

## DRAFT MINUTES

### PARISH OF ENSTONE

#### **Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held In Enstone Parish Hall on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> May 2024 at 7.00 pm**

PRESENT:- Seven Parish Councillors, DCs Alex Wilson & Andrew Beaney, CC Geoff Saul and eight residents

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs B. Sinclair, Clerk to the Council

APOLOGIES. Apologies for absence had been received from PCs Philip Shaw (holiday) and Anthony Ward (work); Revd. Mark Abrey

*Cllr. N. Knott welcomed everyone to the meeting.*

417. **Minutes:-**

- The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> May 2023 having previously been circulated, were agreed and signed by Cllr. Nikki Knott.

418. **Matters Arising:-**

- There were no matters arising.

419. **Police Report – PCSO Helen Duffield**

- In six months, 35 incidents were reported in Enstone equating to an average of six incidents per month. December 2023 and March 2024 saw the most incidents with eight incidents per month. The most frequently reported incidents were road-related incidents and road traffic collisions – there were no significant issues of note.
- There have been stolen vehicles ranging from Range Rovers, Land Rovers and high-performance cars. The advice for owners is to put keys into a Faraday pouch and keep keys in a metal tin indoors.
- A survey is being carried out for the Woodstock and surrounding villages to establish priorities for the next 12 months.

**Planning Application:-**

- **Upper Farm, Cleveley, 24/00854/HHD & 24/00855/LBC** – Internal & external alterations to main house and outbuildings, including two-storey extension and proposed roof lights to the main house. Erection of a carport and conversion of dovecote into plant room with the addition of a heat pump and landscape proposals. The applicants attended the meeting and kept the Parish Council informed during the planning process and were thanked for this. It was requested that swift bricks be installed and this was confirmed. *The Parish Council approved the application*

420. **Chair's Report – Cllr. N. Knott**

- PCs Mike Baggaley, Tom Gilbert and Richard Parker had resigned from the Parish Council. Richard had served on the council for 25 years and will be greatly missed.
- Three members were co-opted during the year – PCs Mike Gomm, Nathan Peart and Craig Millar and were welcomed onto the Council. There is still one vacancy.
- The Parish Council works closely with the OALC (Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils) which offers training courses for Parish Councillors and clerks and which also organises a monthly meeting for an elected Councillor with updates.
- District Cllr. Alex Wilson was congratulated on his recent re-election for a further four years.
- DCs Andrew Beaney, Alex Wilson & County Cllr. Geoff Saul were thanked for their continued work and support for the Parish during the past year.
- In September 2023 an open morning was organised at the Parish Hall to meet the Parish Council and ask questions. Twenty residents attended, as did members from Enstone Eco Group and from this meeting, a parish questionnaire was produced.
- A vote for “No Mow May” was agreed with a reduction of grass cutting of the verges from seven cuts per year to five cuts per year. Enstone Parochial Church Council was responsible for the maintenance of the churchyard and cemetery with the Parish Council funding this, along with a financial contribution from the PCC.
- There was a good response concerning biodiversity and the Parish Council will be devising its first Biodiversity Policy, working with the Eco Group which kindly took the lead on this.

- Suggestions for the S106 monies towards recreation showed support for the sports club, playing fields association and parish hall.
- There were many requests for pavements but these are too expensive to implement.
- The County's 20s Plenty Campaign for Enstone has been approved and will be implemented in the next few months.
- The one-way system outside the village shop has been completed although parking is still an issue. The Parish Council asks everyone to be respectful of the shop and residents. The two-hour slots are for the shop.
- A few Parish Councillors met with Enstone School and, as a result, are arranging for the installation of a school flashing slow-down sign on Lidstone Road.
- In recognition of the King's Coronation, a new parish noticeboard has been installed.
- A new bench for the top of Cleveley Road was very kindly donated by a resident and a local builder has donated his time to lay a new base and Cllr. Mike Gomm will help with the fixing of this to the ground.
- Senior teas continued and Cllr. Richard Parker was thanked for organising these.
- A hugely successful weekend litter pick was organised by Cllr. Philip Shaw – record numbers of volunteers attended and were all thanked for their help.
- Planning applications – The Mullin Project now has full approval and building will begin in a few years' time. The houses in the field on Chapel Lane were approved on Appeal. There is an Appeal in relation to a house in Church Enstone.
- There is an enforcement on the land at Cling Clang Farm field, with no work being allowed for 56 days whilst planners review the situation. This is following the plots being sold through auction. The first plot which had a planning application for a dwelling has been refused.
- Enstone Quarry – Cllrs Millar & Knott attended a meeting with Smiths who have purchased the quarry site and a report will be available at the next Parish Council meeting.
- Rachel Hunt, webmaster, had organised a new email system for all Councillors (gov.org) and was thanked for all her work on this.
- Cllr. Knott thanked all her fellow Councillors for their dedication throughout the last year and to the clerk, Beth, for all her continued hard work.

