

MINUTES OF THE **ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY** OF THE ELECTORS OF EVERSLEY
HELD ON **Tuesday 10th March 2020** AT 7.30 PM IN **EVERSLEY VILLAGE HALL.**

PRESENT: Cllr Elizabeth Beckett (EPC)
Dr Anne Crampton (HDCllr)
Cllr Shawn Dickens (EPC)
Cllr Edward Dixon (EPC)
Cllr Adrian McNeil (Chairman)
Cllr Kevan Neville (EPC)

8 other residents

ALSO PRESENT: Julie Routley (Parish Clerk),
David Simpson (HCllr), Mags Wylie, Rayner Mayer (YTSG)
Mags Wylie, Nicola Harpham and Cal Coskery all from Action Hampshire

1. Apologies for absence

No apologies had been received.

Introduction

Cllr Adrian McNeil introduced himself as the Chairman of Eversley Parish Council and welcomed all present to the meeting. The Chairman introduced the Eversley Parish Councillors. He extended a particular welcome to Mags Wylie from Action Hampshire who is here to speak about Affordable Homes in the Parish.

This was an opportunity to hear what the Parish Council has been doing over the past year, to hear from the District and County councillors and other speakers and to let the Parish Council know what residents' concerns and priorities were for the coming year.

The Chairman thanked all the Parish Councillors for the time they give voluntarily to make life in Eversley that little bit better. He also thanked Julie Routley, the Parish Clerk, for the huge range of work she does to support the business of the Parish Council; and to the Grounds Maintenance Contractor, Nick Robins, for his never-ending willingness to help out.

2. Approval of the minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly of Tuesday 19th March 2019

The Chairman explained that the minutes were available on the website.

No errors were reported, and it was **resolved** that the Minutes be approved and signed by the Chairman.

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3. (a) Affordable Housing in Eversley – Mags Wylie, Senior Rural Housing Enabler, Action Hampshire

Mag Wylie has a long history with Eversley and was involved in the Rural Exception site at Westward Ho. EPC contacted her some months ago to see if there is still a need for Affordable Housing in the area. A Housing Need Survey was undertaken which was sent to all houses in Eversley. This identified 24 responses stating a need for Affordable Housing. The Housing schemes would be for local people with a connection to the parish who live or work or have close family withing the parish. These Affordable

Housing schemes can keep the younger groups in the parish and contribute to a mixed community. The houses prices in Eversley are around 10 times the average income. So for those on lower incomes there is little chance that their circumstances can change. It is advised that people interested in the scheme get put on HDC's Housing register. There are currently 41 on HDC's housing register stating a connection to Eversley. The survey concluded that Eversley does have a need for Affordable Housing. If Eversley wants to take the scheme forward then next steps would be to search for a suitable site at rural exception land value. Action Hampshire would be happy to give another presentation down the line.

Questions:

A resident commented that 2 members of their family lived in Eversley for over 35 years and are full time professional but cannot afford a house in the village. It was also noticed that 2 affordable houses are currently empty.

Nicola Harpham responded that there had been several issues with these houses and that the housing association would be purchasing the houses under the shared ownership scheme.

A resident asked how Affordable Housing is defined.

Mags Wylie responded that housing for sale or rent for those whose needs are not met by the market. 20% less than the market is the umbrella for an Affordable home.

The Chairman thanked Mags Wylie for her report and said that EPC is keen to pursue this further.

At 8.22pm Mags Wylie, Nicola Harpham and Cal Coskery all from Action Hampshire left the meeting.

(b) Eversley Parish Council Report – Cllr Adrian McNeil, Chairman

Before I start my report of activity over the last year, I want to pay tribute to Doug Bradley, who sadly died last month. Doug had been on the parish council, including being the vice chair, for many years. As many of you will know, he put in a great deal of time and thought into the business of the PC and contributed a lot of his time, thought and energy to make the village a better place.

