

ETCHINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Meeting of Etchingham Parish Council
held on Thursday 15th August 2024 at 7.30pm The Parker Hall, Parsonage Croft, Etchingham

Members Present: Cllrs: Trevor McGregor (in the chair), John Barnes, Mary Barnes, Colin Boylett and Benjamin Sutch.

Also present: P Barton – Clerk to the Council.

- 2862. Apologies for Absence:** Were received from Cllrs Rob Beeney, Sid Barrow and County Cllr Eleanor Kirby-Green which were accepted.
- 2863. Minutes of the previous meeting:** The Minutes of the Meeting held on 20th June 2024, which were unavailable due to an internet outage for the July meeting were reviewed, approved and signed following a minor amendment (deletion of word ‘through’) to 2837b, as were the minutes of the meeting held on 18th July 2024.
- 2864. 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.
- 2865. Etchingham Parish Council – Dispensations:**
The Clerk confirmed that no written requests for dispensations had been received.
- 2866. Chairman’s Announcements:**
The Chairman had no announcements other than to remind Council that the first of his ‘surgeries’ @the Bistro would be taking place of Wednesday 21st August.
- 2867. Clerk’s Report:**
There were no items to report that were not to be covered under the agenda.
- 2868. Portfolios 2024-2025:**
Following discussion, ***it was Resolved that the attached Appendix 1 will be the allocation of Portfolios for the forthcoming year.***
- 2869. Public Time:**
- a) County Cllr Eleanor Kirby-Green being absent there was not report this month.
 - b) District Cllr John Barnes explained the changes taking place to the allocation of CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy). To the disappointment of the Rural District Councillors, it has been decided that this fund will no longer be ‘split’ with separate funds available to Rural towns/parishes and Urban towns/parishes but be maintained as one fund, once administrative costs and a fund available for small projects which are match funded. It is feared this may lead to a smaller percentage being available to rural areas should priority be given on a ‘heads of population’ rather than a need basis. It was also reported that the post of Head of Planning has been reinstated.
 - c) There were no members of the public present.
 - d) As no members were to be excluded this right was not exercised.
- 2870. Parish Matters:**
- a) **Village Amenities**
 - i. **The Old Etchingham Stores** - Cllr McGregor reported that the Structural Engineer approached had not proved suitable so an alternative is being sought with all speed. A Certificate of Lawfulness will be completed but may not be required. Discussions continue with Heringtons, the EPC solicitors, to ensure all is properly managed. Delegated authority stays with Cllr McGregor, the Clerk and, following Resolution, also with Cllr Sutch to avoid unnecessary delays as time is very much of the essence.

- ii. **Queen’s Gardens & Viper:** The inspection reports were reviewed (including those from the previous month when they had been unavailable due to an internet problem) and accepted. They are on file.
 - iii. There no other matters to discuss.
- b. Children and Young People:**
- i. Nothing to report this month.
 - ii. There were no other matters to discuss.
- c. Highways, Footpaths and Community Safety**
- i. County Cllr Kirby-Green has continued to push for action on the dangerously overgrown hedge on the eastern corner of Church Lane and High Street. Highways, having checked the Burgh Hill/A265 junction, the response was that the legal requirement of a 70metre distance between the final tree and the junction was met, it has been pointed out that this should not apply here as the highway is not straight but has a considerable curve obscuring clear vision. A response on that point is awaited.
 - ii. The monthly Speedwatch reports was accepted and is on file.
 - iii. A police report is on file.
 - iv. There were no other matters to consider.
- d. Environment and other**
There were no matters to consider.
- e. Communications**
Cllr Boylett reported back on the progress changing the website to .gov. Anyone using the old web address will be automatically redirected to the new website (so long as we retain and pay for the domain name). Cllr Boylett is working with our provider to find a similar solution for council email addresses. The Clerk is work on revising the Social Media Policy to reflect these changes. A draft will be put before Council for consideration as soon as possible.

2871. 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. RR/2024/957/P: King Johns Nursery, Sheepstreet Lane : Extension to existing parking area and installation of ‘terram geotextile membrane’ over existing parking. ***It was Resolved to support this application.***
There were no other applications to consider.
- b. Following discussion ***it was Resolved that Cllr McGregor should prepare the response to the RDC Planning Enforcement Survey and liaise with the Clerk for its return.***
- c.
 - i. ***It was Resolved that the response to the Draft Rother Local Plan prepared by Cllr John Barnes be formally adopted.*** He was thanked for his work on this project.
 - ii. The Burgh Woods issue in Hurst Green, but abutting our boundary line, of possible illegal encampment has been resolved through RDC Enforcement.
 - iii. The considerable resident opposition to the dog rescue operation in Fontridge Lane, based on the unsuitability of the site and the lack of any facilities, remains high. Enforcement is in place and will be supported by Etchingham Parish Council.
 - iv. All comments, overwhelmingly opposing the application to extend leisure activities, have been lodged. The outcome is awaited.
 - v. There were no other matters to consider.

