

Earsham Parish Council
Minutes
of a meeting of Earsham Parish Council held in Earsham Village Hall on
Wednesday 27th September 2023

Present: Councillors: Richard Randlesome, Jim Bennett, Tony Leech, Nick Meade, Dick Naunton and Keith Reeve

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

1. **Welcome** – The Chairman welcomed those present to the meeting
2. **Apologies from members unable to attend** – None
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** – Cllrs. Leech and Randlesome declared an interest in Item 10 - allotments.
 - a) **To consider any dispensation requests** - None
4. **Co-option of potential candidates**
 - **To consider co-opting candidates who have come forward in response to a casual vacancy on the council, and if appropriate, to appoint a councillor by co-option. If an appointment is made, the new councillor, if present, should then sign the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.**

Members unanimously agreed to co-opt Dave Clark onto the Parish Council having read and noted his application. Apologies had been received from Mr. Clark as due to prior commitments, he was unable to attend the meeting. The Clerk will contact Mr. Clark to inform him of the co-option decision and make arrangements for the necessary paperwork to be completed.

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

ALL AGREED

5. Resolution to approve the Minutes of previous meetings

- **Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 2nd August 2023** – Agreement proposed by Cllr. Naunton and seconded by Cllr. Meade

ALL AGREED

No members of public wished to comment during the public session

6. Reports/Protocols/Consultations

a) **Police, District and County Councillors**

District Councillor Brown informed members of the following:-

- As reported at the May meeting, Cygnet House in Long Stratton was put up for sale, however, an application to make it an asset of community value had been received, so the sale has been halted whilst that process took place. **Update** - Cllr Brown reported that the application had failed and the building can now be sold when a buyer is agreed.
- Neutrality and Planning – Is causing issues for developers and construction work has stopped in some places, this is due to recent updated advice which means developments may require Habitats Regulations Assessments.
- South Norfolk Council is investing £3 million in buying properties to be used as temporary accommodation
- South Norfolk Council's Leisure Centre's membership numbers are now back to where they were pre-Covid
- Two by-elections are being held on Thursday 28th September in South Norfolk, these are for South Wymondham and Mulbarton and Stoke Holy Cross wards
- Geldeston Parish Council is now up and running again with parish councillors having returned via a co-option process
- Homes for Ukrainian refugees are still being sought

b) Chairman's report and Parish Councillors reports –

Cllr Leech – Reported that he has been approached by residents expressing concerns about the junction onto the A143 from The Street and trees on the A143 need cutting back on the junction as you cannot see the directional signs.

Cllr. Reeve – Reported that a lockable post has been installed on the playing field near the gate. Concerns were raised that should emergency services be required, the access would be blocked. Cllr. Bennett commented that he had contacted the football club's chairman who confirmed that the key for the post was inside the pavilion which meant no-one would be able to open it in an emergency. It was suggested that permission should have been sought first before installing and that contact should be made with the chairman of the club to discuss and to ask for a key safe to be installed on the exterior of the building (or something similar) so that access can be gained if necessary.

Cllr. Naunton – Reported that there is a modified horse box in the lay-by towards the Bungay end of the Village and that hedges need cutting back on the Old Harleston Road. It was agreed that Cllr. Meade contact one of the farmers to ask if the hedge could be cut back and the horse box vehicle be watched and if necessary to be reported to the appropriate authorities.

Chairmans report – Cllr Randlesome reported that he had forwarded an email to members from Trevor Holden re Town & Parish Council Summit on 9th Nov 2023 if anyone was interested in attending.

Clerks Report – The Clerk gave a brief breakdown of various Village related items and outcomes since the last meeting which included a zoom meeting with a SNC Officer regarding the Pride in Place funding (zoom meeting also attended by the Chairman), the burnt out van near the bowls and football pavilions, disappearance of same, and an email from a resident about the flooding on Kingsway (subsequently reported to Highways)

7. Village Items –

Update on all village items, including the WW1 Commemorative Plaque, Signpost, email from Highways, grit bins etc. – No update

a) Report from the Speed Watch group – Peter Goodfellow provided the following figures:--

August - Speeders were caught travelling at 1 x 35mph, 2 x 36mph, 3 x 37mph, 1 x 40 and 1 x 41

September – no vehicles were caught presumably due to the road closure at Earsham Dam.

The Speed Watch Group are looking for new members to join them and anyone interested should contact Peter directly.

b) Discussion on the purchase of a commemorative bench to mark King Charles III coronation -

Cllr Naunton had researched some companies selling recycled plastic benches. Alternatively a teak circular seat had been found at a cost of £1190 with the option of a plaque or engraving available for an extra £35. The teak is from a sustainable source. This will be discussed after further research is done.

c) Discussion and agreement to installing a light above the defibrillator – Pending

d) Discussion on the purchase of a new Parish Council noticeboard – Cllr. Naunton had researched companies selling a variety of noticeboards, a standard 1200mm x 1050mm board which could display 12 A4 sheets was selling for £970 - extra for oak post legs and header board. Deferred until next meeting.

e) Update on maintaining the defibrillator cabinet (this may include training and maintenance of), and recent issue with the cabinet door and security of the defib, changing the batteries for the SAM2 machines and moving the machines to different locations - Cllr. Naunton informed members that the defib door had been tampered with again, however he had managed to get the door closed although the door doesn't fit properly anymore. With regard to Grumpy's Café defib, it was suggested to contact them to find out if they would also like to help host a training session for residents.

