

EASTON ROYAL ANNUAL COMMUNITY MEETING

Chaired by Easton Royal Parish Council

Thursday 16th April 2024
Easton Royal Village Hall
at 6.00 pm

MINUTES

Present : Anna Patterson (Chair), Peta Puyo (Clerk), Ben Cooper, Tom Doyle, Beverley Helps, Paul Narizzano, Beverley Turton, Amanda & Mark Baines, Isobel & Nigel Barnwell, Emma Dickie, Tricia & Allan Duncan, Rachel & Colin Edwards, Maggie & Chris Elliot, Simon Frodsham, Judy Grange, Dawn & Jim Hamblin, Hilary & Cedric Hollinsworth, Liz Johnson, Barb Martin, Judith McLain, Marty & Michael Meredith, Bill Nimmo-Scott, Liz & Brian Norman, Daniel Puyo, Anne Ring, Colin Sibun, Sarah Townsend-Rose, Jennifer Turton, Polly & Colin Yates,

1. Opening comments and welcome – Chair

Anna Patterson welcomed everyone to the Annual Community Meeting. She explained that the meeting is to highlight and celebrate the achievements of the village over the past year, let everyone know what the PC and other village groups have been doing and that the meeting was an opportunity for questions and discussions. Finally, the bar would be open at the end of the meeting.

2. Apologies for absence

James de Pass , Karen and Bill Nimmo-Scott, Rev Mark Windsor, Fiona & Mark de Pass, Bertie & Frances Stevenson, Emma & James Dickie, Shirley & Chris Machin, Dawn & Jim Hamblin, Ann Dancer.

3. Minutes of the Annual Community Meeting held on 18th May 2023

APPROVED

4. Report from Wiltshire Council – Jerry Kunkler

Jerry was unable to join the meeting. A copy of the minutes will be sent him so as to inform the council of any issues.

5. 2022/2023 Parish Council Report – Anna Patterson (Chair)

Another very busy year...

Recreation Ground

Maintenance - Despite having fulfilled the grounds maintenance very successfully in the past, due to change within the company, ID Verde did not live up to expectations and we, like many other PCs, were very let down by their services. This year, having put the contract out to tender, the PC have chosen Last Landscaping for ground maintenance. Already a marked improvement. This contract is our largest outlay, but we know how important this asset is to all the village.

Basketball Court – It is now complete. Thanks again to all of the financial support from the village and Pewsey Area Board. The ER Playground Fundraising Group is now winding down as their objective reached. Thanks were given to Emma Dickie and Peta Puyo for their hard work.

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Sadly Jeremy Booth, a much-loved member of the village, passed away this year. His family gifted a lovely bench which has been placed outside the hall. Our thanks to his family.

Rights of Way

Attempts to use ID Verde to assist with the maintenance of certain footpaths was not successful so an Adopt a Footpath scheme has been set up. Excellent response with over 20 people signing up to adopt an allocated stretch of footpath to maintain for a year. A mower has been purchased and, thanks to Rachel Edwards, a Pewsey Area Board grant was obtained to help with the cost of this, safety equipment and a shed for storage. We are hoping this scheme proves successful.

Thanks were extended to all of these volunteers and also landowners who assist in maintaining these paths for everyone's enjoyment.

Any issues should be reported to the Clerk directly.

Highways

Where to start? The PC had hoped that Jerry Kunkler from Wiltshire Council would be present to assist in responding to everyone's questions...

WCC have accepted that this part of the county has been under-funded and assured us that they are working diligently to sort things out, gain extra funds, etc, etc. However, we are seeing little change.

Tom Doyle and Anna Patterson attended a Highways Meeting last November and confirmed their astonishment at the WCC's self-praise but lack of information as to what they were doing to improve the situation. Questions had been requested from attendees prior to the meeting but these were not addressed at the time and, despite promises of responses following the meeting, nothing has been received five months later. The latest Pewsey Area Board meeting to discuss potholes has been postponed.

No idea when the main road will be attended to – it was a priority last year but has still not been done. New drainage is required where it floods towards Burbage. Highways continue to be a headache.

The PC are aware of the damage to the bus shelter seating and is looking in to its repair.

Parish Steward

No change since previous meetings. The Steward came to ER twice last year! Many jobs listed for attention prove too big for one man. Tom Doyle is forever on his case but the situation is very difficult to manage and WCC often take the PS off his regular rota to carry out other tasks.

Thanks were extended to volunteers who step in to carry out works that should be carried out by the Parish Steward. We are very grateful for this but know that it should not be necessary (mud clearance outside of the church, for example).

