



**BARNHAM AND EASTERGATE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 11th MARCH 2025 at BARNHAM COMMUNITY HALL**

Present: Chris Allington (Chair): David Phillips: Ray Coggin: Phil Cramp: Andrew Crawford:
Heather Kilroy: Simon Parkin: Andrea Rainger: James Roberts: John Robinson:
Sue Wallsgrove: Chris Wells: Penny Wycherley:

In attendance: Alison Crabb (Clerk): Gemma Hindson (Assistant Clerk, Planning): Nina McMaster
(Assistant Clerk, Community): Trevor Bence (County Councillor): PCSO Caroline
Wilson: 4 members of the public

The meeting was preceded by a presentation event for the retiring Clerk, Alison Crabb. Alison has worked for the Parish for the last 12 years (firstly as Clerk to Barnham Parish and since 2019 as the Clerk to the new Parish of Barnham and Eastergate). The Chair and all Cllrs together with the County Councillor, Trevor Bence, and the PCSO, Caroline Wilson took the opportunity to publicly thank her for all her work for the community of Barnham and Eastergate and wished her well in her retirement. The Parish is still looking for a replacement Clerk but has put in arrangements to enable the Council to continue to function whilst this process continues.

1. Open Public Session

A member of the public mentioned a potential scheme that the Parish Council would look into further in relation to the provision of litterpicking equipment for volunteers.

2. Apologies for absence

None

3. Declarations of Interest

None declared at this point in the meeting.

4. Resignation of Councillor

David Phillips had tendered his resignation as a Parish Councillor with immediate effect. The Chair and the Council thanked him for his tireless efforts over the last 20+ years. He will remain as a Trustees on BECT and will continue to support the Resilience Team efforts as a volunteer. A formal Notice of Vacancy will be published followed by an advert to seek the co-option of a new Councillor provided no by-election is called for.

5. County Councillor, District Councillor and PCSO Updates

County Councillor, Trevor Bence was present and following on from previous updates confirmed that the Historical data had now been logged and would shortly be available for the public to access on the Sussex Historical Environment Record. He also informed the Council that the plans to construct the primary school as part of the BEW Strategic site on the southern side of Barnham Road were being brought forward despite the A29 realignment route not being built – a cul-de-sac access road will be built solely for access to the school to start with.

Parking issues in Barnham had been raised, particularly by the residents of Rose Cottages and whilst it was agreed that a full Residents Parking Scheme would not gain support he did suggest the residents might consider making a TRO application for single yellow lines.

District Councillor, Sue Wallsgrove, mentioned that more details on devolution plans would become available on 19th March. One option is looking at Arun and Chichester Districts potentially with Adur/Worthing looking to form a Unitary. The current land supply figure is now 3.42 years which leaves the area susceptible to speculative development. However, it was good to note that our Neighbourhood Plan was still carrying a lot of weight. On this point it was agreed that the Clerk would write to Maureen Chaffe of Process Matters to get her views on a timetable for reviewing the current Plan.

PCSO Caroline Wilson was present and gave a brief update on current issues in the area. It was noted that the number of anti-social behaviour instances had reduced gradually over the last few months and it was hoped that this trend would continue. In response to whether yearly figures could be produced she said she would see what could be done. She also updated on the issue of e-scooters and how following an incident in Bognor Regis all officers have been informed that they cannot try and stop the vehicles whilst on the move they need to find where they are stopping and then they can intervene. In response to a question about car parked on double yellow lines by The Trading Post site a report to highways was made and the lines have now been remarked.

6. Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 21st January 2025

Resolved:

That the minutes of Barnham & Eastergate Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 21st January 2025 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting and be signed by the Chair of the Council.

7. Finance

- 7.1** The Clerk had circulated details of payments made since 21st January. All payments were **noted** with no issues raised.
- 7.2** The Clerk had circulated a summary of the latest financial position of the Council. No issues of concern were raised and the content was **noted**.
- 7.3** The appointment of Smithe & Co as the Council's internal auditor for 2024/25 accounts was **approved**
- 7.4** The appointment of Smithe & Co as the Council's payroll provider for 2025/26 was **approved**.

