

# ***ETCHINGHAM***

## ***Annual Report 2013***



**Annual Parish Meeting**

**Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> April 2013**

**6.15pm**

**at Etchingam Village Hall  
High Street, Etchingam**

## ***Etchingham Parish Council***

Chairman's report 2012-2013

It sometimes seems very odd to be writing one's own end of term report. When at school I am sure, like me, you hoped for a good report. I think that this year we can give Etchingham Parish Council a great report. Something we could not have done without the help and cooperation of others.

It has been another year of numerous meetings. We are now looking forward to the monthly Parish Council meetings being held in much more pleasant conditions. Only one more winter of wearing thick jumpers, coats and two pairs of socks – we are confident that come the winter of 2014 the meetings will be held in a brand new Village Hall.

Our optimism stems from a series of discussions and meetings with the partners involved in the new School and Village Hall project for Etchingham culminating in the granting of Planning Permission for the scheme by Rother District Council last month. This was a landmark decision in more ways than one as it went against Officers recommendation and our thanks must go to our District councillor Mary Barnes, who on the day gave a very persuasive speech to her fellow councillors on the Planning Committee.

Thanks are also due to the other parties in this. The County Council Officers, Trustees of ETSR, Etchingham School and Governors, Millwood Homes and of course Dr and Mrs Ahrens and their Agent. I would also like to thank our Clerk Bob Hodgson for his valued assistance.

We are now proceeding to develop the details for the interior of the halls and school and how they and their use will be managed. It is anticipated that construction will begin shortly and I am assured that there will be minimum disruption to the village by the construction due to the nature of the site.

I admit that this project has been something of a preoccupation for myself and others over the last few months but we have had time to give Parish Council attention to other matters.

The Parking Scheme has been largely successful. On the basis that it is difficult to please all of the people all of the time the scheme has alleviated the most dangerous situations in the village particularly in the lower part of the High Street. The recent public consultation raised some interesting and useful comments. Safety and the continued prosperity of the village have been the main considerations. Minor adjustments are in the pipeline and will appear shortly, to be followed by further consultation.

I was very flattered to be asked to cut the ribbon for the opening of the new shop last spring. The success of this enterprise has been recognised early with not only the level of support but also by the award of the best Startup in the South East by the Countryside Alliance. Congratulations to the CIC and of course to Neil and Sian for all the hard work both in front of and behind the scenes.

You may have noticed the work which Tim Crane has carried out for the Parish Council in the Queens Gardens. The Hazels on the bank have been coppiced and will no doubt soon be showing signs of fresh growth. There has also been some general tidying and thinning.

Sadly the bamboo, which screened the Viper site, had overgrown its situation. With the help of the CIC and their contractors this has now been rectified and a new hedge planted. This was carried out at the same time as the final improvements to the new car park for the Bistro. This is a welcome addition for those using yet another successful enterprise in Etchingham. Our thanks go to Sue Westbrook's persistence in arranging for the recycling bins there which supplement the household collections.

Etchingham has had its own website for some time. It has however now been revamped and congratulations have already been received on its ease of use and information contained. Our thanks to Councillor Colin Boylett who has taken on this project and produced such a professional and informative website. Councillor Paul Gilbert also made a substantial and conscientious contribution to parish projects. Unfortunately for us work has prevented him from continuing and following his resignation we have been joined by Geoffrey Lucas.

Finally I take this opportunity to thank all those of you who contribute to the wellbeing and prosperity of Etchingham in whatever way small or large.

A handwritten signature in red ink that reads "Mary Varrall". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial 'M'.

Mary Varrall – Chair of Etchingham Parish Council

## **Rother District Council Report, April 2013**

The funding climate remains extremely challenging. The Government grant to the Council has been cut by around 30% over the last two years and with further cuts in grants coming over the next two years, Rother will need to find an additional £1.5 million of savings.

This is on top of the almost £2 million savings found in the last two years through a range of measures; these include shedding over 30 staff, selling buildings and sharing office space, investing in new technology, devolving some services and working jointly with other councils and partners.

It is likely any further savings will start to impact on the 60 services the council offers. Councillors will have to face some very challenging decisions soon about further staff losses and making funding cuts in services.

We recently signed a Joint Waste Contract with Hastings, Eastbourne and Wealden Councils. This will provide the authorities with a common waste contractor and save all parties a combined £30 million over the next ten years. It will not start in Rother until 2014. The new contract will actually enhance the amount of recycling that can be done. More information will be available nearer the time.

