

ETCHINGHAM

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Minutes of the Etchingham Annual Parish Meeting

held on Thursday 16th April 2015

at 7.30pm in the Parker Hall, Etchingham

Members Present: Cllr. Mrs M. Varrall (Chairman); Cllrs. Mrs Barnes, Mrs Childs, Mr S Barrow, Mr C Boylett and Mr G Lucas.

Also Present: P Barton – Clerk to the Council; R Hodgson – out-going Clerk to the Council; and seventeen members of the general public.

01/15 Apologies for Absence:

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllr P Benn, District Cllr R Elliston and County Cllr J Barnes.

02/15 Minutes of the previous meeting:

The Minutes of the meeting held on 10th April 2014 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

03/15 Matters arising:

There were no matters arising.

04/15 Chairman's Annual Report 2015:

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting, particularly on this occasion of the first Annual Parish Meeting to be held in the new halls. The Chairman also remarked that as she would not be standing at the next election this would also be her final meeting in the Chair. She also took the opportunity of thanking out-going Clerk, Bob Hodgson for his outstanding work for the Parish Council, and the village in general, as he looked forward to his retirement from the Council.

The Chairman's Report had been published in the Annual Report, copies of which were available from the clerk. It will also be available in full on the Village Website from Saturday 18th April.

After nearly 20 years, of which a substantial number have been as Chair, Cllr Mrs Varrall has decided not to stand for re-election in May. A brief plea was made for residents to come forward as potential Parish Councillors because there would be two vacancies at the May elections after those willing to remain as Councillors were taken into consideration. However, she was extremely heartened by the vibrant community that Etchingham is today as evidenced by the facilities being used for the meeting, future plans to develop the recreational facilities nearby and the number of lively reports from a wide variety of village organisation in the Annual Report and looks forward to sitting in the public seats at future meetings.

Cllr. Mrs Varrall thanked Members of the Parish Council for their efforts during the past year, re-iterated her thanks to outgoing Clerk Bob Hodgson and welcomed the new clerk to the position.

05/15. Etchingam Annual Report 2015:

The Clerk thanked all the contributors to the Annual Report for their hard work and interesting reports – and for sending them in on time! Individual contributions were available via e-mail from the Clerk.

06/15. Report and/or Notices from the Parish Clerk:

The Clerk outlined the arrangements for the Parish Council elections to be held in May.

ETSR are considering approaching The British Heart Foundation with regards to grant/funding the purchase and installation of a defibrillator (PAD) to be sited in the decommissioned telephone box on Market Square. Training facilities are also to be investigated.

07/15. Public Time:

Mrs Greta Crane asked about the status of the decommissioned telephone box and Mrs C Moore reported that it was not secured as yet. The Clerk responded that work to secure the box and then refurbish it prior to the possibility of installing a defibrillator was in hand.

Mr Ken Thomas asked about full blackout facilities being available in Parker Hall, better signage for the halls (as opposed to school information), better signage for traffic entering and leaving the site and re-siting of the centenary notice board. The Clerk responded that these items were in discussion for progress. With respect to things like the Station Clock, the theatre poster and other items that were on display in the old village hall – these are all safe and ways to display them again in the new premises are being explored.

District Councillor Mary Barnes asked if a small action group could be formed to help support and publicise the bus service and offered to facilitate its creation (as part of much larger group being formed to cover the whole route from Hurst Green to Uckfield) if interested persons would contact her.

Mr P Hinde raised the issue of involving new people, not just for Parish Council, but for all the other village events and activities enjoyed by so many. It was agreed that this is a continuing problem, not just in Etchingam, and that while people would be more likely to respond if approached personally the more information to hand on what volunteering would actually involve was very necessary.

Mrs Greta Crane asked that the event organisers remember that not everyone is on-line and attention needs to be paid to the whole community not just those with computers.

Cllr Colin Boylett told the meeting that PCSO Iain Tompsett, who had replaced Tom, was currently working out of Rye and the future of policing in Etchingam, and other villages, is currently under discussion and review. It is still appropriate to dial 101 for non-emergency contact with the police.

08/15. Etchingam Traffic Issues:

The Safety Audit had so recently been published it has yet to be distributed to the School Governors, etc. County Cllr John Barnes was thanked by Mr Hinde for his efforts in getting this far. An Action Plan will be drawn up in response and a meeting date set for discussion and resolution. The Parish Council will continue to raise and support the concerns of all village residents, including school and village hall users, especially such items as the proper siting of warning signs.

09/15. Neighbourhood Plan:

While acknowledging that preparing a Neighbourhood Plan involved a great deal of work, Cllr Mary Varrall said that it seemed to be the best way to make sure that the local voice was heard and hearkened. Clerk Bob Hodgson reminded the meeting that a Neighbourhood Plan was not just about planning; traffic issues, local economy, business needs and communications for instance were also involved. Once agreed, however, it did then become part of Planning Law. As the Rother Strategic Plan is now in place until 2028 raising a Neighbourhood Plan alongside it is advantageous.

Discussion on the possibility of combining with other adjoining villages to save on costs (although this would mean only single grants being offered to the scheme not one per village within the scheme) and to help with recruiting enough people to successfully produce the scheme followed.

The consensus of the meeting was to proceed with the preliminary investigations, in particular speaking with Burwash PC about a joint plan, towards producing a Neighbourhood Plan for Etchingam.

10/15. Date of next Meeting:

To be advised.

Before the meeting was officially closed by the Chairman, opportunity was taken to thank the retiring Chairman, Cllr Mrs Varrall, and the outgoing Clerk, Mr Bob Hodgson for their hard work and endeavour on behalf of the residents of Etchingam. Presentations were made and thanks were made in response.

The meeting closed at 9.15pm

Signed

Date