

MINUTES OF THE **ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY** OF THE ELECTORS OF EVERSLEY  
HELD AT EVERSLEY VILLAGE HALL ON **THURSDAY 24<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2022** AT 7.45 PM

PRESENT: Mike Baldwin  
Malcolm Benjamin  
Cllr Des Deane (EPC)  
Cllr Shawn Dickens (EPC)  
Ray Gurr  
Cllr Susan Hughes (EPC)  
Cllr Adrian McNeil (Chairman)  
Cllr Philip Todd (EPC)  
Brian Webb  
Chris Young  
Shelia Young

ALSO PRESENT: Julie Routley (Parish Clerk),  
Tim Davies (HCCLlr)

**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 also welcomed County Councillor Tim Davies. Unfortunately, District Councillor Dr Anne Crampton had been unable to attend this evening (but sent a report shortly following the meeting which has been included as Appendix A).

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 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 represent the community. They are all busy people yet volunteer a great deal of their time for the benefit of residents. There is a vacancy on the council, so the Chairman would encourage you or your neighbours to become parish councillors.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Kevan Neville, who has now stood down, for his time and help on the Council over the past 11 years. He also commented he personally would shortly be stepping down from the Council and he wished his successor and the Parish Council well for the future. He also thanked Julie Routley, the Parish Clerk, who has helped steer, and manage, the business of the parish council with her usual thoroughness and attention to detail. Thanks also to Mike Hayward, EPC's Litter Picker who has been doing a great job of keeping the village tidy.

And finally, a big thank you to the people who support the parish council, particularly Gareth Rees for leading the Speedwatch team; Nick Robins, who does so much to keep our green spaces tidy and free of litter; Mike Baldwin, the editor of the Parish Magazine who is working with the Council to provide information about what the council is doing or plans to do; and Keith Morrison who does little things in and around the burial ground to keep it presentable.

## 2. Approval of the minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly of Tuesday 27th April 2021

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

### Errors

Min: 4 d) Hollybush Lane delete 'It was noted that half of the road has been flayed...' and replace with 'It was noted that one side of the roadside hedge had been flailed...'

It was **resolved** that, with this amendment, the Minutes be approved and signed by the Chairman. **AM**

## 3. (a) Eversley Parish Council Report – Cllr Adrian McNeil, Chairman

### **Finance**

The Parish precept has stayed at a 0% increase for residents for the coming financial year.

I am also pleased to record that the parish accounts were again approved, without qualification, by the auditors. This success is entirely down to Julie, who as ever, has kept EPC's financial accounts in an exemplary manner.

### **Planning and enforcement**

EPC has commented on a fair number of planning applications for individual or small developments in the Parish. It has pursued Hart to make a long-overdue decision about the application to build a gypsy caravan site in Eversley Centre. The most recent action has been to write to the Head of Planning and the Chief Executive to make a decision very soon. I hope that the District Councillors will press officers in Hart to bring this to a conclusion rapidly.

EPC has also made known to Hart its concerns about the lack of enforcement of compliance with planning conditions and has asked for regular updates.

EPC had decided to postpone consideration of a Neighbourhood Plan until it was clearer how the government's planning policy would affect NPs. This was to have been in October, but given the continuing uncertainty, EPC is not yet able to make a decision.

EPC has expressed concern over the increase in HGV traffic that will be caused by the major development proposed in Wokingham. It has pressed HCC to engage Wokingham to work together on plans to relieve the roads through Eversley, particularly at the junction of Fleet Hill and the A327.

### **Affordable Housing**

A housing needs survey conducted in 2020, identified a need for affordable rented housing for 23 families with a connection to Eversley. As a consequence, the Parish Council is working with Action Hampshire and Hart District Council to provide about 10 affordable homes for a number of these people.

- After a rigorous selection process in Oct 2021, EPC appointed English Rural as the Registered Provider partner/Housing Association to work with.
- Since then, landowners have been contacted to ascertain availability of land and seeking Hart planners' views on the sites and their suitability.

- More work needs to be done on narrowing down the number of sites before a public consultation in the coming months.
- We will keep residents updated on progress and will advertise the public consultation once arranged.

### **Long-standing issues**

EPC has asked Cllr Tim Davies (HCC) to help resolve a number of long-standing problems that have needed resolution. These include

- tackling the causes of flooding in Chequers Lane, Hollybush Lane and Marsh Lane,
- winter flooding of the footway on the B3272 at Eversley Cross,
- replanting of the Busta Triangle,
- accumulation of mud on the A327 and
- reducing the speed and volume of traffic that goes through Eversley.

