

EGERTON PARISH COUNCIL

4th May 2021

AGM and meeting of the Parish Council was held on Tuesday 4th May 2021

Via Zoom at 7.30pm.

Present

Richard King (Chairman), Peter Rawlinson (Vice Chairman), CllrS Claire Foinette, Jeff Hopkins, John Lawton, Tim Oliver, Pat Parr, Lois Tilden, Sarah Elworthy, Sonia Young (Clerk)

Jane Carr NHP Chair. **Russell Jarvis**. Developer, North Field planning application

Eight members of the public were present

1) Election of officers and representatives

Richard King proposed that all officers and representatives agree to carry forwards and continue in their roles and responsibilities from the previous year.

Proposed: Richard King

Seconded: Peter Rawlinson

All in favour:

Richard King, Peter Rawlinson, Claire Foinette, John Lawton, Jeff Hopkins, Tim Oliver, Pat Parr, Lois Tilden, Sarah Elworthy

2) Apologies

Charlie Simkins

Ken Mulholland (Ward Councillor – Ashford Borough Council) – overlap with ABC Council Meeting

3) Declarations of Interest

Richard King: declared no financial or business interest in any matters on this agenda nor in any land put forward for development in the Neighbourhood Plan or any land excluded from development in the Neighbourhood Plan.

Pat Parr: neighbour to site proposed for the Older People's Accommodation at Orchard Nurseries.

Tim Oliver: a relation of his is the owner of Gale Field which is proposed for development in the Neighbourhood Plan.

John Lawton: stated that as a matter of record that he lived in Harmers Way, which is adjacent to land put forward for development in the Neighbourhood Plan.

4) Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting on 6th April 2021

The minutes were approved and signed as a true record of proceedings with four amendments.

Action: Clerk to amend the minutes as noted in the meeting.

In favour: Richard King, Peter Rawlinson, Claire Foinette, John Lawton, Jeff Hopkins, Tim Oliver, Pat Parr, Lois Tilden

Abstain: Sarah Elworthy

5) Matters Arising from 6th April 2021

a) **Footpaths Report No 132** of the Egerton Footpaths Representative – see attached report at end of the minutes.

Six closed issues and one outstanding item.

b) **Highways Report 21** of the Egerton Highways Representative – see attached report at end of the minutes.

15 closed issues and one new item.

John Lawton reported that KCC budget for highway repairs 2021-2022 had not been increased and that repairs, where done, were falling short of expected standard.

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c) Lenham Heath Garden Community

No update.

d) Sale of the Shop

Ongoing. Prospective purchaser still engaged with the process.

e) Pop-up Post Office

New operator. No issues to report.

f) Broadband and fibre to the home

Ellie Rogers continues to lead the sign-ups process and actively advising villagers of the benefits.

g) Section 106 Proposals

Lois Tilden prepared the document which was submitted to Rob Bewick at Ashford Borough Council by deadline.

h) GDPR

Data is outstanding for the Computer Centre.

i) EPC Complaints Policy and Procedure

Pluckley Parish Council has agreed to hear EPC Complaints Policy and Procedure Appeals.

j) Minutes and motions

Cllr Sarah Elworthy said that she was concerned that the minutes, motions and reports were not being sent as quickly as required. The Clerk apologised and reported that workload attached to the AGAR, auditor's visits, VAT return and Section 106 requirements, among others, had impacted adversely on the Clerk's ability to deliver documents early but that the clerk had met required deadlines for public distribution.

6) Public Discussion

The meeting closed at 19.59 for public discussion. Meeting re-opened 20.03

Chairman Richard King suggested member of the public Russell Jarvis, developer of the land at North Field which was the subject of a planning application, answer questions that arose from Cllrs at the point that the application was discussed.

7) Neighbourhood Plan

NHP chair Jane Carr reported that the Egerton Neighbourhood plan was nearing completion and submission to Ashford Borough Council (ABC) for the final six weeks of consultation. She advised it would be made publicly available by ABC during that six-week period, for anyone to comment before then being timetabled for examination by an external independent examiner.

