

**MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF EFFINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL
HELD AT 8pm ON TUESDAY 29 JANUARY 2013
AT KING GEORGE V HALL, BROWN'S LANE, EFFINGHAM**

PRESENT

Cllr Pindar in the Chair
Cllrs Bell, Bowerman, Hogger, Lightfoot, Moss, Peskett, Symes. Wetenhall
Cllr Barker and 22 local government electors

14.13 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Moss had sent apologies that she would be arriving as soon after 8pm as possible, owing to another meeting.

15.13 DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY INTERESTS etc

Cllr Bell reported that he had a disclosable pecuniary interest to declare in relation to the Care Home planning application, as a resident near to the proposed site.

Cllr Hogger explained that as a member of GBC's Planning Committee she does not comment on planning applications, but may offer technical advice on planning policy if needed.

16.13 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 3 JANUARY 2013

03.13 Dispensation to participate in setting the precept

Cllr Pindar was among those who had submitted a request for a Dispensation, and this had been granted.

08.13 Highways: Reports

Yew Tree Close should read

Yew Tree Walk; the procedure is 'unstopping' the road.

With these corrections the Minutes were agreed and signed.

17.13 MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES (not elsewhere on the Agenda)

Nothing arising.

18.13 MATTERS RAISED BY RESIDENTS

Laura Gold and Kelly King introduced themselves to all present as residents from the Home Farm Estate. With 42 years of experience between them, they would like to be involved in future discussions about the area and to be spokespersons for residents there. They had had a meeting with Samantha Hutchison of GBC. They appreciated that this was to be a busy meeting and would like to speak more at the next. This was agreed and the Chairman thanked them warmly for their time and trouble.

A resident asked about progress on setting up a meeting between the Friends of KGV and the EVRT Trustees because there was still no date set and the impetus was being lost. In discussion it appeared as if everyone was waiting for everyone else, or waiting for Minutes of meetings. It was agreed that the Chairman will write to the Chairman of EVRT and let him know that there is a strong desire for a meeting to be convened. **SM**

The Chairman of EPFA asked if it was the case that the Custodian Trustee does not need to sign the agreement between themselves and EVRT. Cllr Pindar confirmed that legal advice had established the agreement was a licence with a fixed term and did not constitute a risk to the asset, so the Custodian Trustee did not need to sign on this occasion. It was agreed the Custodian Trustee would forward the letter. **SM**

19.13 PLANNING MATTERS

New applications

12/P/02164 Summerdown Manor, Critten Lane

Formation of a new access drive together with timber post and rail fencing

The Parish Council had previously objected to a similar application and agreed with the reasons given for refusal: no special circumstances for intrusion into the Green Belt and AONB, and the difficulty of achieving a visibility splay at the suggested location. The Parish Council considered that such measures as re-aligning the junction with the school drive, trimming vegetation or slowing traffic on the school drive should be considered before the steps proposed. The proposed point of access onto Critten Lane was felt to be worse for road users and the applicant than the existing arrangements. An unnecessary new road was a bad use of Green Belt. It was agreed to object.

SM

12/P/02165 82 Strathcona Ave

Two storey side extension, front canopy and replacement front porch

No comment.

13/P/00019 Land opposite The Old Post Cottage, Church St

The erection of a part 2 storey, part 3 storey 60 bedroom residential care home with nursing (Use Class 2) with associated car parking, landscaping and ancillary works following demolition of two small outbuildings

