

# ***ETCHINGHAM***

## ***Annual Report 2015***



**Annual Parish Meeting**

**Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> April 2015**

**at**

**8.00pm**

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

# *Etchingam Parish Council*

## Chairman's report 2014-2015

We are finally in the new Hall. As I write this the final documentation is still to be signed but meetings and activities are now taking place in Etchingam's wonderful new facilities. Although the Parish Council remains Guarantor and holds the appointment of Custodian Trustees for ETSR, The Trust, in cooperation with the School are now responsible for the day to day running and upkeep of the Community Hall. I was very pleased that the Trust has chosen to name the small Hall after David Parker who did so much in the early stages to get the project moving. It is good too that we have been able to recognise the contribution of the Ahrens family in the naming of the large Hall.

There was a time last year when I felt very much in limbo as not only did we no longer have a Clerk's Office we did not have any hall at all. Winter meetings in the Church were not ideal although our thanks are due for their help and it was good to be able to use the Bracon boardroom on a cold January evening. Thank you to them too. I also acknowledge the help from Hodders the Developers of the old hall site, in allowing the Playgroup to remain until Easter. But obviously once the better weather arrived they wished to get on with the construction of the houses which we now see nearing completion.

The whole project has not been without complications. You will have been aware of the problems of parked vehicles in the upper High St while the final groundworks and fitting out at the new hall were completed. Our thanks to the local Police who provided the traffic cones and some relief from the chaos but I am sure you will agree with me that it has all been worthwhile. There remain some snags to be resolved, not least the concerns for pedestrian safety due to the narrowing of the pavement and speed of traffic. We still await the results of the further safety audit by East Sussex County Council in this respect.

The Speedwatch group are doing a great job with their occasional presence at the new school. I think that the yellow jackets as well as the speed gun alert drivers to their excessive speed. Their enthusiasm for standing outside in extremely cold conditions is to be admired and we thank them for it.

Many of the problems in the village never seem to arrive at resolution. No sooner do we find one solution another problem occurs and often it is the same old problem time after time. I fear that we will never solve the problem of cars parked in inconvenient places. The inconvenience is only felt by others trying to use local facilities and not by those causing the inconvenience.

From the new office in the Parker Hall the new Clerk Paulette Barton will now have time to take up the good work done by Bob Hodgson and take forward our next big project – to provide a cricket and football pitch next to the Hall. Plans are well underway and although it won't be in use this summer the cricket nets are and I am hopeful that the new facility will be available in 2016.

Government cuts are being felt in many places, not least of all in the provision of a local bus service. I hope that you did respond to the consultation, which still resulted in a cut to the 318 service. Persistence on the part of Christian Fowler and John Barnes has resulted in the start of a new service which goes some way to replacing the loss. However it will only survive if fully supported. It will again be use it or lose it. Details of the new service can be found in the usual places including the bus stops.

Bob Hodgson has been an excellent clerk. I am sure his replacement will be equally up to the mark but we have a great deal to thank him for in his dedication over and above the hours for which he has been paid. In one of his roles as the Responsible Financial Officer he has put the Parish accounts in good order despite the large amounts which have passed through the accounts over the last few months. I do believe that he leaves everything in very good health with a proposed budget for the next two years resulting in no precept increase.

With this healthy state of affairs I too have decided that I will not be seeking re-election to Etchingham Parish Council in May. After nearly 20 years and a substantial time as Chair I believe it is time to make way for new blood. New ideas are always welcome even in this layer of Government, applied within the rules of course. It is an honour to serve ones community and it has mostly been a pleasure. That is largely with thanks to all the previous Councillors and Clerks who I have worked with. I look forward to sitting in the public seats and asking difficult questions.



***Mary Varrall – Chair of Etchingham Parish Council***

**Etchingham Parish Council 2015:**

**Mrs. M. Varrall – Chair**

**Mrs. A. Childs – Vice-Chair**

**Mrs. M. Barnes**

**Mr. S. Barrow**

**Mr. P. Benn**

**Mr. C. Boylett**

**Mr. G. Lucas**

**Rother District Council Report, April 2015**

The funding climate for local councils remains extremely challenging; Government grant has been reduced by around £680,000 for 2015/6 and Rother's funding has been reduced by about £4 million since 2010.

The reduction is expected to continue in future years and the challenge is in making cuts in spending without reducing services.

Rother has the lowest Council Tax in Sussex which will be frozen again at the present level for 2015/6. Over 60 services are delivered with one of the lowest staffing levels and to get economies of scale we share some services with other authorities. To give an example, Rother's waste collection services is part of a

Joint Waste Contract with Hastings, Eastbourne and Wealden Councils and run by Rother. After some initial problems with the new company collecting recyclables on the kerbside , the new system seems to be working well and the garden waste collection has also proved very popular.

The Community Grant Scheme giving funding to community projects is not affected by cuts and nearly £90,000 worth of funding has been allocated over the last 12 months across the district. Our new village hall has recently benefited from a grant for £50,000 from the Council's former Village Hall Grant scheme.

Our Parish Council holds a copy of the Council's newly published Core Strategy , agreed and approved as a plan for the District until 2028. Work continues on the Supplementary Planning Documents and Neighbourhood Plans for those parishes who want to become more involved with their future.

The public is encouraged to make use of the Council's website which is: [www.rother.gov.uk](http://www.rother.gov.uk) and users can access it 24 hours a day for queries and information on the Council's services. On an average day it has 1300 hits and 92% of customers asking for advice get an answer on first contact.

A new Corporate Plan 2014/5 was adopted which seeks to provide improvements to the quality of life in the District. This is available at : <http://www.rother.gov.uk/corporate> plan.

*Mary Barnes & Robert Elliston - Rother District Councillors*



## **County Councillor's Report April 2015**

By now the village will be all too well aware that local government is in the front line in the battle to balance the national budget and bring the national debt under control. Since interest payments on that debt are running at one billion pounds a week, success in that task is in all our interests, but the consequence for East Sussex is a further £21 million reduction in revenue support grant in the coming year. By the end of the financial year East Sussex had already reduced its spend by £100 million in the last four years and has estimated that, whatever the result of the General Election, it will be asked to take as much as a further £80 million out in the next few years, Wherever possible this has been done by using the digital revolution to work smarter and to build partnerships with other authorities to deliver back office services, We are working closely with Surrey to build what is called South East Services and this is already delivering savings.

