

## **Erlestoke Annual Parish Meeting 19th May 2009 at 7:30 p.m. in the Church**

**Present** Cllr. S. Jonik (Chairman of Erlestoke Parish Council), Anita Whittle (Clerk to the Parish Council) and 17 parishioners were in attendance.

### **70/09 Welcome by Chairman of Erlestoke Parish Council**

**71/09 Apologies:** Apologies were received from Mervyn Gilbert and Rod Coverly

### **72/09 Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting, 8<sup>th</sup> May 2009:**

The minutes were accepted as an accurate record.

**Proposed:** Roger Hampton **Seconded:** Liz Kemp All in favour

### **73/09 Parish Council Accounts – Parish Clerk**

The clerk presented the statement of accounts for 2008/09 which have been prepared for audit in August. It was noted by Roger Hampton that there was an error in the additions on the spreadsheet and it was agreed by the meeting that the clerk would find the error, amend the document and present it to the next Parish Council meeting for formal approval on behalf of the village.

### **74/09 Great Cheverell School**

First of all, I would like to apologise for missing the opportunity to report to you in person this evening. Because I had such short notice, I was unable to clear my diary for this meeting. Thank you for giving us the chance to tell you a little about our school this year. Numbers in school are on the rise – we now have 141 children on roll at present and this will rise in the new academic year. We have employed more Teaching Assistants in order to ensure that our very high standards of education are not compromised. We were oversubscribed for Reception September 2009 and had 52 applicants for 19 places. We offered places to 24, and then were compelled to take 2 more due to the Appeals process and to a mistake by County. We have a waiting list of 26 for that year group. Most of our children go to Lavington Secondary school once they leave our school, but every year a minority go to fee paying schools, St Augustine's or other local schools. This year, 25 children leave Year 6 and move onto their secondary phase. Our drive to make the learning process in our school more interesting and creative has been enhanced by several trips and many interesting visitors. The whole school went to see the ship "The Victory" at Portsmouth to support our theme of the "Fighting Temeraire" by Turner, the younger children have been to Bournemouth to see the Oceanarium and also to the Cathedral in Salisbury to learn about themes on Easter, the older children will be visiting the National Gallery in London in June and we have had visitors from India, Sudan and local interest groups. Our SATS results this year were excellent once again – a tribute to our teachers, our children and their families. However, although they do so well at maths, science and literacy, we are just as proud of the other achievements of our children – their friendliness and kindness, their honesty and integrity. With these skills in place, our children leave our school as well educated and well adjusted young people, starting to take their place in society. People from our local communities are welcome come to the school Sharing Assemblies on Friday afternoons at 2.15pm for half an hour. At these events, children will show work that they have completed during the week and of which they are proud. You are also most welcome to join us for our Christmas productions and for the Summer Fayre and other events that are arranged by the school and our PFA. This is your local school and you are most welcome to be an active part of our community.

### **75/09 Erlestoke Prison – Andy Rogers – Prison Governor**

Andy explained he arrived as the new Governor in June 2008. When he arrived there were too many drugs getting into the prison, there was a very relaxed atmosphere but with a very motivated staff group. The accommodation is very poor and plans have been submitted for changes. Since June 2008 the amount of drugs has reduced which showed in the level of positive drugs test reducing by half. The prison atmosphere is calmer and no one is in segregation. The prison is recognised as the best category C establishment in the South West. It has also been shown as the 5<sup>th</sup> most improved in all prison groups A – D throughout the country. Last year the prison came in on budget but the budget has been reduced for this year. The staff have been challenged to a game of cricket by the Erlestoke Cricket Club which will take place on the 10<sup>th</sup> of June. Andy explained that his aims for the prison for this year are to be drug free and to reduce re-offending rates.

Questions. Roger Hampton asked Andy why the bank along the B3098 outside the prison is not cleared. Andy explained that he was in the process of arranging a meeting with the Chief Executive of Wiltshire Council by the end of the month to look at both speed and the bank. Keith Lewcock commented that it was very important that the village engage more with the prison.

#### **76/09 Erlestoke and Coulston Cricket Club Report** - by Jasper Dorgan and read out by Anita Whittle

The Erlestoke & Coulston Cricket Club adult continues to thrive with some 35 adult playing members and 30 juniors regularly attending weekly training and many non-playing social members continuing to provide their support. The adult club has a full card of Mid-week and weekend fixtures throughout the coming year and our junior section is now running an Under 15 and Under 11 team. The junior club includes girls as well as boys. 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 village and its neighbouring communities. Keith Lewcock commented that the Cricket Club is of value to the village and the village and cricket club should try to work together.

