

# ***ETCHINGHAM***

## ***Annual Report 2014***



**Annual Parish Meeting**

**Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> April 2014**

**7.30pm**

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

## ***Etchingam Parish Council***

### Chairman's report 2013-2014

2013 to 2014 has been, as we would expect, another busy year for Etchingam Parish Council. Much of our meeting time at the beginning of the council year was taken up with the discussion and approval of the weighty documents for the new hall. As that progressed we moved on to gain planning permission for redevelopment of the old hall site and its subsequent marketing and, as can now be seen in large red letters outside the hall, its sale. The 2014 Annual Parish Meeting will be the last meeting to be held in the old hall. Unfortunately it has not been possible to realise a completion date for the sale to coincide with occupation of the new hall and until the new hall is available meetings will take place elsewhere. Due to regulations regarding council meetings in licensed premises we will unfortunately be unable to use the Club or the Bistro for public meetings but hopefully we will meet in the Church for the next few months.

Red tape and the unusual nature of the complexity of the project did result in a delayed start time for the Developers on the Lambing Field and the dreadful wet weather experienced this last winter has aggravated that delay. We do however hope that we will have the new facilities by the end of 2014. The Developers are doing their best now to move the project on and we just hope for lots of good weather. They are also doing a good job so far of keeping disruption to a minimum and keeping mud off the road. There will be traffic delays over the next few weeks as services are connected, but for us locals it will probably help towards traffic calming for the village.

We have had limited success in making the village safer so far as traffic is concerned. The parking restrictions have removed some of the dangerous sites but we all acknowledge there are still problems particularly on weekdays caused by inconsiderate parking along the High Street. This item will be on the agenda for discussion at the Annual Parish Meeting. What is needed is for reporting of all incidents witnessed as evidence to obtain further restrictions through ESCC Highways.

The Speedwatch group now operating in the village is becoming very efficient in recording speeding cars through the village. You have been warned. A good number of letters have been sent to culprits to date. Our thanks to Colin Boylett and the volunteers in this group for the time they give to this.

The Council has this year been able to return to some of the other matters requiring constant attention in the village. I hope you have noticed the new and repaired fingerposts around the Parish. This is the joint result of match funding from East Sussex County Council and in one case joint working with Ticehurst Parish. These posts are an accepted part of our lovely local landscape.

An inventory has been taken of all seats and litter bins too. Those needing it will receive attention in the summer months. In the Queens Gardens the surfaces around the play equipment will be receiving attention too. Over time the ground has sunk and some trip hazards have arisen. This will mean there will be a short period when the equipment will be unavailable but hopefully this will not be in school holidays.

I am pleased that we were again able to organise a Village Spring Clean this year. A small but hard working group met at the Bistro for bacon rolls before setting out with black bags, work gloves and wearing florescent jackets. A large number of full black bags were duly taken away

later in the day. From the nature of the rubbish collected I suspect that a great deal is not the result of residents in our Parish being untidy. However I would encourage you all to take pride in your village and not be afraid to pick up rubbish at any time. I would also like to make a further request that if you have a hedge which grows out onto the pavement, to keep it regularly cut. The pavements are well used in the village and what's more should not be used for parking on or driving over.

We are fortunate in Etchingam to have a good number of clubs, organisations and local businesses, considering our size of population. I would encourage you to support our local shops and post office. As transport becomes more expensive we value them more and more. The Bistro is not merely a service for commuters but along with the Club is a recognised meeting place for social occasions. It has been possible to make alternative arrangements for clubs and organisations to meet in the period until the new hall is available when I hope the wonderful new hall facilities will encourage more organisations to set up or at least reinvigorate other groups. The new hall will also mean a different form of management for that facility and I would like to record here thanks to all who have helped to maintain the old hall which served Etchingam so well even over the last few difficult years.

The Parish Council has been able to help several organisations in the past through its budget and the precept i.e. monies received through the Council Tax. I am grateful to our Clerk Bob Hodgson for the work he does in this respect, along with all his other duties and challenges. The good news is that a forward budget for the next five years has been prepared and as a result, as this year, there is no planned increase in the Parish precept over that period.

Finally I would like to thank my Vice Chair Annette Childs, and the other five councillors for their support and cooperation in dealing with Parish matters as efficiently as possible.

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

Mary Varrall – Chair of Etchingam Parish Council

## Rother District Council Report, April 2014

Since 2010, Rother has had to become more and more adept at coping with a steadily reducing budget. This year-2014-15- has seen a reduction of £750,000, with a cut of £610,000 coming in 2015-16. Our Council is for the first time cutting into its assets.

