	VAT	Playing Field excl VAT	VAT	Allotments excl VAT	VAT
NPower- streetlighting - March 2026	DD	£ 126.93	£ 6.35				
Npower - streetlighting - April 2026		£ 118.54	£ 5.93				
EON Next - pavilion - March 2026	DD			£ 58.50	£ 2.92		
EON Next - pavilion - April 2026				£ 71.08	£ 3.55		
Anglian Water	DD			£ 36.14	£ -	£ 273.28	
ICO - annual information commissioners fee	DD	£ 47.00					
SNC - Brown bin	DD	£ 68.00					
Calum Ward - Annual cost for HMRC and P60	online	£ 120.00	£ 24.00				
Interest	online	£ 8.50					
Microsoft - annual renewal for email services	online	£ 84.99					
John Gore - reimbursement for second community social	online	£ 36.97					
HMRC - Tax for Jan, Feb, March	online	£ 440.20					
Robinsons - VE80	card	£ 18.00					
Stamps - as agreed at March meeting	online	£ 49.60					
Reimbursement for postage to clerk	online	£ 20.04					
	TOTAL	£ 1,138.77	£ 36.28	£ 165.72	£ 6.47	£ 273.28	£ -
Income since last meeting							
NCC - Funding for SAM3 and bus shelter		£ 6,143.20					
SNC - First half of precept		£ 10,375.00					
Earsham Football Club - water and electricity for 2025-26				£ 1,200.50			
Allotments - water and rent for 2025-26 so far						£ 1,246.75	
Bowls Club - water and rent for 2025-26				£ 351.68			
VAT reclaimed		£ 1,367.19					
		£ 17,885.39		£ 1,552.18		£ 1,246.75	
Payments to be agreed - 27th May 2026							
Clerks Salary for May and June	as agreed						
Postage - agenda pack for March	online	£ 6.09	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -
Annual Insurance	online	£ 1,283.68	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -
Internal audit payment to J. Loveday	online	£ 75.00	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -
Big Sky Living/Vertical Property Services Ltd	online	£ 550.00	£ 110.00	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -
NALC - Annual subscription	online	£ 248.97	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -
Partial refund on deposit for plot 7b	online	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 34.31	£ -
Westcotec - New SAM3 machine	online	£ 3,445.00	£ 689.00	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -
John Gore - Community Café expenses for May	online	£ 21.44	£ 2.20	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -
NALC - Managed and website hosting	online	£ 217.16	£ 43.43				
Clerks mileage	online	£ 26.50	£ 5.30				
	TOTAL	£ 5,873.84	£ 849.93	£ -		£ 34.31	£ -
Balances as at 27th May 2026							
Parish Council current account		£ 7,457.57					
Parish Council savings account		£ 41,367.19					
Playing Field current account				£ 839.28			
Playing Field savings account				£ 3,700.00			
Allotment current account						£ 650.98	
Allotment savings account						£ 1,900.00	
		£ 48,824.76		£ 4,539.28		£ 2,550.98	