

ETCHINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Meeting of the Etchingham Parish Council
held on Thursday 21st January 2021
at 7.30pm via Zoom

Members Present: Cllrs: J Barnes (in the Chair), Mrs M Barnes, Mr R Beeney, Mr C Boylett, Mr D Lambert and Ms Roma Turner.

Also present: A member of the public, District Cllr Eleanor Kirby-Green and Ms P Barton – Clerk to the Council, there were no members of the public.

The Chairman explained that the Parish Council meeting was a meeting held in public but not a Public Meeting. Any person present wishing to speak about any item on the agenda should do so under agenda item 6 'Public Time'. There would not be any other opportunity for the public to speak at the meeting.

2188. Apologies for Absence:

There were apologies for absence from Cllr Barrow, which were accepted.

2189. Minutes of the previous meetings:

The Minutes of the Meetings held on Thursday 19th November and 9th December 2020 having been previously circulated, were agreed and signed as an accurate record of that meeting.

2190. Declarations of Interest:

Cllr. J Barnes declared a personal interest in respect of agenda item 12, Village Community Halls as a Trustee of ETSR and that he is now appointed as substitute should a Conservative member of RDC Planning Committee be absent. Cllr. M. Barnes declared a personal interest in respect of agenda item 12, Village Community Halls as a member of the Parochial Church Council and reminded Council that she is a member of the RDC Planning Committee.

2191. Etchingham Parish Council – Dispensations

The Clerk confirmed that no written requests for dispensations had been received.

2192. Chairman's Announcements:

The Chairman expressed the genuine sorrow felt by the Parish Council and the community as a whole at the passing of Phil Blake, Postmaster and good friend to the village. The sincerest condolences were offered to Paul and to all of Phil's family, work colleagues and his many friends. There will be a minute's silence at the close of the meeting to honour him.

The Chairman reported that RDC is outsourcing some services to Cornwall CC but does not have full details at this time. He also reported the good news that Covid cases across all age groups are beginning to come down in this District and County.

2193. Public Time:

- a) The ESCC preliminary budget does not show any additional cuts, full report on the ESCC website.
- b) RDC reserves are being depleted, not just due to Covid. It is hoped that there will be a review. The Vaccination Centre is now open and functioning well at the Community Halls with patients from all over Rural Rother attending. RDC is engaging with businesses not covered by mandatory grants to offer discretionary grants.
- c) A member of the public present raised 4 points:
 - i) whether the annual grant of £500 would be made to the church PCC towards maintaining the churchyard.
 - ii) a request for input to the Parish magazine from individual councillors and the council as a whole.
 - iii) local concern regarding the future of the Old School site.
 - iv) an update on the Neighbourhood Plan.

The Chairman was able to assure the gentleman that i and iv were already on the agenda. With regard to ii this will be discussed and is likely to be actioned as part of the Council Communication policy. Question iii needs to be addressed at ESCC level. The County Cllr, being present, undertook to follow this up, as it is understood the delay is due to discussions being finalised between the Diocese and ESCC. The County Cllr will report back.
- d) As no members were to be excluded this right was not exercised.



2194. Parish Matters:**a) Village Amenities:**

- i) It was **Resolved that as a National Lockdown has been re-imposed the rent holiday remain for the shop premises.** To be reviewed at the end of the current Lockdown.
 - ii) The Monthly Inspection Reports for the playgrounds were accepted. **It was Resolved that the damaged fence between VIPER and the Churchyard could be replaced and repaired as necessary.** The Clerk reported that The Land Registry notification that Queen's Garden is registered as in the ownership of Etchingham Parish Council as Sole Trustee of ERGT has been completed.
 - iii) Cllr Beeney confirmed that the tree surgeon he had arranged to view the work needed on the Fysie Lane council land had done so but declined to take it on as their expertise was confined to much bigger areas of woodland. The Clerk and Cllr Beeney will seek alternative contractors.
- There were no other matters to consider.

b) Children and Young People:

- i) Cllr Turner reported that the school remains open for the children of key workers and those considered vulnerable; between 16 – 26 daily. All staff are present and managing on-line tuition from the school. Working in co-operation with the NHS the school has released the Ahrens Hall during school hours to assist the vaccination efforts. EPC expressed it grateful thanks to the Head and his staff for facilitating this.
A local pressure group continues its efforts to get a School Crossing Patrol. It would help their efforts if a footpath could be built on the south side of A265 to run from Borders Lane nearly as far as the drive into Underwood House, apart from the legalities involved this would unfortunately be very costly however it seems worth investigating.
- ii) Cllr Boylett had previously circulated the report on ERGT fundraising for the playground which is on file. There being no questions the report was approved and accepted.
- iv) There were no other matters to consider.

c) Highways, Footpaths and Community Safety:

- i) A date to replace the postponed SLR meeting has yet to be confirmed.
- ii) Cllr Boylett's Speedwatch reports were presented to the meeting, having been previously circulated and they are on file. The reports were approved and accepted. Thanks were made to the PCSOs for their efforts to support sessions whenever they can. The issue of investing or sharing mobile devices in further will need to be investigated and considered.
- iii) Cllr Boylett having previously circulated the monthly reports from Rother Police and from the PCSOs did not receive any questions on them so they were accepted and will remain on file.
- iv) The Clerk reported back from the new monthly meeting of our PCSOs, clerks and interested councillors. This is an encouraging start with two-way communication and an obvious wish by those present to work together in future. It is anticipated that these zoom meetings will continue beyond Covid restrictions as being an effective use of PCSO time to meet the parishes on a regular basis.
- v) Cllr Lambert reported that was nothing to note on footpaths except, of course, the extremely muddy conditions.
- vi) There were no other matters to consider.

d) Environment and Other issues:

Cllr Turner reported that two complaints had been made to her by residents. The first regarding dog excrement being left in public places and asking EPC to consider special Dog Poo Bins – as RDC allow dog excrement to be placed into the normal black bins so long as it is doubled-bagged (as the waste is incinerated not sent to land-fill) EPC had resolved previously not to take on this not inconsiderable expense but undertook to advertise this fact again to encourage responsible behaviour. The second concerned a possible illegal building in Burgh Woods but as it would appear to be in Hurst Green rather than in Etchingham EPC has no direct responsibility. Advice would be given to the complainant on how to progress his complaint and in the meantime the District Cllr for Hurst Green – coincidentally an EPC Parish Cllr – offered to make this known to the Hurst Green parish Council.

There were no other matters to consider.



2195. Planning:

Cllr Mary Barnes reminded Council that she is a member of Rother District Council Planning Committee and Cllr John Barnes reminded Council that he is now listed as a substitute Conservative member of Rother District Council Planning Committee should there be an absentee

- a) RR/2020/2277/P - 3 Willow Close. *It was Resolved that there were no objections to the application.*
- RR/2020/2472/P- New House Farm Cottages, Sheepstreet Lane. *It was Resolved that there were no objections to the application.*
- b) There were no other matters to consider.

2196. Finance

- a) The supporting documents explaining the Half Year Accounts will be completed in time for the next meeting.
- b) ETSR, having previously circulated the supporting documents regarding the latest financial figures available to them the Council **Resolved that support would be given to ETSR, both as a valuable village amenity and because as Guarantor and Custodian Trustee there was already an obligation. This support not to exceed £10,000 in the financial year and to be called down only as required.**
- c) **It was Resolved that the presented budget be approved as presented resulting in a Precept request of £76,000.00 the budget document is attached as Appendix I.**
- d) **It was Resolved that:**
- i) if still operational locally, (subsequently confirmed) to donate £100 to the Hurst Green First Responders
 - ii) to donate £100 to the BACT (Battle Area Community Transport) when it is able to resume operations
 - iii) to donate £50 to Rother Rural Trust
 - iv) to donate £40 to CPRE
 - v) to donate £25 to the Etchingham Poppy Appeal
 - vi) to continue annual subscriptions to both SSALC and NALC (our professional organisations)
 - vii) to continue and maintain other annual subscriptions as they fall due if appropriate
 - viii) to make grants to village groups under s137 as shown in Appendix II.
- e) Authorisation of payments – the Clerk presented the accounts for payment to the Council.