1. Effingham residents present made the following comments:

- Effingham Residents and Ratepayers consider that the application is so similar to the previous one as to make no difference and have strongly objected
- The area, which is the setting for the Church and Effingham Place, will be wrecked by this intrusion; wrong building in the wrong place. The refurbishment of Effingham Place was done with exceptional care and this setting must be preserved.
- Many details that had been pointed out as wrong in the previous application remain uncorrected or inconsistent. There is also nothing different in the attempt to claim exceptional circumstances, but this is not proven
- The previous application was rejected by GBC Planning Committee unanimously which is very rare, and shows how inappropriate it is. This proposal would destroy the village from the inside; the proposed use is inappropriate in the centre of Effingham
- Minton Group are wrong to claim that Effingham people object to a care home per se; no-one has said this
- The site is in the really attractive central area of Effingham. If permission for this can be achieved here, no other sites are safe.
- Since the previous application, the congregation of Fetcham Catholic Church has been merged with Our Lady of Sorrows immediately opposite the site on the Lower Road. The existing traffic and parking problems are even worse than before
- The Transport Plan still only makes reference to 'the school to the east', not the other two or the churches and the Legion. It is totally inadequate
- We must achieve the right buildings in the right place
- The parents who bought this land from Surrey County Council so that the primary school could relocate its playing field elsewhere stated at the time that their reason for doing so was because the Lower Road was too dangerous for children to cross even supervised. Traffic and parking is much worse than that now.

2. The Parish Council first debated the application as statutory consultee, and the following points were made.

In connection with the claim for exceptional circumstances which would justify the harm to the Green Belt and the Conservation Area:

'No alternative site'

This argument still does not hold up. The sequential test remains as before a flawed self-fulfilling exercise. There was no evidence that the applicant had looked again for alternative sites since the last application.

'Severe shortage of specialist care'

This argument still does not hold up. Demand locally has fallen since the last application. Three new care homes, providing in total 240-250 more beds in the area including provision for dementia, have been opened, at Byfleet, Silvermere and Esher. These

homes are not believed to be overcrowded or oversubscribed.

'The proposal has strong public support'

This claim is given much less prominence in the current application. Publicity and attempts to canvass support have been much lower key. Unlike at the previous discussion when some audience members had expressed support, this time, members of the public demonstrated unanimously by show of hands that they were opposed.

'Dimensions of bulk, height, site coverage reduced and acceptable for the site'

The maximum height had remained the same. Adjustments to width and depth (at maximum measurements) effectively cancelled each other out. The overall result for reducing the impression of massive overdevelopment and cramping of the site was so small as to be negligible. The roof design has been simplified but the result is vast, solid and monumental, even more unattractive than before, and despite claims to the contrary will still be visible from many places in Effingham, not only the immediately neighbouring central roads and properties. Suggested additional landscaping will do nothing to address this problem – at this height, on the raised position of the site, no additional landscaping will camouflage it. It was described as 'gross, and the only difference from the previous application is that it is slightly less gross'.

Other aspects of design and use were discussed:

Design

It looks more 'Lutyens-esque' but with the totally inappropriate scale dwarfs and undermines the nearby Listed Lutyens Red House, the Church and cottages.

Intrusion and impact on neighbours

The building has been slightly re-positioned on the plot and some third floor windows have been removed, but the effect of these changes is so minimal in the context of a building of this size as to achieve no appreciable improvement. It will still represent considerable intrusion: by overlooking from second floor windows; by noise (kitchens, refuse lorries turning, emergency vehicles, night staff; vehicles of visitors at any time of day or night; by smell (kitchens, bins, exhaust); and by light pollution – 24 hour lighting will be a requirement for such a use.

Effect on the Conservation Area

The buildings currently in the area represent a traditional disposition of church with burial ground at the highest point, surrounded by cottages and former manor houses in the appropriate subordinate position and scale. This arrangement where all the elements play their proper role in creating the feeling of a historic village centre will be disastrously interrupted by the insertion of an enormous commercial enterprise. It was noted that the application referred to the building representing 'a welcome introduction to the townscape' of Effingham, which is completely inappropriate. The iron security perimeter fencing is also completely inappropriate, described as 'horrible', both for its unwelcome appearance in this location, but also as a statement of a locked, enclosed institutional compound in the centre of the village.