A working group was set up to consider what could be done to reduce speed. They recommended that Highways consider physical alterations to reduce speed in certain parts of the roads in the village, the introduction of vehicle-activated cameras called AutoSpeedWatch; and reduction of the speed limit to 20mph in parts of the village. The parish council have agreed the purchase of one ASW device to trial and have joined other parish and town councils in Hampshire to urge Highways to introduce a 20mph speed limit in areas where there is high public footfall.

### **(b) Report from Tim Davies – Hampshire County Council**

Cllr Tim Davies thanked residents for electing him as their County Councillor. As a County Councillor I have various responsibilities. For the most part Highways is the main concern. Schools generally are all good but I would like to warn you that because so many schools are currently rated as outstanding some will be downgraded as they tighten up the measurements.

#### Police and Crime

Although not a County issue I am aware that Police cannot attend all crimes. There are PCSO links to me in Yateley and there are low levels of crime and we want to keep it that way. There has been some horse crime that I am aware of. The Police recently held a meeting at Rotherwick and I am happy that the Police are on top of crime in the area.

#### Planning

In terms of extracted industries and gravel pits there are issues of mud on the road and the extension of licences. I attended a meeting that discussed this and why the gravel pit does not have a wheel wash and told to set up a committee to supervise it.

#### Highways

Good news for Hampshire is that the planning application for the new roundabout on the A327. The County Council made a mistake of not having this plan at this start but this change to the design has my support. There will be a 7-mile single carriageway rather than dual carriageway but despite that this will still be an improvement on the current situation.

The roundabout by Warbrook House/The Street the surface is about to redone; having been in a poor condition for 4 years. Traffic on The Street may be affected by a development in Wokingham and I have spoken to my counterpart on Wokingham

Borough Council and officers and my preference would be for a bypass relief road but this would cost around £75 million and therefore is unlikely.

On St Neots road I have suggested to Hampshire to move the 30mph back but I have been told this would be expensive but I am still pursuing.

### Flooding

I am aware that there are numerous problems with flooding. In November I conducted a site visit with EPC councillors and I have asked officers to get in touch with EPC to discuss it.

### Council Council

The County Leader is standing down as leader in May and he will vote for someone closer to home as North Hampshire has put a lot in and would like to see a lot back.

## Questions:

### Mud on roads

The Chairman said that wheel washes for lorries at quarries help to some extent with keeping mud off the roads but the high verges along the roads collect mud and then it rains and washes back onto the road. This ought to be investigated as the roads get so filthy as a result.

Tim Davies agreed the verges were high and said he will walk along and check if there are drains and if they should be cleared out.

A resident commented that the drains are higher than the road and that the ditches behind are not dug out.

It was also commented that the drains on Chequers and Hollybush Lane are not cleared out and get buried.

There was also a comment that due to the mud on the roads many road signs are muddy and obscured.

### Flooding

A resident commented that the footway by The Fielders was flooded again last week and water was laying on the field.

The Chairman commented that EPC has written to the landowner to ask that all ditches on their land are cleared out and the field drained.

### Recycling Centre

A resident asked for an update on the new recycling centre. Tim Davies said that it has been proposed that the recycling tip is going to move opposite the new roundabout on the A327 and the new road there. This will be better as it will be at ground level so you will not have to climb up to dispose of rubbish. It will be happening sometime in the next couple of years. The old one will not close until the new centre is open. A public consultation will be part of the planning application.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Tim Davies for his report.

## **(c) Report from Dr Anne Crampton**

Cllr Dr Anne Crampton had been unable to attend the meeting but sent a report shortly afterward which can be found as Appendix A.

#### **4. Other Parish Matters for discussion**

##### **(a) Open Spaces Report**

The Chairman of Open Spaces Cllr Colin Edge had been unable to attend tonight's meeting. The Chairman of the Parish Council would therefore read out the report.

The Open Spaces Committee is the Parish Council's only Standing committee, chaired by Cllr Colin Edge. It looks after the five village Greens that are registered in its name and the Parish environment including keeping footpaths and footways passable. As Colin can't be here today, he asked me to deliver his report.

It's great that work has started on Cross Green. This includes:

- an entirely new play area. Thanks to our sponsors - Eversley Storage and Collards.
- complete overhaul of the surrounding green area to make it a natural recreational area for families. The overgrown shrubbery around the play area will be substantially reduced and the brambles and other weed undergrowth to the north of the pond cut back and planted with 30 sapling trees and wildflowers.
- New Eversley Sign and board.
- Platinum Jubilee memorial tree.

