

**Erlestoke Annual Parish Meeting  
8th May 2008 at 7:30 p.m. in the Village Hall**

**Present**

Cllr. S. Jonik, Cllr. R. Loraine-Smith, Cllr. M. D. Gilbert, Cllr. A. Pinnington, Cllr D Oram, Cllr B Chapman, Cllr F Morgan-Frise, Anita Whittle Parish Clerk, Cllr. L. Grundy (KDC) and 23 parishioners were in attendance.

**72/08 Welcome by Chairman of Erlestoke Parish Council**

**73/08 Apologies:**

Apologies were received from Jasper Dorgan and Mark Foster from the Cricket Club

**74/08 Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting, 9<sup>th</sup> May 2007:**

The minutes were accepted as an accurate record.

**Prop:** Al Pinnington **Sec:** Mervyn Gilbert All in favour

**75/08 Parish Council Accounts – Parish Clerk**

The clerk presented the following statement of accounts for 2007/08 which have been prepared for audit in August.

| <u>2006/07</u> | <u>STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2008</u> | <u>2007/08</u>       |
|----------------|---|----------------------|
| 2826.59        | <b>OPENING BALANCE AS AT 1ST APRIL 2007</b>                   | <b>3142.61</b>       |
| 3707.79        | ADD RECEIPTS  | 4223.49              |
| <b>6534.38</b> | <b>Total</b>  | <b>Total 7366.10</b> |
| 3391.77        | DEDUCT PAYMENTS   | 3792.89              |
| <b>3142.61</b> | <b>CLOSING BALANCE AS AT 31ST MARCH 2008</b>                  | <b>3573.21</b>       |
|                | <b>RECEIPTS</b>   |                      |
| 3526.00        | PRECEPT   | 3526.00              |
| 81.79          | INTEREST  | 131.00               |
| 100.00         | GRANTS - LITTER GRANT   | 100.00               |
| 0.00           | VAT REFUND  | 466.49               |
| <b>3707.79</b> | <b>Total</b>  | <b>Total 4223.49</b> |
|                | <b>PAYMENTS</b>   |                      |
|                | <b>ADMINISTRATION made up as follows:</b>                     | 607.29               |
| 679.48         | 105.50 AUDIT FEES   | 58.75                |
|                | 396.05 INSURANCES   | 397.54               |
|                | 32.00 COMMUNITY FIRST MEMBERSHIP                              | 34.00                |
|                | 15.00 SAFE CUSTODY FEE  | 15.00                |
|                | 27.00 CPRE MEMBERSHIP   | 27.00                |
|                | 0.00 ELECTION FEE   | 75.00                |
|                | 116.65 WALC MEMBERSHIP  |                      |
|                | 14.00 LOCAL COUNCIL REVIEW                                    |                      |
|                | 15.00 ADVERT FOR NEW CLERK                                    |                      |
|                | 42.88 NALC  |                      |
|                | 42.30 WEBSITE   |                      |
|                | -   |                      |
|                | 126.90 CANCELLED CHEQUES                                      |                      |
| 1478.47        | <b>CLERKS WAGES ETC</b>                                       | 974.48               |
| 175.00         | <b>GRANTS (Sec 137) made up as follows:</b>                   | 200.00               |
|                | 100.00 VILLAGE HALL   | 100.00               |
|                | THE NEWS  | 100.00               |
|                | 75.00 THE LINK  |                      |
| 246.75         | <b>VILLAGE GRASS CUTTING</b>                                  | 1175.00              |
| 812.07         | <b>MAINTENANCE made up as follows:</b>                        | 836.12               |
|                | 260.82 BIN FOR PARK   |                      |
|                | GATE MAINTENANCE  | 258.50               |
|                | BUS SHELTER REPAIR  | 498.20               |

|                            |              |                                    |              |                |
|----------------------------|--------------|------------------------------------|--------------|----------------|
|                            | 70.50        | PLAY EQUIPMENT SAFETY CHECK        | 79.42        |                |
|                            | 340.75       | WITT TREE SERVICES                 |              |                |
|                            | 60.00        | KDC SKIP HIRE                      |              |                |
|                            | 80.00        | MOLE CATCHER                       |              |                |
| <b>3391.77</b>             | <b>Total</b> |                                    | <b>Total</b> | <b>3792.89</b> |
| <b><u>BANK ACCOUNT</u></b> |              |                                    |              |                |
| 100.00                     |              | <b>TREASURERS ACCOUNT</b>          |              | 100.00         |
| 3215.31                    |              | <b>SAVINGS ACCOUNT</b>             |              | 4195.54        |
| <b>3315.31</b>             | <b>Total</b> | Showing in bank accounts           | <b>Total</b> | <b>4295.54</b> |
| 172.70                     |              | Unpresented Cheques as at 31.03.08 |              | 722.33         |
| <b>3142.61</b>             | <b>Total</b> |                                    | <b>Total</b> | <b>3573.21</b> |