Despite this, Rother has the lowest council tax in Rother, with no rise planned for this year.

The Council has been forced to develop strategies to maintain services . This has sadly taken its toll on Rother's staff; around 60 posts have been deleted since 2010. A programme of devolving assets and services has seen some public toilets, car parks and allotments now run by parish councils while the new Joint Waste Contract with Hastings, Eastbourne and Wealden Councils is to roll out in June. A new Corporate Plan is to be prepared by Councillors over the next few months which may further impact on services by the way they are delivered and who delivers them.

The result of the Core Strategy examination is expected soon; we have had to find more houses for the District than we had envisaged originally and the Inspector is yet to pronounce that she's now satisfied with the revised numbers. The 21 new houses on the Lambing Field in Etchingam will help considerably towards our quota, but some parishes have seen the addition of many more houses than they would have liked.

The permission to build the Bexhill Link Road has meant 1500 new houses and 50,000 sq m of business space will be available in north east Bexhill. Without that there would have been much greater pressure on the villages.

The Planning department is seeing a rise of about 10% in applications. This is good news for the local economy. Between April and December 2013 60% of major developments got a decision in 13 weeks- average for English local authorities and individual householders get a decision between 56 and 59 days from application. The Planning Department now offers a (paid for) pre-application advice service which should mean better quality and finished applications coming through.

This is a roller-coaster ride of a time to be in local government and "thinking smart" has become the order of the day. There will be changes to services, but it's to be hoped they will be for the better.

Mary Barnes – Rother District Councillor

## County Councillor's Report April 2014

The County Council continues to be in the front line of Government action to reduce the deficit. With all major parties committed to balance the budget, at least so far as current spending is concerned and the National Debt still mounting that is not likely to change before the end of the decade. Although continuing to look to share services and find more cost effective ways of working, particularly making better use of IT, there is no way of making the necessary reductions without affecting front line services, whether in small ways (the Wadhurst domestic waste site will open only at weekends) or large (spending to look after the vulnerable elderly at home will be capped at the level we pay for residential care). In general County now commissions rather than provides services since we find that gives better value for money, but it continues to innovate. Extra care homes like the one at Ticehurst have proved a major success and are able to cope with the early stages of dementia, a growing problem for East Sussex. The Thrive programme aimed at problem families has reduced the numbers of children taken into care and we are proud of the fact that all our Children's services are now rated good and our adoption service is outstanding. East Sussex is now in the forefront nationally and the only Children's authority with an outstanding ranking.

Last year we had to make £15 million savings and this year we will deliver savings double that amount with a further £15 million to follow in 2015/16. For four years we have not increased Council Tax, but we face a number of unexpected pressures this year, many of them the result of Government actions. We considered the possibility of accepting the Government's 'freeze' grant, but it is what is known as a specific grant and is not therefore consolidated into the base budget. The growing number of elderly (East Sussex has the most elderly in the country) is bound also to bring increased demand for our services. Reluctantly therefore all parties (East Sussex is a hung Council) decided that there was no alternative to raising Council tax this year by 1.94%, below the target rate for inflation, but an increase of 42p a week for a Band D household.

Every year we put contingency reserves in place in case the cuts we are making cannot be delivered within year. I am happy to be able to tell you that not only were the overall savings achieved, but we shall have a sizeable under spend overall to ease our task in the coming year. That leaves us with some one-off sums to spend, and after three bad winters, it seems right to tackle the poor state of our highways. As a result of an earlier decision to allocate £15 million a year in capital spending to them, the A and B roads are in a much better state. In March we approved a £40million investment over the next two years, £10 million of which will be targeted at unclassified roads. This is on top of £6.5 million set aside for the maintenance and improvement of pavements and highway drainage and £2.25 million approved for pothole repairs.

This week, the Government added a further £2,645,187 to the total as part of its £180 million fund to repair roads. While we will continue to tackle dangerous potholes within days, every pothole reported which needs attention will in future be tackled within a month rather than up to twelve months and many bad stretches of highway will be subject to what is called 'patching' i.e. a more extensive repair.