#### **77/09 Erlestoke Church Report** – Chris Hampton

**Background** - 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 Assistant Curate for taking services. We continue to thank Mrs Helen Diskett for her services as Sacristan in preparing the church for services. 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, Doreen Smith plays for us twice a month. We also thank Mr W Kemp for being treasurer of our benefice fund responsible for paying benefice expenses.

**Membership** - 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 2008 the following served as members of Erlestoke PCC, Vicar The Rev Dr Graham Southgate Chairman, Curate (from 27/09/08) The Rev Malcolm Wieck, Mrs Chris Hampton Churchwarden, Representative on the Deanery Synod Mrs Chris Hampton, Elected Members, Mrs Audrey Tye Secretary, Mrs Elizabeth Kemp Treasurer, Mr Tony Tye, Mrs Helen Diskett, Mrs Veronica Brown, Mr Roger Hampton. Foundation Governor Holy Trinity School to 31.08.08 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 19 parishioners on the electoral roll. Churchyard - The churchyard continues to be mown regularly by volunteers. We have done a topple test check of gravestones.

**Pattern of Services** - 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 10pm 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 changed in October is as follows: - 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month no service, 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday 9.30am Parish Communion, 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday 6.30pm Evensong, 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday 9.30am Parish Communion

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

**Collections and Fund Raising.** General collections throughout the year amounted to £898.52. 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, coffee mornings, a fun day, a plant sale in May, strawberry teas in June, a barbeque in August, the craft fair in November, also with the Easter and Harvest smartie tube scheme and the twice yearly bingo raised a total of £2499.85. Our accounts have been examined by Mr. William Smith, Barnfield Farm, Erlestoke. Devizes Wiltshire. SN10 5UE.

**Church Attendance** There were 50 in attendance at our Palm Sunday Pilgrimage service, 12 at the Easter service, 44 at Harvest Thanksgiving, 29 at the Remembrance service, 54 at the Christingle service and 37 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 Edington. During the year there were no weddings at Holy Saviour but one at Christ the Carpenter (prison), one baptism and two funerals followed by the burials. 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. A benefice monthly biblical themed children's movie night started in May and has an average attendance of 10 children

**Charitable Giving** The PCC responded to a request for donations from Holy Trinity School for purchasing a new sound system to which we gave £75. During the year the Children's Society received £101.43 from the Christingle service, the Harvest auction raised £63.05 for Alabaré Christian Care Centres and £63.05 for the Diocesan Sudan Appeal, the collection to the Royal British Legion from the Remembrance service was £52.87.

**Repairs** Now the bells are being rung on a regular basis they have regular checks in the belfry and the bearings are oiled. Yet again the pillar at the roadside was demolished by an anonymous lorry colliding with it; it was repaired under our insurance less the excess fee. A buttress was repaired by a local stonemason. We had modern 5 lever locks fitted to the entry doors.

**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.

**Expenses** Our Parish share for 2007 was £2374. Our church running expenses were £2279 for insurance, power etc. We pay £27.20 a month share into a Benefice managed fund to pay Vicar's and benefice expenses. The PCC bought a projector for use at the benefice children's film night to avoid borrowing.

**The Future** We have started an exciting time of development of facilities inside our church. We have plans before the DAC to install two toilets, a kitchenette area and a disabled access / fire exit. This will also entail relocating the organ on the west wall and later moving the font. We have no village hall in the village and the PCC are keen to develop wider use of the church in the community.

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 hence the plans for our improvements.

Chris Hampton explained that the main aim last year was to encourage children into church. They get them to come to workshops at Easter and Harvest etc. Workshops were successful as the children felt welcomed. The church holds monthly movie nights in the church. The movies are religious based.

The Future. The church is applying for planning permission to install 2 toilets, move the organ to the back of the church and to install a kitchen area. The biggest hold up so far has been the fire door and ramp installations.

Questions.

Is this a replacement for the village hall?

Chris explained that the toilets and kitchen facilities are for church use firstly but future changes will make the building more accessible for the community whilst there is no village hall

Are there any long term plans to turn it into a community hall

Chris explained that they have only applied for the removal of some of the pews not all. The Diocesan Advisory Committee is in favour of a community use for the church, but the building will always remain as a church.

Chris explained that the church has some money put aside including the £5000 grant they received from Kennet Council. She thanked the Parish Council for having the foresight to continue and build the village car park as it has been an invaluable asset to the village and the church already.