It was proposed by Fiona Morgan-Frise and Seconded by Mervyn Gilbert that these accounts be accepted as a true record of the Parish Council accounts for 2007/08. All in favour.

**76/08 Great Cheverell School Report** - Head teacher Ms Mercedes Henning.

The school has just received an outstanding Ofsted report for this year. Out of 150 primary schools in Wiltshire only 10 received an outstanding judgement of which Great Cheverell was one. This is a huge tribute to the children. They also received an outstanding SYAT report which is undertaken because the school is a church based school. There are 15 children from Erlestoke that attend the school which is 11% of the intake. 58% of the intake are from outside the catchment area. It is important to realise that without the 58% from outside the area, the school would not still be running. Money was raised for the Children's Society by carol singing through Erlestoke at Christmas. The school holds lots of events to raise money not only for the school but also for charity. 500 trees were given to the school of which 250 have been planted on the school site. The ex official Governor at the school is the Rev Dr Graham Southgate our carried out the audit on the schools ethos. Bullying is a very rare occurrence. The schools long standing teaching assistant Sue Stoyle from Erlestoke has left not only the school but also the village. She is missed by both the staff and the children. The school is undertaking a project on China and the Olympics at the moment. If anyone has any knowledge of either subject they would be most welcome at the school to talk to the children. Cllr Grundy praised the school on achieving the outstanding judgement and Cllr Jonik asked for a round of applause.

**77/08 Village Hall Committee Report** – Richard Loraine-Smith

At a meeting last month of the Village Hall Committee it was decided by a unanimous vote to close the hall due it not being viable. The cost of running the hall and its upkeep are far more than the income received through bookings. Therefore as of the 11<sup>th</sup> of May the hall will be closed. As for the future, the monies held for the new hall project are £6409.64. A quantity surveyors report was undertaken some time ago at a cost of £7500. The committee will remain ember so the village hall association but new members are needed for the hall committee to continue raising monies for a new hall. The planning approval received in 2004 expires in September 2009. Cllr Jonik thanked Richard and the committee for their hard work in trying to keep the hall open and in raising monies for a new village hall. Adrian and Pam Hampton have agreed to take back the hall as it stands and undertake any demolition in the future themselves. The hall committee do intend to try and store as much of the equipment from the hall as possible. These will still be available for hire in the future. It was commented that the plans drawn up seem to be a very ambitious project surely all the village needs is a room to meet and maybe an office. Discussions then took place about the size of the planned hall and the reasoning behind making it the size it is. A member of the public then said his company was involved in building schools and school rooms. He would be happy to join the committee and help with drawing up plans and ideas. It was decided that the next village hall meeting, which will take place as soon as possible will be advertised so that anyone from the village can attend.

**78/08 Erlestoke and Coulston Cricket Club Report** - by Jasper Dorgan and read out by Anita Whittle

Last year saw the completion of the lease negotiations with the MOD and a new contract providing lease tenure of the ground to Erlestoke Cricket Club through to 2026. This security of tenure has allowed the club to develop both its playing and community aims and much has been achieved in the last year that has been of benefit to players and supporters, and to the wider community of Erlestoke village and its neighbours. The club was successful in obtaining a grant from the Big Lottery which enabled a new and safe viewing area to be added to the pavilion, the toilets refurbished and new store rooms created for the junior kit and equipment. A new set of mowers has also been purchased and through the generosity of Westbury Cricket Club we also the proud possessors of three old but more than serviceable pitch covers. The adult club continues to thrive and has some 35 members. Our junior club is proving very popular with over 20 under

9's attending the regular summer Monday evening training sessions and 30-35 usually attending the Under 13 training sessions on Tuesday night. The junior club includes girls as well as boys. The adult fixture card is full for Wednesday's and Sunday's through to September and the junior section will be playing in the Kennet League every Thursday evening in May and June. As well as a successful year on the field the club has enjoyed a full year of inclusive community activity. This included a summer village camp out in the grounds, the bonfire night party, village quizzes, village conker tournaments and hosting a wide variety of informal villager leisure activities, from picnics and rounders through to grounds hire and wedding parties. Erlestoke Cricket Club is in sound health both socially and financially and it continues to play an important and much admired role at the heart of the Erlestoke and neighbouring communities.