Need

There is no information about the intention to provide for NHS patients, whereas this is the market for which there is overwhelming need and the argument of exceptional reasons for building in the Green Belt might be accepted. SCC has confirmed that it reiterates its previous assessment; the need is for NHS beds, and even so the need is greater in other parts of Surrey. Jean Boddy of SCC Social Services has commented 'This application is overestimating need for this very local demographic'. An SCC officer writing in *Surrey Today*, the official publication of SCC, writes about the policy that even very frail people or dementia sufferers will do better supported in their own homes, and that this is now their policy. There is no stated intention to provide for Effingham residents, only to compete with existing Effingham businesses.

Fitness for purpose

It was questioned whether the design was fit for purpose. This is a consideration when Green Belt may be lost so irretrievably. The likelihood of success is of very great concern

to residents. Care Homes are known to fail and close down with great regularity. The applicants describe their approach as 'boutique hotel' style care homes, and there was very little evidence of the facilities having been designed with the practicalities of assisted living under nursing care in mind. As explained in the Needs Assessment report, dementia patients do not need rooms with ensuite bathrooms, which they cannot use. This is just window dressing intended to dazzle and tempt the family of potential patients, and allay guilt feelings about putting a relative in a home. The Needs Assessment explains that the ratio for bathrooms should be one assisted bathroom to 8 beds, yet in the application one area has 19 rooms to one assisted bathroom. There are no rooms designed for the stimulation activities which are well understood to be essential in care for dementia patients. In case of medical difficulty, the future of the nearest hospital, Epsom, is currently in doubt and the Community First Responders had feared that they would be unable to resource support for a facility of this size.

Transport

The local public transport provision available to employees is virtually non-existent and certainly not available outside very limited day-time hours. There is very little likelihood that employees will be drawn from the immediate vicinity. They will have to come from larger population centres at some distance, and their only feasible means of travel will be by car. Yet while the number of employees has gone up from before, the number of parking spaces has been reduced. The area allocated to vehicles is so tight that refuse and delivery lorries will barely have room to turn. It remains to be demonstrated how they would go both in and out using forward gear if all parking spaces were full.

Vehicle access

Parish Councillors did not accept that the visibility splay as presented can be achieved, given the crest of a hill immediately to the west, the historic high wall forming part of the boundary of Ambledown, and the railings above the front boundary wall of Ambledown which obstruct visibility just as much as the wall itself. The planting of a hedge on SCC land was a condition on the developer in the planning consent for Effingham Place and it is not the case that SCC can give permission for it to be cut down to improve visibility. Visibility is a vital issue because of the large number of pedestrians (school children with their headphones on) who will be very close to this exit before they can be seen.

Impact on traffic

The same traffic assessment as previously has been repeated, although this was done when one of the schools in this area was on half term. It refers to 'one school to the east', but does not mention the other secondary school, or more amazingly the Primary School in immediate proximity, nor the two churches and a chapel, two church halls, the pub and other businesses, the British Legion and the Playing Fields which are all heavily used, with an ongoing history of traffic and parking problems. Capacity is already so overwhelmed that parking on private property or on spaces belonging to other organizations is a routine source of complaint and inconvenience to the rightful owners/users. Owing to the narrowness of the carriageways traffic flow is frequently backed up and grid-locked. This will only be exacerbated. Since the previous application, the congregations of the Catholic churches of Fetcham and Effingham have merged and the congestion (not only on Sundays) is even greater than at the time of the previous application. It should be noted that several years ago when they purchased this site from SCC in order to re-locate the Primary School's playing fields elsewhere, the current owners stated that this road was too dangerous for Primary School pupils to cross the road safely even under supervision, in the middle of the day (ie not rush hour), yet the same people now propose making an already higher level of traffic still worse.

Geological concerns

Owing to the geological strata of the sub-surface there have already been several well recorded serious episodes of subsidence in this area (junction of Lower Road and Church Street; Ambledown; Listed tomb in churchyard). These caused not only great expense for the affected property owners, but also days of traffic disruption not only for properties in this immediate vicinity but for the wider area. The introduction of yet more traffic including lorries to the area is completely inappropriate. The construction of a building of such mass and weight on this high area raises fears that it will also de-stabilise the ground around it and have a potentially very serious effect on the nearby Listed Buildings and structures.

