

## Easton Parish Council

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### Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting for Easton held on Monday, 12 April 2021 at 7.00pm via Zoom

#### Present:

Cllr P Miliken, Chairman Easton Parish Council - presiding  
M Cossey                      D Lewis                      S Renders                      B Moye                      M Blathwayt  
J Barnard                      D Martin                      M Dewsbury                      C Chisolm                      R Newman  
PC S Barnard                      R Chapman                      M Cossey                      G Lopes

#### **1. Chairman's Welcome**

The Chairman welcomed all those in attendance and those watching on "You Tube".

#### **2. Minutes of the Annual Parish meeting held on 1 April 2019**

**RESOLVED** unanimously to approve the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 1 April 2019.

#### **3. Chairman of Easton Parish Council - Annual Parish Council Report**

The Chairman of Easton Parish Council read the following Annual Report –

*Thank you for joining us for our annual Parish meeting, It is a solemn time with the passing of the His Royal Highness The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh. Over the years I met him on several occasions but the time I remember most is when I was attending a Gold award ceremony, he filled the room with laughter when he spoke with my students. He had a way of putting people at ease. His focus was on their achievement, his devotion to his service to our Queen and our country will be sorely missed.*

*I would ask for one minute of silence to mark the passing of His Royal Highness The Prince Philip Duke of Edinburgh.*

*The last year has been a difficult one and it is likely we may have lost family members, close friends or someone we know to the pandemic. This time last year our community rallied together supporting those in need, the light is now at the end of the tunnel as we move forward.*

*With this in mind, I want to cover several topic areas of what has been achieved and the direction the Parish Council I hope will head in the future.*

*So let us look at what has been achieved in the last five years,*

*We have a Neighbourhood Plan to help shape and focus development in our community.*

*SNC will be paying for the building of the new village hall with a contribution from us. I have been working with Persimmon Homes and SNC to deliver the Hall finished within the next 2 years subject to planning approval by Christmas 2020 and completion of the land transfer. This is an ambitious target but it is achievable if there is a will*

*We have a safe crossing point at the Church, funding for extra trees in the churchyard.*

*We have a trod along Church Lane and an extended 30 mph zone along the road.*

*We installed a new covered bus stop on Dereham Road.*

*We sold land on Dereham Road which will bring in over one million pounds for our community.*

*We have worked with Highways England to secure a safe crossing of the A47, its design will reconnect our community while stopping over 4800 cars a day blighting the lives of the residents of Lower Easton.*

*We have installed 3 defibrillators and provided guidance to the community on how to use them.*

*We are installing bollards to stop verge parking close to the school.*

*We completed phase 1 of redeveloping the Jubilee Playing Field and will have this vital amenity completed before the start of the summer holidays.*

*We could never stop the major development of Easton, this was decided before our time in office but what we have done is help shape its future design and layout. It will even have garages that you can park a car in, I know a novel concept in many new homes.*

*We removed the use of unsafe shared roads from this development and proved that Developers, District and County Council will listen to Parish Councils.*

*There are many more examples of what has been achieved but time is limited so the future.*

*As of May, I will be standing down as chair of the parish council and I will leave it to others to take this village forward. I have learnt that you can only please 50% of the residents 50% of the time.*

*What is clear, is that my work on the Council these past years has been guided by my over-arching principle of helping as many in the community, for as much of the time as has been possible, whilst disabled and a wheelchair user with a life-limiting medical condition.*

*There have been hugely disappointing examples recently, of attacks made against myself and staff, by parishioners seemingly motivated by personal agendas, and putting their self-interests rather than others first.*

*For the Council, it must always be "the Village first". Easton has a Neighbourhood Plan which puts the Village first because that's what people wanted so badly and which 96% of the village supported when it was adopted in 2017.*

*The Parish Council will make no apologies for defending Easton against anyone - individuals, corporates, or agencies who by their words and actions think they can ignore the community they allude to support or be a part of.*

*It is now up to others to put the work in, to move the village forward, there are vacancies on the Parish Council but please only apply if you are willing to put the time into the role. The role of parish councillor in Easton is a demanding one, it is not just to get around a table once a month. This is a very busy parish with huge changes taking place.*