Inevitably there will be cuts to front line services. For example Etchingham now no longer has a fortnightly mobile library service. Instead it comes once every three weeks. That saved us having to spend more than £100,000 on a new vehicle and other savings will flow from that decision. We were also faced with reductions to the No. 318 bus service, but I am pleased to report that, with considerable help from Christian Fowler, County has been persuaded in finding a way of keeping the full service going. Please make more use of it to get to Heathfield and beyond or it will again come under threat.

Unlike the last national government, the County Council built up sizeable reserves while the economic weather was good and is now spending those on capital projects to regenerate the East Sussex economy. Etchingham has benefited directly in terms of a new school and village halls, although not without an injection of funds from the village itself. Indirectly the village will benefit from completion of the Bexhill Link Road since that will make a 2000 house contribution to meeting Rother's housing needs as well as producing several thousand new jobs. In all County will have spent just under £500 million over four years, and with the new investment the programme has levered into the County, we are beginning to see the result – better job prospects than at any time since the 1950s and household income rising ten times faster than the national average and much faster than the regional average also.

All this is good news in the medium term for Council tax payers, but in the short term County believes that it is right to combine cuts with a small increase in council tax. It will go up this year by 1.95% or an increase of £23.02 p.a. in the Council Tax paid on a Band D property.

Quite apart from the fact that we are on track to deliver the latest stage of our current savings plan, in many respects our services have actually improved. In particular our Children's department is now one of the very best in the country. It is having great success with troubled families and has been able to reduce the number of looked after children. County has also set in train a four year capital programme totalling £100 million on the structural maintenance of roads and the reduction in number of roads requiring major work is already substantial. I am particularly pleased that unclassified roads have been included for the first time in many years. We have also found a new and better way of dealing with potholes faster.

The papers from the last Cabinet meeting (10 March) are on line and document how well we are doing with our four priority areas; but I should like to draw attention to the way we were working much more closely with the NHS in joint commissioning services that keep people out of our overburdened hospitals. We have also developed new mental health services for children. Our schools are also achieving record levels of performance and there are fewer in special measures. Against a background of cuts, it is startling to see how much is going well and I would hope that the village would join me in sending thanks to all County Council staff for what they are achieving in a time of great austerity.

Necessity has proved the mother of innovation, and East Sussex has taken the edge off the axe by delivering its service programmes in new and better ways.

***John Barnes - East Sussex County Councillor***



## ***Etchingam Parish Council – Finance Report***

The Parish Council, at the January 2015 meeting agreed the Budget and Precept for 2015/2016. In accordance with the previous five year budget forecast related to the new community facilities, Members were able to maintain the Precept at the current cash level £30500. The Council tax for a Band D property in Etchingam will however increase by about 40p for the year because Etchingam village has one fewer average Band D property in 2015/16.

The Council has continued to support a number of local organisations with grants towards their operating costs or for special projects.

The Council has been able to balance the budget again for the current financial year and maintains adequate reserves for general operating costs and for special projects such as replacement play equipment. There will be an additional seat in the VIPER play area and a replacement of the goal post and basketball net in Queens Gardens.

The Council is about to begin a new Project to establish a Sports field adjacent to the new School and Village Hall and further details will be made available as the Project progresses,

The Accounts of the Parish Council are subject to an Internal and External Audit each year and copies of all financial information is available from the Parish Clerk.

***Bob Hodgson – Etchingam Parish Council Responsible Financial Officer***  
***Etchingam Parish Council – Finance Report (continued)***

My apologies for not being at this years Annual Parish Meeting.

When I was first elected onto the Etchingam Parish Council in 2007 the previous council had just increased the Precept to £29,300 for 2007/2008, following the completion of the Etchingam Local Action which outlined a number of village projects identified from the public consultation. This was a 44% increase and gave Etchingam the highest Band D Council tax in the Rother District.

The proposed new Village Hall and associated sports facilities were at that time estimated by ETSR in excess of £2 million.

It didn't take me long to get interested in the Village finances and I soon became the Portfolio Holder for Finance. With prudent management over the following years, not always approved of, the Precept requirement was stabilised. For 2015/2016 it is again £30,500 an overall increase of only 4.1% in eight years. Hopefully with all the new homes being built in Etchingam and the extra revenue this will create the Council tax burden will be shared by more households. It is not the intention that future Precepts will increase but this will be dependent on any proposals for new village projects or improved local facilities, it might even come down!!

Now the new Village Halls are up and running I hope they will be an outstanding success. Next years grant of £3,000 is expected to be the last time that ETSR will be calling for support from the Parish Council although I am not yet reassured on this.

The Parish Councils original commitment to the new community facilities was £500,000 but because the sale of the old village hall produced a better result than expected and following additional grants from Rother DC together with those secured by ETSR the final loan required from the PWLB is only £150,000, a significant reduction on the original prediction and considerably less than the first project estimates. The loan, which is at a fixed rate over 50 years, and less than half the Lease term of the premises, equates to a charge of approximately 35p per week for each present house in the village.

I wish my successor all the best for the coming years as I will not be seeking re-election in May. Thank you and good bye.

*Councillor Peter Benn – Portfolio Holder for Finance*



## **Report to the Parish Assembly 2015**

I am sure that virtually everyone in the village will share the delight of the Trustees that the new halls to serve the village are now up and running. Because of the unusually wet weather, there were some delays in construction and when Balfour Beatty handed over the site to the school on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2015, it was evident from the numerous workers still around that the final touches had not yet been put to the building. By the time everything stored and ordered was moved in after 14<sup>th</sup> February 2015, the buildings were fully ready for use, although snagging will continue for some time to come. I am sure that most will agree that the architects have designed a set of buildings of which the village can be proud. We shall find occasion at a formal opening early in July to give our thanks to Stuart Eatock and Mike Terry. We first met with Stuart at the time of the feasibility study and were delighted that the choice of architect meant that his firm had the chance to deliver the project that was shared with the village seven years ago.

