

ETCHINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Etchingham Parish Council Meeting
held on Thursday 19th January 2023 at 7.30pm The Parker Hall, Parsonage Croft, Etchingham

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

Also present: A number of members of the public, County Cllr Eleanor Kirby-Green 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.

2568. Apologies for Absence:

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

2569. Minutes of the previous meetings:

The Minutes of the Extraordinary General Meeting held on 8th December 2022 having been previously circulated were agreed and signed as accurate record of that meeting, unfortunately due a technical issue the minutes of the meeting held on 15th December were unavailable so will be presented at the next meeting.

2570. Declarations of Interest:

There were none.

2571. Etchingham Parish Council – Dispensations:

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

2572. Chairman's Announcements:

The Chairman had no announcements to make.

2573. Public Time:

- a) County Councillor Cllr Eleanor Kirby-Green confirmed that the old school will be sold by auction, probably in February/March.
The county-wide issue with the poor state of the roads continues to be a problem. Staff are being transferred across departments to try to speed the processing of the backlog of work required. Report ALL potholes – the online reporting facility is open to everyone. Attaching images and using 'my 3 words' to locate is very useful. Damage to vehicles will only be compensated IF the pothole has been logged then not fixed within the allowed timeframe so reporting is key.
- b) District Cllr John Barnes reported that the Local Plan is running late but a draft is anticipated later this year. Consultation on the RDC Budget is open as the search for economies continues. Bexhill and Sidley have benefitted from Levelling Up.
- c) Members of the public (MOP) asked for an update on the shop (7a i) the budget for 2023-24 (9a). The Chairman explained that these items were already on the agenda – as indicated above.

Further comments and discussion followed on the communication channels utilised by the Council and how they might be extended, improved and updated.

More detailed information on the RDC budget was requested and the MOP directed to the RDC website as useful and up to date.

A number of questions were asked regarding the status of the Neighbourhood Plan. After discussion the Acting Secretary resigned due to pressure of other work and a new Secretary installed. The Council will continue to support the Neighbourhood Plan Group to the best of its abilities and remains committed to a successful outcome.

Another MOP, a lead member of The Northern Rother Group, detailed the work and aims of the group with regard to inappropriate lighting levels at the railway station. Minute 2574 (e) refers.

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

2574. Parish Matters:

a) Village Amenities:

- i) **Village Shop/The Old Stores:** The Clerk was authorised to appoint Bracketts as agent to market and to approach Clive Emson, auctioneers, should an appropriate and speedy sale not be forthcoming
- ii) The Monthly Inspection Reports for the playgrounds were accepted. Final discussions with the playground contractor and a site visit to be conducted as quickly as possible. It was confirmed that the Give as You Live funds continue to be utilised (and encouraged) to help towards a properly funded repair and replacement Ear Marked Reserve for the future.
- iii) There were no other matters to consider.

b) Children and Young People:

- i) Cllr Turner reported that the new Headteacher is both busy and popular. The Barn Owls continue to prosper, there is a lively Reception Class and the new Forest School has been very well received.
- ii) Cllr Boylett had submitted his report on ERGT fundraising which was approved and is available on file. A steady rise in funds month on month.
- iii) There were no other matters to consider.

c) Rural Villages Services Group

The correspondence having been circulated discussion was brief and ***it was Resolved that while the Council would support the Group and its aims it would not be sending volunteer councillors to either the Finance, Younger Persons or Older Persons Boards.***

d) Highways, Footpaths and Community Safety:

- i) The Clerk reported that ESCC Highways has been instructed to refill all the grit bins, including the one owned by the Parish Council for which payment will be invoiced. Council did not feel that additional grit bins were required but that the one at the old school might in fact be considered for removal.
- ii) Mr Michael Le Garignon, Chairman of the TESAG Sub-Committee confirmed that the results off the additional road traffic are still awaited.
- iii) Cllr Boylett had submitted his Speedwatch report which is on file. A quiet month on the whole but an increasing number of vehicles without up to date MOT certificates.
- iv) Cllr Boylett had submitted the reports from Rother Police which were accepted and are on file. Unexceptional for the time of year.
- v) As noted on the agenda there had been no PCSO Rother Parishes Forum meeting held.
- vi) There were no other matters to consider.

e) **Environment and Other issues:**

The Northern Rother Group's work regarding the issue of inappropriate lighting at the Station was discussed following the presentation by a MOP. While the Council had resolved to support this work last month, the Clerk stated that to create a Parish Council Working Party – as proposed by one of the councillors at this meeting – may well fall outside the powers and authority of this Council as it does not carry the General Power of Competence. Advice will be taken.

Cllr Barrow alerted Council to the issue of raw sewage lying in the field behind the old shop, almost certainly due to failed pumps. Most footpaths are wet but passable with sensible footwear. There were no other matters to consider.

f) **Communications:**

While there is no complacency in the council regarding the communication channels, both the size of the council and the size of the parish population prevents much expansion from the existing channels being used regularly. Consideration will be being made into highlighting Council successes. There were no other matters to consider.

2575. 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 at this time. The Kitchenham application for an annexe has been granted.

b) Beech Farm, Sedlescombe: this is now with the Minister. The unsuccessful applicant for Horsebrooks Farm has said that he will modify further in order to get approval. There were no further items to consider.

2576. Finance:

a) The amended Draft Budget for 2023-2024 was presented to Council. The Budget was accepted and **it was Resolved to set the Precept figure for 2023-2024 at £71,600.** Although this sum is £600 higher than the previous year due to additional properties being included the cost per rate payer has, in fact, reduced slightly.

b) **The Bank Reconciliation at 30th December 2022 (3rd Quarter) was received and approved.** A healthy balance is showing and the RFO will present a revised schedule of Ear Marked Reserves to reflect this position as soon as possible.

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

Payments for January 2023		TOTAL PAID
P Barton	Salary & Expenses Jan 2023	1661.57
L Worton	Salary & Expenses Dec 2022	42.53
Olga Bilai	Salary & Expenses Jan 2023	381.90
HMRC	NICs & PAYE Qtr 3 (3 employees)	1701.60
ESCC	7 site speed survey	2704.80
NALC	Clerk Training	52.04
ESALC	Cllr Training (Cllr Turner)	48.00
Bistro @ the station	Coffee & Cake Club x 12 (21.12.2022)	29.40
Bistro @ the station	Coffee & Cake Club x 23 (18.01.2023)	58.30
Co-Op Bank	Auto charge fee sweep	30.00
Crane Designs Ltd	NP Mthly charge for hosting site DD 01/01/23	15.00
Crane Designs Ltd	EPC Mthly charge for hosting site DD 01/01/23	15.00
Focus Group	Office Phone to 30.01.2023	32.29
	Total Payments	£6772.43

It was Resolved that the payments for January 2023 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.

2577. To receive Reports from Members and Representatives

- a) ESALC – Cllr John Barnes reported that Levelling Up and the effect on planning was likely to be good for Rother as 90% of its land is protected so the housing targets will have to be revised.
- b) RALC – no attendee was available.
- c) Cllr Turner reported on the ESALC training for councillors that she had attended and confirmed that it was very worthwhile for existing councillors as well as new.

2578. Correspondence

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

2579. Etchingam Parish Council – Notification to members of Council decisions:

There were no notifications.

2580. Agenda items for the next meeting to be held on Thursday 16th February 2023 in The Parker Hall at 7.30pm.

There were no exceptional items proposed at this time.

Signed..... By the Chairman

Date..... 16th February 2023