EPC lasted for eight months with a full complement of 8, but Sandra Miller stepped down at Christmas, so we are 7 now. She worked tirelessly to improve all the recreational areas in the village, especially the play areas, which were falling into disrepair. And she used all her energy and guile to raise funds so successfully from all kinds of organisations. I'm really pleased to say, that she continues to lead, the Speedwatch team. So, on behalf of the PC, I want to say thanks Sandra for all you have done for this community.

Of course, that means we have a vacancy, so I would ask you to think long and hard about joining us on the Parish Council. It is your chance to do your bit for the community. Please feel free to talk to one of us councillors about what it involves or contact the Clerk for further information.

Litter – after Doreen Wallace, the litter picker, died 18 months ago, EPC made do with a combination of volunteers and the Payback Team to pick up litter. That arrangement was OK for the short term, but it was clear that a permanent litter picker would be needed. I am pleased to record that the PC recruited Mr Hayward in November.

Planning - EPC has commented on a fair number of planning applications for individual or small developments in the Parish. It has also made known to Hart its concerns about the lack of enforcement of compliance with planning conditions.

The Open Spaces Committee is the only standing committee of the Council. It was chaired by Colin Edge until December, and since then by Shawn Dickens who will now give you a brief summary of the committee's activity.

Cllr Dickens reported the following:

- The committee manages the maintenance of the Burial Ground
- The committee provides garden plots.
- Up Green improvements.
- Regeneration of the pond and surrounding village green.
- Maintaining the play equipment and village greens.
- Agreeing safety checks with the Grounds Maintenance contractor.
- Approving a maintenance programme for the play areas – removing graffiti – cleaning wooden structures – reducing splinter risks for the users.
- EPC is continuing to use and direct the payback teams to carry out individual projects – currently working in Hollybush Lane clearing litter and ditches – to cut back fallen trees and hedgerows.
- Footpath at Firgrove Road is now restored and other footpaths are kept clear.
- 2 new bus shelters have been purchased and installed.
- Dragons teeth around Cross Green have been installed.

The Speedwatch team led by Sandra Miller have continued to monitor traffic speeds in the village. The team has noted that the volume and average speed of traffic continues to increase. I am working with David Simpson and Anne Crampton to find ways of mitigating this growing problem.

I know that Speedwatch is finding it difficult to recruit volunteers so if any of you would like to get some fresh air and help keep Eversley a bit safer, why not volunteer – and ask friends and neighbours if they'd like to as well.

Flooding I am pleased to say that, after a major push by the Parish Council, and with David Simpson's help, Hampshire started work in February on flood attenuation at Webb's Corner and Warbrook Lane. The PC is now turning its attention to flooding in Chequers and Hollybush Lanes. After a great deal of pressure from the PC, and with David Simpson's help, Highways have embarked on work to investigate the causes of flooding on these roads and take certain remedial action where required. The PC has been working with David Simpson to get Hampshire to arrange for the closed quarry at Coopers Hill to be replanted with trees as these would help take up a lot of water before it found its way down to Up Green and Chequers Lane.

Mud on Roads EPC continue to press the County about mud on the B3272 and A327 and are working with David to get the highways team at HCC to improve things.

Survey of projects The PC drew up a list of possible projects for 2020/21 and asked residents to help prioritise them and say if there were other improvements they would like to see. In light of the responses, the PC decided to focus on implementing the following projects in the coming year:

- Traffic management, which was the area of greatest concern to residents.

- New village signs at all entrances to the village and new signs and “gates” at three of the main entrances to the village - at Eversley Cross, Longwater Lane and the A327 – the latter to be moved, if possible, from Cooper’s Hill nearer to the roundabout outside Warbrook House.
- A completely new play area at Cross Green.
- Wild flower and bulb planting in Cross Green and other sites in the village, and pond plants for the newly restored village pond.

