

The Annual General Meeting of East Garston Parish Council was held as a virtual meeting on Wednesday 6th May 2020 at 7 p.m.

MINUTES

1. Present: - Councillors: - Jonathan Rabbitts (JR), Chris Tonge (CT), David Ruse (DR), Sue Tulloch (ST), Annabelle Eyre (AE), Deana Carpenter (DC), District Councillor Clive Hooker (CH) Clerk :Alison Blackmore (Clerk). Apologies: - None
2. Declarations of Interest: None
3. Election of Officers:- JR advised the meeting that he wished to remain as a Councillor but stand down as Chairman of the Council. DR was proposed as Chairman by JR, seconded by CT. Elected. ST was proposed as vice chairman by CT, seconded by DC. Elected. Clerk to arrange signature of Declaration of Acceptance of Office as Chairman by DR. DR took over as Chair of the meeting. A vote of thanks, on behalf of all residents of East Garston for the way he had carried out his Chairmanship was proposed by DR to JR. His commitment to preserving and developing - and caring for - the village and its residents is unquestionable, whether by his actions in fixing the odd fence or stile, his cynical and down to earth approach to the bureaucracy the Parish Council has to endure, and his genuine concern for individual residents. It had been greatly appreciated.
4. Minutes of Bimonthly meeting held 4th March 2020 – were read and signed as correct.
5. Matters Arising: -
 - a. DC reported that, per her last contact with Sovereign in mid March, a site inspection of the garages was being planned by them to gain a better insight into the state of the garages. We had not heard back from them since. Clerk to write & chase up their report .
 - b. Village Champion Award. As the Annual Parish Meeting had been cancelled due to Coronavirus there had been no progress on this. Agreed to put on hold for the time being.
 - c. Settlement/boundary Review, Clerk confirmed that the questionnaire on local facilities & services in the area had been completed by DR & AE and submitted. Clerk had reported to WBC on the settlement boundaries & HELAA sites as agreed at the last meeting. We had received acknowledgement of our response but no further update.
 - d. Annual Parish Meeting. Due to Coronavirus this had been cancelled. The Chairman’s annual report had been publicised on our website & in the annual parish newsletter distributed to all parishioners. The annual financial information would also be publicised on the website, once approved.
6. Finance and Compliance : -
 - a. Paid since last meeting:

Name	Goods or Service	Amount inc VAT	Approved
Mid Thames Quakers	Meeting Room Hire	£42.00	DC CT
Wilkins Kennedy	Payroll	£300.16	DC CT
West Berks Council	Dog Waste Removal	£168.77	DC CT
Unity Bank	Bank Charges	£18.00	
PJS	Padlock & chain-Jubilee	£23.45	DC CT
Scofell Landscapes	Mowing	£252.00	DC CT

b.To be paid by next meeting

Name	Goods or Service	Amount Inc VAT
Auditing Solutions	Internal audit	£276
ROSPA	Annual Inspection	£103
E-mango	Website updates	£174
Penny Post	Annual Newsletter	£265
West Berks Council	Recharge May 19 elections	£75
Zurich	Insurance renewal	£497
Scofell Landscapes	Mowing	£504
BALC	Subscription	£130
CCB	Subscription	£32
Wilkins Kennedy	Payroll	£300
Unity Trust	Bank charges	£18

c. Received since last meeting

Name	Goods or Service	Amount Inc VAT
P Kindersley	Fencing Contribution	£580
West Berks Council	Precept	£4,500

d.To be received by next meeting

Name	Goods or Service	Amount Inc VAT
R Wilkins	Dog Training	£TBC

It was noted that £190 had now been received from dog training for the period up to March 2020.

