

ETCHINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Meeting of Etchingham Parish Council
held on Thursday 21st September 2023 at 7.30pm The Parker Hall, Parsonage Croft, Etchingham

Members Present: Cllrs: John Barnes (in the Chair), Mary Barnes, Sid Barrow, Rob Beeney, Colin Boylett, Trevor McGregor and Roma Turner.

Also present: P Barton – Clerk to the Council. There were no members of the public.

2697. Apologies for Absence: Apologies for absence were received from County Cllr Eleanor Kirby- Green which were accepted.

2698. Minutes of the previous meeting:

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 17th August 2023, having been previously circulated, were agreed and then signed as a true and accurate records of those meeting.

2699. 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.

2700. Etchingham Parish Council – Dispensations:

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

2701. Chairman’s Announcements:

The Chairman had no announcements.

2702. Clerk’s Report:

The Clerk is investigating the possibility of applying for a grant from RDC to pay for a Public Convenience in Queen’s Gardens. Answers from EA regarding surveys required to support application for a permit to undertake the repair to the river wall of the Old Stores. Work continues with Cllr Boylett to ensure the website is up to date for the Interim Audit in the autumn. Discussion with contractor required regarding hedge cutting.

2703. Public Time:

a) County Cllr Eleanor Kirby-Green being absent had no report to make.

b) Cllr John Barnes reported that the contentious application for Normanshurst (a 300acre site in Catsfield) had been turned down. Finances remain poor, largely due to the escalating costs around supporting rising numbers of homeless. There is a possibility of a £2.8M this year. Sadly, the Savings Program is not delivering although there are new officers beginning to show results, however some of them are only on short term contracts. There were no questions.

c) No members of the public being present there were no items raised.

d) As no members were to be excluded this right was not exercised.

2704. Parish Matters:

a) **Village Amenities:**

i) Village Shop/The Old Stores:

Zurich have confirmed in writing the verbal explanation to the Clerk as to why the river wall repairs cannot be claimed under our insurance policy, i.e. it is specifically excluded under the terms of the policy.

ii) The Monthly Inspection Reports for the playgrounds were accepted and are on file. The broken notice board near the PO has been repaired by the village handyman. The broken footpath sign in Church Lane has been reported to ESCC. The contractor for grass cutting and green space maintenance is to be contacted regarding the western hedge of the Viper site.

iii) An offer has been made to commission and install a bench in Queen's Gardens in Greta Crane's memory. Cllr Barrow and the Clerk to progress. If sufficient funds are available a circular (or part circle) bench around a tree in the quadrant behind the new path and the church wall was a popular choice for the bench.

iv) There were no other matters to consider.

b) Children and Young People

i) Cllr Turner reported that the Ofsted results have proved to be very good.

ii) Cllr Boylett that GAYL remains consistent. Changing to an easy access savings account was discussed briefly. The clerk and Cllr McGregor to progress after the councillor returned from holiday.

iii) There were no other matters to consider.

c) Highway, Footpaths and Community Safety

i) Some verges have been cut and some pot holes repaired but Fysie Lane remains of great concern.

ii) ***It was Resolved that the Clerk should begin the tender process for rectifying the overhanging branches affecting No 1 Orchard.***

iii) Cllr Boylett had submitted his Speedwatch report which is on file. Volunteer sickness is making it difficult to fill all the potential rota sessions.

iv) Cllr Boylett reported that the incident in Borders Lane has been satisfactorily concluded although, unfortunately electric bikes have been stolen from Horsebrooks Farm.

v) There were no other matters to consider.

d) Environmental and Other issues

There were no issues to report.

e) Communications

Cllr Turner volunteered to write the Councillor page for the next issue of the Parish Magazine. Deadline to clerk for onward transmission to the Editor is 8th November 2023.