Gates into the village – not only to create a sense of a village community, but as part of a speed reduction strategy. Accompanying the gates will be new Eversley signs bearing the Eversley Boar above the village name and bearing the legend "Home of Charles Kingsley" underneath it. Highways will be putting large 30mph roundels on the road surface near each gate.

The Open Spaces Committee is working on a digital guide to footpaths in the parish. There will be a digital guide and also physical copies. Cllr Susan Hughes is leading the way on walking the routes and Mike Baldwin is helping with the design. The project is near to completion.

Residents and parish councillors joined forces last summer and again in the autumn on a litter-picking day as part of the Great British Spring Clean campaign. Our thanks to all who participated in 2021. The plan is to repeat this, twice yearly if possible, so look out for when these will be. A half hour or so of your time is all that is needed.

You will have noticed the evocative Tommies 'Silent Soldier' statues at Cross Green and outside the Village Hall. These will be used to mark subsequent Remembrance Day in future along with the placing of the wreath by the Remembrance Cross at St Mary's.

Clearance of footpaths and footways across the Parish continues routinely.

##### **Communication**

EPC agreed that it needs to communicate with residents better. It will do so in a number of co-ordinated ways using different media – the website, the Parish Magazine and by creation of a Parish Council Facebook page.

The Facebook page will provide information only (no feedback etc); and those residents who don't use social media, can rely on the Parish Magazine. EPC has formed a good, practical working relationship with the editor of the Parish Magazine, which will, in parallel with the parish's FB page, also record events and provide information. The website will be the fulcrum for information.

Questions:

#### Village Gateways

A resident asked if there will be flowers on the gates. Cllr Hughes replied maybe but they would need watering which would need volunteers.

The Chairman explained that as part of the village gateways project Highways were going to cut back the hedge on Marsh Lane and will be putting 30mph markings on the road itself.

#### **b) Opportunity to raise any issue for discussion**

##### Auto Speed Watch

A resident asked if the Police would act on data from the auto speed watch. The Chairman replied that it is hoped they will and will write to drivers but that initially it would act as a deterrent. The Chairman noted that the Police and Crime Commissioner is keen on the idea. Swanmore and Denmead are trialling it with the Police.

##### Hedges and Trees at Chequers Green

A resident commented that at Chequers Green there are a lot of overgrown hedges and large trees. The Chairman asked for clarification of the exact area. The Chairman confirmed that if it was EPC owned land then EPC then would do it and if not, the Council would write to the landowner.

##### Hollybush Lane

A resident commented that there are trees sticking out on Hollybush Lane which are dangerous for cyclists. Cllr Todd explained that depending on where the trees were located it would either be Highways or a landowner's responsibility.

##### Fly Tipping

It was noticed that there is a lot of fly tipping near the Fisheries sign on the B3272 which has still not gone. The Clerk confirmed that it had been reported. It maybe that it is on private land in which case HDC would not clear. Tim Davies (HC Cllr) said it is always worth reporting fly tipping even if it maybe on private land. He also said if there is a lot in one area then HDC will put in a covert camera. Fly tipping can be reported on fix my street. <https://www.fixmystreet.com/reports/Hampshire>

##### Roads

Cllr Dickens commented that it was frustrating as a taxpayer that get temporary fixes and patching rather than properly repairing the roads.

Fuel Crisis

A resident said although not a Parish Council issue, they were aware of the rise in fuel prices and was concerned that residents may not be able to afford to heat their homes. They might be too proud to say but might be at risk in the coming winter. The Chairman will contact Bramshill and Eversley Trust regarding this. Cllr Dickens commented that it will be important to rebuild community links after the Covid pandemic.

Warbrook Lane

A resident asked whose responsibility it is to maintain the grass verges as they look untidy. Due to budget constraints Hampshire County Council were unable to maintain it until April. The Chairman stated that EPC has passed on queries about the verges and the fact that the road is being used as a rat run to the project manager at HCC.

Footpaths

A resident commented that there are footpaths to Castle Bottom off Cooper’s Hill but along the road there are high banks on both sides and so it is hard to get up there to join the paths. He wondered if the landowner might assist by making a footpath for 2m on the side of the fence to make a footpath up Cooper’s hill on the west side. The Open Spaces Committee will investigate this. It was mentioned that without a footpath, walking up Cooper’s Hill is dangerous. Cllr Todd commented that many years ago a similar plan was suggested to HDC but they didn’t have a capacity to negotiate it. Cllr Dickens commented that EPC may be able to approach them again.