Planning designation of the site

The Parish Council notes that the applicants, who are commercial concerns not residents, feel that the current designation of the site (outside the Settlement Area, in the Conservation Area and in the Green Belt) is not relevant. However residents strongly disagree with this and point out that these policies are still current. In 2011 an application even to raise a garage roof by less than a metre was turned down at appeal as being inappropriate.

S.106

The Parish Council noted the applicants' belief that a development of this size would not attract a planning gain contribution, and queried this.

Planning policies

Cllr Lightfoot had examined the arguments which referred to particular planning policies, and had found them to be faulty. She will let the Clerk have the information in writing.

In conclusion, the Parish Council agreed that it did not accept applicants' claims that the previous reasons for refusal had been dealt with. The changes were not sufficient to overcome the previous objections, and not nearly enough to overcome the harm to the Green Belt. The Parish Council agreed unanimously that it objected strongly to the application and by extension to the need to demolish two small buildings (13/P/0020). All residents present declared by show of hands that they were unanimously opposed.

3. The Parish Council considered the application as a neighbour of the site.

It noted that the applicant had completely failed to indicate the immediately adjacent Burial Ground on the Landscape Proposals Plan. The Parish Council strongly objects on the basis that the essential amenities of the site, tranquillity and privacy, will be harmed by overlooking and by intrusive noise coming from the building and people in the grounds.

SM

13/P/00020 Land opposite The Old Post Cottage, Church St

This application is contingent on the one above and the Parish Council strongly objects.

SM

13/P/00057 The Willows, Effingham Common

Demolition of existing stable block and replacement with new outbuilding providing non habitable accommodation (leisure use) and wine store.

Full information about the proposed dimensions had not been supplied. It was unclear whether this is change of use from agricultural as the area seems to be outside the curtilage. There were no special reasons given to outweigh harm to the openness of the Green Belt. It was agreed to object in the absence of this information, and to request that if consent was given, a condition against a later application for a further stable should be attached.

SM

13/P/00097 Limekiln Farm, Dog Kennel Green, Ranmore Common

Change of use of barn for a temporary period from agricultural to B8 (storage) (retrospective application)

There was no information provided about how long the temporary period would be, what the new use was and why this was retrospective. In this situation the Parish Council agreed it had no option but to object.

SM

Results / progress on previous planning applications

12/P/02033 The Orchard House, Beech Ave Refused

Other planning matters

None

Reports and correspondence relating to other Planning matters:

Joint Communities meeting

The Joint Communities representatives discussed amongst other things lengthsman's agreements, and it was agreed to research this jointly further. Each parish undertook to do an audit of the work it would wish to see done (verges cut, signs cleaned, hedges cut etc). Cllr Barker reported that a further meeting had taken place, and SCC Officers are keen to get the list together. Cllr Peskett undertook to research the verges, and

SP

Cllr Lightfoot the signage, siding out and hedges etc. **AL**

'Aspirations' document

Tim Harrold of CPRE had attended the Joint Communities meeting and mentioned this document, now signed up to by several Guildford parishes attempting to influence the Guildford Local Development Plan positively, rather than reactively. Cllr Hogger said she thought this was a very important initiative. It was agreed this item will go on the next agenda, but meanwhile the Clerk should ask for Effingham to go on the mailing list. **SM**

Enforcement training, GBC

Cllrs Lightfoot, Bowerman and Symes would like to go. **SM**

Flooding

Cllr Lightfoot had photographed serious flooding of land either side of Effingham Common Road over the Christmas period. It was agreed this information needs to be recorded for the Village Plan, and also other similar areas prone to flooding eg Critten Lane, Orestan Lane, area near Effingham Junction Station bus layby and footway over the bridge. Cllr Lightfoot will submit the photos to the SCC group responsible for monitoring flooding risk via the SCC website.

