

**EPWELL PARISH COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES OF A PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**  
**HELD ON FRIDAY 26<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2024**  
**IN EPWELL VILLAGE HALL AT 8PM**

Councillors Present

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

Christine Coles (Parish Clerk)

**24/06. To receive apologies for absence**

Cllr Platt (personal)

**24/07. To receive Declarations of Interest under the Council's Code of Conduct relating to business on the agenda**

No interests were declared.

**24/08. To approve the minutes of the meeting of 13<sup>th</sup> November 2023**

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

**24/09. Public participation session**

There were no members of the public at the meeting.

**24/10. To note any matters arising from the minutes not included on this agenda**

Funding for village gates – There is no funding available from CDC or OCC

Epwell Echo – A meeting with the existing editorial and admin team was held to discuss the future of the Echo.

*Subsequently a new editorial team has been found and the Echos future looks assured for the short and medium term.*

Roads – Funding from Voneus has been secured for some limited road maintenance. Areas of particular concern have been identified for repair. This includes the ford.

Flagpole - Access up the church tower is dangerous and slippery. The EPC has received a grant of £2000 from our District councillors discretionary fund for flagpole maintenance. At present the Parish Council are reluctant to manage the flagpole in its current condition.

*Action: Cllr Rudge to attend the next PCC meeting to discuss this matter further.*

**24/11. To discuss the 2014 Community Plan**

After 10 years a review of the community plan was considered necessary. A lot has happened in Epwell since the 2014 Community Plan was published.

THE VILLAGE HALL The Village hall committee is very active. Grants have been secured, funds raised and many improvements made including a new kitchen, heating system, WiFi and entertainment system.

ROADS. Excessive speed, particularly on Sibford Road was a concern to many residents in 2014. The implementation of a 20mph speed limit is now complete.

The condition of the roads remains poor. The EPC continues to lobby OCC for more than superficial repairs. Pre pandemic it looked as if major capital investment was planned for some of our most dilapidated stretches of road. Unfortunately this has been rescinded. A resident has been appointed and trained by OCC highways to report and mark potholes for repairs. This may prove to be effective in speeding up repairs. Villagers are to continue to report potholes on [Fix My Street.com](http://Fix My Street.com)

BROADBAND There was no broadband in the village in 2014. Most households now have access to fast fibre. The digital switchover in 2025 will make the provision of WiFi to all households a necessity. More information will be circulated to residents in due course.

PLANNING. In 2014 most residents agreed that a small number of new housing would be acceptable. EPC has taken this into account when considering any planning decisions. Planning applications are dealt in a consistent manner, applying material considerations and each application is judged on its own merit.

DOG FOULING was an issue in 2014. Dog bins are now in place in three locations. CDC empties the bins on a regular basis. Fouling is still a problem but on a much reduced scale. A lot of visitors do come to the village with dogs and perhaps are less conscientious than residents.

LITTER. is not a huge problem. The Sibford Scout group have conducted a litter pick on a number of occasions in the last few years.

MAINTAINING WILDLIFE HABITAT Extensive bulb planting has taken place on the verges throughout the village. Tubs and planters are maintained by volunteers.

SNOW CLEARANCE – The Trust has invested in a salt spreader to use in adverse weather.

THE BUS SERVICE that served the village in 2014 has been discontinued.

It was agreed an updated plan should be developed. A lot of work is involved and volunteers will be required to help format a questionnaire and lead the research before a new plan can be published. An exact timeline to be discussed further.

**24/12. To receive an update on the clearing of the grips**

Those grips deemed essential should be identified and priority given to their continued maintenance. The clearing of grips by volunteers has proven untenable most years. Paying for their clearance may prove necessary.

*Action: The Parish Clerk to ask OCC Highways who is responsible for clearing grips and if any funding is available.*

**24/13. Financial Report**

*To receive the cashbook and bank reconciliation*

The current bank balance in the HSBC account is £13,007.52.

The current bank balance in the Lloyds account is £1145.21

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

£20.00 to Hook Norton Brewery (rent for playing field)

**To set the precept for 2024/25**

Our fixed costs have continued to increase in line with inflation in 2023. It is anticipated that costs will continue to increase in the year 2024/25. It was agreed to increase the precept by 5% and set it at £6048.00.

*Action: The Parish Clerk to notify CDC.*

*To add the Parish Clerk to the HSBC mandate and another Councillor to the Lloyds account.*

It was agreed to add the Parish Clerk, Christine Coles to the HSBC mandate. The following resolution was proposed.

‘The Bank is authorized to act on the following agreements/instructions entered into or given by those persons specified by the Organisation for giving those instructions’. Proposed by The Chair, seconded by Cllr Rudge and all voted in favour.

It was agreed to add Cllr Platt to the Lloyds account.

**24/14. To receive an update on planning**

No new applications had been received.

**24/15. To receive Councillors Reports**

The pavement outside Dovedell, Back Lane is subsiding. There is a lot of building work going on. Once work is complete it is hoped that any damage is made good.

Cllr Rudge to look at grants to possibly change the village hall boundary from a fence to a hedge.

The overflow churchyard was discussed. The trust has suggested taking on the responsibility for its maintenance. EPC accepted this kind offer.

**24/16. To note meeting dates for 2024**

11<sup>th</sup> March, 16<sup>th</sup> May, 8<sup>th</sup> July, 16<sup>th</sup> September, 11<sup>th</sup> November.

Meeting Closed 9.15pm.