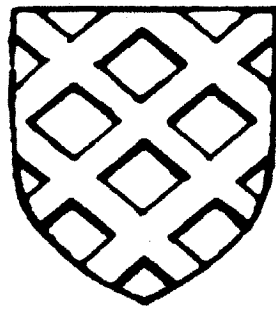


ETCHINGHAM

Annual Report 2023



Annual Parish Meeting

Thursday 18th May 2023

at

8.00pm

**in the Parker Hall, Parsonage Croft
Etchingham**

Chairman's Annual Report for Council Year 2022-2023

Since April 2022 Etchingham Parish Council has taken a number of major decisions which will affect its role in the village and has also impacted on its expenditure.

Towards the end of the previous financial year a professional survey revealed a number of dangerous trees on the north side of Fysie Lane in the stretch of woodland owned by the Parish Council. Urgent remedial work was authorised and carried out. The payment for this major expense actually fell at the beginning of this year.

Because of Covid the Council had had to make provision to meet its obligations as The Etchingham Trust for Sport and Recreation (ETSR) Guarantor/Custodian Trustee, however the feared shortfall in income did not materialise, thanks in part to a very generous Government grant to ETSR and the provisions of the furlough scheme and, of course, the hire of the halls as an NHS Vaccination Centre. So, the Council was left with a larger than normal amount in its Reserves for which there is no mechanism available enabling its return to the resident ratepayers. In other words, it cannot be applied to reduce or repay Council Tax.

The Council had had a very generous offer from the Etchingham CIC to source and manage the installation of new playground equipment to the Queen's Garden, but unfortunately our lawyers advised that, while the CIC might help with funding, responsibility for delivering the project must remain with the Etchingham Recreation Grounds Trust and the Sole Managing Trustee. However, there was nothing to prevent the Parish Council making a grant for the purpose and the decision was taken to order new playground equipment and while we were at it, to commission a new path across the Queen's Garden. That work is currently going ahead and should be complete before the end of May 2023.

Repairs have also been carried out to the equipment in the Viper play area, again funded by the Parish Council in its role as Sole Trustee for ERGT.

Probably the biggest change of all involves the Trusteeship of ETSR itself. It was created towards the end of the last century to deliver and run a new village hall. The first of these tasks was completed in 2016 by a major project, part funded by the Parish Council, in partnership with the Diocese and the County Council. Most villagers will be familiar with the arrangement by which the village and those who hire the halls has access to the Parker Hall at all times and the Ahrens Hall outside school hours. In return ETSR provides 28% of the running and maintenance costs. ETSR's lease was for 125 years, and is by statute renewable. In addition, it enjoys certain reversionary rights should the school ever close. Although the Trust is in a strong financial position, in no small part because of its use by the NHS as a temporary vaccination centre, it has found an increasing difficulty in recruiting trustees. The Parish Council throughout has been what is known as the Custodian Trustee and rather than see the Trust terminated it agreed to become Sole Managing Trustee. The possibility of merging ETSR with ERGT was considered but

on examination it was thought preferable to maintain two separate Trusts. The new arrangement came into effect earlier this year.

Inevitably that will create more work for the Clerk and the Council was well aware that her workload had already risen because of the increasing stringent regulatory framework surrounding the governance of parish councils. Many councils have already appointed a separate Responsible Finance Officer to work alongside the Clerk. The Council therefore agreed to employ one of our Ukrainian refugees, an accountant by profession, to take on part of the work of both the Council and the Trust. The job specification has been left flexible to allow the best long-term distribution of duties to evolve. We shall review the position once we have had at least a year's experience of how the arrangements work, but it is worth noting that overall there has been a reduction in the running costs of ETSR.

A decision taken in principle a year ago to analyse the costs and benefits of owning the shop with a presumption that this was likely to lead to its sale. That was indeed the conclusion reached, and although there have been enquiries about renting the property, none have come to fruition. Certain essential repairs needed to be done before the shop was put on the market, but it is currently being marketed for sale.

Finally, the Council established a working party, TESAG – The Etchingham Safety Action Group - chaired by Michael Le Garignon, primarily to review the engineering report commissioned earlier on road safety measures, to make recommendations and progress a scheme in conjunction with East Sussex Highways.

The group decided that two elements of the report were costly and of limited benefit but they made eight recommendations which the Council accepted. These are designed to improve the situation with regard to speeding at both ends of the High Street and in Church Lane and to provide a 20-mph zone at the main pedestrian access to the school, which is located on the A265. The Parish Council agreed to fund the speed survey essential to preparing the case for a feasibility study which was then submitted to the County Council for examination prior to a bid for matched funding. The Council agreed that it would be prepared to consult the village on a loan of up to £40,000 should that be required. The results of County's review have recently been reported to the Council and to TESAG. Action on Church Lane has been ruled out. And, despite the fact that the Highways Agency operates a 20-mph zone on the A21 outside Hurst Green Primary School at drop off and pick up times ESCC appear to be resisting the idea of special action for our school. More positively they have suggested that 50-mph should be the speed limit for the whole length of the A265 between Burwash and Hurst Green. At the time of writing, the Parish Council has yet to consider TESAG's report on County's suggestions, but it is likely that it will want to support the extended 50-mph zone and to support a further effort to secure a 20-mph zone along the A265 frontage of the school/village halls site. That will necessitate consultation with Burwash and Hurst Green Parish Councils. The Council is very grateful to Michael and his team for all their hard work this year.

The 2021 Emma Beeny award for service to the community of Etchingham was awarded to Clara Batten and her team of volunteers for their work during the Covid crisis. It has been agreed that the 2022 award should be given to the Speedwatch Group and 2023, to be presented at this Annual Parish Meeting, be given to all the Etchingham residents and the volunteers at the Club, who turned out without

hesitation when the sudden 'snow dump' hit on 4th December helping struggling travellers, both in vehicles or waiting for non-existent trains, to either complete their journeys or by offering over-night hospitality at the Club. The virtually instant emptying of all available grit bins in the village was also a sign of Etchingham taking action and working as a community. Job well done.

Flooding has also threatened the village although in the event no houses were actually inundated. An EGM was called to discuss what might be done to alleviate the problem and it was agreed that the failure to dredge the Rother was preventing the drainage ditches from doing their job. Councillor Mc Gregor consulted with Railtrack to ensure that they were keeping the ditches and culverts clear, for which they were responsible and the Clerk alerted the Environment Agency to the problem.

The last year has seen both the Platinum Jubilee and the death of our beloved Queen Elizabeth II and the Coronation of the King, Charles III at the beginning of the new council year. For the most part, events marking these occasions were organised by others with some grant aid by the Council. However, the Council co-organised a highly successful strawberry tea with the Friendship Club/Rother Valley Ladies in the Bistro on the occasion of the Platinum Jubilee.

