

# **Minutes of the Meeting of Eynsford Parish Council held on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> September 2025, at the Parish Office, Priory Lane, Eynsford, at 7.30pm.**

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## **9355 PRESENT**

### Members Present

Mrs J Laird, Mr D Naylor, Mr V Robson, Mrs H Sim

### Others Present

None

### Clerk in Attendance

Mrs H Ivaldi

## **9356 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Mr M Barker, Mr Cooke, Mr Griffiths, Mr Young, Mr Logen (County Councillor), PC Wilson

## **9357 CHAIR'S REMARKS**

Mr Robson noted that the new draft Local Plan was being prepared for consultation and that a list of sites for development had been published. Mr Robson noted that the Development and Conservation Advisory Committee was now called the Development and Infrastructure Advisory Committee. Mr Robson noted that Pedham Place was included in the proposal as well as a new Stadium in Crockenhill. Mr Robson said that the council needs to work together to engage the public and to signpost the best ways they can provide their views both through the consultation and by attending important meetings.

## **9358 CLERK'S COMMENTS**

None.

## 9359 GOVERNANCE

### a) Declarations of Interest

None.

### b) Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the last full council meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2025 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

The clerk submitted a list of accounts, and a budget report, for July and August 2025 along with the most recent schedule of payments.

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

### d) Outstanding Actions

Councillors were asked to provide updates on the outstanding actions spreadsheet. No updates were given.

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

### e) Budget Review

Councillors were asked to approve proposed changes to the council's budget for 2025/26.

**RESOLVED:** That the following changes are made:

Bank Interest: increase from £400 to £500.

Castlefield Car Park Income: decrease from £2640 to £2525

Grant Income: decrease from £7392.64 to £4000

Photocopying/Misc Income: decrease from £2000 to £1500

Allotments Expense: decrease from £1750 to £1400

Annual Parish Meeting: decrease from £300 to £200

Clerks: decrease from £46,000 to £42,000

Common Meadow Grounds Maintenance: decrease from £1500 to £1000

Community Rail Partnership: increase from £100 to £150

General Reserves: decrease from £7337.8 to £6730.16

Grounds Maintenance General: decrease from £1200 to £1000

Harrow Meadow Changing Rooms Refurbishment Rolling Fun: decrease from £19200 to £17000

Harrow Meadow Football Pitch Maintenance: increase from £5800 to £6600

Insurance: increase from £1200 to £1750

Street Lighting Energy: increase from £4000 to £4900

Street Light Replacement Rolling Fund: increase from £21000 to £23000

Summer Play Session: decrease from £750 to £500

#### f) Assertion 10 and GDPR Compliance

Councillors were informed that a new assertion had been introduced into the Annual Governance and Accounting Review for local councils for 2025/26. This requires councils to positively declare that they have complied with GDPR and have relevant policies and procedures in place including data management, IT policy and suchlike. The Clerk provided more detail and examples of what would be required.

**RESOLVED:** That the council supports and carries out the following actions:

- Review all the data the councils holds and processes and carry out data risk assessments
- Review and update data retention policy
- Review and update GDPR and IT Policies
- Research and action Web Accessibility Guidelines
- Research the FOI/Transparency Code and what is required
- Councillors/staff to access additional training if required.

#### g) New Phone Contract

The Clerk reported that due to the expiry of the previous phone and broadband contract, she had arranged a new contract on a business basis. The new line is VOIP line (which will be introduced throughout the UK from 2026). The agreed contract is £18.45 + VAT for the first 6 months and then £36.95 + VAT for the following 18 months. This includes retaining the council's landline number, all calls and broadband. Additional set up costs were £85.20.

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

#### h) Insurance

Councillors were asked to approve payment of an additional premium on the council's insurance to include the 77 streetlight columns owned by the council. The Clerk had reviewed the other assets listed in the insurance schedule too which had a small effect on the final cost.

**RESOLVED:** That the streetlights are insured and that the additional premium of £604.17 is paid.

#### i) Local Government Pay Agreement 2025/26

Councillors were informed that the national Joint Council for Local Government Services had reached an agreement on pay rates applicable from 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026. Employers are encouraged to implement and back date this pay award as soon as possible.

The Clerk explained that the new pay rates are less than £1 an hour more and will mean an approximate increase in costs to the council of approximately £850 for the current financial year. This is within the current budget.

**RESOLVED:** That the new pay scales are implemented.

#### j) Neighbourhood Plan Update

Mrs Sim said that specialists were now analysing the data from the Household Questionnaires and the results would be reported at the Neighbourhood Plan meeting tomorrow. In response to a question about percentages, Mrs Sim said that the consultant would clarify the statistics and that they and Sevenoaks District Council were happy with the progress and process to far.

