

ERLESTOKE PARISH COUNCIL

Draft minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on

Wednesday 1st July 2020

Please note the meeting was held online.

Present: Councillor J S F Jonik – (Chairman)
Councillor K Lewcock
Councillor J Durham
Councillor L Jones
Councillor R Gamble

In Attendance: Mrs Polly Doyle – Parish Clerk

Public Participation – no public in attendance

The agenda had been published on the Parish website and on the notice board. There were no requests by the public for any issues to be raised at the meeting, one member of public requested to attend and a Zoom invite was sent.

Councillor Keith Lewcock requested to speak;

"For the record as an Erlestoke Parish Councillor and Chairman of the Erlestoke Hub Ltd I can only express disappointment that the owners of our local Public House, the George and Dragon, have chosen to circulate a letter to some, but not all, residents of Erlestoke regarding the award of Asset of Community Value status applied to their Pub. Their letter contains significant inaccuracies and I wish to put the record straight on some of the points. The owners have previously been refused permission for 'change of use' to a private residence.

The Parish Council, who applied for the ACV, are aware that The Erlestoke Hub made a formal, properly funded, written offer, to buy the Pub in 2017 which included 'overage provisions' in favour of the owners. This offer remained open until the end of last year and was based on two professional valuations. In addition a full cash offer was made to the owners in 2017 by a local Wiltshire family at well above the valuation prices and a third willing cash buyer withdrew from the process when they were asked inappropriate questions. Shortly after the owners then withdrew the Pub from sale. No responses were received from the Pub owners to any of these 'offers to buy' and no negotiations entered into.

The Pub was put back on the market at the end of 2019 through a new agent and the Hub notified this agent of their interest. No survey of this 17ct building has ever been carried out and as time has passed a survey was arranged by the Hub but had to be cancelled due to the lockdown. The Parish council has been notified by the Hub that it continues to pursue the option to buy the Pub as a Community facility and has instructed a surveyor to carry out a full survey whilst the Pub remains for sale. The Hub have made it clear that they have no

objection to the sale of the Pub to private buyers provided it remains a Pub and have been willing to work with prospective buyers to ensure the Pub has the support it needs. The Parish Council and the Hub can confirm that the preservation of the Pub is considered of vital importance as a community facility, confirmed by the grant of the Asset of Community Value, and have no wish to see it turned into a private house after 300 years of service to the community as a Pub.

Confirmation on any of these issues can be obtained from the Chairman of the Parish Council at 'Stan.Jonik@SFJSystems.co.uk' or Chairman of the The Erlestoke Hub by email to 'space.travellers@btinternet.com'.

Keith

Councillor Richard Gamble highlighted that community engagement was a topic that was central to everything that Danny Kruger MP, stands for. Engagement with communities and charities is central to his philosophy and consequently suggested that it may be worthwhile bringing this situation to his attention.

Chairman Jonik noted the aim is that the pub is not only a pub but a community hub, for which The Hub have many ideas. He also noted that communities are currently at a vulnerable time and council planners need to be supportive and aware to avoid communities losing pubs to developers. Chairman Jonik stated that the pub is the best option we have to provide village facilities as the only other option is the Church which is not always an appropriate venue. An additional factor is that the Church is in dire trouble. Hopefully it will be able to remain open with help. If both the Church and pub go then Erlestoke will have no facilities.

Councillor Jones had concerns about the interior of the pub as it is a listed building and wondered whether conservation officers check that the interior has been respected in light of being a listed building. Either as a pub or private dwelling there is a need to preserve its' historical value.

Councillor Lewcock informed the meeting that a survey has been requested and there is a limited time. The surveyor is very experienced and is recommended by the Plunkett Foundation.

The Public Forum finished at 7.39pm

048/20 APOLOGIES

Councillor Simmons sent her apologies and has sadly informed The Chairman and the Clerk of her resignation.

Councillor Morgan-Frise sent her apologies as she was unable to join the meeting until 8pm.

Councillor Justin Hunt-Davies was unable to attend the meeting due to currently travelling.

049/20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Jones declared an interest in the planning permission she has requested regarding trees at 15 High Sreet.

050/20 MINUTES

The minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 20th May 2020, having previously been circulated were confirmed by the Chairman, Councillor Jonik as a correct record.

These minutes are to be signed at the next convenient opportunity.

051/20 REPORT FROM COUNCILLOR RICHARD GAMBLE – WILTSHIRE COUNCIL

Councillor Richard Gamble informed the meeting that a change in the leadership team has just been announced and that Laura Mayes is again the Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Skills, whilst Councillor Simon Jacobs is the new Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public health and Public Protection. These are two key areas in terms of the amount of council money spent.

