

DRAFT MINUTES

PARISH OF ENSTONE

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held

Via Zoom, in line with Coronavirus Regulations, on Thursday 22nd April 2021 at 7.15 pm

PRESENT:- Eight Parish Councillors attended the meeting together with District Cllr. Andrew Beaney, County Cllr. Hilary Hibbert-Biles and six members of the public, Mrs Anita Rowsell, Mrs Sue Lee, Mrs Jessica Markham, Mrs Pamela Woolcock, Mrs Margaret Sawyer and Mr Mike Baggaley

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs B. Sinclair, Clerk to the Council

APOLOGIES. Apologies for absence had been received from Parish Cllr. D. Robottom, Revd. Mark Abrey, PCSO Helen Keen, Mrs Denise Casewell, Mrs Susanne Hamilton and Ms Kate Farquhar-Thompson

Cllr. N. Knott welcomed everyone to the meeting.

382. **Minutes:-**

- The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Thursday 5th May 2019, having previously been circulated, were agreed and signed by Cllr. Knott.

383. **Matters Arising:-**

- There were no matters arising.

384. **Residents' queries following Parish Questionnaire:-**

- Residents had been invited (via Ensign and the website) to attend the meeting to ask questions regarding the recent parish questionnaire.
- One query was how are decisions made and what is agreed following the questionnaire?
 - *Response from Cllr. Knott – all the suggestions and comments will be looked at by the Parish Council and prioritised. A request for further traffic calming measures is the main priority.*
- A further query raised concerned the Parish Council's "Green" Policy, particularly relating to planning applications i.e. electric power points, carbon neutral homes, sustainability etc. and how the preservation of flowers and fauna within the parish will be undertaken?
 - *Response from Cllr. Glendinning is that all the queries and suggestions raised will be answered by the Parish Council.*
 - *Cllr. Ward explained that an open meeting to residents was arranged for March 2020 but had to be cancelled due to the Covid Pandemic. Cllr. Ward has prepared an initial report regarding the Parish Council's "Climate Change" policy which will be discussed further once meetings in person are allowed to take place.*
 - *Cllr. Shaw reiterated the importance of the Parish Council responding to planning applications regarding climate sustainability but explained that the District Council makes the final decision on all planning applications.*
 - *District Cllr. Andrew Beaney explained that the District Council adheres to its Green and Sustainable Policies.*

The resident expressed her wish to help and support the Parish Council in relation to this and was thanked.

385. **Chair's Report – Cllr. N. Knott:-**

- The Chair began by reflecting on the past year and thinking of all those who lost their fight against Covid-19, and to celebrate the life of Prince Philip who died at the beginning of April.
- Following new Accessibility Regulations for the public sector in 2020, the parish website has been upgraded and the Parish Council thanks Mrs. Rachel Hunt for all her work with this, as well as the Facebook page, with the help of Ms Kate Farquhar-Thompson.
- Two speed indicator devices will soon be installed at both ends of Gagingwell and the Chair thanks Alpine Racing Ltd (formerly known as Renault) who has sponsored one of these devices.
- Repair of the Planks is still awaited and the Parish Council has offered £5,000.00 towards these repairs.

- The Parish Council revisited the idea of formulating a Neighbourhood Plan but this is on hold until new planning regulations are awaited from Government.
- The first phase of work at Heythrop Park/Warner Leisure is due to commence this summer. This will include the refurbishment of accommodation and removal of the large event Marquee.
- A Parish Survey was distributed to all residents via the Ensign and website. The main concern continues to be traffic calming and the Parish Council is working with the County Council to install improved speeding signs and village signs.
- Enstone Pre-School sadly closed in December and the Parish Council is liaising further with the Primary School concerning this.
- Burst sewage pipes in the rising main continue to be a burden on a regular basis and Thames Water will replace some of the old pipe work later this year.
- The grass cutting contract was awarded to Thomas Fox last year and the Parish Council has received many compliments on its work.
- Parish Cllrs. have continued training via Zoom and donations were given to Ensign and Volunteer Link-up.
- In September 2020, the clerk celebrated ten years working with the Parish Council. It was agreed to undertake a formal review of the Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer's role and the Parish Council thanks Beth for her continued hard work, cheerfulness and dedication to the role.
- The Chair thanked CC Hilary Hibbert-Biles for all her sterling work over the years – Hilary retires on 6th May and will be greatly missed. Thankfully, District Cllr. Andrew Beaney continues and the Parish Council is grateful for his ongoing help and support.
- The Chair thanked the other eight Parish Cllrs. for all they do, taking on projects to main and develop everything that is special about the Parish.