Despite the funding climate, Rother continues to run its Community Grant Scheme which gives grants to community projects and good causes, especially in rural areas. Last year the Jubilee Grants Scheme helped Etchingham by aiding funding of the Church's Medieval Banquet and the Improvement Committee's purchase of Jubilee mugs for the children of the village.

The Council have ring-fenced a grant of £50,000 towards the community facilities recently granted planning permission on the Lambing Field.

The efficiency of the council is demonstrated by having the lowest Council Tax in East Sussex. This will remain frozen for another year.

A key player in the regeneration of the district, Rother has supported East Sussex County Council with their construction of the Bexhill to Hastings Link Road. This will have wider economic benefits for the district, as the road will provide an estimated 1,500 new homes and 50,000 sq m of business space.

Mary Barnes – Rother District Councillor

## County Councillor's Report April 2013

Probably the most satisfying thing to report on this year is the continued progress towards delivering a new school, village hall(s) and playgroup facility for the Village. At the then Chairman of the Parish Council's invitation I chaired the working group looking for the right site in the mid 1990s and shortly after I joined the County Council in 1997 had the chagrin of seeing any prospect of a replacement school go because we had not got a site. By the time the chance came round again, we had a site but the then Government imposed rules that meant the school did not qualify for Government funding. Fortunately County agreed that they would look at replacing it off programme, and I am grateful to the relevant cabinet members, Councillors Elkin and Glazier for ensuring that County made a major financial commitment to ensure the project could go ahead. County has been more than generous towards the other elements of the joint project and it now looks as if we are on course to get the new facilities by September next year. This project is an excellent example of partnership working and the Parish Council and the Etchingham Trust have worked closely with County and Church to deliver facilities fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Working together with the Parish Council and County, I believe that we have gone a long way to resolve the problems caused by commuter parking in the village, and in the course of that work we were also able to move one of the bus stops from its very dangerous position opposite the Church. Another campaign, masterminded by Uplands parents, was taken on petition to the relevant cabinet Member, but I am afraid was only partially successful. We were able to secure that the bus would continue to run, but we were not able to secure any abatement of what I regard as an exorbitant cost. Another small victory was securing an extension of the gritting route to the wireworks. Finally, potholes have been an abiding concern and while we have had three times the number of gangs at work and have filled more than 7,000 holes in January and February, the prevailing bad weather has meant that these repairs have often been very temporary. I think the incoming Council will need to look very carefully at whether we are really getting value for money. The good news, however, is that we are going to devote some £15 million a year in capital spend on resurfacing roads and we have a new technique in place which enable us to recycle roads in situ. We should see a major improvement in our roads therefore over the next few years. The latest good news is the Government's agreement to provide £56 million towards the cost of building the Bexhill-Hastings Link Road. There were pessimists who thought this would never happen, but County's determination in pursuing the project will result in hundreds of new houses and thousands of new jobs, all of them in a part of the local economy that is one of the most economically deprived areas in Britain. Another success story is the incinerator at Newhaven, which means that we are almost at the end of any requirement for landfill, let alone land raise. We speak of incineration, but virtually everything that goes into the incinerator is recycled, even the ash, which is treated and goes back into road construction.

Much of what has happened has to be put in a wider context. The expenditure on the new school and on roads form part of a four year programme of capital expenditure that will total in all £491 million. The aim is to kick start the revival of the East Sussex economy and strengthen the business base. Since business taxation is a key part of Council finances, this should enable County to hold Council Tax down over the next three to four years, something that we are determined to do given the large part of our population which lives on fixed incomes, while others are seeing very little income from their savings.

We are able to do this because of the way we built reserves in the good years, but increased capital spending goes alongside reductions in current expenditure. We are, as everyone will know, in the front line as far as reductions in Government expenditure are concerned. We are putting IT to good use in what is called in current jargon, agile working, and that means we are able to reduce our property bill. Switching out the street lights in the small hours is another relatively painless economy, and we see the first signs, several million pounds worth, from partnership working across the Counties and Boroughs of the South East. A good example is the way in which Surrey and East Sussex have come together with a view to driving down the cost of procurement by £15 million and the Districts will tell you of what is going to be achieved by the new Waste partnership. I am glad to be able to point also to the way that changes in our style of working are achieving better results and costing us less. Targeting problem families has meant a substantial reduction in the number of children referred to social services – good for the families and children concerned, but also good for taxpayer. Again by helping 11,752 people stay in their own homes, we can keep them from residential care or, what is still more expensive, a hospital bed. It would be silly to pretend that taking another £19 million out of our current spending in the coming year will not involve real reductions in service, but we are doing our level best to ensure that we can still cope with the problems faced by the most vulnerable in the community. What is more, by helping carers and by giving more people packages which are more under their own control, we are almost certainly spending a limited sum of money more effectively.

