

Easton Parish Council

UNAPPROVED MINUTES OF MEETING ON MONDAY 20 JULY 2026 – 7.45PM Easton & Letheringham Village Hall

34/26-27 **PRESENT & APOLOGIES**

Present: Cllrs Ladbrook (Chair), Balcombe, Banham, Bennett-King, Edwards, and Gibbon. Apologies received from Cllr Siddall, (absence approved).

In attendance: District Cllr Langdon Morris; A Staples (Clerk/RFO).

Apologies: County Cllr Bryce.

35/26-27 **COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ON ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA AND FOR CONSIDERATION OF FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

Six members of the public attended. Comments were made in relation to items **46/26-27** and **47/26-27.1** as noted below.

36/26-27 **RECEIVE REPORTS FROM DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS**

District Cllr Langdon Morris attended and reported on: problems with the new recycling & refuse collections - arising from the introduction of new equipment, unexpected breakdowns, staff sickness, (heat-stroke during recent heatwaves), new software issues, additional rounds for the new bins and the extra collections scheduled. There is a perception that ESC's focus was on the towns, with village collections being neglected, which ESC is seeking to address. It was also reported that ESC's budget has balanced and is in surplus by £2m. Written reports from District and County Cllrs are available on the Parish Council website.

37/26-27 **RECEIVE ANY CHANGES TO MEMBERS INTERESTS**

None received.

38/26-27 **RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS RELATING TO AGENDA ITEMS**

None received.

39/26-27 **APPROVE MINUTES OF MEETING: 8 May 2026 (extra planning meeting); 11 May 2026 (Annual Meeting); and 15 June 2026 (extra meeting Re: SCC's s.19 flooding report)**

All the above minutes were approved and signed.

40/26-27 **FINANCE MATTERS:**

**40/26-27.1 Confirm bank account balances (13 July 2026) - Community
Account: £7,576.89; Business Premium Account: £7,540.98**

The above bank balances (as on 13 July 2026) were confirmed.

40/26-27.2 Approve and sign bank statements received since last meeting (Business Premium Account issued 30 June 2026 & Community Account issued on 1 June 2026 and 30 June 2026)

The above bank statements were considered and signed.

40/26-27.3 Consider and approve Financial Report dated 13 July 2026

The Financial Report for the period 5 May 2026 – 13 July 2026 was approved and signed.

41/26-27

MATTERS TO REPORT FROM ACTIONS OF RECENT MEETINGS:

41/26-27.1 Sizewell Community Fund applications

Deferred to September 2026 at request of Chair.

41/26-27.2 HIGHWAYS – Analysis of SID data

Deferred to next meeting at request of Clerk.

Action: Clerk to liaise with Cllr Edwards about downloading data from SIDs.

41/26-27.3 HIGHWAYS – location of SID on Framlingham Road

The Clerk has completed a form provided by SCC Highways to apply for the installation of a taller pole. The form was considered and the Council agreed it should be submitted.

Action: Clerk to email completed form to SCC Highways.

42/26-27

PLAY AREA:

42/26-27.1 Consider and agree response to draft lease for playing field / play area

The draft lease received from the landowner's solicitors was discussed. Cllr Balcombe raised concerns about the quality of the drafting, highlighting numerous unnecessary clauses and typographical errors; the draft being more in keeping with a proforma lease of commercial property and not appropriate for a playing field. It was noted the draft lease contains a break clause allowing the landlord to terminate with two months' notice after five years.

This may cause difficulties in securing grant funding for new play equipment, as the long-term future of the site could not be guaranteed. It was also noted that the annexes are missing from the draft. Cllr Banham suggested a simple licence might be preferable to a lease. It was agreed a letter be sent to the landowner's solicitors noting these concerns and requesting a more appropriate lease or licence be drafted.

Action: Clerk to liaise with Cllrs Balcombe and Banham to agree a wording for the letter.

43/26-27

FIX DATE AND APPROVE ARRANGEMENTS FOR AUTUMN VILLAGE TIDY-UP

It was agreed the next village tidy-up event will be on Sunday 18th October 2026, following the Sunday Café. Further arrangements to be confirmed at the meeting in September.

44/26-27

CONSIDER LISTED STATUS OF EASTON'S SERPENTINE WALLS

Cllr Banham noted the village's serpentine walls are currently Grade 2 listed, whereas the recent heritage report provided by Edward Martin recommended the listing be upgraded to 2* or 1, it being the longest serpentine wall in Europe, and a significant heritage asset for the village. It was suggested the process is straightforward, and should be at no expense to the Council,

assuming it doesn't need to be fast-tracked. An approach would need to be made Historic England, following a consultation with landowners and parishioners. It was agreed Cllr Banham would place an article in Easton Village News setting out the proposal and requesting feedback for discussion at the September meeting.

