

Minutes of Annual General Meeting at 7pm on Wednesday 14th May 2025 at Broad Oak Village Hall

Present:

Cllr Ashley Bubb, Cllr John Hogben, Cllr Steve Birch, Cllr. Gill Betts, Cllr Anne Dekker, Cllr Kathleen Warner, Cllr Ann Davies and Cllr Heather Taylor
Ken Dekker Clerk and Ken Bullock Cemetery Superintendent.

3 residents in attendance

91-25. Apologies for absence

Cllr Chris Gartland who is working, CCC Cllr Keji Moses at another meeting, Roger Lithgow due to work commitments.

92-25. Election of Chairman of the Parish Council for the year.

Cllr Bubb proposed Cllr J Hogben. This was seconded by Cllr Davies. Cllr Taylor abstained from the vote and the rest of the council agreed.
Cllr Hogben accepted the position of Chair and thanked Cllr Bubb for his hard work over the past few years.

93-25. Election of Vice Chair of the Parish Council for the year.

Cllr Hogben proposed Cllr Betts. This was seconded by Cllr Dekker.
Cllr Taylor proposed Cllr Birch. This was seconded by Cllr Bubb.
A vote was taken with 5 Cllrs voting for Cllr Betts and 2 for Cllr Birch.
Cllr Betts accepted the position of Vice Chair.

94-25. Appointment of members to existing committees.

- a) Members of The Planning Committee.**
- b) Reserve member of the Planning Committee (Optional).**
- c) Chair to be elected at first meeting of committee.**

It was decided to bring all planning applications to full Council.

- d) Members of the Staffing Committee.**
Cllr Betts, Cllr Gartland, Cllr Hogben and Cllr Dekker were proposed by Cllr Davies.
The above Cllr were elected to the Staffing Committee.
- e) Reserve member of the Staffing Committee (Optional).**
Cllr Taylor agreed to be the reserve member.
- f) Chair to be elected at first meeting of committee.**

g) Members of the Finance Committee.

Cllr Dekker, Cllr Davies, Cllr Hogben, Cllr Gartland and Cllr Taylor were proposed by Cllr Betts.

The above Cllrs were elected to the Finance Committee.

h) Reserve member of the Finance Committee (Optional).

There is no reserve.

i) Chair to be elected at first meeting of committee.

j) Members of the Events Committee.

Cllr Birch, C Gartland, Cllr Hogben and Cllr Taylor were proposed by Cllr Taylor.

The above Cllrs were elected to the Events committee.

k) Reserve member of the Events Committee (Optional)

Cllr Warner agreed to be the reserve member.

l) Chair to be elected at the first meeting of the Committee.

95-25. Review of the terms of reference for the following committees

- a) Finance Committee.
- b) Planning Committee.
- c) Staffing Committee.
- d) Events Committee

All terms of reference have been reviewed and are satisfactory.

96-25. To Discuss and agree setting up of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Cllr Dekker explained that this committee would be needed in the future when we go unitary so she explained that we would be getting ahead of the game by stating to do this now. It would mean that different Councillors could engage in this activity, just not on any committee they are part of, thus sharing responsibility and lowering any chance of any one Cllr being seen having the job of 'scrutinising' others The checks are to make sure that all committees are working to their terms of reference and also the code of conduct.

There was a good discussion on this by all the Cllrs.

Cllr Bubb was mentioned as the only Cllr who could be involved in any committee as he will not be a member of any committee.

Cllr Bubb proposed that all the paperwork be put together and be brought back to the next meeting, Cllr Hogben seconded all in agreement clerk to prepare.

97-25. Review of representation on external bodies and arrangements for reporting back.

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| a) Ayre sur la Lys Twinning Association. | Cllr Dekker |
| b) Sturry Social Centre. | Cllr Birch |
| c) Broad Oak Village Hall. | Cllr Birch |
| d) Kent Association of Local Councils. | Cllrs Davies and Hogben |
| e) SABORA | Cllrs Dekker and Betts |
| f) G SABORGS | Cllr Birch |
| g) Sturry Church | Cllr Betts |
| h) Stephen Bigges Charity. | To be brought back to next meeting. |

98-25. Determining the time and place of ordinary meetings of the full council up to and including the next Annual General Meeting.

Meetings will be on the second Wednesday of every month alternating between Sturry Social Centre and Broad Oak Village Hall.

First meeting will be on 11th June at Broad Oak Village Hall.

There will be no meeting in August.

99-25. Review of the council's and/or staff subscriptions to other bodies.

Annual membership of Society of Local Council Clerks for the Clerk.
£240 for the year.

This was proposed by Cllr Hogben and seconded by Cllr Taylor and all in agreement.

100-25. Financial Regulations and Standing Order.