8) Planning

Cllr John Lawton left the meeting.

Planning applications submitted to Ashford Borough Council this month for Egerton Parish Council to consider and decisions recently taken by ABC to be noted, details of which may be accessed on line at: http://www.ashford.gov.uk/online_planning/ Individuals may also register via the website with ABC to receive regular alerts of new applications and decisions.

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New

21/00627/AS	Egerton	Weald North Ward	Land rear of 7 to 14, Harmers Way, Egerton, Kent Erection of 13 dwellings together with all necessary infrastructure
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Object. This site was not allocated by ABC in the 2030 Local Plan nor is it included in the latest draft of the Neighbourhood Plan for range of material reasons.

Proposed: Lois Tilden

Seconded: Pat Parr

Total in favour of objecting: four

Total against the proposal and in favour of the development: one

Abstain: three

Proposal to object carried.

Detailed comments on this application are in the Annex to these minutes. **(See appendix iii)**

Cllr John Lawton re-joined the meeting

21/00583/AS	Egerton	Weald North Ward	Agricultural Building, Wanden Farm, Wanden Lane, Egerton, Kent Proposed 2 Detached Dwelling houses [Revision of 20/00913/AS].
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Comment rather than object or support, with similar observations as before – that this application seems to have little relation to the existing footprint of the barn but the more modest proposals are in keeping with the Egerton PDS. It is not a sustainable location for two new dwellings in the countryside but since this kind of proposal is precedented, the main concern will be to preserve and enhance the natural environment and minimise the built impact. Such matters should be included in conditions attached to any approval granted.

21/00646/AS	Egerton	Weald North Ward	Stone Barn, Stonebridge Green Road, Egerton, Ashford, Kent, TN27 9AN Proposed standalone oak framed building to form a treatment room and installation of one number conservation roof light to rear elevation of house to existing bathroom.
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21/00647/AS	Egerton	Weald North Ward	Stone Barn, Stonebridge Green Road, Egerton, Ashford, Kent, TN27 9AN Proposed standalone oak framed building to form a treatment room and installation of one number conservation roof light to rear elevation of house to existing bathroom.
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No objection and recognition that the proposed building meets principles of Egerton’s Parish Design Statement

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9) Older People's accommodation update

Move to update EPC in a confidential session and exclude the press and public due to the commercial sensitivities of the discussions.

Proposed: Richard King

Seconded: Peter Rawlinson

All agreed

10) Approval of the EPC Asset Register 2021

All in approval subject to two amendments noted.

Action: Clerk

11) PCSO Kyle Farnfield PCSO 46061547 – no report received

Action: Clerk to invite PCSO 46061547 to the next meeting

Action: Clerk to send a note via Kyle Farnfield to express condolences from EPC regarding the murder of their colleague PCSO Julia James.

12) Correspondence

All circulated by email in advance unless marked with a *

Note

KCC – closure of Mundy Bois Lane 9 days. All. 12/04

ABC – virtual planning event. LT/JC (NPlan) 13/04

NALC bulletin. All. 13/04

Jenni Burr: beavers and scouts re-opening and call for volunteers: PP/MR (update). 13/04

KALC event – re-imagining community buildings. All. 15/04

KALC April chief exec bulletin. All. 15/04

David Hopkins – email re wall in poor repair opposite Stisted Way. Clerk. 15/04

KCC – closure Crockenhill. All 19/04

KCC – closure – Headcorn Road - Bedlam Lane - Smarden. All 19/04

NALC chief execs bulletin. All. 19/04

KALC – local council COVID recovery funding. 26/04. All.

