

## **EARNLEY PARISH COUNCIL**

Minutes of the meeting of Earnley Parish Council meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2024 which commenced at 19.45 at Bracklesham Barn, Beech Avenue, Bracklesham.

**PRESENT:** Cllrs Robert Carey (Chairman), John Stant (Vice Chairman), Frank Doel and Dougie MacDonald.

**In attendance:** Louise Chater (Clerk), District Cllr. Elizabeth Hamilton and nine members of the public.

### **60.24 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

A member of the public asked how a quiet lane would be enforced, they stated that the traffic needs to be slowed down, and something needs to be done.

The Chairman responded that discussions would take place with West Sussex County Council in relation to how to address the issues in the parish as part of the quiet lanes process.

It was noted that tracked tractors are using the public highway, the Clerk highlighted that tracked vehicles are supposed to be loaded on a lorry, the clerk requested the tractor number be provided and she would contact the farmer.

What existing highways regulations are in place that are not being followed? Cllr. Stant responded that Easton Lane currently has a width restriction, but this does not prevent wider lorries/tractors etc using it to access the fields or business units.

The resident asked how it is enforced?

It was suggested that if residents had dashcams and they followed a vehicle on the road that was using it as a cut through rather than for access, the digital file be uploaded to [Operation Crackdown](#).

The Clerk made a request for volunteers for a speed watch group, a minimum of 12 volunteers are required to make the group viable. Training would be required, and the Police would need to assess any proposed locations. One member of the public came forward,

### **61.24 APOLOGIES AND REASON FOR ABSENCE**

On a proposal by the Chairman, it was RESOLVED to accept Cllr. John Williams apology and the reason for absence.

### **62.24 COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT**

No report received.

### **63.24 DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORT**

District Cllr. Hamilton advised that the District Council are reconsidering the redevelopment of Chichester southern gateway.

District Cllr. Hamilton in her role as a parish councillor for Birdham Parish Council highlighted that there is an application pending for a gym at the premier site, and requested residents and the parish council consider submitting a supporting letter.

#### **64.24 CODE OF CONDUCT, GENERAL DATA PROTECTION, HEALTH & SAFETY & POLICIES**

1. Declarations of Interest on items included on the agenda - none.
2. Dispensation requests - none.
3. General Data Protection - it was noted that starting in October 2024, all UK Government services will be monitored for WCAG 2.2 compliance. Parish Councils are encouraged to use a .gov.uk domain for their websites and email communications. To comply with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), it is recommended that the Council has an official .gov.uk email accounts for councillors and the Clerk ensure that the Council's website meets the minimum accessibility standards. The website complies with the requirements, and although the councillors are issued with an email address this is not a .gov.uk email address. It was agreed that it was not necessary to change the domain name and email address to .gov.uk.
4. Health & Safety - Parish Council assets nothing further.
5. Policy Review - none.
6. New Policies - none.

#### **65.24 MINUTES**

Minute 59.24(3) amended to read "journey from Earnley Church to Third Avenue 104 vehicles were counted, this was a distance of 1.2 miles". Following this change on a proposal by Cllr. Stant, it was RESOLVED to agree and sign the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on [29<sup>th</sup> July 2024](#); this was duly completed.

#### **66.24 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES NOT ALREADY ON THE AGENDA**

None.

#### **67.24 FINANCE**

1. Bank Balances as at date of meeting £50,050.95.
2. On a proposal by Cllr. Carey, it was RESOLVED to ratify the [Payments](#) made and payments.

##### **Payment Schedule 27th August 2024**

Mrs Louise Chater £611.13 P32 Salary - month 5

HMRC £152.03 P33 PAYE - month 5

WSCC Pension £185.89 P34 Pension - month 5

EWBPC £25.50 P35 Room hire.