*For the future, the village needs to replace the bus shelter next to the Orbit development, repaint the bus shelter by the B&B. Design traffic calming measures for Dereham Road and Marlingford Road. Work with Persimmons to deliver phase 2 to 4 of the master plan for Easton under EAS1. Ensure delivery of the new village hall, work with Orbit to deliver its development. The list is extensive but if the work is put in the village will come through this change over the next 10 years in line with the vision that was created within the Easton Neighbourhood plan.*

*One of my last acts as Chairman is to announce that I will be requesting the Parish Council to set up the Easton Covid Recovery Fund. This fund will be designed to help village organisations that directly support the community with grants to get back up and running. I will be asking for £10,000 to be set aside for this fund. I envisage that we will be offering grants of amounts from £50 up to £2,500 on a match funding basis with grants under £200 not requiring match funding. I will be looking that funding*

*applications can be made from the 1 June 2021 with grant applications considered in the 1 week of August and the first week of November. This is going to require a lot of work in the meantime to set it up so if anyone in the community has experience in this area and wants to help please get in touch. Full details of the Easton Covid Recovery Fund will be made available on the Parish Council website as soon as we can.*

*I am sad to announce that for personal reasons Francis is stepping down as our parish clerk to take a sabbatical but will remain as the parishes Responsible Financial Officer with immediate effect.*

*I am however pleased to advise that Gina Lopes will be taking over the role of Parish Clerk and Proper Officer of the Council. Gina is a very experienced professional who will cover the period Francis is on sabbatical. Gina is contracted to provide 15 hours of support per week to the parish council.*

*The contact number and email address will remain the same however we will be looking to change the address for written correspondence shortly. Gina will be available Monday to Friday from 9 am until midday.*

### **One Minute's Silence was held to reflect on the sad passing of HRH The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh**

#### **4. District and County Council reports**

Cllr M Dewsbury, Norfolk County Council: -

Cllr Dewsbury presented the following Annual report:-

*Last year I wrote my annual report in April and finished it by saying 'dealing with the Coronavirus has completely disrupted the council's work and budget plans. We have responded to current needs and, like everyone else, we have no idea how long this will continue or when we will be able to get back on track.'*

*I don't think any of us imagined that we would not be emerging from this for a full year.*

*We will be balancing the budget this year because the Government has assisted with the financial demands of the pandemic but it has been a very different and difficult year.*

*For the last year staff have been working from home and many who had face to face roles, which had to cease, have been helping our other services, or the NHS with whatever needed to be done to help local people and businesses. They have delivered medicines and groceries, helped with testing and vaccinations and answered phone calls for assistance.*

*The Fire Service has driven ambulances, taught others to drive ambulances and set up and run a new mortuary when there were not sufficient to cope.*

*Museums, libraries, Records Office were closed but they set up and ran virtual visits, activities, etc to assist with the wellbeing of children and adults sitting at home.*

*Adult Learning put their courses on line and developed many new ones, to help people who had lost their jobs develop new skills and acquire qualifications as well as provide activities to support peoples' mental health and wellbeing.*

*The council funded and distributed 5,000 laptops and tablets for children who needed them to do school work at home and art packs were also supplied to keep them occupied and interested. Libraries set up a phone line to support families who were struggling with home learning and how to use the new digital devices.*

*Customer Services has assisted with the test and tracing to warn people who have unknowingly been in contact with people with COVID and we believe this service will need to continue for at least another year.*

*The council's usual work continued maintaining roads, supporting vulnerable adults and children and responding to emergencies such as the flooding during the winter. The Norfolk Strategic Flooding Alliance has been set up to identify the causes of some of the flooding and help rectify them.*

*Libraries are about to open again. Recently they have assisted people to complete the Census online and will be stocking the lateral flow tests in libraries and on mobile libraries when they start coming round again.*

*A new grant scheme called 'Go Digital' was launched in December to enable micro, small and medium sized businesses to make better use of digital technology by providing funding and one to one support and advice to help support the local economy.*

