

MINUTES OF ERLESTOKE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
Held in the Parish Church 4th May 2011 at 7.15pm

Present: Councillors, Mr. S. Jonik (Chairman), Cllr Lewcock, Mr. M. Gilbert, Mrs. D. Oram, Mr. R. Loraine-Smith and Mrs A Whittle (Clerk).

Open Forum:

Mr R Hampton asked if the Parish Council could look into having the Erlestoke road signs on the approaches to the village replaced with more decorative ones. He suggested maybe a competition for the village to come up with the design for the signs. The clerk will add this to the agenda for the next meeting.

Mr G Phillips made the following points:

This meeting should be called the Annual Parish Council meeting as the first of the Parish Councils New Year. The minutes of the 23rd of March meeting were very late.

Cllr Pinnington should have left the room during the discussions regarding his planning application at the March meeting. He asked Mr Hampton if he had heard North Close Wood be called Brushetts Wood. He had asked the new owner of Uplands to cut back a shrub which was overhanging the footpath which she has done and he thanked her. The hedge is hanging over the pavement at 46 High Street. Footpath 6 towards Coulston is very over grown and the hedge is growing over from 48 High Street. Is it correct that 3 trees will be planted for every tree removed on Cllr Pinningtons planning application? Had the clerk found out about the issue of signage during weed spraying?

Devises parking in the Market Place is now half an hour free and then 55p per hour but is there any pay meters being installed. The council needs to look into the new rules of access for the disabled at the park and the secret garden. Finally, should the council be dealing with 2 resignations over the planning application for Pound House tree works?

At this point the clerk read out the following letter from **Cllr Pinnington**.

I am sorry to have not been present at the AGM. If I had known the felling license business was coming up I would have been there. From what I have been told from various sources is that there was copious amounts of misinformation and a lack of clear information coupled with high degrees of venom. One thing to clear up is the matters that took place at the council meeting before the AGM. I told the Chairman verbally 4 times the time and date of the planned meeting between the Forestry Com, Wiltshire Council and PC. He seemed to either ignore or push aside my comments and in frustration at this I wrote him a note with the time and date on. At long last he had to acknowledge this and stated that he was not available on this date. So let's be clear the date/time of this meeting was now in the public arena! After questions from councillors he also stated that all councillors were invited to the meeting. He then said he would advise when the meeting was; a peculiar comment as the time/ date had already been mentioned several times. The day before the meeting I happened to see Richard and said to him 'don't forget the meeting tomorrow at 10.00'. I assumed that the Chairman had sent 'as promised at the meeting' some form of communication reminding councillors of the meeting. I was most surprised the next day to find no other councillors there. The meeting took place and a healthy compromise was achieved. The Chairman needs to be asked: Why was he reluctant to accept the information from me regarding the time and date of the meeting? Why did he not invite councillors to the felling licence meeting at the time of the Parish Council meeting? Why did the Chairman not inform councillors to the meeting as he promised he would? If these goings on were some kind of devious plot to delay this license application or wait until after the AGM or some other some other low cunning plan then it is obvious that this operation was planned well in advance. If so who was also involved or knew what was going on. Yet another question for the Chairman! More importantly, if the previous paragraph is true, do we really want a Parish Council where these kind of underhand dealings are part of this Councils behaviour and normal process.

The Chairman's reply is that he is very disappointed that Cllr Pinnington feels he has to write this letter and his letter is full of misinformation and rubbish.

Simon Turner had offered Cllr Jonik 3 dates for the site meeting. He emailed back saying he was not available for any of the suggested dates as he was away on holiday. He was then awaiting a further email with revised dates. Cllr Gilbert and Oram stated that they had no knowledge of a site meeting taking place. A discussion took place regarding the circumstances surrounding the application and the site meeting etc. Cllr Jonik stated that the only thing he is concerned with is the process for tree applications and what the Parish Council should do with any in the future.

50/11 Apologies – were received from Cllrs Pinnington, Moore, Gamble, PC Milnes and Andrew Rogers.

51/11 Election of Chairman and Vice Chairman

Cllr Gilbert took the chair for the nominations and vote of the Chairman for the forthcoming year. Cllr Gilbert nominated and Cllr Oram seconded Cllr Jonik to continue as the Chairman for 2011/12. This was resolved with a unanimous vote.

It was decided to postpone the election of Vice Chairman until the next meeting.
Proposed: **Cllr Lewcock** Seconded: **Cllr Gilbert** All in favour

52/11 Declaration of Interest – no declarations were made

53/11 To approve the minutes of the meeting held 23rd March 2011 and the Annual Parish Meeting 13th of April 2011

The minutes for the 23rd of March were accepted after the following amendments:

29/11 Planning - FLA/018/400/10-11 Felling License Application – Pound House Paragraph 2 should read as follows: Cllr Jonik advised that a site meeting was being organized. Unfortunately he is not available for either suggested date but will advise the Councillors of the date and time once the details have been confirmed to him.

Proposed: **Cllr Gilbert** Seconded: **Cllr Jonik** **3** in favour **1** abstention

The Minutes for the Annual Parish Meeting on the 13th of April 2011 were accepted as presented and will be signed off at the next annual parish meeting in April 2012.

54/11 Appointment of representatives 11/12 - Postponed until the next meeting.

55/11 Planning

E/11/0517/TCA – Inglenook 44 High Street – Felling of two incense cedar trees.

No Objection

Proposed: **Cllr Loraine-Smith** Seconded: **Cllr Jonik** All in favour

56/11 Prison update – Andy Rogers Prison Governor – not present but has sent his apologies and explained that he had not been able to attend the council meetings due to the work load of running two prisons at the moment.