Rural Services Network April bulletin. 26/04. All

KALC March meeting minutes. 26/04. All

KALC – Govt. Town and Country Planning Consultation. RK/LT/JC. 26/04

Local Govt bulletin – funding for neighbourhood planning. RK/LT/JC. 27/04

KALC – Appeal re continuance of remote meets thrown out. All. 28/04/2021

KALC survey on rural broadband. RK/ JL. 28/04

Ellie Rogers request to hold a summer fair in July. All. 28/04

KALC May agenda and Zoom details. All. 28/04

Rural Services Network bulletin. All. 28/04

Minutes of ABC planning meet. LT. 28/04

KALC: ABC planning and design Consultation response. RK/LT/JC. 28/04

KALC advice re holding remote meetings and safety in face to face meets from May 7th. All . 29/04

a) Continuance of virtual meetings

Legally EPC is unable to meet after 7th May via electronic means. As such, no meeting can be held until 6 July. No meeting to be held in June.

b) Wall repair at Stisted Way.

Action: John Lawton to refer the matter to KCC Highways Dept.

Web Items

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April minutes
 May agenda
 Draft April minutes

13) Finance

a) Accounts – to be approved

Expenditure		Cheque No	£
KALC	Annual Membership	BACS	501.72
Playfix	Playground inspection	BACS	252.00
Bison Print	Welcome packs x 12	BACS	89.00
KALC	Training – S Young communications strategy	BACS	42.00
KALC	Training – S Young: The Dynamic Councillor	BACS	60.00
Captive web	Neighbourhood Plan website updates	BACS	168.75
Captive Web	Neighbourhood Plan website updates	BACS	110.00
UK Office direct	Reimburse S Young – files and stationery	BACS	32.55
John Lewis	Office printer/ scanner	BACS	141.94
Heather James	Assistance with AGAR / auditor	BACS	35.00
Sonia Young Salary	May	BACS	693.74
HMRC	May	BACS	281.60
Total			2408.30

Income			
Geoff Wickens Trust	Repayment of donation Egerton Playfields 2020	Cheque	400.00
ABC	Precept 2020/21	BACS	12,256.00
KALC	Refund – payment error	BACS	84.00
Total		BACS	12,740.00

Bank Reconciliation Balance as at 30th April 2021 £12,858.14 less un-presented cheques as follows

Actual balance = £12,858.14 as at 30th April 2021

Accounts for Egerton update magazine

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Expenditure		Cheque No	£
Big Print	May issue	BACS	1,186.00
Total			1,186.00

Income			
Advertising			85.00
			85.00

Bank Reconciliation Balance as at 31st March 2021 £6306.70 less un-presented cheques as follows:

Actual balance = £6,291.70 as at 30th April 2021

Accounts for Village Projects

Expenditure		Cheque No	£

Income			
Interest			0.18
			0.18

Bank Reconciliation Balance as at 30th April 2021 £20, 703.82 less un-presented cheques as follows:

Actual balance = £20,703.82 as at 30th April 2021

Village Projects fund

Pre-school move	£11,288.65
Village Hall	£ 9,415.17
TOTAL	£20,703.82

Accounts for Neighbourhood Plan

Expenditure		Cheque No	£

Income			

Approval of the accounts for the month, for cheques to be signed and internet transfers to take place:

Proposed: Peter Rawlinson

Seconded: Tim Oliver

All agreed.

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b) Spend to date

Clerk reported that EPC accounts process is under review in order to migrate to an accountancy software package and as such spend to date not available for May.

c) Approval of AGAR

i) Section 1 Annual Governance Statement 2020/21

This was read out by Peter Rawlinson, approved by Cllrs King, Rawlinson, Foinette, Tilden, Parr, Hopkins, Lawton and Oliver, completed and signed.

Cllr Elworthy abstained.

ii) Section 2 Accounting Statements 2020/21

These were read out by Peter Rawlinson and approved by Cllrs King, Rawlinson, Foinette, Tilden, Parr, Hopkins, Lawton and Oliver, completed and signed.

Cllr Elworthy abstained.