Thanks to the Chairman

A resident wanted it recorded that the Village thanked Cllr Adrian McNeil for his time as Chairman and councillor on the Parish Council and wished him all the best for the future.

All the members of the Parish Council were thanked for all their help in the village.

As there were no other matters, the Chairman thanked everyone for their contributions and for giving up their time to attend.

The meeting closed at 9.10pm.

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

## Appendix A

### Hart District Council – Cllr Dr Anne Crampton – sent shortly following the meeting

#### Eversley Annual Parish Assembly 2022

I would like to begin this report with the main local issues I have been involved with in the past year. Covid has again dominated our lives. I have been employed as a Clinical supervisor and vaccinator by the Branksomewood surgery in Fleet and have been vaccinating residents for over a year now. I do firmly believe that because of this success we can now move on and return to some sense of normality. The booster programme for the over 75s has started, if eligible I do urge people to book at one of the local centres.

Enforcement has been highlighted over this year. They used to send out a summary of cases received, those being dealt with and those not being progressed, they no longer do this so Parish Councils have been left unaware of the status of the cases they have brought to Enforcement's attention. I attended a remote meeting with one of the officers and Cllr. Dickens to discuss this. The result was they agreed to send a précis of cases that the Parish Council and residents have brought to their attention. On some of the issues we have disagreed with their findings but at least we now know some of what is going on and can continue to speak to them about ongoing and new issues.

I have received emails from residents concerned on various planning issues and have been taking to the case officers. They of course abide by the planning legislation and their own professional rules but planning is largely about interpretation and speaking to officers, I can sometimes put arguments forward that will help form their opinions. Please do let me know if you wish to comment on a planning issue. I am copied in sometimes to emails to the Parish Council and this practice is most useful. I cannot say if I am for or against an application as this is considered to be predetermination but I can say I am minded to support or not an application. I recently substituted for our main planning Councillor Cllr. Tim Southern when the Bramshill House application for filming rights came up. The traffic this would generate was a concern, so I was able to support the application as long as these issues were addressed by condition

The recent storms brought power lines down and subsequently power cuts to some parts of the village. I was contacted via social media by someone who had seen that an elderly couple had been without power for several days. After speaking to the couple, I found they were extremely vulnerable and in spite of telephoning SSE several times nothing had been done to help them. A colleague of mine suggested emailing the CEO and though not optimistic I did just that. Within 30 minutes I heard from SSE with offers of a priority call out to find the fault, offers of a welfare team visit, and an hotel if power couldn't be restored. Thankfully it was restored a few hours later.

I have a grant to support local events celebrating the Platinum Jubilee. Your three councillors have between them £1000 which can be allocated to one project or divided up amongst others depending on who applies. There is an online form to be filled in on Hart's website and I have heard quite a few requests have been made.



Hart District Council have a challenging financial year coming up. 2022/23 has a reasonably balanced budget although a few issues have arisen recently which puts this fragile balance into jeopardy. 2023/24 sees a deficit of over £1,000,000 looming and I know the Liberal Democrat/ Community Campaign Hart administration are meeting in June to discuss further savings. Tier one and tier two cuts are already underway and largely have only a small impact on residents although the outsourcing of the dog warden contract is controversial. Tier three cuts are likely to be more noticeable. The Council Tax is raised by the maximum amount allowed without a local referendum. The Government is offsetting some of the impact to Band A to D households and my group proposed a further £10 offset this year. Sadly, we were defeated on this proposal.

The Civic Campus, that is the Council offices and the Harlington area, are to be redeveloped into a mixed housing and community space. There is to be a community engagement starting mid-May where the proposals will be outlined for comment by residents. This will take the shape of online, hard copy and an exhibition to be held in Fleet where people can see the proposals and comment.

A Climate Emergency was declared last year by the Council. The original motion proposed by me, was in line with Government and Hampshire County Council timelines. The motion was amended by the administration to a much shorter timeline. Preliminary reports have shown that in order to achieve this shortened time frame, issues outside of Hart's control will have to be tackled such as taking the majority of diesel and petrol cars off the road. The leisure centre is Hart's biggest emitter and a report on how to reduce its carbon emissions and the cost is yet to be presented to the working group. My group proposed that funds set aside for housing which are ring fenced could be used to insulate homes which would not only reduce carbon emissions but also reduce fuel bills for householders has yet to be taken up but we will continue to press the administration for this.

Lastly Planning laws are likely to change soon. We don't know quite what these changes will be but our Joint Chief Executive Daryl Phillips is now firmly of the opinion that a Neighbourhood Plan is essential. I would urge Eversley residents to consider this and soon as it takes on average two years to get through the system.