Planning

Not so quiet this year.

The application for the access to Land for the construction of 3 large houses came in just after last year's meeting. An extraordinary PC meeting was held to discuss this with over 70 people attending. 72 responses (objections) were made to the application and it was finally rejected by WCC. An Appeal was lodged by the applicants and a decision for that is imminent.

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The PC now have a policy in place with regards to all planning applications. This can be found on the Parish Council website.

Defibrillators

The PC were informed last year that the defibrillator at the church, “donated” at the time by our MP, would no longer be funded and that it would cost £1800 every four years to retain it.

It was decided to return this item to SWAS as an opportunity arose to have a new DHSC match funded grant for a new defibrillator (cost £1500) provided by the London Hearts Charity. Thanks to a Pewsey Area Board grant, a further £350 was received towards this cost leaving us to cover £350 from our funds.

Thanks to Beverley Turton, three fully subscribed first aid and defib training courses were arranged and many residents now feel more confident should these defibrillators be needed.

SIDS (Speed Indicator Devices)

The PC wished to know if this is something the residents still want. They are expensive and theoretically cannot be permanently active. £1400 is ringfenced for a device, however they cost at least £2500 each not including installation. Speeding is still an issue on the main road and down the village street. This is expected to be a subject of discussion on Item 6 of the meeting.

Thanks

The Chair wished to thank ALL of the community groups and volunteers for everything they do to make the village what it is. Individual reports were made available for residents, and everyone was encouraged to either photograph them or take a copy.

Particular thanks went to:

- Tom Doyle and the other Village Hall Committee members who offer so many events throughout the year, as well as the regular Bar Night (special thanks to Allan Duncan who works so hard for this).
- The organisers of the regular Coffee mornings and Craft afternoons – much appreciated and a great way for getting people together.
- The Heritage Group which thrives and offers so much interest for the village. Thanks to Liz Johnson and her team for their tireless efforts
- The Poppy Appeal, Remembrance Service and Curry lunch which is a much-enjoyed annual event. Last year an amazing £1601.26 was raised. Bill Nimmo-Scott wished to thank all helpers and for everyone’s support. Bill’s work over the years in this role was applauded by those present. He is stepping down and will be replaced by Megan Ashton.
- The Speedwatch Team who are out in all weathers, helping to keep us safe.
- The Church under the helm of the PCC is another valued resource.

Many of these community groups are looking for new blood and new volunteers. Please reach out if you feel you can help.

Anna wished to thank all of her fellow councillors for their ongoing hard work. Also to Phil Bates who has kindly accepted to renew his offer of being Internal Auditor in support of Peta, the Clerk.

From the floor, Ben Cooper extended his warm thanks to Anna for her work as Chair – her dedication is greatly appreciated by everyone.

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6. Matters of Interest

- i. Concerns regarding the state of the roads was discussed but, as everyone recognised, this seems the case everywhere and all we can do as a Parish is continue to list tasks for the Parish Steward and keep Jerry Kunkler informed of any particular issues.
- ii. The residents were reminded that they should report any potholes, lighting issues, etc on the MyWilts App (www.wiltshire.gov.uk/mywilts-online-reporting) and/or send an email to the Clerk.
- iii. Some members of the public feel a SID on the Burbage Road would help control the speed of traffic through the village. Others were more sceptical, especially given the constraints imposed by WCC with regards to their usage (2 weeks on/8 weeks off). The PC has a small amount earmarked for the purchase of a device, but a further large sum would be required. The PC suggest enquiring with local parishes as to their usages and effectiveness of SIDS. The Clerk will also contact WCC Highways for the latest information regarding the installation of a SID and if there is any data on their impact. The matter will be discussed at the next PC meeting. The Speedwatch team remarked that speeding was significantly reduced when the car from one of the properties was left parked on the road...
- iv. A suggestion was made that the entrance to Harris Lane footpath be improved with planings as it has been very muddy and slippery. It was confirmed that planings had already been requested from WCC but nobody had responded. This will be followed up.
- v. The bad smell from Hook Cottage persists. This is an Environmental Health Issue and the site was visited recently. Unfortunately, this was on a day when there was hardly any wind and, unusually, it was an easterly wind therefore not giving a true picture of how unpleasant this is for the neighbouring properties. This is an ongoing issue and is being monitored.
- vi. Speeding down The Street continues to be a worry. 20mph signs seem to be ignored. The idea of painting on the road was suggested, but is probably not permitted.

The Annual Community Meeting closed at 7pm and everyone was invited to stay on as the bar was opening.