The Council has also planted a disease resistant English Elm in the Queen's Garden to replace the original Coronation tree which was lost due to a fungus infection and this will now commemorate our late Sovereign's life and reign.

When the Council came to the Budget, despite the expenditure identified above, it felt that it was not only able to reduce the precept, but imperative that it should do so. It was agreed that Band D taxpayers should be asked to pay £169.59 per annum, in effect a decrease of £3.87 per annum on the previous year, which may not be a huge sum but in the face of the continuing rise in inflation across the board was considered an appropriate and expedient decision.

Our normal activities as a Council are carried out by the Clerk as a result of our deliberations made at the monthly meetings, but on occasion has required an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM). We have continued to lobby hard about the state of our roads and in particular about the state of both Fysie and Oxenbridge Lane. We have also considered a number of planning applications, most of which we have been either able to support or raised no objection. On occasion we have commented on applications in other parishes, either where they are close to our boundaries or raise awkward precedents for the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty which surrounds us. This is not only a beautiful landscape, but one of considerable historic interest.

Two planning applications perhaps deserve mention. We could not support the proposals for New House Farm, although we accept that the temporary use agreed embodies enforceable conditions that will, it is hoped, mitigate the impact that those activities have had a large number of neighbouring properties. We were grateful that our District Councillors were able to get an events business proscribed. We were also pleased that the proposed dog walking field in a small field in the centre of the Rother Valley off Church Lane was turned down. It has gone to appeal and the Council has submitted evidence to the Inspector conducting the appeal, which is by submission.

As Chairman I attend meetings of the Rother Association of Local Councils (RALC). I represent RALC on the Board of the East Sussex Association of Local Councils and currently serve as its Vice Chairman. I also attend the Northern Parishes Group meeting and participation in these bodies enables us to influence the policies which affect Etchingham and other rural communities.

The Council continues to support the Cake and Coffee morning at the Bistro as its contribution to dealing with the problems caused by social isolation amongst our rural population. The Clerk attends regular meetings arranged by ESALC and with the local police via the PCSO facilitated forums. Councillor Beeney has donated a Black Cat speeding device in memory of his late wife and the Council has restored the equipment used by Speedwatch to good working order. Colin Boylett and his small group of volunteers do a very effective job in keeping speeds down in the village and in addition contribute to police knowledge of cars that are unlicensed or should not be on the road. The Council is very appreciative of their work

Those who attend our meetings or study the minutes on the website (maintained by Councillor Boylett) will appreciate that there is much else that the Council does on a regular basis and I would like to express my warm thanks to my Vice Chairman and all Etchingham Councillors for the work they do. Finally, both Chairman and Council wish to express their warm thanks to our handyman, Laurence Worton, not least for his regular inspections of our play equipment, for its repair and the other tasks he carries out on our behalf; to Olga Bilai for her contribution since she joined the team in the office; and above all to our invaluable Clerk, Paulette Barton, who provides us with good counsel, keeps us on the right track and implements our decisions.

Cllr John Barnes

Chairman 2022-2023

ETCHINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL – FINANCIAL REPORT

The year started with a not unhealthy balance in the bank but the knowledge that a large sum, largely unbudgeted was due to be paid out. The Parish wide Tree Survey had shown that there were significant problems with the woodland adjacent to Fysie Lane, the section owned by the Parish Council as apparently healthy and stable mature trees proved, on detailed expert investigation, to be an imminent risk with some threatening road users on Fysie Lane and others the walkers in this stretch of woodland itself. A second opinion was sought which confirmed the first so the work was commissioned. It required a short road closure and some advanced tree work so took some days to complete. However, it was completed without mishap and council acknowledged that it had been a very necessary expense and other savings would be considered if necessary as the year progressed.

There could be no going back and cost cutting where public safety is concerned so The Etchingham Safety Action Group (TESAG), a sub-committee of the Parish Council, continued its work towards securing the improvements needed to our roads, lanes and verges working with ESCC Highways as, at the end of the day, this is the authority responsible for the whole of the county's highway network and any improvements we might consider advantageous for the safety of road users in Etchingham has to be agreed with them and, unless extremely fortunate, then look to 'match-funding' to bring an agreed plan into reality. Even match-funding is not a given as ESCC Highways have limited funds to spread across a large County. Undeterred, in the financial year 2022-2023 Etchingham invested in 9 separate Speed Surveys and a major Feasibility Study undertaken by ESCC Highways itself (this is the procedure there is no option here). The results of the Feasibility Study were received towards the end of the financial year. Further discussion and negotiation are taking place as everyone works towards a satisfactory conclusion.

Another major financial decision taken has been the reluctant acceptance that life has changed beyond all recognition over the past few years and maintaining the Old Stores as a community asset is no longer a viable proposition. The tenants, who had been building their successful businesses prior to Covid, had not been able to resume trading after the restrictions were lifted. There was no immediate interest in the property so advice was taken from local Agents experienced in the field and the Old Stores was put onto the market for sale towards the end of the financial year. Very early days as yet so although unsold at the time of this report there has been interest and viewings so Council is expecting developments very soon. While the sale of the premises had been mooted before, the level of loan to be repaid against the probable sum received would have shown a substantial loss but as time has progressed this equation has changed and, all things being equal, it is anticipated that this will release funds which can be allocated elsewhere in the parish. There are very strict rules regarding how Parish Councils are allowed to spend this particular form of income but it always goes to the benefit of the community at the end of the day.

Fund raising continued for the replacement of the remaining aging equipment in the Queen's Garden playground. While worthwhile, and council is very grateful to everyone who has signed up to Give As You Live making regular donations as they shop, it would have been impossible to build sufficient funds to complete a rebuild before units had to be taken out of service. As noted in the Chairman's report the CIC offered to step in and take over the whole project but, on legal advice, this had to be declined as a council can receive financial help with a project but it cannot hand over the responsibility for its specification and management. Having been so close to the goal Council decided to reallocate its reserves, rein in slightly elsewhere and commissioned a new playground which you can see being installed at the time of writing. Included in this project will also be a widened pathway across the entire width of Queen's Garden from the main gate to the little gate into the churchyard using the same surface material as around the new items of play equipment. Looking not unlike a rich Christmas pudding mix it is in fact made from recycled HGV tyres and should last for many years to come.

Going forward, this expenditure notwithstanding, Council has been able to reduce its rate to the ratepayers by a small amount which in these days of escalating costs is no mean feat. Reserves will need to be replenished however, although they are not falling below a prudent level, Etchingham continues to want and deserve improving standards in its community assets and services so the Parish Council will continue to do its best to address those aspirations as best it can.

Grants and donations continue to be made. The Tuesday Lunch Club held in the Bistro@ the Station is now the Coffee and Cake Club, this is open to everyone in the village - you don't need to be a 'senior' to want a bit of a chat and some company. It is going from strength to strength and the support provided by Council to cover half the cost of the morning is considered money well spent particularly as, sadly, the village has lost some of its other social groups which just didn't 'bounce back' once the pandemic restrictions were lifted.