386. **Finance Report – Mrs Beth Sinclair, Responsible Financial Officer:-**

- The Clerk reported that the certificate of audit had been received for the 2019/2020 accounting year and that no queries had been received from either the internal or external auditors.
- The audit process for 2020/2021 is in progress, the Parish Council having appointed Astral Accountancy as Internal Auditor and Moore continues to be the external auditor.
- During the Coronavirus pandemic, quarterly checks on the accounts took place via zoom – the clerk circulated the Statement of Accounts and a copy of the accounts electronically to all members of the Parish Council for approval at the Parish Council meetings.
- All the required documents have been put onto the website in relation to the Financial Regulations Act for Local Authorities and thanks go to Mrs Rachel Hunt for her help with this.
- As at 31st March 2021 the balance of the accounts totalled £49,771.56 in the Santander Account, of which £15,000.00 is budgeted for traffic calming measures, £9,000.00 for Speed Indicator Devices at Gagingwell and £5,000.00 towards the repair of the planks. £14,215.90 is in the Barclays Account towards the Parish Hall.
- The clerk thanked the Parish Council for all their continued help and support during this difficult year.

387. **District Councillor's Report – DC Andrew Beaney:-**

- DC Andrew Beaney thanked the Parish Council members for all the work they do, particularly to the Chair and Clerk – the Parish Council's work is extremely important for the community.
- The workload at the planning department is six to eight weeks' behind schedule.
- As restrictions ease, Leisure Centres are beginning to open outside.
- The District Council's "Climate Plan" aims to be carbon neutral by 2030, to include an increase in electric charging points within the District. Free car parking within the District continues.
- The District's council tax equates to £5.00 for a Band D property.
- The Local Plan will also include a Green Energy policy and it is recognised that more needs to be done. The consultation process for the Local Plan will be issued in September.
- The Oxfordshire Plan 2050 has been approved – this is one of the commitments made by six Oxfordshire authorities as part of the £215m Housing & Growth Deal, which will help deliver greatly needed new homes – including affordable and social housing, and infrastructure to the county while helping to tackle climate change.
- The recycling sites in Chipping Norton are to be closed as they are being mis-used by residents and business owners.

388. **County Councillor's Report – CC Hilary Hibbert-Biles:-**

- It has been a challenging year for all areas of the Council with increased expenditure due to the pandemic. Central Government provided £72 million of additional funding for the 2020/2021 year, with total funding for Oxfordshire Councils being £300 million.
- The Council Tax was raised by 2.99 %.
- The County Council purchased over £1.3 million of PPE which was distributed to schools and to care home providers, at cost, to ensure they could continue to deliver services.
- An additional £4 million was made towards the adult social care budget.
- Coverage of 98 % Superfast Broadband was achieved.
- £400,000.00 has been invested in Highways with additional funding for drainage and vegetation clearance at high risk flooding areas.
- Additional funding will roll out 20 mph speed limits to those villages who wish to work with OCC to lower speed limits within their communities – this includes Enstone.
- The County invested £1.4 billion into Infrastructure to help with the planned growth to deliver homes, particularly affordable homes.
- Over the next decade the County will be investing £260 million in schools, £617 million in major infrastructure projects, £338 million in Highways’ improvements, £70 million in County-owned property improvements and £9 million in vehicle and equipment replacements.
- Oxfordshire CC has the highest rate of recycling in the Country, at 60 per cent.
- 280 electric charging points in 24 car parks across the County (including the New Street Car Park at Chipping Norton) is planned.
- A further £1 million long term funding is being provided to help tackle the impacts of the pandemic on young people.
- Highways England will be deciding whether to remove signposts on the M40, directing HGVs to travel along the A361. The concerns regarding HGVs throughout the County continue.
- CC Hilary Biles explained that she has served as Councillor at Parish, District and County level for 19 years, including being Deputy and Chair of the County Council. It has been a pleasure, honour and privilege to serve as County Councillor and Hilary thanked Enstone Parish Council for all its continued hard work within the community.

389. **Thames Valley Police:-**

- Unfortunately, PCSO Helen Keen has now relocated to Eynsham and Enstone has no PCSO. Residents are asked to ring either 101 or 999. The Parish Council is seeking further PCSO support from Chipping Norton.