The PC would try to obtain grant contributions to supplement the cash it sets aside for each of these projects

Finance The work of the Parish Council is underpinned by finance. This is very ably managed by Julie Routley, the Parish Clerk, who has steered the Parish Council successfully through yet another audit.

The Precept You will be pleased to hear that the PC has decided to keep the Parish precept remaining at £78,977 for the coming financial year.

Questions:

Neighbourhood plan – EPC will be returning to this more formally to see if residents are interested in taking this forward. Rayner Mayer said he would be keen to work with Eversley along with Yateley.

Speedwatch – When EPC conducted a survey of what was important to the parish traffic and traffic volume came top of the survey and although EPC has limited powers, it is working with District and County councillors to see what can be done about it.

Ditches – a resident commented that after work last weekend Hollybush Lane is running more quickly. The Chairman had met residents and the principal engineer, HCC Highways, at Up Green. HCC were are working with the County councillor who believes that planting trees would help.

HDC officers had agreed to funding planting around Cross Green. EPC noted that the daffodils planted around the Village hall by the W.I. looked lovely.

A resident commented that recently 3 enormous houses had been built in Eversley and asked why Affordable houses had not been built on that site. The Chairman replied that at the time of the planning application EPC had commented that smaller properties were preferable.

(c) Report from David Simpson – Hampshire County Council

The year started pleasantly enough with the successful Bicentenary of Charles Kingsley. Hampshire had given a grant to help the hard working organisers of this event which was very successful.

In Eversley I have spent much of the year discussing water and how to stop it going where it wants to go. Aided by your excellent parish council we have had many meetings with a lot of frustration as new people come in and old conversations are repeated. Finally work started on Webb’s Corner only to be slowed down by rain....

HCC is encouraging riparian owners of ditches and waterways to ensure these are kept clear. Currently we have to give 28 days' notice and I have asked officers to see if, in an emergency and where we have previously asked for work to be done, HCC can do the work and charge the owner.

Flooding on the Reading Road, Chequers Lane and so have all been investigated and HCC even jettied Thames Water sewers knowing the chances of getting any funds back are nil.

Always bubbling in the background is The Street. Traffic is bad and is getting worse, as we all forecast. I have had numerous conversations on this with Highway Officers and wrote to the MP after the election to see if we can get some of the £100 billion in the Government manifesto. The short answer is no but come with plans and then it can be looked at. I pointed out it has been looked at for over 50 years.

Just yesterday I had another meeting of nearly 2 hours discussing The Street in which downgrading it to a B road was ruled out. Realistically we do not expect a bypass unless MPs on either side of the river can get the money from central Government. Many old and a few new ideas were churned over. Eventually we came back to immediate priorities. I suggested it was to slow traffic down. This would allow residents to get in and out of their homes and make it safer for them. Officers have now been tasked to concentrate on this. If anyone thinks a different priority should be in place please let me know. Nb we are looking at feasible priorities so the officers can look at solutions. We know these will be short term but the MP said at a public meeting that a bypass will only happen if more houses are built.....

Bramshill House, although outside Eversley will have an impact on the village. The developers lost their appeal and have hired new consultants to try and find how they can put houses there. I visited their exhibition and whilst this is a Hart decision still do not see that it has changed that much.

A30/A327 roundabout. I have managed to get the 4th arm on the roundabout agreed. This will save drivers going all the way up to BCA and then back in order to turn right. On HCC's original figures some 500,000 extra miles would be travelled before this roundabout was even built. It will be more now.

Tip. Because HCC wanted to close the Tip in Hartley Wintney, I still have all the documents saying so, I thought it best to pre-empt that and find a new site. When the new road off the A30/327 roundabout goes ahead it will leave dead land between the old and new roads. I suggested this could be a new HWRC site. A feasibility study has been done and I have seen draft plans.

However as the 4th arm of the roundabout has been delayed, we are also looking at other possible sites that may be cheaper to acquire.

Roads. These are bad and getting worse. I asked of we have stabilised at how bad they will reach and was told "No. years of underinvestment means deterioration will accelerate. I guess we already know that as we can see more potholes appearing faster than ever.

Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority - HFRA- I had been asked to look after the On Call firefighters across Hampshire and spent a lot of time visiting fire stations all over the County from Fareham to Lyndhurst to Bramley as well as our own local ones of Hartley Wintney and Yateley.

The service had been losing a number of firefighters and this has now changed from 11% pa to 8% and falling. Naturally this is due to the excellent work of our dedicated and professional officers. For those that do not know over half the firefighters in Hampshire have other full time jobs where they are ready to drop everything and get to the fire station within 4 minutes.

We have also had prolonged discussions with the Isle of Wight Fire Service and an order is currently before Parliament to combine the two services. HFRA already hires out our Chief Fire Officer to the IoW and this merger is a natural progression. Older residents will know that we were once one anyway.

The Shadow Board will take effect in April and the full merger in April 2021.

Questions:

Library consultation – David Simpson was asked about the library consultation. He replied that Yateley library was in a tier 3 and was less likely to close but may have its hours reduced. He urged all to fill out the consultation.

Footpaths across Chequers Green – a resident commented on how badly the footpath had been repaired. David Simpson asked him to send details to him and he would follow up on it.

Mud on the roads – David Simpson said that if anyone sees mud being dropped by lorries then to take a note of the number plate and time.

The Chairman thanked David Simpson for his report.

(d) Report from Dr Anne Crampton – Hart District Council

Finances – Difficulties ahead such as new homes bonus loss. Will get it this year but it will be phased out resulting in a loss of £2m in income.

Staff increases - New staff for Commercialisation, digital change.

Changes to contracts - resulting in previously outsourced services being brought back in house. Cancelling of contracts and starting new ones.

Climate change agenda - £100,000 initially.

Regeneration and commercialisation - Need outside contractors to formulate plans. £95,000. HDC are concentrating on regeneration of civic quarter offices and the library and Harlington Square stage.

Council tax increases - Maximum allowed by Government. £5 about 4.5%.

Local Plan – March Council meeting. The Inspector's report had little in it that was unexpected. Now we have made the corrections the biggest was the removal of the proposed development at Murrell Green.

The garden community at Shapley Heath has up to 10K houses. Dr Anne Crampton is concerned that the increase in traffic would make Hart undesirable. She would prefer regeneration of the whole area, especially Fleet.

Opportunity board and Community forum, landowners forum - One meeting of the board so far.

Green grid consultation - Green grid provides cycle ways, footpaths etc.

Linking communities. Questions include what is more important to you school routes or leisure that sort of question. Ends with what would you like to see.

Covid-19 cases in Hart – cases are rising and there are contingency plans for the Council so that essential services still function.

Eversley flooding – HCC has cleared the pipes but the ditches need digging. Planning applications e.g. Love Lane need for neighbourhood plan.

Traffic and EPC we will get together to discuss our approach to County.

Questions:

Council tax - A resident asked if it was true that in terms of council tax a 3 bedroom house could be graded higher than a new 5 bedroom house. Dr Anne Crampton confirmed this could be the case as it is decoded as point of sale.

Fleet regeneration - A resident said that they hoped that Fleet would regenerate the shops before the civic quarter. Anne Crampton replied that as HDC own the civic quarter so they can do that bit.

The Chairman thanked Dr Anne Crampton for her report.

(e) Annual Eversley Event

Individuals have approached the Parish Council to suggest that the time is right for Eversley to hold an annual event. The Parish Council strongly agrees that a summer fete would be a great way of bringing people in the village together in a relaxed, social environment and has decided to form a small working group to make it happen.

I don't want to anticipate anything, but a possible outcome of the working group might be to invite institutions such as the ESA and cricket club, and one or two residents and parish councillors, to form a committee that will begin the real job of turning this into reality.

