

ETCHINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Etchingam Parish Council Meeting
held on Thursday 20th October 2022 at 7.30pm The Parker Hall, Parsonage Croft, Etchingam

Members Present: Cllrs: John Barnes (in the Chair), Mary Barnes, Sid Barrow, Rob Beeney, Colin Boylett and Roma Turner.

Also present: District Cllr Eleanor Kirby-Green, a member of the public and 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.

2516. Apologies for Absence:

There were apologies for absence from Cllr Trevor McGregor which were accepted.

2517. Minutes of the previous meetings:

The Minutes of the Meetings held on 18th August and 15th September, having been previously circulated, were agreed and signed as accurate records of those meetings.

2518. 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 the substitute Conservative member of RDC Planning Committee. Cllr. M. Barnes reminded Council that she is a member of the RDC Planning Committee.

2519. Etchingam Parish Council – Dispensations:

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

2520. Chairman's Announcements:

There were no announcements but the chairman advised councillors that there would be a brief 'Closed Session' at the end of the meeting in public to brief those councillors now present, who had missed the pre-meeting session, on those matters. This session to be minuted separately due to the sensitive commercial information discussed.

2521. Public Time:

- a) County Councillor Cllr Eleanor Kirby-Green's report, having been previously circulated, was accepted and approved with thanks.
- b) District Cllr Barnes updated the meeting on the Beech Farm Planning Application. The Secretary of State has stayed the decision to allow him time to consider on whether it should be called-in or not. The Town hall project has already substantially exceeded the budget and that is only for Phase I. In view of this and the majority opinion that too many planning details are outstanding to allow the application to succeed it was refused. In general terms the current finances of RDC are bad and getting worse and as the deficit is to be carried over it is anticipated that all reserves will be down to the bare minimum in the next financial year.
- c) Mr Michael Le Garignon, Chairman of the TESAG Sub-Committee submitted his report under agenda item 7c i.
- d) Mr Colin Phillips, Chair of de Etchingam CIC brought a proposal to the Council. In essence the CIC would take over the fundraising, design and build to refurbish the playground in Queen's Garden. On completion this would be handed back to the Council for onward maintenance. The CIC plan to revisit the village survey on residents wants/needs, if the village still wants the facility then it would proceed – working to a budget of £30-£50k and expecting EPC to match fund the CIC contribution while it would also seek grants and funding from other sources such as RDC. It anticipates that, if the expected grants and external funding of £20-£30k is raised, CIC would pay £10k together with £10k from EPC. EPC itself not being in a position to accept or decline this proposal will be put before the Etchingam Recreation Grounds Trust, the Registered Charity for Queen's Gardens and Viper, for consideration.

- e) There were no other members of the public wishing to be heard.
- f) As no members were to be excluded this right was not exercised.

2522. Parish Matters:

a) Village Amenities:

- i) **Village Shop/The Old Stores:** The Clerk is arranging for the Energy Efficient Rating Certificate to be updated so that an Agent will take on the sale of the premises including making a current valuation. The possibility of taking to Auction will be investigated.
- ii) The Monthly Inspection Reports for the playgrounds were accepted.
The contract for replacing the gates for Queen's Gardens has been awarded. A start date is awaited.
- iii) There were no other matters to consider.

b) Children and Young People:

- i) The school Harvest Festival, due to be held in the church had, due to extremely bad weather, had to be re-located to the school hall. It is now half-term.
The Mother & Toddler group (run by the church) which meets in the Parker Hall on Wednesday mornings has offered to open more generally to anyone in the village that might like to share the warmth with a warm drink, biscuit and a natter as a first step to establishing 'Havens of Warmth' this winter in the village. **It was Resolved that EPC would progress this proposal.**
- ii) Cllr Boylett had submitted his report on ERGT fundraising which was approved and is available on file. It was confirmed that the Give As You Live fundraising effort would continue indefinitely or for so long as the facility exists, even when the playgrounds are replaced as it a proper and useful method of consolidating funding into the maintenance earmarked reserves to be created by EPC.
- iii) There were preliminary discussions regarding the CIC proposal but only ERGT can take a final decision. The Clerk will take advice from the insurers, the Annual Inspection team and council solicitor in order to present the findings to ERGT at its next meeting. However, should the advice be positive then a maximum of £10k would be available from EPC reserves.
- iv) There were no other matters to consider.

c) Highways, Footpaths and Community Safety:

- i) The Council **Resolved that once purchased the Black Cat unit would be retained for the use of Etchingam only and not 'rented' out or shared.**
A councillor raised the issue of the dire state of the road surface, or what is left of it, for most of Fysie Lane. Being present, County Cllr Kirby-Green was able to confirm that she will be trying to persuade the Highways Steward and others to include Fysie Lane in the site visits on 7th November in the neighbouring parish of Burwash.
- ii) Michael Le Garignon, Chairman of TESAG (The Etchingam Safety Action Group) was able to report on a successful public meeting, follow-up survey and inclusion of the results of the 2-site 7-day speed/volume count in the documentation to be sent to ESCC Highways in order to apply for match funding for the project with the approval of the Council. It was **Resolved that the application be progressed and that the Clerk should begin the application process for a PWLB loan to a maximum of £40k.**
Going forward regular reports will be submitted to the Parish Council on progress, as detailed in the Terms of Reference for the sub-committee, and in addition, that County Cllr Kirby-Green be included in the circulation list for those reports.
Cllr Boylett had submitted his Speedwatch report which is on file. Another quiet month.
- iii) Cllr Boylett had submitted the reports from Rother Police which were accepted and are on file.

