

ETCHINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Meeting of Etchingham Parish Council
held on Thursday 20th June 2024 at 7.30pm The Parker Hall, Parsonage Croft, Etchingham

Members Present: Cllrs: John Barnes, Mary Barnes, Sid Barrow, Rob Beeney, Colin Boylett, and Trevor McGregor.
Also present: P Barton – Clerk to the Council. There was 1 member of the public.

- 2831. Apologies for Absence:** Apologies for absence were received from County Cllr Eleanor Kirby- Green, which were accepted.
- 2832. Minutes of the previous meeting:** The Minutes of the Meeting held on 16th May 2024, the Annual General (Statutory) Meeting, having been previously circulated, were agreed and signed as a true and accurate record of that meeting.
- 2833. 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.
- 2834. Etchingham Parish Council – Dispensations:**
The Clerk confirmed that no written requests for dispensations had been received.
- 2835. Chairman’s Announcements:**
The Chairman welcomed everyone to his first monthly meeting in the chair and announced that he was going to be taking some new initiatives forward including preparing a 5-Year Plan in co-operation with residents to ensure that the final outcome reflected as wide a point of view and aspiration as possible. He was pleased that the ‘introduction’ via E-Bulletin had been so well received.
- 2836. Clerk’s Report:**
There were no items to report that were not to be covered under the agenda.
- 2837. Public Time:**
- a) County Cllr Eleanor Kirby-Green being absent will supply a written report as soon as possible.
 - b) Cllr John Barnes had little to report as the District Council is restricted in its actions during the Pre-Election Period. However, there is another reorganisation of the top management to re-arrange those roles in a better way. The primary aim for RDC is finding more savings. The Housing Strategy is under discussion as the number of new homes completed must rise substantially. A working party looking into the Planning Enforcement process is to be set up, the Northern Parishes Group has been instrumental in pushing this project through. *Amended prior to signing by chairman.*
 - c) No MOP wished to comment.
 - d) As no members were to be excluded this right was not exercised.
- 2838. Parish Matters:**
- a) **Village Amenities**
 - i. **The Old Etchingham Stores** - Cllr Barrow and the owner of the neighbouring property concerned with the river wall issue met with members of the Environment Agency on site. EA confirmed that the work would have to be done. It seems that the method using gabions rather than plastic piling would be preferred but it might be financially advantageous to rebuild the wall completely. This option is to be investigated. It is obvious that this will not be completed this year. There is a charge of £800-1,000 per permit. The contractor will do a detailed method statement once instructed, but a pump and a dam will be required to do this work whichever method is finally agreed. Day to day decisions delegated to Cllrs McGregor and Barrow together with the Clerk.

- ii. **Queen’s Gardens & Viper:** The inspection reports were accepted. Gray Nicolls have been informed regarding the Himalayan Balsam taking over their land adjacent to Viper. The fallen basketball ring backplate has been removed by Cllr Barrow who has also oiled the gate padlock which as seized up. Confirmation has been received regarding Permission to Develop the eco-loo in QG.
- iii. The protocol for flying appropriate flags on the flagpole in QG has been updated and will include appropriate flags on VE and VJ days in 2025.
- iv. While the wildflower tyres are not on Council land public interest being high Cllr McGregor undertook to speak to the Station Mistress regarding a proper maintenance plan going forward. Concern regarding the lay-by and pull-off areas in Church Lane seemingly not owned by either SCC Highways not the adjacent landowner but requiring urgent maintenance continues. Cllr John Barnes will consult with County Cllr Kirby-Green.
The hedge near the old Wireworks need attention, Cllr Barrow will speak with the landowner’s tenant. The new owner of these premises is moving equipment in to enable the new business to commence but it is causing some traffic concerns to local residents. The situation will be monitored going forward.
Cllr John Barnes reported that representations are being made through the Dark Skies Group regarding the excess lighting at the station.
- b. **Children and Young People:**
 - i. There was no report.
 - ii. There is a new recruit for ERGT fundraising.
 - iii. There were no other matters to discuss.
- c. **Highways, Footpaths and Community Safety**
 - i. It has been confirmed that Fysie Lane will be reconstructed.
The Telephone Exchange hedge has been cut back but a resident’s hedge further up the High Street is causing concerning – a letter will be sent. A new VAS has been ordered for opposite the Club as spar parts are no longer available.
 - ii. The monthly Speedwatch reports was accepted and is on file.
 - iii. Little to report by Rother police, report is on file. Van thefts in neighbouring villages is concerning.
 - iv. Having received the up to date costs for purchasing a Traffic Radar Unit (Black Cat) plus the necessary laptop and other on-costs, ***it was Resolved that it was difficult to justify such expenditure at this time, despite the generous donation being offered, so this project will not proceed but could be re-visited at a later date.***
- d. **Environment and other**
There were no matters to consider.
- e. **Communications**
Cllr Boylett reported that there is a grant offer available via Netwise (our internet provider) to adopt a gov.uk domain. He explained the benefits but said that until all councillors were using a proper EPC email address (including the clerk) none of these benefits could be utilised. A major benefit is protection for all on the EPC email addresses should there be a contentious FOI situation. Cllr Boylett suggested that he could provide a detailed report for the next meeting outlining the costs, which includes upgrading the contract with Netwise. ***It was Resolved that Cllr Boylett should report back in July.***