421. **Finance Report – Mrs Beth Sinclair, Responsible Financial Officer:-**

- The Clerk reported that the certificate of audit had been received for the 2022/2023 accounting year and no queries had been received from either the internal or external auditors.
- The audit process for 2023/2024 is now in progress, with the Parish Council having appointed Astral Accountancy as Internal Auditor. Moore continues to be the external auditor. The internal audit had been completed with no queries.
- Quarterly financial checks continue at Parish Council meetings and Cllr. Carole Glendinning undertakes rigorous checks of all the receipts and payments. The clerk thanked Cllr. Glendinning for working with her to produce the annual budget and preparation of the annual financial meeting.
- All the required documents have been put onto the website concerning the Financial Regulations Act for Local Authorities and thanks go to Mrs Rachel Hunt for her help with this.
- As at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024, the balance of the accounts totalled £44,985.39 in the Santander Account.
- The clerk thanked the Parish Council for its continued hard work serving the residents of Enstone Parish and welcomed Cllrs. Gomm, Peart and Millar to the Council. The clerk also expressed her thanks to Cllr. Nikki Knott for her incredible support following her son's serious road traffic accident in February and to Cllr. Carole Glendinning for covering her role during this difficult period.

422. **District Councillor's Report – DCs Alex Wilson & Andrew Beaney:-**

- DC Alex Wilson thanked the Parish Council for its support during the recent District Councillor elections.
- WODC continues to be led by the Liberal Democrats in alliance with Labour and the Green Party.
- The council tax has increased by £4.99 for a Band D property and the green bin license fee has increased from £45.00 to £50.00 per annum.
- WODC's land supply is 4.38 years which gives cause for concern regarding the plots at Cling Clang Lane.
- The leisure centres around the District are being improved including the fixing of the roof at Chipping Norton Leisure Centre.
- Improvements are being made concerning mental health.
- Alex and Andrew thanked the Parish Council for all the work that they do for the community.

423. **County Councillor's Report – CC Geoff Saul:-**

- CC Saul thanked Enstone Parish Council for its continued hard work for the community.
- The County Council passed a multiparty budget for 2024/2025 that adopted, in full, the budget proposals of the Labour & Co-operative Group. The following challenges include:- tackling the cost

of living crisis through restoring £300,000 in annual support grants to local advice centres across Oxfordshire inequality; making services for children fit for the future to include £1.3 million for increased support for children with special educational needs and disabilities; £1.3 million for more family help social workers to stop children being taken into care; £6 million to build brand new children's homes; highways - £5 million to fill more potholes and fix pavements (55,000 extra potholes filled); to bring buses back under public control; £6 million for projects to cut congestion; £6.5 million for safer walking and cycling infrastructure and routes across the County.

- Council tax has been increased by the maximum allowed of 4.99 %. This includes the maximum increase of 2.99 % plus 2 % to cover adult social care. In 2010, council tax represented 28 per cent of council income; following a decade of Government cuts, the council tax now represents 58 per cent of council income.
- Over 50 per cent of the budget is spent on statutory obligations surrounding adult and children's social care.
- There is a new 801 bus service running from Chipping Norton to Cheltenham.
- The County Council administration has signed off on a lease of the triangle of land at Kidlington for a new Oxford United Football Stadium, subject to the grant of planning permission by Cherwell District Council.

