

# Local Government Act 1972 Section 9(1)

Minutes of The Annual Meeting of Electors for The Parish of Earnley  
held on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2026 which commenced at 18.45pm in the Community Room at Bracklesham  
Barn.

**Present:** Cllr's. Robert Carey (Chairman), John Stant (Vice Chairman) and John Williams.

**In attendance:** Vicky Middleton-Head (Parish Clerk), Cllr. Pieter Montyn and Cllr Elizabeth Hamilton and 25 members of the public

**Apologies and Reason for Absence:** Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr. Keith Martin and Frank Doel

## **01.26 To Approve the Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting**

On a proposal by Cllr. John Williams it was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on the 12th March 2025.

## **02.26 Matters Arising from the Minutes - None**

## **03.26 Report from County Councillor Pieter Montyn**

County Councillor Pieter Montyn advised that West Sussex County Council are at an important stage now due to re-organisation and should hear later this month which form of authority that the Government will choose but WSCC would prefer one authority for financial reasons.

There will now be a County Council election and Cllr. Montyn reminded to all residents to ensure that you are registered to vote on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2026.

The new crossing at Bracklesham Lane/Stocks Lane has now been completed.

Replacement gas pipe works being completed by SGN have almost been finished in Donnington but the road will be closed for 6/7 weeks starting in October. WSCC are still in discussions with SGN regarding the diversion that will be in place for traffic and in liaising with the Birdham housing development who expect there could be 20-30 HGV movements during the day which is not practical when a traffic diversion is in place. Discussion is also still ongoing regarding the plan for bus services during this time. WSCC will continue to keep Parish Councils advised so that residents can be updated in due course.

## **04.26 Report from your District Councillor Elizabeth Hamilton**

Cllr. Hamilton advised that the District Council is responsible for local Planning, rubbish collections and is soon to start food waste collections. Bins will be delivered toward the end of March/beginning of April but it takes time as there are 67 Parishes within the Chichester District. Each household will be issued with a bin and caddy for kitchen and will be collected weekly.

Planning requirements have been changed by Government, advising that we need more houses and despite the recently adopted Local Plan saying that there would be no more houses for the Manhood this has since been overruled by Government with the requirement to provide an additional 20-30% more properties across the District.

Cllr. Hamilton advised that CDC has money in reserves so are using this money towards the following local projects to avoid any money left in reserves being used to clear other Council's debts during future re-organisation:

- New Enterprise Hub
- Update the existing leisure facilities at the Westgate Centre, The Grange in Midhurst and Southbourne
- Supporting works to the Sea wall at Selsey
- £500,000 allocated for social housing in Birdham that will create 15 new houses

Cllr. Hamilton took a question from a member of the public who said, CDC had advised in 2015 that a total of 58 traveller sites needed to be found within the district so how many have now been found? Cllr. Hamilton

advised that she was unable to confirm but will find out and advise the Clerk who can advise residents in due course.

#### **05.26 Annual Report from The Parish Council**

Cllr. Robert Carey, Chairman of Earnley Parish Council expressed his gratitude to the Councillors for their efforts during the year and extended his gratitude to residents that had also been supportive of the Parish Council, in particular Warren and Linda who regularly attended Parish meetings and offer help with delivering flyers which is greatly appreciated.

Cllr. Carey introduced the new Clerk, Vicky Middleton-Head who has now been in post since May 2025.

Cllr. Carey advised that the Parish Council holds several meetings throughout the year.

- Full Council – 5 times per year
- Planning Committee – 10 times per year
- Employment Committee – 2 times a year
- Lots of External Meetings

In the past year, Earnley Parish Council have dealt with 31 new planning applications in the parish and as a Statutory Consultee, the Planning Officer must consider the comments that are submitted for each application. Applications considered include, extensions, conversion of existing outbuildings, siting caravans on land, works to or removal of trees, conversion of Class Q buildings to create new housing and conditions set on approved applications.

Cllr. Carey advised that construction work to Fossil Bay has now slowed down as they begin their appeal following their failure to discharge Condition 22 and refusal of the Section 73 application for the installation of RTC (real time control) tanks. Initially, condition 22 stated that;

*“No dwelling hereby permitted shall be occupied until the off-site foul drainage infrastructure necessary to serve the development is operational and it is confirmed in writing by the sewerage undertaker that sufficient sewage capacity exists within the network to accommodate the development.”*

Cllr. Carey advised that our objective is to get Southern Water to upgrade the local sewerage infrastructure to safeguard existing local residents. We cannot prevent the development of Fossil Bay although currently they have only sold 4 properties in 7 months and marketing has now ceased. We expect that they will lodge an appeal with the Planning Inspectorate but in the meantime Earnley Parish Council urge residents to continue to monitor problems with sewage to support continued objections to any appeal that is made by BDW Homes. A member of the public asked if the Parish Council had funding to fight any potential appeal that the Developer would make, Cllr. Carey advised that Chichester District Council would be responsible for funding and providing evidence to support their reasons for refusal but that the Parish Council could fund a professional report if they deemed it necessary to support their objections. The Parish Council are aware of a water survey being completed with some households and urges residents to document their concerns on this survey as this may be used as evidence in a future appeal made by BDW Homes.