Payments December		TOTAL PAID
P Barton	Salary & Expenses December 2020	1231.05
L Worton	Salary & Expenses November 2020	24.25
Tim Crane	Second 1/2 payment Grounds maintenance	835.00
Active Risk Management Services Ltd	Annual inspection and reports for Viper and Queen's Garden playgrounds	146.00
SSALC Limited	Budget Planning - Zoom Training for Clerk/RFO	36.00
Crane Designs Ltd	NP Mthly charge for hosting site DD 05/11/2020	15.00
Crane Designs Ltd	EPC Mthly charge for hosting site DD 05/11/2020	15.00
Focus Group	DD 22/12/2020 Office Phone to 30/11/2020	23.84
	Total Payments	£2,326.14
Payments January		TOTAL PAID
P Barton	Salary & Expenses Jan 2021	1,230.85
L Worton	Salary & Expenses December 2020	44.00
HMRC	2nd Qtr PAYE, NICS	3,900.40
Crane Designs Ltd	Domain renewal for village website (old)	36.00
Co-Op Bank	Auto Chg Fee Sweep	30.00
Crane Designs Ltd	NP Mthly charge for hosting site DD 07/01/2021	15.00
Crane Designs Ltd	EPC Mthly charge for hosting site DD 07/01/2021	15.00
Focus Group	DD 27/01/2021 Office Phone to 16/12/2020	26.80
	Total Payments	£4,067.20

It was Resolved that the payments for December 2020 and January 2021 be approved and that proof of the BACs payments together with copies of the relevant invoices be signed by two councillors to comply with Financial Regulations and best practice as soon as possible.

It was also Resolved that Cllr Boylett should proceed to authorise our supplier to upgrade the EPC website to ensure longevity as fit for purpose.

2197. Etchingham Neighbourhood Plan

The Clerk, as Acting Secretary to the NP Steering Committee, reported that it was anticipated the final draft, prior to formal submission for Reg 14 of the Neighbourhood Plan would be early in February.

2198. The Emma Beeney Award for Outstanding Service to the Parish of Etchingham

Further discussion on the recipient and the presentation of the Award will be dependent upon Covid Restrictions and the timing of the Annual Parish Meeting which is normally held in May.

2199. Village Community Halls

Cllrs J & M Barnes reminded the meeting of their personal interest in ETSR.

There is nothing further to report to this meeting.

2200. To receive Reports from Members and Representatives and pass such resolutions as may be necessary:-

- a) SSALC – Cllr J Barnes reported that whether or not West Sussex decided to split from East Sussex and Surrey in this Association the subscription from Etchingham would continue as currently and would continue to be allocated to East Sussex. Pressure continues to be exerted on Government to amend the proposed Planning Law changes.
- b) RALC – continues to focus on its work to curb speeding as make it at least as socially unacceptable as drunk driving. It also continues to fill its own small number of vacancies.
- c) There were no other meetings or Conferences attended by the Members or the Clerk.

2201. Correspondence

All correspondence having been distributed by e-mail upon receipt there were no further items to discuss.

2202. Etchingham Parish Council – Notification to members of Council decisions:

There were no notifications.

2203. Agenda items for the next meeting to be held on Thursday 18th February 2021 at 7.30pm via Zoom

As noted through the above minutes.

Signed.....

