

**EASTON ROYAL PARISH COUNCIL**  
**PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**

on  
Thursday, 28<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2022  
at 19:00

**Present** : Margaret Holden (Chair), Anna Patterson (Vice Chair), Ben Cooper, Tom Doyle, Beverley Helps, James de Pass, Jerry Kunkler (Wiltshire Council), Peta Puyo (Clerk)

**1. Apologies for absence**

Paul Narizzano

**2. Member's declaration of interest**

Item 8: Ben Cooper, Beverley Helps, James de Pass.

**3. Approval of the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Thursday, 10<sup>th</sup> February 2022**

Correction: £100 payment to HH removed as had been entered in error.

**4. Appointment of new Parish Clerk**

MH welcomed PP as the new Parish Clerk. MH thanked AP for acting as Clerk in the interim period. MH and AP had taken time to review and seek advice from WALC (Wiltshire Association of Local Councils) on a revised salary of the Clerk/Finance Officer position and it was proposed to the Council that the role warranted Salary Point 6 (NALC agreed National Salary Award 21-22), with an annual pay of £2709.20 (£10.42/hr). A contract and job description are being finalised. **APPROVED** by the Council.

**5. Matters arising from February meeting**

Item 5: Old Planning Papers. BH advised that this is ongoing. Older planning papers have been offered/given to households concerned for historic purposes as they do not have to be archived. JK advised that only applications for the past 3 years should be kept as all applications are available online.

Item 8: Footpath access. JdP advised that there were no ongoing issues of the gate being left open. The gate can be opened sufficiently to enable access to everyone including those with a buggy.

Item 9: Update on surface repair EROY 22. BH advised that no grant was available but ongoing coordination was being maintained with Stephen Leonard (ROW Wiltshire).

Item 13: White gates Conygre Farm. MH, through courtesy, advised Conygre Farm of the future positioning of the white gates at the entrance to the village.

**6. Report from Jerry Kunkler (Wiltshire Council)**

JK informed the Council that CATG (Community Area Transport Groups) would now be known as LHFIG (Local Highways Footpath Improvement Grants). Future grants would be available, but more limited, through this body. Precept should reflect higher participation from the village in such projects.

Matt Perrott (Wiltshire Council Area Highways Engineer) will be meeting with MH, BC and TD on May 12<sup>th</sup> to discuss ER needs. It is to be noted that the eastern part of the main road

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in ER has been resurfaced. Breach Cottage and beyond that point is in Burbage and will require separate discussions for repair.

The Area Board funding available this year is being reduced from 30k – 16k.

JK was made aware of the issue regarding Item 8. JK suggested the council contact Wilts CC Legal Department to seek advice. **ACTION AP**

JK thanked everyone for their work and was excused from the meeting.

**7. Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR 2021/22)**

PP has processed all of the accounts for 2021/22 and they have been approved, in principle, by Roger Tilbrook our Internal Auditor. However, as gross income and gross expenditure exceeded £25k, an external audit is also required this year. PP proposed that a complete review be made of the Asset Register as this appears on the AGAR form and should reflect the purchase of the new playground as well as other assets for insurance, maintenance and liability purposes.

PP therefore proposed that the AGAR approval be postponed until the meeting in May and that both an Asset Policy and Asset Register be worked on in the meantime.

**ACTION PP**

PP has been informed by Roger Tilbrook that he will be stepping down as Internal Auditor after this year's accounts. The council wish to thank him for all his work as Internal Auditor over the past years and wish him a very happy second retirement.

**8. Update on Speed Monitoring Devices**

This is an ongoing issue being closely monitored by AP and MH. To date no funds have been paid as no satisfactory conclusion has been reached. It was agreed with a benefactor towards this project that their donation be returned pending an acceptable outcome to this dispute. As suggested by JK, advise is being sought from WCC/WALC as to the best way forward. **ACTION AP**

**9. Update on Playground**

BC advised the Council that the playground is well used and the feedback has been extremely positive.

£4654.78 remains in the PC accounts, ringfenced for use to complete a small basketball court (reflects successful grant applications). Quotes received to date are circa £6.5k. The council agreed that we should continue fundraising over the forthcoming year in the hope of obtaining the further £2k required. In the meantime, people are enjoying the use of the basketball post. Very soon, two basketballs will be left on the Rec by the post for everyone's use. It is hoped that these will be appreciated, respected and left on site for the next players.

The old swings will be removed and the area flattened for tables and seating. **ACTION BC and JdP**

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BC informed the council that he had checked the trees on the Rec with tree surgeon Rob Mead. None require attention

Beverley Helps was excused from the meeting at 8.30pm due to ill health.

