

EASTON PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
Held on Thursday 27th May 2021 at 7.30pm
Easton Farm Park

Reports from District, County Councillors and Question time for members of the public – Duration time maximum 10 minutes - 2 minutes per person re Agenda items.

2 members of public in attendance.

Meeting opened 7.30pm

1. PRESENT & APOLOGIES

Present

Cllr S Piggott – Chair
Cllr F Siddall - Vice-Chair
Cllr I Palfreyman
Cllr D Balcombe
Cllr M Birt
County Cllr E Bryce
District Cllr L Freeman

Apologies:

Cllr B Gibbon
Cllr G Edwards
Alison Bramall – Parish
Clerk/RFO

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

- None

3. CONSIDERATION OF ANY DISPENSATION REQUESTS –

- None

4. PARISH COUNCIL REPORT – CHAIRS REPORT

The Parish Council continues with its responsibilities, managing the cemetery and burials, village car park, village play area, village grass cutting responding to planning applications along with village projects.

The village green Christmas tree is organised and provided by the Parish Council annually and is considered an important feature for the Christmas period, residents regularly voice appreciation, the Parish Council would like to thank the volunteers that help to position and decorate the tree.

The Parish Council grass cutting, and land management contract has been appointed for a three year period ('20) to Kindle-wood, the decision is based not only on costs but on the diligence of the contractor.

Parish Council business, including finances and conduct is officially audited each year by a qualified independent Internal Auditor and Government External Auditor and despite the challenges of the pandemic restrictions took place successfully last year. The Annual Audit reports

and documents are uploaded onto the PC website, along with the Minutes and Finance statements.

The Parish Council has worked hard to deal with the challenges caused by the Covid pandemic. During these unprecedented times, information and regulations imparted on authorities were constantly changing and required a huge amount of time and flexibility to keep abreast of.

The Parish Council acted as quickly as possible for the first lockdown in March last year and formed a support network and telephone contact to support any resident requiring help during the difficult months ahead.

The Parish Council put into place the ability to hold virtual meetings and adhered to the new flexible regulations put in place by government, this enabled the Parish Council to continue functioning as efficiently as it could. Amongst government regulations were the cancellations of Annual meetings for 2020. Institutions and authorities across the board were faced with extraordinary times coping in a pandemic which has meant timelines and abilities to address matters have been difficult.

The Parish Council now has a directly employed and dedicated Clerk who is working hard for the Parish Council.

In 2019 (Sept) the Parish Council had the opportunity to pursue a grant to purchase a Defibrillator for the village, the funding window was very short but the application was successful. The village now has a Defibrillator that is easily accessible and whilst siting it at the Village Hall was not possible, the Parish Council would like to warmly thank the Hunt Kennels for so kindly allowing the Defibrillator to be sited on the external stable wall which is roadside and can be quickly accessed.

The Parish Council has worked hard to speak with SCC Highways regarding the traffic speeding problems, this proved to be difficult but eventually SCC Highways met for a site meeting. A speed survey was conducted in November 2019. An assessment was made of the measures that were already in place to address speeding traffic those being signage, community speed gun, and intermittent speed indicator signs. Following the results of the survey which showed that 85 percent of traffic is above the speed limit, SCC advised that a physical speed calming scheme was necessary to address the problems, and that the neighbourhood parish CIL monies held by the PC resulting from the Hopkins development would

be needed to deliver the project and this would meet the ESC criteria for parish CIL money expenditure. SCC Highways designed the proposed scheme.

In September 2020 the Parish Council sent a letter via a mail shot to every resident illustrating the proposed scheme which was also available to view on the Parish Council website and still is. The majority of responses to the mail shot were very supportive and have been followed up with a regular question 'when is it going to be installed'. A recent correspondence from SCC has explained Highways team changes that have not helped, and they are now pushing on with the project administration, we now wait to be given the timeline for installation.

The Easton Neighbourhood Plan is at Draft stage this involves assessments by East Suffolk Council, and has created another stalling of the timeline, as soon as East Suffolk have completed their review the plan will be distributed to residents with a questionnaire for any comments. The plan is then finalised and submitted to the external government examiner, once this is complete a referendum is held in the village for residents, the plan needs 50 percent or above to vote for the plan, if this is the result it is then adopted by East Suffolk and forms part of the Local Plan.

On behalf of the Parish Councillors, I would like to thank all the members of the community who consistently thank the council and show their appreciation for the work that the Parish Council does. All Councillors give a lot of their time to meet their duty as a Parish Councillor and they do their very best to ensure the Parish Council meets its legal obligations and works within its powers and looks forward to doing their best for the village.

Sue Piggott, Easton Parish Council Chair

5. EASTON & LETHERINGHAM VILLAGE HALL COMMITTEE REPORT

2020 did not turn out to be the year we hoped as the start of a new decade, like the most community buildings, the normal hustle and bustle of the hall with people gathering for exercise, to meet or socialise had to stop on 19th March 2020, with the first national lockdown. Who would have thought in April 2021 the hall would still be silent, except for a brief interlude for new day-time Yoga classes between September and

November before forced closure for lockdowns 2 and 3. The Spring Quiz night had to be cancelled at last minute. We hope to be able to schedule a new Quiz night later in the year.

