

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF ERLESTOKE PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON
WEDNESDAY, 19TH JULY, 2006 AT 7.30 P.M. IN THE VILLAGE HALL**

OPEN FORUM

One parishioner attended.

1. The parishioner raised the problem of dog fouling in the village. Agenda item for the next meeting and Cllr. Morgan would bring literature concerning signage to the meeting.
2. Agenda item for next meeting – additional gate in the play area.
3. New refuse collection arrangements appear to be causing confusion – Clerk to display a notice reminding parishioners of the pattern of collection.
4. Cows had made their way through the fence and churned up the surface of the land owned by the Council. Clerk to approach the ground maintenance crew to seek their views on the damage and request insurance information from cows' owner.
5. Two members of the Council would attend the Meet & Greet session with WCC on 24th/25th July.
6. Community First were holding their AGM on 4th October – Cllr. Morgan would attend.
7. The Chairman had responded on behalf of the Council to the NHS "Pathways for Change" consultation.
8. Decriminalised Parking Enforcement – this information would be placed on the noticeboard.
9. The Clerk gave notice to the Council of her intention to cease working for the Parish on 30th September, being the half yearly point.

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PRESENT: Cllr. J. Foote (in the Chair), Cllr. M. Gilbert, Cllr. R. Loraine-Smith, Cllr. J. Morgan, Cllr. P. Sinnett-Jones and Cllr. D. Turner.

IN ATTENDANCE: District Councillor L. Grundy.

The Council stood for a minute's silence in remembrance of Martin Grech who had sadly passed away and would be much missed in the community.

48/06 APOLOGIES: An apology for absence had been received from Cllr. S. Jonik .

49/06 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS: Cllr. Sinnett-Jones declared a personal interest in item 8 on the Agenda: Future of the Post Office.

50/06 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 5TH APRIL 2006: These Minutes, having been circulated, it was proposed by Cllr. Morgan, seconded by Cllr. Sinnett-Jones and unanimously agreed they be signed as a correct record.

51/06 MINUTES OF AGM HELD ON 24TH MAY 2006: These Minutes, having been circulated, it was proposed by Cllr. Morgan, seconded by Cllr. Sinnett-Jones and unanimously agreed they be signed as a correct record.

52/06 MATTERS ARISING: 24/06 Village Representatives' Reports: Roads: No further communication had been had with Highways concerning the surface of the B3098. The temperature on the road surface on that day had reached 140° F. In earlier discussions with Mr. Gibbs of Eastern Highways it had been reported that a sum of money would be withheld to ensure satisfaction with the work carried out and value for money. It was agreed to invite a representative from Eastern Highways to the next meeting with an inspection report and details of the finance withheld.

Army: Low flying planes had continued to be a problem causing alarm to adults and children on horses. Cllr. Sinnett-Jones had reported the matter to the MOD and Cllr. Gilbert informed the meeting that he understood the planes would not be flying low over Erlestoke again.

53/06 FINANCE: (a) Balance at Bank: The Current Account balance stood at £100.00 and the Reserve Account stood at £3,791.59.

(b) Insurance: It was proposed by Cllr. Gilbert, seconded by Cllr. Sinnett-Jones and unanimously agreed to ratify the payment of £396.05 for the Council's insurance.

(c) Community First Membership: It was proposed by Cllr. Morgan, seconded by Cllr. Gilbert and unanimously agreed to ratify the payment of £32.00 to renew this membership.

(d) Skip Hire: It was proposed by Cllr. Gilbert, seconded by Cllr. Sinnett-Jones and unanimously agreed to ratify the payment of £60.00 for skip hire.

(e) Internal Audit: It was proposed by Cllr. Gilbert, seconded by Cllr. Morgan and unanimously agreed to ratify the payment of £35.00 to the internal auditor.

(f) Grass Maintenance: It was proposed by Cllr. Gilbert, seconded by Cllr. Sinnett-Jones and unanimously agreed to pay £246.75 for grass maintenance.

54/06 PLANNING: (a) Planning Application No. K/54557/F 20' Steel Frame Building Extension plus Milk Bulk Tank and Isolation Pen Extension at Pudnell House Farm for Wiltshire County Council: No objection was raised to this Planning Application.

(b) Planning Application No. K/54594/F Rebuilding of existing external Chimney and Rear Garden Room at 55 High Street for Mr. & Mrs. Jonik: No objection was raised to this Planning Application.

(c) Planning Application K/54290/F and K/54315/F Change of Land Use and Proposed Extensions and Alterations to Dwelling, Garage & Stables at South Farm for Mr. M. Marshall: This had been granted Full Planning Permission.

(d) Planning Application K/54338/F and K/54339/LBC Conversion of Redundant Dairy/Garages to Holiday Let at Brounckers Court Farm for Mr & Mrs J. Hunt-Davis:

This had been refused Planning Permission on the grounds that the number and design of the new windows and doors would be akin to those found on a modern bungalow, which would thereby detract from the character and appearance of the dairy building and the setting of the main farmhouse. The proposal would therefore be contrary to Policy HH8 in the Kennet Local Plan. The applicant was also advised that any revised application should include a justification statement for the proposed use and associated works in order that a full assessment of their suitability could be made. It was also recommended that pre-application advice be sought from the Council's Conservation Department prior to submitting a new application as there were many issues that needed to be resolved before an acceptable scheme could be achieved. There were additional objections to Listed Building Consent which would be made available to parishioners on application to the Clerk.

