



**The meeting of Egerton Parish Council was held on Tuesday 2 September 2025
7pm Committee Room, Millennium Hall, Egerton**

Present

Cllrs: John Lawton, Peter Rawlinson, Jeff Hopkins, Pat Parr, Claire Foinette, Richard Wall, Susan Stone, John Harper and Simon Palmer. Clerk Sonia Young.

Nine members of the public were present.

1) Apologies

Borough Cllr Kayleigh Brunger-Randall. Kent County Councillor Jeremy Eustace.

2) Declarations of Interest

Cllrs Palmer, Parr and Harper: neighbours to the Orchard Nurseries site proposed for development and neighbour to one site put forward for consideration for the Ashford Borough Council Local Plan 2041.

3) Minutes of the Previous Meeting – 8 July 2025

Ratification of the decision taken by email to approve the minutes of the 8 July meeting and signed as a true record of the proceedings.

Proposed: Cllr Foinette. **Seconded:** Cllr Hopkins. **All in agreement. Cllr Parr abstained as not present at the 8 July meeting.**

4) Matters Arising from 8 July 2025 (not covered by the agenda below)

i) Installation of a bike rack on the Glebe

The rack has been installed.

ii) Revaluation of the Games Barn

The report has been ordered.

iii) Southern Water – update on the upgrade to the treatment works

Following a site visit and presentation to EPC Cllrs and members of the Egerton Playing Fields Management Committee (EFC), a combined 'wish list' will be agreed and submitted to Southern Water for consideration. This list will support the approval given in principle to SW to allow them to install one additional processing tank at the site. The tank will ensure SW can meet the statutory requirements laid down by Government in April 2025 for the quality of water allowed for release into Egerton's water courses. Chair Cllr Lawton said all parties had agreed to work towards an amicable and realistic agreement on the assignment of a small slice of land owned by EPC. He said the land was needed to accommodate the extra tank and all parties were keen to avoid a compulsory purchase order.

Action: Clerk to organise a meeting to finalise the response.

iv) Village Hall outdoor area hire costs

Cllr Harper said no change was needed at this time.

v) Tree on Elm Close

Update at the next meeting.

5) Chair to close the meeting for public discussion

Meeting closed at 19.07

Meeting re-opened at 19.21

6) Footpaths Report 182 (See Appendix 1)

Report circulated in advance of the meeting to all Cllrs. Cllr Parr said KCC footpaths warden is looking at a possible 15k new boardwalk solution to repair footpath that has been closed at the back of St James due badgers burrowing under it and causing a collapse.



7) Highways Report

Cllr Harper said he had been in touch with East Kent Highways on 28 August team to stress that the junction between Mundy Bois Road and (lower) Green Hill Lane is dangerous, and the scene of multiple vehicle collisions – a number very serious and involving all emergency services. He told them the issue could not wait for a meeting in October. Cllr Harper said that the Highways team promised to be back in touch within two days; he will report on outcomes at next council meeting. He added that Kent Highways will only allow two meetings per annum to talk about the Egerton HiP.

Recent rain has shown that the long-standing problem of flooding between Harmers Way and New Road has not been sorted. Cllr Stone has been back onto the Highways team about this. EPC Cllrs agreed that the work that has begun on North Field to build new housing will exacerbate the issue further if drainage levels are not discussed with the developer and reviewed at an early stage of the building work. Cllrs Stone and Palmer will look at the proposed drainage plans for the site and then get in touch with Canham Homes to discuss concerns and possible solutions.

Action: Cllrs Stone and Palmer

EPC HiP. The next stage of the proposed 20mph speed limit between Oliver's Garage, St James and Stevens Close, will be public consultation.

Cllrs agreed that the planned closure of a large section of Smarden Bell Road for replacement mains works by South-East Water will impact adversely on Egerton residents, with many concerned at the increase in traffic that diversions will cause. EPC has been liaising with Pluckley Parish Council on this and will feed concerns/ alternate suggestions back to South-East Water via PPC.

Action: Cllr Rawlinson.

8) Planning and Development

Planning applications submitted to Ashford Borough Council this month for Egerton Parish Council to consider, details of which may be accessed online at:

<http://www.ashford.gov.uk/onlineplanning/>.