#### **78/09 Village Hall Committee Report— Richard Loraine-Smith**

Richard advised the meeting that the Village Hall Committee had given the Parish Council £5000 towards the car park. The hall committee is holding a balance of £1647.62 as at the 26<sup>th</sup> of March 2009. The planning permission given for the proposal of a new village hall and car park were in the name of the Parish Council so it was decided to build the car park to help the village and also to use the planning permission before it expired this September and had to be reapplied for. Thanks must go to all members of the village hall committee for all their help in raising funds to go towards the new village hall. Unfortunately at this time the idea of a new hall is not feasible so the committee agreed to make the donation towards the car park. Thanks to all Village Hall committee members both past and present.

#### **79/09 Parish Council Chairman's Report**

I will start by saying it was a busy year for the council. Basil Chapman had to stand down for ill health reasons. Basil's input at meetings was always clear and practicable and we miss his input. On behalf of the council I would like to thank Basil for his input and advice and wish him well in his retirement. Mr Lewcock

was duly elected as a new councillor and has been an active councillor right from day one. Because we don't have a village hall the council were very grateful for the hospitality of the church and the George and Dragon public house for a meeting place, we used both throughout the year. Chris Hampton the church administrator and the new landlord Rod Coverly have always been keen to assist. We are pleased to see that the footpaths along the main road will be resurfaced this month. The prison continues to be an important area for discussion and Andy Rogers the new Governor has taken an immediate interest in the community, and attended council meetings. Andy is keen to help in his capacity as Governor. We are aware of the expansion of the residential area at the prison and continue to ask for a more camouflaged approach to the buildings and reduced lighting directed outside the prison towards the village. The tree felling on the verge along the B3098 next to the prison was a massive improvement but we feel the trees could be thinned more to expose people walking adjacent to the prison fence! The B3098 continues to be a talking point at meetings. Speeding cars have careered off the road into resident's gardens and we eagerly wait for Wiltshire Council to reduce the speed limit while entering Erlestoke passed the prison. We are pleased to be able to say Erlestoke continues to be a none serious crime area and no real crime issues have been reported to the police! Although we do have disturbances late at night by teenagers in the park area and the new seating in the play area has been broken due partly to the wrong seating and possibly not installed to suit the area. The new houses in the Park are finished and lived in and we welcome all new residents to Erlestoke whether in the Park, on the High Street or Lower Road! You will no doubt find out that although a small village there is plenty to do and take part in, just keep an eye on the notice boards or speak to almost anybody, we are a friendly village and new helpers are always required. We decided to raise the precept by 3% this year. We have linked up with the other villages in our area discussing local topics, our representative is Councillor Fiona Morgan Frise, Fiona reports back from the meetings keeping the council up to date on issues concerning all the villages not just Erlestoke. In June we received £18200 from Kennet which was Section 106 money to be spent on recreational use! This was allocated to the council as part of the planning condition for the new houses in the park. Recreational items are expensive and to purchase the rebound wall we thought was right for Erlestoke required more funding. Our clerk Anita Whittle was quickly on the case and Anita secured extra money from Kennet to purchase this equipment. After a village survey it was decided to purchase and install: Clone climber, Spinner, Encounter 7 seat, New bench, Rebound wall, New swing seats, Re painted swings, Bench around hornbeam tree, New bench in church and an extra bench in park playing field. The new equipment was designed to cover all age groups from small children, teenagers and adults. The feed back from using this new equipment has been positive and the play area is in regular use. In August our time was taken coping with the news that the government is re-structuring the boundaries throughout the UK. We were informed that Erlestoke would be part of Westbury White Horse and moved out of the Lavingtons. This provoked a number of meetings and the village pulled together to put our case forward to stay in the Lavingtons. We put forward a good case highlighting the local issues and the Boundary Committee agreed with us and accepted we should stay in the Lavingtons. We are now officially part of "The Lavingtons and Erlestoke"; I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who wrote to the Boundary Committee expressing our views and to Lionel Grundy (District Council) and Pat Rugg (County Council) who offered advice on how to approach this issue. The Government has also re-structured the District and County Council in Wiltshire. Erlestoke will be part of a new Unity Council! We are currently in a transition period where a skeleton council is managing Wiltshire until the Unity Council elections take place in June! The immediate change for Erlestoke is we will lose District Councillor Lionel Grundy, and our County Councillor Pat Rugg. Both have been an enormous help giving the council advice and direction throughout their period we shall miss them and on behalf of the council I would like to take this opportunity to thank them both for their support and help. Lionel Grundy informed us that he would not be standing for the Lavingtons and Erlestoke but would be standing for Urchfont and the Cannings, and Pat Rugg informed us that she would not be standing and would be retiring from office. Because of the new play equipment and possible increase in traffic along the Park road we applied and received funding from Kennet for road improvements and we are now in the process of installing children play signs and "slow" markings on the road. We looked at speed humps but the feeling was these would be too noisy. With the re-structuring of the Unity Council and imminent closure of Kennet as a District Council we decided to apply to Kennet for funding to build a new road and community car park before their finances were transferred to the new Unity Council. We received some funding and sent out tenders to builders to build the road and car park. We received the quotes from the builders and decided that Gaigers was the most comprehensive. There was still a shortfall and we decided to ask Kennet for further funding. We could use Gaigers as an initial quote and budget price! Further quotes were asked for from the builders based on a more detailed and accurate specification generated on a CAD system by Councillor Lewcock this with a firm dead line for delivery. The financial issues in getting the Kennet funding meant that the invoices had to be received by Kennet by the middle of March and this could not be delayed