ACTION – CLERK

Cllr. Naunton informed members that he has taken on responsibility for the SAM2 machines but is unsure if one of the machines is working. If this found to be the case, the Clerk asked that she be informed in order to contact the company they were purchased from for advice.

f) Discussion on employing a self-employed handyman for occasional jobs around the village – Cllr Leech confirmed that the chap in question was insured and had appropriate associated paperwork. Cllr. Leech will set up a meeting with the chap to discuss further.

ACTION – CLLR LEECH

g) Discussion on Village Hall Car Park flooding and update on recent meeting with SNC's Andy Sexton regarding Pride in Place fund. To also discuss application for funding, any quotes received for remedial works so far and any actions going forward – Cllr. Naunton has contacted different companies with a view to getting quotes for the land work to drain water from the car park and empty into the attenuation basin on The Green. These works were also the reason for the online meeting mentioned in the Clerks report earlier with a view to trying to get some funding to help towards the cost, which may also include getting the car park resurfaced. All agreed it would be beneficial if funding could be found. **ACTION – CLLR. NAUNTON**

h) Parish Partnership Scheme – Discussion as to whether the Parish Council would wish to consider applying for funding from NCC for the delivery of highway improvements – Ideas put forward for an application for 50/50 funding included an illuminated sign at the junction with the A143, and an application for speed reduction measures between Earsham and Bungay. Deferred until the November meeting.

8. Planning Applications –

Application Number – 2023/1877

Location – 4 Dukesway, Earsham Norfolk

Proposal – First Floor rear extension

Decision – Approval with Conditions (Delegated)

Date of decision – 4th September 2023

Noted by members of the Parish Council

9. Finance and Governance –

a) Approval of items of expenditure invoiced since the July 2023 meeting and note balances – Payments already made (excluding VAT) –

Parish Council - £124.39 (streetlighting August/September)

Playing Field - £337.76 (pavilion electricity and water for August/September)

Allotments - £711.15 (water)

Payments for approval at this meeting (excluding VAT)

Parish Council - £3701.93 (Clerk salary cheques for two months), playing field precept transfer, SNC dog emptying bin service, street lighting maintenance, CPRE annual subs and stationery

Agreement proposed by Cllr. Randlesome and seconded by Cllr. Naunton

ALL AGREED

b) Half year finance report – The report had been included in the agenda pack sent out the previous week. The Clerk reported that half-way into the financial year, there had been no abnormal or unexpected costs and the accounts are where you would expect them to be, however the cost of electricity and water is proving to be unpredictable. The second half of the precept (£8,500) was expected before the end of the month. No questions were raised by members.

c) CPRE – Agreement to continue to the countryside charity was agreed at £36 per annum.

Agreement proposed by Cllr Naunton, seconded by Cllr. Reeve

ALL AGREED

d) To note the conclusion of the external audit – Noted

e) Agreement to purchase large letter stamps before the cost rises on 2nd October 2023 – As this is the cost of sending out the agenda documents, the Clerk asked if she could purchase in bulk more stamps as the increase will be 40p per stamp. It was suggested that £50 in large 2nd class stamps and £50 in 2nd class stamps be purchased.

ALL AGREED

f) Resolution to discuss and agree:-

1. Public Participation Policy
2. Safeguarding Policy
3. Lone Working Policy
4. Council Vacancy Policy
5. Privacy Statement

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

ALL AGREED

The Chairman asked members if members wished to continue with the meeting as it was 9.30pm or defer the rest of the items until November, all members agreed to continue (Standing Orders 3.01)

10. Playing Field/Play Equipment/Bowls Club/Allotments

- a) Update on the installation of the two new litter bins purchased last year (one for the layby and one for the playing field – Cllr. Bennett confirmed that these were now fitted.**
- b) Update on the burnt-out van near the Pavilion and agree any action –** No update to report, also discussed in Clerk's report
- c) Update on allotment payments and consideration of next steps to take as the three-month period for tidying up plots is coming to an end –** The Clerk reminded members of the content of the letter which went to all allotment holders in July which gave tenants three months to tidy up their plots and dispose of detritus. It was agreed that Cllrs Randlesome and Leech plus the Clerk should undertake an audit of the allotments for this purpose and it was agreed to meet the following Wednesday to undertake this. The clerk also reported that there were 4 outstanding payments and these had been chased up via emails and letters.

11. Significant Correspondence – Forwarded to Councillors

12. Business for the next meeting – Update and village items and allotments, budgets, parish partnerships funding and Pride in Place funding

The meeting was adjourned at 21.46 and reconvened at 21.49 for a member of the public to speak

The member of the public commented that there was still lots of carpet at the allotment and he couldn't cut his hedge on the allotment side because of items in the way and too close to the hedge. Cllr. Randlesome responded that these things will be looked at next week while visiting the allotments.

13. Confirmation of the date of the next meeting – Wednesday 29th November 2023 at 7.30pm in Earsham Village Hall

Signed R. Randlesome

Meeting ended at 21.51

Date 29th November 2023