Applications submitted

Case Reference:	PA/2025/1319
Location	Old Harrow Farm, Link Hil Lane, TN27 9EP
Proposal	Extension and alterations to existing detached garage/store following partial demolition of flat roof element of existing garage. Re-surfacing of parking area.

EPC view: The proposal looks to be a positive enhancement of the current structure that makes sense for both the owner and in terms of the building's relationship to the listed building. EPC agreed that it would be appropriate to suggest ABC consider adding a clause to ensure use of the new garage is exclusively for parking cars and storage, and that habitation is excluded. EPC would also request confirmation that the renewal of the hard standing will be in gravel/stone to ensure it drains into the ground and not onto the highway in an area of the village already prone to flooding.

Proposed: Support.

Proposed: Cllr Wall. **Seconded:** Chair Cllr Lawton. **All in agreement.**



Case Reference:	PA/2025/1354
Location	Malthouse Farm, Rock Hill Road, TN27 9EB
Proposal	Erection of a garden studio

EPC view: The application is for a 'removable sunroom' on the land within the curtilage of the listed building of Malthouse Farm. It will be largely invisible from the road and does not detract significantly from the listed building. Should permission be granted, EPC will ask ABC to add a clause to define use of the building as exclusive to the owners of Malthouse Farm and not permitted for use as overnight accommodation. EPC requires confirmation of how sewerage will be managed as no details were contained in the application.

Proposed: comment only

Proposed: Cllr Wall. **Seconded:** Cllr Palmer. **All in agreement.**

Case Reference:	PA/2025/1219 and 1223
Location	Malthouse Farm, Rock Hill Road
Proposal	Variation of Condition 2 (approved plans and documents) of planning permission PA/2024/0119 for "Single storey rear extension following demolition of existing single storey extension," to allow a design alteration to increase wall space for improved kitchen layout.

Ratification of decision taken by email support the application listed above.

Ratification proposed: Chair Cllr Lawton. **Seconded:** Cllr Parr. **All in agreement.**

- **Other Egerton Planning and development updates**

No updates available.

9) Correspondence

On 26 August, EPC received an open letter via email from former EPC chair Richard King. Cllr Palmer requested that the letter be read out in full in the meeting given the serious nature of its content. The letter was read out. See Appendix (ii).

Chair Cllr Lawton said that the Clerk will hold the documents referred to, and should anyone wish to read them then they would need to apply to the clerk in writing to obtain an electronic copy.

He added that it had been exceptionally distressful for the four Parish Councillors who had served on the previous Parish Council to be individually accused of bullying by Mrs Elworthy who had lodged a formal Code of Conduct complaint with the Monitoring Officer at Ashford Borough Council.

Bullying is a very serious allegation and Mrs Elworthy's allegations were further exacerbated by the claim that the four Councillors had not only bullied her but had acted in concert to do so.

Cllr Lawton said the accusations caused each of the Councillors significant and unwarranted distractions and anxiety. He explained that all complaints were thoroughly investigated by a firm of solicitors based in Grimsby, contracted by Ashford Borough Council—at a public cost of at least £16,000. Not one of the four Councillors was found to have breached the Code of Conduct.



He stated that the decisions in all four cases were unequivocal. To have the matter, which is subject to confidentiality by all parties resurfaced publicly by Mrs Elworthy, four years later via social media was, in his view, egregious and appalling.

He emphasised that each of the Councillors reported to the Monitoring Officer had only ever acted appropriately and had never publicly discussed the matter, in accordance with the duty of confidentiality imposed by the process—a duty they have respected. He said the current Parish Council believed the situation had been resolved years ago, and that raising it again on social media was distracting for the Parish Council and offensive to the Councillors she persisted in demeaning.

He concluded that all four Councillors she accused had reasonably deduced that the allegations against them lacked foundation, as based on the Monitoring Officer's conclusions. Accordingly, the current Parish Council maintained that the protocols, processes, administration, and minutes of the previous Parish Council were accurate.

In other correspondence, EPC Cllrs welcomed a villager's offer to look after the planters on Elm Close. They agreed that £35 should be assigned for bulbs, plants and compost in autumn and spring.

10) Accounts

Unbudgeted payments for full council to approve for September as per the EPC Financial Regulations.

