

Easterton Parish Council Meeting

Monday 24th January 2022 7.30 p.m.

Minutes

Present: Cllr Chris Saunders (CS) (Chair), Cllr Ben Myerscough (BM) (Vice-Chairman), Cllr Anthony Snook (AS) Cllr Judy Boyt (JB) & Cllr Richard Brooks (RB). In attendance: Gill Tatum Parish Clerk, 5 Parishioners & 2 members of the Public. The meeting started at 7.30pm.

- 1 **Absence apologies and Declaration of interests** Members are bound by the provisions of the Code of Conduct and are required to declare either personal or prejudicial interests; Apologies: Cllr Andy Colley (AC) & Wiltshire Councillor Dominic Muns. Cllr AS declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 4 1.1.
- 2 **Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting 6th December 2021.** The minutes were agreed by all Councillors present and signed on behalf of the Council by the Chair as a true record.
- 3 **Adjournment for Open Meeting;**
 1. Robert Snook (representing the applicant F J Snook) & his tenant Robin Kraike (RK) attended in regard to PL/2021/03057 Land at New Side Farm Urchfont, SN10 4RL (which is within Easterton Parish) which had just been refused by Wiltshire Council “..due to the unacceptable impact on highway safety (...given the relationship and proximity of the bridleway to the taxi way and runway associated with the proposed use, it is not possible to mitigate the risk to users of the bridleway (EAST26) caused when microlights are operated.....”
RK read out a prepared statement to the meeting; his first plea was that he didn't feel it was necessary to move the bridleway due to the low frequency use of both microlights and pedestrian and equestrian users using the bridleway, his users pre notified him when going to use the runway, he would have signage on the bridleway and he was a very experienced pilot/manager of an airstrip and also cited another example of an airstrip and bridleway co-existing. He realised however there was a fundamental objection and outlined a couple of proposals for re-locating and moving the bridleway (to the field edges on the Eastern or Western perimeters). Mention was made during discussion of a past Inspectors refusal to move the bridleway (made a few years ago), however mention was now made by the landowner of providing a 2 metre strip of land inside the field boundary to ensure riders did not have to ride along the road. RK is very keen to maintain his livelihood and work out of Wickham Green (as it is locally know as) and wants to resolve the situation to work with the Parish and users of the bridleway. The Parish Council offered to review any proposed bridleway diversion prior to submission to Wiltshire Council to gauge Parishioners views. Cllr BM also raised the potential of creating a permissive bridleway now around the field edges, providing signage to help riders (although of course the definitive route would still need to be left open).
 2. A Parishioner asked about the field bounded by Haywards place, Sam Moore's Lane and the High Street (known locally as Halstead Farm Field) where he noted there had been significant surveying recently. He wanted to know if any prior planning permission for this land granted or requested, who owned the land and what will be the Parish Council's (PC) response to a planning request for housing. The Chair confirmed no planning applications had been submitted but indeed a few months ago the PC had contacted Wiltshire Council

about policy feedback about this piece of land but unfortunately had no reply. Cllrs present all felt the land could not be construed as “Infill” as it would not be providing a property within a garden or small space between current properties, access at present was hard to forecast as no obvious link to the High Street. It was acknowledged that Wiltshire currently has a shortage of housing but the land in question is an integral green space in Easterton lying within the Conservation Area with constrained access.

4 **Past Planning Issues**

1. Update on PL/2021/09788; Application Refused (see 3.1)

2. Update on position at Honeywood Stables PL/2021/06748

Wiltshire Cllr DM has spoken to the planning officer determining this application and she is minded to approve this application. In his absence the Clerk had circulated his update; The framework for allowing residential use is established under Core Policy 48 where it can be demonstrated that sufficient evidence has been presented to show that a continued commercial use is not viable. The Planning Officer feels that this has been demonstrated. I pointed out that Easterton Parish Council feels this crucial element has not been demonstrated properly but she is confident that the financial evidence provided by the applicant is sufficient. I went on to argue that this sets a dangerous precedent for many other historic approvals that include such conditions as it allows a backdoor to be used in order to gain residential use. She explained that any application would be assessed on its own merits and the applicant (if following a similar agricultural-to-commercial-to-residential route) would need to demonstrate that ongoing commercial opportunity has truly been exhausted. I questioned the extent of an approval for residential use since the plot in this case is very large, potentially opening up further development on the land. She agreed that if she was to approve the application the curtilage of the residential usage would be limited to the immediate building thus removing the ability for additional buildings to be placed on the plot in the event that it all became “residential”. Furthermore, Permitted Development rights would be removed to further protect the plot as a whole from additional development. I was initially disappointed in the direction of this application but with the restrictions the officer has agreed I feel slightly more comfortable. I still believe that there is a danger for rural communities where this protracted approach could be taken to gain residential development support and we need to be wary of it. For this reason there is a broader discussion to be had surrounding national and local planning policy which allows commercial use to become a stepping stone to residential development when that same residential development would not have been allowed had it been the initial step. This is something which I will raise with the cabinet member for development as well as our MP in the coming weeks. The PC views already submitted will remain unchanged.