It has been a long haul since Nigel Jarvis and the Parish Council asked me to chair the working party which identified possible sites for a new village hall in the mid '90s. Since many residents of Etchingam are relative newcomers, it is worth putting some of the history on record. The Trust was formed by the Parish Council in 1998 to deliver the project. At that time the Governors of the school had ruled out a joint project and the chosen site was behind the Church. That site flooded in 2000 and the efforts of the Trust turned to the Lambing Field. Sasha Hunt, who was then its chairman, was untiring in his efforts to win first, the consent of the landowners to put forward a joint amendment to the Local Plan, and then to secure Rother's consent to include it in the plan that went forward to the Planning Enquiry. By then the Governors had agreed that it was not possible to rebuild the school on its existing site and the Inspector therefore gave approval to a joint project involving the Trust, the School and the building of enabling housing. I have telescoped a lot of history, but I would want to put on record the village's debt to Sasha, to the landowners and the Governors at that time who had the vision to see what could be gained from working together.

That first effort came to an end at the final hurdle when a bid for lottery funding, having got through all earlier hoops, was turned down simply because there were too many good projects competing for the available funds. The next blow came when by the fiat of the then Government, the long promised new school for Etchingham was displaced, not just from its recently attained place as joint top of the building programme, but from the programme altogether. Fortunately as your County Councillor I was able to persuade Councillors Peter Jones and Keith Glazier that this decision was so unjust that they must do something about it. They agreed to a feasibility study and followed that up by agreeing to fund the school off- programme. The community owes them an enormous debt of gratitude.

That was the green light to reopen talks with the landowners and they gave their support to the project. When we began our discussions with County, the then head of Property Services, Melanie Griffin, made it clear that to secure progress, we must make the best use of the available funds and avoid wasteful competition for space and lettings: hence the decision to build two halls to serve the village, the larger of the two to be available to serve the needs of the school in school hours and the needs of the village outside those hours, the smaller available to the village at all times. The Trust was asked to make a capital contribution to the entire project. The sum asked was increased subsequently, but not by a massive sum, and very generously County capped it at that figure. Originally we had asked for a stage in addition to a hall fit for badminton and short mat balls. In the end we agreed to an arena stage and the provision of the tiered seating, something that you will not find in many halls, and a very valuable asset. Obviously the Trust and the school need to work closely together. A Joint Management Agreement has been set in place and a Joint Management Committee meets regularly. The larger of the two halls has been named the Ahrens Hall in recognition of the landowners contribution to the project, including a substantial gift. David Parker's many contributions in the early days of the project have been commemorated by naming the smaller hall the Parker Hall.

Over the last two decades a good many people have served as Trustees and deserve the thanks of the village. We intend to find some way of recording their contribution. However, the Trust Administrator since late 2009, Catherine Richards, and our most recent Parish Clerk, Bob Hodgson, deserve special mention. Their untiring efforts to bring the project to a successful conclusion have been more than valuable. They have been indispensable. Thanks are due to my fellow trustees, my Vice Chairman, Caroline Moore, our Treasurer, Steve Millea, Nicky Menzies who chairs our village fundraising sub committee, Andrew Morton, Paul Stott and Gary Meeds. Gary had recently to resign because of pressure of work, and subsequently we have co-opted to our number Annette Childs. They will all know just how much they have done in recent months to ensure that the funding required is in place and likewise the management arrangements, but I can say without fear of contradiction that no body of Trustees can have worked harder or more successfully. They all deserve the village's heartfelt thanks.

A major debt is owed to the Parish Council for both financial and moral support. In one way or another, it has invested more than £500,000 into the project and we thank its members for their vision, support and confidence. There can be few Parish Councils anywhere that have done more to fit their village for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Recently we launched an appeal to the village for financial support and many villagers have given very generously indeed to help us towards our goal. By the time we have finished equipping the hall, we shall have spent over £900,000, but I am afraid that cannot be the end of the story. Fundraising will have to continue, since we have not quite all the equipment that we need. In addition, until we build up a substantial clientele, the new halls are unlikely to altogether cover their running costs, including provision for them to be managed and cleaned. The Trust has a business plan based on considerable research into other venues and it is confident that before too long lettings will cover costs. Indeed they may even enable the Trust to consider making some grants to village organisations. However, for the moment village organisations are enjoying favourable terms and the Trust intends that to continue.

Last May, Etchingam Church was packed as Robert Bathurst (a patron of the Trust) performed "The Scattering" by Christopher Reid. It was a very moving occasion and a wonderful performance. In June ETSR hosted a very successful plant sale held over 2 days. Thanks are due to all who donated plants as well as those who came to buy. Particular thanks go to Mary Barnes who hosted the event and supplied teas and coffee. Mary and Eleanor Knowles grew many of the plants from seed and they and the others who contributed are to be congratulated on their green fingers. ETSR held a very successful Garden Party at Barden, Sheepstreet Lane on the 27<sup>th</sup> August. The food was wonderful, the weather was kind, and it was a wonderful excuse to just sit and enjoy good company. Everyone was very generous and we thank them all. Thanks particularly to James Thiele for his delicious quiches, Mary Barnes for her excellent pudding and especially Andrew and Kate Morton for their warm hospitality. On 20<sup>th</sup> September we gathered in Robertsbridge Community Hall for a highly successful Barn Dance with the ever popular Catsfield Steamers providing the music. I cherish the memory of an enthusiastic group of young people who made the occasion.

We are grateful that, in addition to our own efforts, different organisations/people are fundraising on our behalf. The Etchingam Music festival kindly organised a fundraising event to help us - an evening of Folk Rock music by David Burns and the Logan Wilson Band held in Etchingam Church. The music could not have been bettered and we had a really good audience. Sight of the evening was three ladies in their eighties reliving their youth amongst the many people dancing in the aisles! Truth to tell they were much better at it than the youngsters. Special thanks go to Mary Newington, Brian Hilton and Marie Niven for setting up the event, and also to Don Nicholls for organising the musicians. At the Kino Anna Canetty-Clarke organised a viewing of a first rate film The Hours, starring Nicole Kidman, Meryl Streep and Julianne Moore with a talk by Jonathan Zoob who lived with his wife Caroline at Monk's House the former home of Virginia Woolf for over a decade as tenants of the National Trust.

