

ETCHINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Etchingham Parish Council Meeting
held on Thursday 18th November 2021 at 7.30pm The Parker Hall, Parsonage Croft, Etchingham

Members Present: Cllrs: Mr J Barnes (in the Chair), Mrs M Barnes, Mr S Barrow and Mr C Boylett,

Also present: 2 members of the public, Huw Merriman MP, District Cllr Eleanor Kirby-Green and Ms P Barton – Clerk to the Council.

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.

2359. Apologies for Absence:

There were apologies for absence from Cllr R Beeney and Cllr Roma Turner and Mr Paul Stott of ETSR, which were accepted.

2360. Minutes of the previous meeting:

The Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday 21st October 2021 having been previously circulated, were agreed and signed as an accurate record of that meeting.

2361. Declarations of Interest:

Cllr. J Barnes declared a personal interest in respect of agenda item 11, Village Community Halls as a Trustee of ETSR and also 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 11, Village Community Halls as a member of the Parochial Church Council and reminded Council that she is a member of the RDC Planning Committee.

2362. Etchingham Parish Council – Dispensations:

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

2363. Chairman's Announcements:

The Chairman had no announcements to make that would not be covered under the agenda points.

2364. Public Time:

The MP for Bexhill and Battle, Mr Huw Merriman, being in attendance, was invited by the Chairman to address the meeting.

Having visited many Parish Council and local communities during the Summer recess Huw has continued this process to try and visit all who wish to invite him. He reported that the 5 East Sussex MPs meet weekly and are working together for the benefit of the whole County. Huw also meets with the Chief Executive and the Chair of ESCC weekly. Begun during the lockdowns necessitated that these meetings be conducted electronically and this has proved an invaluable mechanism to allow both these meetings to continue post-lockdown. Huw expressed his thanks for the invitation to join this meeting and reminded those present that his is an always open door. He concluded by confirming that he would be staying for the whole meeting to gain a better understanding of what was top priority for the residents of Etchingham. The Chairman thanked him for his interest and his time, returning to the agenda order for Public Time.

- a) County Councillor Cllr Eleanor Kirby-Green informed the meeting that ESCC has approved a report including Climate Emergency Work, and will keep Etchingham Parish Council apprised of progress.
- b) District Cllr Barnes told the meeting that the Deputy Chief Executive has now been appointed and confirmed that the Development Policy Manager is effectively head of planning as this role no longer exists in its previous form. It is hoped that Government funding may allow District Councils to transfer £1.5M to its Parish Councils.

- c) A member of the public enquired about the current state of the zip wire in the Viper play area and Council was pleased to confirm that the issues have been rectified and the unit is now back in use.

A second member of the public enquired about the current situation with the Old Etchingam Stores and whether this might be a good time to review the true benefit to the village, as a whole, of maintaining ownership of this property. Particularly with the Parish Council's declared aim of redressing the level of Rate increased so substantially in this current financial year. The meeting was told that this review was already underway and the benefit of retaining the property, including the need for substantial repairs to the entire rear roof, against sale either with or without the repair work being completed first will be resolved by the Parish Council as soon as professional advice has been sought and given.

- d) As no members were to be excluded this right was not exercised.

2365. Parish Matters:

a) Village Amenities:

- i) See second paragraph in 2364 c above. In addition, the Clerk was able to confirm that interest in renting the property on Wealden Cake's departure had already been received. It was **Resolved that the Clerk be authorised to proceed as necessary to engage appropriate professional advice.**
- ii) The Monthly Inspection Reports for the playgrounds were accepted. It was **Resolved that Kirby McKay be contracted to complete the immediate tree work required in QG.**
- iii) Coffee & Cake Club – this event is continuing to be popular and Cllr Barrow and the staff at The Bistro were thanked for their support and work bringing about this success.
- iv) Informal discussions with the PCC of the Parish Church regarding a joint project to have a public lavatory in Queen's Garden have recommenced. The Clerk will contact Thunderbox, considered to be the best option previously, to begin investigations again. It was confirmed that the date of the 2022 Village Fete will be 10th September. There were no other matters to consider.

b) Children and Young People:

- i) Cllr Turner's apology for absence having been accepted there was no report.
- ii) Cllr Boylett's report on ERGT fundraising having been previously circulated was approved and is available on file.
- iii) There were no other matters to consider.

c) Highways, Footpaths and Community Safety:

- i) Complaints have been received about the beech hedge on the High Street between Old Rectory and Glebe Cottage encroaching badly on the footway together with grass, moss and other groundcover vegetation extending on the footway even further than the hedge. The Clerk will contact the homeowner and ask for these issues to be rectified.
- ii) Cllr Boylett presented the monthly Speedwatch report which was accepted and is on file. The Clerk will progress the early stage requirements to install a Black Cat data collecting device with ESCC previous advice received being confusing.
- iii) Cllr Boylett presented the reports from Rother Police and our PCSOs farm break-ins.
- iv) There were no other matters to consider.