We have just taken over Public Health from the NHS, but we already have a Health and Well Being Strategy in place and are working closely with the new Clinical Commissioning Groups to ensure that wherever it is beneficial, we commission services jointly. Together we are making £3 million available to organisations, which provide services designed to strengthen local communities.

Etchingam can be proud of its school and playgroup, but across the County, we are committed to raising standards still further: now that schools are much less under our direct control, we shall have to do so in partnership with local communities. We need to raise expectations and make sure that teachers and parents alike realise that good early years provision and schools can make a major difference to children's lives. I am pleased to be able to tell you that across the County, 77 per cent of 11 year olds achieved level 4 or better in both Maths and English, the best result to date in East Sussex and 5 percentage points up on 2011. We are also committed to a national campaign to help young people to make informed choices about their future career.

There are difficult times ahead. We have to cut our current spend by £60 millions in the next three years, but we have already plans in place to achieve those savings in the least damaging way. We have an outstanding team of officers and the way in which our services are run in East Sussex means that we can be confident of continuing to deliver high quality services. We shall continue to be innovative and to work with partners to keep our costs down as far as it is possible to do so. Those who serve you on the County Council can say, without any fear of contradiction, that it now ranks as one of the very best local authorities in the country, and that is something of which we can all be proud.

John Barnes - East Sussex County Councillor



## **Report to Annual Assembly 2013**

We have come a long way in the last year. As a result of County's decision to make provision for a £5.5 million building project in their capital budget, parallel negotiations were set in train which resulted in an agreement with the landowners to provide a site, contingent on planning permission, an agreement between the landowners and Millwoods to develop the enabling housing, and the detailed design of shared facilities to the satisfaction of the School and Parish Council as well as ETSR.

Another village survey took place in August 2012, the results of which were published at a subsequent Parish Meeting on the 30<sup>th</sup> August and questions answered.

A pre-planning consultation organised by Millwoods took place in October 2012 in both the school and village hall. All the stakeholders were present and a substantial number of villagers saw the plans in depth and made detailed comments. A full summary of those comments and the resulting changes was conveyed to both Parish and District Councils and made public.

In December 2012 County produced a newsletter for the village responding to all the questions that had been raised at the pre-consultation. A planning application was submitted to Rother District Council in November 2012 and that is published on the District Council website as Planning Application RR/2012/2326/P.

The Parish Council held a special meeting on the 9<sup>th</sup> January 2013 where the plans were discussed. Subsequently the Parish Council have written in support for the project to the District Council. The Project Board collectively and the Trustees also wrote to give the project their full support.

While all this was going on ETSR, together with the Parish Council took part in detailed talks with the Diocese about the heads of terms of a 125 year lease on the small hall and ancillary facilities, the recording studio and rehearsal room, and on arrangements for shared access and use of the main hall and various other facilities. While they are not yet finalised, broad agreement on the terms of the lease has been reached.

Simultaneously talks between ETSR, the School, Parish Council and Diocese have resulted in a Joint Management Agreement and a Joint Management Committee to operate the two halls, recording studio and rehearsal room. Again there is substantial agreement on both the composition of the Committee and the terms of the agreement, although clearly nothing can be finally agreed until all contracts are in place.

While ETSR in common with the Parish Council and the community more generally would have liked to see more affordable or low cost housing as part of the 21 house proposal put to Rother, detailed study of the economics of the scheme convinced all concerned that the number and mix of the houses was required to enable the site to be brought forward and a substantial gift made which would enable the project to be realised. Clearly it is no part of our role to reach a judgment, but I would want to make clear that we are well aware of and grateful for the generosity of the landowner in these matters.

The grant of planning permission by unanimous decision of its planning committee on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2013 means that we now have to make speedy progress to finalise all the necessary agreements in order to allow the builders to make a start in July 2013. We shall be having the final meetings on the design and specification early in May 2013. We have conducted a business planning exercise to ensure that the new facilities are sustainable.

