



**BARNHAM AND EASTERGATE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 17TH JUNE AT BARNHAM COMMUNITY HALL**

Present: Chris Allington, Ray Coggin, Phil Cramp, Andrea Rainger, Chris Wells, Penny Wycherley, John Robinson and Simon Parkin

In attendance: Nina McMaster (Interim Acting Clerk, Assistant Clerk, Community), Gemma Hindson (Assistant Clerk, Planning), Linda Cranfield (Admin support), PCSO Caroline Wilson and five members of the public

1. Open Public Session

The members of the public present asked for an update regarding the poplar trees on Murrell's Field that cause a nuisance to their properties. The Chair gave a summary of the challenges and actions that have been taken by the Parish Council towards resolving this matter.

2. Apologies for absence

Sue Wallsgrove; Andrew Crawford; Heather Kilroy; Trevor Bence (WSCC).

3. Declarations of Interest

None declared.

4. Co-option of Councillor to fill current vacancy

The Council had received an application to fill the current vacancy on the Council. Having considered the application, the Council unanimously approved the co-option of Rob Bates to be co-opted to the Council. He duly signed his Declaration of Office and immediately joined the meeting.

5. County Councillor, District Councillor and PCSO Updates

Due to the absence of Trevor Bence and Sue Wallsgrove there were no updates to report. Caroline Wilson, PCSO presented a report of recent activities that had been dealt with in particular around vehicle crime and the misuse of e-bikes in the Parish and surrounding area.

6. Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 6th May

Resolved:

That the minutes of Barnham & Eastergate Parish Council meeting held on 6th May be approved as an accurate record of the meeting and be signed by the Chair of the Council.

7. Finance.

The Chair thanked Alison Crabb, former Clerk for all her work in concluding the 24/25 Annual Return and RFO handover. It was confirmed that Gemma Hindson would act as Interim RFO until a new Clerk had been appointed.

- 7.1 The Interim Acting Clerk had circulated details of payments made since 6th May 2025. All payments were **noted** with no issues raised.
- 7.2 The Interim Acting Clerk had circulated a summary of the financial position as at 6th May 2025. No issues of concern were raised, and the content was **noted**.

Resolved:

1. **To note the payments made since 6th May 2025**
2. **To note the current financial position of the Council**

8. Annual Return for the year ended 31 March 2025

The Interim Acting Clerk had circulated the completed Annual Governance Return, together with the Internal Audit Report undertaken by Smithe & Co and asked the Council to approve the following recommendations:

- 8.1 **Approval of Internal Auditor Report**
- 8.2 **Approval of the Annual Governance Statement for 2024/2025**
- 8.3 **Approval of the Accounting Statement for 2024/2025**
- 8.4 **Approval of the publication of Notice of Public Rights and submission of the Annual Return to the External Auditor.**

Resolved

1. **The Council approve the content on the Internal Audit Report prepared by Smithe & Co**
2. **That the Interim Acting Clerk and Chair sign the Annual Governance Statement for 2024/25**
3. **That the Chair sign the Accounting Statement for 2024/25**
4. **That the Interim Acting Clerk publish the Notice of Public Rights to inspect the Accounts and submit the required documentation to the External Auditor**

9. Planning & Environment Committee

Chris Wells, Chair of the Committee, gave a brief update on the last meeting of the Committee that was held on Tuesday 20th May. The main item of interest was the proposed development on Land south of Wandleys Lane, for the construction of ten dwellings with new access from Wandleys Lane. The Committee objected to the application on the grounds that the access was not via Fontwell Avenue as was the stipulation in the Neighbourhood Plan. The majority of the remaining applications were for various tree works around the Parish, on which the Committee agreed to support the views of the ADC Tree Officer.

10. Community Facilities in the Parish

The Assistant Clerk (Community) gave a brief update on current activities at the various community facilities in the Parish.

Nina McMaster and Gemma Hindson had met with Barretts Technical Director Adam Quayle, as a result of this meeting £7,500 had been donated. It was agreed that these funds would primarily be used to host a community event on Sunday 10th August on Murrell's Field.

The Assistant Clerk also mentioned the following matters:

- Both buildings had been very busy with regular activities and additional events
- MAMF was very successful with 2,500 people on site on Saturday 14th June 2025

- West Sussex Waste Prevention Grant preparation had started involving lots of volunteers
- Stagecoach had been booked to attend both buildings coffee mornings to talk to local residents about bus timetable updates
- The Cricket Club were now in residence for the season at Eastergate playing field and it was noted that the hand-over with Barnham Trojans went smoothly.

11. Award of Grants 2025/26

The Grants Panel had considered the applications received by the agreed deadline and the Assistant Clerk (Community) had co-ordinated the comments and decisions and produced a report that had been circulated for consideration. In summary, three applications had been received and the Panel recommended to the Council that all three should receive funding from the £2,500 budget available as follows:

- Arun Community Travel applied for £290 and an award of £500 had been suggested
- Tylers' Trust – applied for and awarded £500
- 4Sight – applied for £390 and an award of £500 had been suggested

It was suggested that £1,000 be retained and applications re-opened later in the year.

The Council **approved** the recommendations for the award of grants and supported the recommendation to re-open the application process at a future date.