#### **79/08 Kennet District Council Report – Cllr Lionel Grundy**

He does endeavour to get to Parish Council meetings as much as possible. In 11 months time there won't be a Kennet District Council. This is because the government has agreed that the 4 district councils and Wiltshire County Council will join to become the Wiltshire council. 3 of the 4 district councils fought against the idea. The district councils are now in a very difficult position. It's becoming difficult to maintain services during this final year as staff are leaving to find new employment. As the year progresses more and more services will have to be scaled back in order to keep the vital services going such as benefit payments, planning applications and waste collection. The government have made the decision but not given any guidelines as to how the new council will work. 240 Councillors will be reduced to 98 from May 2009. His advice would be to keep an eye on our council tax bills for future years. Roger Hampton commented that he is very despondent about the whole process, by going from WCC to WC is everything going down the pan!!

#### **80/08 Erlestoke Church Report – Chris Hampton**

The Parochial Church Council is responsible for working within the framework of the Benefice of Bratton, Edington, Coulston and Erlestoke under the guidance of the Vicar, the Rev Dr Graham Southgate. Our thanks are due also to Malcolm Wieck, our Benefice Reader for taking services. Malcolm is training for his Ordained Local Ministry. We continue to thank Mrs Helen Diskett for her services as Sacristan in preparing the church for services and for being part of the team who support Malcolm during his long period of training. We are grateful to visiting clergy who stand in when Graham or Malcolm are not available. When no priest is available we have a Morning Praise service led by the Churchwarden. Our organist, Gordon Ford, relocated to Devon so has given up however Doreen Smith will play for us at least once a month. Members of the PCC are either ex-officio (Beneficed or Licensed Clergy, Church Wardens and Lay Representatives of the Deanery Synod) or elected at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting in accordance with the Church Representation Rules. In 2007 the following served as members of Erlestoke PCC Vicar The Rev Dr Graham Southgate Chairman, Mrs Chris Hampton Churchwarden, Representative on the Deanery Synod Mr Tony Tye, Elected Members, Mrs Audrey Tye (Secretary), Mrs Elizabeth Kemp (Treasurer), Mrs Helen Diskett and Mr Roger Hampton. Foundation Governor Holy Trinity School Mrs Amber Hayward, Foundation Governor of Holy Trinity School Mrs Veronica Brown. The PCC met five times this year. The PCC organise fund raising events throughout the year to raise funds for church maintenance and parish share. There are 21 parishioners on the electoral roll. Members of the PCC attended the Deanery Synod forum at Bishop's Cannings. The churchyard continues to be mown regularly by volunteers. We have done a topple test check of gravestones. We have a regular pattern of three Sunday services a month. When there is a fifth Sunday in the month the parishes of the Benefice take turns in hosting a United Service. As usual we enjoyed our IOPM Christmas Eve Communion service taken by Graham. There are mid-week services and also Saint's Day services in addition to the above. The normal pattern of services for Erlestoke is as follows: - 1st Sunday of the month 9.30am Parish Communion 2nd Sunday 9.30am Parish Communion 3rd Sunday 6.30pm Evensong

#### **Review of the Year**

**1. Collections and Fund Raising.** General collections throughout the year amounted to £660.46. Planned Giving supplied another £2587.02 with a tax refund of £499.11. Fund raising events followed a similar pattern as previous years. The Shrove Tuesday pancake supper, a quiz night, a plant sale in May, strawberry teas in June, a barbeque in August, half share of the takings at the craft fair in November, also with the Easter and Harvest smartie tube scheme and the twice yearly bingo raised a total of £1727.46. Our accounts have been examined by Mr. William Smith, Barnfield Farm, Erlestoke. Devizes Wiltshire. SN10 5UE.

