

**ETCHINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL**  
**Minutes of the Meeting of Etchingham Parish Council**  
**held on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> February 2024 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:** P Barton – Clerk to the Council. There were 5 (five) members of the public also present.

**2765. Apologies for Absence:** Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Rob Beeney and County Cllr Eleanor Kirby- Green which were accepted.

**2766. Minutes of the previous meeting:**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2024 having been previously circulated, were agreed and then signed as a true and accurate records of that meeting.

**2767. 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.

**2768. Etchingham Parish Council – Dispensations:**

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

**2769. Chairman’s Announcements:**

The Chairman had no announcements.

**2770. Clerk’s Report:**

The Clerk did not present a report as all current matters were already on the agenda.

**2771. Public Time:**

- a) County Cllr Eleanor Kirby-Green had sent her report through which had been circulated and was approved and accepted by EPC and is on file in full.
- b) Cllr John Barnes reported that the RDC increase in rate is to be 2.99%. £2.8M saving needed will have to be met from Reserves. The new Local Plan will be open to consultation in April and will be completed in 2025 – it will run until 2040. The new Deputy Finance Director is now in place.
- c) The 5 MOP explained that although they realised the planning application they had come in to talk about was actually in Hurst Green and not Etchingham, because of the site’s close proximity to the joint boundary hoped that EPC would take note. The Clerk said that this application had already been placed on the schedule for discussion at the meeting so it was entirely proper that their concerns should be brought to the Council.

There followed a short presentation by one of the MOPs in attendance detailing their specific reasons for wanting the application to be refused. This included: outside the Development boundary; destruction of a hedge known to be a nesting site/s for dormice; inserting a pavement across the front of the development that would not join to any other at either end; if that pavement was – as is likely – used for overflow parking by visitors to the house on site this would severely impact on the width of Burgh Hill and likely make it impossible for emergency vehicles to get through this section of the lane; introduction of multiple drive ways accessing Burgh Hill at one of its existing ‘pinch points’ even though there is an existing access to the site (via a large five-bar gate) at the western end of the site that could service all houses; the field is not flat – the field level is much higher than that of the road

- so tons of earth would have to be moved to level the site for the build; there would be increased run-off from the site compared to the current field; effluent will be taken to join the already overloaded sewer system down in Etchingham evidenced by the regular overflow issues in a local field behind residential housing; a local survey called for more affordable homes not any more executive build; there are no affordable houses on this outline application; the outline application does not mention sufficient importance being paid to the sensitive nature of this site in terms of both fauna and flora; this application would play a significant role in the suburbanisation of a country lane; if built this would lead to an unacceptable visual intrusion on an AONB (National Landscape).

A short Q&A session followed. The chairman then closed the discussion.

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

**2772. Parish Matters:**

**a) Village Amenities:**

- i) Village Shop/The Old Stores: Cllr McGregor was authorised to seek a Method Statement from another company as we are still waiting for a reply from the first one approached, the quote of £150-£200 was resolved as acceptable.
- ii) The Inspection Reports on Queen's Gardens and VIPER were accepted. The blacksmith will be asked to replace the 'stop' on the gate between the churchyard and QG. Cllr Barrow will check that water is still available from the stopcock near that gate.
- iii) Tim Crane, after many years of sterling service to the Council grass cutting and managing the hedges on its landholdings, has decided not to renew the contract with EPC. The Clerk was delegated to seek tenders for this work as quickly as possible so the new season's work could begin without a break.
- iv) Work progresses towards an Eco-loo for Queen's Gardens.
- v) *It was Resolved that Cllr J Barnes should continue to look into the local Dark Skies Community group and report back to EPC when appropriate.*
- vi) *It was Resolved (with one abstention due to the nature of the actual project) that the letter of Endorsement for the CIC EV charging point project be sent.*
- vi) There were no further matters to consider.

**b) Children and Young People**

- i) The school held a presentation for Dr & Mrs Ahrens to demonstrate how much the Outdoor School facility is used and appreciated which was very enjoyable.
- ii) Cllr Boylett had submitted his report on ERGT fundraising which was approved and is available on file.
- iii) The Clerk reported that there had been no progress with clearing the space due to lack of time. Additional help was promised.
- iv) There were no further matters to consider.

**c) Highway, Footpaths and Community Safety**

- i) ESCC Highways continue work on assessing the TESAG proposal for Community Match in detail.
- ii) Cllr Boylett had submitted his Speedwatch report which is on file.
- iii) Cllr Boylett reported, mostly, a crime free month but that oil-thefts are on the rise.
- iv) there were no other matters to consider.

**d) Environmental and Other issues**

- i) Raw sewage in the field behind the shop and other houses remains an unacceptable issue, in spite of numerous 'call-outs' for its removal no permanent resolution seems to be being offered. The MP and his office to be contacted.