2705. 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) To consider and make recommendations on local planning applications as follows:

RR/2023/1526/O : Stable Cottage, Myskyns Rd : Certificate of Lawfulness for the removal of an Agricultural Occupancy. Condition imposed on A/61/519 to allow for the existing use of building as a dwelling occupied by person/s not employed in agriculture or forestry. ***It was Resolved that EPC had no objection to this application.***

RR/2023/1711/P : Shelton House, Burgh Hill : Construction of a single storey rear extension. ***It was Resolved that EPC had no objection to this application.***

RR/2023/1751/P : Chaffinches, Burgh Hill : Demolition of existing dwelling and outbuilding to be replaced with 1x two storey dwelling. ***It was Resolved that EPC would object to this application on the grounds that not only is it overdevelopment when a modest bungalow is being replaced by a substantial house on this particular site, that the garage is placed a long way from the house and very close to the neighbour's boundary, hence likely to require lighting in a dark skies area, that the orientation seems calculated to overlook the old school site and the house behind it, and that from the point of view of the wider setting the house would look more acceptable if it faced the road (the traffic is negligible). In any case the design offered in the application, as well as orientation is unacceptable, given the view from the valley, and must be of a more High Weald design due to its visibility in a designated AONB.***

RR/2023/1894/P : Marina and Ferndale, Sheepstreet Land : First floor infill extension at the rear of Marina and Ferndale. ***It was Resolved that EPC had no objection to this application.***

RR/2023/1905/P : The Willows, High Street : Proposed replacement of shop front with bay window to match existing. ***It was Resolved that EPC would support this application.***

b) Any other planning matters:

- i. *It was Resolved that EPC had no objection to granting permission for Gigaclear to enter its land to undertake necessary telecom works under the terms of agreement GWA271133/SE-RBERTS.***
- ii.** The clerk will liaise with RDC Enforcement and the clerk to Hurst Green Parish Council regarding the alleged illegal camping in Burgh Woods abutting Fysie Lane but not on the EPC land. On the second possible site of illegal camping in Park Wood to consult with RDC Enforcement for the next steps.
- iii.** With regard to a response to the Government Consultation on changes being proposed to ‘the exercise of permitted development rights’ generally and within AONBs and National Parks to draft a response in line with that from Brightling Parish Council and submit.

2706. Finance:

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

Paulette Barton	Salary & Expenses for September 2023	2000.55
Olga Bilai	Salary & Expenses for September 2023	317.04
Laurence Worton	Salary & Expenses for August 2023	72.59
Bistro @ the Station	Coffee & Cake club Coronation cream tea x 24 (half from Rother Friendship Group)	300.00
Mulberry & Co	Services rendered in connection with further consultation – policies inc Register of Assets	201.60
NALC	Membership fee	52.04
ETSR	Half yearly contribution	500.00
PKF	Limited assurance review of Annual Governance and Accountability Return for year ended 31 March 2023	378.00
Mulberry & Co	Consultancy service	60.00
B Online Ltd	Monthly payment due to broadband supplier	38.92
EDF	Electricity for Shop	23.00
	Total Payments	3943.74

- b) There were no other financial matters to consider.

2707. Review of Etchingham Parish Council Policies and Latest Consultations

- a) **Employee Handbook:** the report on the review of various policies to be deferred until the HR committee has concluded its review of item (b).
- b) **Job Description and Contract of Employment for the Clerk/RFO:** to be deferred.

2708. To receive reports from Members and Representatives passing such resolutions as may be necessary

- a) **ESALC** – the AGM will now be held on 14th November.
- b) **RALC** - no meeting held.
- c) Both the Chairman and Clerk had attended separate forums hosted by ESALC which were useful. No other meetings or conferences had been attended by either members or the Clerk.

2709. Correspondence

Correspondence had been received from a MOP regarding the provision of bus shelters at the pick up points for school children waiting for office transport. Sadly, the width of the pavements preclude this being a possibility.

2710. Etchingham Parish Council – Notification to members of Council decisions:

There were no notifications.

2711. Agenda items for the next meeting to be held on Thursday 19th October 2023 in The Parker Hall at 7.30pm not mentioned in the minutes above.

There were none other than those listed throughout the minutes.

Signed By the Chairman original held on file

Date..... 19th October 2023