Because we were a prudent authority, building substantial reserves in the good times, we are able to boost East Sussex's economy by using those reserves. Our spending on capital projects, which will total more than £500 million when completed, is now delivering a solid boost to jobs and the economy. The biggest project, but far from the only one, is the Bexhill Link Road, and that will enable 1500 houses to be built as well as freeing up land for extensive business development, providing several thousand new jobs. We are rolling out the successful regeneration programme which concentrated initially on Hastings and Bexhill, to other parts of the County and I am proud to note that the second phase of the University Centre in Hastings, which was a major feature in our thinking, is now complete. Finally, after a bad hiccup while Europe considered the legality of the subsidy, the Rural Broadband project is rolling out and Etchingham will be an early beneficiary. About 96 per cent of all properties are likely to be covered, and County is considering what to do about the remainder.

Etchingham's greatest benefit from the capital programme was the County Council's decision to find just over £5 million to provide the village with a replacement school and dedicated playgroup facility. This major project was developed in partnership with the Parish Council and ETSR in order to provide new community facilities to the village. Construction will be completed this year. A side benefit of the whole project will be an extension of the 30 mph limit up the Straight Mile, backed by traffic calming measures. The Traffic Orders to deliver that are already in place and I am seeking early implementation.

These are far from easy times, but I am confident that we have one of the best managed Councils in the country and that it is continuing to address the major challenges we face in innovative ways that enable us to maintain the services vital to the people of East Sussex.

John Barnes - East Sussex County Councillor

## ***Etchingham Parish Council – Finance Report***

I am pleased to report that the Parish Council has not had to increase its Precept this year. The only increases come from East Sussex County Council, East Sussex Fire Authority and the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner. On a band D dwelling this amounts to 52p per week. I feel Etchingham have done very well as East Sussex County Council are building us a brand new Under 5's and Village School.

I would also like to update everyone on the Parish Council's application to the Public Works Loan Board. Last year the Parish Council had to make a commitment to East Sussex County Council for £500,000 towards the rebuild of the new Community Hall and larger School Hall. This was to be financed from an application to the PWLB. If the Parish Council had not made this commitment the entire project would have been put at risk of not going through.

After a better than expected tender offer on the old Village Hall, our request for a loan from the PWLB has been substantially reduced. All it needs now is a successful fund raising effort from the ETSR. For every £500 they raise for the new Community Hall it will mean that the Parish Council can reduce their borrowing from the PWLB by £500. Remember this loan repayment is going to be part of the Etchingham Precept for the next 50 years.

I therefore urge everyone to help in the ETSR's fundraising efforts over the coming months.

Cllr. Peter Benn, Portfolio Holder for Finance



## Report to Annual Assembly 2014

In the twelve months since last April, nearly a decade and a half's hard work by the Trustees and others has come to a climax, not without a hiccup or two along the way. As everyone will recall, at the time of the Trust's report to the last assembly, the planning process was under way, but nothing had been determined. Even though the scheme had been in the Local development Plan since 2005, the planners were concerned about the impact of the detailed scheme on the AONB and recommended refusal. In particular it was apparent that they wanted the housing confined to a much smaller footprint and suggested that this might be accomplished by the inclusion of flats. After some discussion, there was strong agreement between the Trust and the Parish Council that what was proposed was more in keeping with the village than the Officers' tentative suggestions and that flats, even if thought acceptable (few of us thought they were) would not sell. We were grateful to the village for a strong display of support not only when the planning committee came to look at the site, but also when the Planning Committee met at Bexhill. Mary Barnes made the case for the scheme which had been put to the village in the pre-consultation and modified in the light of what had been said, and it was pointed out in various representations that not only would planting minimise the visual intrusion on the AONB, but that it was not likely to impact on the Rother valley, a shared concern of the planners and ourselves. In the end the Planning Committee voted unanimously for the scheme, subject only to satisfactory Section 106 provisions. These took some months to be agreed and there was a further problem when the wrong permission was issued and lawyers had to rule on whether the scheme that had actually been agreed could go ahead in those circumstances. Fortunately the lawyers took the common-sense view. Although there was still the remote possibility of legal action over the diversion of the footpath and some way to go in securing the final agreement of the Highways Authority, it was finally decided that building could be begun, although the final agreements could not be signed until some way into the New Year.

We owe considerable thanks to Melanie Griffin, the County officer in overall charge of the project, and Jonathan Dall, the Project Officer, together with the legal team, the property team and a legal expert from Kent, whose services were put at the disposal of the Parish Council for steering everyone through what at times looked a legal morass. While the Trust did not achieve everything it wanted from a complex set of negotiations, chiefly in respect of exactly what would happen in the unlikely event of the demise or change in character of the school, it was extremely satisfied with the provision achieved for the community and the Joint Management Agreement with the school.