Item	contractor	£
Installation bike rack on The Glebe	G Green	60.00
Total		£60.00

Proposal to approve the accounts as presented

Proposed: Cllr Palmer. **Seconded:** Chair Cllr Lawton. **All in agreement.**

As per the EPC Financial Regulations, the chair approved all budgeted expenditure as circulated to him by the clerk prior to the meeting.

Proposal to ratify the decision taken by email to approve an unbudgeted spend of £450 on a new kissing gate for installation on the footpath between the football field and lower rec.

Proposed: Chair Cllr Lawton. **Seconded:** Cllr Parr. **All in agreement.**

Proposal to release the special reserve of £600 held at year end to balance NI payments and move it into the EPC General Reserve.

Proposed: Chair Cllr Lawton. **Seconded:** Cllr Palmer. **All in agreement.**

11) Parish Plan and Future Projects Working Group

- **Replacement swings**

Cllr Foinette confirmed that all Cllrs had reviewed the plans and costs provided by Caloo and the application for the funds to replace the swings and perimeter fencing had been submitted to the ABC S106 team. Payments will be made ex-VAT.

- **Millennium Hall upgrade to sound system**

Cllr Harper will report at the October meeting.

Vice-chair Cllr Rawlinson said the Working Group had met and reaffirmed the priority village projects, as voted for by residents as:

- 1) Purchase defibrillators for village blackspots
- 2) Build a permanent home for the pre-school
- 3) Install solar panels at the Millennium Hall



- 4) Install a central electric charging point for villagers
- 5) Replace the main climbing frame at the children's playground
- 6) Upgrade and refurbish the Millennium Hall
- 7) Install outdoor adult gym equipment
- 8) Re-order the interior of St James Church to create more flexible useable space

12) Ashford Local Plan 2041 Working Group update

Comment on the consultation needs to be made by 13 October. The main consultation documents issued by ABC Planning are 180 pages long and contains 14 policy intentions and 11 policy ambitions. There are also multiple associated documents and overall, many details are still being refined or expanded. The process of assessing each individual site submitted for consideration in the 2042 Plan has not been done; the six sites submitted for consideration in Egerton have only been through an initial 'sift'. As such, it was proving somewhat difficult to make comments. The Working Group will meet to prepare draft comments for Cllrs to review and approve via email as the submission date is ahead of the next full EPC meeting.

14) Village Websites Working Group – update

No update to report.

15) Asset of Community Value Working Group – The George Public House

The renewal document has been submitted.

16) Playground

See Item 11).

17) Proposal to refresh the agenda

The Clerk circulated a proposed format refresh of the EPC agenda to all Cllrs for consideration in advance of the meeting.

Proposal to accept the new format.

Proposed: Cllr Parr. **Seconded:** Cllr Palmer. **All in agreement.**

18) Additional items

i) Welcome packs

Cllr Parr has delivered a pack to Henshaw Place.

ii) Games Barn grant application for adult gym equipment

A grant application for funds to install adult gym equipment has been submitted to KCC Sport.

iii) Parking at village hall

Cllrs agreed that occasions when parking caused issues for residents were few and far between but agreed that it had been problematic for those living nearby to a recent private event held at the village hall. Cllrs suggested that when the village hall is hired out, the areas for overflow parking needed, perhaps, to be better highlighted.

iv) Egerton Music Festival

Chair Cllr Lawton said EPC wished to congratulate the organising team of Egerton Music Festival for putting on such a fantastic and well-attended Festival and which has gone from strength to strength during the nearly 30 years it has been running. He said the hard work that had gone into arranging such a varied programme across the week was appreciated and recognised by EPC and many villagers.

EPC also wished to thank Cathy Hill for organising the wonderful Art Expo at the Games Barn which ran alongside the Music Festival.



Lastly, Cllrs wishes to congratulate the Friends of St James for organising the Afternoon Tea at the Church on the August Bank Holiday weekend. Cllr Foinette said just over 90 people attended and £500 had been raised.

Chair Cllr Lawton said that these three summer events, plus Cricket Week, which was also incredibly well supported and organised, showed what a wonderful, active and vibrant village Egerton is.

The meeting closed at 21.15pm.

Next meeting: Tuesday 14 October 2025.