- a) **Financial Regulations** – TO NOTE that there are changes to the NALC Model – The Model Financial Regulations have been updated because of The Procurement Act 2023 and the Procurement Regulations 2024, which came into effect on 5th March 2025. The changes are to Model Financial Regulations 5.4, 5.7 and 5.11.
- b) **Standing Orders** – TO NOTE NALC made changes to the Model on 31st March 2025 to comply with new procurement legislation and ensure consistency with the Model Financial Regulations. The changes are to 18.a.v, 18.c, 18.d and 18.f. also updated Model Standing Order (England) 14 to better reflect Code of Conduct requirements: 14.a, 14.b, and 14.c have been removed. NALC has also changed the language in the document to gender-neutral terms.

These will be updated and brought back to next meeting for adoption.

Public questions.

Before the remainder of the meeting, we will receive questions and statements from members of the public regarding items on the agenda. Any member of the public present at the meeting is entitled to speak for up to three minutes at this point.

There were no public questions.

101-25. To receive Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Significant Interests and Voluntary Announcements of Other Interests on any agenda items and a reminder to think of any changes to the DPI register held at CCC, such as change of job or home.

None

102-25. To approve the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 9th April 2025.

Proposed by Cllr Hogben and seconded by Cllr Dekker all in agreement.

103-25. Matters arising from the minutes of the Parish meeting on Wednesday 9th April 2025.

No matters arising.

104-25. Chairman and Councilors reports.

Chairman was very happy in the turn out for the 80th Beacon lighting. Cllr Birch reported on what the payback team have been doing this month. Cllr Taylor reported on the illegal parking on Parkview. Cllr Dekker reported that she had an email from Jane Carey-Harris on how delighted that she was with the 80th Beacon lighting evening.

105-25. County and District Councilors reports.

No County Cllr present and no report.

CCC Cllr McKenzie gave the following report.

Since the Sturry Annual Parish Meeting where Keji delivered our last report was so recent, everything we reported on still stands.

VE Day:

On 5th May, Harry attended the VE Day celebration at the Chislet Colliery Welfare Club in Hersden. It was fantastic to see such a big turn out; it is always good to see the community coming together. It was a massive success, so well done and thank you to the club and Hersden Parish Council. On 8th May, Keji and Harry both attended the beacon lighting in Sturry to commemorate VE Day which also had a huge turnout from the community. It brought everyone together to show respect and commemoration for those who sacrificed for our freedom and celebrate the end to the war. Thank you to Sturry Parish Council for arranging it.

Land South of Marley Lane Solar Farm:

On 6th May, Harry attended a public engagement meeting in Hoath regarding the proposed planning application for a solar farm between Hersden and

Hoath. It was important to listen to the views of local residents and understand how they are feeling about the proposed changes to the area in which they live.

This is a matter that has raised concerns among some residents in Sturry; Harry met a Sturry resident at the public engagement meeting in Hoath. As a member of the planning committee, Harry is unable to comment or predispose himself on this application but will be carefully reviewing the application and continuing to listen to affected people. Another councillor has called this into the planning committee, and it will be considered when that meeting comes.

Response to the KCC election results:

We congratulate Mark Mulvihill on his election. We have not formally met yet, but when we do, we hope we will be able to collaborate cross-party effectively on the issues that matter to our residents when required, as we did with the previous KCC councillor.

As your ward councillors, nothing has changed for us. We will keep doing everything we can to deliver the best service to Sturry, Broad Oak, Hersden, Westbere and Fordwich.

106-25. Community Warden report.

Sturry Ward

I am still mentoring a new Nailbourne Community Warden until her police vetting is completed, so at present I am required to work across three wards for the time being.

I am covering Sturry Ward Mondays and Wednesdays, and Tuesdays and Thursdays on Little Stour/Nailbourne. Fridays I am aiming to work in each ward on alternative weeks.

I have been conducting extensive Visible Presence, with and without my colleague across the wards over the last month.

Issues reported last month:

Sturry – a resident reported males door-knocked offering to clean the front of the house. They claimed they were working at one of houses in the road, which appears to be untrue. Client agreed for work to be done, but was charged a lot of money. Alleged suspects also wanted an additional amount of money for clearing up their mess and tried to claim more work was required at the property.. Same people also visited another property in the road, and charged allegedly a small amount of money to install a blocked driveway, and again did not clear up their mess.

I have been popping into Sturry Parish Council Office throughout the month to check for any issues.

I attended Sturry Church Coffee Morning on Wednesday when I am free.

Flytipping hotspots checked. The large amount of flytipping on the wasteland behind Hillbrow avenue, and Copt Close has been cleared by CCC.

Hersden – I and my colleague conducted a reassurance visit where we undertook Visible Presence the day after residents were evacuated from their properties. A further joint walk around Hersden was undertaken with local Police Officer.

107-25. Village Caretaker's report.

No report as caretaker is on holiday.

108-25. Cemetery Superintendent's Report.

Admin Work:

We have dealt with numerous enquiries as usual.

Cemetery Database:

I continue to identify missing or incorrect information in the database. I am updating the records as I go. This exercise will continue for the foreseeable future.

Cemetery Other:

Since my last report, we have had 1 full burial and 2 burials of cremated remains.