57/11 Devizes Area Board update – Cllr Jonik - Next meeting 23rd May 7pm at Devizes Sports Club. The clerk advised that the minutes of the last meeting were in the circulation file for reading.

58/11 Big Society and the Localism Bill – report from seminar 7th April – Cllr Moore

The clerk distributed the following report from Cllr Moore.

Purpose of the meeting: The purpose was to brief the community on the outline of Localism Bill and start a consultation with local people and organisations, such as councils, to develop a strategy for the development of the Devizes area over the coming decades. To this end a number of presentations were made by WCC officers. Slide handouts of these presentations were handed out at the meeting and I put them through Stan's door for inclusion in the circulation file.

Timescale: Currently the Localism Bill is planned to be passed into law by end of the autumn 2011.

What is in it: The localism Bill is linked to the Big Society philosophy. Things that seemed to me to be important are;

- **Local Referendums:** Local Referendums may be triggered by 5% of the population in area. The process did not appear to be well defined to date. It seemed possible that a petition for a referendum could be turned down by WCC cabinet, although it was stated that such decision would be 'transparent' - i.e. they would state exactly why the request was refused. The source of funding for these local referendums was not clear. I would guess that it is likely that this must be funded by the WCC within its existing budget.
- **Planning/area development:** The Bill should allow councils to create plans for development of their towns/villages to influence decisions at WCC called Neighbourhood Plans. It was suggested that Parish Councils could work together on these plans. Cheverell already has a plan in draft. Wiltshire Council's task is co ordination of plans and taking into account local opinion in creating a county wide development strategy. The interesting thing was that any party/organisation within the community can generate a plan. I took this to include developers and land owners. Parish Councils do not have to produce a plan if they are happy with overarching national and county strategy. Wiltshire council will assist Parish Councils in generating these plans. Wiltshire Council's strategy is being put together over the next year. Public engagement is to be completed by mid 2011 to formulate the WCC development strategy through public hearings. The Kennett 2011 plan remains valid until this new strategy is in place. This plan was discussed. In particular Cheverell were concerned that it was highlighted for significant development under this plan. I discussed this with chair of Cheverell PCC who was also at the meeting and it is likely that a Cluster meeting may be called in the near future.

More important detail to come: There seemed to be little detail on the actual processes that will allow local people to do what the law will allow them to do at the present time. I guess that as the law goes through parliament more detail will emerge or be thrashed out. However, it is law and the Bill itself will probably not tell county councils how to implement the new law. I expect more of these meetings over the coming months and they may be very important in letting us know how the PCC and county council working relationship will change when the bill become law. I think planning changes could be the biggest element of the affect on us.

Next step for Erlestoke PCC: The planning changes and particularly the Neighbourhood Plan will be significant developments. I think we as a council should consider (and canvas opinion in the village) for the next meeting for the following questions - particularly the first;

- What development the village wants or wishes to see, specifically how many new homes and how (large development or infill) in the coming 50 years?
- Do we think we need a Neighbourhood Plan?
- Should we look to produce a Plan ourselves or work with other villages in creating a wider plan?

It was decided that this will be included on the next agenda for further discussion with Cllr Moore.

59/11 Highways issues to include Parish Steward visit 10th May

The clerk advised that the village has a new Parish Steward called Kevin McCoy who is based at the Melksham highways office not Marlborough due to area changes in the highways team. Cllr Oram or Loraine-Smith will try and meet Kevin during his next visit to introduce themselves and the council and point out any problem areas in the village that he may be able to put right.

The clerk was asked to advise of the following required tasks for the steward.

1. Weeds along Lower Road red brick wall
2. Handrail on footpath 11 has been overgrown by the neighbouring hedge
3. The willow at 15 the Park is overhanging the footpath
4. Cllr Gilbert had been asked to walk the High Street to look at the drain covers and reported the following: outside 29 High Street, old manhole cover could be replaced, just above 1 High Street towards Turners garage broads London drain has low tarmac, on 30 High Street boundary 2 trip hazards here 1 manhole could be replaced the other drain could be built up to remove the trip hazard and finally outside Oak beams old manhole could be replaced.
5. Cows Hollow Japanese Knot weed is growing on the bank

The clerk advised she had received the following email from Paul Bollen regarding the road condition at the entrances to the village. "I have inspected the approach roads into Erlestoke, and although the top surface is stripping off it does not constitute an intervention level defect. I will make the necessary arrangements for this to be addressed, and as the road surface temperatures are now increasing and the required treatment process visiting such locations within the County will be enabled soon. Once I have a programme date, I will contact you in due course.

Regards *Paul Bollen*"

60/11 White fencing at entrances to the village – request from Annual Parish Meeting

The clerk will contact Highways regarding the possibility of these gates being installed on the outskirts of Erlestoke and place this item on the June agenda.

61/11 To consider items of Correspondence

In circulation file – H M Prison Erlestoke report, Wiltshire Police re change of Beat Manager, Wiltshire Council Parish Steward Programme, WALC newsletter April 2011, Devizes Area Board Minutes

62/11 To confirm the Financial Statement for March, April & accounts for payment

Mrs A Whittle – Hours/Expenses - £202.63 HM Customs & Excise – PAYE month 2 - £44.41
WALC membership - £68.83 Community First – Insurance - £671.40

63/11 To receive reports from Village Representatives

Cllr Lewcock advised that the village pub had new Land lords.

Cllr Gilbert advised that he had placed boards at the base of the kissing gate on the footpath which goes across the golf course in preparation for the tenant farmer placing his ewes and lambs in the vicinity. It was feared the lambs would be able to escape under the gates. The council thanked Cllr Gilbert for undertaking this.

The meeting closed at 8.55pm.

The next meetings, Wednesday 15th June 2011, Wednesday 27th July and Wednesday 7th September at 7.15pm in the Village Church.