

THE PARISH OF EASTINGTON

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 25th May 2017 in the Eastington Village Hall

In attendance were Cllrs Corrie (Chair), Loveridge, Bomberg, Chatterley, Wells and Allen; District Councillors Davies and Jones; Julie Shirley (Clerk) and 10 members of public.

Cllr Corrie welcomed everyone to the meeting, and expressed thanks to the group of volunteers that regularly deliver the Eastington Community News every 2 months.

The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 24th May 2016 were accepted as a true record.

Cllr Corrie referred those present to the Chairman's report from Cllr Bullock (see Appendix 1).

The Parish Council Finances for 2016/17 is available at Appendix 2.

Cllr Corrie introduced each of the following speakers during the meeting:

1. Peter Sirett – Gloucestershire County Council Flood Risk Management

Peter gave an overview of riparian ownership and responsibilities of landowners. Since the 2010 Flood & Water Management Act, Gloucestershire County Council can enforce owners to carry out their responsibilities – this function has been delegated to Stroud District Council.

Parishes can assist with flood risk management by having volunteers that check on watercourses that are most likely to block / flood; the parish council can contact landowners to clear their watercourses. This is a community approach to managing the risk of flooding.

Gloucestershire County Council can assist in identifying landowners, and providing maps of watercourses within the parish.

Riparian ownership is complex and depending on the type of watercourse will be a different responsible authority, eg River Frome problems are referred to the Environment Agency, whereas ordinary watercourses are overseen by SDC/GCC.

Q. Do you have any leaflets?

A. Yes, these can be sent to the Parish Clerk.

Q. Do owners know they are responsible for watercourses?

A. Always been the responsibility of landowners, but often not realised.

Q. What does GCC do proactively, eg Oldbur Brook already floods and this will get worse with housing developments nearby.

A. EA models the watercourses and proposed developments are looked at by officer/engineer to make sure properties are not at risk of flooding.

Q. What if flooding occurs after new housing is built, who is responsible?

A. Depends on the circumstances of the flood, eg developer could be at fault, or it could be a lack of maintenance on the watercourse etc.

Peter offered to look at Oldbury Brook that already floods onto Chipman's Lane.

Q. Do you work with the SUDS team?

A. Yes.

Q. When the landowner is absent, does the tenant have responsibility?

A. Not sure, ultimately the landowner is responsible.

2. Tom Low – Eastington Community Orchards

Tom gave a brief overview about how the Orchards group came into existence, following on from the formation of Keep Eastington Rural and Eastington Community News. Tom went on to give an update on Brownings Orchard, and thanked the Parish Council for granting monies from the Charlie Bullock Fund to ECO.

3. Bill Edwards – Public Rights of Way Defenders (PROWD)

Bill gave a talk on how PROWD was formed and grew from a motivation to try and encourage older members of the community to be active by walking in the countryside. One aim was to replace all the stiles with kissing gates to make walking more accessible, so far 44 stiles have been changed and 15 new bridges installed. PROWD also suggests improvements to footpaths in neighbouring parishes. The developer at Swallowcroft installed 5 kissing gates but the ground gets very muddy so stones have been put down to make it more passable.

Bill was thanked for all that he does and there have been many positive comments on the Love Eastington Facebook group.

4. Jennifer Empson – Friends of Snakey Park

Jen gave an overview on the progress to date at Snakey Park with recent additions of play equipment and a skate area. All the capital improvements have been made possible through grant funding (section 106, Gloucestershire Enterprise Trust, Charlie Bullock Fund, Solar Fund, and Gloucestershire County Council).

The skate area has been constructed from concrete as this is more resilient to vandalism and is lower maintenance; the equipment is aimed at all ages and abilities. The feedback so far has been very positive. Signage and litter bins are still to be installed.

The play park has recently had a climbing frame and sail shade added, along with new steps for the slide. Baby swings, roundabout and improvements to the tunnels are to be completed soon.

Q. The community very much appreciates what the Friends group has achieved for the community.

A. We feel very supported by the Parish Council.

Q. How have you achieved so much grant funding?

A. If you don't ask you don't get.

Q. What is the roundabout?

A. Supernova can be used by all ages, it is a round disc that turns on an angle.

Q. Do people outside the area using the play park contribute to the costs?

A. No; it is a wonderful facility for all to enjoy.

5. Sharon Wells – Eastington Community Land Trust

Sharon gave an update on progress to date with the Eastington Community Land Trust; funding has been received which has allowed the group to pay for professionals eg feasibility study. The location was largely dependent on the Neighbourhood Development Plan. So far they have spent £16k and applied for £64k funding. Aiming to submit the planning application for 23 affordable houses by end of June 2017.

