



# Winter News 2023

*from*

**EYNSFORD PARISH COUNCIL**

Welcome to the Winter Newsletter from your parish council, packed full with useful and interesting information!

Please have a read of this newsletter for useful information about the work of the parish council.

You will find an update on the village hall project, the coronation, work at Eynsford station and more.

The council will be planting a new tree acrostic at Lullingstone close to the 'chicken' tree pictured here in the next couple of months. We have also arrange for three of the willows at Common Meadow to be pruned to keep them in good health.



Our Annual Parish Meeting will be held on Friday 31st March from 6.30pm-8.30pm in the village hall. All are welcome to come along and find out what the parish council has been doing over the past year and to ask any questions. Light refreshments will be served.

Parish Council elections will be held in May this year, so if you are interested in standing as a councillor, do look out for details on our website or via Sevenoaks District Council.

*Holly Ivaldi, Clerk*

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Find 'Eynsford Parish Council' on Facebook and Twitter.

[www.eynsfordparishcouncil.org.uk](http://www.eynsfordparishcouncil.org.uk)

# Parish Council Budget 2023/24

*Cllr Phil Ward*

By now, councillors should have approved the council's budget for the financial year 2023/24. The agreed precept is £90,188 which represents an increase of 5% over the previous year, significantly lower than the UK consumer price index of 9.3% (November 2022).

The parish council precept accounts for only a small proportion of the council tax which is mostly made up by Kent County Council, Kent Police, Kent Fire Service and Sevenoaks District Council. The new council tax levels will be published by Sevenoaks District Council later in the year.

As detailed elsewhere in this newsletter, the council has decided not to budget for a public works loan for the new village hall in the financial year 23/24. This is because the hall project is now not requesting this funding within this coming budget year.

## NEW VILLAGE HALL PROJECT

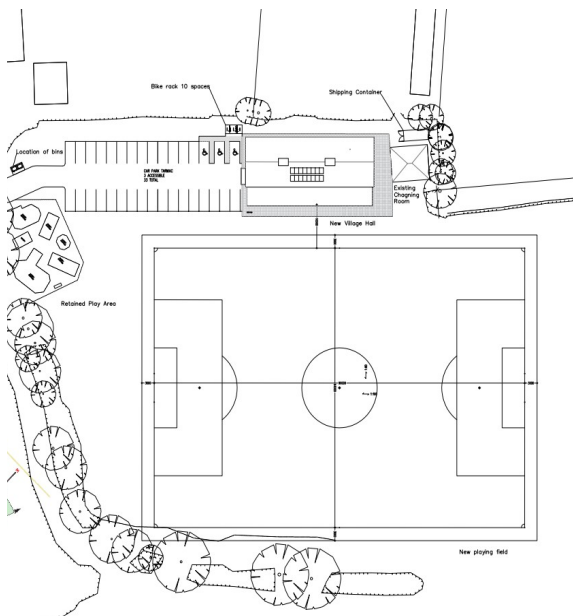
*Cllr Alan Cooke*

We continue to work closely with Eynsford Village Hall Trustees on the joint project to build a new village hall and football pitch at Harrow Meadow.

### Project Update

The Autumn newsletter reported that our archaeological consultant had issued their report to Kent County Council (KCC) regarding the findings of the initial phase of investigation and were awaiting feedback as to the scope of additional work necessary in order to discharge this planning condition.

KCC agreed that two areas needed to be investigated further, one below the footprint of the proposed new hall and the other in an area of



the new football pitch where the level of the ground is to be reduced.

Our consultant has tendered this work and the parish council agreed to accept the lowest tender with a view to starting this work early in the new year (January 2023).

During this work, Harrow Meadow will be closed to the public for safety reasons and each gate will be padlocked. It will also be necessary to close the play area for the period that the work is being carried out. Some temporary fencing will be in place and the public are asked to respect that this is there for their safety.

On completion of this second phase of investigation, the two areas that have been excavated will be left open but will be cordoned off. Again, the public are asked to exercise extreme care and to keep children and animals away from any trenches if and when Harrow Meadow is reopened.

In spring 2023, we plan to start the next phase of the project and carry out the ground works to rotate and lay the new football pitch. This work involves a considerable amount of earth moving and the work site will include an area north of the changing rooms alongside the tree line with the allotments. The site will be fenced off and the public will not be allowed into this area or within Harrow Meadow. Again, gates will be locked and access to the play area will not be permitted for safety reasons.

