

ETCHINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Etchingham Parish Council Meeting
held on Thursday 16th April 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, Trevor McGregor and Roma Turner.

Also present: 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.

2616. Apologies for Absence:

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

2617. Minutes of the previous meetings:

The Minutes of the Meetings held on 16th March 2023, having been previously circulated, were agreed apart from extending the RDC report at 2608b which, having been done were signed as a true and accurate record of that meeting.

2618. 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.

2619. Etchingham Parish Council – Dispensations:

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

2620. Chairman's Announcements:

The Chairman had no announcements to make.

2621. Clerk's Report

The Clerk congratulated Council on its re-election and reminded Councillors of their legal obligation to return their Election Expenses Returns, even if there is nil expenditure to report. Rubbish collection remains an issue particularly in Queen's Garden. The Clerk to continue discussion with RDC regarding improvements to be incorporated going forward.

2622. Public Time:

- a) In her absence County Cllr Eleanor Kirby-Green submitted her report which is available on file.
- b) District Cllr John Barnes reported that there can be little activity during the Pre-election period (purdah). However, a new Development Manager, Kemi Erifevieme, has been appointed to manage the planning team.
- c) A member of the public (MOP) had emailed, being unable to attend the meeting, to express his disappointment that the previous Parish Council had been returned uncontested meaning there would be no election. This was not the preference of the Council either, but if insufficient candidates offer themselves, i.e. 7 + 1 minimum in Etchingham, there is no other option. It was also agreed that a wider spread of ages being represented by councillors would also be advantageous as opined by the MOP.

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

2623. Parish Matters:

a) Village Amenities:

- i) Village Shop/The Old Stores: The Clerk informed Council that an offer had been received. After discussion in closed session it was resolved to reject this offer but to remain open to further offers.
- ii) The Monthly Inspection Reports for the playgrounds were accepted. The damaged backboard to the Basketball ring to be considered for 'DIY' by the Council and attempts to source a suitable replacement for the 'missing' screw from the Hamster Wheel will also be investigated.
- iii) It was **Resolved to claim the verge to the west side of Church Lane between the bridges on the Causeway**. The Clerk to consult with an appropriate solicitor.
There were no other matters to consider.

b) Children and Young People:

- i) Cllr Turner reported that there are no issues within the school but the Clerk added that there is mounting concern regarding the unsupervised playing of football on the Market Square outside of school hours. The Building Manager and Caretaker are concerned about accidental damage to both people and property. The situation will be monitored. An early date for a JMC meeting would be beneficial.
- ii) Cllr Boylett had submitted his report on ERGT fundraising which was approved and is available on file. A gradual but steady rise in funds continues month on month.
- iii) There were no other matters to consider.

c) Highways, Footpaths and Community Safety:

- i) County Cllr Kirby-Green has not confirmed the status of Parsonage Croft, i.e. has it been adopted or not as yet and it was suggested that this might be expediated by calling an SLR meeting. Clerk to try to organise.
- ii) Mr Michael Le Garignon, Chairman of the TESAG Sub-Committee confirmed that the ESCC engineering feasibility study response has been very disappointing, concentrating on offering a 'one-size fits all' solution rather than the tailor-made project that is required. The school governors, as well as TESAG being the Parish Council committee, are challenging the ESCC response.
- iv) Cllr Boylett had submitted his Speedwatch report which is on file. While some new volunteers have come forward, due to both health issues and moving from area the total number of volunteers remains static. Efforts will continue to encourage more to step forward.
- v) Cllr Boylett had submitted the reports from Rother Police which were accepted and are on file. A relatively quiet time with some seasonal activity (i.e. allotment/garden shed incidents)
- vi) Civil Parking Enforcement. 'Tickets' had been issued to three private vehicles parked on double yellow lines near to the church, during the Sunday service. It was **Resolved that revision to the parking arrangements near the church should be considered**.
- vii) There were no other matters to consider.

d) Environment and Other issues:

- i) The Village Spring Clean Day (renamed The Etchingham Community Clean It Green It Day) has been moved to Saturday 13th May to avoid the weekend of the Duck Race. The Clerk has been unable to contact the 'retired' councillor who master minded previous clean Up Days but Cllrs Rob Beeney, who offered to organise the division of routes for volunteers, and Cllrs Barrow, McGregor and Turner also volunteered to be available on the day. The Bistro is 'booked' for the conclusion of the event.

- ii) The problem with overgrowing hedges along the High Street, severely impacting the already narrow footpath width, remains a concern. The Clerk to use ESCC official wording for a letter to householders reminding them of their obligation and the possible outcome, i.e. Highways cut the hedges and charge the householder if there is no action. There were no other matters to discuss.

e) **Communications:**

The new broadband package has been installed to the Community Halls including the Parish Office. Cllr Boylett asked that everyone review the contents of the EPC website to consider if there is anything that could usefully be included.

There were no other matters to consider.

2624. 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) RR/2023/620/P : Sevenacres, Sheepstreet Lane : Renovation of existing dwelling house and addition of rear extension. Demolition of existing outbuildings and erection of a single outbuilding comprising garage and workshop.
It was Resolved that there was no objection to this application but great care needs to be taken with stringent conditions in place appropriate to the prominent and highly visible position this property holds within the High Weald AONB. While applauding the inclusion of solar panels, both the type and placement of these require particular sensitivity due to the highly exposed nature of the site within the landscape.
- b) A response to the Appeal, confirming the strongest objection to overturning the RDC refusal for change of use of the Dog Walking Field Church Lane has been lodged.

2625. Finance:

- a) **It was Resolved that the grant requested by South East Community Rail Partnership to replace two planters on the upline platform be accepted in full, the payment of £400 to be made next month.**
- b) The year end bank reconciliation having been previously circulated, was approved as an accurate record. Interest rates available to and from appropriate sources to be reviewed.
- c) Authorisation of payments – the Clerk presented the accounts for payment to the Council.

Payments for April 2023		TOTAL PAID
P Barton	Salary & Expenses Apr 2023	1420.26
L Worton	Salary & Expenses Mar 2023	27.58
Olga Bilai	Salary & Expenses Apr 2023	305.52
Steve Millea	E Bulletin Subs March 21 – Apr 23	440.08
ESCC	Extra 4 cuts Grass Cutting	275.63
ESALC	Ann sub fee ESALC £200.62 & NALC £53.51	254.13
HMRC	Qtr 4 PAYE & NICS	1600.73
Co Op Bank	Auto chg fee sweep	30.00
	Total Payments	£4,353.93

It was Resolved that the payments for March 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.

2626. To receive Reports from Members and Representatives

- a) ESALC – has held a Board Meeting. It is asking Parish Councils to respond to the Community Infrastructure Levy Consultation: the % question at least as not all questions are applicable to PCs. A suitable form of words has been circulated if help is required.
- b) RALC – there was a detailed presentation from RDC on the Climate Emergency. Representations were made to ESCC Highways regarding potholes and the general state of the road system but the response was that with the huge backlog and lack of sufficient funding it is all going to take time.
- c) No other meetings or conferences had been attended.

2627. Correspondence

The letter from Mr & Mrs Howard regarding the appalling state of the roads sent to the MP and copied to EPC was discussed. The MP will be informed that EPC supports the opinion of these residents.

2628. Etchingham Parish Council – Notification to members of Council decisions:

There were no notifications.

2629. Agenda items for the next meeting to be held on Thursday 18th May 2023 in The Parker Hall at 7.00pm.

The earlier start time will allow the Annual Parish Meeting to start at 8pm. There were no exceptional items proposed at this time.

Signed By the Chairman original held on file

Date..... 18th May 2023