The AGM was held on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> October 2014 in the Etchingam Club. We would like to thank the Committee for allowing us to use their club, but look forward to welcoming you later this year to our first AGM in the new hall. By then we shall hope to have our own website up and running, although we shall continue to make use of the excellent village website also.

Earlier in the year we held a table top sale and at the end of March another of our excellent quiz nights with Steve and Terry. This was our first event in the fantastic new facilities and we are grateful to Caroline Evertz Lyall for ensuring that the food was excellent and the whole occasion very enjoyable. Make a note in your diaries now for the Catsfield Steamers on the 9<sup>th</sup> May 2015.

There are already many enthusiastic users of the new hall. Bookings can be made through our administrator Catherine Richards - [admin@etchinghamtrust.org.uk](mailto:admin@etchinghamtrust.org.uk) or 07855 239848

***John Barnes - Chairman of Etchingam Trust for Sport & Recreation***



## Friends Of Burwash Surgery

We have seen some changes in our committee in the last year, losing Ann Pereira, and Shirley Kerr has been replaced as secretary by Sue Mumford. The Surgery has also seen some changes, indeed, by the time this report is published in the Annual Meeting notes, there will have been a lot of changes: Dr Packham retired last year, and Dr Woodgate will have left, as will Dr Grosvenor (who replaced Dr Packham).

The provision of transport continues to be one of – not to say the - most important function of the Friends. We have a rota of drivers, but would always welcome new volunteers. This only involves perhaps two or three requests per year, to drive a patient to (usually) a hospital appointment (and back).

We have a capital reserve, to meet requests for equipment, from the Surgery, and are about to fund a new automatic check-in screen, at a cost of some £2,000. Needless to say, donations are always welcome!

The committee meets only about once every three months, and there is really little more of a commitment than that (aside from the virtually inevitable inclusion on the drivers' rota). The one member lost last year has not been replaced, and we are likely to lose another one at the next AGM in June, so if anybody feels able to volunteer to join us, that would be most appreciated.

### Contacts

**Chairman: Frank Smith 01580-819326 langsmith\_@hotmail.com**

**Treasurer: Jill Copland 01580-819321 teakeeper@mypostoffice.co.uk**



## Etchingham C. of E. School      Report 2014-2015

The beginning of 2015 will always be a landmark in the history of Etchingham C. of E. School. The long-awaited dream to move into a new school has finally come to fruition and signals the beginning of a new era.

The Victorian school building on Burgh Hill served the village and community well for 150 years but had become woefully inadequate for modern day needs.

In 2013, East Sussex County Council had allocated £5.4 million in their capital programme, to provide Etchingham with a brand new replacement school on a much larger site. There was the promise of permanent classrooms, a very large games hall, a level games court and a full size playing field.

An additional bonus in the new scheme is that the Under 5's Pre-School, now called Barn Owls, have a purpose built facility alongside the school.

After the February Half Term, the school was ready for occupation. A great deal of preparatory work had taken place in the lead up to the big move and continued throughout the holiday period. Recognition must be given to the Head, Mrs. Williams, all the teaching staff, the assistant teachers, and all the helpers in the Under 5 department for their time in preparing the classrooms for the start of the new term.

Elaine Pooley and her assistants worked hard preparing their new kitchen. Particular mention should be named of Greg Coleman, the Business Manager and David Churchill, the School Caretaker who spent many hours dealing with all the deliveries of new stock and ensuring that all the teaching rooms and administrative equipment were in place for the children's arrival.

The partnership with Bodiam C. of E. School continues to thrive. The schools share the same Headteacher and the teaching staff plan collaboratively across both schools. Termly events take place across the schools where pupils and staff work and train together to produce the best opportunities for all in both schools.

Staff and Governors work together to ensure that all children receive the quality of education to which they are entitled.

Over the past year, children have experienced many different learning opportunities through bi-termly Learning Journeys. These are planned to cover statutory requirements in Foundation Subjects through which core subject skills are practised and knowledge applied.

For example in Terms 1 and 2, the Learning Journey focused on World War 1. This involved activities such as a Remembrance Service and poetry reading. A Music Day featured the creation of posters and singing songs of the era, led by an actor in full regalia who talked about military action. A parent who is a veteran of the Iraq War also spoke about his experiences and related them to his grandfather's experience in World War 1. All these experiences helped the children to produce some remarkable written work.

There were many happy and memorable events celebrated throughout last year in the life of the old school. Not least the Easter Bonnet Parade on the sloping playground, Sports Day on the confined field at the back of the school, the Christmas Nativity when so many little bodies miraculously fitted on to the tiny stage and the most amazing Enrichment Week when Football World Cup Fever came to Etchingham. Key Stage 2 performed their amazing Summer Show, in a packed Hurst Green Village Hall, on one of the hottest nights of the year.

Since 1864, the old school has been buzzing with activity and the closure carries with it many fond memories for its past pupils. However, the future beckons and on the new site there will be many more memories to be made. The amazing staff team deserve the facilities and opportunities which are afforded in the new school and will certainly unlock the potential of each individual to achieve 'Excellence for All at Etchingham'.

*Annette Childs*  
**Etchingham Parish Council**

## **YOUTH ENJOYMENT SOCIETY (Y.E.S.)**

The Youth Enjoyment Society (Y.E.S. for short) was founded in 2000 as a charitable trust, and ran youth clubs in Etchingham and Burwash, with some success, until 2012, when the Youth Leader left. Despite a good deal of trying, a replacement leader could not be found, and the youth clubs were closed - it was hoped, temporarily.

The trust is still in existence, but the trustees no longer feel able - for various reasons - to continue in position, and try to get the youth club(s) re-started. All the indoor play equipment (table tennis tables, football table, etc., of which there is a considerable amount), that was used in the clubs, is still in storage and, indeed, the trust has a cash reserve. But unless new trustees can be found, who are willing to undertake the tasks of trying to find a new youth leader, and the background running of the trust, it will be wound up, and the assets disposed of - in accordance with the constitution - to other body/ies with similar aims.

We (the trustees) hope that new people, willing to take over, in any of the villages previously involved, will come forward. Although we are not looking to take a long-term part again, we would be pleased to give help and advice to a new board of trustees.

