

EASTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF ANNUAL VILLAGE MEETING

Held on Friday 27th May 2022 at 7.30pm

Easton & Letheringham Village Hall

**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.**

1 members of public in attendance.

Meeting opened 7.30pm

1. PRESENT & APOLOGIES

Present

Cllr S Piggott – Chair
Cllr D Balcombe
Cllr M Birt
Cllr G Edwards
Alison Bramall – Parish
Clerk/RFO

Apologies:

Cllr B Gibbon
Cllr F Siddall - Vice-Chair
Cllr I Palfreyman
County Cllr E Bryce
District Cllr L Freeman

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

- None

3. CONSIDERATION OF ANY DISPENSATION REQUESTS –

- None

4. PARISH COUNCIL REPORT – CHAIRS REPORT

Sue Piggott, Easton Parish Council Chair

PARISH COUNCIL REPORT – CHAIRS REPORT – AP MEETING 27.5.22

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 and village projects.

The village green Christmas tree is organised and provided by the Parish Council annually and 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 to Kindle-wood. The contract is reviewed every 3 years which will come up during this financial year, 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 when mandated by the Government External Auditor. The Annual Audit reports and documents are uploaded onto the PC website, along with the Minutes and Finance statements.

The pandemic has impacted institutions and authorities across the board and timelines and abilities to address matters continue to be challenging.

The Parish Council is pursuing the Quiet Lanes project and hopes for two lanes within the parish of Easton to become part of it. The lanes submitted for inclusion are Hacheston Rd and Borretts lane. The aim is to designate lanes and display signage as a reminder that small rural lanes are valuable to all users which includes, walkers, horse riders, and cyclists in the hope that those motorists that may need reminding will be encouraged to drive accordingly.

Two more dog bins for the Parish have been installed and have been well received. They are sited on the entrance of the footpath on Sanctuary Rd and Framlingham Rd.

In recognition of the Queens Jubilee year ESC made available an oak tree for each Parish Council as part of the Treebilee project. Easton accepted their tree, and it has been planted in the Cemetery with a special plaque.

The speed calming scheme is set to be installed this summer, a date is being organised by SCC Highways and we have been told it will be between July and September this year. SCC Highways team became especially responsive and pro-active following the involvement of our County Cllr, Cllr Elaine Bryce, thanks goes out to Cllr Bryce for her very pro- active support.

The Draft Neighbourhood Plan is awaiting the completion of the Strategic Environment Assessment which is with the government planning team, once this is received, the Draft will be able to go out for consultation

The NP processes have suffered disruption due to the pandemic which has badly affected the teams at Local Authority and Central Gov resulting in serious delays to the processes.

A new consultancy has been assigned to take the Plan through S.14 which is the public consultation and subsequent referendum. The few committee members left have a major job to bring together all that is required to present the NP for examination.

This year the Queens Platinum Jubilee is being celebrated. The Queens Pageant Masters communications were received and were the reason back in 2015 that the Parish Council took up the encouragement and purchased an official beacon, this now means that we are equipped to be registered and take part in each beacon commemorative event.

Last year the Parish Council decided to take part in this year's historic platinum jubilee event and organise two events. One the official beacon lighting, the time and date as issued by the Queens organising committee, and to accompany the event with a Hog Roast. Also, the following day a Jubilee Tea Party to be held at the Cricket Club. The Parish Council is grateful to the Cricket Club whose grounds and clubhouse are providing the venue.

It is hoped there will be something for everyone across the 2nd and 3rd of June.

On behalf of the Parish Cllrs 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 duties as a Parish Councillor, and do their very best to ensure the Parish Council meets its legal obligations and works within its powers and looks forward each year to doing their best for the community and village.

5. EASTON & LETHERINGHAM VILLAGE HALL COMMITTEE REPORT - Jenny McEvoy – Chair - Easton and Letheringham Village Hall Committee

During the majority of 2021/22 the VPMC continued to be impacted both in hirer income and maintenance activities with a second year of Covid restrictions. A small number of our regular Hirer groups continued to operate with lower numbers, masks and social distancing and continuous ventilation to reduce transmission, which contributed to higher energy costs. My thanks to Jean & Christine for your support in continuing to assist in compliance as the ever-updating guidance and Winter Plan B and roadmap to reopening in line with advice from the government and our advisors. We did not find ourselves having to close the hall during this time due to any outbreaks.

The Sunday Café made a welcome return after two years in February, along with the long-awaited Quiz Night in March, which was wonderful for the community to come together once again after such a long period of time. We also welcomed back the dance class and Monday Mardles. Hires continued to be varied, at times seeing late cancellations due to omicron over winter and spring, but we hope a return to more normal patterns of activity after such a long period of uncertainty.

