

EARNLEY PARISH FULL COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Earnley Parish Council held on 19th May 2025 which commenced at 18.45 at Bracklesham Barn, Beech Avenue, Bracklesham.

PRESENT: Cllr's Robert Carey, John Stant, John Williams and Frank Doel

In attendance: Vicky Middleton-Head (Clerk), County Cllr. Pieter Montyn , District Cllr. Elizabeth Hamilton, Dawn White Community Warden and 2 members of the public.

32.25 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND SIGNING OF DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE

On a proposal by Cllr. John Stant seconded by Cllr Frank Doel it was **RESOLVED** to elect Cllr. Robert Carey to the role of Chairman, the Declaration of Acceptance of Office was duly signed.

33.25 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN AND SIGNING OF DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE

On a proposal by the Chairman and seconded by Cllr. Frank Doel, it was **RESOLVED** to elect Cllr. John Stant, to the role of Vice Chairman, the Declaration of Acceptance of Office was duly accepted.

34.25 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Dawn White introduced herself at the meeting as new Community Warden. Cllr John Stant asked if there was anything of concern in the local area and Dawn advised that the mis-use of catapults are a great concern and Sussex Police are in the process of making house visits. People are urged to call the police to report any incidents of wildlife cruelty that they witness. Whilst the reported incidents are outside of the Earnley Parish, there has previously been feathers found near the Earnley Church indicating that the culprits may be coming through Earnley.

35.25 APOLOGIES AND REASON FOR ABSENCE - None

36.25 COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

Cllr. Montyn would like to report that the flooding experienced in the last Winter to Bookers Lane and Almodington Lane is being assessed and WSCC have a Riparian Team, who are awaiting an update from the Environment Agency regarding the Grange Rife and Earley Rife. Cllr Montyn believes that previously a neighbour refused access to the Environment Agency who intended to clear the rife. Whilst it is understood that the corner property from Easton Lane are refusing to do works, it is believed that it is actually WSCC that are responsible. Cllr Montyn requested that he be advised of the details for the resident and the property and he will look into it. Cllr Carey advised that Earnley Parish Council will contact the Environment Agency in late summer once again and generally they do respond.

Southern Water are still being pressed for answers regarding Clappers Lane and Cllr Montyn will continue to pursue this with them. Cllr Carey advised that he and Cllr John Stant plan to meet with Andrew Frost from Chichester District Council to ask them to ensure condition 22 of the planning appeal is met.

Cllr Montyn will update all local councils late July with details of the ongoing consultation regarding devolution for West Sussex County Council

Cllr Montyn closed by confirming that he was duly elected as Chairman once again and Earnley Parish Council congratulated him and advised that this is very pleasing.

37.25 DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORT

Cllr Hamilton advised that Chichester District Council Annual General Meeting is being held tomorrow and on the Agenda they will be discussing the decision of getting rid of the parking forum as not enough people attended the last meeting. They also will be reducing the number of people on the Planning Committee and they are also reducing the timescale of when you can make an objection to a Planning Application, and limiting the ability to "red card" an application.

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¹Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960

38.25 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. On a proposal by Cllr. Robert Carey, it was RESOLVED by all Councillors to confirm the use of existing policies listed below: –

Standing Orders (adopted on 23rd May 2022),

Code of Conduct Policy (adopted on 25th March 2021),

Councillor – Officer Protocol (adopted on 23rd January 2023),

Scheme of Delegation (adopted on 24th January 2022),

Health and Safety Policy (adopted on 20th July 2017),

Communication Policy (adopted on 24th November 2016),

Press and Media Policy (adopted on 28th September 2017),

Data Protection Policy (adopted on 19th July 2018),

Retention of Documents Policy (adopted on 24th November 2016),

Equal Opportunities Policy (adopted on 26th September 2019),

Councillors IT Policy (adopted on 19th July 2018),

Financial Regulations (adopted on 28th November 2022, updated 2023),

Councillors and Employee Expenses (adopted on 27th January 2021),

Protocol for Dealing with Planning Application Consultation (adopted on 25th September 2023), Tourism Policy (adopted on 15th May 2023),

Adoption and Management of Open Spaces Associated with New Developments (adopted on 24th January 2022),

Biodiversity Policy (adopted on 25th March 2024),

Community Engagement Strategy (adopted on 26th January 2017),

Protocol on Filming, Videoing, Photography, Audio Recording, and Broadcasting at Council Meetings (adopted on 28th September 2017),

Flexible Retirement Policy (adopted on 26th June 2014),

Pension Scheme Discretions (adopted on 28th September 2017),

Disciplinary Procedure (adopted on 25th March 2021)

Dignity at Work Policy (adopted on 26th September 2022),

Grievance Policy (adopted on 18th July 2019),

Sickness and Absence Policy (adopted on 18th July 2019),

Staff IT Policy (adopted on 19th July 2019),

Pay Policy (adopted on 19th July 2019),

Training Policy (adopted on 23rd January 2020),

Homeworking Policy (adopted on 28th May 2020)

39.25 ELECTION OF PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES or EXTERNAL MEETINGS

The following councillors were nominated to represent the Parish Council at the listed external meetings:

1. Peninsula Community Forum has been changed to Manhood Peninsula Partnership - Cllr. Robert Carey

2. West Sussex Association of Local Councils (WSALC) – Cllr Carey proposed that when the Agenda is received, this will be circulated and any Councillor that wishes to attend can do so. AGREED by Cllr Doel.

