

Erlestoke Annual Parish Meeting
Wednesday 22nd April 2015
at 7:30 p.m. in the village Church

Present Cllr. S. Jonik (Chairman of Erlestoke Parish Council) and 24 parishioners were in attendance.

Welcome by Chairman of Erlestoke Parish Council. Cllr Jonik welcomed all to the AGM and highlighted agenda and the publication of the agenda on the village notice board prior to the meeting

Apologies. Apologies were received from Dean Moore, Justin Hunt-Davis and Bill Pidduck.

Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting 23rd April 2014

The minutes were accepted as an accurate record.

Proposed: Fiona Morgan-Frise

Seconded: Keith Lewcock

All in favour

Guest Speaker – Sally Willox – Youth Coordinator for the Devizes Area

Sally thanked the village for inviting her to attend. She is the Community Youth Officer for the Devizes Community Area. She gave a very informative talk on her position and the Youth facilities provided by Wiltshire Council.

Guest Speaker – Alex North – Wiltshire Good Neighbours Coordinator for the Devizes Area

Alex explained his role as a Good Neighbour Coordinator for the Devizes area and the support he can give the over 60s in the area.

Great Cheverell School – Mercedes Henning

The number on roll at Holy Trinity at present is 147 – and will have to turn away many children who have applied to join us in the Foundation Stage in September. About 10% of our children come from Erlestoke parish more than half the children in the school come from outside the designated area. We have 5 classes, a total of 7 teachers, 7 teaching assistants, 5 Midday Supervisory Assistants and 2 admin staff. This year, Mrs Abbott, who taught the youngest children, moved on to a promotion post and we were delighted to be able to appoint Lucy Nisbeck to cover her post. Mrs Garraway, who teaches in a job share in Sarum class, has decided to stop teaching and run a little business, so we are at present recruiting for her post. We are fortunate to have a huge amount of interest in our school. Our externally assessed SATS results were once again well above the expected levels putting us in the top 2% of the country in statutory assessments in both KS1 and KS2, and we had letters of congratulation from Nick Gibb (Minister of State for School Reform) and Claire Perry our local MP - who drew our attention to the fact that we were in the Sunday Times top 600 schools, which include both state and private schools – a huge achievement for our little school.

We are subject to the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist schools, and our inspection was held on 26th February. As well as inspecting our academic achievements, the inspector looks at the Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural development of the children. We were delighted to be awarded Outstanding in all four of the areas that are inspected. The inspector commented on the exemplary behaviour of our children, the enthusiasm and maturity they show in their learning and the outstanding relationships she saw across the whole community. The children understand that the Christian foundation of the school is at the heart of all that happens here and our values of courage, aspiration, compassion and joy are lived out to the full.

These aspects of our work are just as important as the academic success we achieve – and indeed will probably stand the children in even better stead when they are grown up. It is a great privilege for all of us to work and learn in such an extraordinary and loving community. A copy of the inspection report is available online. We are also very pleased with our children's sporting achievements – they have won several challenging interschool tournaments this year and we are always delighted with the great sportsmanship they show and their commitment to excellence – they are gracious and polite champions.

We work hard at ensuring that our children are given a broad and balanced curriculum – not based only on the government's core subjects of Maths and English. As well as entering the Eisteddfod with a very talented choir (and doing very well there), we have performance poetry competitions, lots of offsite trips, including this year a whole school trip to HMS Victory in Portsmouth as part of our topic on "The Fighting Temeraire". There have been trips to a local "Rainforest", to the Magna Carta exhibition, the library, and many other places that help the children learn more about their topics. Children in KS2 are looking forward to their

residential trips at the end of this half term. Every child in the school now has a course of cooking lessons with Mrs Heath – they learn to make a 3 course meal, starting with raw ingredients and learning a lot about nutrition and hygiene as they work. We also offer a wide variety of special interest clubs – including urban sports, cricket, winter sports, chess, hand bells, art, design technology, judo, dance, gardening and many others. We are also very pleased with the improving links with Lavington School under the new head teacher. We have had projects around books and reading with their Year 8 students, our children have taken part in an interschool Science competition organised by Lavington (which we won!) and we are working with their BTec design students who are making pieces of equipment for our new science garden. One of their English teachers judged our poetry competition. Links with Dauntseys are also strong, with sports coaching, Design projects and other initiatives helping to enrich the experience of our children at school. Canvassing of parents and children shows that our school community has very high satisfaction with the school across all areas. We are aware always that happy learners are good learners and we work hard to ensure that our children are happy and aspirational. Our tremendously supportive families make this possible and we are very grateful to all of them. This is your village school – please do come and visit us if you would like to. Simply make an appointment with the head teacher. I also encourage you to click onto our webpage from time to time – the weekly newsletter is published there and I update the photographs regularly. www.holy-trinity.co.uk

Erlestoke Church

Mrs C Hampton summarised the annual church report. She also advised that the 3 services a month are still maintained at the moment. Minor Repairs are required to the roof but otherwise the building is in good repair. The Easter, Harvest and Christmas children's workshops are not always well attended but the book shop on the 1st Saturday each month is well attended.

Parish Council Accounts – Parish Clerk

The council's financial year opened with a balance of £1836.10 carried forward from 2013/14. The precept for 2014/15 was £5584.26 plus a Housing Subsidy grant from Wiltshire Council of £165.74. Total £5750.00. Other income totalling £184.06 was received made up of various monies including a VAT return of £34.89. The council's expenditure totalled £5216.02. This includes Clerks costs of £3220.73, insurance cost of £536.85 and grass cutting cost of £790.00.