Appendix (i)

Report No. 182 of the Egerton footpaths representative for September 2025 Meeting

6 Outstanding Issues remain from the July 2025 report.

0 Closed Items

0 New Issues

The outstanding items below are listed with the KCC Reference, the date reported, the footpath number, the location, the difficulty experienced and the status of action.

1. **PROW211126930.** 09/11/21. Part of AW87 to the west of the church behind the Glebeland houses where the path is quite narrow has collapsed due to badger activity. Status: Still In Progress.
2. **PROW230732955.** 28/07/23. AW96. Barhams Mill Road, before Frasers, on the right-hand side from Egerton village end. Broken stile at the entrance to the footpath from the road. Status: Still Awaiting Allocation.
3. **PROW240835559.** 04/08/24. AW74 Wanden Lane. Reported by Egerton Running Club. Obstruction at both ends of this short footpath. Status: Still Awaiting Allocation.
4. **PROW241298717.** 03/12/24. Part of AW87 to the west of the church. Further subsidence at the edges of the rubber matting placed there in 2021. Because of the danger it has been reported to KCC. Status: Still In Progress.

UPDATE 25/2/2025: Residents have not actually taken down the taped closure of this short section of path but are using the path anyway and have filled the two large holes with stones under the rubber matting as they want it reopened. Cllr Parr will contact KCC again and try to get some action on this problem.

UPDATE 11/3/2025: KCC replied that they will put up some sterner signage/warning tape and some posts. It's not a cliff edge so a metal barrier is not needed. The big issue is that a licence from Natural England is needed to work on the path as the badger and sett are protected. Natural England have indicated they will give a licence to complete works, but work cannot be done until July due to the breeding season!

NEW UPDATE 20/ 5/2025: KCC have advised that they have been working on this one and decided a raised wooden board walk with a handrail over the top is the best way forwards and a design is currently being looked at. It's not straightforward as permission from Natural England is needed for a licence. This has been agreed in principle, but an ecologist may be needed on site to assess whether the badgers need to be permanently or temporarily evicted which will cost ££££££. KCC do not foresee that it will be sorted in July, but are working hard to get it sorted

UPDATE 24/7/25: *New Temporary Closure Order received for this footpath up to January 2026 or until completion of the works, whichever is the earlier. The church side of the path*

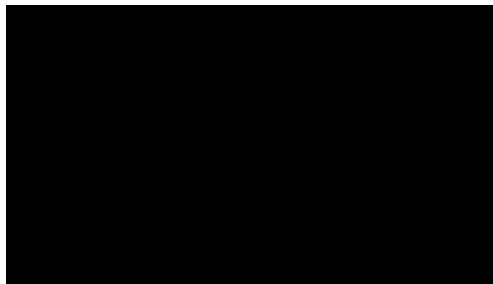


was checked by Cllr Parr on 23 July, and the new Order is there, but the tape across has been removed by people determined to still use it. KCC have been asked to do works to block the access at both ends, for health and safety reasons.

UPDATE 6/8/25: Reply from KCC Footpaths Officer Denis Fogle: "We had a contractor out to look at it recently, quoted over £15K for a new boardwalk, which I am trying to find somehow"

5. **PROW250339948.** 11/03/25. AW68 Rockhill Road, opposite Buss's Farm Shop. Broken stile. Status: Still Awaiting Allocation.
6. **PROW250549477.** 20/5/25. AW73 Newland Green Lane. Rambler reports that "the landowner of the land on which AW73 runs over has put up rope fencing surrounding and blocking the footpath". The footpath runs up the east side of Acorn Woods to the west of Newlands Green. The landowner has previously not welcomed walkers using the path". Status: Awaiting Allocation.

Appendix (ii)



Sonia Young,
Clerk to the Egerton Parish
Council c/o The Millennium Hall
Egerton

29th July 2025

Dear Sonia,

I have been told that at the last Parish Council meeting (on 8th July) Sarah Elworthy read a statement, which she subsequently published on local social media (Next Door and Facebook), about matters in which I was involved and which took place some four years ago. Her statement and comments, which I read on social media, are both factually inaccurate, misleading and untrue. As the only person referred to by name in Mrs Elworthy's statement I believe that I need to set the record straight.