Date.....21.1.2021

APPENDIX 1

Etchingham Parish Council - Budget & Precept 2021-2022 - 21/01/2021

Budget heading	2020/2021	APPROVED 2021/2022
Expenditure:		
Office & Admin costs		
Clerk Salary & expenses (not attributable to another line)	17500.00	25,000.00 ↑
Insurance	1000.00	950.00 ↓
Audit	750.00	600.00 ↓
Office & Administration Costs (inc share)	2500.00	2,000.00 ↓
Parish Communications (INC new website)	600.00	500.00 ↓
Subscriptions	1500.00	1,000.00 ↓
Training Courses	750.00	1,250.00 ↑
Grants inc 5500 Neighbourhood Plan	3500.00	2,500.00 ↓
Community Projects/Budget Lines		
Traffic Management/pedestrian safety	2000.00	2,000.00 Same
Grass Cutting of highways additional cost to ESCC for extra cuts	250.00	275.00 ↑
General village maintenance	2500.00	2,000.00 ↓
Trees and risk management of green spaces	3300.00	1,000.00 ↓
Queens Gardens Equipment maintenance fund	500.00	625.00 ↑
Viper Play area Equipment maintenance fund	500.00	625.00 ↑
Inspections (not trees) and minor works to play equipment and upkeep	750.00	500.00 ↓
Play equipment match funding to boost ERGT donations	1,000.00	0.00 ↓
Village Churchyard	500.00	500.00 Same
Etchingham Community Shop Premises - PWLB loan	6432.00	6,432.00 Same
New Village Hall - PWLB loan	7164.96	7,164.96 Same
Queen's Gdn - If a PWLB loan for £25k: if no loan taken transfer to Playgrounds maintenance	1500.00	0.00 ↓
Etchingham Community Shop Premises - Fabric Repair Fund	1500.00	10,000.00 ↑
Etchingham Community Shop Premises - fees	750.00	750.00 Same
project in 2022-2023	0	10,000.00 ↑
Election expenses	500.00	500.00 Same
Chairmans allowance	200.00	100.00 ↓
Total Expenditure	57,446.96	76,271.96 ↑
Receipts		
Shop Rental Income	5000.00	1.00
Bank Interest	50.00	100.00
Total Receipts	5050.00	101.00

Includes NICS contributions to HMRC from council not just salary

still includes the upgrade recommended playground safety course included

Based on previous annual requests and to reserve £500 for "exceptional" requests through year. Grant to churchyard shown on separate line.

urgent/emergency work only

to be an Ear-marked Reserve (EMR)

2021-2022

To achieve £77,196 using the **notified tax base of £11.00** is an increase of **£56.50** per annum for Band D i.e. from **£130.30 to £186.80** which represents an increase of **£47.10 per month (£1.10 per week)** at Band D.

In spite of trimming all possible expenditure this is still an exceptional increase due to **four** factors:

It is no longer considered prudent or expedient to reduce the amount of precept requested by anticipated income. This is due to the unprecedented difficulties experienced by many councils because of lockdown, this is a national directive not just local, and straightforward adds a little over £5000 to the Precept request compared to last year.

An estimate is still awaited at this time for urgent remedial work to the roof and rear lower window of the Old Etchingham Stores. This work is urgently required before further damage is incurred. The rear door and frame also need completely replacing and has been authorised from budget 2020-2021 as until that is replaced, there is no access to the rear of the building to gain access to the roof and determine the work needed and the costs involved. Tenders will be invited if these costs are high of course.

In addition the sum of £10,000 potentially needed, although unlikely to be called down in full, to support ETSR and the Community Halls from April 2021 through to end March 2022, should it be necessary due to UK Government regulations to control Covid-19. If this full sum is not required then the balance to be carried over to an ear-marked reserve in 2022-2023 against a specified project of village benefit to be decided at that time, i.e. Budget 2022-2023.

The fourth element is completely outwith your Parish Council's control. Rather District Council has for the next financial year (the tax calculation to allow Parish Councils to properly calculate the impact of its rates on the residents) and has to make adjustments compared to the current year. This has resulted effectively in an increased rate to be charged at Parish level. The main reason is due to the increase in households claiming support through the Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTR). It has also been necessary to reduce the collection rate by a small margin (0.2%) to allow for an increase in non-collection. They expect as the financial situation gets tougher that it will impact on the amount of money it can collect in the year, particularly if the number of households claiming CTR continues to rise.