

ETCHINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Meeting of the Etchingham Parish Council
held on Thursday 23rd July 2020

at 7.30pm via ZOOM electronic communication

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

Also present: Ms P Barton – Clerk to the Council and a member 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.

2099. Apologies for Absence:

There were apologies for absence from Cllr Boylett, District Cllr Eleanor Kirby-Green and also Mr Paul Stott Chairman of ETSR, which were all accepted. Due to technical difficulties Cllr R Beeney was unable to attend the full meeting.

2100. Minutes of the previous meetings:

The Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday 25th June having been previously circulated, were agreed and will be signed as a correct record of that meeting as soon as is practical.

2101. 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.

2102. Etchingham Parish Council – Dispensations

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

2103. Chairman's Announcements:

The Chairman had no announcements to make.

2104. Public Time:

- a) The work of ESCC continues but there is little new to report at this time except that Highways has postponed the resurfacing of the A265 through the village until September, exact date to be confirmed.
- b) RDC has still to be informed of exactly what central government help will be forthcoming to support the District with the unprecedented and unexpected expenditures during and on-going because of the Covid-19 pandemic. There may well be a deficit to be faced but until the full picture is known cannot be forecast.
- c) The member of the public present spoke about her planning application for the property known as Woodpeckers, and was willing, and permitted, to hold a Q & A session with councillors to assist their discussions under agenda item 8a.
- d)

2105. 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.*** In addition the Clerk informed the meeting that a specialist window repair company had been instructed to repair the high rear window to the property which has been ill-fitting and subject to rain ingress for some time. The estimate at less than £200 was acceptable and work may continue.
The tenant of the First Floor has given her notice to quit and is wished well for the future. The tenant of the ground floor wishes to take over the lease of the entire building and negotiations to complete a new lease will begin immediately.
- ii) For Queen's Garden and Viper ***it was Resolved that the monthly inspection reports be approved and that the issue of the Viper fence to be subject to discussion on the next monthly meeting agenda.*** It was noted that the new picnic table unit, as resolved at the last meeting, has been ordered and delivery details are awaited.
- iii) There were no other matters to consider.

- b) **Children and Young People:**
- i) Cllr Turner reported that Mrs Margaret Williams retires as Head Teacher on 1st September when the new head teacher will commence in the role. The school roll will stand at 104 for the new school year. In spite of and with regard to current restrictions the Year 6 completing their primary education this year were treated to a fun day of games and entertainment to celebrate.
It was Resolved that concerns regarding funding by Central Government for Early Years Learning be raised by the MP.
 - ii) In Cllr Boylett's absence questions were requested to his report, previously circulated but there were none, and the full report is on file.
 - iii) Cllr Lambert reported that the work on replacing the equipment in Queen's Garden still remains on hold due to the Covid-19 pandemic but it is understood that the fundraising event that had to be cancelled in May will be ready to re-instate as soon as restrictions allow.
 - iv) There were no other matters to consider.
- c) **Highways, Footpaths and Community Safety:**
- i) It appears that Highways has removed the large Giant Hogweed Plant on the verge of Oxenbridge Lane. Pot holes have been repaired in Church Lane/Hill and resurfacing is also scheduled shortly for sections of Sheepstreet Lane.
 - ii) In Cllr Boylett's absence questions were requested to his report, previously circulated but there were none, and the full report is on file. The Council welcomed the return of the Speedwatch sessions, albeit under the new restrictions and hoped that speeds would soon return to the previous level as, although not perfect, is better than the national average.
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 - iii) Cllr Lambert had re-inspected the footpath he previously strimmed off Borders Lane and was pleased to report that the local farmer had indeed carried out his promise to use his agricultural equipment to clear further stubborn vegetation. He also reported that the Council strimmer has been serviced and is ready for collection. Proof of cost will be handed to the Clerk to enable full reimbursement to be made.
 - 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 Empty Housing Action Plan supporting the work thus far but regretting consideration is not being given to including temporarily vacant properties that could potentially be leased from the owner and managed by Optivo or similar Housing Association for short term relief from homelessness.***

2106. Planning:

Cllr Mary Barnes reminded Council that she is a member of Rother District Council Planning Committee and Cllr John Barnes reminded Council that he is now listed as a substitute member of Rother District Council Planning Committee should there be an absentee.