As required by Law, the Accounts of the Parish Council are subject to an Internal and External Audit at year end and copies of all financial information will be available from the Parish Clerk in due course.

Paulette Barton

Etchingam Parish Council Responsible Financial Officer

May 2023

District Councillor Report 2022-23 to Etchingham Parish Assembly

For the fifth year in a row the Council has achieved a balanced budget only by drawing in reserves built up before 2019/20. The intention when the policy was launched was to make up the shortfall between our net spend and income raised by increasing our income from property bought in the course of an energetically pursued programme of regeneration. Although hampered by the onset of the pandemic, that programme has made a worthwhile contribution to income, and some projects e.g. Barnhorn Road Surgery have yet to come into play. The £8+ million investments made in property funds more than four years ago have fluctuated in value but continue to generate worthwhile sums and inflation, while a major headache, has led to an increase in interest rates, meaning that the substantial sums that pass through the Council's hands can be put to beneficial use.

There were two other elements to the Council's Financial Stability Programme, the transfer of services to Parish and Town Councils, and a search for efficiency savings. Many of the services that were proposed to go to Bexhill Town Council were in large part financed by the Special Expenses tax charged to the residents of Bexhill, Battle and Rye, although there was an element of subsidy from the generality of Rother council tax payers. However, Bexhill Special Expenses has had to be reinstated this year as no transfer of services has as yet taken place to the Town Council. Burwash Parish Council, however, have taken over the Burwash car park. Every year so far the Financial Stability Programme has missed its target; while savings have been found, the level of savings has always fallen short of the figure projected.

In the meantime, net expenditure has continued to rise and the reserves to fall. In 2022/23 Council has a net spend of £16.9 million while useable reserves have fallen by over £3 million. The 'balanced' budget agreed for 2023/24 relies on £1 million largely unidentified savings (if and when Bexhill's public conveniences are transferred to the Town Council that will save £149 thousand) and £2 million drawn from reserves. That will bring Rother's useable reserves down to £5.3 million and the interim Chief Finance Office, backed by the Audit Committee, has made it clear that the minimum useable reserve kept intact should be £5 million. The newly elected Council will therefore face some difficult decisions.

Council tax has been set at the maximum permissible rate (any more would require the consent of the electorate by referendum) which in our case (because of the special expenses) is just 2.7%. The Council's capital programme has slipped badly in recent years, in part because of Covid, and given the recent rise in interest rates, is under review to ensure that it is still viable.

The Government has entered into a Levelling Up partnership with the Council, the first fruits of which are a grant of over £19 million, the bulk of which will regenerate the De La Warr pavilion, with a relatively small contribution going to the new community hub at Sidley Recreation ground – Sidley is amongst the ten per cent most deprived communities in England.

The backlog in dealing with planning applications is well on the way to being eliminated, largely thanks to new procedures inaugurated by the interim development planning manager, and the new local plan should be out for consultation in the autumn. It will be detailed, possibly even to indicating sites where development is intended to take place. At the moment Rother still suffers from an imposed target for annual housebuilding that has no regard at all for the fact that ninety per cent of our district is designated AONB or otherwise protected as RAMSAR sites or SSSIs. Thanks to a quite arbitrary process which pays no attention at all to the steadily widening gap between houses built and permissions given, Rother is deemed to have less than 3 years land supply. In general, the Planning Committee does not allow itself to be swayed by this where the AONB is concerned, but not all Appeal Inspectors are prepared to recognise the problem. Nevertheless, Rother is winning the majority of appeals and the Government seems to be moving in the right direction with its proposed abandonment of top down housing targets.

The steps Rother has taken to address the housing problem have had mixed fortunes. Not a single house has yet been started on the Blackfriars site and the spine road (a Council project) essential to site development is running months late with a cost that has doubled. Optivo (now Southern Housing Association) has been encouraged to purchase sites and develop them with 100 per cent affordable housing, but only that at Banky Field in Ticehurst has yet come to fruition. Roughly 100 affordable homes will have been completed in 2023/24, slightly fewer than the 112 in 2022/23, but that figure should improve; and the completion of the first Community Land Trust housing at Icklesham is very welcome. Overall house building has picked up post pandemic, 238 new homes being added in 2021/22, a number that is almost certain to have been exceeded in 2022/23. But the demands on our housing services continue to rise, with something like 20 households a month swelling a housing list that in December stood at 2095 households. At that moment Rother had no fewer than 133 households living in temporary accommodation. The decision to devote £8 million to the purchase of properties to accommodate at least some of those requiring temporary accommodation is therefore not only necessary, but actually saves the Council money.

About 30 projects have been completed as part of our environment strategy and £500,000 of CIL money has been awarded through the Climate Emergency Bonus Fund (sic) to the Village Halls Energy Project. I am afraid that Etchingam is not one of the halls eligible for funding as the ownership is complex although it has proved eligible for the free expert inspection which will result in a proposals document of what might be feasible and/or practicable. It would then be down to the Trust which manages the halls to action or not. Progress is also being made with installing vehicle charging points in Council car parks, and a grant is being sought from the Energy Saving Trust. However, it looks as though only urban areas will benefit. The possibility of using vegetable oil rather than diesel in our waste collection fleet at a cost of £250,000 a year is under consideration, but will have to be agreed by all three authorities involved. Regrettably some of our Waste recycling facilities have been closed as the waste had to be treated as contaminated, but kerbside collection rightly is the main vehicle for our ability to increase recycling levels.

Community Grants continue with the new Lottery launched a year ago making a relatively small but useful contribution towards what remains a largely tax funded programme. 65% of the proceeds are available for that purpose.

Rother has provided robust evidence to the outstanding appeal on the suggested dog walking site off Church Lane, but has been less than forthcoming with enforcement action on New House Farm, although we were assured that the temporary conditional approval granted would make enforcement easier.

The recent District Council elections saw Councillor Kirby-Green and me returned for Burwash and the Weald. The Conservatives are the largest group with ten seats, but Rother remains a hung Council and is likely to be governed by a rainbow Alliance led by a member of the Rother Association of Independents, who are now a registered political party. The Labour Group numbers 8, the Rother Association 8, the Liberal Democrats 7, the Greens 3, and there are two non-aligned Independents.

District Cllr John Barnes

ESCC annual report for Etchingham Parish Assembly 2023

This summary sets out some of the key achievements of East Sussex County Council over the last year under the four strategic priorities of the Council:

Driving sustainable economic growth

Following a competitive tender process, ESCC awarded a new contract for highways and infrastructure services to Balfour Beatty Living Places Ltd. The contract valued at £297m for an initial seven years from May 1st 2023, has an option to extend to a maximum of 14 years. During the procurement process bidders were asked to demonstrate how they would support the Council's goals to reduce its carbon footprint, ensure high quality work, provide value for money and improve social wellbeing.