55/06 CORRESPONDENCE: (a) Letter from Mr. G. Chaffe: This letter raised several queries, namely:

Q.1. Would the Council explore the possibility of combining with Bratton for payment of pensions normally collected from the corner shop at the lower end of the High Street and for pensioners without their own transport to be offered free bus transport to and from Bratton on specified days?

A. In 2007 pensions would cease to be paid into the Post Office and only paid direct into bank accounts. Those over 60 were now entitled to free public transport on completion of an application form available from the Tourist Information Office in the Market Place, Devizes.

Q.2. With fewer people taking the trouble to walk down to read the Minutes on display at the lower end of the High Street, would the Council consider publishing an edited version of Council's Minutes in the Village Monthly Magazine?

A. Parishioners who took an interest would see the Noticeboard. At present draft Minutes are published on the website www.erlestoke.org and an edited version of the Minutes was already published in the Parish Magazine as necessary. If there were still parishioners who were unable to have a sight of the Minutes, it could be arranged to post a copy if application were made to the Clerk.

Q.3 Why does the Budget show an increase in the Clerk's Salary from £959 last year to £1800 - an increase of over 87% without any identifiable increase in the Clerk's duties?

A. The Budget showed the actual figure paid to the new Clerk when it was compiled in December 2005 was £1,337.00, but this figure included £458 for work carried out by the Clerk from her appointment in December, 2004 to the end of March 2005 – an invoice being presented once the work had been completed. The £959 paid to the previous

Clerk was for work carried out to the end of November 2005. Deducting £458 from £1337 provides a figure of £879 as a half-yearly wage for the Clerk's duties and once this was doubled would present a yearly figure of £1,758. The new Clerk was more experienced which put her one point higher up the pay scale than the previous Clerk. She had also gained her Certificate in Local Council Administration which placed her another point up the pay scale and an annual review would provide an inflation pay increase of some 2.5%. She was at point 21 on the pay scale.

Q.4 What prompted the Council to offer the Clerk "up to four hours work per week"?

A. In Part 3 of the "Guide to Good Employment Practice in Local Councils" issued by the Society of Local Council Clerks and the National Association of Local Councils in the Spring of 2005: "When establishing the basic hours for the job of a Clerk to the Council several factors should be taken into account. Clerks to even the smallest or inactive Councils will have workloads which require at least four hours a week. Additional duties and responsibilities will increase this requirement."

Q.5 Why did the Clerk not present her accounts in the accepted form?

A. The Clerk had first presented her accounts in the detailed form when the District Auditor was checking them at KDC. They were acceptable to him in 2000 and have been acceptable to both the internal auditor and external auditor for both the Parish of Cheverell Magna and Erlestoke since that date. They are presented in this form to give Parishioners greater information. Erlestoke Parish Council has full confidence in the Accounts and they give full detail.

Q.6 On the Budget – where did the c/f figure of £2,975 and £3,217 come from?

A. The figure of £2,975 in the proposed budget drawn up in November 2005 was an estimate of what the bank balance would be on 1st April, 2006 – in fact the balance was £2,996, so quite an accurate estimate. The figure of £3,217 was an estimate of the Council's expenditure between November, 2005 and the end of March 2006 which in fact amounted to £4,217 – the additional expenditure being taken up with a variety of items ranging from donation to the Three Village Minibus to ground maintenance for the year. This was a **proposed** budget.

(b) Letter from Mr. Chapman concerning the Plum Tree Adjacent to the Path: The Council had been informed that the tree had been reduced in size which should have resolved the problem

(c) Letter from KDC concerning New Developments in Dealing with Planning Applications: The Clerk outlined the changes which meant that non-contentious applications would be dealt with by Planning Officers at the Council and Parish Councils would need to request that contentious Applications be brought to the Regulatory Committee. Larger developments would be dealt with by Regulatory Committee in the usual way. This letter was circulated to Councillors.

56/06 THE FUTURE OF THE POST OFFICE: Following discussion it was agreed that no decision could be taken on this item as no suitable location had been offered to the Parish Council to site a satellite Post Office. No Parishioner had come forward to offer assistance to ensure the Post Office continued.

57/06 STANDING ORDERS: A discussion ensued concerning details contained on three Standing Orders. Finally, with these issues resolved, it was proposed by Cllr. Lorraine-Smith, seconded by Cllr. Turner and unanimously agreed they be adopted.

58/06 NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING AREAS: This information had been circulated to Councillors and it was noted that Erlestoke came in Devizes Rural South Area.

59/06 SEB DRAFT TENANCY AGREEMENT: The Clerk had been seeking advice from WALC, but despite her persistence they had been unable to provide any guidance on this matter. She read a draft letter to the SEB, which the Council agreed should be sent.

60/06 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS: For the remainder of 2006 the following dates were agreed; 20th September, 1st November and 13th December.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.30 p.m.