Action: Clerk to submit all documentation to external auditors, as in previous years.

d) VAT return

Clerk advised the annual VAT return had been submitted and totalled £1,922 which included the VAT return for the Games Barn, Computer Centre and Film Club.

14) Any other business

a) The Barrow House

The pub has been sold and will re-open in due course.

b) Playground repairs

Claire Foinette reported one swing seat needed to be replaced and also the surfacing under the ply areas had raised at the corner. Approval needed for the Clerk to approach Wicksteed to quote for repairs.

Proposed: Claire Foinette

Seconded: Jeff Hopkins

All agreed

c) Mowing

Tim Oliver advised a villager had complained about over-zealous cutting.

Action: clerk to review areas to be left longer potentially during May to support wildlife. Bank behind the Millennium Hall and The Glebe to be explored as a potential areas although wasp's nests etc must be avoided. The bank alongside the wall opposite Stisted Way and the shaded area behind the Games Barn are already subject to reduced cutting of twice a year only.

d) New Office items

Peter Rawlinson advised new items had been re-deployed free-of-charge from a prior office for the EPC and included a binding machine, a laminator, a coffee machine and two chairs.

15) Confidential Items

Sarah Elworthy left the meeting at 9.40pm

Peter Rawlinson read the confidential minute of the 6th April EPC.

The minutes of the previous month's confidential item were approved and signed as a true record of proceedings.

Proposed: Claire Foinette

Seconded: John Lawton

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The meeting closed at 10.05pm

Next meeting: Tuesday 6th July 2021

Appendix i

Egerton Parish Council meeting held via Zoom due to lockdown from Covid-19 Report no. 132 of the Egerton footpaths representative – April 2021

6 Closed Issues – Items 1, 2, 5, 6 and 7 of Outstanding Issues and the New Issue 1 have been resolved so will be removed from the Outstanding Issues List next month.

1 New Issue has been raised since the March 2021 report but has already been dealt with.

1 Outstanding Issue remains from the March 2021 report which is the Green Wickets issue.

The outstanding issue below is listed with the KCC Reference, the date reported, the footpath number, the location, the difficulty experienced and the status of action. Those with an asterisk will be removed from the list next month.

- *1. **PROW549664.** 14/05/19. AW84 Egerton House Road/Coach Road from the Court Lodge orchard. Erosion of steps down to the road. Status: “RESOLVED – WORK COMPLETE”
- *2. **PROW359025.** 09/09/19. AW94 Coldbridge. Broken stile on the right-hand side of the lane, (just before woodyard). Status: “LANDOWNER ACTION”
- 3. **PROW 200491079 and PROW 200484748.** 19/04/20 and 24/04/20. AW90 Green Wickets, Rockhill Road. The outcome of the complaints received about being unable to use the public right of way at Green Wickets is that KCC said because of the spread of the virus a temporary block was put on that part of AW90 with signs either end, there being an alternative footpath nearby. Keep on list to reinstate access once the situation changes back to normal. This part of footpath AW90 is still closed. Status: “In Progress”.
- *4. **PROW 200992767.** 01/09/20. AW88 Greensand Way at Elm Close. Wooden fingerpost at the steps down to the hall is rotten and needs replacing. Status: “RESOLVED – WORK COMPLETE”
- *5. **PROW 210133402.** 17/01/21. AW101 at property Netherfield in Chapel Lane where a mini railway track has been erected partly along the line of the footpath to the right of the property which means the footpath is very narrow in places with the danger of slipping and falling down into the ditch which at the present time is flowing nicely! Status: “LANDOWNER ACTION”.
- *6. **PROW210298069.** 08/02/21. AW104 at Wanden Lane. Metal safety fence on the right-hand side of the bridge crossing the ditch has fallen over. Status: “CLOSED. NO ACTION REQUIRED”. I queried this and got a reply from Michael Ellis (top man): Photos are shown on next page.