2872. Finance:

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

Etchingham Parish Council - Statement of Payments for July 2024		
Paulette Barton	Salary & Expenses for August 2024	1990.06
Olga Bilai	Salary & Expenses for August 2024	454.72
Laurence Worton	Salary & Expenses for July 2024	64.13
Bistro @ the Station	Coffee & Cake Club for 16 people	49.00
Netwise	Hosting, Support and Maintenance of EPC website 22/07/24-22/11/24	44.36
Netwise	Domain name set up (for .gov project)	12.00
Project X Strategies Ltd	Dell monitor, technical support	379.00
PWLB	Half-yearly payment to PWLB	6724.44
B Online Ltd	Monthly payment due to broadband supplier (August 2024)	49.66
EDF	Electricity for Shop	16.82
	Total Payments	9784.19

- c) There were no other matters to consider.

2873. Review of Etchingham Parish Council Policies

- a. **Etchingham Parish Council Employee Handbook**

It was Resolved to approve all the remaining policies making up the Employee Handbook reviewed and recommended by individual councillors to the Council. The remaining policies thus adopted are listed at Appendix 2.

- b. As previously minuted the upgrade to the communications package will require a revised Social Media Policy, to be reviewed at the September meeting.
- c. The photographic/GPS work to create the new Fixed Asset Register software package is almost complete and will be worked through as soon as it is available.

2874. To receive reports from Members and Representatives passing such resolutions as may be necessary

- a. **ESALC** – Finances are ‘comfortable’ so subscriptions should not have to rise.
- b) **RALC** - The recent funding windfall to the County Highways budget was welcomed. The newly revised process for utilising CIL funding (see minute 2869 b) however is causing concern.
- c) **Northern Parishes Group** – remains active and, as newly appointed representative, Cllr McGregor will make all efforts to attend meetings of the Group.
- d) **Dark Skies Group** – David Field has offered to come to Etchingham, either a Parish Council meeting or meeting of an alternative interested group, to discuss ways forward. To be deferred until the new representative has had a chance to acquaint himself with the project. Very limited options for Etchingham to improve its ‘dark village’ credentials with a main line station and A road level crossing within it.
- e) No other meetings or conferences had been attended by either members or the Clerk.

2875. Correspondence

All correspondence received had previously been circulated.

2876. Etchingam Parish Council – Notification to members of Council decisions:

There were no notifications.

2877. No fresh agenda items were suggested.

Signed..... **By the Chairman**

Date..... **19th September 2024**

APPENDIX 1

Etchingham Parish Council Portfolio Holders 2024/2025

PORTFOLIO	HOLDER/S	TOTAL # HOLDERS	VACANCIES
Financial Management	Benjamin Sutch Trevor M cGregor	2	0
Assets Management	Benjamin Sutch	2	1
H.R. (Personnel)	Trevor McGregor John Barnes	2	0
Communications	Colin Boylett Benjamin Sutch	2	0
Highways & Transport	Colin Boylett	2	1
Community Safety & Police Liaison	Colin Boylett	2	1
Environment & Climate Change	Sid Barrow Rob Beeney	2	0
Children & Young People	John Barnes	1	0
Senior Citizens	Mary Barnes	1	0

OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES	HOLDER/S	TOTAL # HOLDERS	VACANCIES
Planning Committee	Trevor McGregor, John Barnes, Sid Barrow, Benjamin Sutch	4	0
Speedwatch Coordinator	Colin Boylett	1	0
Strengthening Local Relationships (with ESCC)	t.b.c.	2	2
ESALC	Trevor McGregor & John Barnes	2	0
RALC	Trevor McGregor & John Barnes	2	0
Northern Parishes Group	Trevor McGregor & John Barnes	2	0
Dark Skies Representative	Benjamin Sutch	1	0
Flood Warning	Colin Boylett	1	0

SOLE TRUSTEE OF REGISTERED CHARITY	
Etchingham Recreation Ground Trust (ERGT) Reg. No. 1093289	All Councillors
Etchingham Trust for Sports & Recreation (ETSR) Reg. No. 1076642	All Councillors

APPENDIX 2

REMAINING POLICIES ADOPTED ON 15TH AUGUST 2024

TO COMPLETE THE EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

<i>Performance Management Scheme</i>
<i>Training and Development Policy</i>
<i>Member/Officer Protocol</i>
<i>Recruitment Policy</i>
<i>Grievance Policy</i>
<i>Disciplinary Policy</i>
<i>Sickness and Absence Policy</i>
<i>Bullying and Harassment (Dignity at Work) Policy</i>
<i>Employee Expenses Policy</i>
<i>Statement on Employee Management</i>
<i>Adverse Weather Policy</i>
<i>Confidential Reporting (Whistleblowing) Policy</i>
<i>Pay Policy</i>
<i>Redundancy Policy</i>