

EGERTON PARISH COUNCIL

The monthly meeting of the Parish Council was held on Tuesday 2 February 2010 in the Millennium Village Hall, Egerton at 8.00pm.

Present: Tim Lee (Chairman), Richard King (Vice-Chairman), Viv Foulds, Roger Harper, Richard Hopkins, Pat Parr, Alison Richey, Bill Smyth, Hugh Ellison (ABC Ward Councillor) Lois Tilden (Clerk) and 4 members of the public were also present.

- 1. Apologies:** Wendy Payne
- 2. Declarations of interest:** R J Hopkins – re accounts
- 3. The minutes of the meetings on 5 January and 19 January** were approved and were signed as a true record of proceedings. Proposed: Richard King ; seconded Bill Smyth

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES 5 & 19 JANUARY 2010

- a. Recreation ground: Lower rec:** The Clerk had again reminded Ben Hope to provide a quote for weedkilling in the Spring, on the basis that the costs could be paid by EPC. He had also been reminded to cut down the thistles and other weeds in the meantime but the bad weather was an obstacle. The Clerk and Richard Hopkins would arrange to meet Ben Hope about that and the best way of making good the broken fence alongside the football field and supply posts at EPC's expense (as previously agreed this was EPC's responsibility). In the longer term, Councillors had unanimously concluded that sheep grazing, interspersed with indigenous and suitable memorial trees along with robust management was the preferred way forward. They awaited a response to the Clerk's request to Michael Steed for assistance to Bill Smyth in surveying and identifying the existing trees and drawing up a list of suitable trees for the site. **Action: Clerk, Richard Hopkins, Bill Smyth**
- Football field- water leak near sewage works:** the water leak had been repaired by SW's contractors but the soil infill had sunk even further; the Clerk would again raise this with SW. **Action: Clerk**
- Fir Trees screening the sewage works:** In consultation with Alison Richey, the Clerk had drafted a letter to Jeremy Ault to accept his quote formally. Alison Richey was finalising the details. The Clerk would contact SW to alert them to the plan. **Action: Alison Richey, Clerk**
- Drainage on the Recreation ground leading to the cricket field:** Richard Hopkins had begun the work, for which he had submitted the first invoice, and would consult further with Geoff Wickens to be sure of meeting EPFA's requirements for the remainder of the work. **Action: Richard Hopkins**
- Cricket net proposal between the football goal and sewage works boundary:** EPFA had confirmed their approval of the Cricket Club's proposals. Southern Water had indicated informally they had no objection and that if the water supply pipe needed to be replaced, it would not affect the cricket net.
- Muddy and slippery areas on the bank behind Jubilee Villas:** Viv Foulds had sown grass seed on the areas; although there was some sign of growth it was at risk of being "scalped" by the grass mower. Heber will be asked to raise the blades to avoid this. **Action: Viv Foulds**
- Larger rubbish bin:** The Clerk had ordered a dark green bin from Broxap, which was cheaper than a black bin. Carriage and fixing bolts were extra (see Accounts). It would be delivered in a few weeks. **Action: Clerk**
- b. Sports pavilion:** Bill Smyth reported there had been a series of meetings of EPFA's sports pavilion subcommittee, including one that day. Most of the money required for the basic build was available but several grant applications were still under consideration and would not be forthcoming until July/August. There was a chicken-and-egg dilemma over the timing of grants if they were approved: two were dependent on no building work beginning; others might be forthcoming after the work was completed. The Committee had concluded that they had to decide by the end of February if a) they should hold back work in case of grant funding being available or b) start the work, given the need to get things moving. ABC had been approached (at a cost of £183) about the need for new planning permission; the answer was expected in a week. If planning permission were required, the building supplier (who had been checked out via Companies House) would make the application. Once the order for the building was made, the footings design could be established. In the meantime, Richard