Would anybody interested please contact:

<b>Frank/Barbarann Smith</b>	<b>01580-819326</b>	<b>langsmith_@hotmail.com</b>
<b>or</b>		
<b>Sue Westbrook</b>	<b>01580-819386</b>	<b>spwest177@gmail.com</b>

**Barn Owls – Etchingham Pre-school**

During the past year, it seemed on occasions that we would never make it to the wonderful new building, which was to be constructed on the Lambing Field, along with a new village hall and a new primary school – it seemed a long way off! But we did make it and the two moves went well. We are now right next door to the primary school to which most of our children will graduate and will continue to build on the relationship which we believe is so important for Etchingham's children.

Along the way, we moved from the old village hall in April, 2014, to a temporary building in the playground of the primary school and without their support and the support of the governors, Parish Council and ESCC, it would not have been possible. We had to get through the Ofsted inspections which are required when a pre-school moves to new premises and it is a credit to Helen and her team that we passed inspection and did so twice, once for the temporary site and finally for the new building. There is much left to re-establish the pre-school but we are well on the way.

Recruitment is vital to our ability to maintain this childcare and child development service to our village community and we plan to recruit more parents and their children, using our strengths – the ability of our staff, the warmth and enthusiasm we have for the children in our care and a smart new building.

We will continue to work hard to raise money not only for the extras but also to fill the gap between our income and costs. Beth Sequeira is leading our efforts in this key area and also running our “Baby Barn Owls” weekly session for mothers and their toddlers. We welcome Beth and also Harriet Knowles as our new Trustees. And we thank all those in the village who have generously given their time, energy, wisdom, goods and money – without you, we could not survive.



# COMMUNITY SPEEDWATCH

Co-ordinator; Colin Boylett 01580 819532 [etchingham-speedwatch@gmail.com](mailto:etchingham-speedwatch@gmail.com)

The Etchingham Community Speedwatch group continues to operate regular sessions and since starting in January 2014 has run 315 roadside sessions up to the End of March and reported 2,950 speeding vehicles.

Thanks to the Parish Council and de Etchingham Community Interest Company (CIC) sharing the cost, the group now has its own radar device, this means we no longer have to collect a device from Battle Police Station and it also enables the group to run sessions at times that best suit the volunteer operators and target the times when the worst speeding is identified.

The group currently has 7 volunteer operators, more will always be welcome, more volunteers means that each person is called upon less often. Instruction for new volunteers is now done online, anyone wanting to volunteer for the group should first go to [www.communityspeedwatch.co.uk](http://www.communityspeedwatch.co.uk) and use the Register button to apply to join the group. After the online instruction has been completed the details will be sent to the group co-ordinator and the new volunteer will be able to join sessions.

If you are interested in volunteering and do not have a computer, please contact the co-ordinator.

We are aware that there will be village residents who support the work of the group, but are unable to take part in roadside sessions and might like to support the group in other ways. The new device will need an annual service a calibration check and there are other items that the group might like to purchase in the future to help with the group activities. This will involve further expenditure, and we would not expect Parish Council to cover the costs. We would like to set up a Speedwatch Support Group to raise funds to keep Speedwatch running efficiently. We do not want to overload our volunteer operators with fund raising as well, so we hope that there is a small group of village residents who would like to assist by joining a support group.

If you are interested in helping form a support group, or can help in another way, contact the group co-ordinator or go to the village website Speedwatch Support Group page where you can register your interest through an online form, you will find a link on the website Home Page. Updates on the activity of the Etchingham group are posted on the Etchingham Speedwatch Facebook page.

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



*de Etchingham CIC*

Serving the community

**Update from the Etchingham Community Interest Company**

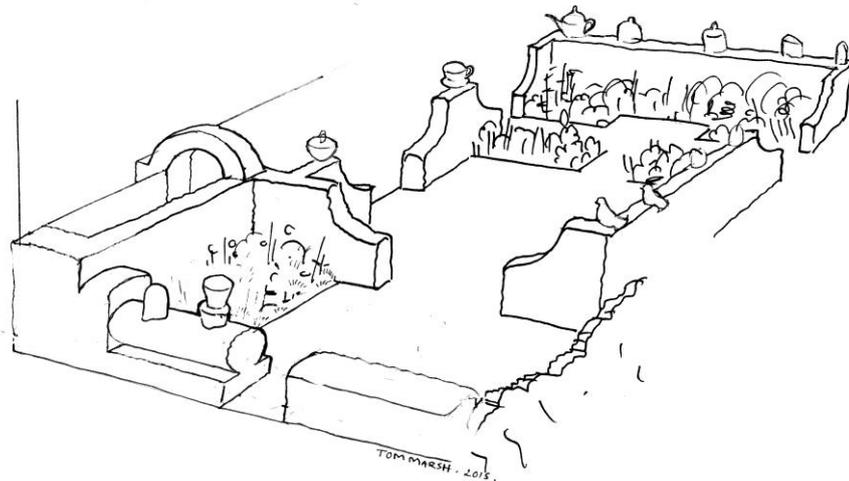
It's hard to believe the Bistro has been a feature of our village for five years and the Shop & Deli opened for business three years ago! The directors of the CIC congratulate Paul and Julie Collins at the Bistro and Neil and Sian Cotterill in the Shop & Deli for the success of both

all

CIC

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as



businesses and their hard work.

During 2014 the conducted a village survey to gather feedback both businesses a view to making improvements required. With exceptionally positive feedback very

few changes were necessary. The most pleasing result was over 90% of respondents rating service at the Bistro and Shop & Deli in the top two categories of “very good” and “excellent”. Service is the lifeblood of any organisation and keeps customers coming back for more – it’s good to see we are getting it right.

### **Steady at the Helm**

The role of the CIC has changed in the last year. Previous years have seen frenetic fund raising for various projects including the gardens at the coal yard site and the Bistro. The demand for funding reduced and 2014 saw the Directors less directly involved with the businesses but taking up a more supporting role. It is great when a plan comes together! The intention is to build on current success and to ultimately look around for other areas where the CIC’s skills and experience may be of value.

