



## EARNLEY PARISH FULL COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Earnley Parish Council held on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2026 which commenced at 7.15pm at Bracklesham Barn, Beech Avenue, Bracklesham.

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

**In attendance:** Julia Bowering (Taking minutes) and 9 members of the public

**14.26 APOLOGIES AND REASON FOR ABSENCE** – Apologies were received and accepted from Councillor Martin.

**15.26 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS IN RESPECT OF ANY MATTER ON THE AGENDA - NONE**  
It was noted however that all councillors were concerned, but none any familial or pecuniary interest.

**16.25 CONSIDERATION OF LAND SALE ADJACENT TO EARNLEY MANOR CLOSE**

Councillor Carey asked councillors in turn to give their opinions on the purchase of the 9 acre field.

There was a broad consensus that it would be desirable to contribute to the purchase of the land in order to maintain the rural character and to provide additional amenities to parish residents, such as footpaths, community orchard/tree planting and/or allotments. Such activity would contribute to carbon reduction and meet the need for allotments identified in the Infrastructure Business Plan (IBP).

It was also noted that any expenditure would be dependent upon a number of factors; including the legality of using CIL monies in this way, clarification of the access arrangements in place, the current category of use, and the need to obtain planning permission for a change of use.

Councillor Carey stated that he had contacted the Environment Agency (EA) to request a copy of the access arrangements in place, however he suspected that these would be similar to those for a neighbouring plot that he has possession of.

Councillor Stant raised some concerns that allotments would require a level of development out of place in that setting.

Councillor Carey raised the issue of costs associated with the project. It would not be possible to put all CIL monies towards the purchase. There will be legal costs, costs setting up the project and the need to raise the precept in future years to cover maintenance.

The meeting discussed the ownership arrangements should any purchase involving the parish council go ahead. As it is currently unclear whether the council could contribute CIL money to a trust, the council explored the implications of residents gifting sums to the council that the council would then use to purchase the land and own in its entirety. Councillor Doel felt that residents would each wish to retain responsibility for the land they had purchased. Councillor Stant, expressing support for a trust approach, stressed the need for common goals for the management of the whole field.

Summarising the progress of the meeting, Councillor Carey stated that the council was in principle supportive of buying the land. Yet, it would be necessary to seek legal clarification over the access arrangements and guidance from the District Council over the likelihood of obtaining planning permission for orchards and/or allotments. He also remarked that it would be beneficial to discover whether further CIL monies were expected.

The meeting was then opened for comments from the public.

Following a question from the public concerning the future use of the land, Councillor Carey gave the opinion that it was unlikely that the field would be attractive to a developer. A member of the public stated that he was strongly opposed to the council taking ownership of the land and would not personally

contribute to such a scheme. Also, he would not wish to see the land divided into smaller plots. Members of the council explained that CIL monies could only be used where there was wider community benefit and were subject to legally binding rules. Councillor Carey will seek guidance from district council staff on the matter.

The group discussed the existing access arrangements and how they have come into being. Councillor Carey agreed to pursue the EA for information on the access arrangements, to seek legal advice and to advise the group of any information forthcoming.

Councillor Stant asked how residents felt about using the land for allotments. There was a discussion of the visual impact and the expense of providing road access and some parking. Residents preferred the option of an orchard and possibly a footpath. It was noted that the provision of allotments was a target within the parish IBP and that using the land only for an orchard may not be sufficient to permit use of CIL funds. A resident again stated the opinion that the area should continue as a uniform whole, although a footpath would be acceptable.

Following a suggestion from a resident that the field be subject to a community right to bid, the meeting discussed the implications of this in terms of timing and the possible impact upon the actions of the seller. The resident suggested that advice be sought from the community legal team.

A resident thanked the council for their work on this project.

The council RESOLVED the following;

- That a local solicitor is contacted to advice on the access arrangements. To be funded from parish plan reserve.
- Agreed to contact the local planning authority to ascertain whether the land would get planning permission for allotments/orchards.
- In principle agree to explore the idea of putting CIL money into a Trust if that is within our powers.

Meeting ended at 8.13pm