The Trust has a 125 year lease of the southernmost bay of the three bay building with provision for that to remain available to the community should the school go out of existence. It also has user rights governed by the Joint Management Agreement over the main hall out of school hours and the hall is of sufficient size and height for badminton and for other indoor sports. It has retractable Bleacher seating which will enable it to be rigged for theatre and film performances and the Trust will provide the necessary stage lighting, projector etc.

There is an excellent working relationship with the present Governors of the school and agreement that we shall look to maximise the use of both halls and minimise duplication and wasteful competition. However, looking ahead to the next century and a quarter it seemed necessary to draw up the agreement in such a way that if there was less amity down the line, disputes could be resolved amicably.

Since a surprisingly large part of the village population was not here when the whole process began in the 1990s, it is perhaps necessary to remind people that we owe a great deal to the Ahrens for their ready agreement to make the Lambing Field available and to join with the Trust in making an objection to the draft Local Development Plan with a view to securing the necessary amendments to it which made the whole project possible. Back in 2005 we were envisaging the possibility of lottery funding, but that is no longer available for village halls in general, let alone for what is thought to be a part of the wealthy South-East. Hence, the importance of a joint project with the replacement for our badly outdated school. A key part of that project is the provision of a dedicated playgroup facility which enables the regular use of the small hall for other groups during the day. It is probable that on some occasions the school will use the smaller of the two halls and the community the main hall during the day where that seems appropriate. Out of school hours both halls will be available to the community, including FES, and they can be used separately or in combination.

There will be time in the coming year to say thanks to the architects and engineers, but it is probably right here to say a word of thanks in particular to John Kay, who has worked with ECE architects to modify the design to accommodate retractable lighting bars, the appropriate design of curtain tracks around the hall, the necessary control facilities and the projector platform. Mike Terry, who has acted for ECE, and his engineer have also been very helpful here. Despite the truly appalling weather in January and February, Mansells have made surprising progress and are still forecasting that the building will be complete within the year.

Which brings us to funding. Thanks largely to the generosity of both the Ahrens and the Parish Council we are now in a position to meet the capital contribution that we have guaranteed to the County Council for the buildings. We have held a number of small fundraising events, not least the highly successful talk and book signing by Charles Moore and the equally successful Ghost evening. Last year's Big Party was a social success but less valuable to us financially than previous occasions have been. The uncertain weather may have had something to do with that. The Catsfield Steamers have promised a return visit later in the year. More recently we have held another very successful quiz night.

We have launched a major fundraising effort from Charities and while not all have been forthcoming, we have some tens of thousands promised. It is important



however that the community plays its part either by giving to the project directly or by finding ingenious ways to raise money for us. One resident, who wishes to remain anonymous, engineered a scheme that has provided us with £10,000. That will probably remain exceptional, but we would ask that everyone in the community gives some thought to possible ways of helping us achieve a total sum raised that will enable us to equip the halls as we would wish, including provision of the appropriate lighting for dramatic productions and the necessary audiovisual equipment. We have no wish to saddle the village or the new hall with a sizeable debt to service and we would therefore like to urge that we all pull together to find the remainder of the sum necessary to deliver the project which Nigel Jarvis and his colleagues first envisaged in the 1990s, which Sasha Hunt and his colleagues worked so hard to secure earlier in the century and to which my colleagues in turn have now given their energy and skill. The many Trustees who over the years have done the immense work necessary to secure what the village wanted deserve the thanks of the community, but I know that all will feel that the best way of thanking them will be to find the remainder of the money necessary to bring the whole project to a triumphant conclusion.



Friends Of Burwash Surgery

With the help of generous donations and bequests, we have been able to finance the purchase, by the surgery, of equipment considered essential by the doctors, but which cannot be financed by the NHS, for example we have, in the past, financed the purchase of a defibrillator, blood pressure monitors, resuscitation kits, etc., etc.

At the request of the surgery, we deliver medication to patients unable to get to the surgery. We also take patients to local hospitals or consultants, and return them to their homes, when - for various reasons - it has not been possible to use Hospital transport, and they cannot find friends or relations to drive them, nor use public transport. This service is provided free, by volunteer drivers, although a donation to the Friends is always appreciated.

There has again this year been little change in membership, this being effectively all patients, but what is most important to us is drivers, the number of which has - perhaps inevitably – fallen a little. As always we could do with some more volunteers, for whom we offer to pay expenses, if required.