One opportunity did appear during the year at the old industrial “Barnfield” site in Church Lane. Initial discussions were opened with the owner with a view to acquiring the site and creating an “Etchingham Social Enterprise Park” to increase employment and commercial units in the village. Unfortunately negotiations stalled and the site is currently let to a small business which we wish well. Who knows what might happen in the future.

The CIC will continue to invest time and resources to improve facilities and services in Etchingham when opportunities arise. Meanwhile, we look forward to saying hello to our fellow villagers at the Bistro or Shop & Deli.

### **Update on the garden at the Bistro**

#### **Terrace & Topiary**

The garden at the Bistro had yet another exciting and productive year.

Topiary master Charlotte Molesworth kindly gave some of her time and expertise to help establish some topiary from the Yew Hedges that are a major part of the Bistro garden. The new topiary maintains the Bistro theme and local nature; this includes a topiarised teapot, wine glass, cakes, buns and birds.

Peter Baldock from English Heritage Gardens Ltd has been raising money for the garden by offering expert garden advice in exchange for donations to help fund improvements to the Bistro garden. Peter also ran several garden workshops for topiary, pruning and border development. Look out for the pretty hazel pea stick plant supports in the borders which were made during these events.

These donations and a contribution from the Etchingam CIC enabled Peter and his team to create a new terrace extension creating more dining space. The new terrace is bordered by more formal Yew hedging, an herbaceous border and views extending out over the Gray Nicholl's willow plantation and all of its birdlife. The new yew hedging also creates more opportunity for topiary. How about a steam train, ideas on a postcard please!

The first wave of spring bulbs are now in bloom in the Bistro Car Park area and with spring calling we can always do with an extra hand so if you have some spare time and enjoy gardening in a social environment **please call Peter on 01580 861294.**

### **CIC Directors, April 2015**

Colin Phillips – 01580 860121  
Sue Westbrook  
John Morris  
Peter Benn



The Bistro is now approaching its sixth year in business and continues to go from strength to strength. 'Friday Night, Pizza Night' has proved an absolute triumph with Friday evenings being our busiest shift of the week. During the height of our beautiful summer last year, we tallied up 67 pizzas on a frantic Friday night! The Etchingam Community Interest Company remains involved and is currently overseeing the exciting new development of the extended patio in the garden. This will incorporate an additional outside dining area which will prove invaluable during the warmer weather. We are very grateful to the CIC for its continued support, advice and guidance.

Here are a few 2014 highlights.....

- **Royal Visit** – HRH Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall paid us an unexpected visit on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> March 2014. They were returning to London, via train, after visiting Batemans. They appeared to be very impressed with our little

Bistro and The Duchess kindly purchased 8 pieces of carrot cake for her party to enjoy on the train home.

- **Mothering Sunday** – On Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> March we hosted a very successful ‘Roast Lamb’ lunch. Again, just as the previous year, this was fully booked.
- **Easter Sunday** – On Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> April we were booked up for Easter Sunday lunch. The ‘Easter Egg Hunt’ in the garden proved very popular with families with young children.
- **Bistro’s 4<sup>th</sup> Birthday** - On Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> August we were able to enjoy a wonderful celebration in the beauty of the Bistro garden. It was a very successful evening, including a brilliant performance from ‘The Logan Wilson Band.’
- **Quiz Nights** – During the spring of 2014 we were approached by a number of customers requesting the possibility of a regular ‘Quiz Night’ at the Bistro. We ran with this idea and it has proven to be very successful. They are staged every month on a Saturday night, entry cost being £5 per team and all funds go to ‘The Station Garden Project.’
- **Bistro Garden** – The garden is currently undergoing a major facelift with the patio area being extended to incorporate further outside seating. We have also had the privilege of a very experienced lady, namely, Charlotte Molesworth, who has introduced topiary to our bistro garden. We look forward to watching this grow and develop over the coming months and years.

We are extremely proud of the success the Bistro has enjoyed over the last 12 months and with ever increasing ‘Private Hire’ bookings we look forward to an even more fruitful 2015. For more information or to book the Bistro for a private party or just to make a reservation please call Paul Collins on 01580 819262.



The Music Festival had a particularly successful year in 2014 in terms of musical excellence and audience numbers. We managed to procure a concert from the Heath Quartet, possibly the best young string quartet in the country (who went on to perform at the Proms.) and our opera evening featured two extremely talented singers.

Our Patron, Peter Katin, gave a wonderful piano recital. Sadly we learned of his death on 19<sup>th</sup> March and we have lost not only our esteemed Patron of 11 years but a very dear friend. We were very privileged to have had Peter as our Patron, he was one of the greatest British pianists of the twentieth century. We are very fortunate that he played his very last concert in our beautiful Parish Church.

As regards finance we managed to cover all our costs in 2014 but made a profit of only £30. However we raised £450 for the new village halls and £500 for the church by giving two special

fund raising concerts. We have not asked for a grant this year as we still have sufficient working capital.

*Mary Newington*



## Etchingham Shop & Deli

**Year 3 and the Shop & Deli is going from strength to strength.**

**We now host a 'Taster Saturday' on the last Saturday in the month pairing cheese and wine and other foodie treats.**

**Checkout the entrance blackboard to see what's coming up**

**The 'Deli' range of meals is proving popular – we are always cooking – trying to catch up with the demand and are working on creating a menu for one, two and four portion meals.**

**The 'Willy Wonka' Coffee Roaster is going non-stop, with a number of local Cafés & Restaurants ordering coffee beans**

**This is alongside the roasts we do for our lovely takeaway coffees and for those budding home Barrista's to enjoy.**

### **YEAR 3 HIGHLIGHTS**

**'Feast In The Field' in July 2014 – was a great success – so much so that we are hosting another one this year on July 18<sup>th</sup>.**

The Under 5's was the winning charity AGAIN for the annual duck race raising a fabulous £700

A price comparison survey was carried out by the CIC and the shop was found to be:

- Less expensive than its nearest competitor (in geographical terms)
- Comparable or cheaper than all the other outlets for simple basics of bread, milk and eggs
- A far superior shopping experience than any of the other 6 shops visited

#### WHATS IN STORE FOR YEAR 4

We have a new range of exciting wines from “Secret Cellar”

This year's “Charity Duck Race’ is on Saturday 2nd May

A big thank you to the residents of Etchingam & the CIC for all their help and advice and the ongoing support from the Parish Council



[www.etchinghamvillage.co.uk](http://www.etchinghamvillage.co.uk)

The village website is provided by the Parish Council to provide information about the village and organisations. The site has had a number of new pages added recently, now consisting of over 170 pages, with more planned.

