

**Erlestoke Annual Parish Meeting**  
**Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> April 2016**  
**at 7:30 p.m. in the village Church**

**Present** Cllr. S. Jonik (Chairman of Erlestoke Parish Council) and 30 parishioners were in attendance.

**Welcome by Chairman of Erlestoke Parish Council.** Cllr Jonik welcomed all to the AGM.

**Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2015**

The minutes were accepted as an accurate record.

**Proposed** Andrew Cooper

**Seconded** Keith Lewcock

**All in favour**

**Wiltshire Police**

PCSO Ellen Carter attended the meeting on behalf of the Devizes Neighbourhood team and gave a short update on the crime figures for the area over the last few months. She explained that along with PCSO Fiona Marno and PC Jo Newberry they cover the Devizes villages. It was noted by those present that there has been an influx of boy racers speeding through the village in recent months. Any suspicious activity in and around the village and on Salisbury Plain should be phoned into 101. Fly tipping though should be reported to Wiltshire Council.

**Wiltshire Council – Richard Gamble**

Most of the topics with which I have been involved with Erlestoke in the past year continue to be "work in progress". I have supported the designation of the George & Dragon as an Asset of Community Value but its future has not yet been determined. If the evidence available to our planning officers makes them minded to approve the application to reclassify the property as a dwelling, I have requested that the matter is considered for determination by the Eastern Area Planning Committee so that the case for and against can be heard in public. Regarding high speed broadband, the roll out in Erlestoke has been patchy. Some have a good service but others nearby are not so lucky. I cannot promise that all those who are on slow speeds will be upgraded soon but I have asked officers to try to identify what needs to be done so that we know what process is required for a solution. On the roads, I hope residents will benefit from the major resurfacing work on the 83098 that is currently underway and, in the meantime that you are enjoying the quieter evenings while traffic is diverted. We are keeping an eye on the use of Lower Road by some very large vehicles that caused some concern recently. Arrangements for the use of Speed Indicator Devizes still have to be put in place and I am afraid I must admit the blame for the delay. At the Community Area level, the Area Board seems to be going well. We have supported innumerable projects in the Community Area in the past year, not least helping young people. We are also paying increasing attention to the needs of older people and we are in the process of appointing an Older People's Champion to liaise with appropriate organisations, identify needs and direct resources where they will be of most help. At county level, I have to mention that budgets continue to tighten but I hope you have noticed relatively few changes in services. I know it's a pain to pay for the green bin collection but it's probably fair that we do so. Almost uniquely, we have maintained our budget for public transport but that is going to be a topic for discussion next year. We have had a phenomenal 11,000 responses to our consultation. I am grateful for the support I have received from the Parish Council, which has been regularly represented at Area Board meetings and other public gatherings. The Area Board meets every two months and everyone is invited to attend. The next meeting is on 16 May at the Assembly Rooms in Devizes.

**Great Cheverell School – readout by the Parish Council Clerk**

The number on roll at Holy Trinity at present is 150 – and we are oversubscribed, having to turn away many families through the course of the year. We have 5 classes, a total of 7 teachers, 7 teaching assistants, 4 Midday Supervisory Assistants and 2 admin staff. We have appointed two new