3. Strawberry Fields; outstanding issues GreenSquare Group have created the hard standing for the proposed Grit Bin (see item 8.4). Parishioners present were still concerned about the outflow arrangements from Strawberry Fields to neighbouring properties and undermining garden. Cllr CS confirmed there was still work outstanding, the second phase and he had been promised contractors will come back to complete the work. **Action: Cllr CS will continue to chase GreensquareGroup.**

Cllr CS

5 **Update from Wiltshire Councillor Dominic Muns**
Unfortunately Wiltshire Cllr DM had to give last minute apologies but sent comments for the planning discussion.

6 **Governance Issues**

6.1 Parish Councillor Vacancy; co-option of candidate Dr Johnny Cayford

Unfortunately Dr Johnny Cayford (JD) had to give last minute apologies due to family issues. Cllr CS proposed his nomination as a Parish Councillor for Easterton, Cllr JB seconded and all Cllrs present unanimously agreed his office. As he was not present the formal signature and office co-option will take place at the next meeting. Meanwhile the Clerk will provide him with induction materials. **Action: Formal co-option at February meeting, Clerk to start induction process.**

Clerk

6.2 Resignation of the Clerk.

The Clerk has handed in her notice and her last day will be 28/02/22. She has nothing but praise for working with the PC but is off travelling and so regretfully is leaving.

6.3 Recruitment update for a new Clerk; 3 applications received to date, the closing date for applications is the 15th February 2022. One prospective candidate was in attendance at the meeting. Cllrs CS, JB & RB will be on the interview panel planned for the 21st February 2022. **Action: Clerk will forward applications after deadline for shortlisting and interview on 21st February. Cllr CS to book Garden Room at the Village Hall.**

Clerk/Cllrs
CS, JB & RB

7 **Correspondence and Communication**

7.1 Letter request for donation towards war memorial in Saint Barnabas Churchyard.

The letter from David Part had already been circulated to Cllrs and 2 Parishioners were in attendance to give further details. There is no outside war memorial for Easterton in the Village. A remembrance garden has been created with a cluster of rosemary bushes just inside the Church yard and it was thought this was a suitable location. Upon questioning by Cllr RB it was confirmed that several other locations had been assessed but none were suitable (to allow safe gathering to celebrate on remembrance Sunday). Whilst a donation was sought from the Parish Council it was construed on discussion from the Parishioners present that a decision had not yet been made on what form the memorial should take. Suggestions included a replica in limestone of those headstones used by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission; another idea was a bronze replica of the memorial inside the Church or a Sarsen Stone. Some information will be put in the Echoes to get feedback from Parishioners on which type of memorial they would like to see. There was unanimous overall level of support by the PC however, as costs were therefore unknown at this point it was not known the size of donation appropriate. **Action: To revisit when costs for the chosen memorial are known, Clerk/FO will make a financial allowance in the accounts**

Clerk

7.2 Letter received from Carer Support Wiltshire and Dorothy House seeking a donation to start a brand-new bereavement support 'Help Point' service in Devizes

Cllrs were in support of this new local initiative. Cllr CS, seconded by Cllr JB proposed a donation of £50, all Cllrs present agreed. **Action: Clerk to issue Cheque.**

Clerk

7.3 Letter received from Parishioner regarding dog attack; this had been covered in the latest Echoes with advice to report to the Dog Warden.

7.4 boomCast Update; Cllr AS has with support from volunteers has been putting out flyers to parishioners missing off the communication system and as a result had added 5/6 new names to our list. **Action: Clerk to liaise with Cllr AS to purchase “top-up” text slots.**

Clerk/Cllr
AS

7.5 Echoes Update; the January addition has just been circulated via boomCast (and on the website). Editor Cllr JB thanked all for contributions and gave the usual request for more news gratefully received via judy@judyboyt.com.

8 Finance Update

8.1 Bank Reconciliation December 2021 & Budget Update

Clerk/FO ran through figures £30,490.85 (closing balance with unrepresented cheques) as at 17/12/2021. Agreed to transfer £650 for playground future maintenance/new equipment into the Savings Account (current balance Savings Account £2,892.65). FO has started to analyse end of year budget position and identified area of spend remaining.

8.2 All cheques ratified; Ch. No. 1806 Royal British Legion £30 Wreath, Ch. No 1807 £50 Easterton PCC hedge maintenance, Ch. No. 1808 Integrity Enterprises Ltd (grit bin) £174, Ch. No. 1809 £15.45 Clerk Expenses, Ch. No 1810 £600 Superior plants Christmas Tree, Ch. No. 1811 £50 North Newnton PC for laptop, Ch. No. 1812 £15.12 Clerk expenses Ch. No. 1813 £469.71 Parish Gardener, Ch. No. 1814 £600 transfer to NS&I (for playground), Ch. No 1815 Parish Gardener £108 and Ch. No 1816 Carer Support Wiltshire £50

Cllr
CS/Clerk

8.3 Motion to purchase grit bin for Strawberry Fields, Cllr CS, cost £145 + VAT proposed Cllr CS, seconded Cllr RB, and unanimously agreed by all Cllrs present. **Action; Cllr CS to order liaise with Clerk on invoicing.**

9 Projects and Activities Updates

9.1 Easterton Community Fibre Partnership Update; Cllr AC had provided a written update read by the Clerk; I am working on building enough support amongst the 1st wave of addresses from Openreach (circa 40 addresses) to enable us to proceed to survey and then create a CIC to enter into an agreement with Openreach to bring FTTP to the 1st wave and then use this success to garner support from the wider Parish.