20.13 HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT
Current Highways and Transport matters
None.

Reports and correspondence relating to Highways matters

Highways items for repair

Cllr Barker asked for a list to be sent to him, as bids go to the March meeting of the Local Committee. Councillors and residents spoke about continuing drainage problems. **SM**

A246 Speed limit

This is now going out to consultation until 18 February. If there are objections, a report will go to the Local Committee.

Bridleway claim, Beech Avenue

Cllr Wetenhall reported that the Inspectorate had said the result is imminent.

Rights of Way training

SCC had offered places on two courses, for training volunteers to cut back vegetation, and for information about the network. Cllrs Bell and Bowerman would like to go to the latter. **SM**

Effingham Place

A controlled protest by residents against vehicles using and blocking their drive had been held on 7 January. This had worked well and it was planned to repeat it. It was noted that the Catholic Church experiences similar problems.

21.13 VILLAGE PLAN
Minutes of Steering Committee Meeting, 10 January 2013
These Minutes were received and adopted.

Progress report

Cllr Moss reported that the Neighbourhood Area Application had been submitted and news of when the consultation would begin was awaited from GBC. Information had been circulated to all residents, and a letter will be sent to key village organisations. A Press Release and information on the website was ready to activate when GBC is ready. The Annual Parish Meeting in April will include a presentation and public launch.

The Terms of Reference for the Steering Group had been decided, and those for the Working Groups were being drawn up. Cllr Pindar said that public libraries have information on local businesses that might help the 'Youth and Business' group. The next Steering Committee meeting will be Wednesday 13 February. The SC will work on the

time plan.

Draft Budget

An early draft had been compiled. It was agreed to invite the GBC Officer to discuss it in detail. GBC had confirmed it would not charge EPC for officer time. Cllr Symes commented that he would like to see the total raised, to show that it was not yet clear what grants could be available, there was no provision for contingency or for the costs of independent assessment. Including these could bring the total to £22,660. It was agreed that Cllrs Moss and Bell would discuss these points, re-vamp the figures and write formally to Cllr Barker with the figures and making the case for funding, to ask for a contribution.

PM
CB

22.13 GREEN SPACE AND VILLAGE AMENITIES

Current GSVA matters

Liaison with Polesden Lacey's Steering Committee for Community Day, 6 July

This will be a special events day targeted at all the communities which neighbour Polesden Lacey, following the success of the Jubilee event. Cllr Lightfoot volunteered to take on this role for Effingham. Cllr Bell will make sure Sarah Montgomery and ICE know, to avoid a clash.

AL
CB

Commoners' Day

GBC is still trying to recruit a replacement for Adam Owen, but is keen to run the day again even in reduced form rather than let it lapse. It was agreed that EPC could realistically only go ahead if GBC has a named person responsible for liaison. In principle, the best day would be Sunday 29 September 2013. Cllr Moss will join the Commoners' Day working group.

SM
PM

Bid to the Community Fund from EVRT - benches

As requested EVRT had supplied further information about the cost of the benches and the fixing kits. Three quotations had been asked for, at least one of which should be from sources independent of the charity or user groups. Two quotations for the installation work, had been provided and one estimate given without seeing the site. One of the quotations was not from an independent source.

The Community Fund working group had discussed this information and recommended to the Parish Council that EPC buys the benches and fixings direct, so that VAT can be reclaimed; also, that the Parish Council agree to pay the cost for the installation work on condition this is done by Norbury Park Wood products who supply the benches. These recommendations were discussed and agreed. The Clerk to inform the Chairman and ask for a response.

SM

Reports and correspondence relating to GSVA matters

Adult fitness equipment on the Playing Fields

Cllr Hogger reported she had been shocked to discover that GBC had still not processed the s106 grant arrangements for installation of adult fitness equipment on the KGV fields, despite this having been settled over a year ago. Following restructuring new officers had begun to query the whole project again and wanted confirmation that residents and the Parish Council had been asked and approved. Cllr Hogger had explained that from her own knowledge of residents' comments, she fully supported this on their behalf. The Parish Council also gave its unanimous support to the project. Cllr Hogger will inform GBC.