Barclaycard £21.58 P36 Statement dated 21st July 2024

Barclaycard £8.80 P37 Statement dated 21st August 2024

Moore £252.00 P38 Audit fees 2023/24

##### **Payment Schedule 18th September 2024**

Mrs Louise Chater £611.13 Salary - month 6

HMRC £152.03 PAYE - month 6

WSCC Pension £185.89 Pension - month 6

Westcotec Ltd £84.60 Battery for speed indicator device

3. On a proposal by Cllr. Stant, it was RESOLVED to accept the [Financial Statement](#) for July and August 2024

4. Finance Review first quarter - Cllr. Carey reported that he had carried out the review and all was in order. The budget is on track; however, it is likely that there will be an overspend on clerk's salary due to the handover period.
5. Budget monitoring year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 - no action required.
6. Land transfer from Taylor Wimpey footpath 2 to enable connection of new path from Barrett's site. It was noted that the Clerk had advised Taylor Wimpey that the Parish Council wished to progress taking on the responsibility of the land (on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2024), no response has been received and a follow up email has been sent. The Adoption Manager is currently on leave.
7. Highway Tree Planting - land at the junction of Easton Lane, Batchmere Road and Almodington Lane - the Clerk advised that the Parish Council had previously included the reinstatement of dew pond at this location, therefore until further investigations have been carried out in relation to the reinstatement of the dew pond it was agreed to defer decision to plant trees at this location.
8. [Chichester District Council Infrastructure Business Plan 2025/2030](#) - Consultation on the draft plan. Consultation closes on 25<sup>th</sup> October 2024. No comment
9. Audit year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 - Annual Governance and Accountability Return - Section 3 External Auditor Report and Certificate  
It was noted that the External Auditor has stated that "On the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return is in accordance with the Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met." In other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority: "none."
10. Audit year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 - The Notice of Closure of Audit - has been uploaded to the website and placed on the parish council noticeboards.
11. Internal Audit year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 - The interim audit was carried out on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2024 by Andy Beams of Mulberry & Co, the report states " our sample testing did not uncover any errors or misstatements that require reporting to the external auditor at this time, nor did we identify any significant weaknesses in the internal controls such that public money would be put at risk. It is clear the council takes governance, policies and procedures seriously and I am pleased to report that overall, the systems and procedures you have in place are fit for purpose and whilst my report may contain recommendations to change these are not indicative of any significant failings, but rather are pointers to improving upon an already well-ordered systems."

It is therefore our opinion that the systems and internal procedures at Earnley Parish Council are well established and followed." It was noted that there were no recommendations or points to be carried forward.

12. Internal Audit year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 - it was noted that the yearend internal audit is provisionally booked for the 28<sup>th</sup> of April 2025, the new clerk will need to confirm that this date is acceptable.
13. Budget preparation for year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 - On a proposal by Cllr. Carey, it was RESOLVED to form the budget working party consisting of all members of the council. The Clerk to arrange a meeting at the earliest opportunity.

14. Replacement Clerk - it was noted the advert for the vacancy had been issued on West Sussex Association of Local Council website, the date for application closes on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024. To date one application has been received. The Employment Committee meeting is due to be held on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2024 to review the applications received, interview date to be arranged at this meeting.

## **68.24 ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS**

1. Flood Prevention - Cllr. Carey reported that County Cllr. Pieter Montyn has requested photographs of flooding in the area. It was requested that the Clerk obtain clarification from the Environment Agency as to when the annual clearance of Earnley Rife is due to take place. It was noted that the ditch to the north of Flint Cottage up to B2145 has been cleared by the adjacent landowners.

It was noted that the Clerk has reported the fly tipping in the ditch to West Sussex County Council.

2. Public Rights of Way - Cllr. Stant has carried out the monitoring survey, a volunteer is required to carry this out in future, but they will need to complete the training carried out by West Sussex County Council.

FP 2 (South from Clappers Lane) Growth from both sides is now so severe that the path is unusable on the Earnley portion. The East - West portion (East Wittering & Bracklesham parish) is also virtually impassable at the eastern end.

FP 54 (Earnley Church to Earnley Grange) The path is clear, but there will be future problems on the southern of the two bridges from growth from below, because the ditch is badly in need of clearing.

FP 51 (Almodington Lane to Somerley via Biotech) The stile 50 m from Almodington Lane cannot be used because of brambles growing from the south side, but the gate can be opened.

FP 52 (Bookers Lane to Almodington Lane) The stile on Bookers Lane has a broken plank which needs replacing.

The vegetation needs removing from the back gate to Cookscroft into the field.