I currently 1 burial of cremated remains progressing.

I have completed two transfers of EroB via probate.

I am progressing one new monument application, but this also requires a transfer of EroB before it can progress.

With one new application in April, users with access to the cemetery, who have been given the gate code stands at 35.

I have as requested by the Council, raised a claim with our insurers for the damage to the cemetery road. Our insurers have raised a case, and I have supplied photos, a statement of fact, deeds for the cemetery. I am waiting on a revised quote as the last item requested by our insurers.

109-25. Clerks Report.

Routine office work regarding resident's enquiries.

The internal Audit was carried out on 23rd April and this is the auditors report.

I am pleased to report to Members of the Parish Council that I have completed my internal audit of the Parish Council's records for 2024-25 and have been able to complete the Annual Internal Audit Report for the 2024-25 Annual Governance and Accountability Return.

Members should be aware that the audit tests that I undertook during the audit cannot be relied on to identify the occasional omission or insignificant error, nor to disclose breaches of trust or statute, neglect or fraud which may have taken place and which it is the responsibility of the Members of the Council to guard against through the Parish Council's internal control procedures.

As a result of my audit and my discussions with your Clerk I was able to answer 'YES' to the relevant questions contained in the Annual Internal Audit Report.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank your Clerk for the assistance given to me in the conduct of the audit that took place on 23 April 2025.

PREVIOUS AUDITS:

External Audit 2023-24:

Mazars issued their certificate in respect of 2023-24 on 5 September 2023. It was unqualified but with comments in respect of public rights, variances and the bank reconciliation. Their covering letter did not list any "Minor Scope for Improvement" items. The council approved the audit report at its meeting on 11 September 2024.

Internal Audit 2023-24:

The 2025-26 budget approved on 11 December 2024 does largely comply with the requirements of s49A Local Government Finance Act 1992. There remains one item not covered in that a calculation of use to be made of reserves and/or contributions to them is mandatory (paras 2c and 3b of S49A).

FINDINGS THIS VISIT:

During the audit I carried out sufficient work to enable me to complete the Annual Internal Audit Report. I concentrated on the trail from the annual accounting statement back to the receipts & payments A/c and bank statements. I have also reviewed the Council's minutes for compliance with

legal obligations, its general functioning and for mutual consistency with the accounts.

I found the financial records to be accurate and up to date. I found nothing in the minutes to indicate any issues around legal obligations, the council's actions or its general functioning. I have noted, for future reference, activity that is planned or due to occur in 2025-26.

I have nothing further to report.

Completing the grounds maintenance tenders and sending them out to the companies. These tenders have been received and opened in the presence of the finance committee and who will make its recommendations later at the agenda item.

Arranging for the Annual Parish Meeting on the 30th April, with both speakers giving talks on their chosen professions. Unfortunately, the turn out by the residents was very poor.

Making the arrangements for the 8th May beacon lighting.

I have spent some time going through the fireproof filing cabinet searching for the deeds to the Social Centre but to no avail. Contacting the solicitors involved in this gets me up against a brick wall. I am going to get the solicitor that helped explain the conveyance document for us to see if they could have more sway.

110-25. Outside Bodies members reports.

Cllr Taylor had some concerns regarding some of the items in the minutes of the last meeting of the committee for the Social Centre. This would be explained by the committee at the next meeting.

111-25. Finance

1. Presentation for approval end of year accounts 1st April 2024 to March 31st 2025.

2. Balance sheet as of 31st March 2025.

3. Income and expenditure sheet as of 31st March 2025.

The end of year accounts were checked by the Cllrs and signed off by the Chair

Payments for approval.

Proposed by Cllr Birch and seconded by Cllr Taylor all in agreement

£250.48	UK Safety Management	PAT testing
£1250.89	John Caddick	Grounds Maintenance
£28.51	Mustang washrooms	Toilet Cleaning
£15	PW Needham	Window cleaner
£245	Lionel Robbins	Internal Auditor
£128.57	Westleyhire	Cemetery Toilet hire and cleaning
£125.92	Amazon	VE flag and office supplies

Accounts for approval and signature. Two Cllrs checked and signed the documents.

112-25. To discuss and agree grounds maintenance contract.

The Chair of the Finance Committee explained the procedure on how they reached their decision. There were a few questions about all the tenders and their submissions and the reason for the selection. It was proposed to accept the tender from Bourne to Garden by Cllr Davies and seconded by Cllr Betts all in agreement. The clerk to notify the tenderers.

113-25. To Discuss and agree annual subscription to the Link up Magazine.

Cllr Bubb proposed paying for a one-page subscription of £120, this was seconded by Cllr Warner and all in agreement.

114-25. Update on requirements for the toilets.

Cllr Betts stated that the cleaner would like to have the roof cleaned, gutters cleared, and woodwork painted. and the woodwork painted. The council to set up a program of work for the caretaker and for the clerk to monitor progress within an agreed time frame. Update at next meeting.

Date of next meeting.

11th June 2025

Meeting closed at 20:53