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

#### k) Village Hall Update

Mr Cooke had provided a written report as follows:

- The village hall trustees have agreed to accept an offer on the existing hall site for a figure of £780K less commission and vat. The developer has agreed in principle for a completion date February 2026 to coincide with the commencement of new hall site works.
- A meeting was held with Harpers Construction Services on 9th September to discuss the way forward.
- A contract is being drawn up appointing Harpers to carry out Stage 1 design. This will take about 20 weeks during which time packages of work will be priced so a more accurate tender figure will be known.
- As we do not have all the funding in place, it has been decided to carry out the construction in two phases. Phase 1 will be to build the shell and Phase 2 is construct the fit out. The split in the two phases will be determined once all the prices are returned and what the funding gap may be.
- There is a shortfall in the current funds to complete the shell works. It may be that the trustees approach the parish council for a Public Works Loan in order to bridge this funding gap.
- Trustees are keen to launch a publicity campaign sending out the message that construction work will start Feb/March 2026

- Trustees are still to comment on the draft lease agreement

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

#### l) Parish Council Website

Councillors were asked to discuss a proposal to make the parish council website more dynamic and useful to residents, for example having information about local events and businesses, with local people being able to submit information. There was a discussion about how this might be managed. It was also noted that the website must meet transparency, accessibility and GDPR requirements.

**RESOLVED:** That Mr Robson and Mrs Ivaldi work together to put together a proposal and obtain quotes for the work to be brought back to a future meeting.

#### m) IT Support for Eynsford Parish Council

Councillors discussed the possibility of procuring reliable, secure and cost-effective IT support for the parish council. This would enable both staff and councillors to access help and advice.

**RESOLVED:** That Mr Naylor assists in creating the terms of reference for the IT support required. That Mr Robson and Mrs Sim work together to approach suitable suppliers and to obtain quotes. That information gathered is brought to a future meeting for consideration.

#### n) Bank Account Signatories

Councillors were asked to approve Mrs Tunbridge (Assistant Clerk) as an additional bank signatory, and to add another councillor to the mandate.

**RESOLVED:** That Mrs Tunbridge is added as a bank signatory. That this item is brought to another meeting when more councillors are present to add another councillor.

#### o) Water Bill

The Clerk had noted that the water bill for the parish office was higher than expected for July. The Clerk suggested that this may be because this included the supply to the allotments and it had been a particularly hot and dry season, and a new trough had been added. It was noted that a meter linked to the allotment supply was located in the parish office but was not normally read separately.

**RESOLVED:** That the Clerks monitor the allotment usage in future using the separate meter and report any significant changes to the council as appropriate.

## 9360 PLANNING

### a) Report of the last Planning Committee meeting

Councillors were asked to approve the reports of the Planning Committee meetings held on 4<sup>th</sup> August and 1<sup>st</sup> September 2025.

**RESOLVED:** That the report from 4<sup>th</sup> August 2025 is approved, but that the report from 1<sup>st</sup> September is not approved and will be brought back to the next meeting for approval.

### b) Notifications of Planning Consents/Refusals

The following information had been received since the last meeting:

25/02110/CONVAR – Home Farm House, Riverside, Eynsford – GRANTED

25/01923/LBCALT – Home Farm House, Riverside, Eynsford – GRANTED

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

### c) Tree Preservation Order – Mallards, High Street, Eynsford

Councillors were informed that Sevenoaks District Council had made a new Tree Preservation Order (no, 2 2025) on a mature sycamore tree in the rear garden of Mallards, High Street, Eynsford.

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

### d) Tree Work Application 25/02153/WTCA – 5-6 Gibsons Place, Eynsford

Notification of an application to reduce the height of a Maple tree by 50% and cut back the sides to no greater than 1.5m had been received. Following consultation with the Tree Warden the Clerk had submitted a response of No Objections.

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

### e) Tree Work Application 25/02389/WTCA – Boyne House, High Street, Eynsford

Notification of an application for various works to trees had been received. Following consultation with the Tree Warden the Clerk had submitted a response of No Objections.

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

### f) Tree Work Application 25/02603/WTCA – Darenth Cottage, Lullingstone Lane, Eynsford

Notification of an application to cut back and reduce the height of a holme oak, and to reduce the height and spread and to remove deadwood from a mulberry had been received. The Clerk had sought a response from the Tree Warden.

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

## 9361 HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORTATION

### a) Streetlight Replacement Costs

Councillors were presented with the final costs for the replacement of four columns in Eynsford as agreed at the last full council meeting. The total cost will be £22,288 including the costs of the contractor and UKPN. Councillors were asked to approve these costs.