The committee meets only about once every three months, and there is really little more of a commitment than that (aside from the virtually inevitable inclusion on the drivers' rota). The current committee consists of seven members, all - to put it bluntly - "of an age", and one has already announced that (quite understandably) she will not be standing for re-election at the AGM in June so, again, we are looking for volunteers.

### **Contacts**

Chairman: Frank Smith 01580-819326 [langsmith\\_@hotmail.com](mailto:langsmith_@hotmail.com)

Treasurer: Jill Copland 01580-819321 [teakeeper@mypostoffice.co.uk](mailto:teakeeper@mypostoffice.co.uk)





## Etchingam C. of E. School      Report 2013-2014

Etchingam C E School is a place where children learn to love learning! Staff, parents and governors work together to ensure that all children receive the quality education to which they are entitled.

We have fabulous pupils and our amazing staff team are both highly qualified and passionate about learning and doing the best for each child in our care. We have supportive parents and a dedicated Governing Body. We currently have 102 pupils on roll.

Over the past year, children have experienced many different learning opportunities through our bi-termly Learning Journeys. These are planned by staff across the Partnership with Bodiam C E School. Staff work, plan and train together. Partnership working is now embedded in both schools. Both communities have schools which reflect their setting and history and give the pupils additional opportunities.

The 2014 – 2015 Learning Journey themes have been

Terms 1-2 : ‘All Change Please!’

Highlights included visits to the London Transport Museum for KS1 and Lullingstone Villa and Preston Manor for KS2.

Terms 3-4 : ‘Go Compare!’

Highlights have included Flamenco and Bollywood dancing for KS2 pupils.

These overarching themes provide a lens through which our pupils access a rich and varied curriculum, including aspects steered by themselves, so that pupil interests are reflected in what they learn. Local and National events are also included in learning opportunities, in addition to the National Curriculum.

Terms 5-6 : theme is still top secret!

We work hard to ensure that all pupils master the basic skills of English, Maths, Science and ICT and these are taught discretely and then practised and applied in a cross curricular context. We also focus on developing resilience, independence and collaboration skills so preparing the children for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century in which we live. Opportunities for ‘Behaviour for Learning’ underpin all aspects of school life. The quality teaching and learning that takes place day to day in the school means that our standards are high and we are proud this year to have been a Top 20 East Sussex School (Daily Telegraph November 2013). If the focus of calculation had been the average point score obtained by our pupils, we would have been 2<sup>nd</sup>! We want all our children to *be the best they can be* in every area of their development.

The school community is very excited at the prospect of the big move! With the *Turning the Sod* ceremony and activity on the Lambing field, it is all becoming a reality and new facilities to enable us to deliver even better experiences for the children, after many years are within reach.

Annette Childs  
Etchingam Parish Council



de Etchingham CIC

Serving the community

### **Update from the Etchingham Community Interest Company**

The last 12 months has been one of consolidation for the CIC. Both of the businesses set up in previous years are now self-sufficient and doing well. The Bistro has completed four successful years under the management of Paul and Julie Collins. The Shop & Deli will soon be two years old and is going from strength to strength.

Word is spreading about Etchingham and in addition to an official Royal Visit from the Duke of Gloucester last April the Bistro had two unexpected visitors this month – the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall. Prince Charles and Camilla were returning from a visit to Batemans and paid a whistle stop visit to Bistro. Prince Charles commented that it reminded him of the 1945 film “Brief Encounter”.

During the year the CIC has invested in extended and improved kitchen and storage areas for the Bistro and project managed the new railings at the rear of the shop funded by the Parish Council.

In terms of fund raising the CIC helped the Etchingham Under Fives raise more than £3000 by way of a “Double your Money” campaign in conjunction with localgiving.com. Thank you to everyone who signed up and donated.

### **Finally Your Opinion Counts**

To ensure continuous improvement in the village the CIC will be circulating a new survey on the Bistro and Shop over the next few weeks. This will build on the original survey taken prior to the Shop & Deli being opened in 2012. Please take the time to feed back your thoughts, it will mean a great deal to the community and help with plans going forward.