Resolved:

- 1. To note the payments made since 21st January**
- 2. To note the current financial position of the Council**
- 3. To approve the appointment of Smithe & Co as the Council's internal auditor for 2024/25**
- 4. To approve the appointment of Smithe & Co as the Council's payroll provider for 2025/26**

8. Planning & Environment Committee

The Vice-Chair of the Committee informed Council that a strong objection had been submitted to an application for 5-7 dwellings in Wandleys Lane citing several N Plan policies. The site is also not identified in our Neighbourhood Plan. However, the Committee also received a presentation on the proposals for 10 dwellings on another site in Wandleys Lane, which was included in our Neighbourhood Plan and the Committee were able to discuss their concerns and desires prior to an application being submitted.

At this point in the agenda the Chair took the opportunity to raise the issue of an item on the BEW Infrastructure Development Plan (IDP) going to ADC's Planning Policy Committee on 18th March, following email exchanges with District Cllr Stephen McAuliffe. The Council had previously written to ADC in 2023 giving detailed comments on the Plan at that time following discussions between the Chair and Karl Roberts and through the Chair's involvement in the now non-existent BEW Advisory Group. The Revised IDP being presented to the Committee does not account for these agreements. The details on the issues we have with the report will be sent to the presenting officer, David Easton. We have also raised the matter that the BEW Advisory Group has not met for 2-years so communication regarding the progress of the BEW Masterplan has been very poor. The Clerk was asked to send the letter from 2023 to the Chief Executive of ADC together with a view from this Council that they believe this is very poor governance and stakeholder engagement on the part of Arun District Council and request that she takes the matter up with the officers dealing with the detail of the Plan.

9. Community Facilities in the Parish

The Assistant Clerk (Community) reported both Halls continue as always to be busy with lots of events and bookings. First Aid Courses have taken place and more are planned, potentially also one for children which will be funded by the Trust. An application has been made to the Waste Prevention Fund to take forward projects with UK Harvest and others to fund a swap shop and a Friday Morning Kitchen. A Trustees meeting is scheduled to take place on 18th March to look at a list of projects and programmes for the Trustees to discuss and prioritise.

10. Working Party Updates

10.1 Community Resilience – David Phillips having now resigned as a Councillor did agree he would continue to support and be involved with the Resilience Team and the work he had planned. He is looking to talk to West Sussex Fire & Rescue over potential courses for young people as part of the project funding in the Council's budget. WSCC Emergency Team discussions taking place for them to undertake a desk top exercise with Hall staff.

10.2 People, Places, Spaces – Penny Wycherley reported the very positive responses and compliments that had been forthcoming for the planting projects across the Parish. The team had also received offers of more donations of plants from local nurseries. The Green Angels had started to all become more proactive. The Village Garden plans will continue when tree works have been undertaken. Local people and street names – it was proposed that the Clerk write to ADC to ask that we be given the opportunity through the Planning process to ensure that we can get some local people recognised through having streets named after them. Andrew Crawford reported continued successful litterpicking events and new innovations were being looked at which he would report on further to a future meeting.

10.3 Communications Working Party – James Roberts updated the Council on the plans for the Annual Parish Assembly – which this year has been renamed Community Connect Event. It was noted that the Chair's Annual Statement and approval of minutes would be incorporated into the event at the appropriate time with copies of both documents being made available at the event. The latest monthly newsletter had been produced and included interviews with a volunteer and a councillor which it was agreed were a great addition. James also reported that a professional photographer had been engaged to produce photos for use in the newsletter and other communications.

11. Murrells Field Improvement Project

The Assistant Clerk (Planning) reported that the tender process had now been undertaken with two tenders having been received but had not yet been evaluated. She sought the approval of the Council to delegate the evaluation process and other requirements to move to award of contract to the Chair and the Assistant Clerk (Planning). The Council gave unanimous approval to the request.

Resolved:

That the Chair and Assistant Clerk (Planning) be given delegated authority to undertake the evaluation of the tenders received for the Murrells Field Improvement Project and to undertake any other requirements (including public consultation) prior to awarding the contract.