outstanding, talented and creative teachers in a job share position in Year 3 and Year 4. So with some staff changes this year, we are enjoying the freshness that they bring to our school life. We have 13 children attending our school from Erlestoke. This amounts to 7% of the school population. We have also decided to change the structure of the leadership in our school this year – we have never had a deputy Head teacher since I became head, and we have now decided to appoint from within the staff two assistant head teachers, Mr Amor and Mr Gyllenspetz. This is a great move, which will help us to continue our school's drive for ever better education and outcomes for our children and will also allow us to support other schools to improve their outcomes. Our externally assessed KS2 SATS results, the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile results, the Year 1 phonics screening results and the KS1 SATS results were once again well above the expected levels nationally, and we were once again delighted to have a letter from the government congratulating us on our outstanding performance. The culture of outstanding teaching and learning is firmly embedded in our school and our wonderful children are given the excellent education that they deserve. 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 in every school day. Whilst our academic success is very important, we believe that our role is provide a broad based education where children's spiritual, emotional, social, physical and cultural education is also outstanding. To this end, we have lots of field trips (we have taken the children to @Bristol, to the canal, to a local market garden, to Southampton docks and museum, and many other places of interest) and we have lots of exciting and inspiring visitors including authors, musicians, historians and scientists. Themes that have been enjoyed this year include "Space, the final frontier", The Titanic, World War 2, the Great Fire of London, the Iron Woman, the Arctic, and many more. We are delighted with our new library, which has been completely refurbished in the style of Mr Tumnus's cottage – a magical place which engages children in their reading experience even more fully. Our school was lucky enough to be chosen to take part in a national scientific experiment, where we will be given two sets of seeds, one lot that have been into space with Tim Peake and one lot that stayed earthbound. We shall grow them, monitor them carefully and report back to the RHS and other scientists on the impact (if any) of taking seeds into space. 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. Our school choirs have done very well in various competitions and Eisteddfods in which they have taken part. We are a singing school and it is lovely to hear the children sing together in rounds, in parts, in different languages, and with actions. This engenders a great sense of community. Every child in the school has a course of cooking lessons each year 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. A highlight this year has been the youngest children's cooking lessons which involved an imaginary rocket trip to various planets to try out their food! We also offer a wide variety of special interest clubs – including archery, street surfing cricket, winter sports, chess, hand bells, judo, dance, gardening and many others. Our wonderful PFA have worked very hard this year to raise the funds we need to build an outdoor classroom on stilts up near Bluebell Wood – this has been a really lovely project and we look forward to using the classroom for much exciting learning. The children themselves held a fund raising afternoon, where teams of children ran their own stalls, and raised £150! They learnt a lot about the retail trade through this event and it was lovely to see how they cared for the younger children, giving them free offers when it seemed necessary to maintain a little one's happiness! 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 and governors 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](http://www.holy-trinity.co.uk) You can also follow us on Facebook, if you use that platform.

## **Erlestoke and Coulston Cricket Club – read out by the Parish Council Clerk**

My name is Mark Douse, and I became Erlestoke & Coulston Cricket Club Chairman in October last year, when Jasper Dorgan stepped down after a very successful thirteen years, at the head of our club. I had previously carried out the roles of Mid-Week captain and secretary on the committee, and have played for the club since 1994. I live in Market Lavington. My apologies for not being able to attend the Annual General Meeting this evening. My wife is working a night shift at Chippenham hospital (she is a midwife), and I will need to stay at home to look after our children. The club as ever is buoyant, social and vibrant, with around forty playing members, drawn from Erlestoke, Coulston, The Cheverells, The Lavingtons, Edington, Bratton, Warminster, Westbury, Worton and Trowbridge. We play Twenty/20 matches on Wednesday and Friday evenings, with traditional forty overs per side on Sundays. The junior section also regularly attracts thirty plus youngsters each Friday evening for training, and participates in local leagues and tournaments. The club Twitter account can be found @erlestokeccc and the website [www.erlestokecricket.co.uk](http://www.erlestokecricket.co.uk). In the last year we have invested £500 in repairs to the wall surrounding the ground, using reclaimed bricks and traditional lime mortar. This work will continue in further stages for the next year. We await to hear news regarding the decision on George & Dragon public house from Wiltshire Council. Our club is much stronger socially with this open, being so close to the ground, and has pledged £2000 to the "Save the George Fund". Half of this amount came from the ever successful annual bonfire and fireworks night held at the Walled Garden, and begun by the late Sean Gilbert in 2003. Club members have also nearly completed the construction of an all-weather practice strip and metal cage, which will be well used by players/juniors once finished. The committee is aware of the deteriorating track surface leading up to the Walled/Secret Gardens and woods. We hope to remedy some of the worst of the potholes ourselves with road repair macadam, but in the longer term, will hopefully be looking to have this resurfaced. We are very appreciative of the support which we currently receive from the Three Daggers and Edington Priory. Robin Brown (General Manager) has recently designed and printed our 2016 season fixture cards, and gained several new sponsors of the club. Edington Priory ground staff have also mown the ground outfield several times, which has assisted our grounds man, Patrick Stayt enormously. We look forward to our first match this Sunday and a successful (and dry!) sunny season.