3. Chichester District Association of Local Councils (CDALC) – Cllr Carey once again proposed that when agenda is received, this will be circulated and any Councillor that wants to attend can do so. AGREED by Cllr Doel

4. Chichester District Council Meeting of the Parishes – Cllr. Robert Carey

5. Medmerry Stakeholders Advisory Group (MSTAG) – NO LONGER EXISTS so will be removed

6. Green Links Across the Manhood (GLAM) – Cllr. Stant (Cllr Stant advised that he won't be available to attend June meeting)

The nominations were accepted.

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40.25 ELECTION OF MEMBERS' AREAS OF SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY

The following councillors were nominated as lead councillor on the following areas:

1. Environmental Issues – Cllr. Doel
2. Police and Vandalism – Cllr. Doel
3. Highways & Road Safety – Cllr. John Stant
4. Footpaths, Rights of Way, and Verges – Cllr. John Stant
5. Finance & Budget (including quarterly checks of Parish Council Finance) – Cllr. Carey
6. Emergency Planning – Cllr. Carey

These nominations were accepted.

41.25 TO APPOINT MEMBERS TO SERVE ON THE UNDERMENTIONED COMMITTEES

a) Planning Committee - On a proposal by the Chairman, it was **RESOLVED** that all councillors were nominated as members of the Planning Committee, and the adopted terms of reference (adopted 15th May 2023) remain in place. On a proposal by the Chairman, it was **RESOLVED** to elect Cllr. John Stant as Chairman and Cllr. Frank Doel as Vice Chairman. These nominations were accepted, and the Declarations of Acceptance of Office were duly signed.

b) Employment Committee – On a proposal by the Chairman, it was **RESOLVED** that all councillors were nominated as members of the Employment Committee, and the adopted terms of reference (18th July 2019) remain in place. On a proposal by Frank Doel it was **RESOLVED** to elect Cllr. Robert Carey as Chairman and Cllr. John Williams as Vice Chairman and the Declarations of Acceptance of Office were duly completed.

c) Code of Conduct Committee - On a proposal by the Chairman, it was **RESOLVED** that the adopted terms of reference (19th July 2012) would remain in place.

d) Complaints Committee - On a proposal by the Chairman, it was **RESOLVED** that the adopted terms of reference (14th May 2015) would remain in place.

Cllr John Stant therefore proposed that we accept them all but at the next meeting we should review the Terms of Reference for the Employment Committee which was **AGREED**

42.25 MINUTES

On a proposal by Cllr. Carey, it was **RESOLVED** to agree and sign the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 24th March 2025; this was duly completed.

43.25 EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE

On a proposal by Cllr. Carey, it was **RESOLVED** to agree and sign the minutes of the Employment Committee held on 28th April 2025; this was duly completed along with confirmation of the employment of Vicky Middleton-Head as the new Clerk & RFO with effect from 19th May 2025.

44.25 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES NOT ALREADY ON THE AGENDA

