

Draft minutes of
ANNUAL MEETING OF ERLESTOKE PARISH COUNCIL
Wednesday 27th April 2022

Present: Councillor K Lewcock (Chairperson)
Councillor C West
Councillor J B R Durham
Councillor L Jones

In Attendance: Mrs Polly Doyle – Parish Clerk

Public Participation – To receive questions from members of the public.

Two members of the public attended and concerns over parking on the High Street was raised. There was also concern expressed over the noise levels coming from The George and Dragon pub as the licence was requested before the pub garden was created.

422/22 APOLOGIES

Apologises received from Councillor Morgan-Frise.

423/22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor L Jones declared that she has a planning application submitted for review.

424/22 MINUTES

The minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 9th March 2022, having previously been circulated, were confirmed by the Chairperson, Councillor Lewcock as a correct record.

425/22 REPORT FROM COUNCILLOR TAMARA REAY – WILTSHIRE COUNCIL

Point voted to be brought forward.

The County Council plan is to embed more local decision making into highway matters. As a consequence of this, there has been a restructure of CATG into the 'Local Highways, Footpaths and Infrastructure Group'. This should result in more funding into the local pot for local schemes and projects.

It was brought to Councillor Reay's attention that the new sign and wall around The George and Dragon narrowed and obscured the view. In addition to this, cars are not fitting properly into the front spaces and are sticking out into the road. Planning suggested that there should be a parking space to each room let. Councillor Reay will follow up with the Planning department.

426/22 CO-OPTING OF COUNCILLOR

Point voted to be brought forward.

It was proposed, seconded and **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to approve the co-option of Andy Rodgers onto the Council.

427/22 DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE

Point voted to be brought forward.

Andy Rodgers signed the declaration of Acceptance of Office Section 83 of the Local Government Act 1972.

428/22 VOTE FOR CHAIRPERSON

It was proposed, seconded and **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to approve the voting in of Councillor Jones as the new Chairperson.

429/22 VOTE FOR VICE CHAIRPERSON

It was proposed, seconded and **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to approve the voting in of Councillor Rogers as the new Vice Chairperson.

430/22 Chairman Lewcock gave the CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2021/22

This is the official Annual Parish Council meeting which sometimes gets confused with the Annual Parish Meeting. What a surprise. This meeting is a formal Parish council meeting, and strict Parish Council rules apply. The Annual Parish Meeting is open to everybody and is a hangover from the Middle Ages when communities would meet probably in the local church to discuss issues affecting the community. Nothing changed there then! It is usually organised, for convenience, by the EPC and this year's Annual Parish meeting is arranged for **Wednesday 22nd June** in this church and all residents can attend.

The local elections took place last year and fortunately we have six active Parish councillors from an uncontested election. The following Parish councillors were duly elected: James Durham, Louis Jones, Keith Lewcock, Fiona Morgan-Frise and Caroline West. Subsequently Justin Hunt-Davis was co-opted onto the council. Andy Rogers is going to join us today as a New Parish Councillor. A very warm welcome

Our longstanding chairman Stan Jonik stood down from the Parish Council after many years of service and his presence and commitment are sorely missed. A small farewell party for him was held at Caroline's home to say thank you. Currently we do not have a 'full time' chairman and the current Parish councillors are taking it in turns to carry on the role as acting chairman and vice chair.

In addition, our longstanding and supportive local councillor Richard Gamble retired, and his place has been taken by Tamara Reay who joined us at this meeting. Tamara is taking an interest in village affairs including issues around the opening of the Pub, speeding and traffic in the village.

Sadly, one of the long-term residents in the village, Bill Kerr, recently died. He and his wife Liz played an important part in the church and with the loss of the few regulars of the church there has been some uncertainty about how the church can continue. Fortunately, Simon West, who appropriately lives in the old vicarage, has stepped into to manage the church, and keep the building in use. It is an important architectural landmark and the location for our Parish Council meetings. Funds are being raised to improve and bring the church bells back to life.

The cricket club next to the secret garden is well cared for and they have plans for a new pavilion. It is looked after by Patrick Stayt and there is a new energy around cricket club activities. The club is aware that the Parish Council has right of access to the secret garden along the road owned by the cricket club.

There was a well-supported Community litter pick on the 10th April in which I participated. If anybody is missing an unopened packet of Viagra found by the side of the road, please get in contact with me. Thanks go to Stan Jonik who organised the litter pick and all those who helped.

The pandemic brought about some challenges for the Parish Council as the number of visitors to the village increased dramatically. Most were heading for the Erlestoke Woods, owned by the MOD but many parked in the Parish Council Car Park. Park residents found the number of visitors disruptive and there were some aggressive confrontations. Overflow parking often happened on the grassy sports field creating muddy tracks and mud.

As a result of submissions by the residents the Parish Council agreed to surround the car park with knee high fencing and put signs in place to try and limit the parking which so far has worked. This was completed in April of last year and some occupants of the park assisted with the installation.