## **Funds & Fundraising**

Fundraising and grant applications continue and our progress can be seen on the thermometer attached to the village hall notice board. At the time of writing this article, funds held by the Hall Trustees plus monies pledged by the parish council amounts to £470k and when combined with the CIL grant received from Sevenoaks' Council and from the expected sale of the existing hall site, amounts to £1.23m. With the overall cost of the project being around £2.0m we still have some way to go.

Scan to donate



gofundme

The development committee would like to take this opportunity to thank those who have supported the various fund-raising events including the sale of raffle tickets and Eynsford calendars. If you are able to help with fundraising in any way, please get in touch. Many companies offer matched funding to workers who undertake charity work – is this something that you could do?

A Comedy night is our next major fundraising event in the village hall which will take place on 17<sup>th</sup> February 2023 featuring Steve Best, Raymond and Mr Timkins and Audrey Heartburn. Tickets are £15 and can be obtained via [www.buytickets.at/eynsfordvillagehall](http://www.buytickets.at/eynsfordvillagehall). We hope that you will all support this event.

Other fundraising events are being planned including the Garden Safari which will take place on 17th and 18th June 2023.

### **Public Works Loan**

In the financial section of the Business Plan, which was developed during the year, it identified a short fall in the funding, which could be covered by taking out a public works loan. This is a loan, at lower rates than the high street banks and is paid back over a number of years by an increase in the precept part of your council tax.



Under the Local Government Act 2003, this guide sets out the criteria on which the Secretary of State generally applies in deciding whether to give approval. When applying for borrowing approval the parish council should be fully open with residents and details of the project and plans for borrowing along with loan repayments must be available to residents. This can include discussions at meetings or via a web site or through the distribution of a parish newsletter. Evidence of this will be taken into account in considering whether to give approval to a loan. In addition, when increasing the precept to fund borrowing, evidence of public support for increasing the precept is required.

Clearly there are a number of risks should a large funding gap occur, not only would there be the loss of our CIL grant, as it is dependent upon all the funding being in place, but if the whole project does not go ahead and the biggest risk is the village losing its community hall due to structural issues.

At the parish council meeting held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2022, it was resolved to seek approval from the Secretary of State for a public works loan of £300k over a 20 year period for the new village hall project. It was also intended to increase the parish council's precept (which forms part of your council tax bill) for the purpose of the loan repayment.



The budget was discussed by councillors on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2022 and the inclusion of the public works loan was to be deferred until the meeting to be held on 15<sup>th</sup> December and when the full results of the public consultation could be reviewed. A decision was deferred until the meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2023.

In January, councilors agreed that the 23/24 budget would not include a public works loan at this stage but agreed that the project as a whole should be presented to the public at a meeting to be held in March 2023.

## Charles 111 Coronation

*Cllr Ferne Haxby*

Have you seen the fountain at the end of Bower Lane, next to the war memorial? This fountain was put in place to celebrate the coronation of Edward VII, back around 1910 and we will be carrying out work, via a specialist company, to restore the fountain in time for Charles III's coronation in May.

With the coronation drawing closer, what plans do you have to celebrate the event? Are you a member of a group in the village planning something?



We have approached Farningham Parish Council to see what they have planned and if we can feed into anything they are exploring but would be very interested to know if residents in Eynsford are thinking of how they are going to celebrate Charles's wonderful day.

Let the parish council know if we can support any plans going forth, can we help in bringing together ideas for the weekend? Would you be interested in being part of a group to enable this?

Contact the parish council office on [info@eynsfordparishcouncil.org.uk](mailto:info@eynsfordparishcouncil.org.uk) with any ideas and support you can give.

# Annual Parish Inspection 2022

*Cllr Michael Barker*

Parish councillors are constantly on the alert for action that might be needed to maintain village property and facilities at a high standard, but in addition to ad hoc year round reporting we conduct a systematic annual inspection of all property owned by the parish council to assess and prioritise routine maintenance needs.

That process has now been completed for 2022/2023 by some councillors going out as a group and some going out individually so assess designated facilities.

On the whole the facilities of the village appeared to quite robust and in good repair but one or two items were identified: a bench or two in need of a coat of varnish, one or two of the noticeboards e.g. outside the Olive Seal hall and in Mill Lane are in need of replacing, probably.



Also we notice some areas of subsidence by the river and areas where the paving stones had become uneven and could be a tripping hazard.

Other, smaller jobs have been identified and prioritised, including the removal of the old village noticeboard from the car park.

It goes without saying, almost, that if any of our loyal readers feel the need to bring any issues of a maintenance related nature to our attention, then the best way is to ring the parish council office and speak to a clerk or leave a succinct message.

