

**The East Garston Annual Parish Meeting was held in the Village Hall on Thursday 10th April
2025 at 7.30pm**

MINUTES

Present: Councillors – Deana Carpenter (Chairman/DC), Sue Tulloch (Vice-Chairman/ST), Annabelle Eyre (AE), Jonathan Rabbitts (JR), Liam Robson and Stephen Reschwamm (SR), Liz James (Clerk), District Councillor Clive Hooker, Clive Cox.

Parishioners - 23

1. **Apologies:** Julie Mintern
2. **Chairman's Remarks:**

The Chair welcomed those in attendance and outlined changes to the Parish Council team, Councillor Peter Smith has moved out of the village and the Clerk, Gillian Woodward, has retired. Chair thanked both for their dedication and hard work over the last few years. The Chair welcomed new Councillor, Stephen Reschwamm, and new Clerk, Liz James.

The Chair thanked Lee Michigan for his work as editor of East Garston news, and Henry Wilson for his management of the East Garston website. Chair asked parishioners to contact Lee or Henry directly on eastgarstonnews@gmail.com (Lee) or news@eastgarston-pc.gov.uk (Henry), if there is any content or photos to share.

The Chair reported that the PC has continued to support local services such as the Lambourn Library, and that the defibrillator (on the wall of the Village Hall) has been replaced this year, she thanked Alan Breadmore for ensuring that the device is maintained and ready should it ever be needed. The Chair also reported that the PC has funded repairs to the base of the War Memorial, added rubber chippings to the children's play area in Jubilee Meadow. She also pointed out the fundraising effort to replace the toddler equipment, which the PC has contributed to.

It was reported that Thames Water still have some work to do in re-instating the Millenium Field, but that this should be completed this Spring. The Chair was thankful that there have been no major sewage or flooding issues this winter and thus far it seems that the work carried out by Thames Water has helped in this regard. Chair thanked Martyn and his team for their time and commitment.

Last summer the village hosted a Band Night and Fete. Both events proved extremely popular and raised funds for the Village Hall and East Garston Amenities. The Chair thanked everyone involved for organizing such popular and fun community events.

It was reported that PC costs have once again risen slightly but that the decision has been taken not to increase the precept. The PC is conscious of the increased cost of living and efforts are being made to provide important services at minimal cost. The PC is lucky to have an enthusiastic team of volunteers who help around the village, and this helps with keeping costs down. Much work – from tidying public areas to filling grit bins – is done by volunteers and Councillors, which largely goes unnoticed but is hugely appreciated. Specific thanks were made to Chris Tonge, Trevor Butcher, Richard Talmage, and Dave Knight. Thanks were also made to Karen Hack and her team of volunteers who look after the churchyard. Final thanks were given to everyone who keeps the verges in front of their homes tidy. Anyone interested in helping with village chores should contact the PC.

Signed:



Date: 15/5/25

3. Financial Report – Clerk, Liz James:

The 2025/26 Budget and Fixed Asset Register were distributed to those present. The Clerk reported that the PC was very close to operating within budget for the year 2024-25, running only £624 over budget. This was largely due to unforeseen costs which arose during the year (Repairs to the War Memorial, Election admin, Removal of tree over the river) but was also due to rising costs of services. The PC also bore the cost of replacing the community defibrillator. As reported last year, there was a slight increase of £500 to the Parish Precept for the year 2024-25, taking the total to £10,500. The PC agreed in January to maintain this figure for the coming year despite continued rising costs. This means that budget constraints for the coming year will be tight, and difficult decisions may have to be made.

The annual audit is currently underway and once completed and approved by the PC in the May meeting it will be available on the website.

4. District Councillor Clive Hooker:

Councillor Clive Hooker had nothing to report but his March report can be found at <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/downlandparishcouncilreport>

5. Guest Speaker – Clive Cox:

Leading British racehorse trainer Clive Cox gave an interesting and insightful talk on his life and experience training in the Lambourn Valley. Discussion ranged from his time as a National Hunt Jockey, to his move to Beechdown Stables in 2000, to recent successes, and included delightful insight into his experience training for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth. Clive's talk was warmly received by those present.

6. Any Other Business:

Martyn Wright gave a positive report on flooding and sewage issues over the past year. Groundwater levels reached a higher level than the point which resulted in the use of tankers last year, yet no tankers were required. Work done has clearly been successful. There have been a few near misses but no overflowing of drains or sewage. The ATAC filter unit hasn't been used. SAGLUV pressure group continues to put pressure on Thames Water. Whilst the situation in EG and Eastbury has improved, the same is not true for Great Shefford, where raw sewage has been discharged continuously since December.

Pat Glover gave an update on the work of the EG Eco Group and highlighted that the group is available to advise villagers on a range of environmental and climate issues and that there is a WhatsApp group for anyone interested. Pat pointed out the good work done by Ed James towards decarbonising the Village Hall and Social Club. She also reported on the recent voluntary work done in the Millennium Field by The West Berkshire Countryside Society which has been a great success.

Ed James voiced his thanks to Pat for help with securing grants towards the various projects in the Village Hall and Social Club, reporting that her expertise has helped to secure approximately £15,000 in grants etc.

The Chair expressed thanks to Martyn, Pat and Ed for their efforts.

The Chairman closed the meeting by thanking attendees and the guest speaker.

The meeting closed at 8.15pm

Signed:



Date: 15/5/25