*Work has begun on two new recycling centres one to the north and one to the south of Norwich and some major road schemes are about to start in Gt Yarmouth, Downham Market and Stalham. The Long Stratton bypass has also been agreed.*

*The Member's Highways grant of £6,000 will be increased by £4,000 this year and extended to include environmental projects. The council has also agreed to plant one million trees over the next five years to reduce our environmental impact and meet our target of zero carbon by 2030. Parishes are asked to help identify areas where trees are required.*

*This is just a brief overview of some of the work of the council. I am always around to answer questions or help with any problems that arise and I endeavour to attend all Parish Council meetings but occasionally I have two or more meetings on one evening and cannot attend everything. The Parish clerks know they can contact me anytime and I am happy to help.*

## **5. Reports from local clubs, groups and organisations**

The following verbal reports were received:-

### **Mr Barnard, Easton Gym**

The Gym had re-opened today

- Grant assistance had been received which helped back in August
- Gym classes have been running online
- There are changes ahead
- Currently 600 x members and 7 x staff
- Improvements made to car park and internally
- Welcomed the recovery grants
- Assisting with SEND School in Easton and also discussing with Long Stratton School

### **PC Barnard, Norfolk Constabulary**

- Crime statistics were reported
- 3 months crime figures were low and good news as many at 0
- Easton is a very safe place to live

### **Ms Newman & Mary Blathwayt, Easton Academy**

- School has remained open for children of key workers and SEN
- Some teaching is live and some online
- Regular telephone calls to families

- There have been some cases of Covid requiring some class bubble to be sent home but overall has worked well
- Governors were concerned about loss of education and their support has been amazing
- No signs of breakdown in good behaviour
- Everyone was pleased to return to school
- A great debt was owed to all staff and even those shielding have worked online

#### **Mary Blathwayt, Women's Institute**

- The group has not been able to run for a year
- Unsure when they can meet but keeping in touch by telephone, post, etc
- Subs have been reduced but they have had to fund additional costs for printing, etc
- There has been a WI since the beginning of the War and they want to continue
- Hoping funding request will help

#### **Mr Cossey, Football Club**

- Highlighted current games and results
- Currently 7 x teams, 4 x adult, 3 x youth
- South Norfolk Team invite
- They are hopeful for the next season
- Will be grateful for new funds available

#### **Clare Chisholm**

Not a good year for school fundraising but have had some successful fund raisers

- Tried to focus on "smiles" and fun events
- Joined the School Lottery which brings in £1,000 p/a
- Signed up for other online funding, Smile, etc
- Provided free arts & crafts, free virtual Valentine's disco, etc
- The children made cards for parents to buy
- There was a virtual pantomime
- A quantity of new books have been purchased
- They are not committing to any large events but have plans for a non-uniform day, egg decorating and family photo-shoot, etc
- Next year will consider more traditional events
- Thanks were expressed to the Parish Council for their support

#### **Mrs Cossey, Bowls Club**

- No games held because of Covid
- The ground still had to be maintained
- Were in 3 x leagues but now only in 2 as 1 has dropped out because of the current regulations
- Should start in May
- The Club is struggling
- Currently 25 x members

### **Roly Chapman, Easton Village Hall**

- Received a grant in the first Lockdown of £10,000 which was paid into the Village Hall account
- Whilst Hall has been closed they have redecorated and replaced the chairs
- Hoping to re-open in June
- A meeting will be called when possible for all to meet and then advise when hirers can come back
- Cleaning in between hirers is a problem and will be extra costs, etc
- Will be open for the Elections and was recently used for Covid testing

### **Mr Martin, Condimentum Ltd**

- It was a challenging first trading year, had to build a factory and deal with Covid
- Has gone well and proud of what they have built, local organisations welcome to visit
- Processing both mustard and mint sauce
- Staff team are fantastic and local people
- Unilever have been very supportive and are delighted with progress
- Community engagement is welcomed
- Working with UEA business students
- Signed a 10 year contract and they are building for the future, they want to become a global supplier

The Chairman thanked everyone for their reports

### **6. Parishioners' questions and comments**

None received

The meeting closed at 7.50pm