

# MINUTES OF THE 128<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF

## Effingham

Tuesday 9th April 2024, 8pm, The Barnes Wallis Hall.

King George V Hall, Browns Lane, Effingham. KT24 5ND

### **Those present:**

Cllrs Hackett, Hogger, Pindar, Rehorst-Smith & Symes.

In addition, there were 2 representatives from Effingham Residents Association, PC Ingham & 8 local residents.

### **1) Apologies for absence:**

Apologies were received from SCC Cllr Booth, EPC Cllrs Moss & Trevor.

### **2) Minutes:**

The draft minutes from the 11<sup>th</sup> of April 2023 (127<sup>th</sup>) Annual Parish Meeting were considered and approved.

### **3) Review of Parish Council activity for the year 2023 – 2024.**

Cllr Symes (Chairman EPC) gave a comprehensive review of Parish Council activity throughout the last year; a copy of the full report can be found here: <https://www.effinghamparishcouncil.gov.uk/our-meetings/dates-agendas-and-minutes/>

In addition to the latest Chairman's report, he spoke about the need to find new councillors to fill the 3 current vacancies, and the sad standing down last year of Cllrs Cornwell, Muscat, Palmer, Roscoe & Thorne. Cllr Cornwell & Palmer agreed to stay on the Planning Review Group, to assist the parish council in the consideration of planning applications. (a working group without decision making authority). He also spoke regarding parish boundary changes where there had been a loss of 56 properties to a neighbouring parish, which in turn meant a loss of 6% of precept contributions. Another change was the standing down from Guildford Borough Council of Cllr Hogger, who had served local residents for 24 years. The Parish Council had been angered by a developer removing the historic beech hedge at Orchard Walls, and very disappointed by GBC's Enforcement Department's investigation. There had been a successful scaled down Commoners Day at the end of September 2023, and it is planned to hold another Commoners Day in 2025. He was pleased to report on 2 projects that were completed in 2023/24, namely new playground equipment at the KGV Playing Fields and a Vehicle Activated Sign on the A246. The parish council thanks Guildford Borough Council for grants that helped finance these projects.

#### 4) **Questions and Answers:**

PC Ingham kindly attended the meeting representing Surrey Police and took questions from councillors and residents.

She explained that her policing area is the East of Guildford, and that she works in support of communities in particular with finding long term solutions for issues that need extra resource to resolve. She hopes to be in Effingham once a week and feels an increased police presence is a positive way to increase engagement and hopefully reduce crime. She works with PCSO's who don't have the same powers as PC's but are invaluable with intelligence gathering.

She agreed to speak to colleagues about providing a regular speed check on A246 and that online chat from the Surrey Police website was a useful resource along with messaging from the Surrey Police Facebook page.

Cllr Hogger kindly gave a review of planning in the Effingham area.

She first spoke about **Berkeley Homes** "Grand Scheme" – and the delays that have stalled their decision whether or not to proceed with the development. She noted there hadn't been any new documents on the planning portal for application (23/P/01088) since October 2023 & that the expiry date for determination was this coming Friday (12.04.24). She noted the meeting with Berkeley Homes's technical people that had been positive in discussing the various S106 road improvements for the centre of the village.

Next reviewed was the **Orchard Walls** development where the historic hedge had been removed (now replaced) and where applications for security gates and an additional property from that originally agreed, are being currently considered by GBC planning officers. It was noted that the developer had been acting in a way that concerned local residents at The Crossroads, and this was being investigated by GBC's Planning Enforcement department.

The **Church Street** development was covered next, which appeared to be progressing well, although the parish council had concerns relating to boundary treatment at the development, especially the new boundary for the Parish Council's burial ground extension and the existing elevated one with Church Street. The clerk was able to confirm that the Burial Ground Extension (part of the S106 agreement) had been completed (28<sup>th</sup> March), which should help to future proof burial capacity at the Parish Council's burial ground.

The refused application for the old **Sibleys** site was briefly discussed along with the refusal of security gates at the **Queens Stage** development.

Cllr Rehorst-Smith (as GBC Cllr) spoke next. She gave an update on the borough council's financial situation although couldn't go into any details due to an ongoing police investigation. She did confirm that the borough council had avoided being served a S144 Notice (for bankruptcy) and that the council had a balance budget for 2024/25. Cuts had been made that affected waste collection and the council were considering selling assets. She went on to explain that the Local Plan needed reviewing every 5 years, and that due to central government changes they were looking at housing numbers. She also confirmed that there is a Local Plan public consultation planned for 2025.

Vivien White (Chair of EFFRA) spoke of her concerns regarding a statement in the Chairman's report that covered the inactivity at the **Berkeley Homes** site off Lower Road, and that wildlife was returning to the Effingham Lodge Farm site. She went on to say that EFFRA would like to see the site properly fenced off to avoid incursions. She also confirmed that Berkeley Homes appeared to have resolved the water run-off from their site entrance on Effingham Common Road.

A resident asked if GBC Cllr Rehost-Smith considered GBC's Planning Department was adequately resourced due to the issue seen there. Cllr Rehorst-Smith thought the department was getting up to speed.

A resident asked if GBC's planning department were outsourcing work to Bristol. Cllr Hogger thought this might have something to do with a warning GBC's Planning Department received from Government in early 2023 regarding their performance & that the right to make planning decisions could be taken away and handed to the Planning Inspectorate, who are based in Bristol. However, the planning department had improved their performance since then and this seemed to be no longer a threat.

#### **5) Report from the Trustees of The Henry Smith Charity:**

##### **Henry Smith Charity Report to EPC April 2024**

Update on the Henry Smith Charity

The Henry Smith Charity Effingham is a long-standing village charity that benefits from an annual grant from the national Henry Smith Charity to be spent on people in need specifically within the Effingham Parish boundary. It is part of the Effingham Parish Council activities but has been run by a group of four local volunteer Trustees since March 2007.

(Presently Gill Walker, Terry Driscoll, James Brennan, Brendan Kelly)

In 2023 the charity made several direct grants, some via the local schools and in addition handed out Christmas Shopping Vouchers to 12 households within the parish.

A total of £2,800 funding to households in Effingham over the year. All grants are made with the maximum privacy and discretion.

Although traditionally directed towards the needy of the older generation, we have found the need has broadened lately to a variety of families. All cases of hardship can be considered. We work closely with the local schools and other local institutions to ensure families with young children also benefit where appropriate.

Although we are a relatively small charity, we are well funded and seek to make a difference at the very local level.

In the last year we were receive a new grant (annually £3,900) from the Henry Smith Charity as we had been successful in spending the previous grant. Rules state that each year the charity is required to only hold no more than one year's income. Hence, we are always keen to find genuine cases of hardship to support. We have in the past made additional grants to help with school trips and the like which is an area which may grow.

Looking forward the Charity is continually seeking:

- Deserving Christmas voucher recipients.
- Hardship cases for making grants.
- And to undertake more promotion – we are listed on several websites and try to promote through local agencies and newsletters. Most recommendations are by word of mouth.

For further details - please contact the Parish Clerk – Jon Short. (In confidence) [clerk2010@effinghamparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk2010@effinghamparishcouncil.gov.uk)

Brendan Kelly  
Trustee – Henry Smith Charity Effingham.

**6) Vote of thanks:**

Cllr Symes spoke of the new alliances with local parish councils, who were now working collectively to look at flooding, and proposed developments such as Wisley / Preston Cross.

Cllr Symes finished the evening by thanking his fellow councillors and clerk for their continued support throughout the year.