v) As noted on the agenda there had been no PCSO Rother Parishes Forum meeting held.

vi) There were no other matters to consider.

d) Environment and Other issues:

Sewage is once again backing up badly. The main sewer is 'squashed' and inadequate for the amount of sewage generated. The Clerk to investigate how to report this to the Regulator and also inform the MP asking for help and guidance in order to get this impending public health issue taken care of in good time and not left any longer than it already has.

Cllr John Barnes has been on a site visit with Mr Robert Banks (representing Save our Fields, Burwash) to view and assess the lighting levels at Etchingham Station after dark. Railtrack were also in attendance.

There were no other matters to consider.

e) Communications:

There were no matters to consider.

2523. Planning:

Cllr Mary Barnes reminded Council that she is a member of Rother District Council Planning Committee, Cllr John is also a substitute member of the Rother District Council Planning Committee

a) There were no Etchingham applications to consider.

b) Horsebrooks Farmyard : Having received the presentation from the applicant **it was Resolved that EPC would reconfirm it's support for this application and welcomed the information that this application has been called in by a District Councillor.**

c) There were no further items to consider

2524. Finance:

a) The Completion of the limited assurance review for year ended 31st March 2022 and associated documents were reviewed and it **was Resolved that actions be taken to complete the recommendations of the Auditor prior to the next annual review.**

b) The first Quarter 2022-2023 Bank Reconciliation to 30th June 2022 was received & approved.

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

Payments for October 2022		TOTAL PAID
P Barton	Salary & Expenses October 2022	1,614.74
L Worton	Salary & Expenses September 2022	18.40
EDF	22/08/22 – 22/09/22 shop electricity	14.02
PKF Littlejohn LLP	External Audit Review 2021-2022	360.00
Bistro @ the station	Coffee & Cake x 15 28/09/2022	53.30
Action in Rural Sussex	VH training – the Governing doc.	24.00
ESCC	2x7 day speed survey on A265	892.80
Mulberry & Co	Training & Support	110.52
ESALC	Finance Training	48.00
HMRC	Qtr 2 PAYE & NICS	1,603.36
Bistro @ the Station	19/10/2022 x 12 for coffee & cake	31.50
Crane Designs Ltd	NP Mthly charge for hosting site DD 4/10/22	15.00
Crane Designs Ltd	EPC Mthly charge for hosting site DD 04/10/22	15.00
Focus Group	Office Phone DD 26/10/22	32.65
	Total Payments	£4,833.29

It was Resolved that the payments for October 2022 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.

Finance: continued

- d) **It was Resolved that EPC would instruct ESCC Highways to continue the extra grass cuts through the next year and the additional appropriate payment be made upon receipt of invoice.**

2525. The Standing Orders for Etchingham Parish Council were reviewed and updated in line with Model Standing Orders as issued by the National Council of Local Associations in April 2022.

The Media and Communications Policy of Etchingham Parish Council was reviewed and an amendment was resolved to include members of sub-committees of EPC who are not necessarily parish councillors.

The two amended documents will be included on the EPC website.

2526. Etchingham Neighbourhood Plan

The Local Plan now being in draft form it is expected that the Consultation document will be circulated before Christmas so work on the Etchingham Neighbourhood Plan remains a priority.

2527. Village Community Halls

Cllr J Barnes reminded the meeting of his personal interest in ETSR.

It was Resolved that EPC would accept nomination as a Managing Trustee of ETSR, maintaining its role as Custodian Trustee and Guarantor, at the ETSR AGM on 10th November and will accept the role of Sole Managing Trustee should no other Trustees be nominated.

It was also Resolved that an Administration Officer role be created to work in the Parish Office to support the Clerk/RFO with both Trust and parish matters.

2528. To receive Reports from Members and Representatives and pass such resolutions as may be necessary: -

- a) ESALC – no meetings have been held. There being only one councillor willing to stand as a representative it was **Resolved that the Clerk be nominated to perform the role of the second representative.**
- b) RALC – held a Parish Conference supported by RDC. The focus was on biodiversity, the CIL fund for green projects and moving the climate change conversation into action points.
- c) There were no other meetings on which to report.

2529. Correspondence

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

2530. Etchingham Parish Council – Notification to members of Council decisions:

There were no notifications.

2531. It was Resolved that a meeting of the ETSR & then ERGT Trusts be held at 7 & 7.15 pm prior to the meeting in public of the Parish Council at 7.30pm.

Agenda items for the next meeting to be held on Thursday 17th November 2022 in The Parker Hall at 7.30pm.

There were no exceptional items proposed at this time.

Signed..... **By the Chairman**

Date..... **17th November 2022**