## Parish Council Meetings

Members of the public are welcome to attend our meetings which are generally held on the first Monday and third Thursday of each month at the Parish Office, Priory Lane. Agendas are put up on noticeboards in advance as well as the council's website and facebook page.

## **The Space**

**9am-1pm every Wednesday at the Riverside Club, Eynsford**

*Cllr Wendy Gee*

The Space was launched at the beginning of December by Darent Valley Community Church and is being supported by Sevenoaks District Council.

It is a place for the whole community to meet in a safe warm environment and chat, have breakfast and lunch (plus a good helping of tea, coffee, cakes and biscuits in between) and engage in activities if desired.

Come and enjoy snooker, a game of chess, play cards, do a jigsaw, learn and use a computer, printer facilities, knitting, crochet or bring your own entertainment or just sit and chat with old and new friends.

There is also a play area set up for small children and their parents.

Arrive at whatever time you would like to, no membership of the Riverside Club required, free parking on site, free food, free activities, heated space and everyone is invited. You will find a warm welcome awaits you.



## **Photocopying Service**

Did you know that you can use our photocopier in the office for a small charge? This is less expensive than using your home printer! A reduced price is offered to local clubs and societies. Please note that prices will be going up a little from 1 April 2023 to cover increasing paper and printing costs.

Contact the office for details on [info@eynsfordparishcouncil.org.uk](mailto:info@eynsfordparishcouncil.org.uk).

# Eynsford In Bloom

*Anne Marie Fereday*

Eynsford In Bloom, formerly known as Eynsford Best Kept Village Group has been in existence since 1989 and currently has 16 regular volunteer members. These range from school kids doing their Duke of Edinburgh awards, to enthusiastic pensioners. We meet on a weekly basis and tend to various sites in the village. Eynsford In Bloom have won gold awards in the South & South East In Bloom contest (part of a nationwide scheme), for eight consecutive years. We are hoping to do so again this year but success has all been down to the passion and dedication of our volunteers who are all organised by one person, Pauline Penney. Now she has finally decided to hand over the management of our group to Kaz Langridge of the Eynsford Gardeners' Club and me, Anne Marie Fereday.



We have both been volunteers for Eynsford In Bloom for a few years now. Kaz has experience from working as a professional gardener for some years. I must confess I'm a bit of an amateur but my interest comes from a passion for the unique environment we have here in Eynsford. One of only about 200 chalk river valleys in the United Kingdom (and there are more in the UK than any other country), it is fragile but too good to lose to the threat of development or pollution. Many local farmers are encouraging wildlife, which includes wildflowers and species such as lichen and pollinating insects. It's clear that many of Eynsford's gardeners are also making efforts to compost and save water as well as tending their garden plants.

The group looks after sites around the village including the station, car park, Village Hall Drive and war memorial which we plant every year. We meet weekly on Tuesday mornings in the car park and also on Thursday evenings, when watering is necessary. In addition, we hold monthly work parties on the first Saturday of every month, in the mornings. We meet for coffee after our work parties, hosted by supporters.

There are also a number of “Adopt-a-Plot” sites available to work on at a time that suits individuals. We also meet up for social outings and take part in community events such as local fairs etc, so it’s a great way to meet local people and make new friends! (We are always looking for new volunteers, so if you are keen on gardening or protecting the local environment, please get in touch with us; Anne Marie Fereday, 07792 663564 or email [annemariefereday@me.com](mailto:annemariefereday@me.com). Or Kaz on [kazlangridge@gmail.com](mailto:kazlangridge@gmail.com) 07538 110505. There are regular updates on our progress in the parish monthly magazine “Trident” or check our regular postings on Eynsford and Farningham Massive, or on our own Facebook page.

Monthly work parties focus on seasonal tasks such as planting, dead-heading, composting etc. Recent work parties have also focused on pruning growth on local trees in specific sites such as the station “triangle”. But there are other activities – for instance, last year’s wildlife survey of St Martin’s churchyard. This is the first survey of this site since 2017, and it is a haven for insects plants and birds. The results of the survey will be sent to Kent Biological Records Centre and the Botanical Society of Britain – this is just one example of how Eynsford In Bloom liaises with other organisations.

Another of our sites is outside Eynsford railway station, where the “triangle” – the area of grass that stretches from the station building to the corner of the railway bridge – is kept in a wild-life friendly state, but the car park and planters are tended by us. The “In Bloom” contest itself encourages community work, for instance last year the ‘islanders’ of Old Mill Close entered a category called “In Your Neighbourhood”, which designated for specific sites. We also coordinate with the Millfield trust and help their work parties.

