

EPWELL PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF A PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON MONDAY 14TH MARCH 2022
IN EPWELL VILLAGE HALL AT 8PM

Councillors Present

Gavin Lloyd Thomas (Chair), Chris Hurst, Nicola Rudge, Norman White, Paul Neal

All members of the Parish Council would like to send their condolences to the family of Chris Woodcock who passed away recently. Chris was a much loved member of the village community and has been actively involved with many village organisations over the years. His recent legacy being the editor of the Epwell Echo and his stewardship of the fabulous and much enjoyed Epwell fun day last September. He will be missed by all his many friends in the village.

22/13. To receive apologies for absence

Christine Coles (Parish Clerk) isolating

22/14. To receive Declarations of Interest under the Council's Code of Conduct relating to business on the agenda

Nil

22/15. To approve the minutes of the meeting of 13th January 2022

The minutes were approved and signed.

22/16. Public participation session

Nil

22/17. To note any matters arising from the minutes not included on this agenda for report only

Nil

22/18. To discuss the Queens Platinum Jubilee Celebrations in June 2022

A group of volunteers have begun to meet in the village hall to discuss the arrangements for the celebrations over the long bank holiday, Thursday 2nd June-Sunday 5th June.

Anyone interested in volunteering to plan, execute, and help run events please contact Nicola Rudge at: nicola.rudge@icloud.com

Epwell will receive a grant of £200 from Cherwell District Council to assist with expenses.

Action: The Chairman will make the grant application.

22/19. To discuss the '20mph initiative'

Oxfordshire County Council is changing its approach and acceptance of 20mph restrictions which will enable a much greater coverage across Oxfordshire. The changes must be approved by the Parish Council and supported by the local County Councillor. The decision on who will cover the cost, has still to be disseminated to Parish Councils.

It is EPC intention to apply for a 20 mph limit within the village.

The proposal to apply for 20mph limits was unanimously approved by EPC.

Action: The Chair will seek the support of George Reynolds (OCC member) and make the necessary application.

22/20. To receive an update on the Parish Council elections in May.

Residents of Epwell Parish or worker whose principal place of work is within the parish (minimum 12 months) may run for election to the Parish Council. All those wishing to run including those incumbent councillors must:

Complete the necessary Nomination Documents and hand deliver them to Cherwell District Council at Bodicote House between 10am Tuesday 29th March and 5pm Tuesday 5th April 2022. To avoid waiting an appointment is recommended.

All details can be found on the CDC website www.cherwell.gov.uk. The election is 5th May 2022

22/21. To discuss the Annual Parish Meeting on 5th April 2022 at 8pm

Due to COVID a parish meeting has not been convened for 2 years. This meeting is an opportunity for village organisations to have a public forum to highlight their activities over the last 2 years and their plans for the future. In addition, all residents may attend and contribute to the agenda. Could individuals please notify Christine Coles, Clerk to EPC epwell.pparishclerk@epwell.com of items they wish to be included on the Agenda. Village organisations will have their participation included automatically on the agenda. The meeting will be chaired by Gavin Lloyd Thomas(Chair EPC)

22/22. To discuss a village response to the Ukrainian crisis

Understandably this is a very emotive subject. The use of the village hall to house Ukrainian refugees has been raised by two residents. The public liability, security, welfare of young persons, health and hygiene to name just a few, makes this option untenable for a small community like Epwell additionally:

“Parish and town councils are, by legislation, limited as to what they can spend public money on. Sec 137 (3) Local Government Act 1972 specifically constrains councils to expenditure in the United Kingdom”.

As individuals you may wish to register at www.gov.uk/homes-for-ukraine.

If a Ukrainian family does come to live with a family in the village. We would urge all residents to make them welcome.

Charities have made it clear that donating cash is the most efficient and effective way to distribute emergency aid. “It is tempting for people to want to make donations of goods that seem more personal, but time is of the essence and charities can get money transferred to local Ukrainian banks within minutes”. The cost of shipping donations is also prohibitive for many charities. It follows that fundraising events only delay the very real need for immediate cash donations.

Action: In these tragic circumstances individual action by residents will be more effective than a EPC response.

22/23. To discuss footpath maintenance.

The stile on Rectory Farm drive has been repaired. The muddy slope at the start of the footpath on Back lane leading to Mary Dale gate is very treacherous, especially when wet. Options to make this more accessible were discussed. Our first response will be to contact the Oxfordshire County Council Countryside Access officer who is responsible for footpaths, to see if they are prepared to carry out the necessary maintenance.

Action: Cllr Rudge will contact OCC.

22/24. To discuss the placement and maintenance of village benches.

A bench in memory of Oliver Boyles has been purchased and will be placed in the playing fields where Oliver loved to play. The bench in the Square has been sent for maintenance and will return in due course. (A temporary bench will be installed).

22/25. Financial Report

To receive the cashbook and bank reconciliation

Salary to Parish Clerk/HMRC (hours)

£27.90 To Parish Clerk (mileage)

£150.00 to OALC (membership)

Action: Payments Approved

22/26. To receive an update on planning.

The Chandler Arms continues to refurbish prior to reopening. A new bathroom and new windows will be installed

22/27. To receive the following correspondence

Woodland Creation Proposal, Radway Riding Stables.

This is an initiative funded in part by the Forestry Commission. It covers 1 hectare of native broadleaf woodland to be planted on a field which is currently grassland. It will extend an existing pocket of woodland. (Grid reference SP347415). The field is opposite the entrance to Radway Riding Stables, on the Tysoe side of Sugarswell lane, on the far side of Orchard Hill.

No Action Required: for information only.

22/28. To receive Councillors Reports

1. The EPC will resume responsibility for the maintenance of the overflow graveyard. Our thanks to the Epwell Trust for its stewardship.

Action. Chair to write to the trust to express EPC gratitude of its stewardship.

2. To assist with monitoring and repair of roads, OCC Highways has created a volunteer post to enhance the reporting methods used to assess highway damage. The volunteer acts as the eyes and ears for the Highways officer. They can raise work orders for certain repairs (potholes and kerbing). Epwell will require only one volunteer. Chris Hurst has volunteered to take up this important role.

Action: Chair or Clerk to arrange training for the volunteer.

3. The fence on the southern boundary of the playground will be repaired prior to planting a native hedgerow

Action: A working party to be sought to carry out the repairs.

4. A group of Epwell residents interested in biodiversity, wildlife habitats and wildflower planting visited Tysoe to see what the 'Wildlife Friendly Parish' initiative has accomplished. They were seeking inspiration and knowledge to help establish similar biodiversity in Epwell.

Action: Trust for Oxfordshire Environment (TOE) has grants available for such schemes. TOE awards grants on a quarterly basis.

5. Defibrillator Battery and Pads replaced.

Action: Check annually. The previous battery lasted 8 years. Pads expire September 2024

22/29. Date and Time of Next Meeting

The Annual village meeting 5th April 2022 8pm Village Hall

The Annual meeting of the Council

To be held between 9th -22nd May
DATE. TBC.

Meeting Closed 9:18pm

Minutes completed by Gavin Lloyd-Thomas
Chair EPC