FP 56 (Almodington Lane to Mapsons Lane) This path seems to be never used. Cllr. Stant has cleared the bridge from Almodington Lane, where the fingerpost is missing. The path cannot be traced through the meadow, and where it narrows between the back of the new houses and the parish boundary, it is impassable.

Footpath 50 (Second Avenue to Sommerly Lane) it was noted that the Clerk had advised the Church Commissioners that the land agent at Savills has not been in contact. The Church Commissioners has chased and has provided the Clerk with the contact information.

3. The sea defences at Medmerry - the Environment Agency have advised that the three redundant groynes have been removed. The shingle recycling works are due to commence in October 2024
4. Medmerry Car Park - no further update.
5. Replacement Airman - no further update.
6. Update from Environment Group - no further projects have been carried out, Cllr. Doel will attempt to get some volunteers to carry out work on the following paths: FP 54 (Earnley Church to Earnley Grange) and FP 51 (Almodington Lane to Somerley via Biotech)
7. Defibrillator in Clappers Lane Telephone Box - it was noted that the defibrillator is now in place and will be maintained and serviced by Witterings & District Community First Responders. The device is locked to ensure that you call the ambulance if you need the machine, the ambulance service will provide you with the code to unlock it. Training can be provided by Witterings & District Community First Responders to provide residents with the confidence to use the machine. However, it was noted that anyone can use the defibrillator as the machine will talk you through how to operate it. It was noted that Barrett's planning application had included the installation of a defibrillator adjacent to the open space in the centre of the housing.

## **69.24 HIGHWAYS**

1. A27 -no further update.
2. Village Gateways phase two - the order has been placed and the signs are being manufactured, installation date to be confirmed.
3. Highway Meadows - the Clerk has received confirmation from West Sussex County Council that the highway meadow has been removed from the grass cutting and she has received the information to enable a claim to be submitted.
4. Bus Shelter and Notice board First Avenue - the clerk has meet with two fencing contractors, however, only one has provided a quote. Clerk to obtain a further quote.
5. Bike Stands Bell Lane and Bracklesham Lane - the order has been placed date for installation awaited.
6. Quiet Lanes - Cllr. Carey reported that the questionnaire has been distributed. It was noted that the Clerk had started to receive completed responses, and has commenced compiling the data received, it was noted that to date nine responses have been received of which two object to the proposal and seven support it. The overall level of support received for the scheme will guide the council on if this proposal is presented to West Sussex County Council for progression.  
It was noted that Sidlesham Parish Council were currently working on a project to reduce speed limits and were also investigating the provision of Quiet Lanes.
7. Verge Cutting by West Sussex County Council - No further update has been received on the poor quality of the work carried out by the contractor on behalf of West Sussex County Council.
8. S278/38 Highways Agreement Clappers Lane - Barretts Homes Site, it was noted that the Principal Engineer, Highway Agreements, Planning Services was awaiting the report from the Health and Safety Officer. Cllr. Carey to follow up.

## **70.24 REPORT ON EXTERNAL MEETINGS**

1. Cllr. Stant reported that he had attended the Manhood Peninsula Partnership Meeting, a report had been received on the proposal to submit a request to West Sussex County Council for all secondary roads on Manhood Peninsula to be reduced to 20mph and B roads to 30mph and 40mph. West Sussex County Council has advised that they do not accept blanket applications and each individual area will need to be applied for.

A presentation was received from West Sussex County Council, Parish Council & Community Engagement Officer, on the Green Print Project in relation a trial to cut and pick up grass cuttings from verges in both the rural and urban areas in a small number of areas in the district.

Manhood Wildlife Heritage gave a presentation on the plans for the future and in particular the re-hedging project.

## **71.24 CLERK'S REPORT AND CORRESPONDENCE**

Community Warden - the Clerk reported that following the recent death of Drew Allardice, Chichester District Council have decided to move Dawn an experienced warden, who has covered Tangmere and Oving for a number of years, to cover the Witterings and Earnley ward. Dawn will commence her new role in November. The area is being covered by the existing Community Wardens.

## **72.23 ITEMS FOR NOTING OR FUTURE AGENDAS**

None.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 20.45pm

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Chairman Earnley Parish Council

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_