



## **CASTLE EATON PARISH COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the Meeting of the Annual Parish Meeting 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2022**

#### **Present**

#### **Outgoing Councillors**

CLlr D Naidu - Chair

CLlr D Sainsbury – Vice Chair

CLlr A Keate

CLlr L Saunders

CLlr R Wilkins

#### **Incoming Councillors**

CLlr C Williams – Chair

CLlr S Cooper Caine – Vice Chair.

CLlr P Hall

CLlr L McVey

CLlr M Patrick

T. Whyborn (Clerk)

Seven residents and two Councillors from Kempford

## 1. Annual Report From Parish Council Chairman – Cllr D Naidu

### *REPORT BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PARISH COUNCIL*

It is my duty, as the outgoing Chairman of the Parish Council to give you my report for the year ending March 2022.

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.

In the past year the Parish Council has been active in various areas, which include:

- Liaising with Thames Water regarding the sudden drop in water pressure that occurred.
- Liaising with Scottish Power regarding the high frequency of power outages that were being suffered by the village.
- Challenging the ongoing Planning Application for the expansion of the AD unit in Droveaway.
- Supporting the village in its efforts to claim the title of Best Kept Small Village.
- Publishing Newsletters covering important matters.
- Working with Swindon BC to deal with fly-tipped rubbish.
- Maintaining financial support for the Village Hall.

I would like to take this opportunity of thanking my fellow outgoing Councillors and our Parish Clerk for their input and support over the past year and to wish the new Parish Council the very best for the future.

As I said last year congratulations must go to the residents of Castle Eaton for their unending public spirit and generosity.

## 2. Reports From Parish Groups

### **Ladies club activities 2021 to 2022 - Resident P Price**

We began our evenings again in June 2021 with our postponed AGM, we decided to celebrate being back together and thanking the members for their patience with a cream tea and Prosecco. This went down so well we repeated the experience at our 2022 AGM and I think it is probably written in stone now. A lovely way to kick start our years and brighten up an AGM.

In 2021 the committee decided to advertise what exactly the Ladies club does and invite prospective new members to attend the garden party which the committee organised and paid for. We had a fantastic response and all the new people who attended have gone on to become members.

We did lose a few of our older members in terms of duration of attendance such as Shirley who decided that she was not really well enough to continue attending events. Val is still struggling with her health however she continues with a keen interest in the club. A few other members have stayed away with concerns over health and some have just decided that they no longer wish to be members.

The club really relies on the occasional reenergising that new members bring and I think that we have a really committed and actively involved membership currently.

2021 programme of events we had Justin Tomlinson give a talk. This event was opened up to the village and it was great to see some of the villagers attend.

We had a theatre trip to see Pam Ayres which provided us with a very amusing evening much needed after covid and lock downs. The Wiltshire Bobby van gave a talk on all the good work that they do and several people made appointments to have their home security checked. Christmas meal was at the Red Lion and jolly delicious it was too.

January 2022 saw a cancellation of the planned AGM due to Covid, so we postponed it to February and moved our February planned event to September.

March was a trip to the theatre to see the acclaimed Menopause show. Very funny..

April, we had Rachel from the Wiltshire Fraud Squad give us a talk on internet fraud. Very informative evening. Rachel left some pamphlets in the village hall for the coffee morning. Rachel is keen to deliver her talk to as many people as she can and has offered to attend a coffee morning or talk to the whole village or attend a parish council meeting. If anyone is interested, I have her contact details.

May we visited the Elemental sculpture show, which was very, very good and I would highly recommend. They accommodated us after their usual closing time, and we could purchase coffee and cake which of course we did. The sculptures are so varied, and the setting is magnificent. The owners only charge a small admission and they asked us to pay this to the charity for Ukraine.

We have made a few charitable donations this year. It is something the the original Ladies club used to do but over the years it has fallen by the wayside. The committee and members took the decision 3 years ago to reinstate this.