The carry forward for 2014/15 is £2554.14, an increase on 13/14 end of year balance of £718.04. This is made up of £1409.13 in the treasurer's account for everyday expenses and £1145.01 in the section 106 monies from the houses built in the park.

The precept for 2015/16 is £6034.38 plus the reduced housing subsidy grant from Wiltshire Council of £120.99. Total £6155.37. The rise of approximately 12p week per household is to cover the reduction of the housing subsidy grant of £44.75 and the increased over all running costs of the council. The council does make every effort to keep its costs to the bare minimum but unfortunately outside cost increases mean it has had to raise the precept for financial year 2015/16.

The meeting accepted the accounts as presented.

Proposed: Keith Lewcock

Seconded: James Durham

All in favour

Parish Council Chairman's Report and discussion regarding a Neighbourhood Plan for the village

This year started very quiet compared to recent years but changed dramatically as the year progressed. Cllr Simon West proved an active councillor attending meetings with the Prison staff and MOD and starting the project to bring back the Erlestoke Gates to their rightful home in Erlestoke. Cllr West advised that when the Ministry of Defence moved out of Erlestoke House, now Erlestoke Prison, they removed the main gates and took them with them. Cllr West has found them at Camberley training centre. Sadly Simon has had to step down because his son has had a terrible accident. We offer Simon and his family all the help and support available that we can give from the village.

The B3098 continues to be an issue in Erlestoke. We are still working on a safe crossing for school children at the bus stop. A number of things have been done including speed recording using the police metro count system. We are now going back to the Unity Council to revisit the dangers of crossing the road. Erlestoke works on a tight budget and the precept only just covers the expenses of running the village. Although we are in a period of government austerity cutbacks we are at the tail end of financial balancing and the bills do not reduce. This year we decided on a small increase to the precept. A rise of £6.18 per year per band D house i.e. 12p per week. We were very pleased to accept the application for the vacant councillor post from Justin Hunt-Davis of Brounckers Court Farm. Justin brings a wealth of

knowledge from his work with government meetings and procedures and has already proved invaluable with our current issues. We are now working closely with Sarah Hanks, (Community Co-ordinator) in our area. Sarah sorted the blocked drains through the village and looks after the general upkeep of the village. We still have a long term blocked drain issue opposite Beech House, after heavy rain this can block and will be the source of the blocked drains issue in the village. The drain now requires re building with concrete blocks as it is also periodically hit by traffic when two large vehicles are inching past one another in a traffic jam. During the summer months we seem to be going through a period of Raves from Stoke Hill Farm to Coulston. The Raves take place on weekends when the Police are deployed in the towns and cities. The edge of the plain where these activities take place is almost deemed as no man's land and covered by Land Wardens not the Police. Unfortunately we hear that the Land Wardens numbers have been reduced making the situation worse. Ironically we still are unable to get a response from the SSE on the overcapacity issue of the Sub Station. It seems this is just not a priority any more. The village has experienced power cuts during the year and we are keen to get this Sub Station upgraded. This year we have decided to go ahead with the Neighbourhood Plan for Erlestoke. The Neighbourhood Plan must relate to the Wiltshire County Core Strategy. Very briefly the Wiltshire Core Strategy states the location of new buildings sites, road infrastructure, social and shopping facilities amongst any development and changes that might be required in each town in Wiltshire. Without the Erlestoke Neighbourhood Plan builders and developers will use the Wiltshire Core Strategy for villages as an indication where to develop. With the Neighbourhood Plan Erlestoke can identify and control where any development can take place.

In January this year the Parish Council received an application to convert the George & Dragon Pub into a residential property. We only had a few weeks to respond and decided we must take this issue directly to the residents of Erlestoke. In fact the consultants who generated the report for the George & Dragon used the Wiltshire Core Strategy as part of their justification for converting the pub to residential as this type of work is covered in the Wiltshire Core Strategy. We called for an Extra-Ordinary Parish Council meeting Held in the Parish Church Wednesday 11th February 2015 at 7.15pm. The agenda was to discuss the application and the possibility of considering applying for a community asset on the building. The meeting was well attended with 39 people and an open and frank discussion took place regarding the present use of the pub and the future of the building. People were given the opportunity to voice their concerns on both the issue of the change of use to residential and the possibility of applying for listing as an asset of community value. After lengthy discussion at the next Parish Council meeting, the parish council decided to advise Wiltshire Council of the following objection:

The Parish Council objects to the change to residential due to the lack of facilities in the village and the Parish Council believe the pub is an asset the village requires. We also decided to apply for a community Asset order on the pub to explore the opportunities for the village.

Since the meeting the Parish Council has done a study with a question and answer proforma to gain more information from the residents and possibly a way forward.

The results of the study from a 35% return are as follows:

Would you support the pub if it was a community asset? Yes 68%, No 18%

What extra facilities would you like the pub to provide?

Café 53%, Snack/Meals 47%, Pub 50%, Library 9%, Beauty Parlour 3%, BBQ 6%, Shop 41%, News Agent 3%, Quiz Night 3%, Cheese + wine 3%

Would you be prepared to help/volunteer and contribute in some way if the pub became a community facility, or would you be part of any action group to take any ideas forward?

Yes 44%, No 21%, Would if available 15%

Village Issues

The question was asked as to what has happened to the Village Hall committee. Fiona Morgan-Frise and Chris Hampton said they were going to resurrect it.

Questions from the floor

Bill Kemp asked about Superfast Broadband – he was advised by Wiltshire Council that a solution will be provided in the next couple of months.

The meeting closed at 9.05pm