

# **Minutes of the Meeting of Eynsford Parish Council held on Thursday 26 March 2026, at the Parish Office, Priory Lane, Eynsford, at 7.30pm.**

## **9425 Present**

### Members Present

Mr M Barker, Mr A Cooke, Mrs F Haxby, Mr D Naylor, Mr V Robson and Mr O Young.

### Others Present

Three members of the public.

### Clerk in Attendance

Locum Clerk, Helen Penney.

## **9426 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Mr M Logen and Mrs H Sim.

Cllr Naylor advised that he would be making an audio recording of the meeting.

## **9427 CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS**

Cllr Robson welcomed Cllr Haxby, who has recently co-opted to Eynsford Parish Council (EPC), and thanked Helen Penney for providing locum clerk cover following the rescheduling of the meeting. Cllr Robson also noted the recent passing of Gwyn Griffiths, adding that this is an incredibly sad time for the village, and extended condolences to Gwyn's family.

Cllr Robson read out the following statement:

*"I would like to remind everyone that we will be sticking to the Agenda and not moving away from the items as described. We will not tolerate any personal attacks, insults, or divisive behaviour. If any of this should occur the guilty party will be asked to leave the meeting immediately. May I remind you that failure to leave is a criminal offence and we will ask the police to intervene".*

## 9428 CLERK'S COMMENTS

The Clerk reported that EPC were sad to have received Jim Griffiths' resignation from the parish council earlier this month. The vacancy has been advertised by Sevenoaks District Council as required. If no election is called (deadline 25 March) the EPC will be able to co-opt a new member.

## 9429 GOVERNANCE

### a) Declarations of Interest.

Cllr Naylor declared an interest for agenda items 9428 i, j, k and l as he is a local land owner.

### b) Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the last full council meetings held on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2026, 19<sup>th</sup> February 2026 and the EGMs held on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2026 and 13<sup>th</sup> March 2026 were presented for approval.

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes are accepted as a true and complete record and that the recommendations are approved.

### c) Finance Notes

Councillors were asked to approve the finance notes & schedule of payments for the January and February month-ends.

**RESOLVED:** That the accounts and payment schedule are approved.

### d) Outstanding Actions

Councillors were asked to provide updates on the outstanding actions spreadsheet.

There was nothing to report.

**RESOLVED:** That the information is noted.

### e) Bank Signatory

Following Mrs Laird's resignation, Members were asked to volunteer to be a bank signatory, to approve payments as required.

Cllr Young expressed an interest in undertaking the role. However, he requested further clarification on the process and confirmed he would discuss this with the Clerk upon her return.

**ACTION:** Clerk to provide further information to Cllr Young.

#### f) Data Retention Policy

Councillors discussed the updated Data Retention Policy and raised several questions before approval could be given. The Locum Clerk suggested that questions be submitted to the Clerk prior to the next meeting.

**ACTION:** Members to submit any queries to the Clerk for the policy to be approved next month.

#### g) Assertion 10 Update

Members noted the update.

Cllr Haxby queried whether AI should be included. The Locum Clerk advised that AI does not currently form part of Assertion 10, which is a new requirement for the end-of-year audit.

**ACTION:** Cllr Haxby to discuss AI with the Clerk and consider any impact on EPC.

#### h) Neighbourhood Plan Update

Cllr Barker reported:

- That he had recently been nominated as Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.
- The Local Green Spaces consultation closed that evening, adding that members of the Steering Group had held an engagement session at “The Space” and had visited the train station twice to discuss it with commuters. The results from the consultation will be analysed and feed into the Local Green Spaces part of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- The consultant has been sent the draft Neighbourhood Plan with the intention to share with the Parish Council soon.

Cllr Naylor queried the advertised closing date of the consultation. Cllr Barker confirmed there had been no extension and was happy to be corrected to 22 March 2026.

Cllr Naylor also asked if the Steering Group had attended the station for commuters returning to Eynsford on the 19:11 train. Cllr Barker advised that they had not.

**RESOLVED:** The information was noted.

#### i) Neighbourhood Plan Transparency

Cllr Robson read the following statement for Members to approve:

*“The council agrees that the degree of transparency of the Neighbourhood Plan steering group achieves the standard required by Eynsford Parish Council, including the frequency and accessibility of public meetings and the standard of minutes provided.”*

Cllr Barker added that the new Terms of Reference, standard of minutes and information on EPCs website meet the standard required by EPC and SDC.