### **CIC Directors**

**April 2014**

Colin Phillips  
Sue Westbrook  
John Morris  
Peter Benn  
01580 860121

## Bistro@the station

The Bistro is just about to commence its fifth year in business and continues to evolve. The introduction of a hand built, wood-fired pizza oven has been a real triumph with Friday night, pizza night, being fully booked week on week. The Bistro is now open every Saturday, 10am-2pm and Saturday evening 7pm-11pm. Saturday Brunch is very well attended with the 'Brunch Special' proving to be very popular. The Etchingam Community Interest Company remains involved, constantly updating the infrastructure, liaising with South Eastern and offering valuable advice and guidance with marketing and PR.

Here are a few recent highlights.....

- **New Year's Eve** - The Bistro was transformed into a venue able to accommodate one hundred plus people by erecting a marquee over the garden area. Joining forces with the Etchingam Shop & Deli, the Bistro delivered a memorable New Year's Eve party attended by sixty five adults and twenty five children. The transformation on New Year's Eve portrayed the promise of the Bistro being able to host events such as weddings in the future.
- **Burns Night** – A full house for 'Burns Night' on 26<sup>th</sup> January where haggis, neeps and tats was enjoyed by all. Local, Scottish born Kevin Rennie delivered a splendid 'Address to the Haggis.'
- **Valentine's Day** - The Bistro hosted a Valentine's Pizza Night on 14<sup>th</sup> February. It was fully booked with heart-shaped pizzas and champagne cocktails being consumed. With 'Take Away' orders also being received, the Bistro tallied up 54 pizzas on the night!
- **Six Nations Rugby** - A large screen TV was erected in the Bistro to stage this prestigious event. Every Saturday the Bistro was visited by avid rugby fans who enjoyed the matches on a large screen and drank Harvey's best bitter on tap.
- **Mother's Day** – On Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> March the bistro was open for 'Roast Beef and all the trimmings' to celebrate Mothering Sunday. This was extremely popular last year and sold out again this year.
- **Easter Sunday** – The Bistro will be open on Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> April for Easter Sunday lunch which will include a roast dish with all the trimmings plus alternative choices.

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

# ETCHINGHAM MUSIC FESTIVAL

The Music Festival is now in its 27<sup>th</sup> year and is held annually from the first Saturday in July. This year the Festival will be held from 5<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> July. All the concerts are held in our lovely Parish Church with its marvellous 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 talented musicians. We are pleased to note that many of these young musicians have gone on to international success and acclaim.

The 2013 Festival was well attended by Etchingham residents and those from surrounding villages. Together with sponsorship and the continued support of the Friends of Etchingham Festival we were thus able to make a small profit. Given the considerable demands on the Parish Council purse currently, we have not therefore asked for a grant this year.

Again this year we will be providing a varied programme of classical and popular music. Our final free concert on 13<sup>th</sup> July will provide the opportunity for donations to the Church. Last year we supplemented the amount raised and gave the Church £500.

We look forward to welcoming you to this year's programme in July. We would welcome sponsorship and offers of help in running the Festival. Please contact any committee member for further details.

