

**EPWELL PARISH COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES OF A PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**  
**HELD ON MONDAY 13<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2023**  
**IN EPWELL VILLAGE HALL AT 8PM**

Councillors Present

Gavin Lloyd-Thomas (Chairperson), Peter Gibson, Matthew Platt, Nicola Rudge and Norman White

Christine Coles (Parish Clerk) and one villager

**23/72. To receive apologies for absence**

No apologies were received.

**23/73. To receive Declarations of Interest under the Council's Code of Conduct relating to business on the agenda**

No interests were declared.

**23/74. To approve the minutes of the meeting of 11<sup>th</sup> September 2023**

The minutes were approved and signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

**23/75. Public participation session**

Defibrillator training was discussed. James Clarke in Hook Norton normally helps. The Chair will make contact and discuss for the New Year.

The Tommy Silent Soldier was discussed. It was brought by the community but is stored at the Church. It was agreed it could be stored in the village hall.

**23/76. To note any matters arising from the minutes not included on this agenda**

Chris Hurst has been removed from the EVA WhatsApp group. With the creation of the Epwell Exchange WhatsApp group it is hoped that all requests for assistance from residents can be accommodated.

A note will be put in the next Echo asking land/property owners to maintain their boundary hedges and keep footpaths clear.

The Parish Clerk to ask OCC if there is funding available to purchase speed awareness gates at the village entry points.

**23/77. To approve and sign the changes to Schedule 1 of the S101 Grass cutting agreement**

An amendment to Schedule 1 has been received. In February 2023 OCC adopted a Highway Verge and Vegetation maintenance policy. As a result, Schedule 1 was reviewed and amended in line with that policy. It was agreed to accept the amendment as it enhances biodiversity and undertakes a nature led and risk based approach to verge maintenance.

*Action: The Parish Clerk to sign the amended document.*

**23/78. To discuss the repair of the access road to the playing field**

It was agreed to cut the hedge back and clear weeds and brambles. The hard surface which allows access to the playing field is adequate. The loose gravel will be swept away.

**23/79. To discuss the future of the Epwell Echo and give thanks to Harriet Brooks**

Thanks was given to Harriet Brooks who will give up her editorship of the Echo in March. There are new advertisers and the finances are good. The Parish Council will give their annual donation in January. Councillors hope to see the Echo continue in the present format, six times a year. A new editorial team will need to be found. It was agreed to hold a meeting at the end of November to discuss Village Comms such as the Future of the Echo and more help with the website.

*Action: Cllr Rudge to look at a meeting date and invite attendees.  
(A meeting was held on 27<sup>th</sup> November)*

**23/80. To ensure that Voneus and Thames Water make good any damage they may cause to the roads and verges following their work**

Voneus has set aside a budget to repair roads and verges that have been damaged whilst doing their work. As a gesture of good will other repairs to potholes and road surfaces will be carried out. They will wait until all work is finished and visit the village at the end of November.

*Action: The Chair will meet with Mark Burgess and discuss the repairs.*

There is possibly a leaking pipe under the village green.

*Action: Whilst in the village, Thames water will be asked to investigate.*

**23/81. The result of the Chairmans discussion with OCC about the placement of the 20mph repeater signs**

OCC advised the position of the repeater signs cannot be changed. It is a legal requirement that drivers must be made aware of the speed limit. The Chair noted concern about the sign by the tree at the bottom of the village. Children climb the tree and it could be dangerous if they fell on the sign. OCC have looked at the concern and have dismissed it, saying there is no risk. The Chair replied this was unacceptable.

*Action: Communication is ongoing.*

**23/82. To discuss the best way to review the 2014 Community Plan**

The Community Plan was originally set up to help the Parish Council identify residents wishes and concerns. A survey was distributed and the results included in the plan. Issues raised at the time included speeding, housing and amenities. The plan is on the website.

*Action: Councillors to read the plan and it will be an agenda item in January. A full review of the plan will identify the needs of the village into the future.*

**23/83. To discuss a parking space in the Square for a resident with mobility difficulties**

This was an issue whilst Voneus had road closures in place. That has finished now and the problem has been resolved.

**23/84. To thank Andrew McHugh for purchasing a new Union flag**

Thanks was given to Andrew McHugh who has purchased a new Union flag. The Chair has recently been up the Church Tower and in his opinion it is becoming dangerous.

*Action: The Chair to liaise with the PCC about replacing the flagpole to make it more accessible.*

**23/85. To discuss the clearing of the grips**

This work cannot be done manually. It was agreed to spend up to £1000.00 on clearing the grips.

*Action: Cllr Platt to speak to a villager who has the correct equipment.*

**23/86. Financial Report**

*To receive the cashbook and bank reconciliation*

The current bank balance in the HSBC account is £13,032.52.

The current bank balance in the Lloyds account is £1951.98

*The following payments were approved under statutory powers:-*

£36.00 to Geosphere Ltd (digital mapping)

£344.40 to Nigel Prickett (grass cutting)

£225.60 to Nigel Prickett (grass cutting)

£498.61 To Parish Clerk (hours)

£200.77 to CDC (dog bin emptying)

£124.60 to HMRC

£39.06 to Parish Clerk (mileage)

£32.89 to Parish Clerk (expenses)

*To agree a donation to purchase a wreath for the RBL*

It was agreed to give a donation of £50.00.

*To resolve the banking issues with HSBC*

HSBC are not actioning any letters that have been sent to transfer money into the new Lloyds account. It was agreed to write a cheque transferring most of the money from the HSBC account to the Lloyds account.

**23/87. To receive an update on planning**

No new applications had been received.

**23/88. To receive Councillors Reports**

Because of the lack of mobile phone signal in the Square, The Village Hall committee will be asked if access to the VH Wi-Fi can be made publicly available. This will allow phone calls to be made when emergency access to the defibrillator is required.

*Action: Cllr Rudge to liaise with the VH Committee.*

**23/89. To note date and time of next meeting**

Monday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at 8pm

Meeting Closed 9.15pm.