9.2 Container behind Bus Shelter update; Cllr CS reported that the container price is £2,800 +VAT and was clearly far too expensive. He repeated that there was no storage capacity at the Village Hall and the emergency flood equipment needs to be stored near to the “at risk area”, he will therefore do some further research to see if he can find a cheaper storage option. **Action: Cllr CS to reassess storage facilities for the flood/litter pick equipment.**

Cllr CS

9.3 Allotments adjacent to Drove Lane Burial Ground; Cllrs RB & JB had been to assess the field adjacent to the Burial Ground and confirmed that there is great potential to create allotments here, the fence line can be moved to separate with the Burial Ground to keep that private and secure. Cllrs reported that they estimated the area can accommodate 8 full size allotments; there is separate running water (trough already in the field). Access would need to be by foot using the adjacent footpath but that can accommodate wheelbarrow access (to also help some hedge trimming may be required) with plenty of space for a new field gate access. The questions are should we provide a plot with a shed, or just an area of grass? There is also the potential to provide half plots if a large demand or as starter allotments. The first step was to gauge interest from Easterton Parishioners before any longer term consideration for provision to Market Lavington Parishioners, Cllr RB was keen to

secure the facility for Easterton. The site is also adjacent to the School who also might like an allotment. **Action: Cllrs RB & JB to take forward; article in the Next Echoes to gauge interest and potential take up, liaison with the School and will use support from the National Allotments Society as required.**

Cllrs RB &
JB

9.4 Energy; Cllr JB confirmed she is still reviewing the potential for electric charging points for the Parish. She hopes Johnny Cayford (JC) will assist her with this area of interest in the future. She along with Cllrs RB are still committed to the Environmental Open Day and has been gauging interest in others to host stalls/information at the event. **Action; Ongoing and to involve JC.**

Cllrs JB, RB

9.5 St Barnabas School; the Headmistress had been invited but had given apologies and hoped to attend another meeting. Cllr JB has been in touch to find out their projects and any assistance from the Parish Council. The Platinum Jubilee event was raised as an area of potential joint event across the whole Parish; the Village Hall Trustees, The Fete Committee (the idea was to have an event on the 4th June 2022 perhaps instead of the August bank holiday fete? And to involve the School). **Action: Cllr CS will approach the Fete Committee and the School to get their views on hosting a joint event to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.**

Cllr CS

10 Highways and Byways Issues

10.1 Landowner letters on path maintenance responsibilities feedback; EAST 1 and EAST 22 works have been undertaken (works have also been paid for by the Parish Council plus volunteer works for EAST 22 to clear these routes). Cllr RB has also been speaking to Paul Milliard (Wiltshire RofW) about providing a definitive paragraph about Landowners Responsibility that can be passed on to Landowners to help emphasise their obligations.

10.2 Kings Road Surface; Cllr CS has again chased within Wiltshire Council and will seek assistance of W Cllr Dominic Muns to help progress as "patching" by the Parish Steward is clearly now not working and the proposed dressing in 23/24 will be useless if the lower surface on the road is not addressed. **Action: Cllr CS to progress.**

Cllr CS

10.3 Eastcott Rights of Way diversion updates; Cllr RB has meeting with Paul Millard to progress the paper work and get the stile kits for the diversion. He will also chase the outstanding signs for EAST 14 leading to the Railway. **Action: Cllr RB to progress.**

Cllr RB

10.4 Parish Gardener Update; Cllr AS reported maintenance all in accordance with contract and some additional work undertaken on our request for EAST 1.

10.5 Parish Steward (PS); Cllr AS had put a request out by boomCast for Parishioners to identify any "jobs" for the Parish (Drain, Gully cleaning, pot holes etc.) and had a good response with about 6 replies listing jobs which he would get the PS to action.

11 Environmental Issues

11.1 Easterton Flood Catchment Assessment; Cllr AS has had replies from all consulted but all confirmed unfortunately it was too early in the ELMS process to assess how this could help with the Flood Management Plan for Easterton. Ron Crook has been consulted and is agreeable to wait until ELMS information greater and meanwhile will identify if any other forms of funding to progress the Scheme.

Next Meetings

Next Parish Council Meeting 28th February 7.30pm at Garden Room, Village Hall

Advance Notice of Environmental Open Day for Easterton; Saturday 26th March 11am to 3pm 2022 Village Hall

The meeting closed at 9.15 pm. Signed as approved: Chairman

2022