Through our Hall Advisors we worked through several revisions of the Government Covid-19 rules for Community Buildings. I would like to thank Chris & Jean who assisted in lots of summertime reading to understand and apply the rules to ensure the hall was Covid secure. Hirers are issued with additional Covid-19 Special Conditions of Hire and a Risk Assessment so they can adhere to the rules of covid-secure premises for the safety of users. The hall is also registered with the QR Track & Trace System.

Following government guidelines, we reopened in September until the second, then third lockdown at Christmas to those groups eligible to do so depending on their relevant governing bodies' guidance. Unfortunately, due to the type of permitted activities, social distancing and group numbers, the rules restricted the majority of the regular groups from returning at that time. Other regular hirers managed to resume activities over zoom as a new way of meeting for many. Sadly, some Hirers have ceased due to the pandemic and personal circumstances and others will be a delayed return. We continue to work with Active Suffolk to find replacement Instructor to bring back the evening Yoga class. We say goodbye to the WI Easton Belles group and hope to see you again in the future when a new committee is formed. At this time the hall is permitted to reopen with 25% capacity.

Thanks to the committee for their continued support over the last year navigating through such unusual times. We hope to see new and familiar faces at the hall as restrictions are gradually lifted and we can hear, chat and laughter once more as the community comes back together.

Jenny McEvoy – Chair - Easton and Letheringham Village Hall Committee

6. EASTON CHURCH REPORT

There were no baptisms, weddings or funerals last year and this year only Audrey Mayhew's funeral; but we are greatly looking forward to two weddings.

There were few services in church except between lockdowns when we had socially distanced services with face masks and no singing. This is still the form.

Zoom services have been held every Sunday, which will continue - they are useful for some (elderly, disabled, cold weather). Those without tech can have service sheets for use at home.

Lack of services meant our environmental footprint was smaller. As you know the East Suffolk Council is no longer cutting the grass in the churchyard regularly. We are happy to do our bit for "feeding the bees" but will cut the area next to the path to keep it tidy and more welcoming.

We actually paid our full Parish Share for Easton in 2020 of £9,000. This was done from reserves as income was down, with no fundraising either. The reserves will not last for many years and the future is worrying even with a return to services and fundraising. People often have the idea that the church is rich, but this Diocese has no historical funds (it is only just over 100 years old). Every parish or benefice (ours is 7 churches) has to pay for its own priest, his or her stipend, training, pension and housing, as well as central administration. It's a big ask in small parishes. Training also includes for lay elders and churchwardens and safeguarding training for all involved.

Children's activities: The COSMIC club has been put on hold and Easton Primary School has not been able to have its usual Christmas, Easter and Harvest services.

Like many people, some of our church members signed up to do shopping and collect prescriptions and so on for those who were shielding in the pandemic.

We are lucky to have a great parish magazine produced (even while she was ill) by Clare Owen. The general interest items and (usually) forthcoming local events are really useful. The magazine has been in electronic form for about a year now and some people actually prefer it that way. A few paper copies are made for those who need it.

Jane Woodbury Eggins – Church Warden

7. EASTON BOWLS CLUB REPORT

On behalf of the members of Easton Bowls Club, I will not be attending the Annual Parish meeting, as it is on a Thursday night and that is the Fynn league bowls night, if it has stopped raining! Therefore I am sending this report.

In the last year 2020, there was no league bowls played but the members did manage to play some games amongst themselves, as well as Club competitions – the Kerr Cup, President’s Cup and the Pairs trophy. We also played some Monday Open pairs involving players from other clubs – from 6 July to 21 September, before being stopped by the weather and Covid 19 restrictions.

One good thing from all this, was that it allowed the groundsman, Mike Cattermole to carry out some maintenance work on both the green and buildings. With all the high winds we have experienced recently, we have had a lot of fence damage.

This year we opened the green on April 25th with several restrictions still in place due to the Coronavirus. We have introduced a second Fynn league team, as we are restricted of the number of players per team we are allowed. At the start of the season, we were restricted to playing only teams with pairs on the rinks. By introducing a second team it allowed all members to take part. As the season progresses we will be allowed to go back to playing triples as the restrictions ease. When this happens we will be a little vulnerable and may need more players to complete our teams, with holidays and illness etc. If you do feel like having a go we have put some practice Sunday mornings into our schedule. We are still operating a track and trace system to comply with Bowls England advice so if you would like to join us contact Mike on (01473) 614845.

We are hoping to be allowed to run our 2 remaining tournaments – the Hammond Salver (4th July) and the Ransome (5th September). These are our main fundraising events. If you know of anybody who would like to help the club and could sponsor our other Tournament (The Eric Peck) please be in touch.

Is this the time to ask how the Parish Council feels about allowing the Bowls Club to take the top off the trees along the ditch, at the edge of the

cemetery, adjacent to the bowls green? This would allow more sun to reach parts of the green, which at the moment is never able to dry out. It is always lying wet on rink 4. I could meet somebody from the Parish Council to discuss the matter on site. Please call me to let me know

Mike Cattermole – Chairman

COUNTY & DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORTS

The District and County Councillors having been recently elected were not able to give a report but emphasised that they welcomed contact and will offer support for help when needed their details are on the ESC and SCC site.

CLOSE

The Chair thanked everybody for attending the meeting and thanked Councillor Fi Siddall for allowing the village to use her facilities and supplying refreshments.

The Chair closed the meeting at 20.20

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Chair

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Date