## **Erlestoke Church**

Mrs C Hampton summarised the annual church report. She added that there had been some general repairs to the church roof. She advised that the new vicar had now been appointed for the benefice and is due to start on the 7<sup>th</sup> of September 2016.

## **Erlestoke Hub**

Keith Lewcock as Chairman of the Erlestoke hub addressed the meeting. He explained the status of the hub as a community benefit society, meaning any profit goes back into the community. He explained the process that had taken place over the last 6 months with regards to the Parish Council asking for an Asset of Community Value order being placed on the George and Dragon public house. This came about from the pub owners applying for planning permission for change of use to residential from business. Once the ACV was awarded this gave the village 6 months to try and raise the funds to be able to approach the pub owners to buy the pub. The Erlestoke Hub was set up to forward the project and having secured enough funding made an offer to purchase to the pub owners at the end of November, but the offer was rejected. The owners then reapplied for planning permission for change of use again. The Parish Council and Hub put forward strong objection to the application.

Keith Lewcock stated that the investors in the Erlestoke hub would not get dividends but would get interest payments. He also stated that if the pub was eventually bought and then sold the investors would not receive any profit. Any profit would go to organisations like the EPC.

A lengthy and sometimes acrimonious discussion took place between the members of the Erlestoke Hub, Mrs Southorn (owner of the George and Dragon Public House) and other members of the meeting. A full report is not available for this discussion due to the clerk not being able to keep up with the note taking.

Allen Pinnington stated that at the first meeting in the church regarding the issue it was stated that the Parish Council would not put any money into the project then or in the future.

Stan Jonik stated that the Parish council can discuss general issues regarding the Erlestoke Hub, The Village Hall and the Neighbourhood Planning as long as we don't discuss financials issues or money issue.

### **Parish Council Accounts – Parish Council Clerk**

The council's financial year opened with a balance of £2554.14 carried forward from 2014/15. The precept for 2015/16 was £6034.38 plus a Housing Subsidy grant from Wiltshire Council of £120.99.

The council's expenditure totalled £5110.58. This includes Clerks costs of £3177.90, insurance cost of £353.08 and grass cutting cost of £790.00. The carry forward for 2015/16 is £3601.77, an increase on 14/15 end of year balance of £1047.63. This is made up of £2456.76 in the treasurer's account for every day expenses and £1145.01 in the section 106 monies from the houses built in the park.

The precept for 2016/17 is £6795.10 plus the reduced housing subsidy grant from Wiltshire Council of £21.78. The rise of approximately 13p week per household is to cover the reduction of the housing subsidy grant of £99.21 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 2016/17.

The meeting accepted the accounts as presented.

Stan Jonik, the Parish Council Chairman, advised that the rises in the Parish precept were due to the county council lowering its financial support. The clerk explained that the rises were to increase the council reserve which it was advised to hold by the councils auditors.

### **Parish Council Chairman's Report**

The last year has been challenging for the Council with some important issues requiring close detailed understanding and decision taking that affect the village well into the future. We are still one person short on the council, and if you are a resident of Erlestoke and would like to take part in what's happening in the village please let us know.

We formed a Neighbourhood Planning Committee chaired by Andrew Cooper to look into future development of Erlestoke. You will see from the agenda tonight we are keen to find out if there is an interest in the "Neighbourhood Plan". This must be driven from residents and not the just the council. We will look at the response from tonight's meeting and make a decision on its future.