**10. Update on White Gates**

MH informed the council that the new white gates (westbound side only) are scheduled to be installed before July. The village name will appear on the gates and speedwatch sign will be moved to the 30mph sign.

The estimated cost is £3157.34 which includes a 20% contingency. ERPC will pay 25% of the total.

**11. Amendments to Bank Account**

MH has made an official complaint to Lloyds Bank as the request for changes made 4 months ago have still not been put in place. The previous clerk is still receiving correspondence and the new clerk is unable to access the accounts nor make VAT refund applications due to this. Ongoing **ACTION MH**

**12. Training**

AP, TD, JdP, BC and PN have recently attended Parish Councillor training.

They all reported that it was extremely informative. The training highlighted, in particular, that decisions can only be made by the PC at PC meetings and that the only issues to be raised are those which were on the previous minutes and the agenda.

PP (clerk) is signed up for the WALC Parish Clerk training on the 6<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> May.

Paul Oatway is putting together a "Code of Conduct" training session for the Chairs and Clerks of the Pewsey area as part of the Wiltshire Council Standards Code of Conduct.

**13. Annual Parish Meeting**

It is proposed that the Annual Parish Council Meeting be held on Thursday, 19<sup>th</sup> May at 6pm before the Annual Parish Meeting that is chaired by the PC. The latter would be held at 7.30pm.

The PC meeting would be to elect the Chair and Vice Chair and to approve the AGAR (see item 7 above).

During the Annual Parish Meeting, it is proposed that a list of each village activity be made and that a representative from each be invited to give a 5 minute summary of their activity. Following the APM, all present would be invited to stay, the bar would be opened and the above representatives would remain to answer any further queries the public may have.

**APPROVED**

**14. Update Poo bin**

MH confirmed that the new green bin situated on the bank outside Home Farm is being well used and much appreciated by both villagers and visitors walking through. The PC thanks Beverley and Hew for offering to empty this regularly.

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**15. Appointment of new Advisor for Wiltshire Association of Local Councils (WALC)**

The PC were informed that Deborah Bourne has replaced Kate Fielding. MH has been in contact with Debbie who has been very helpful in sending policy copies and other useful information. It was agreed that the Standing Orders should be reviewed as well as the Asset Policy. **ACTION MH, AP and clerk**

**16. Items from the General Public**

Item 1. The clerk received the following emails from a resident. For the purpose of transparency and clarity, these emails are being published. The senders have authorised this under the understanding that they be unredacted.

Paul van Dyck <[vandyck4@icloud.com](mailto:vandyck4@icloud.com)>

Thu 24/03, 13:07

Clerk

Dear Peta,

Thank you for your email, and news of your post and acknowledgement of our email, including passing back our respects to both Brian and Pauline, who have done sterling work, and passing on Colin Chesterman's contact details as the interim chairman of the village hall.

There is one part of our email you have not responded to, that is the question of what is being planned by the PC or the ERPG for the village hall and the green now. There is clearly something being put forward as there was a surveyor on site for the better part of an entire day over a month ago and gossip. We would ask that you please ask the PC Chair or Deputy to contact both us and Vivien at Chantry Cottage, as the two properties most closely neighbouring the village hall and the only village properties who are substantively affected by all developments to this bequeathed green site. As you know, waiting until it is at formal planning stage increases ill-will and poor relations, and once again, sets the PC against the two neighbouring properties, rather than respecting them and working with them before plans are paid for and so, heavily invested in.

A new matter, that your announcement of your new post brings, is a question about who from outside of the ER Parish Council has looked at the direct conflict of interest in your offer to hold the post of Parish Clerk? This is in consideration of your past and current role in the ER Playground Group, and your known drive for, and personal interest in development proposals.

Who will be overseeing concern or complaint in relation to your impartiality as clerk? Can the PC please formally report directly to us and all villagers on this. And on what they have done as our PC, and will do ongoing to ensure the conflict of interest that clearly exists between your two roles

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has been mitigated, and who is the external governing body to ensure this remains so, available to take any formal complaint to?

It is our duty as citizens to raise this conflict of interest clearly and formally through the clerk, so it is added to the formal Agenda, openly minuted and action taken by the PC so it cannot be said by the PC that no one raised it. We all have a duty to ensure that the PC and the paid clerk uphold the highest conduct in public office and respect ALL villagers who pay the precept. We have seen this go very wrong before in the ERPC, specifically zero communication or discussion with the two neighbouring properties before planned developments, a PC who represented its own clique and a culture under Elliott and Hollingsworth 2013-2022 that led to many documented acts of failure to consult, failure to present the true state and vexatious behaviour toward The Old Forge in retaliation for exposure of those failings.

