

DRAFT Minutes of Playford's Annual Parish Meeting held at Playford Parish Hall on Wednesday, 7th May 2025 at 6.30pm

Present:

Ben Evans –Chairman
Joan Metcalfe - Vice-chairman
Stephen Hicks - Councillor
Lynne Dawes - Councillor
Colin Hedgley – District Councillor

In attendance:

Wendy Cook - Clerk

Also present:

3 members of the public for all or part of the meeting

The meeting started at 6.30pm. Ben Evans was unanimously voted in as Chairman for the evening and took the chair.

1. Apologies for Absence

Jonathan Fieldsend
Elinor Wombwell

2. To approve the Minutes from the Meeting held on 7th May 2025

The Minutes were approved by those present and were duly signed by the Chairman as a true record.

3. Matters arising from the Minutes: None

4. Chairman's Report

Ben's report was circulated in advance to all councillors. In brief:

- Ben thanked the councillors and clerk for their work in the past year. And welcomed new councillors Lynne Dawes and Eileen Stennett who joined the Parish Council. He also thanked Martin Hill for his service after resigning from the Council.
- Ben talked about the Westerfield Quarry Planning application and the Northern Bypass and how the Parish council had done their best to represent Playford's interests.
- The Parish Council have also been responding to the Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) processes. The PC had many residents who were very worried about the implications of LGR, as were many from neighbouring parishes. Of particular concern was the Three Councils proposal, which unfortunately was selected by central Government to go ahead a couple of months ago. This means that Playford will become part of an Ipswich and South Suffolk Unitary Authority that combines the powers of District and County Councils. The Parish Council, and residents, made strong representations against this choice through the consultation process and directly to the Minister making the decision because of fears that our rural identities and priorities will not be adequately represented within the new Authority structure, which will be dominated by Ipswich.

- On a more positive note, we all have extra bins! The long-awaited traffic priority works on the C324 have also been funded by Cllr Elaine Bryce this year, and new white lines suggest they may have commenced, at least in part. There has also been quite a lot of work done on potholes along Butt's Road this year, which is welcome. Meanwhile, other highways issues persist, as do the usual issues with footpaths. As ever, please report such things on the East Suffolk website and send the Clerk an email to let them know you have done so.

For details of the above in full please see www.playfordparish.gov.uk

5. County council report

Cllr Elaine Bryce was not present at the meeting, however, she sent a report that can be read online on the Parish Council's website

6. District Council report

District Cllr Colin Hedgley presented his report which is appended to these minutes. In brief:

- Colin stated that we are still awaiting a decision Westerfield Quarry and that the application will now not be considered until after the County Council Elections on May 7th.
- He stated that he was disappointed with the decision for three separate Councils and firmly believed that the best way forward would have been one Council for the whole of Suffolk.
- On Planning, he stated that Planning is undergoing major changes with the aim of speeding up the delivery of new homes. East Suffolk Council has had their built homes figure increased from 905 to 1660. He also mentioned Planning enforcement.
- 2026 will see the introduction of a new bin collection systems and the new bins are now being delivered to homes in the area.
- There is a new sustainable transport grant to pay for items such as community cycle parking facilities.
- Boot Street Bridge will take a while to be repaired so there will be a 3 ton limit in place.
- He urged parishioners to report issues with verges and pot holes to highways via their online reporting tool.
- He has money available for the Carlford Ward via his District Councillor Funding.
- East Suffolk Council has announced a new £1.5m programme that's set to revitalise the district's towns, village and rural communities.

7. Report from Norman Porter – Editor of FLN

Norman reported that the Fynn Lark News is thriving thanks to donations from the local parish councils and paid advertising. On average, forty Eight pages are published every issue which costs approximately £400 per issue.

Norman commented that the Fynn Lark News is not a commercial operation and that the publication's ethos is bringing together of a rural community and

giving that community an identity. He mentioned the publications tenth Birthday and a celebration being held on the 9th May.

He praised the fantastic team of helpers which numbers about 60 with a special thanks to Tim Llewellyn for putting it all together each month and to Peter & Vicky Carr for organising the distribution.

8. Tree Warden Report

Elinor Wombwell was unable to attend the meeting so Cllr B Evans read out her report.

The Tree Warden has been busy planting and tending to the trees in the parish. Last autumn she collected many seeds and these small seedlings are doing well. Through the free trees scheme by the Tree Council, the Little Bealings Tree Wardens and Elinor have planted several hundred trees and hedging plants in the two parishes and have kept some back for next winter due to the concerns over potential drought this spring and summer. They have commenced surveys of the ancient and veteran trees in the two parishes; this work will continue in the years to come as it is a lengthy process.

The Tree Warden has helped liaise between parishioners where there have been queries or concerns raised regarding trees on areas with shared access. She has also mulched and re-staked the new oak tree in the village hall playing field and removed the broken and redundant guard for the sweet chestnut tree. Elinor met with the Suffolk Tree Wardens in the Autumn for a bud grafting course and attended another grafting session in the winter to further her grafting experience and stock of fruit trees. There will be a small number of apple trees available for parishioners to purchase, with all proceeds to the Suffolk Tree Warden Network. There will be hundreds of free trees and hedging plants with guards available from October/November time, parishioners may contact me directly for this.

9. Playford Church Report

In the absence of Jonathan Fieldsend, Helen Clarkson-Fieldsend gave the report on behalf of the Church

- Helen stated that church services continue twice a month and numbers are steady, but there's always room for improvement
- There has been coffee mornings and a quiz in the last year and these have been successful, not only to raise the profile of the church, but also bringing in some much-needed income
- The Church had not seen any wedding in the last year.
- Overall the Church is in good condition, however there is some plaster that needs repairing on one of the walls and the church organ is in need of refurbishment.
- Helen thanked parishioners for their support and mentioned the help they had received from the WI and the Village Hall
- She concluded by saying that the Church is there for everyone of any faith. And that is was not just a building but a place to bring people together.

10. Other Reports

There were no other reports

11. Open Forum

A resident spoke of her concerns about the issue of a Northern Bypass now that the decision on Devolution had been made and reiterated the importance being prepared to object if the subject is revisited.

A member of the Deben Climate Group talked about the quality of the water in the river Fynn and asked about the Parish Council Funding some river testing kits. The Parish Clerk suggested that he contact her directly for the matter to be discussed at a Parish Council Meeting.

12. AOB – none

The meeting ended at 7.11pm

Signed
Chairman

Full Reports can be found on the Parish Council website at
www.playfordparish.gov.uk