

ETCHINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Meeting of the Etchingham Parish Council
held on Thursday 25th June 2020
at 7.30pm via ZOOM electronic communication

Members Present: Cllrs, J Barnes (in the Chair), Mrs M Barnes, Mr C Boylett, Mr D Lambert and Ms R Turner.

Also present: District Cllr Eleanor Kirby-Green, Ms P Barton – Clerk to the Council. Also Cllr Brian Drayson, Chairman of Rother District Council and Cllr Sue Prochak, RDC Rural Matters there were no members of the public.

The Chairman would normally explain that the Parish Council meeting was a meeting held in public but not a Public Meeting. Any person present wishing to speak about any item on the agenda should do so under agenda item 6 'Public Time'. There would not be any other opportunity for the public to speak at the meeting but as no members of the public were present did not do so on this occasion.

The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming District Cllr Brian Drayson and District Cllr Sue Prochak.

2084. Apologies for Absence:

There were apologies for absence from Cllrs Barrow and Beeney also Mr Paul Stott Chairman of ETSR, which were all accepted.

2085. Minutes of the previous meetings:

The Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday 28th May having been previously circulated, were agreed apart from point 2078 which is expanded for clarification, and will be signed as a correct record of that meeting.

2086. Declarations of Interest:

Cllr. J Barnes declared a personal interest in respect of agenda item 12, Village Community Halls as a Trustee of ETSR and that he is now appointed first substitution should a member of RDC Planning Committee be absent.

Cllr. M. Barnes declared a personal interest in respect of agenda item 12, Village Community Halls as a member of the Parochial Church Council and reminded Council that she is a member of the RDC Planning Committee.

2087. Etchingham Parish Council – Dispensations

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

2088. Chairman's Announcements:

a) The Chairman expressed the thanks of the Parish Council on behalf of Etchingham residents to Clara Batten and the team of 40 volunteers who have supported anyone in the village and immediate environs needing help both practical and supportive with prescription collection, shopping and telephone conversations, etc. Clara and her team were there from the very beginning long before the official channels were able to be fully organised and respond. Indeed one of the local GP surgeries would contact the group for assistance with transport when their own volunteers were not available. From a village of only just over 400 homes this is a real example of community in action. A grant has been sought from the insurance company Hastings Direct that has offered some funding for such groups and if successful it is hoped that this project can carry forward long after this current crisis is over.

b) The Chairman asked if there was a wish to consider an annual award for 'Villager of the Year', perhaps to be named the Emma Beeney Trophy if the family were in agreement. It was decided to carry this forward and discuss at the next meeting.

2089. Public Time:

a) The daily reports of the Covid-19 outbreak circulated by ESCC have been transmitted onward to the village by E-Bulletin. As restrictions are eased there is still much needing to be done and eventually a self-critical look back on how services need to be improved going forward. An immensely expensive operation only partially funded by central government which may mean some very difficult financial decisions being taken going forward.

b) District Cllr Kirby-Green reported that RDC now has a new working group considering the whole subject of Business Rates and the effect of Covid-19 on future plans. As most schools are not reopening fully some parents treated recent hot weather as 'holiday' causing unprecedented issues with crowd control at Camber Sands in Rother and many other beaches along the South Coast. The new notices marking the newly renovated 1066 Walk are installed together with the first of the specially commissioned carved wooden 'statues' and walkers are welcomed, obeying social distancing regulations. Both District Councillors are in regular contact with the MP regarding the detail of relaxing the pandemic restrictions. The distribution of the 'cheer up we're all in this together' cards supplied by RVA was considered a nice idea that had not been sufficiently thought through to enable fulfilment. Burwash will soon be going to Reg 14 with its Neighbourhood Plan.

- c) There were no members of the public present – but a request to run free keep fit sessions in Queen’s Garden on Sunday morning, in strict adherence to the Covid-19 restrictions has been received. To be resolved under 8a) iii.
- d) No members of council will be excluded from the meeting so no further reports or comments.

2090. Parish Matters:

a) **Village Amenities:**

- i) ***It was Resolved that the ‘rent holiday’ for the tenants of The Old Stores continue for at least another month, to be reviewed thereafter.***
- ii) For Queen’s Garden ***it was Resolved that proper repair of the slab bench on concrete posts by replacing the damaged seat completely be undertaken and that delegated authority be granted to the Clerk and Cllr Doug Lambert to purchase a suitable replacement for the picnic table unit up to the cost of £700 ensuring that it would be suitably accessible for all users.***
- iii) ***It was Resolved that Alice Millea be permitted, on a trial basis, to run a keep fit class in Queen’s Garden f.o.c. as the sessions, run strictly within covid-19 restrictions, will be free to the limited number of participants.*** To be reviewed as necessary.
- iv) There were no other matters to consider.

b) **Children and Young People:**

- i) Cllr Turner reported that plans to mark Mrs Margaret Williams retirement as Head Teacher are in place, Covid-19 restrictions allowing. ***It was Resolved that the Parish Council offer its heartfelt gratitude to Mrs Williams for her years of selfless devotion to her work for the school and to every individual child that came into its care and wished her a long and extremely happy retirement.***
A new teacher has been appointed to Yr 3, a local man. It is hoped that the full school roll will be able to return in September for the new school year.
- ii) Cllr Boylett’s full report is on file but fund raising is necessarily slow during the Covid-19 restrictions.
- iii) Cllr Lambert reported that the work on replacing the equipment in Queen’s Garden remains on hold due to the Covid-19 pandemic. All existing equipment has been marked as out of bounds until such time as restrictions are lifted by Central Government.
- iv) There were no other matters to consider.