“I closed the issue because the bridge is still in a reasonable state of repair. I enclose photos taken of the same bridge taken 10 and 5 1/2 years ago. I appreciate that there is some Heras fencing that is now slightly impinging on the bridge but it is not preventing use of it - more of a concern for whoever is responsible for the water course. I would like to see the rails removed and when I find the time I will discuss that with the landowner as it will require them to install some suitable fencing.”

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AW104 Wanden Lane - Photo left taken in 2015. Photo right taken in 2021

NEW ISSUE:

- *1. **AW90 from Ragged Barn, Mundy Bois to Pleasant Valley Farm, Rockhill Road.** Owner of ragged barn wants to know when the temporarily closed section of AW90 will be open again. In the meantime she would like a laminated sign placed on her gate to inform users when this might be. I informed her that I thought that as soon as restrictions on numbers were allowed, possibly as early as 17th May, the path should be lifted of the restriction to Rockhill Road. She agreed to wait until then. **CLOSED NO ACTION REQUIRED.**

Appendix ii

Report no. 22 of the Egerton Highways Representative - May 2021

Summary

Closed Items	15
Open Items	7
New Items	1

Closed Issues

Reference	Description & Status
507083	Forstal Road/Bedlam Lane – Flooding
Logged	26 th May 2020
Status	Works completed
525179	Field Mill Road, by Field Mill – Drainage & Flooding, Blocked drain/gully
Logged	16 th September 2020
Status	Works completed

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544278	Rock Hill Road – Drainage & Flooding, Blocked drain
Logged	07/01/2021
Status	Works completed
553958	Barhams Mill Road – Multiple Potholes
Logged	Not advised but during February
Status	Works completed
564499	Multiple Potholes – Coach Road from junction with Egerton House Road to Field Mill Road
Logged	March 2021
Status	Works completed
564785	Multiple Potholes – Egerton House Road
Logged	March 2021
Status	Works completed
564497	Multiple Potholes – Iden Lane
Logged	March 2021
Status	Works completed
564217	Pothole – Rock Hill Road/The Street/New Road
Logged	March 2021
Status	Works completed
564519	Forge Lane, Egerton Forstal – Holes in verge/verge damage
Logged	29 th March 2021
Status	Works completed
564783	Link Hill Lane – Pothole
Logged	March 2021
Status	Works completed
563975	Barham Mill Road/Pembles Cross – Blocked Drain/Gully
Logged	March 2021
Status	Works completed
564810	Pothole – Coach Road from junction with Egerton House Road towards Boughton Malherbe
Logged	March 2021
Status	Works completed
565025	Mundy Bois Road- Potholes
Logged	March 2021
Status	Works completed

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564522	Egerton Road – Holes in verge
Logged	29 th March 2021
Status	Works completed
564516	Green Hill Lane – Soft Verge damaged
Logged	29 th March 2021
Status	Works completed

Outstanding Issues

Reference	Description & Status
546693	Link Hill Lane - Drainage & Flooding, Blocked drain
Logged	17/01/2021
Status	Enquiry under investigation
562299	Stonebridge Green Road – Blocked Drain/Gully
Logged	March 2021
Status	Enquiry under investigation
564500	Crocken Hill Road – Holes in verge
Logged	March 2021
Status	Works being programmed
565029	Crocken Hill Road – Multiple Potholes
Logged	March 2021
Status	Works being programmed
564523	Egerton House Road – Soft Verge Damage by Star and garter Cottage
Logged	29 th March 2021
Status	Works being programmed
559347	Chapel Lane – Ditch problem
Logged	March 2021
Status	Works being programmed
No Ref	Bedlam Lane – nr Badgers Works raised by KCC Highways
Logged	March 2021
Status	Order raised

New Issues

Reference	Description & Status
550693	Blocked Drain/Gully rock Hill Road
Logged	April 2021
Status	Enquiry under investigation

Other Matters

Rock Hill Road wall between Elm Close and the school. On agenda for discussion under correspondence.