#### Questions:-

- How much does the County Council have to pay out following car damage from pot holes? CC Saul will find out*
- There seems to be a lot of "top dressing" on the roads.*
- Has anyone from the County Council looked at the Old London Road? The pot holes are now in all of the passing places which are not being repaired. CC Saul explained that the repair of pot holes on main roads have top priority.*
- Road safety for the school – concerns regarding school safety around the junction of the school entrance. Can there be double yellow lines? This would create different problems.*

#### 424. Reports from the following Parish Organisations:-

##### **(a) Enstone Parish Hall – Mr Andrew Lee – Chair, PHMC**

- The Parish Hall has been trading quite well. There has been an upturn in the hiring of the hall of around nine per cent which is encouraging.
- The hall closed 2023 with a small loss but is now making a profit following the increase in users. As a result of higher energy bills, there is a loss of £483.00 during the first four months of 2024.
- A few evening events have been organised including film nights, quiz nights and the possibility of a summer party. There is limited attendance at these events which is of concern. This has been raised with the Parish Council as the apathy in the village as a community needs to be collectively addressed.
- The Parish Hall is in urgent need of additional committee members to assist and help organise these community events. New residents are encouraged to engage with the hall.
- The committee is looking at having the hall sports floor revamped and some decoration improvements both internally and externally.
- Other areas of interest will be events for the elderly and introducing other sports.

##### **(b) Enstone Eco Group – Mr. Ian Cave**

- Working with the Parish Council, the "No Mow May" approach will increase wildflowers and feed bees and other insects. There is a need for more wildflowers across the parish.
- The Eco Group publishes articles in the Ensign magazine and has a website [www.enstone-eco.co.uk](http://www.enstone-eco.co.uk) to raise awareness.
- The Eco Group now has a bank account.
- The group has tested the water quality on the River Glyme for nitrates and phosphates. It also undertook river fly monitoring training to assess the water quality in the River Glyme.
- Explored a proposal to establish a workshop similar to the Witney Shed although there was insufficient interest for this.
- At the Bicester Road/Great Tew Road crossroads the site has been assessed by a qualified ecologist as suitable for wildflowers; gained OCC support for seed mix; applied for a grant to undertake the work but were unsuccessful.
- The group joined parish Councillors at the "Meet the Parish Council" morning and canvassed parishioners on what environmental improvements they would like to see.
- Contacted the Environment Agency about the local former landfill site.
- Commented on planning applications concerning environmental issues.
- Requested the Parish Council to fund the TVERC report which revealed the nine local Wildlife sites and records of their species surveys within the parish.

- Agreed to draft a Biodiversity Action Plan for the Parish Council to consider.
- Met with several local organisations to understand why environmental activity is happening across the parish and enhance communication between groups.
- Assisted St. Kenelm's by removing an old compost heap and surveying butterflies in the churchyard.
- Assisting with the litter-picking campaign.
- Assisted the Green Gym in clearing undergrowth at Enstone Corner (East) to encourage the growth of woodland floor plants. Japanese Knotweed on the adjacent land was reported to the PC.
- The Group thanked St. Kenelm's PCC and the Parish Council for its continued encouragement.

*Cllr. Mike Gomm congratulated the Eco Group on all the work it had done – there are now over thirty people on the mailing list.*

*Comment – cow slips were seen along The Drive and wildflowers will come when they want to.*

(c) **Enstone Primary School** – No report had been received but it was confirmed that the school has now been reduced to only three classes and a teacher is leaving.

(d) **Enstone Parochial Church Council – Report received by Revd Mark Abrey**

- The PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at St. Kenelm's and to become part of the parish community and the wider Chase Benefice.
- As a Benefice, we are committed to being an inclusive church community and actively seek to offer a welcome to all, regardless of economic power, gender, mental health, physical ability, race or sexuality. Our affiliation with Inclusive Church continues to attract people from outside the Benefice and we have been pleased to welcome new members who have found a home among us, including those who join us online.
- Financially, 2023 was a challenging year for St. Kenelm's Church. Parish churches receive no support from the State or the National Church and remain open because of the generosity of our members and fundraising events. Expenditure has exceeded income over the years and we have used our reserves which have now been expended.
- The PCC understands that without the significant increase in regular donations, the long-term sustainability of the Parish is at stake. At the end of 2023, such information was disseminated through The Ensign and hosting meetings to raise awareness. The initial response has been encouraging.
- Coffee mornings have been reinstated, on the third Saturday of the month between 10.00 am and 12.00 pm and other events will be held during the year. The church is short of volunteers to organise and run them.
- The PCC wishes to record its thanks to the Parish Council for the support with the costs of the mowing of the churchyard and production costs of The Ensign.