LH

Grit bins, Leewood Way

Cllr Moss asked whether Parish Council-funded grit bins could go at the junctions of Leewood Way and Effingham Common Road. Grit bins had previously only been made available on adopted roads, not private roads. It was agreed to put this on the next Agenda and discuss whether it was possible to introduce a second 'wave' of bins.

SM

Mayors Award for service to the community

Nominations for this award are invited by 1 March.

23.13

REPORTS

Police and safety community issues (report of session before the start of the present Agenda)

PCSO Culross reported 4 crimes in January – 1 burglary to a property, 1 criminal damage to a vehicle and 2 thefts: one laptop, from a vehicle and one tractor, located and returned. Patrol cars and officers had been in the area on Operation Candlelight anti-burglary work encouraging people to make it look as if houses were occupied, and Operation Marjoram, to discourage people from leaving property on show in vehicles. There had also been speed checks on Effingham Common Road.

A resident asked if PCSO Culross would be more effective if he had a bicycle, but he explained that on foot he was more approachable and this was the point of his role. With thanks to residents who had contacted the Police Commissioner to ensure this role was not under threat, he could say that his job is not in danger and he will stay in Effingham for a long time.

There was discussion about the discrepancy between crime figures and those on the official statistics, but this is because the beats do not coincide with the parish boundaries.

Allotments

No further news.

Schools

No further news.

EVRT

A resident reported that rugby was being played on the fields after 6 days of snow, and the ground had been reduced to mud which no-one could walk across. It was said that the Howard School had complained it could not be used.

Home Farm Estate

A meeting of PHFCC will be held at GBC on 7 February.

Friends of Effingham Common

No further news.

Smith's Charity

No further news.

Effingham Local History Group

No further news.

Local government / admin matters / website

There was discussion about a damaged grave surround in the Burial Ground. The family who originally purchased this are uncontactable now.

Mr Cornwell had kindly donated a large quantity of stationery left behind when the business near the Parish Room had moved.

No-one had put names forward for the vacancy on the council.

24.13

CORRESPONDENCE

The following correspondence which had been received since the last meeting was noted:

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Effingham & Little Bookham GBC | Parish magazine Agenda and reports, meetings of Planning Committee, 15 January Nomination Form, Mayor's Award |
| SCC Highways | Publication of intention to make a Traffic Order (speed limits A246) |
| St John Ambulance NALC | Surrey News: Final edition! DIS no 800 |

25.13 FINANCIAL & ADMIN MATTERSConclusion of Budget 2013-14

Following decisions at the last meeting the re-calculated figures had been authorised and submitted to GBC.

Clerk's leaving date and hand-over

During this item the Clerk withdrew and Cllr Symes acted as Minute-taker.

(i) Date of leaving to be notified to bank

The council agreed to add a further 8 working days to the Clerk's (Sue Morris) salary so that she would be paid up to 28th Feb 2013, to help with handover and consistency.

(ii) It was further agreed that if further work was needed after the end of February, and Sue Morris's agreed, she would be offered a daily rate pro-rata at her current salary. This rate would be offered until altered by further negotiations.

The Clerk plans to hand over information about different areas of activity to named councillors.

Cheques for approval and signature

The following cheques were authorised and signed:

| | | |
|----------------|----------|--------------------------|
| Phone Coop | 31.80 | Local Govt Act 1972 s111 |
| EDF | 134.55 | Local Govt Act 1972 s111 |
| James Nicholls | 260.00 | Local Govt Act 1972 s214 |
| EVRT | 1,500.00 | Local Govt Act 1972 s145 |
| | 500.00 | Ditto |
| | 3,200.00 | Ditto |
| Arnold Pindar | 658.80 | Local Govt Act 1972 s112 |
| Susan Morris | 238.88 | Local Govt Act 1972 s112 |

Reports and correspondence relating to Finance & Admin matters

Nothing further.

26.13 PARISH BUSINESS FOR THE AGENDA OF THE NEXT MEETING

Date of the next meeting: Tuesday 26 February 2013.