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King had helpfully identified more funding, including via the Collyer-Ferguson Trust - up to £15k - and he had attended a meeting of the Committee. Tessa Hilder had also continued to assist voluntarily. Hugh Ellison was still aiming to help secure funds from the dissolution of the Julie Rose Foundation which could possibly generate another £2-5k, but this would not be known until the end of March. All this signalled that there could be a cash-flow problem and a short-term loan might be necessary. After taking a vote (7 for, 1 abstention) it was agreed that in principle, and subject to terms, conditions and legality, EPC would be prepared to consider making a bridging loan to the Committee. Bill Smyth and Richard Hopkins would attend the next meeting of the Committee to convey this and to report any updates to EPC. The Clerk had approached SW about a site meeting to agree the basis of a new turning area for vehicles. **Action: Bill Smyth, Richard Hopkins, Richard King, Clerk**

c. Parish land and boundaries: Bill Smyth had again met the owner/occupier of No 4 Old School Court adjacent to the recreation ground but they had decided not to carry out work to cut back the hedge and realign the fence until the weather had improved. The Clerk still aimed to study the Land Registry guidance about land titles in respect of Pemples Cross and Stonebridge Green but other EPC priorities continued to overtake this.

Action: Bill Smyth, Clerk

d. Playgroup: Alison Richey had spoken to the Playgroup to confirm that EPC would arrange to improve the area at the rear of the Hall. In addition to AK Paving, whom Wendy Payne had previously agreed to contact, it was agreed that other builders would be asked to quote. The Playgroup had also asked if they could brighten up the dull fencing – they would do this themselves and EPC agreed to this. **Action: Alison Richey, Wendy Payne**

e. Highways: Adverse weather conditions had made poor road surfaces worse. KHS had reported they were filling 3,000 potholes a week but EPC questioned the workmanship and believed KHS should put more emphasis on monitoring the work as it was a false economy to do a half-hearted job. The Clerk had raised this before with KHS and would raise it again. KHS would be undertaking a full review after the Winter. Pat Parr and the Clerk had also continued to register potholes and faults to KHS, notably in Iden Lane, Stonebridge Green, Newland Green Lane, Mundy Bois Road, Crockenhill Road and Bedlam Lane. The Clerk reminded everyone to use the KHS hotline 08458 247 800 to report potholes instantly and add to the pressure. Stolen salt bins and the need for replenishing bins had been raised with KHS and were being chased up. **Action: Clerk, Pat Parr, all**

f. Bus route 523/new route to Headcorn: Richard King reported that the new timetable for a route extension to Headcorn was expected to start on 11 April. The contractors had advised it would cost an additional £6,300 pa – about £25 per day. This would be funded in the first year via his KCC member's Highway grant. It will need to be fully used to make it worthwhile. Smarden PC will be publicising it and it was agreed that EPC should do likewise, in the Parish magazine and other media. It was agreed that once the confirmation had been received, an article would be drafted in time for the April magazine and that some councillors would aim to catch the bus on its first day on the new route to boost public patronage. **Action: Richard King, all**

g. Noise from M20: A draft from Charing PC was awaited in the form of a multi-parish letter, to put pressure on the Highways Agency to resurface the motorway with better sound-reducing properties.

Action: Viv Foulds, Clerk

h. Local Needs Housing: Tim Lee had established with Alison Thompson that work was due to begin on the site in a few weeks. GSE Builders will put up hoarding. Alison T was aware of the continuing problems with the sewers/pumping station and was in touch with SW. It was agreed that EPC should support local people's concerns about the sewers taking in surface water (resulting in the pumping station not coping with the excess) and that the Clerk should put more pressure on SW as well as contact other bodies who could persuade SW to resolve the situation in the short- and long-term. **Action: Clerk**

i. Older people's accommodation in a "cluster" settlement to serve several villages. ABC had prepared questionnaires for people over 50 in the participating cluster villages, to test demand. Tim and Pat had worked out distribution and arranged this with other councillors. Replies were anonymous, to ACRK, for analysis and conclusions.
Action: Pat Parr, Tim Lee

j. Older people's accommodation in Egerton: 1. Richard King would defer identifying potential sites solely for Egerton people, in parallel with the other project, until the outcome of the questionnaires was known. 2. The Clerk reported that ABC would be in touch with the resident (or his/her representative) about vacating a Haven Bungalow in Elm Close and if or when a vacancy would be advertised via the ABC choice-based lettings scheme.
Action: 1. Richard King, 2. Clerk