**RESOLVED:** That the costs of the work are approved as they are required for safety reasons. That the Clerk asks the contractor about measures to protect wildlife from light pollution.

### b) Darent Valley Community Rail Partnership

Councillors were asked to approve an increased annual contribution of £150 (previously £100) towards the partnership programme.

**RESOLVED:** That an increased contribution of £150 is approved.

## 9362 COMMUNITY

### a) Report of the last Community Committee meeting

Councillors were asked to approve the reports of the Community Committee meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> August and 1<sup>st</sup> September 2025.

**RESOLVED:** That the reports are approved.

### b) Police/Crime Report

The Clerk provided crime information from July 2025. Twenty five crimes had been reported as follows:

Parkgate Road, Lullingstone	2 x Violence and sexual offences
Lullingstone Lane	1 x Violence and sexual offence
Lullingstone Castle car park	1 x Theft
Lullingstone Park	2 x Violence and sexual offences 1 x Theft 1 x Public Order offence
Crockenhill Lane	1 x Anti Social Behaviour
Old Mill Close	1 x Criminal Damage and Arson
Mill Lane	3 x Vehicle crime
Parsonage Bank	1 x Anti-social behaviour

Eynsford Car Park	1 x Anti-social behaviour
Riverside	1 x Anti-social behaviour
Plough Car Park	4 x Anti-social behaviour 1 x Public Order offence
Saddlers Park	2 x Violence and sexual offences 1 x Anti-social behaviour 1 x Criminal damage and arson.

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

c) Revised Wording for Lucy Box

Councillors were asked to review suggested alternative wording for the Lucy Box sign provided by Dr Pittman giving more accurate information about the box.

**RESOLVED:** That councillors were very grateful to Dr Pittman for providing the updated information. However, it was thought to be a little long and Mrs Ivaldi and Mrs Laird would suggest some minor edits and check these with Dr Pittman.

d) Remembrance Sunday

Councillors were asked to decide on what wreath to purchase and to discuss who will lay the wreath.

**RESOLVED:** That quotes are sought for a green wreath with new 'poppies'. That Mr Cooke is asked to lay the wreath.

## **9363 OPEN SPACES**

a) Report of the last Open Spaces Committee meeting

Councillors were asked to approve the report of the Open Spaces Committee meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2025.

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

b) Bylaws and Signage

Councillors were asked to agree whether or not to change the bylaws in light of the research carried out by Mrs Laird and also to discuss the wording of new signage for Riverside and whether this could also be used on Common Meadow and Harrow Meadow.

**RESOLVED:** That bylaws are not changed. That the existing bylaws and noticeboards are cleaned/refreshed. That Mrs Laird, Mrs Ivaldi and Mr Young work on the wording for new signage and bring back a proposal to the committee meeting.

c) Community Asset Transfer – Saddlers Park Green

Councillors were informed that the council's application to take on responsibility for Saddlers Park Green had passed the first stage. A detailed form and business plan are now required to progress this further with a deadline of 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2025.

**RESOLVED:** That Mrs Ivaldi completes and submits the form and requests assistance from councillors if required.

d) Grant for Equipment for the Football Pitch

Councillors were informed that the application to the Football Foundation for funds to purchase a piece of multi-use equipment for maintaining the pitch had been successful. A grant of up to £2,290 had been awarded which can be claimed on submission of invoices and other documents. This will fund 74.84% of the project and the parish council's contribution will be £770.

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

## **9364 FACILITIES & ENVIRONMENT**

a) Report of the last Facilities & Environment Committee meeting

Councillors were asked to approve the report of the Facilities & Environment Committee meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2025.

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

b) Trees at Harrow Meadow

Councillors were asked to agree to get quotes to remove sycamore saplings adjacent to the children's play area and to cut back trees overhanging the changing rooms.

**RESOLVED:** That quotes are sought for the above works.

c) Percy Pilcher Memorial

Councillors were informed that the Clerk had received correspondence from members of the public unable to access the Percy Pilcher Memorial at Upper Austin Lodge due to overgrown vegetation. A letter had been written to the landowner asking about maintenance of the memorial site. A response had been received before the meeting stating that the landowner believed the

maintenance would be undertaken by the Percy Pilcher Society. Due to further research carried out, the Clerk was able to tell councillors that there was no such thing as the Percy Pilcher Society and there must have been some confusion about this.

**RESOLVED:** That the Clerk writes back to the landowner explaining that there is no Percy Pilcher Society and asking if they have any documentation from when they bought the property.

The meeting ended at 9.35pm

Chairperson: 16<sup>th</sup> October 2025