390. **Reports from the following Parish Organisations:-**

(a) **Enstone Parochial Church Council** – Revd. Mark Abrey sent his apologies

(b) **Enstone Relief in Need Charity** – Cllr. Richard Parker, Trustee:-

- Mr Julian Watts has recently resigned and a new trustee, Mrs Lisa Thompson, has joined.
- There were no applications for financial help during the last year.
- In 2020, requests for an allotment increased significantly due to the pandemic. The Charity Ensures that the plots are ready for use.

➤ *An allotment holder explained that there is increasing concern over the lack of accessible water and could stand pipes be installed?* Cllr. Parker explained that the Charity is aware of this and working to remedy the situation.

(c) **Enstone Playing Field Association** – Mrs Pamela Woolcock, Treasurer

- A new committee has recently been elected to re-ignite interest in supporting the playing field.
- A recent tree survey has confirmed that a few trees require work – the Poplars by the pre-school have been pollarded and one Ash, on the boundary with Litchfield Close, was removed as it had died. Several trees along the Lidstone Road also need attention – the report was, therefore, passed onto the clerk who has forwarded it to the County Council.
- The fence separating the play equipment from the field has been removed as it was hazardous.
- New equipment will be installed, should planning permission be approved. The committee would appreciate any help and support from local organisations or individuals who are able to help fund equipment or provide expertise, such as technical drawings for a planning permission.

➤ *A resident requested that a “Hands, Face & Space” notice be erected at the site as some parents/ carers have been seen taking off their masks.*

(d) **Enstone Show** – Mrs Anita Lee, Committee Member

- Discussions are ongoing as to whether the show will be held this year. The Committee is reviewing all aspects on how it can be run successfully and safely.
- (e) **Enstone Sports & Social Club** – Mrs Anita Lee, Committee Member
- The club thanks the Parish Council for its continuing support and for reducing this year’s rent due to the pandemic.
 - The club has been closed due to the pandemic but matches are being planned once outside activities can recommence.
- (f) **Enstone Primary School** – Report read by Cllr. Philip Shaw, on behalf of Mrs Debbie Caswell, Chair of Governors & Mrs. Sarah Mann, Headteacher:-
- The past year has been the most difficult in the history of the school, other than war time.
 - The first lockdown in March 2020 was so difficult with parents/carers having to provide home-schooling and remote learning at very short notice. Seventeen children attended school by the end of May. The teaching and ancillary staff worked in new and difficult circumstances, constantly cleaning and sterilising every area of the school, as well as delivering remote learning.
 - In June 2020 a few year groups were allowed to return full time.
 - In September 2020 all pupils were in “bubbles” and routines and cleaning regimes continued.
 - The lockdown in January 2021 proved to be more difficult with the school having to consider refusing or admitting pupils as the Government’s guidelines were more flexible.
 - All pupils returned on 8th March 2021 and the staff continued to work under enormous pressures, as well as suffering from family illnesses and bereavement.
 - The vast majority of Enstone community has been fully supportive of the school. However, a minority of people have continued to gather around the playing field and village, not adhering to social distancing guidelines. A complaint from a resident stating that “this reflects badly on the school” had been received but the school can only control what happens during school hours, on school property.
 - In January 2021 Enstone Pre-school closed suddenly due to a shortage of suitably trained staff. The Governors will investigate the possibility of re-opening Pre-school under its own powers. This provision would be self-funding and the School would appreciate the support of the Parish Council in working to restore the Pre-school to the community.
 - The item “Pre School” will be put onto the next Parish Council’s agenda.
- (g) **Enstone Parish Hall** – Cllr. Andrew Lee, Chair of the Parish Hall Management Committee:-
- The hall closed in March 2020 and re-opened following the first lock down. It then closed in January 2021 and is preparing to re-open in May 2021.
 - Income totalled £29,871.01, mostly from WODC grants (£17,340.00). Other income included £10K in small business rate relief and then a further £8K from Government. Ofgem receipts totalled £7,587.00. Bookings totalled £4,859.08.
 - Expenses totalled £16,270.90 which included £505.00 on extra cleaning materials relating to the Covid guidelines.
 - With the grants from Government and Ofgem an overall profit of £13,600.11 was made.
 - The PHMC is preparing to recommence film nights and other activities.
 - The upgraded website also includes information concerning the Parish Hall.
391. **Public Discussion:-**
- There was no public discussion.
396. There being no further business the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 8.15 pm.

_____ Chair