2839. 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. There were no applications to consider.
- b. In order to comment on the RDC Draft Local Plan in timely fashion ***it was Resolved that Cllr John Barnes should prepare a draft response to the Draft for consideration.***

2840. Finance:

- a) The schedule for Receipts and Payments for June was presented and approved.

| Etchingham Parish Council - Statement of Payments for June 2024 | | |
|--|---|----------------|
| Paulette Barton | Salary & Expenses for June 2024 | 1852.35 |
| Olga Bilai | Salary & Expenses for June 2024 | 454.72 |
| Laurence Worton | Salary & Expenses for May 2024 | 44.68 |
| Bistro @ the Station | Coffee & Cake Club for 16 people | 34.10 |
| Etchingham Music Festival | S137 Grant towards Supper Concert 2024 | 500.00 |
| Zurich Town, Parish and Community Council Team | Insurance Premium 2024-2025 | 1288.91 |
| Scribe (Starboard) | Annual fee for management of ERGT accounts | 118.80 |
| Steve Millea | E-Bulletin Annual subscription | 307.40 |
| B Online Ltd | Monthly payment due to broadband supplier (June 2024) | 45.11 |
| EDF | Electricity for Shop (not notified in time) | |
| | Total Payments | 4646.07 |

- b) Consideration was given to the request for a grant from the Marie Curie Charity. ***It was Resolved that on this occasion this would have to be declined.***
- c) The Q1 figures will be available for consideration at the July meeting.

2841. Review of Etchingham Parish Council Policies

- a. **Etchingham Parish Council Financial Regulations**
Previously circulated but extra time was requested to complete consideration of the amendments. Resolution to be deferred to the July meeting.
- b. **Etchingham Parish Council Employee Handbook**
The outstanding policies requiring consideration will be deferred for resolution until the July meeting.
- c. No addition policies have been identified at this time.

2842. Northern Parishes Group

It was Resolved that Cllr John Barnes continues to represent the parish but that Cllr Trevor McGregor will attend, as available, as the authorised deputy representative.

2843. To receive reports from Members and Representatives passing such resolutions as may be necessary

- a. **ESALC** – No Board meetings but the liaison with the PCC has noted that the new arrangements are not an improvement.
- b) **RALC** - Cllr John Barnes is now on the Executive. Cllr McGregor, as Chairman of EPC will normally be a representative at these meetings when available.
- c) No other meetings or conferences had been attended by either members or the Clerk.

2844. Correspondence

All correspondence received had previously been circulated.

2845. Etchingam Parish Council – Notification to members of Council decisions:

There were no notifications.

Signed By the Chairman – original held on file

Date..... 18th July 2024 – deferred to 15th August 2024 due to internet outage delay.