k. Sanctuary Housing: Charges to residents in Harmer's Way: The Clerk had received a response (it had gone astray earlier) from Sharon Ridgers (formerly Shepherd) at Sanctuary Housing about the increase in service charges. EPC did not think the explanations were very satisfactory and asked the Clerk to make comparisons with ABC Council housing rents and charges. The Clerk pointed out that Sanctuary Housing would not reveal actual rents paid, because they varied from case to case (means testing applied and different circumstances prevailed). However councillors said that Sanctuary Housing fell short of its contractual obligations in many ways, below the high standard set by ABC and that further investigation was warranted. The Clerk would pass ABC contact details to Pat Parr to try to establish more facts and as necessary the Clerk would seek advice from the Government's Tenant Services Authority. If there was a grievance procedure, tenants should use it.
Action: Pat Parr, Clerk

l. EPC's role/ publicity/Newsletter/ Welcome Pack: A Welcome pack had been provided to Priscilla Harper and Sheila Palmer asked for one for a member of the Over 60s Club. There were new residents in The White House, Stonebridge Green who would also need a copy.
Action: Pat Parr

m. Risk management: The Clerk had updated the memory sticks, one being retained by Alison Richey.

n. Signposts: Bill Smyth was ready to paint the EGERTON sign when weather permitted. **Action: Bill Smyth**

o. Footpaths and stiles: Pat Parr had circulated a report on footpaths prior to the meeting; KCC yet to act in relation to stiles at end of Pleasant Valley/Newland Green and in between Link Hill and Rock Hill farm. Two broken stiles on Poplar farm will be replaced with kissing gates, taking a while to complete. Pat will keep under review.
Action: Pat Parr

p. Frith Wood - noise disturbance: The Clerk and Richard Hopkins had not been able to inspect the woods due to severe weather conditions. When this improves they will map out the areas giving rise to concern and to photograph evidence such as rubbish and other inappropriate use of the woods and any building work. Then ABC will be appraised. Any incidents should immediately be reported to Kent Police on 01233 611 055 and to ABC on 01233 330571 or 01233 330645. Richard Hopkins reported occasional police presence in the area.
Action: Richard Hopkins, Clerk

q. Red Telephone Kiosk at Stonebridge Green – EPC to adopt and BT to Decommission: The Clerk had been advised of a change in the policy about the electricity supply: BT's website now included the option for those adopting red phone kiosks to confirm they wished BT to continue paying for the supply. The Clerk had therefore scrutinised the contract with BT, signed it and sent it off to BT; a response was awaited along with an invoice for £1 fee. Posters about EPC's decision to adopt the kiosk without telephony were in the kiosk and on Noticeboards.
Action: Clerk

r. Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator & Police matters: More names had been added to the email circulation list; Lois Tilden would categorise them by road to identify gaps in the emailing list and gain further support from existing members, to encourage others to join or to provide paper information or calls. More fly-tipping and rogue traders/cold calling had been reported, as had the theft of salt bins. In response to a query about PCSOs not being able to take calls on their mobile phones, Lois Tilden said she would check this. **Action: Lois Tilden**

s. Website: Alison Richey confirmed that Malcolm Laws was content with the plan to set up the new EPC website with a link to the village website. The Clerk had been invited to more free training in late February and she was converting documents to "Acrobat reader" for uploading to the new site. The additional EPC meeting in January had delayed work. Alison reminded everyone that all clubs and societies should update Malcolm with their details and events to ensure good publicity on the village website. **Action: Clerk**

t. Playground and Skatepark: Wicksteed's invoice for inspection had arrived. Bill Smyth had looked at the items in need of medium-risk attention in the playground and believed it would be relatively easy to make effective repairs. Following the meeting on 19 January, councillors recognised that teenagers lacked facilities – and that older children in the junior school as well as secondary level pupils should be consulted further. Councillors agreed to work up plans for achieving this. **Action: Bill Smyth, All**

u. Small Circus proposal by Friends of the School: Alison Richey said that the organisers would have to sell 400 tickets (at £7 each) to make it worthwhile. The circus needed a 500' diameter circular and level space for a day of fun and entertainment on 11 June. Access for 5 touring caravans and lorries was required, possibly overnight, although it would only take 3-4 hours to put up the tent (90 minutes to take it down). It was suggested that anywhere other than the cricket square was best, most likely the football field but this needed EPFA's agreement. It was decided that Bill Smyth would speak to EPFA about this. **Action: Bill Smyth**