Occasionally a speaker will donate their fee to a charitable cause. For Justin we chose the playground trust which endeavours to ensure playgrounds have equipment that is all inclusive. For Rachel we chose Ukraine and added to the amount from our funds

#### **- VILLAGE HALL REPORT - Resident D Price**

The pandemic over the last 2 plus years has clearly had an impact on the use of the hall, the income and to a lesser extent the expenditure. We have however been fortunate, in that we have received a number of government grants during the pandemic to support us during those difficult times when we have had to remain closed with no income.

The hall continues to provide excellent facilities for the residents of the Parish, as it has done for the last 22 years, and with hall hire now again providing income, it seems as if we are returning to normal. We look forward to continued use of the hall by all of the groups and for special events, like the up and coming Jubilee celebrations.

Ongoing maintenance will be required this year, several significant items already identified and in plan. We expect this to continue as wear and tear takes its toll on the fabric of the hall requiring further ongoing expenditure. This in addition to the rapid rise in the cost of living and in particular the energy crisis.

We are of course very grateful to the Parish Council for their ongoing Maintenance Grant which continues to provide reassurance, regarding the future of the hall and its facilities.

I would like to thank all of the users of the hall for their adherence to the restrictive Covid measures during the pandemic and their continued use of the hall. Special thanks again goes to Debbie Osborne for her support and adaptability with regard to keeping the hall as safe and clean as possible.

I would also like to thank, in particular, all of those who facilitate the coffee mornings and their support to village hall, plus Matthew for his provision of the outreach Post Office which is so important to the parish community.

Finally, I would like to thank my fellow volunteer Trustees and members of the Management Committee for their involvement and support to the charity.

#### **Gardening Club – Resident D Saunders**

Great level of membership this year, 40 members of which seven are new members.

Committee – Chair – Nina Warminger, Treasurer – Ian Wallace, Secretary – Ruth Wilkins, Programme Co-Ordinator – Louise Kennington

The AGM is in October and the club year runs from October to June.

New speakers talk about some fresh and creative topics recommended by members. A feedback process is in place for each session, for both the club and speaker.

Events to come this year, include the Scarecrow trail (21/8/22 – 2/9/22) & the Village produce Show.

Driveway Plant and Bake sale commence on the 29/5/22, this produces Revenue for the Group.

The Group will be supporting the Fete with a Flower stall. Free seed swaps of members unwanted seeds.

The 2023 Calendar will be on sale in December, photos from and selected by members.

Membership was free during the Pandemic but now is £5.00, which includes benefits of quality speaker, discounts, free seeds visits to local gardens. All levels of gardener invited.

### **Environmental Group – Colin Williams**

There have been some very successful clean ups around the village, the group would like to extend their thanks to the villagers who are not members but who have helped with those.

A special thanks to residents M. Khoo, J Khoo who are continually seen litter picking throughout the year.

The Environmental Group are looking into cleaning up the railings north of the bridge, Benches and memorials around the village for future cleans once the appropriate permissions are received.

We may enter the Best Kept Village again next year.

### **VCC - Resident R Green**

There hasn't been much change with the VCC over the year,

The Fete and Barn Dance are due to go ahead this year after a two year break due to COVID, the two year absence has left the accounts approximately £280 down on last year.

Spikes have been added to the tops of the playground swings to resolve bird issues. Signage has also been improved.

The VCC is looking to improve the equipment as it is over 10years old. The flooring is in need of replacing but this will be hugely expensive.

### **Cinema Club - Resident P Price**

The films commenced in January 2021 with "off The Rails". In March "The Last Duel" was shown. The next film is "The Blues Brothers" on the 29<sup>th</sup> of June.

The numbers have dropped, therefore we are not covering costs by ticket sales however the sales of refreshments are luckily covering this.

### **Church Group – Resident B Wicks**

The Church would like to express their gratitude to the trustees of the Church group, for all their support. A thanks also goes to the Village Hall for hosting Sunday services during the restoration of the roof.

Although the roof repairs are complete, more repairs have come to light. The building is 150 years old and must be repaired as per English Heritage. Grants have been applied for, some have been successful to help with this restoration.

*The church should be back open by September 2022, however a deep clean will be needed and resident B Wicks will be collecting around the village for this.*

### **3. AOB**

None

### **4. Annual Parish Council Meeting – See Minutes**