The future of the George & Dragon is still ongoing, Erlestoke Parish Council applied to Wiltshire Council to consider the George & Dragon to be a "Community Asset" for the village, we were successful and to date that still applies. To manage the village's proposal the "Erlestoke Hub" was formed and chaired by Keith Lewcock. We were very pleased by the response from Erlestoke, Victoria Park, and interested people from the area. The upshot was that we raised enough finance to put an offer to the owners based on an expert valuation paid for by the Erlestoke Hub.

We are still working on the road crossing for school children on the B3098 adjacent to the George & Dragon. It seems lack of money from Highways will push this issue further down the priority list. We know the dangers but can't seem to move forward on this.

You may have noticed that speed checking is being carried out on the High Street we wait for the results. Councillor Dean Moore will manage the introduction of visual speed indicators that will flash your speed as you travel through the village. They will not be installed permanently but periodically throughout the year.

The Governments cut backs eventually have an impact on our services. We have lost the mobile library, the bus service to local hospitals and a possible reduction in bus service. All these will affect the life and wellbeing of the village but out of our control. We have reported the change of the road signs at the Lower Road cross road. The Erlestoke pointer sign is missing together with the junction warning sign being moved right on the junction thus reducing any warning distance at all. Strangely Highways do not inform us of these changes in our parish so we are following up after the event.

Our MP Claire Perry invited 2 members of Erlestoke Parish Council to visit Parliament on the 16th of November to have an open discussion about any local issues. Cllrs Jonik and our Clerk Anita Whittle attended. We raised the issue of the George & Dragon Community Asset and the very slow broadband speed received in the village. We also attended a separate meeting in Marlborough with Claire Perry and a BT executive who was there to answer questions on broadband. The meeting was attended by locals from Claire Perrys (MP) constituency, but it soon became apparent that all the complaints came from village residents from the area. An observation was that there is a lack of interest in solving the broadband speed for villages and more interest in towns and cities where the cost benefits are obvious. Some villages are talking about paying for the installation themselves but at a great expense. It has become apparent that the railway line through Erlestoke has fibre broadband running along the track. We have had to deal with a number of environmental issues, first the announcement that Fracking is being looked at in the Erlestoke Parish, we have received a letter from Wiltshire Council that a licence to explore for gas and oil has been released for tender. Our Clerk Anita will publish this and answer questions at this meeting. Secondly it has been noted that there is a reduction in the spring water that feeds the Erlestoke lakes, we are not sure if this water is being extracted or it is a strange once in a life time occurrence in Erlestoke.

Thirdly the eight hundred trees that are to be felled in Erlestoke woods was initially planned for January this year, but we have received no reason for the delay.

Due to the recent changes of contract at Wiltshire Highways the reporting system for highways issues has changed. All problems must be reported either via the Wiltshire council website [www.wiltshire.gov.uk](http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk) or via the My Wiltshire app. This option has been added to the Erlestoke website [www.erlestoke.org](http://www.erlestoke.org).

The website menu option also allows reporting of any issue within the Parish and direct to Wiltshire Council.

The "Clean for the Queen" proved very successful thanks to Justin Hunt-Davis for organising the litter pick on the 5th and 6th of March. Through Adrian Hampton Wiltshire Council provided litter pickers and high viz jackets. 7 people turned out to take part.

This year we approved a small rise of £0.13 per week per band D household to help with our Precept.

I would like to thank all the Councillors and parishioners for their efforts throughout the year and a special thanks to our Clerk Anita Whittle and our Devizes Area Board Councillor Richard Gamble for the support and hard work they do for the village.

At the end of his report Keith Lewcock thanked Stan Jonik for doing a good job as Chairman of the Parish Council.

### **Neighbourhood Plan – does the village want more housing? – Andrew Cooper**

Andrew explained that a questionnaire had been delivered to every household in the village asking for replies to 3 key questions:

1. Do you want a Neighbourhood Development Plan?
2. Do you want us to pursue some lesser alternative?
3. Should we do nothing?

### **Broadband**

**The meeting closed at 10.00pm**