Overall hirer income was down by a third for the year on pre-pandemic levels. With running costs disproportionately high due to the covid interruptions and mitigating measures necessary during the year. An old building demands attention and now with more certainty we shall be rescheduling paused maintenance, albeit against a backdrop of increasing labour and material costs to ensure the hall is kept in good order.

My special thanks to the committee, especially Christine, who volunteered to clean the hall for several months as due to the uncertainties of usage and finding a cleaner is not an easy in this locality. This resulted in much lower expenditure than would have been. A big Thankyou also to our hall neighbour, Peter who continues to keep the hall garden and hedge in good order, we are always very grateful for your voluntary support and hard work over many years in this regard. We welcomed our new Treasurer Guy onboard, who was co-opted onto the committee in November.

As always, a big Thank you for the ongoing work and support of the Trustees as we continued to navigate such unusual times. We hope that life can once again return to normal, and more leisure events can be held to bring the community together once again.

5 EASTON CHURCH REPORT - Jane Woodbury Eggins – Church Warden

It has been good to get back to regular services even though our numbers are still below those we had before the pandemic. We are planning a Songs of Praise for the Jubilee Sunday.

There were no baptisms in 2021 but we had two lovely weddings even though the numbers at the time were restricted.

Zoom services have continued but are now on a monthly basis. They are useful for some who find it difficult to get to church. Those without tech can have service sheets for use at home.

As you know the East Suffolk Council is only cutting the grass in the church- yard once a year. We are happy to do our bit for "feeding the bees" but cut the area next to the path to keep it tidy and more welcoming. Most people have remarked that they like the long grasses and we hope more wild flowers will appear over time.

We again paid our full Parish Share for Easton in 2021 of £9,000. This was done from reserves as income is still much down. 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. The training budget also includes lay elders and churchwardens and safeguarding training for all involved.

Easton Primary School has been able to have its usual Christmas and Easter services and it was really great to see them all back and singing so well. We treasure our links with the school.

We are lucky to have a great parish magazine produced by Clare Owen. The general interest items and (usually) forthcoming local events are really useful. Our magazine has been in electronic form since the first lockdown and some people actually prefer it that way. A few paper copies are made for those who need it. The benefice as a whole is going to have one magazine only in the near future.

6. EASTON BOWLS CLUB REPORT - Mike Cattermole – Chairman

Report from Easton Bowls Club for Easton Parish Council – May 22

On behalf of the members of Easton Bowls Club, as there are no matches tonight, as it is a Friday, I have taken the opportunity to fill your invite and come to the meeting.

Following on from the 2021 season, there have been a few changes, after a restricted season during Covid 19, and we are now hopefully back to normal. There has been a change of Committee and officials at the club. Our former president, John Kerr has stepped down and Mary Duggan is his replacement, with Fiona Siddell as the new vice-president. The Chairman Cliff Green has also stepped down after several years and we have a new replacement in David Attmere, with Mandy Plank as our vice-chair. We also had our Woodbridge Captain resigning this year. His replacement is Will Thomas. We still have the 2 captains for the Fynn league, as we are running the 2 teams again in the Fynn this season and therefore we have 2 vice captains for those.

The problem is that with the Woodbridge League returning to 12 players and the Fynn league teams each requiring 9 players – we need 30 players per week to fulfil our matches. We only have 26 playing members, so some players need to play more than one game each week. If we have cup games coming in that only adds another requirement! With one or two members leaving Easton, we could do with more players and helpers from the village itself, which would be good. This would mean there could be somebody in the village to help the groundsman who now lives in Kesgrave.

Last season we were runners up in the Woodbridge League. Team A in the Fynn League won their section while Team B were runners up in their section. Due to Covid there were no cup games played. This season we are expecting to play in 5 cups. Also, we are already running Monday Pairs and hoping to be able to run our 3 tournaments – The Eric Peck, the Hammond and the Ransome. The Hammond is sponsored by Mary and Jonathan Duggan, the Ransome by Margie and Graham Ransome, so we are still looking for a sponsor for the Eric Peck. We are also running our usual club competitions.

We have made one or two improvements to the ground. After dressing and re-seeding the green, we have had a new automatic watering system installed. Lastly, I did enquire about lowering the trees and hedge in the south side of our green. This would allow the sunlight on to the green. Could we have permission to do something about this or at least meet somebody on site to discuss the problem? It seems to be on the cemetery side of the ditch where the problem is.

CLOSE

The Chair thanked everybody for attending the meeting.

The Chair closed the meeting at 20.30

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Chair

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Date