Over 752 road improvement schemes, utilising the one-off additional investment agreed by ESCC Cabinet in November 2021, were completed by the end of 2022 at 398 sites with a further 100 sites expected to be completed by the end of 2022/23. This includes patching schemes, new signs and new road markings. In addition, during the first three-quarters of the year we completed 140 road maintenance projects to maintain and improve the county's roads and repaired over 17,000 potholes in the roads and pavements. There was a significant increase in reported potholes following the wettest November on record and one of the coldest starts to December. By the end of January 2023, we had more than doubled the number of pothole repair gangs from 10 to 23 and extended working hours.

In September 2022, over £41m of funding to improve bus services across the county was confirmed by Government. ESCC's Bus Service Improvement Plan was approved which has enabled the Council to reduce fares and will support bus priority and bus stop improvements, investments in infrastructure and the provision of more bus services.

Following extensive consultation, Transport for the South East, the region's sub-national transport body which is chaired by ESCC, approved their Strategic Investment Plan which is the blueprint for future investment in strategic transport infrastructure for the next thirty years.

Over the summer, over 600 people looking to get into the world of work attended Apprenticeship Roadshows in Hastings and Eastbourne, with more than 60 training providers and employers from a range of industries on hand to give advice and information. The Apprenticeship Roadshows are part of the £600,000 Transform programme, supported by the European Social Fund, and including match funding of £300,000 from the Council's Apprenticeship Levy which helps small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) access apprenticeship advice and funding. More than 3,600 students from across East Sussex gained an insight into the world of work through the Council's work experience scheme with pupils aged 14-18 from 32 schools being offered placements during the last academic year with over 1,400 businesses. More than 20 businesses have also signed up to the Open Doors scheme which gives young people real-life experience of the workplace and runs from November to June 2023 this year. Recruitment of Industry Champions has also continued, with 190 champions supporting schools and colleges in place by the end of 2022.

Keeping vulnerable people safe

The Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) programme provided for more than 1,800 young people during the Easter holidays, including 300 young people with additional needs. May half-term activities focused on supporting young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) and those with low attendance: 1,440 young people were involved through more than 4,500 sessions. Provision was also extended over the summer holidays with over 80 providers across 144 sites, offering activities and nutritious food to children who receive free school meals.

A new Connected Families Service was launched in 2022 for families with children aged 11-17 who are on the edge of care. The service aims to enable children to live safely at home, or where care is necessary, to maintain relationships and work to support children to return home when appropriate. Connected Coaches provide proactive, tailored support for families at their point of need.

Trading Standards were involved in over 425 interventions over the first three-quarters of 2022/23 to protect vulnerable people, including installing CCTV and call blockers to try to prevent people from falling victim to telephone scams. Trading Standards have also obtained Proceeds of Crime Act confiscation orders against convicted individuals this year totalling nearly £100,000. The team also took part in Scams Awareness Fortnight, including speaking to people at local libraries to raise awareness of the types of scams which target vulnerable people.

As at mid-January 2023 1,170 guests were in East Sussex under the Homes for Ukraine scheme, with more than 400 school places allocated to Ukrainian children. ESCC is working with Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations to provide support to Ukrainian families.

Helping people help themselves

A new East Sussex SEND strategy for 2022-25 was launched in November 2022 after a 10-month consultation period. The strategy outlines a partnership approach to service provision and commissioning by putting children, young people and their families at the centre of decision making. A new specialist facility for children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder opened at All Saints Primary School in Bexhill during 2022, alongside a new free special school in Eastbourne; Summerdown School – which will educate up to 84 learners with a diagnosis of autism, between the ages of 5 and 16.

Reablement services are provided to help people to regain mobility and daily living skills, especially after a hospital stay. Between April and September 2022 90.7% of older people discharged from hospital to reablement or rehabilitation services were at home 91 days after discharge.

Work continued on the further integration of health and social care. The Integrated Care Board (NHS Sussex) was formally established on the 1st July 2022 and is responsible for agreeing strategic priorities and resources for all NHS organisations in Sussex. The joint statutory committee between local government and the NHS, the Sussex Health and Care Assembly approved the Sussex Integrated Care Strategy with work underway to develop a joint Forward Plan which will support delivery of shared priorities. During the last part of 2022, schemes to support people who were medically fit to leave hospital into appropriate onward care settings were mobilised to help alleviate pressures on the NHS. ESCC teams

also worked with urgent community response healthcare services to support people and their carers to remain in their own homes.

Thirteen road safety schemes were completed during the first three-quarters of 2022/23 to improve road safety infrastructure. Nearly 3,000 people have also benefited from 'Bikeability' courses.

A new initiative to tackle fuel poverty and improve energy efficiency in privately rented households within areas of Hastings was launched in August 2022. ESCC was one of 13 local authorities to secure funding from the Government's Partnerships for People and Place programme. The funding will help the Council, local partners, and central government colleagues to develop new solutions which aim to reduce fuel poverty and increase the take up of energy efficiency improvements, boosting residents' health and providing environmental benefits.

Making best use of resources in the short and long term

The Council's budget and Council Plan for 2023/24 was approved at the meeting of Full Council on the 7th February 2023. Councillors approved a £501m net budget for 2023/24 for the day-to-day provision of services. Spending in 2023/24 also includes part of our £725m 10-year capital programme, which includes investment in roads and highways structures, in reducing the Council's carbon emissions and in school places.

Following the declaration of a climate emergency in 2019 the Council developed a corporate climate emergency plan for 2020-22, which set out the baseline carbon emissions and the actions to be delivered. In January 2023, Cabinet approved an updated corporate Climate Emergency Plan covering 2023-25. The plan sets out a number of actions to reduce our carbon emissions including in property services, travel, street lighting and procurement. The outturn for quarter 2 of 2022/23 showed a 29% reduction in carbon emissions, from the baseline year 2019/20.

The Council spent £295m with 908 local suppliers over 2022, equating to 67% of total spend. In addition, during the first three-quarters of the year, 10 contracts were awarded which were in-scope of the Social Value Measurement Charter. These contracts had a total value of just over £340m with almost £198m of social value commitments secured, including apprenticeships, employability support and support for the VCSE. This equates to an outturn of 58% of applicable procurement spend, against a target of 10%.

The East Sussex Pension Fund was named Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) Fund of the Year (assets over £2.5 billion) at the 2021 Local Authority Pension Fund (LAPF) Investments Awards (announced in March 2022). The award recognises the Fund's excellence in implementing best practice, leadership across pension fund operations, investment performance, governance and administration. In addition, the Fund was highly commended in the Best Climate Change Strategy category.

County Cllr Eleanor Kirby-Green
May 2023



COMMUNITY SAFETY

The Council portfolio for Community Safety covers several areas that relate to the safety and wellbeing of village residents, as detailed below.