Local fundraising has continued, the latest events being a '70s evening' at the Bistro, for which we are grateful to Peter Benn and Linda Cox and a Quiz Night. Our thanks go to Terry (quiz master) and the Evertsz family for their help and support on the night. A fundraising sub-committee chaired by Nicky Menzies is responsible for community events and we look forward to the Barn Dance on the 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2013 which they are organising at Burgham Farm. We would like to thank the Newingtons for allowing us again to use their barn for an event. If anyone wishes to get involved in helping with these events please do contact Nicky Menzies - [nicky@homebirth.net](mailto:nicky@homebirth.net).

The County Council have kindly guaranteed the price at which the buildings will be available to us and clearly large scale fundraising can and must now take place. Caroline Moore and Bob Hodgson are taking charge of that effort, and much research earlier undertaken by Sue Westbrook has now been updated and more work is in train.

What we have is an extremely cost-effective project that will deliver what the village asked of us so far as indoor sports facilities, theatricals, and a venue for events all kinds is concerned. There will also be space available for farmers markets and similar events. We hope that once this first phase is complete, we shall be able to deliver in a further phase the outdoor sports facilities that the village also needs. In very broad terms we need to raise something of the order of £900,000, but thanks to the generosity of the landowner and others, we are already a long way towards the final figure. We are looking to raise not less than £200k from Charitable Trusts, Foundations and other funding bodies, and have set ourselves a target for more local funding of £100,000.

My thanks must go not simply to my fellow Trustees, very grateful though I am for their continuing efforts, but to all those, some of them now gone, who have for a decade and a half kept this project alive and kicking and can now see it near fruition. There have been many frustrations along the way, but I am pleased now to tell the village that we are on track to have facilities that any village would be proud to have and that with only a modicum of luck with the weather, they will be there for you in the autumn of 2014.



## Friends Of Burwash Surgery

The Friends of Burwash Surgery came into being 20 years ago when the new Fairfield Surgery was completed. It was formed to assist patients who do not have their own transport to attend hospital appointments when they do not qualify for hospital transport, attend doctor's appointments and collect prescriptions when needed.

This service, of course, depends entirely on the availability of volunteer drivers and the Friends are extremely fortunate to have a collection of very willing and obliging drivers. Naturally, with the passing of time we lose some of these people so we are always looking for replacements.

It doesn't matter if you only have, say, mornings or afternoons or just one or two days in the week free to help. You can give these details on the form and you will only be contacted for any relevant journey which you may be able to cover. Obviously, the more names there are on the list the less frequently anyone will be contacted. Mileage can be claimed at 45p per mile for any trip undertaken and car insurance is not affected as this is a voluntary service you are giving.

The Friends also support the Fairfield Surgery with various items which are not available on the National Health Service but which are invaluable in assisting in their care of the patients.

We also have a service of prescription collection once a week for residents of Etchingham who do not have easy access to the surgery.

If you are interested in helping fellow villagers or would like more details of this service **please** ring Jill Copland on 01580 819321 or drop in to Tollgate Cottage.



## **Children and young people and the recreation areas.**

In my capacity as Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and the Recreation Areas in the village, I provide a brief report to the Parish Council at monthly meetings.

The most important piece of news relating to the children in the village is the unanimous approval given by the Rother Planning Committee for the new school along with the community facility and enabling housing. The meeting was attended by representatives of all parties involved and some children from school, who were able to view democracy at work in the Council Chamber.

The children were thrilled by the positive outcome when staff relayed the good news and the classrooms resounded to the sound of cheering. The staff and parents know that a new building will provide the children with up to date facilities that they deserve and they have waited many years to see this come to fruition.

There will also be a much needed purpose built facility for the Etchingham Under 5's group. During the last year, the Parish Council have generously reduced the hire charge for the Hall to ease the financial burden for them. They continue to thrive under quite difficult circumstances.

Etchingham Under 5's has a strong relationship with the school and the school regards the success of the pre-school as critical to it's ongoing achievement.

The school's aim, as expressed in the prospectus, is that all pupils should 'learn to love learning'. This is achieved through various initiatives such as the 'Raising Readers for Life Week', and the flexibility of the 'stage not age' system when applied to Maths and Phonics.

The 'Shake, Rattle and Roll' music workshop gave all years the opportunity to learn through fun.

The partnership with Bodiam C. of E. School continues to be completely focused on improving the quality of learning and teaching for all pupils in both schools. They hold several events each year linked with Learning Journeys. These take the form of workshops in which various year groups participate on both sites.

