



## CASTLE EATON PARISH COUNCIL

### Minutes of the Annual Castle Eaton Parish Meeting 7pm 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021

#### Present

Cllr D Naidu (Chairman)

Cllr D Sainsbury (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr A Keate

Cllr L Saunders

Cllr R Wilkins

T. Whyborn (Clerk)

Approx. 25 villagers

#### 1. Annual Report from Parish Council Chairman – Dinesh Naidu

As you are aware, due to the pandemic there was no Parish Meeting in May 2020, so my report effectively covers the period from May 2019 to date.

For those of you that are not familiar with the workings of the Parish Council, I'll try and give you a very brief overview:

The Parish Council comprises five elected Councillors who each have the welfare of the village at heart. The Parish Council as a body has limited powers as far many issues are concerned, however, it can often act as a facilitator or conduit between the village and public bodies and other organisations.

The Parish Council is responsible for setting the 'Precept' which effectively is a local tax. The precept is used to cover various parish expenses, such as supporting the Village Hall, the village Post Office, the mowing of common areas around the village, to name but a few.

Since 2019, the Parish Council has been active in various areas, which include:

- Responding to Planning Applications
- Obtaining an Asset of Community Value charge on the Red Lion.
- Arranging for Swindon BC to undertake a traffic speed survey in School Lane.

- Working with Swindon BC to deal with fly-tipped rubbish.
- Highlighting issues regarding dog fouling.
- *Ensuring that Thames Water keep the storm drains clear.*
- Updating the Parish Council's policies and procedures and the launching of a new Parish Council website.
- Encouraging the creation of the Village Website to improve social connectivity.
- Publishing Newsletters covering important matters.
- *Increasing financial support for the Village Hall.*
- Posting Draft Minutes on the Parish Council's website promptly.

I would like to take this opportunity of thanking my fellow Councillors and our Parish Clerk for their input and support over the past year.

More importantly, I would like to congratulate the residents of Castle Eaton for their unending public spirit and generosity - factors that cannot be overlooked, as it is this which makes Castle Eaton such a delightful place to live.

In twelve months time there will be elections to select a new group of Councillors – If you are interested in getting involved with the work of the Parish Council, please do speak to me, or contact our Parish Clerk.

## 2. **Guest Speaker – Vicky Townsend PCSO**

VT introduced herself, she is easily accessible and available for any questions. If it is a general question, please use her mobile number, however for emergencies use 999 or 101. VT is looking forward to a more interactive approach once it is COVID safe.

*BW asked if VT could assist with the selection of suitable CCTV system for the village.*

VT responded that by Law she could not advise on the type of CCTV but would be happy to assist with any results from the CCTV. VT will be liaising with other Parishes.

VT is very happy with regards to the CCTV and its effectiveness with regards to theft and antisocial behaviour.

Villager DS – Questioned what to do with the numerous small metal containers that are being found across the village, VT would like details where they are found and volume that are found.

### 3. Reports from Parish Groups

#### a. Village Hall Group – David Price

##### VILLAGE HALL REPORT 2021

2020-2021 has proved a problematic year for us all during the pandemic.

Much effort and significant cost went in to provide a Covid secure environment for all of our users during the time that we have been allowed to be open, al-be-it very briefly in 2020. Unfortunately, income from hall use has been £0. Of course, during the lock-down we have continued to pay for on-going utilities and maintenance as required.

The Village Hall has provided excellent facilities for the residents of the Parish for in excess of 20 years and we aim to continue to provide this first-class environment into the future.

Our plans to improve various aspects of the hall have been halted due to the pandemic, however we hope to be able to proceed with these as the lock-down is gradually removed.

We are grateful to the Parish Council for the increased maintenance grant this year, which will go towards funding some of the renewal activities we had planned, or any replacements required.

In addition, the Village Hall and voluntary groups have benefited from the government grants given to support facilities such as ours.

We now look forward to re-opening and getting back to normal, inviting all our parishioners and village groups back to utilise the excellent facilities. Opening will be limited from 17th May, but fully open from the 21st of June (we hope). Any specific Covid safety rules will of course be circulated and/or displayed to reassure our users.

I also have a plea to people who would like to become trustees, especially any new villagers who would like to be involved. There are a limited number of positions as trustees but some important roles to fill. Please contact me should you be interested and please note that we will be holding the AGM to establish the committee on June 24th at 7:30 p.m. in the Village Hall.

Finally, I would like to thank my much-missed Chairman, Bill Hughes and Jan, and my fellow volunteer Trustees and members of the Management Committee for their extremely hard work and dedication to our charity. Last but not least, our thanks to Debbie Osborne for her caretaking and cleaning role throughout the pandemic, ensuring the hall is properly sanitised and safe.