Police;

The Clerk and community safety portfolio holder are in regular contact with our two local PCSO's, Emma and Daryl, they keep us up to date with what is happening in the area. If you have something you want to discuss with an officer you can contact a PCSO or PC by using the Police Non-Emergency number **101** and asking for a local officer to contact you, **101** is the number to use to report non-urgent matters to Police.

As always – if reporting an urgent matter, do not hesitate ~ call **999**

More information and help available on the Sussex police website www.sussex.police.uk

Neighbourhood Watch;

Etchingham does not currently have an active Neighbourhood Watch scheme operating, I do however still receive occasional NHW information from Rother NHW and will put anything that is relevant to Etchingham on the e-bulletin, social media and village notice boards, and if appropriate will add to the Parish Council website.

Community Speedwatch; See the separate report for Speedwatch

Flood Warnings;

We have been lucky in recent winters, with no serious flooding, during winter of 2022/23 we only had a few Flood Alerts, and none of the more serious warnings.

If any alerts or warnings are issued I am registered, on behalf of the Parish Council, to receive all warnings and updates as soon as they are issued. I can then make sure that residents in parts of the village that are at risk are aware of the current situation. As alerts or warnings are received the details are posted and regularly updated on the PC website, the details are also sent out on the e-bulletin when possible and are usually posted on some of the village Facebook pages.

If you have any queries on community safety issues, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Cllr. Colin Boylett

Portfolio holder for Community Safety

May 2023



ETCHINGHAM COMMUNITY SPEEDWATCH

Co-Ordinator; Colin Boylett 01580 819532 07483 211838

etchingham-speedwatch@gmail.com

<https://www.communityspeedwatch.org>

The first thing to point out is that Community Speedwatch is **NOT** about getting people reported or fined, it is an educational tool designed to remind drivers to drive at appropriate speeds in speed limit areas by regular deployment of Speedwatch operators with speed detection devices.

However, vehicles recorded over the speed limit by more than the margin in the ACPO guidelines are referred to the Police, the vehicle owners receive a Police warning letter, persistent offenders may also get a visit from a Police Officer and possible further action may be taken.

The Etchingham group has now been operating since January 2014. Since then the group has run a total of 2366 roadside sessions that have recorded over 12,594 speeding vehicles and more than 11,000 have received Police letters, 80 have also been referred to the Police for further action, the fastest speed recorded in the 30mph limit so far has been 72mph.

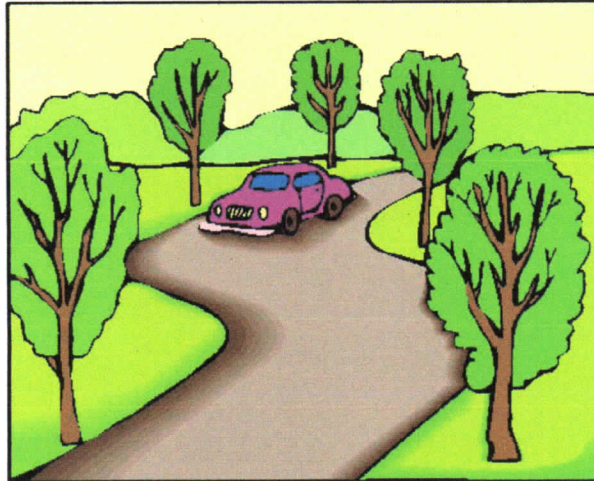
Unfortunately, due to illness, personal issues and volunteers moving away, we are currently low on numbers with only four regular volunteers, we need a few more people to join the group, this can be done on the national CSW website www.communityspeedwatch.org just follow the instructions to register.

If the group had a few more volunteers available more sessions could be run each week, or alternatively the same number of sessions without using each volunteer too often. The equipment is easy to use and only very basic training is involved, so anyone who would like to consider joining the volunteers, even if it is only for an hour occasionally, do it now, first go to the CSW website and sign up.

REMINDER – The speed on the road signs is the **LIMIT** *not* the **TARGET!**



Cllr. Colin Boylett – Portfolio holder for Community Safety and Speedwatch Co-ordinator



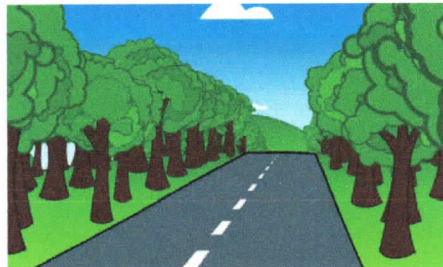
HIGHWAYS

All repairs and maintenance on the roads in the parish, including the verges, pavements and signage is the responsibility of East Sussex Highways. There is a dedicated highways website and all reports of items needing repair or maintenance should be made on the website <http://www.eastsussexhighways.com>.

If you do not have internet access, or you consider the fault/repair requires urgent attention, you can phone your report to **0345 6080193**

Use the contact methods above to report issues relating to roads, pavements or verges as soon as you are aware of the problem. Please also bring it to the attention of the Parish Council send the details to the Parish Clerk or one of the Councillors who hold the Highways portfolio, currently Cllrs John Barnes and Colin Boylett, or speak to any Parish Councillor.

If it is something that might require discussion at a Parish Council meeting, make sure it is reported to the Clerk at least ten days before the next meeting to make sure it is in time to be added to the agenda, and for Councillors and the Clerk to research information.



Cllr Colin Boylett

May 2023

Parish Council website



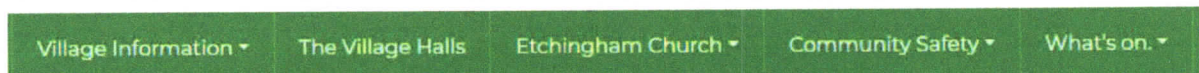
www.etchinghamparishcouncil.org.uk

Back in 2012 the Parish Council decided it was time to have a website, the village website was created and funded by the Council, it was a website that was jointly for Parish Council and village information, the "Etchingham Village Website".

This worked well until 2019 when a lot more accessibility requirements came into force for council websites, sites have to be accessible with every type of device, and readable using devices such as screen readers used by blind and partially sighted people, also some colours and graphics cannot be used, and the site must meet all current GDPR regulations. A quick test on a few pages showed that the village site would not meet the requirements.

The council decided to use a web developer that specialises in Town and Parish Council websites and guarantee the site complies with all current legislation, it was decided to move all Parish Council material to the new site and continue to fund the old site as a "village website", this worked well until the winter of 2021 when access problems arose, temporary fixes were put in place to keep the site operating, but the advice was that the best option, because of the age of the site, would be to start again with a new website.

Mindful of extra costs involved in setting up a new website, it was decided to add some 'village' sections on the Parish Council website for most of the information on the old site to be moved to, that task has now been completed, village information can now be accessed from the bottom row of tabs at the top of the website.