The Queen's Garden and the VIPER Play Area continue to be well used by the young folk (and the not so young folk!) in the village. The dangerous bamboo has been removed from the boundary fence of the VIPER ground and replanted, making the area both safer and tidier.

The play equipment in both areas is inspected annually and maintenance work carried out as required.

Annette Childs  
Etchingham Parish Council



# ETCHINGHAM

De Etchingham CIC

## Village Car Park and Wild Flower Garden

The Sussex Courier quite rightly described the old coal yard beside Etchingham Station as an “Old Eyesore”. This year saw it transformed into a garden and useful car park for the Bistro, village and Shop & Deli.

After months of negotiation and jumping through hoops the Etchingham Community Interest Company managed to obtain all the necessary consents to landscape the area and open it for the benefit of the community.

Working with Southeastern the land was cleared and replanted with new trees, shrubs and wild flowers were planted on the now affectionately called “Teletubby” mounds. The whole area had to be decontaminated because of its previous use before a gravel service could be laid for car parking.

There are now glass re-cycling bins available and the CIC would like to thank everyone for keeping this area tidy.

The fear of commuters using the car park has been managed by keeping it locked until after the rush hour and locking the main gate when the Bistro isn't open. The pedestrian gates are left open the rest of the time.

A boules pitch has been created and fencing surrounding the area completes the new look. Southeastern has resurfaced several of the pathways to and from the Station and a new Etchingham Station “totem” pole including a Bistro@theStation sign will be erected during April.

Finally the CIC worked with the Parish Council to remove the overgrown bamboo in the Viper Park plus repair the surface and fencing of this popular playground.

We would like to thank Peter Baldock and his team at English Heritage Gardens for their inspired design, planting and continued maintenance of this area.



Boules Pitch and Car Park – April 2012

## ETCHINGHAM CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL REPORT

Numbers have fluctuated between 100 and 105 throughout the current academic year.

Our informal partnership with Bodiam Church of England Primary School has continued to work very well to the obvious advantage of the children in both schools. In particular, the not insignificant savings from shared administration costs has released money to the front line e.g. to maintain expert sports coaching.

Both schools have experienced good OFSTED inspections in the past year. We are now dedicated to trying to achieve an "outstanding" award at our next inspection in about two and a half years' time.

Our reception class for September, 2013 is already fully booked at 15 children; but, of course, we should find room for one or two more, as long as they lived in the village.

Importantly, all leavers in July 2012 achieved entry into the secondary school of their/their parents' choice. We hope to achieve the same this summer and every summer here-after.

What concerns me far more is the availability of a choice of acceptable secondary places and the transport cost of attending them.

There being no grammar schools in East Sussex, the "choice" consists of achieving virtually 100% in the entry tests to enrol in a grammar school in Kent. This is clearly a far from satisfactory situation. The sooner we have a proper grammar school stream in at least two local secondary schools in East Sussex, the better!

At present, only Robertsbridge is available and it, far from having a "grammar" stream, does not even have a 6th form! Parents who want their children to attend such a school therefore have to opt for Uplands in Wadhurst.

The problem with this is that East Sussex County Education Department charge parents over £500 per child per annum to use the bus from Etchingham, whereas Kent charges only £100 per child for the longer journey from Tunbridge Wells!

Our County Councillor has been continuously beating the door of the East Sussex County Transport Department to rectify this gross inequity; but so far, with only limited success:-i.e. he has succeeded in saving the bus service( which the County Transport Department planned to discontinue altogether from last September!) and in preserving its direct route via Flimwell ( which the the County planned to divert through

Hawkhurst, Kent!) but not, as yet, to get the price reduced to a reasonable level,

We are still fighting this. Watch this space!

On a more cheerful note on 14th March, Rother District Council unanimously granted the planning consent for our new school buildings, which we are therefore now confident will be open for our occupation in September 2014.

These buildings will include a new, purpose-built facility for the Under-Fives and plumbing for a new swimming pool; but the County won't pay for the construction of the latter. So it is up to the parents and other well-wishers (such as the writer) to encourage the Friends of Etchingam School to come up with the funds as soon as they can. Clearly, it would be optimal if this facility were also available from September 2014, though it could, of course, if necessary, be added later. If the community can afford a bubble as well, it would clearly make the pool available more frequently.

I have consulted the County-appointed architect-Stuart Eatock- who tells me that the sooner we decide to commission the new pool, the less it will cost. Therefore, it now needs some-one to take this project by the scruff of the neck and push it to a successful conclusion.