#### b. The VCC Helen Clift

The VCC was founded in 1979 under the auspices of the Parish Council, for the upkeep of the playground and to organise social events in the village. However as with most other groups we haven't been able to hold any face-to-face events over the last year and as our events are community based, we are sadly not even able to Zoom.

However, we do hope we will be able to carol sing round the village just before Christmas, the proceeds going to a local charity and it will be nice to knock on doors with our buckets once more, to meet newcomers and to receive your donations, even if only to move us on with our rather erratic



musicality! Also, once the Village Hall can reopen it would be good to hold our cinema evenings again: a nice way for people to meet up and socialise.

All being well we want to hold the barn dance next summer, which is held in David's barn so we will ask his permission first, but it is a really good way for the village to get together with drinks, dancing and a BBQ. It is a very light-hearted affair and the group and caller know our limitations regarding the dancing! This event is also the main activity to raise funds for work on the village playground, and apart from paying for an annual inspection and insurance, it also needs maintenance. We are repairing the surface which has cracked in some places and we regularly check the equipment to make sure it is still in good order, so if anyone notices anything when using it, please let us know. The playground was last refitted and upgraded about 15 years ago now, so we will have to start thinking about its future and replacement of some items in the reasonably near future: not a cheap exercise.

The other activity which historically the VCC has organised is the village fete which has been held in the Red Lion garden, where all village groups join in and the proceeds are split between them for their funds. With the Red Lion now much busier maybe we need to speak with Rhiannon and Mark to get their views on whether it is feasible to hold it there, and with other groups in the village to get everyone's ideas on the content for the future.

Whatever happens let us hope we can all get together for some social events again soon.

#### **c. Ladies Club – Sue Sainsbury**

The Ladies Club had our A.G.M. in January 2020,

In February 2020, lots of the Ladies enjoyed a theatre trip to the Barn Theatre, Cirencester to see the 'Importance of being Ernest'.

In March 2020 Nicola Waddicor gave a talk on Carriage Driving, we were able to look around the Carriage and hear stories of events that she and her family had taken part in.

Unfortunately, events in April 2020 through to August 2020 had to be cancelled due to COVID. In September 2020, we had a Covid safe meeting in Hall with an I.T. Question and Answer session with Louise Kennington. In October 2020, we held a 'Party Light Candle' Party.

Unfortunately, due to Covid November 2020 through to May 2021 we had to cancel all events. There is light at the end of the tunnel, and we are planning a late A.G.M. in June with cream teas on June 23rd, to which all ladies will be welcome.

We hope to follow on from this in July with a garden party to which we hope to welcome new members. We will be informing ladies via email, and flyers to new villagers of times and dates of future events. These events will be discussed and organised at the A.G.M.

We look forward to getting back together and especially meeting the new ladies of the village, so come along and give us a go! There are some interesting events in the pipeline!

#### **d. Gardening Club – Nina Warminger**

##### **THE PAST YEAR**

1. We continued through Covid organising speakers via Zoom with audiences of approx. half of our members each month.
2. We increased our membership during Covid by 30%.
3. We held our First Gardeners Question Time event, great success.
4. Village Fete was not held due to Covid, so we held Plant Sales in members front gardens, another huge success, raising money for the gardening club. Thank you to all those who donated plants and bakes and to all those that came along to buy the produce, hope you enjoyed them.
5. We held a hugely successful socially distanced Scarecrow Trail, our best yet, first year raising money for charity = £1147.01 TWIGS. A massive thank you to all those that took part and donated, we could not have done this without our village spirit.
6. We held our Annual Plant and Produce Show in September at the village hall, changes were made to the day to ensure Covid compliant. Another great success, raising as much as the usual auction and raffle would have raised. Thank you to all those that took part and came to our shop to buy the delights made by all in the village.

##### **WHY JOIN THE GARDENING CLUB**

7. We are a friendly group of people who enjoy gardening, no specific experts (except Tony! of course), we just love spending time in our gardens.
8. We meet every 3rd Wednesday of the month, October through May.
9. We ask you what subjects you would like covered, so the subject matter is relevant.
10. We will have a speaker each month who will give a talk on specific subject. This year was – Ponds and Wildlife; TWIGS; Highs and Lows of Vegetables; Pests & Diseases; The Cutting Garden.
11. The meetings are held in the Village Hall compliant with social distancing requirements, so we may also need to continue with some on Zoom.