**2. Church Attendance** There were 60 in attendance at our Palm Sunday Pilgrimage service, 25 at the Easter service, 35 at Harvest Thanksgiving, 30 at the Remembrance service, 50 at the Christingle service and 29 at the Christmas Eve communion. However these are 'special' services and we normally have between 7 and 12 at our regular Sunday services. Erlestoke ladies attended the Women's World Day of Prayer service at St James' church, Bratton. During the year there were no weddings, one baptism, one funeral followed by the burial. We held a Christingle Service instead of a Carol service. Prior to this we held a

very successful Christmas Workshop for children and adults to make christingles and Yule logs for the service the following day. The workshop was attended by 16 children and a number of adults.

**3. Charitable Giving** The PCC decided that they would like to donate a 'one-off' payment to two selected charities. £100 was donated to the Sudan Link Appeal and £50 to Dorothy House Appeal. During this year the Children's Society received £52.69 from the Christingle service, the Harvest auction raised £37.70 for Alabare Christian Care and £37.70 for the Bishop's Sudan Appeal, donations of £22.75 from the harvest supper food was given to Christian Aid, the collection to the Royal British Legion from the Remembrance service was £42.10.

**4. Repairs** This year we are pleased to report that the bells have been repaired and are now ringable. Bellhanger Matthew Higby has attached the top frame to the tower with metal brackets instead of it being wedged and has fitted new bell ropes. The organ was tuned at a cost of £172.56.

**5. Improvements** Once again we held a 'Work-in Day' and a group of helpers including the vicar attacked a number of jobs. The interior of the church was thoroughly cleaned and floor polished, altogether a very successful day. The lead on the roof valleys has been painted with 'Smart Water' to aid detection if stolen also the brasswork and valuables were treated with smartwater. We received a refund of £156 from the diocese for mission work within our church, this was spent on purchasing 20 new 'Hymns old and new', one large print and one music edition. (the PCC had to make up the difference between £156 grant & the £179.71 cost)

**6. Expenses** Our Parish share for 2007 was £2776. Our church running expenses were £1624 for insurance, power etc. We now pay £27.20 a month (reduced from £34) as our share into a Benefice managed fund to pay Vicar's and benefice expenses.

**7. The Future** Planned giving seems to be the way forward as far as possible with Gift Aid for tax payers for raising revenue. There are many non tax payers in the community where gift aid is not practical. We will continue to hold social fund raising events where possible. Again our PCC has great difficulty in finding new members willing to serve. We are a mostly elderly PCC and 'new blood' would be welcomed as it is becoming increasingly difficult to find the energy required to raise funds. The PCC is keen to see a wider use of the building within the community.

Chris picked out certain points from the report which had been circulated, particularly the bells now ringing. Practice is on a Wednesday evening and the bells are rung on a three week cycle with Bratton and Edington. They are always open for new members. After a few questions about the fabric of the church building Chris thanked the village for its support for the church.

### **81/08 Parish Council Chairman's Report**

Last year was a difficult year for the Parish Council, in terms of changes of Councillors and losing facilities in the village that we have all enjoyed for many years. Jim Foote stepped down as Chair at last year's AGM. Jim has successfully recovered from surgery during the passed year and I would like to wish him well and thank him for doing a sound job as Chairman. Dennis Turner stood down in July. Dennis was one of our most experienced Councillors, his advice and direction formed an important part of our meetings and I would like to thank Dennis for his work and dedication over many years. Jemima Morgan took over as Chair but stood down in September. Jemima worked tirelessly as Chair and instigated the Section 106 project to improve the recreational facilities in Erlestoke, and I will talk more about Section 106 later. Veronica Brown stood down as Clerk in September. Veronica's diligent and structured administration meant we all knew what was going on, and I would like to thank Veronica for the good work she did for the council. We co-Opted Four Councillors throughout the year: Christine Whatley, Basil Chapman, Doreen Oram and Fiona Morgan-Frise. Christine decided that the Council was not what she expected and stood down in February. In the short time on the Council she pulled together the diagrams and plans for the Section 106 meetings that we use now. I took over as Chair and acting Clerk in September. My immediate task was to look for a replacement Clerk. We were successful in March 2008 when Anita Whittle joined us as Clerk. Anita is also Clerk for Bratton and has experience in other councils, she has already proved invaluable. We have been supported throughout the year by our County Councillor Mrs Pat Rugg and District Councillor Mr Lionel Grundy. Both have been invaluable to me during this difficult time, and I would like to thank them both for their support and advice. In the background Bill Smith keeps an experienced financial eye on the Council business, and Bill's advice and help proved essential when we received an unexpected tax penalty in November. I would like to thank Bill for his help and compiling the internal audit for the Council. We had one serious crime reported in the village. Mr. Gilbert's car was broken into and some tools stolen. It was reported to the police but they did not follow up the offence. This year we had to spend money maintaining the bus shelter because of a leaking roof. The traffic on the B3098 continues to be an issue and we are now part of a clustering group that is made up of councillors from the villages in our area. We are in close contact with Wiltshire Council on this and will continue to pursue any action that will curtail the traffic. The sub station in the park is under review