- e. The April Current and Deposit Account statements had been reconciled to the cash book and agreed. Chairman to sign.
 - f. The Clerk had presented the Summary Financial Statement for 2019-2020. Figures were broadly in line with budget with no significant variances & a good level of reserves. This statement was approved. Proposed ST, seconded DC. The asset register had also been physically verified & was accepted as accurate. Proposed CT, seconded ST. DC agreed to check whether any furniture items on the register required repair.
 - g. The Clerk had presented the Internal Audit report which had been done remotely this year due to Coronavirus. There were two points to note. The Standing Orders were due for renewal this year & it was recommended they followed model standing orders. Clerk agreed to action by September. A review of the risk register in the financial year had not been undertaken, the last review having been in March 2019. It was agreed to review annually at the Council May meeting along with all the detailed financial data & the insurance renewal. Councillors confirmed that they were satisfied with the provisions for internal control and the processes of compliance and that Auditing Solutions Ltd be reappointed as internal auditors. Councillors accepted the report & thanked the Clerk. Proposed CT, seconded ST.
 - h. The Clerk had presented the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR). There was no requirement for external audit this year, with turnover well below the limit of £25,000. The AGAR was approved by Councillors . Proposed CT, seconded ST.
 - i. The Clerk had presented the Risk Register with 2 additions to cover Clerks review & remote meetings. Approved. Proposed DR, seconded AE. DR & AE agreed to undertake Clerk's review.
 - j. The Clerk had presented the Community Grant proposal for this year. This was in line with previous years with £1,000 available for village projects. It was agreed to extend the deadline for applications to 31st July in the light of Coronavirus.
 - k. BALC,CCB & CPRE subscriptions renewal agreed . Proposed CT, seconded ST.
7. Flood / Emergency Management Status: DR reported that the resources in the Emergency Plan had been useful in dealing with Coronavirus. The sewage situation on Front Street in the village continues to be unsatisfactory with some residents unable to use downstairs toilets, sewage tankers travelling in the village at unsociable hours, and concerns about the environmental impact on the river. Clerk reported that due to the high level of the river Thames Water had been unable to carry out the necessary investigative tests to identify the faults. It was agreed to keep the pressure up with Thames Water & keep CH & Laura Farris MP aware. CH advised residents to report issues to Thames Water but to be realistic about any solution as this would need to be justified in order to get funded. Clerk to write to EA to obtain information on discharge levels into the river in the light of the sewage plant in Lambourn.
8. Speeding/Parking and Road Safety: - DR had issued an update paper on the proposed purchase of SID equipment. The equipment cost, in order to be TOPAS compliant had increased to £3,500. DR had been advised by WBC that they had 3 similar machines awaiting deployment in the area, DR proposed that one be installed on the Newbury Rd in East Garston for a 6 month period, in lieu of that WBC would not carry out any speed exercises in that period. It was confirmed that all data would be available for us to access. Agreed. Residents had expressed concern about the new speed regulation signs that had been put up in the village & the lack of signage on the bend at Maidencourt. Clerk to write to Highways.
9. Coronavirus Response :- CT reported that from March 16th he now had 25 volunteers in the village. There were 30 different people being supported mainly delivering prescriptions, shopping etc. DC was thanked for providing the prescription delivery service. There had been 2 leaflet drops in the village detailing the support available also links to the Berkshire Hub.
10. Volunteer programme:- CT advised work was concentrated on Coronavirus support at the present time.
11. Planning Status:- Clerk reported there had been one planning application since last meeting – A single storey extension in College Way. There were no objections.
12. Correspondence:- None
13. Any other business:-
- a. SSE grants – Agreed Clerk would draft an application for a laptop/tablet /walkie talkies dedicated to Parish Council emergency planning information
 - b. Insurance renewal – Clerk advised that the insurance renewal proposal had been received at an increased premium of 1.8%. The schedule & renewal were agreed. Proposed CT, seconded AE.
 - c. Website – Clerk advised that work on the domain name issue was now complete, work was ongoing on the accessibility requirements & river data.
 - d. ROSPA – Their report had highlighted some general maintenance works that required action at an appropriate time.
 - e. 10 year Plan – DR advised that it is 10 years since the village agreed its parish plan. He proposed a review to assess what progress had been made and to develop the next 10 year plan.

Meeting ended – 8.15 p.m. Next meeting – Wednesday 1st July 2020 at 7.00pm