d) Environment and Other issues:

Levels in the salt bins to be checked and refilled if necessary. Flood warnings, being received, are relayed via E-Bulletin and the other Parish Council social media channels. There were no other matters to consider.



e) **Communications:**

Cllr Boylett will write the next 'Councillor' page for the Parish Magazine focussing on the flooding issue. Deadline to Clerk 10th January 2022. There were no other matters to consider.
 Cllr Boylett will accelerate the amalgamation of the two 'village' websites as the old one is proving unreliable and may become irretrievable sooner rather than later. Remedial work **Resolved as being appropriate upto £150 to allow the work to continue.** Councillors were asked to review changes and comment on any missing or out of date posts and and/or pages as the amalgamation is completed.

2366. **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/2021/2615/P: Church Hill - Land Lying to East of, Church Lane: Change of use from agricultural to dog exercise /dog walking field, with agility course, seating area with shelter and solar panel lights attached to the fence. Part-retrospective.

It was Resolved to object strongly to the application on grounds of central position in AONB, flooding and the detrimental carbon footprint created by car journeys to the site.

- b) In order to improve the Planning process a new procedure promises that urgent applications will be actioned in 48-hours.

An offer by Network Rail to release land adjacent to the Bistro as a public amenity green space was welcomed and post discussion this will be raised with the CIC to see if they are interested. There were no other planning matters to discuss.

2367. **Finance:**

- a) The first version of the Draft Budget for 2022-2023 was presented to Council. This showed a decrease in Band D of £10.39 p.a. Various alternative figures were discussed for individual budget lines and a revised Draft Budget will be presented at the December meeting in an endeavour to bring the rate down even lower in 2022-2023 with the aim of at least maintaining at that level or decreasing again if feasible in 2023-2024. It was **Resolved that the Budget and Precept spreadsheets will be published separately and in addition to being within the Minutes of the appropriate meeting, for full public disclosure and transparency as soon as they are available.**

- b) Authorisation of payments – the Clerk presented the accounts for payment to the Council.

<i>Payment November</i>		TOTAL PAID
P Barton	Salary & Expenses November 2021	1,369.63
L Worton	Salary & Expenses October 2021	92.00
Bistro at the Station	Coffee & Cake club x 19	44.45
Netwise	Ann hosting fee etc & domain renewal EPC	378.00
E Sussex ALC Ltd	Planning Training - Clerk	48.00
Crane Designs Ltd	NP Mthly charge for hosting site DD 06/11/21	15.00
Crane Designs Ltd	EPC Mthly charge for hosting site DD 06/11/21	15.00
Focus Group	Office Phone DD 28/11/21	32.53
	Total Payments	£1,994.61

PJB.

John Barnes

It was Resolved that the payments for November 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.

- c) The combined quotes from Kirby McKay, tree surgeon, were accepted and it was ***Resolved that the work should be commenced as quickly as possible.*** This is the work to the bank and the work scheduled via the Survey could be commenced.
SB, RB and MB will report back on the revised recommendations for the woodland at Fysie Lane/Burgh Woods so that KPS can be informed and either revise their quote or begin the scheduled work.
SB, RB and MB will also report back with a recommendation on the list of suitable trees for the Queen's Garden site.

2368. Etchingham Neighbourhood Plan

Delays continue but RDC being kept fully informed.

2369. Village Community Halls

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

A short, written report was presented and accepted. While fund raising is to be stepped up the current outlook is good. The full report is on file. Thanks are being minuted to the Trustees of ETSR for reaching this satisfactory status, with especial thanks to Paul Stott and Steve Millea with their high input into the success of the NHS booking of the premises as a major Vaccination Centre.

2370. To receive Reports from Members and Representatives and pass such resolutions as may be necessary:-

- a) ESALC – nothing to report as the next meeting (AGM) is not until 25th November.
b) RALC – work continues surrounding the Speeding and Black Cat initiatives.
c) The Clerk attended an excellent conference facilitated by NALC on Rural Housing. A recording of the conference will be available shortly to the Clerk for dissemination to anyone interested in the subject.

2371. Correspondence

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

2372. Etchingham Parish Council – Notification to members of Council decisions:

There were no notifications.

2373. Agenda items for the next meeting to be held on Thursday 9th December 2021 in The Parker Hall at 7.30pm.

As noted through the above minutes.

Signed..........

Date.....9. XII. 2021.....