Previously there were two Chief Executive Officers, but Alistair Cunningham is leaving, so consequently all services are now under Terence Hebert, who is outstanding. The Council are sorry to lose Alistair Cunningham. Financial constraints have had an influence on this change.

Councillor Gamble answered a query whether Wiltshire Council were running out of money to say that there is no technical deficiency at this stage, but that the deficient we are potentially facing will be handled by the government. Wiltshire Council are also confident not to have a deficient at the end of the year.

Councillor Lewcock enquired about the data provided that showed the number of deaths in relation to COVID 19 and high risk areas.

Councillor Gamble acknowledged that Market Lavington was as a high-risk area according to the data. However, county statistics are extremely favourable. Additionally, The Council do not believe we are vulnerable to a local lockdown announcement. The Council are working actively on recovery and the steps that are needed to be taken to cope with recovery.

052/20 FINANCE

052/20.1 BANK BALANCES

Treasurers Account	£2315.88
Business Bank Instant	£8749.53

The bank balances were noted. Chairman Jonik noted that the finances were healthy.

052/20.2 BANK RECONCILIATION

Councillor Lewcock is currently working on the bank reconciliation.

052/20.3 UPDATED CASH BOOK – 24.06.2020

The updated cashbook was noted.

053/20 PAYMENTS BY DIRECT DEBIT

The following payments by direct debit were noted and approved;

12th June 2020 - **£5.39** Zen Internet

054/20 CLERK TIMESHEETS AND PAY

It was proposed, seconded and **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to make the payment of £285.05 via bank transfer to The Parish Clerk Polly Doyle for May 2020.

055/20 UPDATE ON ONGOING POINTS

The parish steward is due to visit on the 8th July. It was requested that the telephone kiosk was tidied up.

Unfortunately, the internal auditor is currently ill and the work on the internal audit is paused. We are due to send the AGAR once it has been approved.

The Clerk has received an invoice from Miles and Francis to be address on the next agenda. Clerk hours for June were 19.25 hours.

Sadly, Councillor Joanne Simmons has resigned her position. The elections office will be informed and will be addressed on the next agenda.

Councillor Morgan-Frise joined the meeting at 8pm

056/20 DOG FOULING SIGNS

Warning signs are now posted around the woods. No bags have been seen around and there seems to have been an improvement. It was noted that it is worth changing the signs periodically so that they continue to be eye catching. The Parish Council would like to note that Jane Batt and Mandy McCann regularly empty the rubbish bags and thank them for their assistance in keeping the parish litter free.

Councillor Jones has received MOD leaflets about topics including dog walking and using Salisbury plain. The purchase of a box to hold these leaflets on the edge of the Secret Garden will be added to the next agenda.

057/20 SPEED INDICATOR DEVICE

Members visited the current site of the SID. Chairman Jonik currently changes the batteries and suggests that other members learn the procedure to understand what is involved. The effectiveness of a permanent sign was questioned and it was suggested that either the sign is moved about or not permanently on. Unfortunately, the current site is the only realistic position particularly as it is on parish land.

It was felt that the cost needed to be considered carefully as it was a significant chunk out of the parish reserves. It was suggested that we continue with the current camera and as and when it fails then the solar powered SID option is reconsidered. Chairman Jonik arranged a demonstration of a battery change.

058/20 AGAR APPROVAL

It was proposed, seconded and **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to approve the completed Annual Governance and Accountability Return prepared for the internal audit.

059/20 SET THE PERIOD FOR THE EXERCISE OF PUBLIC RIGHTS

In light of the new legislation regarding the internal audit Members agreed to setting the period for the Exercise of Public Rights to start on Tuesday 1st September up to and including Monday 5th October 2020.

060/20 FIGURE CHANGE IN FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

The suggestion by the internal auditor that the tendering figure in the FR11.1(h) of £25,000 be changed to match that of the SO65(a) at £5,000 was agreed to by the members.

061/20 INSURANCE RENEWAL

It was proposed, seconded and **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to renew Erlestoke Parish's insurance on the 16th July 2020 at a cost of £331.56. The insurance is with Community First.

062/20 BANK SIGNATORIES

Members acknowledged that in accordance with FR2.2, Councillor Lewcock as the Financial Reviewer is excluded from being a bank signatory and from approving payments at Council meetings.