There is no doubt that such a pool would be a substantial cachet to our new development; but, more importantly, if it saved even one life over the next 50 years, it will have been well worth the comparatively trivial cost.

Swimming will as usual be available on the present school site this summer, subject only to weather, and, provided the present pool survives, in Summer 2014 as well, i.e. the fear that the pool might have to be closed to accommodate the Under-Fives temporarily now looks very unlikely indeed.

Geoff. Lucas  
Chair of Governing Body



## Bistro@the station

The Bistro is now three years old and goes from strength to strength. The success of the Bistro is a joint effort lead by Paul and Julie Collins who run the business and work hard to make it a valuable and enjoyable asset for the village of Etchingham. Another group of unsung heroes at the Bistro are Peter Baldock and his team at English Heritage Gardens who keep the garden looking beautiful and now also look after the car park and garden. The Etchingham Community Interest Company remains involved constantly updating the infrastructure, liaising with South Eastern and taking responsibility for marketing and PR. Here are a few highlights from 2012:

- The installation of a fabulous wooden gazebo with a tiled roof as per English Country Gardens' original design – initially intended as the “smoking department” the building has already proved useful for BBQs and garden parties, particularly in the rain.
- We now have Bridge@theBistro, Beauty@theBistro and Boules@theBistro with a Boules pitch in the car park (instructions and equipment available for free)
- Art Exhibitions – there is a continual turnaround of artwork on show and available for sale from local artists including the Burwash Monday Painters
- Queen's Jubilee – the Bistro opened for food following the village photo in the Queen's Garden and we are delighted to report it proved very popular and by the end of the evening the only food left was the odd bacon roll!
- Bistro Olympics – to join in the Olympic fever which gripped the country last summer the Bistro held its own Olympics on Saturday 28 July
- Farewell to Liz France – the Parochial Church Council chose the Bistro as the venue for a party for our departing vicar, Liz France. The sun shone at just the right times for a fabulous send off when over 50 people enjoyed paella and said a fond farewell to a popular personality.
- Increased employment opportunities – Lucy Kneller who has worked at the Bistro for nearly two years is now attending a VRQ Food Preparation catering course at Sussex Coast College sponsored by the CIC. Lucy has always loved cooking and will now have a recognised qualification to help her catering career.
- Saturday Opening – customer demand has now built up sufficiently for the Bistro to open on Saturdays both at lunchtime and in the evening as from April 2013 – the momentum keeps rolling.

For more information or to book the Bistro for a private party call Paul Collins on 01580 819262.

# ETCHINGHAM MUSIC FESTIVAL

The Music Festival is now in its 26th year and is held annually from the first Saturday in July. This year the Festival will be held from 6th July until the 14th July. All concerts are held in the Parish Church and we are very fortunate that our lovely 14th century church has wonderful acoustics.

The main aims of the festival are to bring exciting and varied music of high quality to our rural community and to encourage young and promising musicians. Many of the latter have gone on to perform internationally to great acclaim.

Last year's Festival was well attended by residents from Etchingham and surrounding villages and we managed to make a small profit. For this reason we have not asked the Parish Council for a grant this year.

We hope that our audience will enjoy this year's programme which ranges from jazz to opera, a 17th century masque, a piano recital and a quartet. Our final concert will be a free concert on Sunday 14th with donations going to the fabric fund of Etchingham Church. Last year we managed to raise £400 for the church.

We hope that we have provided a programme to suit all tastes this year and that many of you will be able to join us.

The Festival Committee:

Mary Newington  
Brian Hilton  
Marie Niven



## Churchwarden's report to the Annual Parochial Church AGM 2013

I would like to begin by thanking everyone who helped to make the Medieval Banquet such a success. Planning this began in the early part of the summer and was to form part of the Queen's Jubilee celebrations, but also, importantly for Etchingham, an opportunity to mark the 650th anniversary of our church. The project manager was Jill Driver who taught us the wisdom of educating our potential ticket purchasers with a series of newsletters, hand delivered to the entire parish, describing life in medieval England and also giving more modern, useful information about, for example, where costumes could be obtained. The idea was to raise awareness of the treat in store. Our thanks to Barbarann and Frank Smith for their skill and expertise and also Bracons for printing all the newsletters.

The menu was carefully researched by Annette Childs and Peter Benn and was as near authentic as modern food handling regulations would allow. A word of thanks also to Paulette Barton who with a touch of genius managed to make the village hall trestle tables look like oak!