12. Eastergate Pavilion Project – Further funding request

The Assistant Clerk (Planning) reported that pre-planning work and design had been undertaken together with consultation with the current users and Aldingbourne Parish Council. The next stage would be to look to finalise designs and submit a planning application and therefore approval was sought for a further funding request of £10,000 to enable this work to progress. As previously the funding would be taken from current CIL funds. The Chair commented that he believed that the Council should get Planning permission in place so that at the appropriate time that funding becomes available to progress the project the permission will be in place. The Council supported that view and **approved** the further funding request.

Resolved:

That a budget figure of £10k CIL funding be allocated to progress to planning application submission for the replacement of Eastergate Pavilion project.

13. Proposal to move the location of the Bus Stop in the Centre of Barnham

Penny Wycherley had been trying to engage with WSCC Highways to look at moving the current 500 route bus stop located near Tesco Express to a different location in the village centre (the layby outside DAU Components). A report presented to the Council explained that the only route to those discussions taking place is to submit a formal Community Highways Application to WSCC. If successful the scheme would be funded by WSCC potentially with the Council funding a bus shelter if possible. The Council gave their **approval** and Penny Wycherley had already drafted the application so will now look to complete and submit the documentation.

Resolved:

That the Council submit an application to WSCC for a Community Highways Scheme to move the current bus stop for the 500 bus route from Tesco Express to outside DAU Components in the centre of Barnham.

14. Outside Body Meetings Updates

14.1 Bus Shelter Working Party – The Clerk reported that she was still awaiting a quote for the installation of the 10 shelters along the route. Slight delays been caused as awaiting Yapton and Oving Parish Councils to meet with Landbuild representatives on site (the only company that are willing to consider the project which WSCC have confirmed is not an issue as we approached 3 companies). The Clerk hoped to have a quote by the end of the month.

14.2 ADALC – The minutes of the last meeting had been circulated and noted.

15. Annual Parish Assembly – 8th April

As already mentioned under the Communications Working Party update plans were well underway for what is now going to be called 'Community Connect' event with lots of local organisations booked to have exhibition stands and plans were in place to produce and distribute a flyer for the event to encourage attendance.

16. Report by Chair of the Council

The Chair had no further items to raise that had not already been discussed during the meeting.

17. Report by the Clerk

As this was the last report by the current Clerk she took the opportunity to list a few of the issues she has been dealing with since the last meeting to give a flavour of what comes into the Clerk's email box. Most of the time the Council is not required to be made aware of all the matters as a lot of them involve signposting or passing to other authorities.

18. Date of Next Parish Council Meeting

Tuesday 6th May 2025. This will be the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council and whilst open to the public to attend there will be no Open Public Session for the public to raise issues but they can attend to observe.

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

19. Staff Matters

19.1 The Chair reported that the Staff Management Panel had considered the recommendation of the current Clerk that the annual increments be awarded to the two Assistant Clerks as per their contracts from 1st April 2025. The Annual Appraisal process had not been undertaken as it was felt this should be undertaken by the new Clerk (once appointed)

19.2 Appointment of Interim Responsible Financial Officer – due to several unsuccessful attempts to recruit a new Clerk the current Clerk has agreed to take on the role of RFO for a period of 3 months to enable the various financial annual returns to be made and to handle all financial matters for the Council in the hopes that a new Clerk can be recruited.

19.3 Further Recruitment cycle and interim Clerk arrangements – a proposal to engage WSALC (the Council's professional support body) to undertake a further round of recruitment was approved and in the meantime the Assistant Clerks would take on the Clerk responsibilities (excluding financial matters) with the support of an outside contractor to provide some administrative support. It was noted that the current Clerk would continue to offer support where necessary as part of her continued role as RFO.

Resolved:

- 1. That the Assistant Clerks (Planning and Community) be awarded their annual increments as per their contracts from 1st April 2025**
- 2. That the Council appoint Alison Crabb as the Interim Responsible Financial Officer until end of June 2025.**
- 3. That the Council look to employ, on a contract basis, administrative support for the two Assistant Clerks in respect of the Clerk's responsibilities that will require covering until a new Clerk is appointed.**

The meeting closed at 9.30 p.m.

Signed by:
Chair, Barnham and Eastergate Parish Council