



Parish Council activities and achievements: 2022 / 2023



The current Parish Council has served Egerton for the past four years navigating through political, economic and social challenges. At a local level, the Council has also had to deal with some active attempts to disrupt council activities, *mostly* from outside our community.

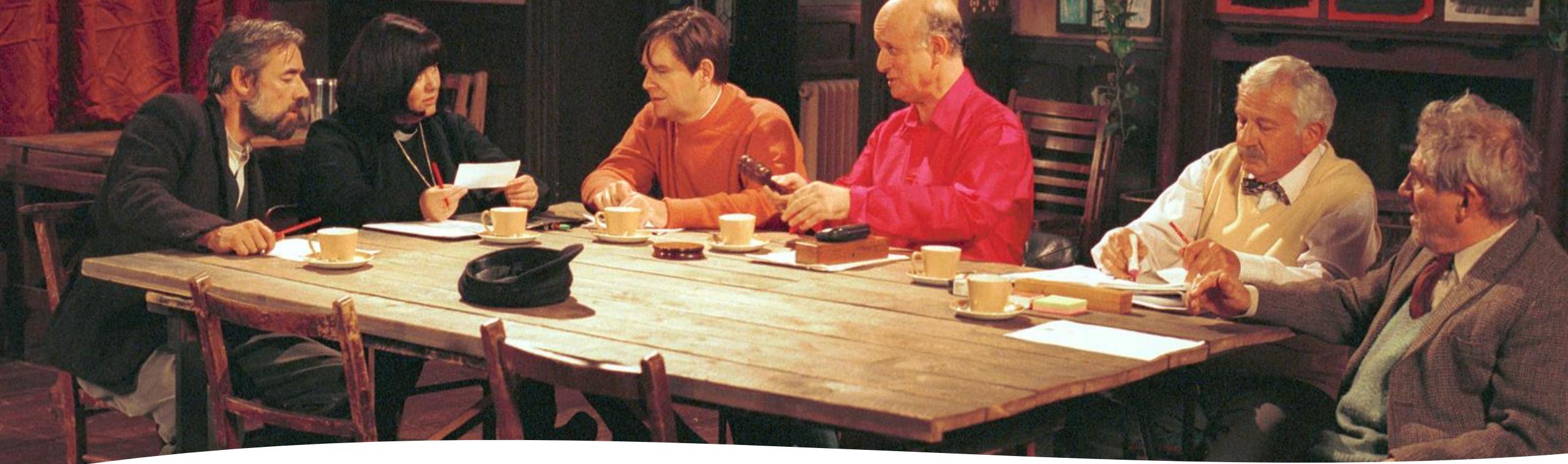
Yet, the Parish Council has successfully managed to progress significant essential projects that continue to improve and enhance life in our community for its residents

A photograph of a rural village at sunset or sunrise. In the foreground, there are several houses with red roofs, partially obscured by trees. In the background, a church with a prominent tower stands on a hill, its spire reaching towards the sky. The lighting is warm, casting long shadows and giving the scene a peaceful, golden-hour atmosphere.

Major projects included:

- Successful adoption of a Neighbourhood Plan**
- Plan for affordable housing for people who wish to live in their village**
- Plans for the development of older people's housing**

Here are some of the other initiatives progressed in the past year:



Parish Council meetings take place on the 1st Tuesday of every month. Eleven meetings were held in 2022 – all of which were open to the public.

**Would you like to volunteer as a Parish Councillor to help maintain Egerton as a great place to live?
It's not quite 'Vicar of Dibley' though!**

**The Parish Council continues to work
to deliver on the wishes of the
community that were expressed in
the Egerton Neighbourhood Plan.**

**The Plan was developed over 5 years
by the Steering Group under the
Chairmanship of Jane Carr. It was
adopted by Ashford Borough Council
on March 3rd 2022.**

**The village referendum three weeks
earlier saw a record turnout of 50%
(average turnout in a Neighbourhood
Plan referendum is 32.4%) with
91.47% voting in favour of the plan**



An application for outline planning permission has been submitted to Ashford Borough Council and a decision is pending, after additional surveys have been completed.

Orchard Nurseries



Not only does Orchard Nurseries provide an ideal site for the accommodation for older residents who wish to downsize and remain in the village, but proceeds from the development will fund local projects, including building a new home for the pre-school in the grounds of Egerton School.



Work on the new Pre-School will be started when funds are received from the developer of the Older People's Accommodation at Orchard Nurseries (subject to plans being approved by Ashford Borough Council).

It will enable the Millennium Hall to be used year-round for other events and activities and will provide more scope to make improvements and enhancements to the Hall.

Local Needs Housing – Sale Field

It was discovered that in fact the site is called ‘Sale Field’ as cattle were sold there up to the mid-1900s Following the last Parish Assembly, 22 people registered interest in one of the potential new homes so that they could maintain family ties and stay in the village they love



Local Needs Housing – Sale Field (contd.)