Some of the tabs have access to multiple pages through a drop-down menu.

Any village information that you would like to see added to the website should be sent to admin@etchinghamparishcouncil.org.uk for consideration, it should be noted that all text on the site has to be typed into the pages or in a readable PDF or Word document, scans of posters or documents cannot be added to the site.

Cllr. Colin Boylett

Portfolio holder for Council Communications

May 2023

Bexhill & Battle Observer

VILLAGE VOICE COLUMN

Every week in the Bexhill & Battle Observer you will find the “Village Voice” section, with weekly contributions provided by a local resident in each village with news and information from their village.

For several years I have been the village correspondent for Etchingham and I am always looking for news and information to include each week. I can include any information about your clubs and organisations, events, fund raisers, special news and anything that might be of interest to other village residents. I do not have any limits on article size, so send anything you want, I may need to adjust slightly to meet the newspaper requirements, but can normally use anything you send.

If sending details of your event or fund raiser send the details as soon as you have them available, then I can include in the column well before the event to give people a chance to put the date in their diary, then include again a few times nearer the date, if you wait until the week before it will only get mentioned once.

I normally require your information to arrive by 10pm on Monday to include in the Friday edition, e-mail is the best method to use to avoid errors during copying, but you can get the details to me by phone or deliver to my home address.

Colin Boylett 01580 819532 07483 211838 colin.boylett@gmail.com

2 Park Farm Close, Etchingham.



Etchingham CE Primary School

Annual Report 2022-23

Terms 1 & 2

We began the year under the leadership of an Interim Executive Headteacher, Mr. Jon Goulding, who supported the school whilst we awaited the arrival of our new substantive Executive Headteacher, Mrs. Cherane Marshall who was due to start in January.

We welcomed 13 new pupils to the school as they began their Reception year with us. They had a wonderful start as they learnt 'All About Me' whilst they settled into school, learned rules and routines, made new friends and explored who they were in the world.

The children from Years 1 to 6 all engaged with their new Learning Journey, 'In the Beginning', through which they focused primarily on learning progression in History as they explored key knowledge from pre-history (Dinosaurs) through to the Stone Age, Bronze Age and Iron Age.

Terms 3 & 4

Mrs. Marshall began in her new role as Executive Headteacher over the Federation and took time to get to know the staff, pupils, and wider community.

Our youngest pupils learnt about 'The World I Share' as they explored developing friendships, understood the importance of keeping healthy, became more aware of the past linked to themselves, their families and communities, and explored what people's lives are like in other countries.

The children from Years 1 to 6 embarked on their second Learning Journey, 'Go Wild'. This topic focused primarily on learning progression in Geography as they explored key knowledge as they considered 'What will happen if the rainforests disappear?'; 'Why is the Amazon so important?' and 'What is the most amazing thing about the Amazon rainforest?'.

Terms 5 & 6

During these terms our youngest pupils engaged with the topic 'More than me' as they learnt about where they live, who they live and work with and their place in History. They will be preparing for their transition to Year 1 later on in Term 6, as we also prepare to welcome our new school entrants.

The final Learning Journey for pupils in Years 1 to 6 was 'Pharaohs to Philosophers'. Through this the children explored their knowledge of the Ancient Egyptians & Greeks: from learning about the geography of Egypt, Howard Carter and his great discovery, the treasures of Tutankhamen, through to lives of the Ancient Egyptians and exploring who Cleopatra was; with the oldest children learning about the Ancient Greek empire and through this understanding the concepts of democracy and invasion, and exploring the importance of religion to the Greeks.

It was also a time of statutory assessments as we appraised the attainment and progress of our pupils in preparation for their next steps, as they either moved up or on to new phases in their education.

Enrichment

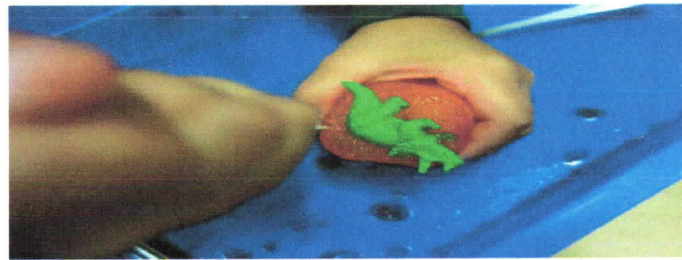
The children had many exciting enrichment experiences over the year, which included opportunities to participate in inter-school sporting competitions, celebrating World Book Day and enjoying a Coronation picnic, amongst others.

Gallery

Terms 1 & 2



This year's Reception settled in well and enjoyed getting to know their Year 6 buddies with weekly opportunities to play and read together.



Whole school reveal for the new learning journey.

Terms 3 & 4



Reception, Year 1 & 2 got the opportunity to undertake a Bikeability Balance course. Whilst Year 6 started their level 1 road safety training.

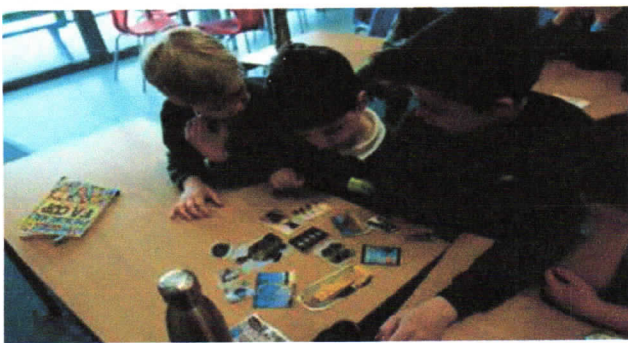


Reception learnt how to measure out ingredients to make a recipe. We also welcomed many families into school for a reading morning to celebrate World Book Day.



Term 5

New Learning Journey, from Pharaohs to Philosophers.





Playground Fund Raising

Now that funds are available to replace the playground equipment in Queen's Garden it does not mean we do not need to continue fundraising, all play equipment has a limited life, in the future it will need repairs and eventually will need replacing again.

Etchingham Recreation Ground Trust (ERGT) a charity *Registered Charity No. 1093289* set up to manage Queen's Garden will continue fundraising, the Parish Council is the Trustee body.

One of the fundraising efforts creates a steady regular stream of funds, that is "Give as you Live" (GAYL), you can help raise funds when you spend money online, at no extra cost to you, by joining "Give as you Live" join at <https://giveasyoulive.com/join/ergt>, then when you shop online, log in to Give as you Live first and use the link there to go to the site you are buying from, a small % of the purchase price will be donated to ERGT, at no cost to you. Over 6,000 websites are registered with Give as you Live, not just shopping, if you are booking a holiday or hotel, or buying insurance, check the GAYL site first, some holiday firms give generous donations, it does not cost you extra.