any more as we were now in February. The road and car park was a very important project and we had now secured funding from the following: £5000.00 Village Hall Committee, £3000.00 Parish Council, £5000.00 Initial Kennet Funding, £5500.00 Secondary Kennet Funding, £18500.00 Total

After a lengthy discussion and a secret vote the council decided to use Gaigers as the builder. We had a budget of £18500 and Gaigers quote of £18000 was accepted leaving a £500 float for emergencies. One of the conditions on the planning application was that we must have an Archaeology study of the site, initially this was to be a walk through but the Archaeology Society insisted on a full study. The up shot was that the cost increased from £80 to £830. Fortunately the Village Hall committee offered to pay this sum for the village! I would like to thank the Village Hall committee for all the work they have done in supporting and contributing to the finances for this project, they have proved a very valuable committee and may they continue with there good work. The Archaeology report actually found nothing of interest and the report is readily available from the council if anybody is interested. The unexpected usually crops up, for us it was reported that the drainage would not be adequate for the car park. Kennet engineers advised us to improve the drainage with a French Drain at an additional cost or £995. Fortunately they offered us additional funding to avert flooding and the cost to Erlestoke Parish Council was £400 leaving us still under budget by £100. One project that we have started and will be completed this year is the new site for the Sub Station in the Park area. The Sub Station must be upgraded for technical reasons and the new Sub Station will be connected and when ready the current one switched off and the new one switched on. This gave the village an opportunity to re-site the Sub Station! We decided to ask the residents in the park for their views as the site chosen affects them more than the rest of the village! By now we should have the results from the park residents. The two main options are adjacent to the current Sub Station, or at the bottom of the new road adjacent to the car park. The use of the Secret Garden has been a sensitive issue, which I might add I can never understand, it is available for anyone to use! The cricket club and walkers sometimes use it to "off road" park their cars, children use it to play, and generally the village use it as a beauty spot. However we have had a number of meetings on its use some want it fenced off others like it as it is. We can add seating for picnickers and people to enjoy the area. 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 and a special thanks to our Clerk Anita Whittle for putting up with us.

### **80/09 Questions from the floor**

1. Paul Whately from the Lodge asked if there were any plans for traffic calming on the B3098 through Erlestoke as recently two vehicles had ended up in his garden. He noted that the response from the Police was terrible.
2. Richard Jones from the new houses in the Park area said that a lot of small children play in the park area and would the Parish Council consider reducing the speed limit to 20mph. Cllr Jonik explained that any reduction in speed limit is made by Wiltshire Council and this was very unlikely in this area of the village but the council had already purchased signage stating slow (painted on the Road) and children in the play area from Wiltshire Council.
3. Mrs Oram asked for better signage for the Park area as many people turn into the Park in their vehicles by mistake thinking its Lower Road.
4. Roger Hampton congratulated the Parish Council on the installation of the car park which is for the benefit of all in the village. Mrs Oram was a very good clerk of the works and helped the builders during the installation especially by providing cups of tea.
5. Perris Sinnett Jones who was absent from the meeting and had sent his apologies sent note of the problem of vehicles parking outside his property. Outside his garage is a lay-by. Access to his garage has been blocked on a number of occasions by vehicles parking in the lay-by. He also asked if people who park on the junction of Lower Road and the High street could use the village car park for their vehicles. He also asked if the car park and road have a membrane to stop weeds growing through. Cllr Jonik explained that yes both areas did have a membrane below the tarmac. It was noted that the asphalt may have been rolled too heavily and cracks will appear if water permeates it and freezes. It was thought that the surface was too smooth and that the skid resistance will be none existent.
6. George Phillips noted that the draft minutes go on the web site so could the agenda also be put on the site. Fiona Morgan-Frise thanked Stan Jonik for maintaining the village website.
7. Keith Lewcock thanked Stan for all his hard work during the last year as Chairman of the Parish Council

**The meeting closed at 9.25pm**