Could you please acknowledge receipt of this email-letter, and the steps you will take to bring this forward to the PC, and their steps to protect the public interest through proper procedure in investigating complaints, and proper procedures in place for collecting and responding to those complaints. This should be within a reasonable timeframe of no more than one month. It should be public, not secret 'off-agenda' meetings by the PC, as we have evidence were used throughout 2014-2016 to target us and our property and likely others.

Kind regards,

Karen and Paul van Dyck  
The Old Forge  
Easton Royal

Paul van Dyck <[vandyck4@icloud.com](mailto:vandyck4@icloud.com)>

Tue 12/04, 09:08

Dear Peta,

Thank you for your confirmation and further information. We trust that the Agenda of the next meeting will raise the issue of vested and conflicts of interests across the PC, the ERVH committee and the clerk, and hope that you will ensure a transparent process for complaints is the outcome of that meeting, to be published widely so all can access it without retaliation.

Kind regards,

Paul and Karen van Dyck  
The Old Forge

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Paul van Dyck <[vandyck4@icloud.com](mailto:vandyck4@icloud.com)>

Thu 05/05, 19:05

Dear Peta,

We are not sure from your tone, should we thank you, or are you frustrated by the request. Conflict of interest can express in different ways.

Are we correct to assume that in the PC meeting you tabled the 2 emails, so presented the question in that manner, and that the work is yet to be done by the PC on forming a workable response for the good of the public?

As we have already been subjected to repeated vexatiousness from those close to the PC, as well as actual PC members, we hope that our requests for a transparent code around conflict of interest and a process for complaints with external oversight will be set up.

Being respectful to those who neighbour the land, which the PC do not own, and was left in perpetuity for children, as an unchanging constant for them during times of upheaval, by Sir Henry Bashford, should never be forgotten. This is as the booklet on Sir Henry Bashford states it, and how this landscape came to be. So, as villagers come and go, and wish to develop it, and change it for their own purposes in their own image, the clear covenant of this bequeathment is of importance, to allow the open green to remain a calm unchanging green for children. This bequeathment is both of land and of respect and kindness to others, thinking of them when they are not there.

This is what the ER PC are the guardians of and we hope that you will pass this to the PC, to the re-formed newer / younger PC, on our behalf, reminding them of the double nature of this bequeathment, of the open space and the care toward those who are not able to speak for themselves and need time to just be. It should not be about grand gestures and voting, as may be the case with other aspects of village life designed to build more social / financial interest.

In the interests of transparency and goodwill, yes we give our permission for you to attach the two emails with our contact details unredacted, and to add this email too. Thank you for asking to do this.

Best wishes,

Paul and Karen van Dyck

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The council highlighted two important points during their discussion :

Firstly, the ER Village Hall has its own committee, agenda and meetings. The PC is not involved at this stage regarding any proposed extension. If matters move forward the PC will ensure that the village is notified and all matters and decisions are minuted.

Secondly, given the nature of the role and employment of clerk (an employee of the council, **not** an elected representative) there **cannot** be a conflict of interest.

The PC has contacted the Wiltshire County Council Standards Committee to see how best deal with the issues of emails of this nature from members of the public.

Item 2.

Due to a conflict of interest BC, BH and JdP left the meeting.

Three separate letters were received from parishioners with regards to certain footpaths and bridleways.

The remaining council members (quorum met) have addressed the issues, agreed on a plan of action and will be meeting with each of these parishioners separately to explain how they intend to move forward. **ACTION MH and AP**

17. Finance -see overleaf

18. Date of next meetings

**Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> May** Annual Parish Council Meeting (6pm)

Annual Parish Meeting (7.30pm)

**Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> July** Parish Council Meeting (7pm)

**Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> September** Parish Council Meeting (7pm)

**Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> November** Parish Council Meeting (7pm)

**Meeting closed at 10pm.**

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**PLANNING: Planning Applications since the last meeting:**

2022/01096	The Old Forge Felling Beech tree Reduction of second Beech tree	Objections Refused Wiltshire Council
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**FINANCE:**

**Payments made:**

Glasdon - Dog Poo Bin	£304.54
Litter Bins - Waste bin for playground	£351.54
HP Store - computer Clerk	£580.00
Hew Helps - IT work old computer	£120.00
Hew Helps - IT work new computer	£160.00
Kellaway - for installation Gate/Poo bin posts	£44.16
Clerk - office supplies	£42.28
IDVerde – grass cutting	£360.64
Clerk Salary - March	£221.67
Clerk - office supplies (ink for printer)	£44.42
Wiltshire Association of Local Councils	£108.42

**Payments to Approve**

None	

**Payments Received:**

SSE Wayleave - substation rent	£90.00
Wiltshire Council – 2022/23 Precept	£7600.00

**PLAYGROUND**

Amount remaining and ringfenced for the Playground (basketball court) **£4654.81**