- **English Rural Housing submitted a full planning application to Ashford Borough Council on September 22nd to build 9 dwellings**
- **The planning application received many comments – some objections and some support**
- **Ashford Borough Council are expected to take a decision in the next month, taking into account comments and after additional assessments have been carried out.**
- **Three local people have pledged funds to buy a section of land behind the planned development for a public leisure area with ideas for more wildlife habitat**



The Parish Council strongly objected to the plan to site a 17-metre monopole outside Egerton C of E School. Ashford Borough Council also objected, but the developer appealed, and permission was later granted by the Planning Inspector.

A group of concerned parents and residents are mounting a protest campaign to try and halt the building of the monopole, calling on Damian Green MP and Michael Gove MP, Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

The Parish Council is supporting the group



Working with neighbouring parishes of Pluckley and Smarden, a campaign was mounted to retain the 123 and 124 bus services, but they were axed despite huge protests. A 10E service was introduced for children travelling to and from schools in Ashford (Mon to Fri). A village-wide survey was commissioned to determine the public transport requirements of those affected by the withdrawal of the 123 and 124 services. The project is ongoing.

Planning Applications

- 38 planning applications have been considered and commented upon by EPC since January 2022.
- Each one requires detailed study, reference to any site history, the Design Statement, Neighbourhood Plan and taking note of any comments by villagers.
- Reports are compiled by one councillor for the Council as a whole to consider making no comment, object, support or make observations to ABC. Agreed comments are then submitted to Ashford Borough Council via its website and may be viewed online at any time by members of the public



The planning application for a housing development at North Field, which is not in the Neighbourhood Plan and to which the Council objected, was rejected by Ashford Borough Council. However, it is now the subject of an appeal. The Parish Council has sought support from a Planning Consultant, funded by concerned local residents, to fight against the appeal.

The support of Lenham Parish Council and Save Our Heathlands Campaign group, in their opposition to Maidstone Borough Council's proposed 'Garden Village' at Lenham Heath, something which will severely impact Egerton, has continued



**The George is
still designated
as an ‘Asset of
Community
Value’, after an
application by
the Parish
Council in 2020
saw it renewed
for a further five
years – up until
2025**





**Mowing, strimming
and weedkilling of
Parish Council land,
at £4,658,
represents the
biggest Parish
Council
expenditure.**

**The village benefits
from voluntary
support in mowing
of the grass on the
Glebe**



**Tree maintenance
on Parish land
continues to
impact our
budget.**

**The list of
required work
continues to grow.
In the past year,
£3,576 has had to
be spent on
urgent work**

Demand for general maintenance in the village remained high. This included repairs to fencing at the Millennium Hall and removal of fencing at the skate park, re-siting of dog waste and litter bins closer to the football pitch and clearance and weedkilling around the Hall, totaling £1,719



New planters were purchased for The Glebe costing £400, ready to be put in place for summer bedding. A kind donation was received to cover the cost of these. The planters are tended so beautifully each season by voluntary support.





Helped by kind funding from the Geoff Wickens Trust (£25,000) and Ashford Borough Council (£5,000) and Kent County Council (£2,000), the Parish Council installed a slide and roundabout on the play area. Longer term, there are plans to replace the climbing frame and swings too. Funds may become available from the development of Orchard Nurseries

A new noticeboard has been purchased for Egerton Forstal to replace the dilapidated version. It's now located next to the post box in Forstal Road. It was acquired for £780 in a sale to save costs. Repairs to wind damage on the noticeboard at the Millennium Hall were carried out at a cost of £180.



Volunteers kindly store the village's salt and grit, which is donated each year by Kent County Council, and then use it to regularly replenish the salt bins in the village.

A new bin located outside the Games Barn was acquired at a cost of £310.



After the new, insulated roof was installed at the Games Barn and solar panels fitted – funded in part by a donation from the Geoff Wickens Trust and Ashford Borough Council – the hiring of the facility has now recovered to its pre-pandemic levels. Overgrown vegetation was recently cleared from the perimeter.





**A legacy was received
from Ernie Mexter –
£5,000 – ‘for the
benefit of the village’.
Some will be used to
support the new
village archive that is
being established in
the Computer Room by
the ‘Archive Annies’
comprising of Janet
Goode, Claire Stevens,
Jane Carr, Lois Tilden
and Sylvia Tilman**

Each year, four quarterly issues are published of the free Parish News magazine, *Egerton Update*. Copies are distributed free to every house in the village. Local companies support it with advertising and any profits are earmarked for good causes in the Parish.

