

BENHALL & STERNFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Benhall & Sternfield Parish Council, Annual General Meeting,
held on Wednesday 17th May 2023 in
Benhall Ex-Servicemen's Club.

Present:– Cllr Hilary Graham, Cllr Chris Durrant, Cllr David Secret, Cllr Sue Nicholson, Cllr Alan Woods, Cllr John Slade, Cllr Archie Bhatia & Cllr Beverley Barclay

In Attendance: 10 members of the public, the Responsible Finance Officer, ESC Tom Daley and the Clerk.

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN & VICE-CHAIRMAN

Cllr Secret proposed Dr Hilary Graham to continue as Chairman, seconded Cllr Nicholson, all agreed. The Chairman is happy to continue.

Cllr Nicholson proposed Riven Brace to continue as Vice-Chairman, seconded Cllr Secret, all agreed. The Vice-Chairman is happy to continue. Declaration forms were completed and signed by the Chairman, to be signed by the Vice-Chairman.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE. Cllr Riven Brace – personal reasons. Cllr Chris Durrant – personal reasons
SCC Cllr Andrew Reid. The Parish Council approved the councillor absence.

3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS.

a. To declare any interests in items on the agenda. None.

b. To remind Councillors to review their Register of Interests (to be done annually). Councillors to do so online.

4. TO CO-OPT A NEW MEMBER ONTO BENHALL & STERNFIELD PARISH COUNCIL.

Deborah Dann informed that she would like to be considered to be co-opted on the Parish Council. All agreed to co-opt her as a Parish Councillor, proposed Cllr Bhatia seconded Cllr Nicholson.

5. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 22ND MARCH 2023 - To consider the approval

The minutes were approved correct by the PC and signed by the Chairman, proposed Cllr Slade seconded Cllr Woods.

6. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES AND ACTION POINTS.

A/P 1.11a Concrete blocks in Red Lane. The Chairman reported that these have now been removed by the landowner.

Cllr Bhatia informed that she has now completed the health & safety risk assessment for the Cemetery.

OPEN FORUM

Member of the public raised the issue of the proposed direct cycling route from Benhall/Sternfield to Saxmundham. This is now most relevant with the proposed new developments and the increase in population. It is becoming increasingly difficult and dangerous to cycle from A to B along the main road (Benhall Layers). Safer cycling is needed, suggest a cycle/walkway could be made the other side of the hedge along the main road. ESC has recently adopted a cycle walking strategy, she would like the Parish Council to keep “the safe route” alive.

Cllr Nicholson agrees in principle and along with Cllr Secret will take a look back at the proposals which the PC had originally sent to the district council regarding the proposed cycle route. Will go back to ESC in a months time when the new ESC administration team is formed. Member of the public would like to be involved with any proposals and suggests involving Saxmundham town council also.

Cllr Barclay suggests that a sign could be placed at the exit from the Club carpark onto School Lane, warning vehicles to be aware of cyclists, as she reported it is dangerous for cyclists when going past the club. The Chairman asked for her to do some research into this and bring suggestions to the next meeting.

Member of the public reported that a bollard has been knocked down at the junction on the A12 into Benhall, she will report this on the SCC highways website.

7. ELECTION OF REPRESENTATIVES to represent the Parish Council

Finance – The Chairman, Vice Chairman & Responsible Finance Officer Carol Durrant.

Planning - Cllr Nicholson, Cllr Secret the Chairman & Vice Chairman

The Wadd – Cllr Brace.

Village Green & Play Area – Cllr Durrant.

Trees – Cllr Brace.

Cemetery – Cllr Bhatia

Chairmans initials.....

Benhall Club – Cllr Slade

Social Media – Jo Pemberton

Website – Cllrs Durrant

Emergency Planning – Cllr Dann

Defibrillator – Jo Pemberton

Newsletter – Cllr Nicholson, Chairman & Mrs Pauline Graham.

Police Liason – Cllr Durrant

The above representatives were proposed by Cllr Slade, seconded Cllr Secret.

SALC representation removed.