The key points I want to make are that:

- This should be a traditional village summer event with a whole range of attractions that one can find at a village show or fete – from dog agility, to a coconut shy as well as plenty to eat and drink. The key objective is for villagers to get together to have fun.
- This event is about the whole community, so I'm sure that, somewhere along the way, the committee will consider approaching local businesses to contribute or be involved.
- It could be held on the same day as another event in the village
Because these events take time to organise, I think it would be most sensible to work towards holding the first fete in summer 2021.

It would be very helpful to have all of your suggestions, either now or by email to the Clerk, about what the fete could include and if you'd be prepared to be involved in any way.

Questions:

A resident said that the village show could do with being supported more and it was hoped that the Charles Kingsley event could be looked at and any lessons learned.

4. Other Parish Matters for discussion

(a) Any issue for discussion

Yateley's Neighbourhood Plan

Rayner Mayer from Yateley's Steering Group gave a talk on Neighbourhood Plans which covered the following:

Neighbourhood Plans form the third tier of the National Policy Planning Framework while the second tier is the Local Plan which will be subject to adoption by Hart District Council at their next meeting. Such Plans enable the local residents to decide how they would wish their settlement to evolve over the next 13 years until 2032 by formulating a set of policy guidelines. Neighbourhood plans will have legal status alongside the Local Plan once adopted by the residents of the Parish or an area like Yateley, Darby Green and Frogmore (YDF).

These guidelines can cover all policy areas that concern a community.

Including -

- Provision of affordable homes
- Identifying local sites for development
- Reducing flooding due to excessive and prolonged rainfall
- Green planting such as envisaged at Coopers Hill and around the village
- Reducing the impact of traffic passing through the village
- Providing public transport provision for those who were not mobile
- Maintaining gaps between settlements
- Limiting impacts of climate change

A further important reason for developing a Neighbourhood Plan is that once the Plan has been approved, this will provide the evidence base which can form the basis for accessing funding from local or central Government sources such as the Government's new fund for enhancing Bus Transport, walking and cycling.

It is for these reasons that YDF has drafted its Neighbourhood Plan, a copy of which can be accessed on our website <https://ydf-np.org.uk>

or consulted at Yateley library. This Plan is now the subject of a Residents Survey and copies can be downloaded from our website or can be accessed at www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/C39FKFJ until April 15.

One would hope that Eversley's residents will also rise to the challenge and produce its Neighbourhood Plan as it would benefit both Eversley's and Yateley's citizens as we have a range of common interests.

Questions:

Buses – a resident said that there is a large amount of older people but Eversley has no buses or shops. Rayner Mayer replied that if you had a Neighbourhood Plan and say that transport if part of your strategy then you can apply for some of the £5M the government has set aside towards local buses.

The Chairman commented that EPC are in discussions with Yela bus about provision for those less mobile.

Rubbish around Sherlock Lea – a resident commented on the rubbish. The Chairman said that he had spoken to the Housing Association and they have cleared their ditches in this area.

The Chairman thanked Rayner Mayer for his talk.

(b) Priorities for the year ahead

Litter picker – a resident asked if the Litter Picker could do Hollybush Lane and if the vegetation could be cut back on the side of the ditch.

The Clerk explained that, for health and safety reasons, the Litter Picker could not pick on routes where there was no pavement or the speed limit was above 30mph. HCC could be asked if they could litter pick this area but that they only litter pick Eversley on a few occasions during the year. Cllr Dickens said he had spoken to the landowner and they would cut back the vegetation but could not do it as present due to bird nesting period.

Rubbish around Sherlock Lea – a resident commented on the rubbish. The Chairman said that he had spoken to the Housing Association and they have cleared their ditches in this area.

As there were no other matters, the Chairman thanked everyone for their contributions and for giving up their time to attend. He reminded the meeting that all Councillors' contact details were in the Parish Magazine. Everyone would be welcome to attend next Parish Assembly and meetings of the Parish Council.

The meeting closed at 9.39pm.

Chairman.....Date.....