Egerton Update goes from strength to strength – contracts have been renegotiated that save £400 per month on paper and printing

The quarterly magazine for the village of Egerton, Kent
Email: egertonupdate@gmail.com

Issue 29 February 2023

Parish Council Elections May 4th

BECOME A COUNCILLOR

EPC chairman Richard King writes:
Are you interested in becoming a Local Councillor in Egerton? This is the year in which a new Parish Council will be chosen by our community, and it would be good to see new faces putting themselves forward for election. If you have an interest in the future of our village and would like the opportunity to be of service to your fellow citizens, then why not consider becoming a member of the Egerton Parish Council.

The new council will serve for four years, and on the polling day, Thursday 4th May, all those registered to do so will have the opportunity to vote for those in Parish who have put their names forward. Some will be existing councillors who wish to continue serving their community, but anyone who lives or works in the Parish (or within three miles of the Parish boundary) is eligible to stand for election, subject to meeting some basic conditions. The notice of election will be published not later than 27th March, with 4th April being the closing date for nominations to be submitted. Later in April a 'Notice of Poll' will be published by the Borough Council, which will give the names of all the candidates. Nomination papers will be available from the Borough Council at the Civic Centre in Ashford. All candidates require a proposer and seconder, and have to declare that they are not disqualified from being elected. Following publication of the notice of the election a nomination paper pack, which includes guidance notes for candidates, will be available from the Returning Officer at the Ashford Civic Centre.

Please note that under the Election Act 2022 voters will be required to show photo ID at the polling station before a ballot paper is issued.

If you are interested in standing for election, please talk to the Parish Clerk, Sonia Young, or to any of the present Parish Councillors, who would be happy to explain what the council does and what a commitment you would have to make should you be elected. You might also like to come along to see what goes on at the Parish Council meetings, which take place in the committee room at the Millennium Hall (entrance through the side door) at 7.30pm on the first Tuesday of the month.

Another way of finding out more about what the role entails, the Kent Association of Local Councils is holding on-line sessions on February 21st (7-8pm online) and March 21st (7-8pm online). This one-hour event will include two brief talks about the role of Local Councillor, what it involves, its challenges and opportunities and the rewarding nature of its contribution to local leadership and vision. This is a good opportunity to ask questions and find out more. For more details contact KALC's training team: Clive Powell (adviser@kentalc.gov.uk) or Veronica Lawrence (support@kentalc.gov.uk).

Egerton Update February 2023

Nearly three years after it closed its door there's a new future ahead for Egerton Village Stores. Two local residents – Stephen Bentley and Royce Parker and their respective wives Eve and Kim have now purchased the building and are hoping to once again make it a hub for the local community. Essential repairs have commenced, and an architect and planning consultant have been contacted to start developing a proposal for approval by the relevant authorities. The new owners are both very experienced in the building industry and are taking on much of the renovation work themselves, describing the new venture as much a "labour of love" as it is a development. The partners say that as residents of Egerton they are grateful for the opportunity to renovate the shop and give something back to the community.

What this 'something' will be is still subject to planning, a viable business proposal and the appropriate consents. However, the building does have huge potential and the new owners are extremely excited about the challenge ahead. Besides the retail area there is also a large cellar which juts under the pavement outside the shop and a big garden area as well as a significant amount of accommodation.

At present the new owners cannot commit to a final proposal as much will depend on them getting relevant permissions on the property, but are committed to keeping us updated as the plans are developed.

There has also been an initial meeting with the chairman of Egerton Parish Council, Richard King. Stephen and Royce are just at the beginning of the development. What is clear though is that this will be a one to two year project for the duo, who will need all the support that the village can muster.

Inside this issue:

Pluckley's Hedgehog heroine * Monopoly in Egerton * Film Club Summer showings* Egerton Parish Council Minutes * The Arts Society Lecture List* Egerton's Preschool

Did Johnny Thunders buy you a pint?