- a) RR/2020/954/P – King John's Nursery, Sheepstreet Lane – Erection of a poly tunnel. ***It was Resolved to support this application.*** Reference OWPC24872 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.
Following a site inspection and information received during earlier public time ***It was Resolved to add another comment to the RDC website asking to amend the previous Objection to General Comment and saying: After a site visit and further discussion at full Council it is resolved that EPC does not wish to call in this application so long as strict conditions are imposed on any permission to be granted as follows:***
a) *Any permission to be granted to the applicants alone, not to the property.*
b) *Arrangements for the abatement of any noise nuisance to be installed in line with the advice and judgment of Environmental Health department.*
c) *Any permission to be subject to strict enforcement of hours of work i.e. 06.30 – 18.30 Monday to Friday only and excluding Bank Holidays.*
- b) There were no other planning matters to consider.

2107. Finance

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

| Payments July | | | PAID |
|----------------------|---|--|------------------|
| P Barton | Salary & Expenses July 2020 | | 932.80 |
| L Worton | Salary & Expenses June 2020 | | 147.69 |
| HMRC | Qtr 1 PAYE - 2 members of staff | | 705.06 |
| Co Op Bank | Auto Chg Fee Sweep DD 03/07/20 | | 30.00 |
| Crane Designs Ltd | NP Mthly charge for hosting site DD 06/07/2020 | | 15.00 |
| Crane Designs Ltd | EPC Mthly charge for hosting site DD 06/07/2020 | | 15.00 |
| Focus Group | DD 24/07/2020 Office Phone to 30/06/2020 | | 28.44 |
| | Total Payments | | £1,873.99 |

It was **RESOLVED** that the payments for July 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.

- b) The previously un-submitted Bank Reconciliation for Qtr 3 was presented for approval and accepted.

c) The Clerk presented the 4th Quarter Accounts (End of Year) for 2019/20 this included a bank reconciliation showing a balance of £58,413.62 and Income and Expenditure Analysis showing £62,375.70 income and £50,531.91 expenditure. It was **Resolved that the** accounts were approved to be presented for Internal Audit.

d) The Report of the Internal Auditor on the Accounts for 2019/2020 having been circulated with no questions raised was taken as read and adopted.

e) The Annual Report 2019/2020 having been previously circulated it was **RESOLVED** that the Chairman presiding and Clerk/RFO should sign Section I-Annual Governance Statement of the Annual Return.

f) It was also **RESOLVED** that Section 2- Accounting Statements be approved as properly representing the receipts and payments for 2019-2020.

2108. Villager of the Year

It was **RESOLVED** that an award for Villager of the Year be instituted, to be considered – although not necessarily awarded – annually. Each award being made once only to an individual unless a different service is being recognised. The suggested award name The Emma Beeney Award for Outstanding Service to the Parish of Etchingham to be used only the family's consent. To be requested.

2109. 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. Pressure of work notwithstanding this is now a priority project.

2110. Village Community Halls

ETSR is making all necessary plans and preparations to re-open the Halls in September should the school be fully re-opening and subject to users wishing to make bookings for classes or small groups. Larger gatherings will still not be possible.

2111. To receive Reports from Members and Representatives and pass such resolutions as may be necessary:-

- a) Cllr J Barnes reported that West Sussex is seeking its own association severing itself from East Sussex and Surrey. SSALC continues to lobby the Government through appropriate channels to accept that housing in the High Weald cannot be part of a national, one-size-fits-all, policy. As 82% of Rother District comprises AONB for instance, there is pressure to treat the whole High Weald Area as comparable to National Park status, a paper is being prepared for submission.
- b) RALC is in discussion with the police to find better ways of tackling speeding. Plans to enable groups of villages to access a mobile VDU between them that produces data to be used for prosecution purposes is underway.
- c) There were no other meetings or Conferences attended by the Members but the Clerk reported that she had attended two virtual seminars, one conducted by Rother Volunteer Action and the second by Breakthrough Communications facilitated by SSALC on Communications and Engaging with the Community post Covid. Both seminars were useful and the follow up documents have been circulated. Discussion on the latter is to be continued as an agenda item at the next monthly meeting.

2112. Correspondence

All correspondence having been distributed by e-mail upon receipt there were no further items to discuss. However it was noted that 'Pick it Up' notices for dog walkers should be distributed again following a resident comment on the subject.

2113. Etchingam Parish Council – Notification to members of Council decisions:

There were no notifications.

2114. Agenda items for the next meeting to be held via Zoom on Thursday 27th August at 7.30pm

As noted through the above minutes.
RDC grant of £20k towards the Sports Field project.
Communicating with residents.

Signed.....

Date.....