None

45.25 FINANCE

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1. Bank Balances as at date of meeting £92,253.28
2. [Payments](#) – On a proposal by the Chairman, it was **RESOLVED** to ratify the payments made Payment Schedule dated 19th May 2025, **AGREED** by Cllr's Doel and Stant
3. [Financial Statement](#)
On a proposal by the Chairman, it was **RESOLVED** to accept the Financial Statement for April 2025
4. Transparency Act – The Chairman confirmed that the Transparency Act requirements for the fourth quarter year ended 31st March 2025 had been completed and will be uploaded to the website.
5. Finance Review year ended 31st March 2025 – Cllr. Carey reported that he had reviewed the year end accounts and in terms of administration costs we came in on budget but staff costs were exceed by 12% but the forecast reflected this and this is due to a six week period of two Clerks whilst a handover was completed. Everything else is on budget and better than forecast and the Auditor had no issues with the accounts. Free reserves are on target, being better than 6 months of expenditure
6. Internal Audit year ended 31st March 2025 - On a proposal by the Chairman, it was **RESOLVED** to accept the report from Internal Auditor, which was completed on 25th April 2025 and it was noted that the report made no recommendations which was good and noted that Louise Chater had done a good job.
7. Annual Governance & Accountability Return year ended 31st March 2025 - Report Page 3 of 6 met all compliance requirements and was signed by Andy Beams, Auditor.
8. Annual Governance & Accountability Return year ended 31st March 2025 - On a proposal by the Chairman, it was **RESOLVED** to accept and sign the Annual Governance Statement (page 4) which was duly completed and signed by Chairman and the Clerk
9. Annual Governance & Accountability Return year ended 31st March 2025– On a proposal by the Chairman, it was **RESOLVED** to accept and sign the [Accounting Statement](#) (page 5) which was duly completed and signed by the Chairman and the Clerk
10. Annual Governance & Accountability Return year ended 31st March 2025– The information submitted was confirmed as correct and the Auditor has accepted it. It was however noted that for the last year we held General Power of Competence (GPC) but this won't be held in the coming year until new clerk completes her CILCA qualification.
11. Annual Governance & Accountability Return year ended 31st March 2025 – [notice of public rights](#) had been completed and it was noted that the period of inspection was open from 3rd June 2025 and would close on 14th July 2024 as per the instructions from the external auditor. Clerk to display on the Noticeboard and Website.
12. On a proposal by the Chairman, it was **RESOLVED** to accept the [End of year accounts](#) year ended 31st March 2025 and was duly signed by the Chairman
13. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) – it was noted that the end of year report had been completed and submitted to Chichester District Council and uploaded to the Parish Council website as per the regulation requirements. Louise has completed it and currently showing £6873 for 2021 with one year left to spend it.
14. PAYE – end of year return has been completed by Louise Chater
15. Pension – end of year return has been completed by Lousie Chater and sent to WSCC
16. Appointment of Responsible Financial Officer year ended 31st March 2026
On a proposal by the Chairman, it was **RESOLVED** to appoint the new Clerk, Vicky Middleton-Head as Responsible Financial Officer for the year ended 31st March 2026
17. [Direct Debit Payment Schedule](#) year ended 31st March 2026
On a proposal by the Chairman, it was **RESOLVED** to confirm the Direct Debit Payment Schedule year ended 31st March 2026
Mileage Allowance Rate for Councillors and Clerk year ended 31st March 2026 on a proposal by the Chairman, it was **RESOLVED** to set the Councillors and Clerks mileage allowance at 45 pence per mile for the first 10,000 miles.
18. [Financial Risk Assessment, Health & Safety and Insurance Review](#)
On a proposal by the Chairman, it was **RESOLVED** to accept the Financial Risk Assessment, Health & Safety and Insurance Review completed by Louise Chater. On a proposal by the Chairman, it was

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AGREED to engage Zurich Municipal, smaller councils' package, from 1st June 2025 to 31st May 2026. **AGREED** by Cllr Stant. It was also noted that Council must open savings account as the bank account is now holding more than £50k **CLERK to ACTION**

46.25 ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

1. **Flood Prevention** – Cllr. Carey confirmed that Southern Electric must replace undersized culvert on Bookers Lane and this is ongoing, as required by the Environment Agency.
2. **Public Rights of Way** – Cllr. Carey advised that we have received a complaint regarding Footpath 2 advising that it is difficult to use and needs cutting back. WSCC was previously contacted regarding this and landowner details supplied so that they could request it was actioned. Cllr Stant suggested that we should write to the local Land Owner on the Eastern side of Footpath 2 asking them to arrange clearance and Cllr Carey will contact the local resident and ask them to raise the matter on the reporting page on the local authority website.
Cllr Doel advised that the footpath to the north side of Third Avenue has an area unfenced where a reservoir is located which raises a health and safety concern, in particular for children and dogs that could get in and then not get back out (the reservoir is located to the other side of Biotech) Cllr. Doel was requested to supply more details to the Clerk so that a letter can be sent to the Landowner asking them to address this.
3. **The sea defences at Medmerry** were discussed at the last GLAM meeting and it was noted on the minutes that the footpath was not passable. Cllr Stant has since inspected and advised it is passable but covered in shingle which can make it difficult. This area now forms part of the King Charles III England Coast Path (KCIII ECP) so whilst not maintained by them, you can still contact WSCC for issues.

47.25 HIGHWAYS

1. Village Gateways phase two is now finished
2. Bike Stands Bell Lane and Bracklesham Lane contractor no longer willing to complete the work so we still have the money and to be discussed at the next Cil meeting in June

48.25 REPORT ON EXTERNAL MEETINGS

Chichester District Council held an event that was attended by Cllr Carey which was for Parish Chairmen. Cllr Doel attended the West Wittering AGM which was very well attended including our local MP who spoke and appeared passionate about no more housing in the area.

49.25 REPORTS AND CORRESPONDENCE

None

50.25 ITEMS FOR NOTING OR FUTURE AGENDAS

Cllr Doel advised that we need to look at traffic calming in the Parish, in particular the white lines need re-doing but Cllr Doel suggested a meeting is required with WSCC regarding reducing speed limit might be a better solution. Cllr. Carey doesn't think WSCC will do it so traffic calming measures need to be investigated and possibly the installation of cattle grids. It was noted that on the future CIL agenda, it should be discussed whether it is feasible to use CIL money for traffic calming to roads that experience high speed? It was also suggested that a letter is sent to WSCC regarding the overgrown vegetation alongside the highway from Earnley Grange to just past bridge at Holly Tree cottage which is now impairing sight lines meaning oncoming traffic is not visible. WSCC agreed last year to add to list but it hasn't been cut back so **AGREED** that the Clerk will send an email to them with details of the location on a map requesting that this is added.

Meeting ended at 19.47pm