Cllr Naylor proposed an amendment to clarify that the statement applies from this point forwards:

*“The council agrees that the degree of transparency of the Neighbourhood Plan steering group **will** achieves the standard required by Eynsford Parish Council, including the frequency and accessibility of public meetings and the standard of minutes provided.”*

Cllr Naylor also queried how the working groups will work moving forwards.

**RESOLVED:** Members approved the amended statement.

**ACTION:** Cllr Barker to report on how the working groups will operate going forward.

#### k) Local Green Space Process

Cllr Robson read the following statement, which Members were asked to approve:

*“Eynsford Parish Council agrees that the Local Green Space process has been followed appropriately and that a formal green spaces audit is not required due to the evidence accrued from the public questionnaire and the local knowledge of members of the steering group.”*

Cllr Barker added that a formal green spaces audit would only be required if there was insufficient evidence from the survey and Steering Group members - which has not been deemed necessary in this instance, and is following advice from the consultants. Cllr Barker noted that the results are based on the quality of responses rather than quantity and a similar approach to SDCs Local Plan data analysis.

Cllr Naylor disagreed and stated that there are fundamental issues with the data analysis of the initial householder survey. Cllr Naylor requested a recorded vote for this agenda item.

**RESOLVED:** The statement was approved.

For – four votes

Against – one vote

Abstained – one vote

#### l) Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Members were asked to approve Mr Barker for the role of Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

**RESOLVED:** Cllr Barker was approved as Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

#### m) Neighbourhood Plan Design Code

Members were asked to consider funding a Design Code for the Neighbourhood Plan, which would set out the parish's preferences regarding the design, character, types of development and local/community infrastructure. The document would be used by EPC, the local authority, developers and other stakeholders. The cost quoted is £5265.00 + VAT.

Members discussed Design Codes and agreed to the work in principle, subject to funding, Steering Group involvement and further information being provided on the process, including how the work will be undertaken and how and when the public will be consulted.

**ACTION:** Sources of funding to be identified, detail on the process, and benefits of the work set out before being approved by EPC.

#### n) Village Hall Update

Cllr Cooke advised Members that most of the design work for the new hall has been completed. The stage lighting still outstanding. The contractor is assembling packages and costs are expected within the next few weeks, at which point any funding gaps in the budget will be identified. It is anticipated that construction of the new hall will begin in May. The sale of the existing hall is ongoing and the Charity Commission is in regular contact.

Cllr Haxby asked if the closing date of the old hall would be pushed back. Cllr Cooke was not able to confirm however it could be discussed with the developer.

**RESOLVED:** Members noted the information.

**ACTION:** Cllr Cooke to check if the closure date of the existing hall can be delayed.

#### o) Fee for Harrow Meadow Entrance

Cllr Cooke reported that a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO), costing £3,125, is required to remove the double yellow lines that are currently over the entrance to the new village hall car park and, that there are sufficient funds in the Harrow Meadow fund to cover costs.

The locum Clerk noted that the TRO could cover any other double yellow line work required elsewhere in the parish, potentially avoiding the need for a second order in the near future.

**RESOLVED:** The TRO is approved and paid from the Harrow Meadow Car Park fund.

#### p) Legal Property Case

Cllr Naylor advised Members of a legal case in which a Parish Council is being sued by a local business/landowner, who allege that the Council acted in bad faith and prevented them from operating. Cllr Naylor added that Parish Councillors can potentially be held personally liable for

damages. A question was raised by Cllr Robson to Cllr Naylor regarding potential legal action. Cllr Naylor did not directly respond to the question but stated concerns about alleged misinformation circulating locally and affecting his reputation. Mr Naylor stated that he may consider legal action against some councillors.

**RESOLVED:** Members noted the information.

#### q) Annual Parish Meeting

Members were asked to discuss a change of date for the Annual Parish Meeting to w/c 25 May, noting the availability of the Clerk and Assistant Clerk.

**RESOLVED:** That the meeting is moved to Friday 29 May 2026.

**ACTION:** 1) The Clerk and Deputy Clerk organise the event.

2) Councillors run the event, as neither member of staff can attend on the 29 May.