The Festival Committee

Mary Newington

Brian Hilton

Marie Niven



# ETCHINGHAM

De Etchingham CIC

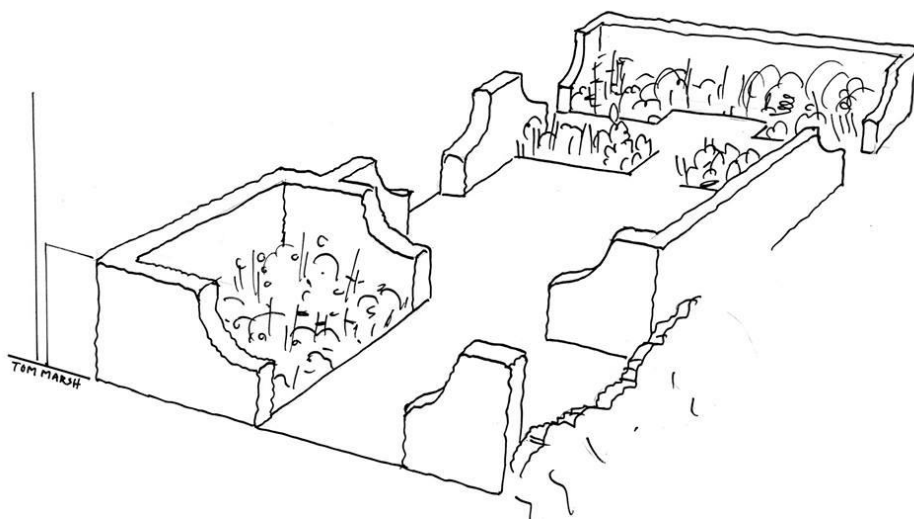
## **Bistro and Coal Yard Garden**

The local community and commuters have been enjoying the Bistro Garden created by English Heritage Gardens Ltd (EHG) for nearly four years and, as with all gardens, it is never a finished project. Peter Baldock from EHG is always looking ahead and is currently offering a garden consultation service in exchange for a donation to the Bistro Garden. Thanks to those that sought Peter's expertise he has now raised a little over £800. Together with the funds raised from a coffee morning and raffle at the Bistro organised by Mary Barnes and other rose pruning events, a further sum of £230 has been added making a total sum of £1030 to spend on the station garden development! Thank you to everyone who has supported these fundraising efforts.

Alongside the ongoing seasonal care and upkeep of the garden and coal yard, new additions have arrived in the areas including the new wooden planters located either side of the station entrance. The planters were crafted by Percy Baldock who kindly donated his own time. Bloms Bulbs, in conjunction with Pashley Manor Gardens, has generously donated 500 tulip bulbs for planting in the station garden borders and wooden planters. The coal yard has been planted with snowdrops split and divided from Peter's own collections and from many of the gardens of his generous clients. Hopefully, in a few years, we will see beautiful drifts in the coal yard gardens.

The borders of the Bistro garden have been an excellent illustration for Peter Baldock to show patrons the development of herbaceous borders over several years. Peter believes gardens should not be static but should always be striving to improve year on year. This garden has been no exception, which, although starting with a fine planting plan, has been re-evaluated each season with changes being made to plants and positions. In its dormant winter period, Peter has shown visitors how to create architectural plant supports using hazel and birch. Looking forward to the spring, we will see bright tulips and, in the summer, beautiful perennials all set against the backdrop of the yew hedging and sandstone walls of the station building.

## A New Garden Area



As pictured in the above illustration EHG would like to extend the planting and seating area in the garden with more topiarised yew hedging. Adding another garden room with its own border and outlook to the Greys Willow plantation but we need a little more help.....

Proceeds of a new quiz night to be held at the Bistro once a month and hosted by Bistro Manager Paul Collins will go towards to this project. For more details please visit [www.bistroatthestation.co.uk](http://www.bistroatthestation.co.uk) or speak to Paul at the Bistro and join his mailing list.

Peter continues to offer his garden consultation and advice sessions lasting approximately one hour for a suggested donation of £25. During the consultation, Peter can demonstrate pruning, herbaceous border improvement, trouble shooting and garden design considerations.

**Snowdrops please!** Now is the best time to split and divide snowdrops once flowering is over and before the leaves die down and it is also the best time to plant new bulbs so that they will settle in and build up reserves ready for flowering the following year. If anyone has a large clump of Snowdrops that could do with being lifted and split, the Coal Yard Garden would love to have them.

For more information please keep visiting the garden and Bistro - you may even see Peter amongst the plants - or see our fliers, portfolio and fundraising events posters. Alternatively please call EHG 01580 861294, email: [info@englishheritagegardens.co.uk](mailto:info@englishheritagegardens.co.uk) or visit: [www.englishheritagegardens.co.uk](http://www.englishheritagegardens.co.uk)



# Etchingham Shop & Deli

Year 2 and the shop is really settling in, providing a great service to the village. The produce list is growing and now boasts nearly 2,500 lines.

Local produce is really taking the forefront with real winners, such as “Burwash Rose” from “The Traditional Cheese Dairy” @ Stonegate and Lighthouse Bakery Bread from Bodiam.

## YEAR TWO HIGHLIGHTS

Winners of 2013 Countryside Alliance Village Shop/Post Office for the Southeast.

Annual Charity Duck Race, raising over £500 for Etchingham Under 5's

## WHATS IN STORE FOR YEAR 3

Countryside Alliance Regional Winners reception at the House of Lords on 30<sup>th</sup> April for the National title

“Pudding Club”, held monthly as a social baking event.

Slow Roasted Etchingham Coffee, on sale as bean or ground

This years “Duck Race’ is on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> April  
(please nominate your village group)

A big thank you to the residents of Etchingham & the CIC for all their help and advice and the ongoing support from the Parish Council

## **ROTHER VALLEY LADIES GROUP**

Our inaugural meeting was held in January 2013, with 22 members joining..

During the year we had the following talks :-

" My Life in the theatre " by Courtney Kenny

" Sussex Ghosts " by Rupert Matthews

" My Kind of Music " by Joy Smith

We had a Garden meeting, a Games afternoon, and an outing to the Ellen Terry Museum at Smallhythe.