v. Winter gritting and snow clearance: Richard King had raised at a KCC meeting the matter of members of the public spreading the salt/grit from the bins adjacent to the highway. It appeared that KCC officers were more concerned about risks of blocking the highway (roads and pavements) with swept snow than they were about possible dangers from spreading grit, and therefore KCC said there was no need for anyone to be concerned. Common sense should prevail. However, more grit was needed in the bins including in the car park – the Clerk had alerted KCC to this but ideally a more secure storage space was needed - and a sweeper/spreader arrangement was thought to be the most suitable method for clearing snow on the bricked area. Richard Hopkins and the Clerk agreed to look into this for the future. Richard Hopkins was thanked for his sterling work in the village. **Action: Richard Hopkins, Clerk**

5. CORRESPONDENCE

For action: (papers either emailed or sent on circulation to all Councillors or both unless otherwise stated)

KCC Local area Board meeting 10 Feb – posters on display about Council Tax

ABC Budget consultation – any comments?

ABC Planning – request to clerks not to use real signatures!

NALC member's working lunch, Oxford – any takers? None

NALC's Local Council Awards – nominations?

NALC leadership academies – any interest?

Sustainable communities Act Amendment Bill - write to MP for support?

Parish Forum meeting agenda 17 Feb – Pat Parr cannot attend, can anyone else? Alison Richey offered.

KALC Ashford area meeting 3 Feb and future dates – Viv Foulds to attend

Ashford Counselling service – request for funding

Egerton Music festival – request for Marquee 1-10 July 2011

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Kent's countryside management partnerships - Orchards for everyone – identify a plot?
 Ken Hopkins of Bethersden – request about Egerton Housing – Clerk replied, copied to cllrs
 Paula Mildner of Smarden – Egerton affordable Housing request – Clerk replied, copied to cllrs
 ESRC Research project: survey about community-based planning - any interest?

For noting: (circulated by hand or email to all parish councillors)

KCC – snow clearance advice notes and follow up
 Kent Link Bulletin
 ABC Electoral Roll update
 ABC Forward Look on key decisions
 ABC Housing Maintenance programme
 Kent Police closure of Ashford Custody suite
 Clerks & Councils Direct
 CPRE Campaigns update
 Highways Agency road works map
 Kent Wildlife Trust posters - Coffee morning idea

6. Accounts

Receipts:

	£
Welcome pack x 1	2.00

Expenditure:

Wicksteed leisure play inspection	105.75
LoisTilden clerk reimburse stationery	49.73
Telecottage welcome pack copying	2.00
RJ Hopkins Rec- maintain drains etc	241.50
L Tilden clerk salary end Feb	429.10
HMRC tax & NI Clerk sal end Feb	125.86

Cheques presented for signature and accounts to be approved: Proposed: Bill Smyth; Seconded: Roger Harper

A copy of the bank reconciliation with the cashbook was handed over for Alison Richey's inspection.

ABC had asked for information about expenditure on grass cutting, maintenance of play equipment (partly covered by ABC concurrent functions grant) and litter control (covered by the ABC street cleaning grant). The Clerk drafted a reply, which was agreed by EPC as follows:

Activity:	Actual expenditure 2008/09	Budgeted exp 2009/10
Grass cutting	1532	2400*
Maintain play equip	100	120**
Litter control	941	950

*standard and frequency of cutting higher, and less dependency on voluntary work

** skatepark added into inspections by Wicksteed. Maintenance costs kept low through voluntary effort and minimum cost of parts.

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ABC had also posed the question: “How should the distribution of the concurrent grant be calculated?” The actual amount to EPC next F/Y will be £1440. It was agreed that this was inadequate and that ABC should be asked to pay the full 100% of costs incurred, rather than the 80% suggested by the Clerk, as in the following text: “The size of population in a parish is not as relevant as the land and playground equipment that needs to be maintained. To ensure health & safety measures are met and the recreation areas are fully usable, a good, reliable standard of mowing and maintenance is required. Until the end of 2008/09, EPC depended on some voluntary and lowly-paid efforts from villagers. This can no longer be relied upon. Added to which, the growing season is lengthening and more grass cutting is required. EPC would suggest that ABC funds the full costs incurred by each parish.”

