

ETCHINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Etchingham Parish Council Meeting
held on Thursday 16th February 2023 at 7.30pm The Parker Hall, Parsonage Croft, Etchingham

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

Also present: Five members 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.

2581. Apologies for Absence:

There were apologies for absence from Cllr Rob Beeney and County Cllr Eleanor Kirby-Green which were accepted.

2582. Minutes of the previous meetings:

The Minutes of the Meetings held on 15th December 2022 and 19th January 2023, having been previously circulated, were agreed and signed as true and accurate records of those meetings.

2583. Declarations of Interest:

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

Cllr. J Barnes declared that he is the substitute Conservative member of RDC Planning Committee.

2584. Etchingham Parish Council – Dispensations:

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

2585. Chairman's Announcements:

The Chairman had no announcements to make.

2586. Clerk's Report

The Clerk's report having been previously circulated was accepted and is on file.

2587. Public Time:

- a) County Councillor Cllr Eleanor Kirby-Green had submitted a written report which having been previously circulated was accepted and is on file.
- b) District Cllr John Barnes reported that the RDC Budget will go before full Council the following Monday. The maximum rise without referendum will be requested and £1M in savings proposed but in spite of this £2M will need to be drawn from Reserves. An unsustainable position going forward. A new leisure strategy also goes before full Council to coordinate the use of halls and facilities across the district for discussion.
- c) The members of the public (MOP) chose a spokesperson as they were all concerned about the same issue. A planning application has been made to alter the s106 on 4 shared ownership properties in Church Farm close. The spokesperson outlined the history which starts in 1996 and also the concerns of the home owners involved as to the current application for modification. A detailed discussion ensued during which Councillors were able to ask questions for further detail.
Resolution will be made under 2589 (a) following.
- d) As no members were to be excluded this right was not exercised.

2588. Parish Matters:

a) Village Amenities:

- i) **Village Shop/The Old Stores:** The agent has to conduct an Anti-Money laundering check prior to marketing the premises so each councillor duly completed and signed the required form for the clerk to return to Bracketts. (See also 2590 a). The Clerk told Council that before viewings commenced a working party to clean, clear and tidy was needed. Brambles are ingressing the rear patio and the loft/attic space needs to be cleared along with the under-stairs cupboard.
- ii) The Monthly Inspection Reports for the playgrounds were accepted. A confirmed start date and length of time for build for the QG build is still awaited.
- iii) There were no other matters to consider.

b) Children and Young People:

- i) Cllr Turner reported that as the new Headteacher remains exceptionally busy the Vice-head, Claire Day is happy to be contacted for updates on the school activities.
- 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) Highways, Footpaths and Community Safety:

- i) Council's attention was again brought to the trees on the wide verge of the A265 between the level crossing and the junction with Burgh Hill. ESCC maintain that there is no issue with these trees obscuring sight lines exiting Burgh Hill to enter the A265 but this is not the experience of residents. ***It was Resolved that County Cllr Eleanor Kirby-Green be asked to query the difference in opinion and to investigate the possibility of EPC taking over responsibility for this stretch of verge and the vegetation on it.***
- ii) ***It was Resolved that County Cllr Eleanor Kirby-Green be asked to query to statement that it is less expensive for ESCC to complete 7 temporary repairs to a pothole rather than a single permanent one.***
- iii) Mr Michael Le Garignon, Chairman of the TESAG Sub-Committee confirmed that the ESCC engineering feasibility study required before the TESAG recommendations can go forward for possible funding will begin shortly.
- iv) Cllr Boylett had submitted his Speedwatch report which is on file.
- v) Cllr Boylett had submitted the reports from Rother Police which were accepted and are on file. Thefts and damage to allotment property is beginning to rise including an incident in Hurst Green.
- vi) As noted on the agenda there had been no PCSO Rother Parishes Forum meeting held.
- vii) There were no other matters to consider.

d) Environment and Other issues:

- i) The Village Spring Clean Day on Saturday 22nd April will commence at 10am, meeting at the Community Halls for allocation of route and distribution of equipment as required. Further detailed planning required.
- ii) ***It was Resolved that the Clerk should approach Gray Nicholls again regarding their responsibility for the upkeep of the pond on their land and offer to consider undertaking this on its behalf should that be its wish. Also, to raise these concerns with Environmental Health and asking County Cllr Eleanor Kirby-Green to check the new responsibilities falling to ESCC regarding flood prevention. To contact our MP regarding a special permit to allow dredging of the River Rother to alleviate the immediate flooding issues of which this pond is a part.***

- iii) ***It was Resolved that the Clerk should approach the land owner of the two footpaths complained about will be approached to remedy the situation. Cllr J Barnes and Cllr R Beeney to undertake a systematic 'walk' of all the footpaths in the parish.***
 - iv) ***It was Resolved not to offer to participate in the Trial but that comment should be made regarding the necessity of sufficient cutting to ensure safety for all.***
 - v) There was no update from Northern Parishes Group regarding lighting levels at Etchingham Station, they await various responses.
 - vi) Raw sewage in the field behind the lower houses, including the Old Stores, on the High Street remains an issue. ***It was Resolved that the Clerk should contact Environmental Health again but by phone and not online.***
- e) **Communications:**
Efforts continue to find and instruct a new broadband provider for both the Parish Office and the Community Halls in its entirety. There were no other matters to consider.

2589. 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) ***It was Resolved that the issue of the four homes in Church Farm Close subject to the application to amend the s106 regarding these properties required further research being so complex, so an EGM will be called to resolve a final comment prior to the deadline but that in the meantime a 'holding' comment of Strongest Objection and a request to call the application into Committee will be made.***
- b) There were no further items to consider, however the current level of Enforcement being undertaken received a lot of criticism.

2590. Finance:

- a) ***It was Resolved that all the required information will be supplied as quickly as possible to the agents, Bracketts, to enable them to proceed to market.***
- b) ***It was Resolved that the Clerk be authorised to sign off the necessary documents to purchase and install the new Queen's Garden playground. It was also Resolved to instruct Redlynch Lappset to replace and extend the existing pedestrian pathway from the main gates to the Garden to the small wrought iron gate into the churchyard with the same material which will be used in the playground.***
- c) ***It was Resolved that financial support (should it be required) to hold a special Strawberry Tea at the Bistro late in May to further celebrate the Coronation of the King would be made available. Also, that the offer to fund an item for the Community Halls in memory a Greta Crane would be gratefully received and the Clerk to discuss both these matters further with the Treasurer of the Friendship Club/Rother Valley Ladies final committee before the group is disbanded.***

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

| Payments for January 2023 | | TOTAL PAID |
|----------------------------------|---|-------------------|
| P Barton | Salary & Expenses Feb 2023 | 1494.91 |
| L Worton | Salary & Expenses Jan 2023 | 1101.79 |
| Olga Bilai | Salary & Expenses Feb 2023 | 305.520 |
| Costain Ltd - ESCC | Feasibility Study - TESAG | 2704.80 |
| ETSR | Half-Yearly contribution | 500.00 |
| J H Payne & Sons | Re-hang office door | 420.00 |
| PCC Etchingham Church | Agreed share t clean/repair the War Memorial | 650.00 |
| Bistro @ the station | Coffee & Cake Club x 26 | 69.05 |
| EDF | Shop Electricity for 2 months | 30.00 |
| PWLB | Half-Yearly Repayment | 6724.44 |
| Crane Designs Ltd | EPC Mthly charge for hosting site DD 01/02/23 | 15.00 |
| Focus Group | Office Phone to 30.02.2023 | 31.80 |
| | Total Payments | £11,942.51 |

It was Resolved that the payments for February 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.

2591. To receive Reports from Members and Representatives

- a) ESALC – no meeting was held.
- b) RALC – no attendee was available.
- c) No other meetings or conferences had been attended.

2592. Correspondence

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

2593. Etchingham Parish Council – Notification to members of Council decisions:

There were no notifications.

2594. 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 March 2023**