

**The Annual Parish Meeting for East Garston was held in the Village Hall on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> April 2024 at 7.30 p.m.**

**MINUTES**

**Present:** Councillors: - Sue Tulloch - Chairman, Deana Carpenter, Jonathan Rabbitts, Peter Smith and Liam Robson  
Gillian Woodward (Clerk).  
Parishioners: - 30

**1. Apologies:** Annabelle Eyre, Cllr Clive Hooker and Lise Cox

**2. Chairman's Remarks:**

Chair welcomed Gillian Woodward as new clerk who started in November 2023.

Chair thanked Lee Michagan who has taken over as Editor of the East Garston Newsletter and Henry Wilson who has taken over responsibility for the website. She also encouraged parishioners to use EGN to publicise events and to send photos and news to the Henry for the website.

The Parish Council has continued to support local services such as The Wantage Bus, the Lambourn Library, the village hall broadband and churchyard maintenance. PC also ensures that the defibrillator (on the wall of the Village Hall) is maintained and ready should it ever be needed.

The PC has re-surfaced playground on Jubilee Meadow with rubber chippings which have replaced the woodchip. This was funded by a combination of CIL money, together with some funding from the Tesco's Grant Scheme and a donation from East Garston Amenities. Thanks to Henry, Nikki, Poppy and Ria for helping Jonathan and I to prepare and lay the new surface.

There is a group of local mothers who are keen to replace the toddler equipment which is old and not in great condition. They have done some research and the PC is beginning to look into funding options.

The winter of 2023/24 will be largely remembered for flooding and sewage problems. Many houses had issues with groundwater flooding and The Parish Council keep a supply of sandbags should anyone need them. This situation wasn't as bad as it could have been as we benefit hugely from the flood alleviation scheme in Eastbury.

The Chair thanked Martyn Wright for the enormous amount of time and effort he puts into dealing with Thames Water to try and address the problems EG has with sewage

A public meeting was held in December with Thames Water, at which they promised to install an ATAC filtration unit to reduce the need for constant tankers. They made good on their promise and this has largely worked, although we have still had overflowing manholes and backed up loos. Recently a blockage was cleared and at the moment we seem to be free of problems. Regretfully, the ATAC will need to stay in place until groundwater levels drop.

As soon as groundwater levels have dropped TW have identified and secured funding to re-line 50 metres of sewers in East Garston. In addition to this they have planned to reline 450 metres in Eastbury which will benefit us hugely.

In order to focus on our specific issues a new group has been set up to tackle sewage pollution in the East Shefford catchment, i.e. Eastbury, East Garston and Great Shefford.

The re-seeding of the Millennium Field by TW has been delayed due to the weather.

Now that TW have finished their work the PC will recommence the community speed watch programme in an effort to slow traffic.

Last summer saw the celebration of the Coronation of King Charles in true East Garston

Style. Thanks to East Garston Amenities for organising such a fun community event. This summer sees the return of the village fete which will take place on Sunday 7th July. Celebrations will start with a band night on Friday night and the fete on Sunday. Full details will be on the noticeboards and website.

Like all organisations Parish Council costs have once again risen over the last year and regretfully we have had to increase the precept by £500.

We are lucky to have such an enthusiastic team of volunteers who help out around the village which enables us to keep the costs down as much as we can. The Chair thanked Chris Tonge, Trevor Butcher, Richard Talmage and Dave Knight for carrying out work around the village. Thanks also to Karen Hack and her team of volunteers who look after the churchyard.

### **3. Financial Report – Clerk, Gillian Woodward**

The 2024/25 Budget, fixed asset register and bank reconciliation were distributed by the Clerk. The Clerk confirmed that the Parish Council had operated within the 2023/24 budget. Because of a rise in almost all costs a small increase of £500 had been requested from WBC bringing the total precept to £10,500 for 2024/25.

The annual audit is in the process of being done and once completed and approved by the Parish Council at the May meeting will be available on the website.

### **4. Councillor Hooker’s Report:**

Although Councillor Clive Hooker was not present at the meeting his April report can be found at <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/downlandsparishcouncilreport>

### **5. Guest Speaker** Paul Sievers gave a very interesting and informative talk and slideshow on his photographs of Newbury over the four seasons for the Newbury Cancer Care calendar.

### **6. Any Other Business**

Parishioner Henry Wilson mentioned about low water pressure at his property and could the PC let Thames Water know about this. Parishioner James Pryor commented about people making noise with garden equipment – strimmers, etc - on a Sunday afternoon and could anything be done about it. The PC cannot enforce anything but could suggest that it might be considerate to do this work on a different day.

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

The Meeting closed at 8.55 p.m.

Additional information is available on the Parish Council Website [www.eastgartson-pc.gov.uk](http://www.eastgartson-pc.gov.uk)