The Chairman closed the Council meeting at 9.50 pm, for

7. PUBLIC DISCUSSION

Tim Oliver commented that there had been problems for many years with sewage backing-up and the pumping station failing in the Forstal. It seemed the engineering and/or contractors had not carried out the original work satisfactorily, and that additional new houses would hardly add to the problems caused by storm water.

Hugh Ellison remarked that ABC’s very high standard for its council houses led to the recently circulated details of costly renovation and repair programmes across the Borough. He questioned the merits of some of ABC’s expenditure and its role. He added that the local Board meeting open to the public on 10 February to discuss Council Tax merited attendance so that constituents could express their views and might influence the outcome.

The Chairman re-opened the meeting at 9.56 pm for:

8. PLANNING

Note: EPC is consulted by Ashford Borough Council about planning applications in the Parish and invited to comment. EPC considers such applications at its monthly meetings and passes comments to ABC before ABC decides the outcome. EPC also notes decisions recently taken by ABC. All details of past applications & decisions and live applications may be accessed on line at: http://www.ashford.gov.uk/online_planning/

Consideration of applications submitted to Ashford Borough Council and noting any ABC decisions recently taken:

08/00528/AMND/AS	Non material change to Permission: Land at North side of Old Byre Site, Stonebridge Green Road, Egerton, Kent Revision to siting of stable block on planning permission 08/00528/AS for change of use of land for the keeping of horses and the erection of a hay store and stable block.	See below- already approved by ABC
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ABC decisions this month:

09/01257/AS	New Stonehill Farm, Stone Hill Road, Egerton Conservatory extension to detached swimming pool building	Permission granted
08/00528/AMND/AS	Non material change to Permission: Land at North side of Old Byre Site, Stonebridge Green Road, Egerton Revision to siting of stable block on planning permission 08/00528/AS for change of use of land for the keeping of horses and the erection of a hay store and stable block.	Amended Plans Approved – minor change

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09/00743/AS	<p style="text-align: center;">Iden, Iden Lane Egerton</p> <p>Replacement single storey garden room extension to the side elevation, installation of a new door opening and porch to the rear elevation. Internally at ground floor, removal of two internal partitions and introduction of three new oak trusses to stabilise the roof. Re-positioning of internal doorways to cloakroom. At first floor removal of masonry wall between landing and shower room. Removal of modern staircase to attic and introduction of a small en-suite to bedroom 1. Enlargement of existing hatch on landing and structural works to the roof.</p>	Listed building consent refused
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9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Richard King proposed the idea that a group consisting of parish council chairmen from, say, six local parishes, plus the relevant local Borough Councillors and the local KCC Member, might get together from time to time to discuss common concerns and try to reach conclusions on workable solutions across the three tiers of local government. Whilst some councillors thought this was already in place via KALC, ABC's parish forum and other events, it was agreed that a more informal arrangement could be of benefit. Richard offered to take this forward.

Action: Richard King

Alison Richey said that the Friends of the School were considering the idea of a **Guy Fawkes' Night** celebration and wondered if EPC would support it, for fund-raising purposes. EPC agreed in principle – bringing the Council and School together was a commendable idea - and a number of suggestions were made to tap in on experiences in other villages such as Smarden before making any firm commitments since there were many hurdles (mostly health and safety) to overcome.

Action: Alison Richey

Pat Parr asked if Egerton could set a date for the next village **Spring-Clean**. It was agreed that 27 March was preferred, subject to the Clerk checking that it didn't coincide with Pluckley's event.

Action: Clerk, Pat Parr

Pat Parr brought along copies of some **Egerton footpath leaflets** designed and written by Claire Foinette, who was keen to play an active part in village life. It was agreed that the leaflets were well thought-out and merited publicity in the next Parish newsletter, noticeboards and the like. Claire was to be commended for her initiative.

Action: Pat Parr, Alison Richey, Clerk

The Clerk mentioned that a resident reported **overhanging trees in Crockenhill Road** near the junction with Forstal Road. Richard Hopkins agreed to contact the landowner about this. KHS had been cutting back some trees in the area and might include those.

Action: Richard Hopkins

The Clerk had been asked by a Mrs King if a **BBQ and marquee could be placed outside the Hall** during April (date to be confirmed by email later). A similar request was made by the Music Festival in Summer 2011. In principle these were agreed, subject to usual conditions.

Action: Clerk

The meeting closed at 10.15 pm