Christmas lunch was enjoyed at the Brickwall Hotel Sedlescombe.

There is a full programme organised for this year, details are on the Post Office notice board.

Membership is £12 a year, please contact Greta Crane on 01580 819 309

## **ETCHINGHAM DARBY & JOAN CLUB**

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The Club was formed in 1958. Everyone over the age of 55 is welcome to join.

We meet on the 4th Wednesday of each month at 2.30pm.  
The Programme for 2014 includes Speakers with Slides, talking on various subjects.

We have a Magician in April. Outings to Scotney Castle. Tenterden. Mystery Tour and Lunch and a Christmas Lunch, to be arranged.

In May we hold a Coffee Morning to help raise some money, as we are self-funding.

If anyone is interested in joining, please contact Julia Barrow 01580 819475 for further details



## COMMUNITY SAFETY

One of my main areas of activity for the Parish Council is 'Community Safety', this can cover many things, but in general terms it covers anything that has an impact on the safety and well-being of village residents.

**Police Liaison;** I keep in regular contact with our local PCSO, who updates me with anything that is of concern and any incidents in the area, I am also in contact with the Sergeant at Battle Police Station. I receive the weekly Police Updates which I pass on to be sent out on the village E-Bulletin and post them on the village website.

**Neighbourhood Watch;** Although the NHW in the village is not very active I am still listed at the Rother Neighbourhood Watch Association as the Co-ordinator for the village and receive updates which I include with the Police Updates.

**Community Speedwatch;** There have always been concerns about the speed of traffic through the village, in November it was suggested that we follow the example of some other local villages and set up a Community Speedwatch Group. Community Speedwatch is operated by the Police and is co-ordinated at Battle Police Station by a volunteer co-ordinator, and is managed through a dedicated secure website. In December I set up a group for Etchingham on the system and act as the co-ordinator for the group, there are currently ten volunteers, six have been trained to use the equipment and speed checks are being carried out at least once every week. The main aim of Speedwatch is to act as a visual deterrent to slow down drivers as they pass through the village, however we have reported an average of 25 drivers exceeding the speed limit on each session, the fastest speed recorded so far is 48mph. With more volunteers we could operate more sessions, if you would like to consider helping, get in touch, once trained you can do a lot of sessions or just a few, it is up to you.

**Flood Warnings;** The majority of the village is safe from flooding, but as we found out in October 2000, some properties in lower parts of the village are at risk in extreme conditions. I receive all the flood alerts and warnings from the Environment Agency and pass the information on to those who might be at risk. The Emergency Planning Officer at Rother District Council also keeps in close contact when there is risk from extreme weather conditions and can assist with help such as sand bags if required.

On December 23<sup>rd</sup> we were put on high alert for possible flood damage, sand bags were deployed in areas of concern and thanks to a group of willing volunteers we were able to get all vulnerable items up off of the floor in the Church, just in case. Thank you to all those who helped, and those who put some things back down for services over Christmas and put it all up again a couple of days later when we received another warning.

Councillor Boylett – Portfolio holder for Community Safety

***And Finally, From the Parish Office:-***

I recently was asked to provide some information about the Parish for a funding application in respect of the new Community facilities. One question concerned the date when your organisation, i.e. the Parish Council, was formed. I was informed, by a very knowledgeable local resident, that Etchingham Parish was at the forefront of the development of Parish Councils which were first formed in 1894.

It is evident from all that has been written in this year's Annual Report that that spirit of enterprise and endeavour has served the parish well for the past 120 years and is still very much alive and active within the community.

As the Chairman of Council has remarked, for a relatively small parish we achieve a great deal and that is due to the diversity of community provision by local groups and organisations and many local individuals who give of their time and professional skills and expertise for the benefit of others.

It is a difficult time for the public sector, as has been highlighted in the Reports from our County and District Councillors, and the Parish Council has faced new challenges as a direct result of Service reviews at County and District level and the introduction of the Localism Act, details of which continue to emerge through various regulatory orders.

I am sure that the Parish Council will continue to face all these challenges with a determination to ensure that the best possible service can always be given to the parishioners of Etchingham. Council will continue to work closely with all of the local community groups and other interested parties for the benefit of the community.

My thanks to the Members of the Parish Council for all their support and encouragement during the past twelve months.

Bob Hodgson – Clerk to Etchingham Parish Council