At this point. 8.45pm, the meeting was opened up to questions from member of the public (see Appendix Q). The meeting resumed at 9.00pm.

## **9430 PLANNING**

#### a) Report of the Last Planning Committee Meeting.

Councillors were asked to approve the reports of the Planning Committee meeting held on 2 March 2026.

**RESOLVED:** That the report is approved.

#### b) Notifications of Planning Consents/Refusals

25/03138/HOUSE – 10 St Martins Drive, Eynsford – GRANTED

26/00224/HOUSE – 9 Priory Fields, Eynsford - GRANTED

## **9431 HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORTATION**

#### a) Grant for A225 Footpath

Members noted that a grant of £10,000 has been awarded by Southeastern towards the new footpath project on the A225. The Clerk has accepted the grant on behalf of the Council and the funds are expected to be received shortly. Kent Highways have confirmed that the project will proceed this year.

Members expressed their thanks to the Clerk for her work in securing the grant and also thanked Cllr Robson for his support.

**RESOLVED:** The information is noted.

## **9432 COMMUNITY**

### a) Report of the Last Community Committee Meeting.

Councillors were asked to approve the report of the Community Committee meeting held on 2 March 2026.

**RESOLVED:** That the report is approved.

### b) Police/Crime Report

Cllr Robson read out the crime report from January 2026:

<i>1x ASB</i>	<i>Crockenhill Lane</i>
<i>1x criminal damage &amp; arson</i>	<i>Lullingstone Lane</i>
<i>3x vehicle crime</i>	<i>Eynsford car park, Station Road and Birch Close</i>
<i>2x other</i>	<i>Theft and parking in Lullingstone</i>

The Clerk added that on Saturday 21 March 2026, a number of horseboxes were parked on double yellow lines and horses reported on Riverside.

**For information only.**

### c) Donation Eynsford in Bloom

Members discussed a donation to Eynsford in Bloom for their costs for the past year and who have shown evidence of costs of £1385.40 so far. There is a budget of £1500 for a donation to this group.

**RESOLVED:** To donate £1,385.40.

### d) Family Fun Day

Members noted that EPC we were unable to secure a slot for a Family Fun Day this year from Sevenoaks District Council, but are on the waiting list should another parish drop out.

**For information only.**

## 9433 OPEN SPACES

### a) Use of Common Meadow

Members discussed an application to use Common Meadow for Eynstock, a local music festival, on 31 August 2026.

**RESOLVED:** That Common Meadow can be used to host Eynstock on 31 August 2026 as per the application.

### b) Ground Maintenance Contracts

Members considered the quotes received for the grounds maintenance contracts for 2026/27.

**RESOLVED:** The contract A (Amenity Areas) and contract C (Harrow Meadow) are awarded to GF Garden Maintenance.

### c) Changing Room Refurbishment

Members noted that the refurbishment of the changing rooms is due start in May 2026 and, that there may be some cost increases and additional budget required due to the delay of one year.

**FOR INFORMATION ONLY**

### d) Common Meadow Fencing

Members discussed the quotes and agreed to defer the matter to a later date so that additional quotes can be obtained.

**RESOLVED:** to defer the item to obtain more quotes.

### e) Fertilizer for Harrow Meadow

Members agreed to the purchase of fertilizer for the football pitch.

**ACTION:** The Clerk organises for the work to take place.

## 9434 FACILITIES & ENVIRONMENT

### a) Tree Survey

Members reviewed the outstanding items on the Tree Survey.

**ACTION:** Cllr Barker and the Tree Warden to inspect all work listed in the survey and report back to EPC, confirming whether they can undertake the required works or if a contractor is required.

The meeting ended at 9.03pm

Signed, Chairman, 16<sup>th</sup> April 2026

## Appendix Q

### **Questions from Members of the Public heard on 26 March 2026 at 8.45pm.**

Two members of the public attended to observe the meeting.

A third member of the public raised the following questions:

1. Outstanding repairs to the noticeboard at the school entrance:

Members advised that quotes are being obtained.

2. A post in the pavement near the school entrance has been knocked over, creating a potential trip hazard:

Members confirmed the issue would be reported again to Kent Highways.

**ACTION:** to report the missing posts.

3. Three posts at the war memorial need to be replaced:

Cllr Cooke confirmed that EPC is obtaining quotes for their replacement.

Public questions closed at 9.00pm.