Some of our work is just geared to good old-fashioned horticulture for example planting the War Memorial four times a year or tending Saint Martin’s Church Rose Garden. The present inclement weather has stopped three work parties recently but our volunteers we will be working cleaning and tidying borders, plots and other neglected corners all round the village. We hope residents and businesses appreciate this and will support the voluntary team by creating interesting and colourful front gardens and entrances to ensure the village is attractive for residents and visitors.

We owe our success to all our volunteers but finally, we would like to thank Pauline for all her years of incredible hard work, as she prepares to hand over the organisation’s future to a new generation, and hopefully Eynsford In Bloom will continue to flourish and help keep Eynsford blooming!



# Darenth Valley Community Rail Partnership (‘DVCRP’) – an update

*Cllr. Malcolm Richardson*

A small ceremony was held in the waiting room recently to commemorate the completion of the restoration work to both this room and the booking hall. Representatives of the DVCRP were joined by people from Eynsford Parish Council, Eynsford in Bloom, members of the Shoreham Society and a number of Eynsford residents.

This work follows on from the restoration of the public toilets in the station and the ongoing work to the shelter on the London bound platform.

The results are impressive with the ceilings in both the booking hall and the waiting room being exposed, revealing an intricate lattice of original beams – residents are invited to look up next time they use the station!

Both rooms have been painted with period Victorian colours to provide a feel of the original station and some rather impressive artwork is also on

the walls, including a poster depicting Eynsford with a view of the railway arch – these can be purchased from the café at Bat & Ball Station.



It is hoped that the waiting room can be hired by residents for community use – for instance perhaps a meeting of residents around the station who do not want to go into the centre. Table and chairs will be available as part of any hire. DVCRP and EPC are currently considering how this might work with opening etc out of hours.

In addition the shelter is nearing completion – works were delayed by the freezing weather but it is hoped that it will be finished in the next few weeks. A new bench will be installed and the artworks erected – two pointillist works (black & white dots) created by Graham Steel will be replaced (he has now left the village) by two new works of central scenes



by two new artists who live in the village.

It is also hoped that it might be possible to create a small museum of railway memorabilia in the old Station Master's office (next to the cycle shelter). This would be a static visual only display, perhaps behind a glass panel as a fair selection of original railway related items have been accumulated.

Thanks are due to the DVCRP for their energy (and grants!) in moving these issues forward – more initiatives are envisaged together with the Parish Council, such as creating a new footpath from the station direct to Lullingstone Villa and beyond to allow rail users and others easier access then having to walk into the centre of the village and along Lullingstone Lane, which can be quite dangerous for pedestrians.

Watch this space!

## Eynsford Parish Office

The Parish Office has a stock of black and recycling bags and garden waste sacks that you can collect/purchase during opening hours. We also offer a photocopying/printing service at competitive prices. If you have a larger amount to do, please contact us in advance to arrange. We can offer help and advice on a number of issues and can put you in touch with other services.

Normal opening hours are 8.30am—2.30pm Mon—Thurs  
01322 865320; [info@eynsfordparishcouncil.org.uk](mailto:info@eynsfordparishcouncil.org.uk)

## Follow us Online

Eynsford Parish Council's website is the best place for you to find useful information about the council and its services. There are also areas dedicated to the village and community groups with the option for you to add your own events for listing. Have a look at [www.eynsfordparishcouncil.org.uk](http://www.eynsfordparishcouncil.org.uk)

We are also on **Facebook** and **Twitter** (search for Eynsford Parish Council) where we post up to date news and share useful information. We love to hear your views and to see your pictures too. Do follow us to keep up to date! Let us know what you think and what other kind of information you would like us to share.



# Eynsford's Repair Café

*Holly Ivaldi*

Eynsford Parish Council's Green Team ran another successful Repair Café at the Scout Hall on 21st January. Twenty three repairs were made, or advice given to enable items to be fixed. The Repair Café was set up by the Green Team to help to reduce waste by saving items from being thrown away. The event was run by members of the team with additional volunteers from the community giving their time and skills to carry out small repairs.



Tea, coffee and cake were served and some people made donations to the new village hall fund. At the end of the day £181 was raised for the village hall project.

I'd like to thank all of the volunteer repairers and members of the Green Team for helping to make the day a success. Thank you to the scout group for the use of the hall which was an ideal venue.

Thank you also to all the people who brought along items to be repaired. These ranged from a teddy with falling-off ears, to an old lamp

and some bikes. If you know of an electrician who might be willing to help with future repair cafes, we would love to hear from them!

We hope that these will become a regular event in our village, so keep your eyes open for the next one!