##### **Our other Events include: -**

1. Plant Sales

These are held at locations around the village, the plants grown by the garden club members, and are cheaper than garden centres plus provides a great community spirit, volunteers welcome to hold plant sales, all funds raised help the gardening club.

2. Scarecrow Trail

This is usually held August Bank Holiday weekend for a week, we have a Scarecrow Committee, volunteers welcome to help. It will be a themed trail - raising money for charity.

It has now been running for 3 years, initially set up to raise funds for the gardening club, last year's raised for charity to support a charity through Covid such a success.

The 2020 trail theme was Key Workers and raised £1147.01 for TWIGS, our first charity trail.

The 2021 Scarecrow Trail is set to take place August Bank Holiday – keep an eye out for more information coming in June.

3. Village Fete – Covid allowed

This is usually held in Red Lion Garden, we hold a plant stall there and ask for volunteers to help.

The Monies raised go in a VCC (Village Club Committee) and is split equally between groups.

4. Garden Visits – Covid allowed

Previous years have been to gardens wider afield. Due to COVID it was more local gardens. We hope to restart July this year.

5. Annual GC Calendar

This started last year to raise money for G.C, it raised £936. The Theme was Life in and around C.E.

It is open to members who submit up to 2 photos per month, selected photo is voted by members.



6. Plant and Produce Show

This is held early September, it's a great chance for everyone in the village including getting the kids involved.

You can Bake, Grow Veg, Flowers from your Garden, or take Photos! There are classes to suit all. Prizes include Certificates and trophies. The monies raised go to the GC, last year raised £278.30.

**e. PCC – Sheila Theobald**

Currently there are Eight PCC members.

The Past year has been quite difficult due to COVID. A new Vicar has joined and unfortunately getting to know her has had to be 'virtually'. Church has worked hard without a Vicar.

The finances from being in lockdown have been hit hard. The VCC are very thankful to the village for their support including: -

VH Marmalade sales which raised £300.

The people who made masks raising £300

DA and bread sales raising £200.

The 'Bring and Buy' raised £700.

Maintenance is still needed although being closed; ceiling inside the church is falling down in parts, we have managed to retain a grant for repairs however, but we have to raise the rest but is restricted £13k, £11k is grant which is needed for the annual running of the church and £15k is needed for roof repairs. Fortunately, we managed not to get into debt due to the generosity village.

Over the year services have been held outside and 'virtually'. When services were held inside, they were socially distanced. The memorial service was held outside and was well attended. The carol service was a huge success with thanks to DS for the use of the barns and all the people who provided animals.

The proceeds from these events were given to charities, The Carol service proceeds went to a children's charity and Memorial service proceeds went to the Poppy Appeal. The Easter Egg hunt was held in April.

The PCC would like to thank everyone who helps with the Library which is open every day now. Thanks goes out to the people who maintain the church grounds and BJ who organizes this. The people who clean church are also thanked.

Congregation has increased to approximately 18-25 parishioners.

End of September it is hoped to have a Harvest Supper, with less of a limit on numbers by opening up the carpark.

**f. Environmental Group – Amy Oliver**

The EG has entered the Best kept Village competition on behalf of the village and a big thank you went out for the people in village who helped in the application.

The clean-up morning in the village went well and had such good results that the following one won't be necessary.

Planters have been put around the village, signposts have been earmarked to be cleaned.

The judging is scheduled to take place sometime in mid-May to mid-June and if possible, we will try to coincide the grass cutting with the dates.

Dog Fouling signs have been erected.



**g. CBF – Barry Wicks**

It has been a busy year; a flyer was distributed around the village for ideas of how to enhance the village.

The CBF received many interesting ideas, unfortunately some are out of our remit, BW had explained why these can't be accepted to those who entered them.

Some ideas that have been submitted are -

- Wildlife, Biodiversity, Bird Hides on Cullimore land
- Canadian Canoes for the village, with equipment storage
- A History Club and Research group
- Electric Car – Pool car for Village use
- Permissive Paths through paying local landowners for access.
- Allotments
- Apple press to make wine or cider.
- France Bastille Day – village party
- Footpaths around Village
- Outdoor swimming Pool
- CCTV around the Village
- Repair of water Fountains in the Village
- War memorial

**4. AOB**

DS Expressed concern regarding the CCTV system, this should be considered carefully prior to implementation.

**5. Parish Council Meeting**

DN closed the Parish meeting and opened the Parish Council Meeting.

Parish Council Meeting Minutes available separately

Minutes submitted by: Teresa Whyborn - Parish Clerk

Approved by: Dinesh Naidu - Chairman