All you need to remember is that once you have registered for GAYL make sure you sign into your account at GAYL and use the link there to visit the site you are buying from.

Make a donation

<https://donate.giveasyoulive.com/fundraising/etchinghamplaygrounds?everyclick> if you are a UK taxpayer please opt for Gift Aid so the fund gets an extra 25% from HMRC.

Cllr. Colin Boylett 01580 819532

Email: etchinghamplaygrounds@gmail.com

Chairman's Report AGM 2022

This is my third and final report as Chairman of ETSR since I assumed the role in March 2020.

It covers the period from the Chairman's Report and AGM on 11th of November 2021 until today's AGM. This is a report which highlights repercussions of the Covid pandemic, its impact upon the Halls income, measures taken to try to improve income from use of the Halls and the forthcoming changes in ETSR's Trustee.

Review of the Year

As predicted in the last report, hiring income for the year has been below that of pre-Covid pandemic times. Whilst many of our regular hirers have resumed their activities, we have lost some previous regular users and seen a significant downturn in use of the halls, notably for weekend children's parties.

Early recognition of this situation, in part prompted by suggestions from the public at last year's AGM, saw the Trustees undertake a programme aimed at rekindling awareness of the Halls in the wider community.

We adopted a simple slogan "Hire the Halls". New banners bearing this motif were displayed at the Halls and regular use was made of the village E bulletin, website and Parish Magazine to spread the message. A comprehensive mailshot was undertaken which covered every household in the village, reinforced by a distribution of leaflets to all parents/guardians of children at the school and preschool.

In conjunction with this exercise we contacted all regular and previous users to further promote interest in the Halls and all known sports clubs within the area were approached.

It is disappointing to report that, despite these efforts, the response to garner new business from our initiative was minimal. This is reflected in the hiring income figures for the financial year (see below). There are one or two notable exceptions to the above, namely continued good use of the Halls for adult education through ACRES and very regular evening use of the halls by Badminton, yoga and keep fit/dance classes. We thank these regular users for their loyalty and support.

During the year the Trustees decided to make a small increase in the hourly charged rates for hall hire and these were implemented with effect from 1 August 2022. It should be noted that these increases were the first for over four years and were only made after careful consideration and comparison with other local village halls.

The village halls remain a fantastic asset, probably amongst the best in East Sussex. These attributes were demonstrated when villagers came together in the Square to celebrate the late Queen's Platinum Anniversary celebrations and later in the year when a prestigious awards event was held, attended by the Lord Lieutenant and other dignitaries.

Buildings of this quality come with substantial costs. Significant payments are required on a monthly basis to support our contracted commitments which largely reflect the nature of a shared premises structure with the school. These include site management, cleaning,

electricity, fuel, insurance, facilities testing and many more. To these must be added ETSR's own administration costs.

Since the opening of the Halls, we have never been able to cover these total costs from bookings income alone, with the obvious exception of the Vaccination Centre contract. Efforts to bridge this shortfall have historically fallen into the category of fund raising. Given all the above and in the absence of a major funding raising initiative this year, the Trustees have increasingly concerned themselves with securing the future viability of the Halls though a different route.

Unlike the position of two years ago, when retained cash balances had fallen to the equivalent of approximately one year's income shortfall, these deliberations have taken place against the background of a relatively healthy (albeit reducing) cash balance held by ETSR, currently around £32,000.

A solution has been agreed whereby the existing individual Trustees will be replaced by the Parish Council as Trustee. The Parish Council has always been Custodian Trustee for ETSR, effectively guaranteeing ETSR and most importantly the existence of the halls for their intended use by the village and the wider community. By adopting this proposed structure, ETSR remains as an entity and within the guidelines set by the Charities Commission. Changes in the Trustee do not impact upon the lease, nor the underlying objectives of the Trust Deed for ETSR, nor the operation of the Joint Management Committee with the school.

It is envisaged that there will be a significant reduction in direct administrative costs arising from this change. More details will be announced in the near future. It is also expected that new procedures will be introduced to adopt an automatic booking system and increased direct access to the halls for all hirers.

The current Trustees and Administrator have agreed that during the forthcoming transition period they will be working closely with the Parish Council to make the handover of duties as smooth as possible and a checklist of practical matters is being worked through. All retiring Trustees have agreed to continue their support, for a short period of time, with practical matters such as opening and closing of the halls and volunteering to assist with larger events in the future. Even with the likely addition of Parish Council representatives to this body of supporters, I again appeal for more people from the village to come forward to help with the practicalities of running the halls and to involve themselves in more and varied use of the buildings.

Financial Performance and Fundraising

The Treasurer's report covers our financial year from the 1st of August 2021 until the 31st of July 2022.

The figures reflect many of the above comments, with the noticeable decline in hall bookings compared with the, albeit exceptional, income largely derived in the previous financial year from the use of the halls as a Vaccination Centre.

Through careful administration, hall running costs have been kept as low as possible and in fact represent a reduction on the previous year, when some exceptional costs were incurred due to the Vaccination Centre.

The splendidly supported Monthly Draw 100 club continued to provide regular income. Thank you to all of our participants. Likewise, thank you to Mary Barnes for arranging her annual plant sale and Nick Smith for another enjoyable and entertaining evening with stories from onboard "Gin@six".

Trustees, JMC and other thanks

This has been a challenging year for a number of reasons made easier by the unstinting hard work and involvement of all of the trustees: John Barnes, Paulette Barton, Joe Kilgallon, Nicky Menzies, Steve Millea and Nick Smith. I thank them all for their support throughout the year.

There have been 6 Formal Trustee meetings held during the year with additional offsite meetings held to consider our position going forward. I would like to thank each of the trustees for their attendance and participation.

We continue to work formally and informally with the school through the joint management committee and regular ad hoc meetings. Particular thanks go to Greg Coleman, Steve Forward and Annette Childs. Likewise we thank everyone connected with the school and the Barn Owls Pre School for cooperation throughout the year and particularly when we have been hosting larger events.

Catherine Baigent cleaned the halls for the majority of the year although she has now left us. We welcome Julie McGregor as our new Halls cleaner.

I would like to thank Catherine Richards, our Administrator, for another year of tremendous support and involvement. She has undertaken a huge amount of work behind the scenes in all matters relating to bookings for the hall and a myriad of other tasks on behalf of ETSR.

Catherine will be leaving us as Administrator early in 2023 and I and Trustees past and present would like to place on record our huge thanks for her loyalty, commitment and tremendous service to ETSR for over 12 years.

Finally, in stepping down as Chairman and a Trustee for ETSR I would like to wish the Parish Council, as new Trustee, together with everyone connected with the Halls every success for the coming years. I have no doubt that the Halls will continue to provide a wonderful venue for many events. My greatest hope is that they will increasingly benefit from the support and active involvement of as many people as possible from within our community.