In January 2021 Mrs Elworthy submitted a Code of Conduct Complaint to the Monitoring Officer at Ashford Borough Council. She alleged that four Parish Councillors, of which I was one, had breached the Council's Code of Conduct. In my own case she alleged that I had repeatedly bullied her, had repeatedly belittled her in emails shared with other councillors, had issued peremptory instructions to her and was acting in consort with other councillors in doing so. In all, Mrs Elworthy made a total of ten specific complaints against me. On 6th June 2021 a 31 page Decision Notice was issued by the Deputy Monitoring Officer.

In his 'Overall Conclusion' I was cleared of any wrongdoing. Contrary to what Mrs Elworthy would have you believe, he clearly stated (para 16.12) "*I do not see any of the matters raised in the complaints documents submitted by Councillor Elworthy as being breaches of the Code of Conduct by Councillor King*". It is highly disingenuous of Mrs Elworthy to continually refuse to admit that he ever said this.

In his findings the Deputy Monitoring officer typically considered that quotes provided by Mrs Elworthy '*were taken out of context*' and were not, as Mrs Elworthy had alleged, '*in any way disrespectful*'. He determined that one incident complained of by Mrs Elworthy '*had clearly been dealt with amicably and is closed*'. Of another the Deputy Monitoring officer wrote "*I believe it would now be unfair to Councillor King, and not at all appropriate for this matter to now be considered as an allegation worthy of further investigation.*"

In view of all of this, and the fact that none of Mrs Elworthy's allegations against me were upheld, it could truthfully be said that her allegations were spurious. The Monitoring Officer could find no basis for them in the facts presented to him or in the evidence she provided. The Parish Council's minute stating that her allegations were unfounded (meaning lacking a sound basis, groundless or unwarranted) can be seen as a completely correct interpretation of the 31 page Decision Notice.

Code of Conduct Complaints are dealt with by the Borough Council under the terms of reference of the Borough's Standards Committee – see



<https://www.ashford.gov.uk/media/orlhqknk/standards-committee-with-diagram.pdf>

This states (Part 3, Appendix 4, para 3.2) that *'where the Monitoring Officer concludes that there is no evidence of a failure to comply with the Code of Conduct they will inform the Parties in writing that no further action is considered necessary'*, effectively meaning that the complaint is dismissed. Mrs Elworthy's deliberately misleading suggestion on social media that 'no further action' means that, in her words, 'guilt has not been attributed to either side' is completely false and untrue. The Monitoring Officer's decision *'to take no further action in relation to this complaint'* was on the basis that *'the evidence provided did not show that there had been breaches of the Code'*.

The councillors that were falsely accused by Mrs Elworthy were quite prepared to reconsider mediation but only if Mrs Elworthy confirmed that she accepted the ruling of the Monitoring Officer about her unfounded allegations. However, Mrs Elworthy chose instead to resign from the Parish Council, and in her resignation letter she deliberately repeated allegations that had already been considered and rejected by the Monitoring Officer. She then circulated her letter to every household in the Parish. My acknowledgement of her resignation letter, sent as the Parish Council's Chairman, which she wishes to have removed from the public record (as an attachment to the minutes of the meeting of 7th September 2021), was a detailed and truthful rebuttal of those allegations.

In the interests of openness, transparency and fairness, which Mr and Mrs Elworthy have argued many times elsewhere is so important - and as Mr and Mrs Elworthy are already (in the words of one contributor to 'Next Door') *'plastering these materials all over this social media site'* - I am enclosing with this letter a (redacted) copy of Mrs Elworthy's Code of Conduct Complaint Form and a full copy of the Monitoring Officer's 31 page Decision Notice sent to me about her allegations so that they can now become part of the public record.

Also, in an attempt to put an end to all this nonsense, if any councillor or parishioner is sufficiently interested and wishes to see a copy of Mrs Elworthy's allegations and the Monitoring Officer's 31 page Decision Notice that dismisses them, I would be very happy for them read it all in full. They can then make up their own mind about whether Mrs Elworthy is telling the truth or is indulging in a sustained campaign of falsehoods, misinformation, misrepresentation and false narratives in an attempt to discredit both me and the Parish Council.

Yours sincerely

Richard King