Q. Who owns the green in the middle of the proposed houses?

A. This is under consideration at the moment.

Q. There is a footpath that runs alongside the site; can E-CLT help to get the footpath opened up?

A. Can look at this but suggest PROWD apply to the Solar Fund for monies to assist.

6. Ken Burgin – Cotswolds Canals Trust

Ken gave an update on Phase 1B (Saul to Ocean section). There is a 4 mile section which incorporates over 30 separate projects. There are 6 key themes which meet the Heritage Lottery themes for funding. Last time it was felt by Heritage Lottery that the bid was too high at £15m and not enough funding from others; now SDC is putting in £3m with GCC £700k, CRT £625k; this reduces the grant needed from Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to £10m. Stroud District Council will become the accountable body for the project. There is £40m available from HLF with around 200 applications so there is lots of competition.

CCT plans to work on some smaller projects in the meantime such as:

- Walk Bridge
- Pike & Dock Locks
- Bonds Mill bridge
- Land agreements

These reduce risk to the main project and optimise the money.

The planning decision on the Ecotricity application is slipping in real time and the lack of outcomes creates uncertainty. CCT is going to submit an outline planning application for the missing mile of canal as a defensive move.

Q. Is Ecotricity giving or renting the land to CCT for the missing mile?

A. Good question; but will consider Compulsory Purchase if necessary.

Q. The perception is that Ecotricity is giving lots of money to CCT, is that true?

A. May look like that but contributions will be required through section 106 and not donated; Ecotricity will be required to give money but are not offering.

7. Jennifer Corrie – The Eastington Allotments Society

The Chairman is Martin Elliot and Secretary is Sarah Underdown. There are around 30 plots in use at present. Last year the Committee took the decision to follow-up non-cultivated plots as a result 4 tenants gave up their plots. This year there are only 2 non-cultivated plots. The membership includes more young families as well as older retired people. The playgroup has a plot which includes a hide overlooking the pond. There is a communal shed with donated tools that any tenant can borrow and the shed provides shelter in poor weather. Thanks were expressed to Alan and Charlie Loveridge who cut the allotments grass.

Cllr Corrie thanked everyone for coming and also Alison and Sharon for providing refreshments.

Meeting closed 8.45pm.

Appendix 1 - Chairman's Report:

Another year has flown by in a flurry of activity. Sometimes it feels that as a Council we make slow progress but when you look back on the achievements of the past year it really has been quite busy. We launched a new website including email addresses for our councillors; the Neighbourhood Development Plan was adopted in October 2016; the long-awaited village gateways were ordered and should be installed during April 2017; the skate area at Snakey Park is well underway all paid for through grants and developer funds and organised by the Friends of Snakey Park.

A review of dog and litter bins was undertaken and two new bins installed with more planned. The Council also achieved Quality in the Local Council Award Scheme and is currently putting together an application for Gold status. I'm sure you'll all agree we've achieved quite a lot for a small council with one part-time member of staff. As always, we're very grateful to our supporters and volunteers who help us with our projects. My personal thanks go to the Councillors who work incredibly hard to progress our plans.

Oldbury End (our preferred name for the development West of Stonehouse) will be starting this year; the detailed planning applications have started to come in and with the support of Stroud District Council we're making sure we receive the best development we can whilst retaining the unique historic characteristics of our hamlets.

Ecotricity plans for the land at junction 13 will likely be decided later this year; we're hopeful that the application won't be permitted; we remain very concerned about the impact on the A419 traffic and surrounding hamlets.

To keep up to date with Parish matters, please come along to our Council meetings or follow us on Facebook and Twitter.

Cllr Muriel Bullock - Chairman

Appendix 2 - Receipts & Payments Account for the Year Ending 31st March 2017

	Year ended 31 March 2017	Year ended 31 March 2016
Receipts		
Precept	66,570.00	60,300.00
Local Council Tax Support Grant	0.00	1,785.00
VAT refund	1,752.48	3,596.82
Burials	2,330.00	3,715.00
Bank interest received	22.27	31.44
Rent and wayleaves	17.38	77.38
Grants & Donations	60,378.25	
Other	6,020.95	11,613.77
	£137,091.33	£81,119.41
Payments		
VAT	8,985.89	1,769.48
Hall hire	274.83	357.00
OHMG ground maintenance	0.00	1,921.02
Greens and churchyard grass maintenance	10,280.00	4,450.00
Office expenditure/phone	2,575.78	1,343.16
Severn trent Water	52.68	44.22
Audit & legal fees	885.00	485.00
Grants and donations	4,313.00	574.60
Subscriptions	255.50	954.68
Training	454.50	517.50
Loan repayments	5,522.96	5,522.96
Insurance	726.07	763.36
Payroll services	90.00	97.30
Staff costs	18,798.72	16,338.21
Expenses: Clerk and council	612.40	585.95
Election expenses	0.00	0.00
Graveyard Burial Ground repairs	3,159.50	2,647.00
Footpaths and kissing gates	600.00	565.00
Planning expenses	5,727.10	8,485.00
Repair projects	1.00	0.00
Professional representation fund	480.00	0.00
NDP/Parish plan	1,500.00	9,356.87
Roads and Transport	297.30	501.39
Other	29.06	339.85
Snakey Park (from grants)	33,501.69	0.00
	£99,122.98	£57,619.55