Thank you to everyone who turned up to help before and on the day. The church looked wonderful- and of course we still have the heraldic banners- thanks to Carole Jacobs and all her helpers. Long may they last as they're still much admired.

Many photographs were taken during the evening and can be seen on Colin Boylett's link on line. The Queens Jubilee Week saw us return three days later for a concert of music from the West End shows of 1952-3. This was put together by Courtney Kenny, who in addition to training the Etchingham Singers, found three outstanding soloists and added a few hilarious songs of his own. The concert was followed by a delicious homemade tea.

We are now beginning another huge project, and meetings, again led by Jill Driver, began in October to found Friends of Etchingham Church. The aim is to fund a complete programme of redecoration which will cost many thousands of pounds.

We were able to find enough money this year to have the church rewired.

We knew in early summer that Liz France would be leaving us in late August after just over two and a half years as our vicar, but nevertheless it was very hard to say goodbye as so many good things happened while she was with us. They are now happily settled into Stephen's new parish in London.

Phillip's 3rd play, eagerly awaited was performed on December 8th, as they say in the trade- "to critical acclaim", and I'm only mentioning this here because speaking personally I'm glad my husband, John was unrecognisable as Ecce the barbarian!

Despite the interregnum we had a full programme of Christmas services. Geoff and I are so grateful to all the retired clergy who have made it possible to hold a service here every week, but we are especially grateful to Peter and Jackie Clark who drive over from Hailsham so often to be with us. They have been a tower of strength to our community and they were with us during the dark days that followed Christmas with Barry Brissenden's sudden death.

In Barry's memory we are establishing a collection of books of prayer and meditation to be used as a resource by those leading intercessions.

The Women's World day of Prayer service on March 1st was hosted by Etchingham and at this ecumenical service, we were joined by ladies from surrounding villages. Our speaker, Lee Athwall spoke movingly on the subject of "I was a stranger and you welcomed me" of the plight of those who sleep rough out in the cold in Tunbridge Wells and how the churches there have got together to provide warmth and shelter for them during the winter months..

Attendances at our Sunday services remain high. From now until the Autumn we begin at 10,30am and as a break from Holy Communion services each Sunday, we hold a non-communion Family Service on the second Sunday of the month

Can I end by thanking everyone who give generously to our church, both financially and with their time. It is so appreciated, thank you everyone.

Mary Barnes



# Etchingham Shop & Deli

The Etchingham Shop & Deli opened for business on Thursday 31 May 2013. From the moment that Mary Varrall, Leader of the Parish Council cut the ribbon the shop and deli has gone from strength to strength appealing to people in the village, neighbouring villages, weekenders and passing drivers alike.

Following the closure of the previous shop the Etchingham Community Interest Company set about raising the funding and renovating the building to open a new shop and deli. The first task was to survey the village at the end of 2011 and nearly 50% responded. The results showed that 95% said there should be shop in the village. However, securing the funding was a bumpy ride. Originally turned down by WARR (Wealden and Rother Rural Partnership) the Directors of the CIC were asked to present their plans to a packed meeting and managed to get the decision reversed. The Parish Council then stepped in to purchase the building and with additional support from private sponsors the project got off the ground.

Here are a few highlights of the new Shop & Deli:

- Neil and Sian Cotterill agreed to manage the business
- The shop & deli was rebuilt and stocked in double quick time (3 months)
- Won the 2012 Countryside Alliance Start-up Award in the South East of England!

## Produce and Services

The Etchingham Shop & Deli has quickly established itself at the centre of the community with:

- Organic produce and extensive deli counter
- Fresh fish counter on Friday and Saturday
- Popular – Take out Thursdays
- Neil's famous sausage rolls, luxury fish pie and many other goodies
- Sian's fabulous cakes
- Locally made bread and other produce
- Kiddies Corner

The first 10 months of the new Shop and Deli has been a whirlwind including Neil and Sian organising the first Etchingham Duck Race. This is the ideal opportunity to thank Etchingham and the Parish Council for its support.



Mary Varrall, Leader of the Parish Council, opening the shop & deli in 2012

# Etchingam Village Website

[www.etchinghamvillage.co.uk](http://www.etchinghamvillage.co.uk)

The site is provided by the Parish Council for village residents to find out what the Council is doing, it is also the main information base for ETSR, with updates on the school/hall project. It is intended that the site should become a “one-stop” location for residents, visitors and potential new residents to find out more about the village, local events, organisations, clubs and businesses.