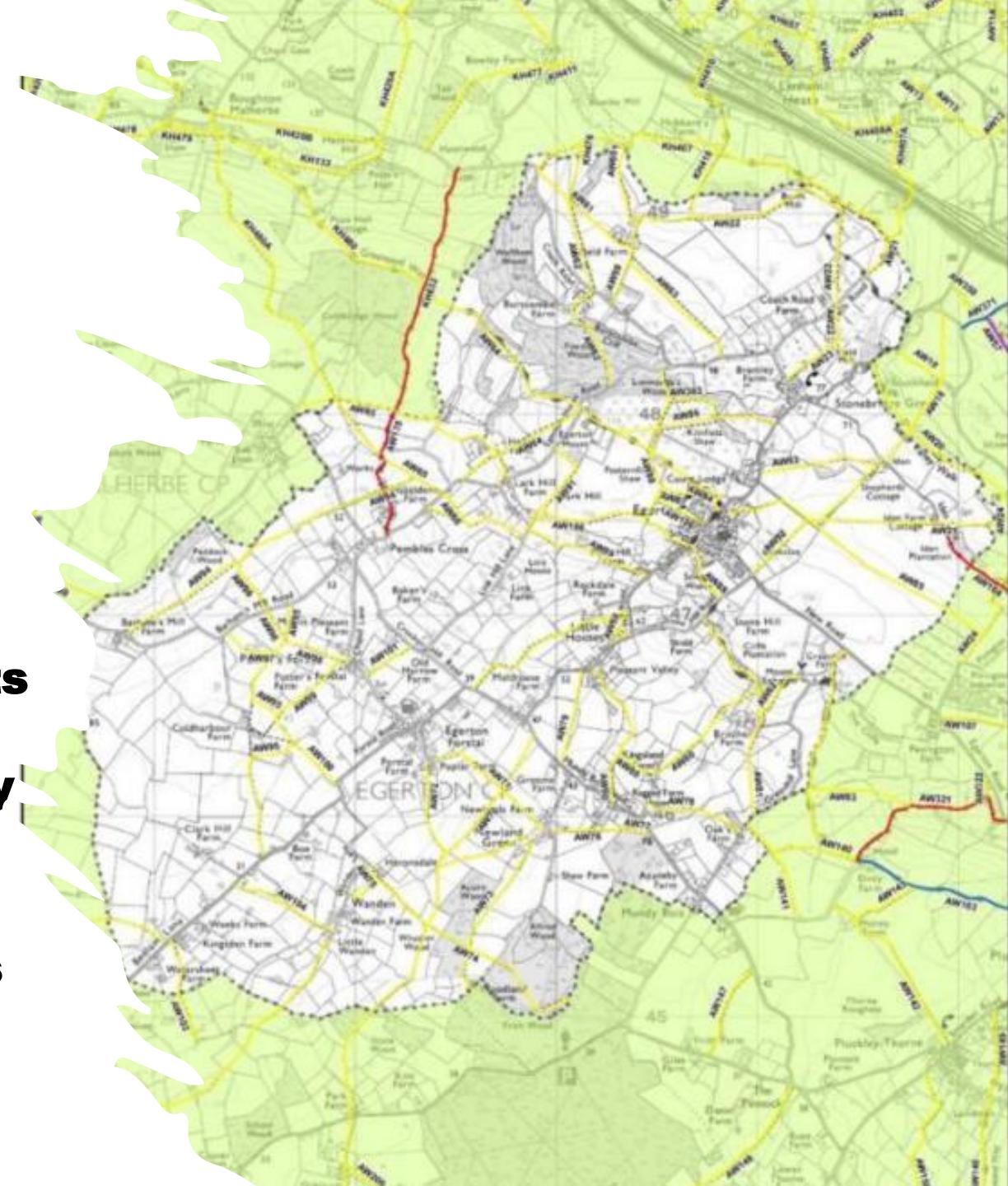
Did someone buy you a pint in the George? Why not let us know about it in the comments below. We'll then add it to our list of people who have bought others a pint. If you'd like to add your name to the list, email us at johnnythunders@kent.ac.uk and we will add it to our list.

INSIDE: Read all about Egerton's Rock n' Roll Years

Footpaths Activities in 2022 / 23

The Parish Council has reported footpath issues regularly to KCC Rights of Way Dept. since June 2009. Footpath, bridleway and byway issues range from:

- Broken or fallen fingerposts**
- Steep slopes with no handrails for slippery weather**
- Fly tipping on footpaths and other rights of way**
- Fallen trees across public rights of way**
- Broken or wobbly stiles**
- Stile planks too high**
- Loose/missing wooden slats on bridges over streams**
- Overhanging trees and shrubs onto footpaths**





Highways Activities in 2022 / 23

- Retaining wall between Elm Close and Rock Hill Road - repaired**
- Application for weight limit on Green Hill Lane**
- Extension of signage on Green Hill Lane regarding unsuitability for certain vehicle types**
- Regular interaction with KCC over diversion and road closure issues**
- On going reporting of Highway issues to KCC**
- Monitoring of KCC Progress in resolving issues**
- Collation and monthly reporting of all Highway issues to Parish Council**
- Regular meetings with our Highways Steward to discuss issues**
- Liaison with our County Councillor to resolve issues**
- Attendance at KCC update and Q&A for Parish Councils**

New residents moving to Egerton are provided with a welcome pack, providing essential information on our village. The first welcome pack was delivered in July 2008. During 2022, 24 packs were issued taking the total number provided to over 200. Feedback shows that new arrivals are very pleased to receive them.





**Spring Clean Up Day is
an annual event
organised by the Parish
Council, where
volunteers litter-pick our
highways and footpaths.
The latest litter pick took
place on Saturday
(25th March).**

**The Parish Council also
employs a part-time
street sweeper who
keeps the main part of
the village tidy**