Cllr. Carey also advised that the footpath across the front of the Fossil Bay development was now being used by residents and that the large pools of water at the front are expected to drain away once the fence is removed. Cllr. Carey advised that he continues to liaise with BDW Homes regarding joining a footpath from the development by a small bridge to the footpath in Bracklesham. Taylor Wimpey originally owned the footpath and Earnley Parish Council completed on the purchase of this before Christmas. The Parish Council plans to widen the existing footpath to enable pedestrians and cyclists to use this footpath to get to Bracklesham easily and avoiding using Clappers Lane and Bracklesham Lane. A member of the public who lives adjacent to the existing footpath in Bracklesham, asked if she would be notified of these works and would an effort be made to prevent destruction of natural habitats alongside the path. Cllr. Stant confirmed that residents would be consulted and every effort would be made to preserve the wildlife habitat whilst widening the path.

Cllr. Carey confirmed that the development of the Earnley Concourse was now underway and that the Parish Council were pleased with the layout of the development and the inclusion of green open space and a village green. Earnley Concourse does have a condition within the approved planning application which requires the construction of a pavement along the northern side of Clappers Lane. (Condition 20) The Parish Council are opposed to this as is the developer so Cllr. Carey is liaising with the Developer asking them to apply to remove the condition to prevent over urbanisation of Clappers Lane and there is now a pavement/footpath off the

road through the Fossil Bay development. There was a sewerage condition (condition 8) which has been “discharged”, even though it is on the same network as Fossil Bay and the Clerk is awaiting a response from Southern Water regarding this.

Cllr. Carey confirmed that Medmerry Park remains closed after the damage caused by the tidal inundation of April 2024. There is still an active Planning Application but with nothing new since August 2024. The Parish Council understand that the owners, Cove are buying out the remaining leaseholders and are still in dispute with their insurers regarding the value of their loss caused by the flooding event.

Cllr. Carey confirmed that Earnley Parish Council have received £113,000 in CIL monies and have to use this money within 5 years of receipt. How the money is spent is guided by the Earnley Parish Council Plan, the Infrastructure Business Plan and views of residents. Currently the Parish Council has allocated funds to complete the installation of bike stands at the Bracklesham Lane and Bell Lane bus stops and have completed worked to install village gateways. Projects to upgrade footpaths, cycleways and tree planting are still in progress.

Cllr. Carey advised that Earnley Parish Council is also considering a future allotment project using CIL monies subject to a possible land purchase in Earnley. The land for sale is 9 acres with a current asking price of £40k per acre, which is considered to be over the odds. There are concerns regarding access and in particular to access across land owned by the Environment Agency so Earnley Parish Council has engaged the services of a local Solicitor to advise.

Cllr. Carey advised that Earnley Parish Council welcomed a residents meeting with our MP, Jess Brown-Fuller which went well and she took an active interest in the concerns of residents.

Cllr. Carey advised that the Parish Council had been consulted on the Local Government Restructuring which will see the existing 8 authorities in West Sussex combine to create 1 or 2 Unitary Authorities along with a new mayoral authority. The Parish Council did not respond to the consultation, but several Councillor’s responded as individuals.

Cllr. Carey confirmed the after persisting to ask that the illegally installed culvert in Bookers Lane was removed, this has now finally been completed by Southern Electric.

Cllr. Carey welcomed questions from residents:

**Q Does anyone in the Planning Department read the comments that are put on an application?**

Cllr. Carey advised that the Planning Officer does read the comments and will consider any material reasons for objection. The Planning Officer that has dealt with the Fossil Bay applications had shown consideration in the comments made which was clear from her reports and the Parish Council were grateful for her work.

**Q Can the Parish Council use the Freedom of Information Act to request information from Southern Water regarding the sewage issues recorded?**

Cllr. Carey advised that the Clerk would investigate

Finally, a member of the public expressed thanks to the Parish Council for everything they do which was gratefully received by Cllr. Carey.

**Meeting ended at: 8.02pm**