- ii) A tree has been reported dangerously over-hanging the A265 from Haremere Hall land, residents are concerned that the landowner is not addressing the issue but as the tree is on private land ESCC Highways has not intervened. Our County Councillor will be informed.
- iii) There were no further matters to consider

e) **Communications**

Councillors were informed that the deadline for the Parish Magazine is now the 12<sup>th</sup> of the month as there will now be an issue every month. There were no further matters to consider.

2773. **Planning:**

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

a) **To consider and make recommendations on local planning applications as follows:**

i) *RR/2024/81/P: Grasmere, High Street : Proposed loft conversion with rear dormer. **It was Resolved that the Council had no objection to this application.***

**Cllr Trevor McGregor took the chair for the next two applications:**

ii) *RR/2022/840/P & RR/2022/2690/P : Reapplications for land at Beech Farm, Sedlescombe : Demolition of storage building & roadway. Construction of carbon negative live work unit, parking and restricted curtilage. Addition of landscape & biodiversity enhancements to the wider site and new access to the B2244. Stopping up of access to the northern boundary of the site. **It was Resolved that the Council continued its strongest objection to both these reapplications being justified on the grounds of 84e (now 83e) and would comment as such again.***

**Cllr John Barnes resumed the chair:**

b) **Any other planning matters:**

*RR/2023/2540/P – Burgh Hill, south of Hurst Green. **It was Resolved that the Council would object strongly to this application on the following grounds:** Etchingham Parish Council resolved to object in the strongest terms to application on the following grounds: it seems to be outside the Development boundary; destruction of a hedge known to be a nesting site/s for dormice, already cut back severely disturbing the fauna; inserting a pavement marked only by flat bricks across the front of the development that would not join to any other similar at either end; if that pavement was - as is likely - used for overflow parking by visitors to houses on the site this would severely impact on the width of Burgh Hill and likely make it impossible for emergency vehicles to get through this section of the lane; introduction of multiple drive ways accessing Burgh Hill at one of its existing 'pinch points' even though there is an existing access to the site (via a large five-bar gate) at the western end of the site that could service all houses; the field is not flat - the field level is much higher than that of the road - so tons of earth would have to be moved to level the site for the build; there would be increased run-off from the site compared to the current field; effluent will be taken to join the already overloaded sewer system down in Etchingham (evidenced by the regular overflow issues in a local field behind residential housing); a local survey called for more affordable homes not any more executive build; there are no affordable houses on this outline application; the outline application does not mention sufficient importance being paid to the sensitive nature of this site in terms of both fauna and flora; this application would play a significant role in the suburbanisation of a country lane; if built this would lead to an unacceptable visual intrusion on an AONB (National Landscape).*

**2774. Finance:**

- a) The schedule for Receipts and Payments for February were presented and approved.

<b>Etchingham Parish Council Statement of Receipts and Payments February 2024</b>		
<b>Receipts</b>		
HMRC	VAT refund	118.76
		118.76
<b>TOTAL PAID</b>		
Paulette Barton	Salary & Expenses for February 2024	1812.76
Olga Bilai	Salary & Expenses for February 2024	341.04
Laurence Worton	Salary & Expenses for January 2024	41.99
EXCEL Carpet Care LTD	63 chairs @ £3 per seat	189.00
Rother District Council	Recharge for cost of uncoasted Parish Election MAY 2024	163.97
Starboard Systems Limited	Scribe accounts renewal 2024	792.00
PWLB	Half-yearly payment to PWLB	6724.44
ICO	annual fee	35.00
B Online Ltd	Monthly payment due to broadband supplier (January)	<b>37.39</b>
EDF	Electricity for Shop	45.00
	<b>Total Payments</b>	<b>10182.59</b>

There were no other financial matters to consider.

**2775. Codes, Policies, Statements and Protocols**

- a) ***It was Resolved that the following be approved (as presented):***

Environmental Policy; Protecting Vulnerable Persons Policy (replaces the previous Safeguarding policy); Email and Internet Usage Policy and Equal Opportunities Policy.

- b) The Job Description review for Clerk/RFO is being progressed.

**2776. Public Consultation – New Local Transport Plan**

Cllrs John Barnes and Trevor McGregor were delegated to go through the Plan and response as appropriate.

**2777. To receive reports from Members and Representatives passing such resolutions as may be necessary**

- a) **ESALC** – The representatives were unable to attend.
- b) **RALC** - the next meeting is in April.
- c) No other meetings or conferences had been attended by either members or the Clerk. However there has been an informal notification that a follow up event to the Housing Development event last month will be held highlighting the developers to be organised by RDC.

**2778. Correspondence**

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

**2779. Etchingam Parish Council – Notification to members of Council decisions:**

There were no notifications.

**2780. Agenda items for the next meeting to be held on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> March 2024 in The Parker Hall at 7.30pm.**

There were none other than those listed throughout the minutes.

**Signed By the Chairman – original held on file**

**Date..... 21<sup>st</sup> March 2024**