c) **Highways, Footpaths and Community Safety:**

- i) The Clerk reported that while ESCC Highways has successfully repaired the drain outside 2 Church Cottages, the Highways Steward considers that the collapsed fence encroaching on the pavement by the A265 between the Burgh Hill junction and the level crossing is not bringing vegetation with it and therefore blocking the footpath, so no more action will be taken. Highways has acknowledged that the large Giant Hogweed Plant on the verge of Oxenbridge Lane needs action and has logged it for destruction.
- ii) Cllr Boylett reported that Speedwatch sessions are still not possible under the Covid-19 restrictions. It is hoped that with suitable social distancing and hygiene protection in place sessions might resume in July in at least two locations where this is possible in the village. The reintroduction of the sessions is welcomed by the Council.
- iii) Cllr Lambert has strimmed the verges of Borders Lane with his own strimmer as, although he is now in possession of the Council strimmer it is in need of a service. Further work on the footpath will be undertaken with the help of the local farmer. ***It was Resolved that Cllr Lambert be authorised to arrange the service of the strimmer at Council expense for future use.***
Concern was raised that the footpath crossing land close to the Hurst Green border to the south of the A265, currently up for sale, be acknowledged in the sale details.
- iv) There were no other matters to consider

d) **Environment and Other issues:**

There were no matters to consider.

- e) Having been previously circulated and following discussion at the meeting ***it was Resolved that the Clerk respond to the Consultation on the Draft Model Member Code of Conduct endorsing the updating of presentation and language, also for highlighting the increase in bullying within Councils including that involving Clerks and the real difficulty in administering any meaningful sanctions when found and proven.***

2091. Planning:

a) RR/2020/732P – 4 Brookside Cottages, Oxenbridge Lane - Proposed replacement of existing conservatory with single storey kitchen extension and alterations including new first floor window to front of property. **It was Resolved to support this application assuming the new window is in keeping with the property and to similar modernisation undertaken in neighbouring houses. OWPC24572 on RDC Planning website refers.**

RR/2020/826/P – Woodpeckers, Straight Mile - Change of use of part of garden to a dog day care facility including construction of dog day care building, new footpath, use of existing access and extended parking area. **It was Resolved to object to this application as insufficient regard was considered to have been applied to the possibility of nuisance by noise and if the screening of any new building would be sufficient when viewed from the north across the AONB valley. Request that this application be Called In. OWPC24573 on RDC Planning website refers.**

b) It was noted that the application by Shortridge Farm in Sheepstreet Lane had been successful and a new sympathetic building to replace the old deteriorating one welcomed, however it is felt that ingress and egress from Sheepstreet Lane is still a matter of concern.

2092. Finance

a) Authorisation of payments – the Clerk presented to Council the accounts for payment.

| Payments June | | | PAID |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|----------------|
| P Barton | Salary & Expenses June 2020 | | 994.56 |
| L Worton | Salary & Expenses May 2020 | | 102.00 |
| Tim Crane | First 1/2 year grass cutting as contracted | | 835.00 |
| Etchingham Club | Grant towards cost of replacing damaged windows | | 1000.00 |
| Etchingham Improvements Committee | Grant towards cost of repairing/replacing damaged roof of storage container in QG | | 500.00 |
| Crane Designs Ltd | NP Mthly charge for hosting site DD 4/06/2020 | | 15.00 |
| Crane Designs Ltd | EPC Mthly charge for hosting site DD 4/06/2020 | | 15.00 |
| Focus Group | DD 26/06/2020 Office Phone to 28/05/2020 | | 26.96 |
| | Total Payments | | 3488.52 |

It was **RESOLVED** that the payments for June 2020 be approved and that proof of the BACs payments together with copies of the relevant invoices be signed by two councillors to comply with Financial Regulations and best practice as soon as possible.

2093. Etchingham Neighbourhood Plan

The Clerk, as Acting Secretary to the NP Steering Committee, reported that work continues on the draft Plan for submission at Reg 14 now that the amendments and suggested additional text has been received from RDC. District Cllr Sue Prochak congratulated Etchingham on its work thus far, acknowledging what a large amount of work is necessary to even reach this stage,

2094. Village Community Halls

It was reported that a meeting of the ETSR Trustees had been held and resolved that the Administrator be part-furloughed resuming some duties in time to re-open the halls in September should Covid-19 restrictions be lifted sufficiently for that to be achieved. The Trustees also discussed increased use of the outside area, Market Square in future.

- 2095. To receive Reports from Members and Representatives and pass such resolutions as may be necessary:-**
- a) Cllr J Barnes reported that SALC is still engaged with issues surrounding Covid-19 restrictions but that concern is still very high regarding pressure on the AONB from new housing. Ticehurst is raising the issue officially to further discussion and resolution.
 - b) RALC remains focussed on the issues of speeding and while Speedwatch is still currently the best deterrent other avenues cannot be ignored.
 - c) There were no other meetings or Conferences attended by the Members or the Clerk.

2096. Correspondence
All correspondence having been distributed by e-mail upon receipt there were no further items to discuss.

2097. Etchingham Parish Council – Notification to members of Council decisions:
There were no notifications.

2098. Agenda items for the next meeting to be held via Zoom on Thursday 23th July at 7.30pm
As noted through the above minutes, to include Emma Beeney Trophy.

Signed.....

Date.....