(e) **Enstone Relief in Need Charity – Mrs Susanne Hamilton, Trustee**

- ERINC was formed in 1968 and three Trustees appointed. Three pieces of land were recorded on the Charity's ownership and later, following the demise of the Benjamin Martin Charity at Kiddington, a further piece of land was added.
- Over approximately 56 years of the Charity's existence, the number of applications for grants has fallen and finding people willing to serve as a Trustee has proven more difficult.
- I joined the Trustees in June 2003 and when the then Chairman left, took over the administration and have been responsible for it ever since. The governing instrument of the Charity only allows Trustees to consider relieving either need generally or individually for persons resident in the parish of Enstone. Not community groups. Whilst we do notify organisations e.g Citizens Advice Bureau, the local schools, Home Start etc. even the vets of our services, no more than three requests a year for help is unusual.
- With parishioners showing little interest in serving as a Trustee and residents not making the most of what the charity has to offer, the charity is becoming moribund. We do have a reasonable bank balance and do not want the charity to close. If it did, the benefit of the legacy left to the parish would be lost to the Charity Commission.
- To try and solve this problem, I have sought the professional advice of a member of the company Butler Sherborn who has worked for us previously when our lack of landowning skills needed help. After acquainting himself of the situation, he has suggested that the best way forward is to sell our land holdings and invest the money. The Trustees could then concentrate on the work required to carry out the main aims of the charity without the more involved work of land management. This change could also make being a Trustee a more attractive option.
- The Trustees, having discussed the matter at length, have decided to pursue the suggestion of selling. Work towards it has yet to be commenced and will take some time. However, as we accommodate allotments on one piece of the land, and it is growing season, I have informed all the allotment holders

of our decision, wishing them to know our thoughts before the rest of the parish and promising to keep them up to date on the situation. Terms of notice will be followed.

Questions:-

- Many people at the meeting expressed dismay at this proposal – Mrs Hamilton explained that there are only 17 allotment holders and it is very costly to keep the allotments afloat. Skips this year have cost £2,000.00 and there has also been an increase in fly-tipping.
- There is £21,000.00 in shares. The four pieces of land include The Paddocks at Lidstone; land along the Little Tew Road opposite the farm; a small piece of land at Kiddington; the allotments and new wooded area which was voluntarily planted by Cllr. Bourne-Taylor.
- Cllr. Bourne-Taylor asked how the allotments and wooded areas can be protected. How can the land be saved?
- Cllr. Knott requested that the Trustees seek advice on how the Charity Commission rules can be updated to include groups being able to seek help.
- Cllrs. Bourne-Taylor, Robottom and Peart all expressed their willingness to help the Trustees find a solution to not selling the allotments and wooded area – the allotments are for the benefit of residents in need and should be refrained from being sold.
- Cllr. Gomm expressed concern that if this land is sold, the same scenario with Cling Clang Lane Field will occur.

*The Parish Council will discuss this item at its next meeting.*

**(f) Enstone Playing Field Association – Pamela Woolcock**

- Thanks to a couple of volunteers, the grass around the play equipment has been kept under control.
- Volunteers are needed to help mow this area – the bottom part of the field by the equipment.
- There have been two instances of quite significant graffiti where the police had to be involved.
- A report on the recent tree inspection is awaited.
- Some investigatory work has been carried out to understand if anything can be done to alleviate the flooding in the Playing Field (school) car park. It is now understood where the drainage runs and that a new soakaway (and associated drainage pipework) needs to be installed to take away the rainwater which currently pools in the car park. To be able to progress this, a percolation test and Engineer's report is required.
- The results of this test will demonstrate where a soakaway could be installed which would then enable quotes for that part of the work to be obtained. The quote for the percolation test is £1,500.00 plus VAT. Funding for this and any works would need to be agreed between the school, the EPFA and Parish Council.

*The Parish Council will discuss this item at its next Parish Council meeting*

**(g) Enstone Sports & Social Club – No one from the Sports Club Committee attended**

- It was reported that no one was able to attend the meeting.
- The club held many sports and social events throughout the year.

425. **Public Discussion:-**

- *Parking outside the village shop – A resident had expressed concern regarding the difficulty of parking outside the village shop. An article will be placed in the Ensign magazine.*
- *Fundraising towards the Ensign magazine – A member of Enstone PCC was due to attend the meeting to discuss this but did not turn up.*

426. There being no further business Cllr. Knott thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 8.30 pm.

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**Chair**