Sternfield Town Lands Charity – Cllr Secret reported that there is no need to elect this year as it is done every 4 years, currently Mr Pat Robbins.

8. FINANCE a. Statement of Accounts. Bank balances as at 12th May 2023, HSBC £2,696.22, Ipswich Building Society £24,629.26. The RFO explained the money in and out. Cllr Woods signed the bank reconciliation.

Spend against budget - very few payments/receipts have occurred.

CILS - PC received an unexpected CILS payment of £435.56, work relating to barns in Benhall Low Street. The CILS holding is now £6,506.08. The first deadline to spend some of this is 16th October 2025.

b. Report from the Internal Auditor Ray Kay. The end of year audit report has been received.

Ray Kay (practising Chartered Account & Chair of Shottisham Parish Council) carried out the audit for the PC this year, report is on the parish website. He was very complimentary about the standard of our accounts, did not find any errors and had no observations or recommendations. He did point out two minor points:-

That the PC should formally appoint the Data Processing Officer at each AGM (this is on the agenda for later in this meeting)
There are some printing errors in the minutes of the AGM in March 2022, which means that some lines are illegible. Technically, we do not have an accurate record of our AGM. Those on the website are fine, but the paper record needs to be reprinted and initialled by the Chair.

c. Approval of End of Year Accounts 2022 – 2023.

Annual Governance Statement has been circulated to all in advance of the meeting. Approved by all, proposed Cllr Secret seconded Cllr Nicholson.

Annual Accounting Statement has been circulated to all in advance of the meeting. Approved by all, proposed Cllr Secret seconded Cllr Nicholson.

d. Variance Analysis, for information. The variances statement was explained by the RFO.

e. Approval to submit an Exemption Certificate. As the PC income is less than £25K in the 2022/2023 accounting year, The Parish Council can choose to be exempt from an external audit and save the PC approx. £280 fee. Agreed by all that the RFO will send off the exemption certificate to the external auditors PKF Littlejohn. Proposed Cllr Secret seconded Cllr Nicholson.

The notice of public rights will be advertised on notice boards and on the website. The Chairman thanked the RFO for all her work.

e. Clerks Pay & Expenses – Invoices to pay, £724.45 Clerks pay £10.80 expenses.

f. Responsible Finance Officer Pay – Invoice to pay. £175.15.

g. SALC Subscriptions – Invoice to pay for renewal, £328.44

The above invoices were approved for payment, proposed Cllr Slade, seconded Cllr Woods.

9. PLANNING APPLICATIONS & REPORT

Cllr Nicholson reported key points are that the Shott's Meadow Outline Application for 41 houses (allocated as 50 in the Local Plan) is still under consideration. No more news on about the next consultation for Saxmundham Garden Neighbourhood. The Community Governance Review is complete and they have accepted, our proposal for boundary changes between Saxmundham and Benhall. Cllr Secret to draft a letter to East Suffolk Council highlighting disappointment of the PC at how reserved matters have in the past been handled.

10. REPORTS FROM PARISH REPRESENTATIVES. Dealt with in the APM.

11. CORRESPONDENCE. None

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS. a. Natural England/Anglian Water. Further to the recent meeting with EDF regarding the Fen Meadow, the Chairman and Cllr Secret to draft a letter to EDF asking for details of the sewage works at the Fen Meadow.

Chairmans initials.....

13. DATE OF NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING.

Wednesday 26th July 2023, 7.00pm.

Cllr Barclay suggests a list of dates of PC meetings to be penciled in for the year. Clerk to do.

Meeting ended at 8.55pm

Signed (Chairman) Date

List of Action Points:

- a/p 1. Open Forum** Cllr Nicholson & Cllr Secret to contact ESC regarding cycle route.
- a/p 2. Open Forum** Cllr Barclay to research with the club possibility of “Beware of Cyclists” sign
- a/p 3.9** Cllr Secret to draft a letter to East Suffolk Council - reserved matters
- a/p 4.12** Chairman & Cllr Secret to draft a letter to EDF regarding sewage works at Fen Meadow
- a/p 5.13** Clerk to draft a list of PC meeting dates for the year