by the Electricity Board. They want to upgrade the unit which could involve increasing the overall size of the unit in the park. We are currently negotiating a new lease of land and are waiting for a decision on the upgrade. The prison continues to be a controversial subject for Erlestoke, and it appears that although it is sited in our parish there is little or no benefit for the residents of Erlestoke. The prison is expanding and taking in more inmates by the year. In fact the prison had made a formal application to the District Council to expand and develop new buildings using a loophole that by-passes the normal planning applications. We have expressed our concerns to Kennet District Council who are monitoring the application closely. This means that we in Erlestoke may not be informed of new building work being carried out. The prison received a bad report from a government study this year, and it was found that Erlestoke prison had the second worst report on drug offences in the country. It has been reported that the governor has asked local people to keep an eye on the perimeter fence looking out for people throwing drugs over the fence to inmates. One issue that we have asked the prison and Kennet District Council to review, is the over grown hedges and unnecessary trees that back on to the prison along the B3098 while leaving Erlestoke. This is a safety issue for residents and could help in their quest to improve security at the prison.

The council owns three different areas of land, the bus shelter, the secret garden and the park playing field. When these were purchased there was no legal requirement to register the land with the land registration office in Weymouth. We are now in the process of legally registering the land with clearly defined borders. One issue with regards to our land was the right of the cricket club to use the secret garden as an overspill car park during their large functions. This was a contentious issue for some people but the council passed a resolution in favour of them using the area for overspill parking. Local residents also raised an unprecedented petition in support as well. In April this year the village shop and post office finally closed. The council has been fighting the closure for Three years. Replacing the shop was not possible but finding another venue for the post office could be a possibility. The landlord of the George and Dragon was prepared to take on the post office facility but this has not materialised to date. It seems that the post office had already made up their minds, and the residents of Erlestoke must travel to neighbouring villages to use a post office facility. We still have a post box and this is situated next to the George and Dragon public house. In November we first heard that the village hall committee had not been successful in securing funding to build a new village hall. The village hall lease expired some four years ago and we have been told that the village hall will close this May. The issue for the Parish Council is finding a new venue to hold our meetings. This is an urgent issue for the council and we will keep the residents of Erlestoke informed of the outcome. For the first time in many years we have new houses in the village. I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the new residents to the village whether from the houses in the park the High Street or from Lower Road. The extra houses in the park had a financial benefit to the Council in terms of how the precept is calculated, and we are able to keep the precept at the same level for residents as the previous year. This would mean an increase of revenue to the Parish Council. In fact the precept has not increased for two years now and on these calculations the precept was agreed in January. Another benefit to the village for having new houses built is that we have been allocated Section 106 funding to the amount of £18120. This is specifically targeted at recreational improvements in the Parish, and after a number of meetings with interested villagers and council members we are now on our way to installing new play equipment in the current play area and outside on the green. Generally there is an interest in rotating and movement equipment in the play area, a new goal post and net ball area outside, and seating around the park and possibly around the village. The final detail is to be decided with a target installation for this years school holidays. This year we have entered the Best Kept Village competition and we wait for the outcome. We have also instigated a project to tidy up the lake area in the Park; this would require volunteers from the village. As in my opening statement, I said this has been a difficult and disappointing year for Erlestoke, but we remain positive and continue to work for improvements to rectify and replace the facilities we have lost. I would like to thank all the Councillors and parishioners for their hard work and tireless effort trying to improve our village life and environment over the past year.

### **82/08 Questions from the floor**

The Parish Council were asked to look into the problems left by the builders in The Park area such as the damage to the pillars and the road through the Park which has been damaged by lorries entering and exiting the building area.

It was also decided to look into the possibility of a mobile shop visiting the village now that the village shop and post office has closed.

**The meeting closed at 9.50pm**

**Next years meeting will be on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> of April 2009**