However, the major infrastructure change to the village has been the re-opening of the George and Dragon Pub. After a long battle with the previous owners, who wanted to turn it into a house, the Pub was sold to Mr Gardner who has spent a significant amount of money refurbishing the 17ct building both internally and externally to a very high standard. Not all villagers have been enamoured with the reopening mostly due to the loss of on-site parking and the subsequent increase in parking on the highways. The Parish Council car park by the church has suddenly again become an 'in demand' location. We still await the Planning Officers decision on the retrospective applications. Probably true to say that the Parish Council car park is a limited solution for parking for Pub visitors, it has limited capacity and many visitors will use the Highways.

Covid and the reopening of the Pub have made villagers aware of the impact of improving local facilities and of Erlestoke being situated in an area of outstanding beauty. The resulting increase in visitors that these bring has perhaps been unforeseen and not always welcome.

Our long-time grass cutter Miles and Francis has now retired. We only now realise how much they are going to be missed. We have put the work out to contract and await three proposals. We are expecting the annual cost to increase and possibly the number of times the grass gets cut.

Erlestoke is a very small community of approximately 100 households. Our precept (annual income) is very small and creates limits on what we can do financially. We are required to have a professional paid clerk, who is an employee of the Council, and Polly has been doing sterling work for us.

Some expenditure has been approved including a new picnic table in the secret garden, white gates at the village entrances and a new SID. In addition, we have received a grant to enhance the playground. This will require 50% funding. However, all of these may not be affordable and will be for discussion later during our meeting.

Fiona is organising a Queen's jubilee event and a Jubilee picnic and dog show will be held in the Park, Erlestoke, on Sat June 4th.

431/22 FINANCE

431/22.1 BANK BALANCES

The bank balances were noted.

431/22.2 UPDATED CASH BOOK

The cashbook was noted.

432/22 GEORGE AND DRAGON PUB

Councillors discussed the parking issues in the village and noted that the Council had received a letter from the George and Dragon pub owner, Paul Gardner. Different options for the Council owned car park by the church were discussed such as; an entrance from the road through the main wall, extension of the car park, the need to change the surface if usage increases. It was acknowledged that a community consultation would be needed. The Council welcome further engagement from the George and Dragon pub and further discussion.

433/22 END OF YEAR BUDGET AND REVIEW

The Council considered the end of year budget and noted the additional expense of training for the playground inspection that would be upcoming.

434/22 WALC ANNUAL PAYMENT

It was proposed, seconded and **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to approve the payment of the annual subscription fee of £84.50 for WALC (and NALC) membership.

435/22 CLERK TIMESHEET FOR MARCH 2022

It was proposed, seconded and **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to approve the payment of the Clerks' March timesheet.

436/22 RESERVE LEVELS

It was proposed, seconded and **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to approve the level of reserves held by Erlestoke Parish Council.

437/22 BIN GRANT

It was agreed to postpone this point until further information was gathered.

438/22 PLATINUM JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS

It was proposed, seconded and **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to approve the funding of a Jubilee memorial gift for the children of the village up to a total of £200. An email will be sent out to promote this.

439/22 UPDATE ON ONGOING POINTS

It was noted that there was a respectful request from a member of the public for those involved with the mowing of the cemetery to be more a little more mindful, especially in the Spring.

440/22 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Application Number	Applicant	Location of Development	Description of Development
PL/2021/11594	The Chaffinch Pub Company Ltd	The George & Dragon, 11 High Street, Erlestoke, SN10 5TX	Creation of a pub garden including construction of boundary fence and means of enclosure within the site, and associated landscaping; and installation of roof vents & extraction for the new commercial kitchen (retrospective). And erection of free standing post at front.
PL/2022/01660	Mrs Cooper	52 HIGH STREET, ERLESTOKE, DEVIZES, SN10 5UA	1 - Conifer tree - fell. 2 - Yew tree - crown raise
PL/2022/00008	Ms Louise Jones	15 HIGH STREET, ERLESTOKE, DEVIZES, SN10 5TZ	Replacement of existing Victorian style wooden conservatory with a uPVC conservatory of the same style, retaining the same size and roof pitch and utilising the existing dwarf wall

All noted and agreed by the Councillors.

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>

441/22 EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION AND ON-GOING MATTERS – Please note no decisions can be made on any items discussed under this agenda item.

- Play Area – An inspection had been made and it was noted that rail replacements were needed
- Sub station
- Telephone kiosk

442/22 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM EPC REPRESENTATIVES

- 442/22.1** Footpaths - Mr S. Jonik
- 442/22.2** Cricket and Golf Club, Erlestoke Prison and EPC land - Councillor Lewcock
- 442/22.3** Health and Well-being - Councillor Morgan-Frise
- 442/22.4** Information Technology and the Play Area - Councillor Durham
- 442/22.5** Flood Warden – Vacant position
- 442/22.6** Police Community Support officer – Paula Yarranton 6015
- 442/22.7** MOD and Erlestoke Woods – Councillor Jones – It was flagged that the bench in the Secret Garden needs replacing and rail posts needed replacing.
- 442/22.8** Defibrillator – Mike Donnachie
- 442/22.9** Website – Mr S Jonik, Clerk Polly Doyle and Councillor James Durham

Meeting finished at 21:32