You can find all information from the Parish Council on the site, agendas and minutes of monthly meetings appear on the site as soon as available and Councillors can now be contacted through online forms. Details of village organisations can be found and a section of pages with Church information has now been added.

With the number of pages increasing it is possible errors can creep in, we need to keep the pages as accurate as possible, if you find anything that needs correcting, use the contact form which is the last item at the bottom of the menu on the left to send details.

The site is provided by the Parish Council, but it is 'The Village Website' if you want details of other village items added to the site, get in touch with the details.

**Cllr. Colin Boylett**

## ROTHER VALLEY LADIES GROUP

We are now in our third year as a village social group, and our full programme can be seen on the noticeboard at the Post Office, and in the Feb./March edition of the Parish magazine. We have our meetings at 2.30pm on the first Wednesday of the month, sometimes with illustrated talks, followed by tea, with at least 3 outings a year and a Christmas lunch at a local Inn or hotel.

From June this year we hope our meetings will be in the new village hall. At the moment we have 18 members, but would welcome any ladies from Etchingham who would like to join us.

## ETCHINGHAM DARBY & JOAN CLUB

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The Club was formed in 1958.

The Members meet on the 4th Wednesday of each month at 2.30.

We will still meet at the Etchingham Social Club in March.

But in April we will be in the new Parker Hall for our meetings.

In May we will be holding a Coffee Morning at Brooklands in the High Street

This is our main event to raise money for the Club, as we are self-funding.

There are various outings planned for 2015 including a Mystery Tour and lunch in September.

We are always ready to welcome new Members, anyone over the age of 55 are eligible to join and will be made most welcome.

Please contact Julia Barrow 01580 819475 for details and a copy of the Programme.



# Etchingham Parish Church

*The Assumption of Blessed Mary and St. Nicholas*



**The Church is currently in interregnum, but continues to hold weekly services every Sunday.**

*Any enquiries regarding the Church should be directed to the [Churchwardens](#).*



## **Etchingam Improvements Committee**

Providing entertainment & amenities for the village of Etchingam  
Founded 1953



### **Report of Events organised & run by the Improvements Committee in 2014**

#### **Village Fete.**

This year's theme was World Cup / Rio Carnival & Fuleco the Mascot proved a huge hit with the children, almost as much as the fire engine that they had the opportunity to travel on to the fete!

The Church had a fantastic display of old photos from Etchingam through the ages, expertly laid out by Colin Boylett. All the local committees had stalls to raise money from bric-a-brac to book sales & tombola.

This year's attendance was one of the highest with over 50 cars in the newly cut field / car park, added to which we sold over 450 raffle tickets, which helped boost profits tremendously. In total this year's fete made £ 840 which was put towards the firework event at the end of the year.

***One new resident commented "I had no idea these sort of idyllic traditional village fete's still occurred" well until he moved to Etchingam that was!!***

#### **Flower & Dog Show**

We would like to thank everyone who contributed towards making the show such a success this year, especially Phil and Phillipa Hinde, who took the event under their wing.

The total of 'indoor' entries was up to almost 300 and the number of different people submitting exhibits also increased. The kind weather helped and the canine section was also a great success with an excellent turnout of dogs and owners. The work Phil and Phillipa did to weed out the less well supported classes and replace with some new categories seemed to have paid off. The only section where entries were down was photography although the standard was very good.

## **Fireworks**

The Etchingham 2014 fireworks started well with a great crowd gathering and eating their way through all the hot dogs, mulled wine and soup, in eager anticipation of the fantastic display which has become synonymous with the Etchingham fireworks. However, as the first rocket lit up the night sky, the heavens opened in retaliation and soaked the crowd for a minute or so, but fortunately did little to dampen spirits. The display lived up to expectations again and with the fantastic finale was a huge round of applause.

As the crowd were slightly soggy many this year continued the evening's entertainment in the Etchingham Sports and Social Club, with hot chilli, a few drinks and live music provided by the Logan Wilson Band. With everyone making merry they soon warmed up and dried out and it was generally agreed that this year had been one of the best yet! The Etchingham Improvements Committee would like to thank everyone who helped at this year's event and all those who braved the weather to come and support.

We also donated & erected the Village Christmas Tree in the High Street again last year.



## **Etchingham Improvements Committee**

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The committee would like to say a special thank you to Corrina Hayler who after many years has decided to take a rest from the committee. Corrina has run the Tea Tent at the Fete & Flower & Dog show for the last seven years. Obviously Corrina had many helpers, but she organised the helpers, sorted the cakes, tea & produce as well as setting up & running it all. We thank her for all her hard work & dedication over the last seven years. She will be sadly missed.

It is also noted that Chas French, Lucy Tooke & Paul Gilbert are stepping back for 2015. Due to this the events for 2015 are currently in the balance pending more help. Please see separate note for more info.

### **Appeal from the Etchingham Improvements Committee**

Dear Village,

What we would like to know is whether or not there is anyone willing to step up and take over from Chas and I, for at least a year! Having both been on the Improvements Committee for many years between us now, and with busier and busier lives Chas and I have reached a point of saturation, and one where we would like to have a rest! In essence it is our intention to have a year off.

We recently had a meeting with the rest of the Committee to advise them of our intent to stand aside and to ask if they agreed with mothballing the events for 2015, or if they wanted to continue without our assistance.

After much discussion they agreed they would like to continue with the Flower and Dog and the Fireworks, and there is enough in the bank account to support these, without the fundraising of the Fete, which would not happen.

To enable this scenario to happen however there are several things which need to be in place;

1. Both events would need to be fully supported with helpers, both in the run up and on the day. This includes organising insurances, licences, first aid bookings, dog judges, shopping, arranging man power and helping co-ordinate each event.
2. Our current Treasurer has agreed that if the EiC is mothballed for a year he will 'babysit' the bank account, however he would also like to step down, and would like to do this in advance of next year's events. This means if the events go ahead there will need to be a new treasurer in place who would then need to sort all the floats and reconcile the accounts after the events.