Resolved:

That the Interim RFO make the payments as approved

12. Working Party Updates

12.1 Community Resilience – Ray Coggin reported that the First Aid courses were ongoing. It was also noted that volunteers were required to assist with filling sandbags and anyone who was interested should speak to David Phillips. A self-defence class run by Bradd Timm had been scheduled at Barnham Community Hall on Saturday 19th July and was to be subsidised by budgeted Parish Council funds as previously agreed.

12.2 People, Places, Spaces - Penny Wycherley advised that the in-bloom baskets had been put up and were being watered regularly. Unfortunately, it had not been possible to install the window boxes around the hall and the plants had been used in the raised beds instead. Martine's meadow, part of the new village garden, had flourished and had generated a lot of positive social media attention.

A suggestion had been made to pro-actively propose names of local people of significance to developers looking to name new streets and ideas were requested. It was also noted that historical documents relating to the Parish had been located at Eastergate Church and were to be brought to the Parish Council office to be archived.

12.3 Communications Working Party – Although James Roberts had stepped down from his post as a Parish Councillor, he continued to act as Chair to the communications working party in a voluntary capacity. It was noted that following the success of the monthly newsletter, the group had plans to introduce a printed version to increase community engagement.

13. Murrells Field Improvement Project

The Assistant Clerk (Planning) reported that the public information event to advise the local community of the upcoming works on Murrell's Field had been scheduled for Thursday 3rd July at 7.30pm. The preparation of information boards was underway, and a communications strategy had been put together. The Chair gave a brief summary of the history of Murrell's Field and mentioned that there would be an opportunity to complete other grounds maintenance works to hedgerows while there was reduced public access to the field area.

14. Bus Shelter Project

At the most recent meeting with WSCC, the funding for the six wooden bus shelters in the Barnham and Eastergate Parish had been confirmed. The locations for the bus shelters had been agreed with shelters to be installed on Fontwell roundabout East and West, Peckham Chase, Lion War Memorial and two shelters on Barnham Road near the Medical Centre. An installation date was to be confirmed.

15. Members allowance policy

The Chair explained that there had not previously been a formal policy in relation to members allowances and it was important that one was adopted. A discussion on the matter was held and it was **agreed** that co-opted members would receive the annual allowance payable pro rata and that any new members would have had to have attended at least two meetings and shown evidence of activity before being eligible to receive an allowance.

Resolved:

That the Members allowance policy be adopted

16. Outside Body Meetings – Updates

16.1 BEWAG Advisory Group

Chris Allington reported that he had attended the 6th May meeting with Chris Wells. It was reported:

- The application for the 500 homes north of Barnham Road had 'timed out' and the construction of the northern arc of the A29 realignment would not commence until a new application was made. However, construction on the roundabout to link the southern arc of the A29 realignment the Barnham Road would commence in winter 2025 part funded by a Coast to Capital grant. This would facilitate access to a new primary school along with 600 new homes, which had been planned on Church Commissioners land to the south of Barnham Road and would effectively create a huge cul-de-sac.
- On a positive note, the Chair referred members to the circulated paper which forecast S106 and CIL funding for investment in existing community infrastructure from the BEW Strategic Allocation's IDP (Investment Development Plan). Having worked so hard over many years to have this investment included continued vigilance is required to ensure that it is not materially diluted during ADC's S106 negotiations with housing developers.

17. Report by the Chair

The Chair had no further items to report that had not been covered during the meeting.

18. Report by the Interim Acting Clerk

The Interim Acting Clerk mentioned the following matters:

- A link with induction documents had been circulated to all Councillors.

- The Interim Acting Clerk reported that complaints regarding dangerous traffic on the Barnham Road had been received from members of the public who felt it impossible to cross the road safely. Steve Hills from WSCC Highways had agreed to join a working party which would meet for the first time in July 2025. Andrew Crawford had expressed his willingness to join the group, The Croft Medical Centre had also offered support. Ray Coggin, Rob Bates and John Robinson agreed to join the group.
- Nina McMaster, Interim Acting Clerk and Gemma Hindson, Assistant Clerk (Planning) had attended Clerks Networking Day at Billingshurst Community Centre.
- A mandatory Data Protection training course had been arranged for Tuesday 24th June at Barnham Community Hall.

19. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Council is scheduled to take place on 22nd July 2025. However, it was agreed that unless any formal decisions were required the meeting would be cancelled by Monday 14th July.

20. At this point the Chair closed the meeting to the public as it was RESOLVED that Pursuant to Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 because of the nature of the business to be transacted the public and press leave the meeting during consideration of all items within Part Two of the Meeting

21. Staff Management Panel Report

- 21.1** Following the distribution of the Staff Management report earlier in June with recommendations to review both Assistant Clerks pay rewards, subsequent questions were asked by one member. The chair responded to these and asked for the pay increases to be approved with effect from 1st May 2025.

Resolved:

That the approved pay increases be implemented by the Interim Acting Clerk as part of the payroll process commencing with the June salary payment but with effect from 1st May 2025.

- 21.2** The Chair gave an update on the recruitment of a new Clerk and stated that the application process was now closed and that the staff management panel would evaluate the candidates to assess progression to the next stage.

The Meeting Closed 9.22pm

Signed by:

Chair, Barnham and Eastergate Parish Council