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Appendix iii

21/00627/AS	Egerton	Weald North Ward	Land rear of 7 to 14, Harmers Way, Egerton, Kent Erection of 13 dwellings together with all necessary infrastructure
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This site was not allocated by ABC in the 2030 Local Plan, nor was it included in the draft Neighbourhood Plan EPC was sent earlier this year. ABC has seen the draft Plan in various draft stages. The final draft will be submitted within a week or so, as approved by Egerton Parish Council. Detailed comments on this application are below.

Site and Surroundings

The application site undulates at 95-97m above sea-level, located in a former arable field, now pasture, south-west of New Road and accessed via Harmer's Way, backing onto Harmers Way and Elm Close. The proposed site is 1.2 hectares (approx. 140m x 70m), taking over about two-thirds of the existing field, located in the outskirts of the village and within the countryside in the Greensand Ridge Landscape Character Area (Egerton-Pluckley Greensand Fruit Belt). The area is well-known for its scarp face enclosing the Low Weald and High Weald landscape to the south and especially its hilltop settlement centred around the ragstone Church of St James at 100m height above sea-level. Maidstone Borough Council has proposed (and ABC have indicated support for) a new Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to extend the length of the Greensand Ridge on which there is a celebrated public right of way - the Greensand Way. Egerton was Kent County Council's showcase when a new Public footpath booklet was produced and launched in Egerton a few years ago. This footpath (AW 88) runs along the south west of the field boundary about 30 m from the proposed site boundary and is a feature that should not be put in jeopardy by new development.

Grade II Listed Barlings Manor is situated some 90 m south west from the nearest marked property on the proposed. There is a hedgerow running along the rear of the site from Elm Close and a number of trees are scattered on the site. Given the sloping nature of the site in several directions (not level as stated by the applicants) and the fact that it is even higher on the north east corner than the nearest existing houses in Harmers Way, the green spaces which currently compensate for the existing density of building at Elm Close and Harmers Way cannot easily be mitigated. Elm Close and Harmers Way do not benefit from sensitive boundary treatment on the present site plan, although some mitigation/ softening could be achieved with landscape planting but not so as to obscure further views. The Grade I Listed Church of St James is visible from the site.

Impact of Development

The site was not put forward for housing as part of ABC's 'call for sites' and **is not allocated by ABC for housing** in the ABC 2030 Plan, whereas the nearby site in New Road proposed by the same landowners and developer was included. The proposed site off Harmers Way is clearly within the countryside and is not sufficiently respectful of the visual impact on the approach into the village. It does not assimilate into the existing setting when taking into account vistas from the surrounding landscape and from the rural road and footpath network. Because of the undulating nature of the site, the height of the proposed two-storey buildings will adversely impact on the single storey bungalows adjacent to the site in Elm close, houses on the south east corner of Harmers way and on Barlings Manor. A key view to the Church from the higher end of the site is already obscured by Harmers Way but views to the Church from Stone Hill will be affected as will views along the Greensand Ridge and towards the North Downs. The new planting proposed along AW88 may also obscure key views from New Road down to the Weald. The sloping nature of the site, and its proximity to residential housing on two sides would result in new development being a visual intrusion in the landscape. The entrance to this remote village would look over-developed with a large cluster of new buildings more akin to a suburban housing estate.

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Housing Needs

This site was put forward for consideration during the call for sites in the Egerton neighbourhood planning process. In the first two instances the proposal was for 22 dwellings. There was considerable public opposition on the grounds of the density of housing, in combination with 15 houses on the ABC allocated New Road site and the proposed Orchard Nurseries site for older people's accommodation; loss of green space, impact on neighbouring properties and overall landscape character; but there was recognition of its proximity to village amenities. The proposal submitted after the Neighbourhood Plan Reg 14 consultation was for a reduced number of dwellings in a farmstead layout, but this new proposal was not put forward for consideration by the Neighbourhood Plan Group or the Parish Council. This latest proposal is for a mix of 5 semi-detached and terraced houses to cater for ABC's affordable housing requirement and 8 four-bedroom detached houses for open market sale.