063/20 COVID-19 COMMUNITY ACTION

Councillors considered the opening of the play park in light of the easing of lockdown regulations on the 4th July. The government guidelines were considered and an assessment of the risks and actions involved was discussed. Signage would need to be in place; to either explain why the playpark is shut or as a reminder that social distancing and good hygiene is adhered to. The Parish do not have the resources or finances to clean the playpark. Consequently, the onus is on the individuals using the play park to behave in accordance with governmental guidelines.

It was agreed to review the decision in two weeks' time via an extraordinary meeting to be held on Wednesday 15th July at 7.30pm on Zoom.

064/20 VILLAGE LITTER PICK

Members set the date for the annual village litter pick as Sunday 12th July. This will help tidy the village before winter and assist Jane and Mandy who do a wonderful job of regular litter picking.

065/20 ERLESTOKE CHURCH

Members are asked to consider the serious concerns regarding the Erlestoke Church keeping its' doors open. Their AGM is being held on Tuesday 28th July at 7.30pm.

The Church is having difficulties, even despite the added problems caused by COVID-19. Attendee numbers are decreasing and there is the potentially that the Church will be closed down. They would like the space to be both a church and a community hub, but this proves difficult. The possibility of having the Parish AGM after the Church AGM in support of them was discussed. Restrictions are to be checked in regards to having the AGM in person with cheese and wine. This item will be added to the extraordinary meeting planned.

066/20 BIKES IN ERLESTOKE WOODS

Illegal biking activity and unsociable behaviour by the bike owners has been an ongoing issue in Elrestoke Woods and MOD land. Recently, there has been an incident of people with unlicensed bikes at the woods being fined by police. Malcolm Cupis has been active in trying to reduce illegal and unsocial activity in the woods and the parish thank him for his time and effort. Hopefully the fine will work as a future deterrent.

Councillor Jones has met with WO1 Elson who works on the training estate and had a discussion about the proactive approaches that can be implemented. The Estate Management Team are aware of the illegal activity on their land and have been dismantling ramps and bike tracks etc. They have an ongoing programme regarding signage at all access points and are developing bar code scans so the public can gain more information about access to MOD land. There is currently no date estimation for Erlestoke signage to be in place.

The Estate Management Team reiterated the need for illegal and unsociable activity to be reported as the number of calls affects how they can react and the amount of funding they receive. The Estate Team are supportive of Erlestoke Parish putting up their own signs at access points and are keen to work with the community. When COVID-19 restrictions are relaxed WO1 Elson is interested in coming to talk to the parish council about their plan of action in relation to this, but also the drainage plans for ditches and lakes etc.

067/20 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Louise

Application Number	Applicant	Location of Development	Description of Development
20/04446/TCA	Louise Jones	15 High Street	Proposal:- T1 - Beech tree - dead wood T2 - Ash tree - fell T3 - Sycamore tree - fell T4 - row of sapling Beech trees - remove T5 - Apple tree - prune & reshape T6 - Conifer tree - fell

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No objections raised.

Erlestoke Parish Council would like to highlight that Erlestoke is a conservation area and consequently all planned tree work must be submitted to the Council via a ‘works to tree’ application. It is a simple process to check and apply online:

<https://www.gov.uk/apply-work-on-protected-tree>

068/20 PLANNING APPLICATIONS DETERMINED

Application Number	Location of Development	Description of Development	Decision

069/20 EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION AND ON-GOING MATTERS – Please note no decisions can be made on any items discussed under this agenda item.

- Erlestoke House Gates
- Fracking
- Broadband
- Play Area
- Erlestoke Lakes
- Erlestoke Woods
- Village Hall

No issues were raised.

070/20 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM EPC REPRESENTATIVES

- 070/20.1** Councillor Jonik - **Website and Footpaths**
- 070/20.2** Councillor Lewcock - **Cricket and Golf Club, Leisure and Entertainments and the Erlestoke Prison**
A letter from the Cricket Club regarding their planned pavilion has been received and will be discussed at an upcoming extraordinary meeting.
- 070/20.3** Councillor Frise-Morgan - **Health and Wellbeing and the Village Hall**
- 070/20.4** Position vacant – **Play Area Officer and Community Police**
- 070/20.5** Councillor Durham - **Information Technology**
- 070/20.6** Position vacant - **General Maintenance**
- 070/20.7** Mr. Bill Kemp – **Flood Warden**
- 070/20.8** PCSO Georgie Dodd - **Police**

Meeting ended at 9.30pm

The next parish meeting will be on Wednesday the 12th August 2020