Paul Stott

ETCHINGHAM MUSIC FESTIVAL

Report on Etchingam Festival 2022

We were unable to hold a Music Festival in 2020 due to COVID and in 2021 we had limited seating capacity due to distancing rules in place. Therefore 2022 was our first "normal" Festival for 3 years and that meant that we could begin to recover from our much reduced financial situation. We were very grateful for a grant from the Parish Council towards our Opera Supper expenses.

The Festival opened on June 25th with a second visit from the Hastings Philharmonic Orchestra with the amazing clarinettist Boyan Ivanov. This was followed on Sunday by Florian Mitrea and the Atea Wind Quintet with a very varied programme.

On 28th June the Pianist Paul Roberts, a specialist in music by Debussy and Liszt, gave a wonderful recital to a packed church. Two days later we held our first Bossa Nova evening which was very popular.

Our Opera Supper was, once again, enjoyed by a full house many of whom were village residents. The final free Sunday afternoon concert was a return of yet more talented and very young musicians from the Trinity Music Academy. The donations from this concert enabled us to give £300 to Etchingam PCC in appreciation for the use of the Church. The tea provided by members of the Church was much appreciated by the pupils and their parents.

Our 2023 Festival will run from 24th June to the 2nd July and will kick off with the intriguing "A Coronation, Beethoven and Dorothy Parker" starring Florian Mitrea - Pianist, Sarah Gabriel- Actor/ Soprano and Richard Williams.

We will also be welcoming Michael Collins, playing with the Sacconi Quartet and described as the best clarinettist on the planet.

Another visit by the Hastings Philharmonic Orchestra will feature violinist Emil Chakolov and we have some amazing singers for our Opera Supper Concert which is part sponsored by another generous grant from the Parish Council for which we are very grateful.

Mary Newington

May 2023

Tuesday Club

A little bit of village history

I am writing about the Tuesday Club as we are one of the few 'clubs' left in the village. Another one is the Etchingham Military and Aviation Club but unfortunately there are only two or three members remaining active today and the Etchingham Improvements Committee which also has far fewer members than previously.

In a copy of the Parish Magazine for February/March 2015 there were many more groups in the village some of which I list below:

Beaver Cubs and Scouts : Brownies : Guides : Etchingham Under-Fives and Etchingham Under-fives Baby & Toddler Group : Darby and Joan : Etchingham and Fontridge Cricket Club : Village Choir : Royal British Legion : Rother Valley Ladies : and, back then, a Mobile Library. How sad that all these have disappeared.

Many years ago, when I was a child my Mother belonged to the group which was then called Ticehurst and Etchingham Young Wives. In a previous time, my Grandmother Weston belonged to a similar group, The Mother's Union. Apparently during war time, to help the war effort, the Old Village Hall was used by them to can and bottle fruit and veg, and also lots of jam making. My Mother told me that there was someone there that made quite sure the correct amount of jam was made for each batch.

I'm not sure where the meetings were held, maybe the old Village Hall. I first belonged over forty years ago and at that time it was called Hurst Green and Etchingham young Wives. Our meetings were always the second Tuesday of the month and were held at Ladyfield in the High Street. Mrs Ransom, who lived there then, was our leader and at the start of the meeting she would always read something from the Bible followed by the Lord's Prayer. A real coming together of both villages with a printed document giving the committee names and all the events planned together with who would be supplying the supper for each meeting.

When Mrs Ransom moved meetings also moved, to the Rectory where Father Fred (Butler) and his wife Nora lived at the time, several other members hosted meetings after that, Greta Crane at Brookside Farm and later Balmain; and Julia Barrow, our leader at that time welcomed us to her home as well. Before the Old Village hall was demolished we held several meetings in the Annexe. Barbara Revell was also a leader for many years.

In April 2011 Julia stepped down and I was voted in as new leader. I am still in that role in 2023. Today our meetings are held at the Etchingham Club, when we are not 'out and about'. We are very grateful to the Club for allowing us to use their lovely refurbished premises.

The decision to rename ourselves 'The Tuesday Club' was made quite a while back because members were feeling they had to leave if they were widowed or if their children had grown up so it was renamed and opened up to any woman to join, single, married, divorced, it didn't matter.

My Mother had also been a member of the Women's Institute, name changed to Rother Valley Ladies later, for over 70 years, she joined when she was only 14 years old. The long existing Darby and Joan Club also changed its name to The Friendship Club. Sadly, neither of these two groups survived the Covid period.

Over the years the Tuesday Group has had many varied evening meetings. At the Cherry Tree Pub together with a two-course meal, the landlord told us about his previous work in Forensic Investigations in the area of road traffic incidents. A visit to Bodiam Castle on the same evening as the local fire crew were practising using their hoses from the moat (not the usual fire hydrant) resulted in 'threats' to spray us with water but we still made it across the Castle pub for another lovely meal. There is an annual bowling competition in Tunbridge Well with a small trophy to be won and yet another great meal to follow.

Pippa Dealey, who lived and went to school in Etchingham as a child but is now better known from Bargain Hunt and Dickinson's Real Deal on television has her own local antique's business, has also spoken at a meeting.

Boules competitions, best decorated Jubilee Hat (2012), visits to local museums, the life and fears of a WW1 soldier compared to a soldier in modern Afghanistan, Ghost Walk, films and talks from travellers far and wide, Slap 'n' Dash evening at the Hawkhurst Fish Farm – over the years since I have been leader it is amazing how many different evenings we have enjoyed.

2022

'Normal' service resumes with regular Tuesday meetings (apart from April when a restaurant night out had to be changed to a Thursday to accommodate the Royal Oak at Whatlington), culminating in a splendid Christmas Dinner featuring the traditional Secret Santa Sack run on a 'lucky dip' basis – it's so interesting to see how inventive our ladies can be within the allocated budget!

It is such a shame seeing so many clubs disappearing but people's lives are so very different to what they used to be and finding volunteers to run the clubs and even to attend, proves ever more difficult as lives are so full already.

Linda Neve

Tuesday Club, Group Leader

May 2023

FRIENDS OF BURWASH SURGERY

The Friends of the Surgery is a voluntary organisation with two principal aims: to help the Surgery, in any way possible, to keep up the excellent service they provide for patients, and to provide transport for patients (to the surgery or to hospitals etc) who cannot themselves drive, or have friends or relatives able to drive them to appointments.

The main way in which the Friends achieve the first of those aims is to finance equipment for the surgery that is not provided by the NHS. In the past year the Friends paid for a Doppler, which enables the staff to carry out some investigations/treatments for which patients would otherwise have to go to hospital. The cost was just under £1,000.

There are a number of drivers on the list of those willing to help and, although there has been fewer requests for help in this way, over the year, virtually all have been met.

Contacts

Chairman: Frank Smith langsmith_@hotmail.com

Secretary: Sue Mumford susanmumford6@mypostoffice.co.uk