There is no indication in the documents submitted as to how the affordable homes will become available (although the applicants have said they have been in discussion with ABC's housing team with a view to AC taking responsibility). Significantly, there is no reference to catering for local needs rented housing which was the key finding in the Housing Needs Survey conducted for the Egerton Neighbourhood Plan (ENP). These key needs are for local older people downsizing from mostly owner-occupied houses, and for local needs affordable rented housing. Open market housing will already be catered for on the New Road site (9 detached dwellings), through older owner-occupiers downsizing and releasing larger homes (about 8 dwellings) and a steady stream of barn conversions. The draft ENP is still at Regulation 14 stage and is imminently due to be submitted formally to ABC for the Reg 16 stage in the next two weeks. So, it can, and must, be afforded some weight. The Neighbourhood Plan Policy D3 (Housing) makes provision for 6-10 affordable local needs dwellings to meet Egerton's affordable housing needs based on evidence. Given this development proposal off Harmers Way does not provide local needs rented housing that could outweigh the locational and environmental harm that is identified in this report, the argument for the particular type of housing in this location cannot be supported. Furthermore, the factors outlined in the proposed development relating to sustainable development within the terms of the Government's NPPF do not override the need to protect high quality land and landscape in this rural location.

The suggestion by the applicant that Egerton needs to meet an open market housing requirement is dubious. The open market housing on the site is in excess of the Housing Needs Survey (HNS) requirement and the affordable housing proposed will not meet local needs as identified by the HNS. Furthermore, the ABC Five Year Housing Land Supply report 2020 – 2025 shows that over the whole Borough, there is only a deficit of 295 dwellings over the next five-year period. This would amount to an average of 8 new homes in each parish. The sites identified for housing quoted in the ABC document include two sites in the draft Egerton Neighbourhood Plan, but with no figures entered into the equation. In addition, several of Egerton's barn conversions are listed as having planning permission but are not yet built and more are anticipated. On the basis that 16 local needs homes will be built, 8 large homes will be available from those downsizing, 15 homes on the New Road site will be granted permission and several barn conversions come on stream to add the open market homes, the implication is quite clear that ABC should not require any additional new housing in Egerton.

Planning policies – NPPF, ABC Local Plan 2030, Draft Egerton Neighbourhood Plan

The applicants have quoted many elements of the Government's NPPF and the Ashford Borough Plan as well as aspects of the draft Neighbourhood Plan to justify development of the site. For example, they say "development that accords to the Local Plan should be approved without delay". But this site it is not in the ABC Local Plan. And whilst the draft Neighbourhood Plan has not yet reached the stage of Inspection and a Referendum, the majority view of the village to date on the draft Plan is a favourable one and that draft did not include this site. This view was further evidenced by the many positive comments from residents about the Neighbourhood Plan and its community-led proposals whilst objecting to a planning application for affordable commercial housing to buy which was

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proposed elsewhere in the village. The final proposals for development and rejections of development in the Neighbourhood Plan are being scrutinised once more by our consultants (South Downs National Park Planning Authority) but it is unlikely that this site will make it into the short list of sites for development. Whilst its final outcome at referendum is still to be realised, on the basis that the majority views to date are sustained with the final redraft, EPC takes the view that ABC should regard the draft Neighbourhood Plan as a strong material consideration when deciding on how this planning application is determined.