Over the last few years we have struggled to get enough people on board and have taken more and more on ourselves, which we were more than happy to do, but now realise that without people to come forward the EiC is in danger of collapse. Without a true and positive injection of man power and support no events will go ahead this coming year. But if there is a happy band of people to step up to the plate, the village and the EiC can continue to enjoy their continued success.



## Etchingham Improvements Committee

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Please could you have a think about whether you would like to get more involved. If you could or if you would like to find out more about either of the events please could you contact:

Phil and Phillipa Hinde – Flower and Dog Show – [PhilHinde@crossrail.co.uk](mailto:PhilHinde@crossrail.co.uk) / [philshinde@btopenworld.com](mailto:philshinde@btopenworld.com)

Frank and Helen Brophy – Fireworks - [frank.brophy@btopenworld.com](mailto:frank.brophy@btopenworld.com) / [hrbrophy@btopenworld.com](mailto:hrbrophy@btopenworld.com)

At this point in time, there will be no Fete this summer. However, if following this appeal there is someone out there willing to take it on, this may change.

We would like to thank the village for their support of the events the EiC have put on over the years, and we sincerely hope that they and the EiC will continue to go from strength to strength.

Kind regards

Chas French & Lucy Tooke

On behalf of the Etchingham Improvements Committee

## **Etchingham Sports & Social Club**

A Member's Club with a friendly atmosphere & great value drinks.

Facilities include two full size billiard/snooker tables, pool table, darts board, juke box, large screen for most sporting events and free WIFI.

Monthly quizzes, bingo every Monday from 8.30pm, discos and barbecues.

The Club is available to book for all occasions and is the home of the [Etchingham & Fontridge Cricket Club](#).

New members always welcome. Membership fees adults (18-59yrs) £20, Juniors (16-17yrs) £5, OAP (60yrs+) £10.

Opening hours; Monday 7pm – 11pm, Wednesday 7.30pm – 11pm, Friday 8pm– 12midnight, Saturday 8pm – 10.30pm and (during the cricket season) Sunday 8pm – 10.30pm.

Telephone; 01580 819240

Email; [etchinghamsportsandsocialclub@gmail.com](mailto:etchinghamsportsandsocialclub@gmail.com)

Facebook; [www.facebook.com/etchinghamsocialclub](http://www.facebook.com/etchinghamsocialclub)



# COMMUNITY SAFETY

One of my areas of activity on the Parish Council is Community Safety, this covers quite a wide area including Police related matters as well as others things which might affect the safety of residents.

***Police Liaison;*** I keep in contact with our local PCSO's and Police Officers at Battle Police Station. I receive regular updates from the Police on incidents in the area, any that are of importance to village residents are sent out on the village e-bulletin and posted on the village website.

If residents are unsure of who to contact about a Police matter I will do my best to direct them to the correct person. During the past year there have not been too many incidents in the village that Police have had to deal with, mainly oil thefts, a few shed break-ins and the two old post boxes that were stolen. And of course parking and speeding traffic continues to be a concern.

***Neighbourhood Watch;*** Although we do not currently have an active NHW scheme in the village I am still listed as Co-ordinator with the Rother Association and receive information when it is sent out, any appropriate items are sent out on the e-bulletin and posted on the village website.

***Community Speedwatch;*** See the separate item for Speedwatch.

***Flood Warnings;*** We have been lucky this winter and only had a couple of Flood Alerts and no warnings, a marked contrast to the previous winter when we had numerous warnings and spent quite a bit of the time just before Christmas getting chairs and other items up off of the floor in the Church 'just in case'.

If any alerts or warnings are issued I can then make sure residents in parts of the village that are at risk are aware of the current situation. The emergency Planning Officer at Rother District Council keeps in contact with me when warnings are issued so that we can ensure help is provided where needed.

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

Councillor Boylett – Portfolio holder for Community Safety

### ***And Finally, From the Parish Office:-***

And yes, this time it really is ***And Finally***, as I write my last ever Report for and on behalf of the Etchingham Parish Council.

The reports presented this year to the Annual Parish Meeting show the variety of interests and activities within Etchingham and cater for a wide and diverse audience. All of these activities would however, not be possible without the enormous hard work and dedication of the persons involved on the many Committees and associated bodies all of whom are voluntary. You will see in some Reports the need for additional volunteers to help organise and run the activities and I do so hope that in this very busy world some of you will find the time to be able to respond. It would be such a pity if some of these activities were to cease. I have been involved with the voluntary sector, as volunteer, manager, youth worker, helper, trustee, cake maker and just about every other capacity for over 40 years and know how difficult it can sometimes be but also how immensely rewarding it also is. Please give serious consideration to the various requests for help.

It is fantastic to see the new School and Village Hall and this superb facility should serve the village well for many years to come. It will need ongoing support, like the Bistro, Shop & Deli, Post Office and Butchers; like so many villages it is a case of use or lose the facilities.

I have been very fortunate to have been involved with most of the Projects mentioned in this Report and have very much enjoyed the challenge in helping them reach a satisfactory conclusion.

There are a few people I would like to thank, beginning with my Chairman, Mary Varrall who has supported me throughout my term of office and has always been available to deal with any parish matter at any time. The existing and previous Council Members who have also served the community well. My thanks also to Barbara Thomas and Gwen Allum for all their help with the old Village Hall. There are many local people who administer the various village organisations and I have enjoyed an excellent relationship with them all for which I now say, thank you. Elsewhere in this Report you will find the contribution from ETSR; John Barnes has recorded thanks to many people who have contributed to the achievement of the new School and Community facilities; on behalf of the Parish Council and myself I would like to take this opportunity to thank John for his untiring efforts in ensuring the success of this fantastic project for the village.

It is more than 50 years since I first entered Local Government as a Junior Clerk in the Hastings Borough Council Water Engineers Department (tea boy really), and the challenge of public service has never diminished. I hope I have served you well as your Clerk and it has been a privilege and pleasure to have been a part of your community for the past six years.

Bob Hodgson – Clerk to Etchingham Parish Council

*(PS – by the way, I can still make a pretty good cup of tea if you are ever in Hastings)*