Action: Cllr Banham to place article in EVN seeking views.

45/26-27

2025-26 AUDIT ACTIONS:

45/26-27.1 Consider and approve new EPC Reserves Policy

(Re: EPC Audit Action Plan 2025-26 "Section 2 Budgetary Controls - Recommendation"). The General Reserves Policy was considered and approved.

Action: Clerk to put policy on website.

45/26-27.2 Review Bank Mandate arrangements

(Re: EPC Audit Action Plan 2025-26 "Section 4 Payment Controls - Additional Comments"). The Council reviewed the current arrangements for setting up and approving online transactions and was satisfied the current practices are compliant with the Financial Regulations. Accordingly, Council decided it was not necessary to retain additional evidence of who has authorised individual on-line payments. The bank mandate arrangements were reviewed. Three Councillors (Balcombe, Gibbon and Siddall) and the Clerk are on the mandate. It was agreed no change to the bank mandate was required.

46/26-27

REVIEW AND CONSIDER INCREASE TO EASTON VILLAGE NEWS FUNDING

(Item taken early for the benefit of members of the public present.)

Clare Owen, Editor of Easton Village News (EVN) was present and invited to speak. A document setting out EVN's 2026 costs and income was presented. In 2026 ninety-nine households paid a subscription and received a paper copy of the magazine. The income generated from subscriptions was £792.00. It was proposed in 2027 that the subscription be removed and the shortfall met from a combination of different income streams, namely: public donations, an increased Parish Council grant, a donation from the Parochial Church Council, (Peter Bennet-King indicated funding from the Church could be available), and a grant from District Cllr Langdon Morris' locality budget. The Council agreed it would be preferable for the magazine to be delivered to all households, it being an effective way to communicate information to parishioners. Accordingly, the Council supported the move away from the subscription-based model and agreed in principle that up to £500 be donated to EVN in 2027, (figure to be confirmed at November 2026 meeting when the 2027-28 budget is agreed). In addition, Peter Bennett-King indicated the PCC might be able to assist with meeting the additional costs of providing a paper copy of EVN to all households for the remaining months of 2026.

Action: Clerk to put the setting of the Parish Council's contribution to the 2027 EVN budget on the November meeting agenda.

Action: Clerk to follow up with District Cllr Langdon Morris about funding application.

47/26-27

PLANNING APPLICATION CONSULTATIONS

No new applications received.

47/26-27.1 DC/25/2997/FUL Ancona solar application – to discuss correspondence received from parishioner

(Item taken early for the benefit of members of the public present.)

Correspondence received from a parishioner was considered and discussed. The parishioner attended and was invited to speak. The issues raised included:

- No survey of bat populations has been carried out by the applicant, (unlike at the Deben Solar site). A survey has been carried out by the parishioner which concluded there is a significant bat population in nearby woodlands;
- Concerns about the proximity of their property to the nearest solar panels. Subsequent revisions to the scheme have resulted in the solar panels moving closer.
- The screening planting proposals are insufficient; glint and glare are likely given the planting will take at least 15 years to mature.
- The applicant has been required by UK Power Networks (UKPN) to accept a 'curtailment of output' of up to 100%, meaning at times the entire output generated by the facility would not be accepted on the national grid. Curtailment at this level is not usual for solar facilities and raises significant questions about the likely public utility arising from this development.
- The application is before the ESC Planning Committee for decision imminently, (Tuesday 28th July). The Planning Officer's report recommends approval. It was requested attempts be made to persuade the Committee that the decision should be postponed until the remaining issues are clarified. There is no urgency, given that the grid connection slot offered by UKPN isn't until 2034, (although the developers hope to bring this date forward if planning permission is granted.)

Following a discussion the Council agreed that a further letter of objection should be sent to ESC for the attention of the Planning Committee for consideration at next week's meeting.

Action: Cllr Banham will draft and circulate a wording for the proposed letter for approval.

48/26-27

SUGGESTED AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

Playground lease; village tidy-up event, and the re-listing of serpentine wall for further discussion at the next meeting.

49/26-27

DATES OF MEETINGS

14 September 2026; 16 November 2026; 18 Jan 2027; 15 March 2027 & 17 May 2027 (Annual Meeting).