The site design proposals

The planning documents submitted with the application cover the following key points which are presented in a positive way without full regard to what is on the ground:

Positive	Negative
Layout - interesting and spacious around the houses, communal green spaces, hedges and trees	No mention of maintenance Hedges should not interfere with or obscure distant views over the Weald. Trees next to the access from Harmers Way to be cut back and this will cause over-looking as well as create a hardening effect along a narrow access road Two- storey houses adjacent to existing bungalows are overbearing. These bungalows blend well into the landscape. Loss of green space. Divisive enclaves for affordable and owner-occupier houses, not integrated.
Hedges as boundaries between houses positive but not so as to obscure important views.	Boundary hedging is a good feature if maintained effectively. The inclusion of so many lengths of 1.8m close boarded fences and brick walls are not appropriate in this rural setting. This causes urbanisation. No scope for wildlife corridors mentioned although it is understood there may be gaps for hedgehog under fences.
	Brick walls to delineate boundaries between some houses and common areas not appropriate for a rural location, likewise too many paved walkways. Needs to blend with countryside
Wildlife study carried out	More work needed and a reference to latest guidance from NHBC about creation of new and replacement wildlife habitat such as introduction of bat boxes & so on.
Access into site meets standards for Fire & Rescue, sight lines	This may be so, but it is a very narrow access, single track. Immediate adverse impact on existing houses on the boundary with the access.
Building design meets Egerton Parish Design Statement – weatherboard, hanging tiles, clay roofs, slate roofs & so on	Nine types altogether could look like an overdone village imitation unless carefully sited.

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No excessive external lighting or street lighting	There should be no external lighting at all. Any exterior lighting would cause severe light pollution over a wide and deep distance.
Attenuation swales and ditches vital for wildlife and recreation and the development is away from the springs lower down the escarpment	According to KCC, a full drainage strategy and maintenance plan should be submitted. Need to study the potential effect on natural springs emanating below the escarpment
Barlings Manor (Grade II Listed) is screened from the proposal and the Grade I Church is distant from the development	Development will still be a visual impact on views from Barlings Manor. Need to take account of the setting of Listed buildings and Conservation Area. There is no projection of the proposals on the site that would show the view of the Church being preserved. There is no Visual Strategy as ABC requested. A scale model on the exact topography should be produced.
Infrastructure Roads, sewerage, drainage is mentioned in the documents as being adequate	The remarks about infrastructure capacity are not substantiated. The impact of this proposal when added to existing and other proposed development will place severe burdens on a poor road network. Sewage treatment works have no capacity; pumping station failures are already frequent. This would require upgrading or a separate system for the development. No energy-saving or green energy generating measures were included. These must be addressed in view of the climate emergency.

Summary - Strong Objection

Egerton Parish Council believe that the site may be sustainable at some levels by virtue of its location in relation to village amenities; but the only shop and pub have been closed for over a year. Sustainability has to be considered alongside other factors that outweigh the case for development that is not needed. There are more over-riding and pertinent issues that should be given greater weight, summarised as follows:

- the density and number of proposed new dwellings, when added to the proposed 15 on the New Road site and the possible 8 on Orchard Nurseries, has the potential to make a significant change to the individual landscape character and environment of Egerton village, to impact adversely on key views to and from the village and to add considerably to light, noise and traffic pollution;
- the site is classified as very good quality agricultural land, with some protection from development in NPPF guidelines
- the absence of an open market housing need emanating from ABC over & above the provision on the New Road site;
- the provision of older people's housing on the gifted Orchard Nurseries site;
- the lack of affordable **local** needs housing for rent;
- the potential adverse impact on neighbouring properties and the individual landscape character of the parish;
- the loss of a significant green gap and buffer for the main settlement; and

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- the disproportionate clustering of new development (North Field, New Road, Orchard Nurseries) with the resultant impact on the visual environment – traffic, urbanisation;
- The sewerage system at is already believed to be at, or close to, capacity. Investigation would be required into the capacity, and the options for alternative/stand-alone systems;
- The sloping nature of the site overlooking the lower parts of the village and beyond makes some light and noise pollution inevitable;
- The impacting of proposed two-storey homes over the bungalows in Elm Close and from the higher ground near Stone Hill above houses in the south eastern side of Harmers Way would be over-bearing;
- The detrimental effect on vistas from the county's renowned Greensand Way and the sensitivities of the Greensand ridge itself that has potential to become a new AONB need safeguarding and enhancing, not being put at risk of harm.

Recommendation: Object.