Parish Council agendas are posted on the site about a week before the meeting date, minutes of meetings will appear as soon as they have been approved at the next meeting. Contact details for Councillors are easily found, and full details of Council Policies and Procedures and Newsletters.

Regular weekly reports from Battle Police are posted when they are received as well as other community safety information. Contact details and information for Police and other safety organisations, details of village groups and organisations, local events, photos and local business information can also be found.

If you are on Facebook, go to the website’s page <http://www.facebook.com/EtchingamWebsitePage> if you ‘Like’ the page you will get details of new items added to the website, in your Facebook Newsfeed, with a link to the page on the website.

If your group or organisation is not on the site, you have spotted errors or have an idea for extra content, let me know, any comments should be emailed to [etchinghamvillagewebsite@gmail.com](mailto:etchinghamvillagewebsite@gmail.com) ,or use the ‘Contact Webmaster’ link at the bottom of the home Page.

If you do not have internet access, you can still get your information added to the website by delivering to 2 Park Farm Close, Etchingam or telephone; 01580 819532 – 07941 786244

Cllr. Colin Boylett, Website updating.

## COMMUNITY SAFETY

I keep in touch with PCSO Tom McAspurn and receive regular updates from Sussex Police, when important information is received I post the details on the Village website, and when appropriate pass the details to Nicky to send out on the E-Bulletin.

If you have Policing matters you would like to discuss with Tom, you can contact him direct.

Mobile; 07810813409     [thomas.mcaspurn@sussex.pnn.police.uk](mailto:thomas.mcaspurn@sussex.pnn.police.uk)

Or phone **101** and ask to be put in touch with PCSO McAspurn.

Tom has regular “Meet and Greet” sessions at the Bistro, look out for details on the Police Notice Board outside Queen’s Garden, details will also appear on the village website.

Remember, if you need the Police and it is not an emergency the number to call is now **101**, this number should be used for all incidents where an immediate response is not required.

AS ALWAYS - - IN AN EMERGENCY **999**

### **Flood alerts and warnings**

The majority of Etchingham residents are not too badly affected when the rivers flood, but there are a number of properties in the village that are at risk when the water levels rise, as we found out quite dramatically in October 2000, when several low lying properties suffered severe flooding.

Those living in flood risk zones are able to register with the Environment Agency to receive warnings when flooding is expected, so they have time to take measures to protect their property.

I am registered with the Environment Agency to receive the warnings, on behalf of Parish Council, when I receive warnings I post the details on the village website and several village Facebook pages and pass the details on to Nicky to send out in the E-Bulletin. The warnings are in three levels, ‘Flood Alert’ means there is a possibility of flooding, be prepared. ‘Flood Warning’ means flooding is expected, immediate action required. ‘Severe Flood Warning’ means severe flooding is expected with possible danger to life and property.

During the winter we had four alerts, but luckily no warnings.

If you have any queries regarding flood alerts, you are welcome to contact me.

Cllr. Colin Boylett, Community Safety and Police Liaison.

## *We welcome a new Village Group*

We have recently formed a new social group in the village, following the closure of the Etchingham W I in Dec. 2012

Called the Rother Valley Ladies Group, we meet on the first Wednesday in the month sometimes in the village hall, for talks, discussions, and tea, or for organised outings and lunches.

A copy of our schedule for 2013 is on the Post Office notice board.

We look forward to welcoming new members, so please join us on May 1st at 2.30 at 2.30 in the village hall.

## *Y E S Youth Group*

Sadly the Youth Club is not currently meeting at the Village Hall, mainly because of staffing problems. However, it is hoped that when the new community facilities are available next year we will again be able to provide an exciting and stimulating venue for the young people of the village.

## Etchingham Under Fives

Established in the village over twenty years ago, 'Under Fives' is a charitable organisation dedicated to providing Early Years education and childcare for three and four year old children in our community. Led by Helen Packham, Pre-School Manager, a team of highly experienced and qualified staff provide warm-hearted, professional care and development of our pre-primary age children, preparing them for a flying start in the Etchingham Church of England Primary School and others. We operate in the existing Village Hall but will move, with the Primary School, to the new school buildings in September, 2014. We always need help, so if you are interested in working with us or making a donation, please contact Belinda Jenness, Chairperson of the Trustees, through Helen on 07528 219825. If you would like to discuss your childcare needs, please contact Helen on the same number.

