

**PARISH
COUNCIL CHAIRMAN'S
REPORT**

Welcome Readers old and new!

I took over as Chairman at the Annual General Meeting last year from Monica Eyre who had led the Council for three

years. I was on the point of retiring from the Village shop so hoped if the sale went through I would then have more time to devote to the Parish Council work. I would like to thank Monica for all the time and effort she put in as Chairman.

We have had a busy time on the Council, which has been made easier by our very competent clerk, Jo-Anne Rabbitts. Thank you Jo-Anne for all your hard work.

Welcome to the many new residents who have moved into the village over the past year, I hope you have settled in and are enjoying living in East Garston.

The village is looking lovely at present with the river flowing (almost too well) and the spring flowers decorating banks and gardens. Thank you to the people who have planted bulbs and care for the roadsides and river bank, especially David Taylor who looks after the Downlands area and Martyn Donno who not only keeps the War Memorial tidy but also cuts the grass in the centre of the village. (He has also donned his waders and cleared fallen trees from the river.) Martyn has asked me to mention the problem of dogs fouling the grass verges – not much fun when you are strimming!! Please clear up behind your dogs; a plastic bag in your pocket should be an essential requirement for dog walking. The Parish Council is investigating the cost of installing some bins in the village for depositing dog pooh.

www.east-garston.com, for those of you who have access to the Internet, should be visited on a regular basis as Ken Tarbox has made this site the envy of all our neighbouring parishes. He updates the site almost daily and his photos and write-ups of various activities that happen in the village are second to none. It is hoped to run the website at the Annual Parish Meeting so those of you who do not have access at home can come along and see what it is all about. THANKS KEN. Also at the APM will be Graham Jones, Gordon Lundy and Richard Benyon as well as representatives from Thames Water talking about the problems that are being experienced with surface water entering the sewers.

Local Council Elections will be held on Thursday 3rd May. Voting will take place in the village hall – get down there and make a difference.

Problems? Comments? Suggestions to make this village a better place in which to live? Contact me on 648370, or any of the Councillors.

Chris Tonge

**EAST
GARSTON
NEWSLETTER
APRIL 2007**

***DON'T FORGET -
EAST GARSTON ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
Tuesday 17th April at 7.30pm
IN THE VILLAGE HALL.***

CHURCH REPORT

Dear Friends,

It has been a busy and eventful year since the Annual Parish Meeting a year ago. Our aim has been to make the Church relevant to 21st century life and for it to be at the centre of the village community, rather than on the margins - a place that people have a need for and enjoy coming to.

We have had some changes in our team following four resignations and I am extremely pleased to welcome Emma Jones and Elved Phillips to the Parochial Church Council. Our Electoral Roll has doubled to 42 people and a sizeable group attended our Annual Parochial Church Meeting last week - another healthy sign. We have enjoyed bigger congregations, especially at Festivals and on several occasions the church has been full to capacity.

The interest and support of parishioners has been evident in the wide range of people now involved in the running of the church: the Bell Ringing Band goes from strength to strength – we so much appreciate their contribution not only at East Garston, but also at Lambourn. The children of the parish are always eager to help. This is most heartening as they represent the future lifeblood of the church.

We owe much to our organists Stephen Holmes and Susan Holmes (who also plays for our children's services and trains and directs the newly formed children's choir) and the Lambourn Church choir. We also appreciate the work of the cleaning team under the guidance of Diana Smith, the flower arranging group – including the children's group, the help from Ann Phillips with the new altar frontal and the cravats for the children's choir and our team of readers in church on Sundays and Festivals, many of whom are new this year.

We are indebted to Ken Tarbox and the Parish Council, for Ken's magnificent coverage of our Festivals and events on the web site and for the interest and support in many different ways that Ken and Maureen have shown to us this year. As we all know the East Garston web site is a precious asset, of which many other villages would love to have the equivalent.

The highlights of the year have been the Gift Weekend – “something for everybody”, Harvest Festival, our Patronal Festival followed by a magnificent lunch in the church, cooked by Kevin Fiske and Di Cox, our Remembrance Service at the War Memorial attended by 65 people, the Candlelight Carol Service, the Christingle with its re-enactment of the creation of The Children's Society, the Mothering Sunday Service three weeks ago and Palm Sunday with Dingle the donkey kindly lent to us by Liz Brunskill of Lambourn.

Despite all the efforts of many parishioners, we are heavily dependent on donations and sponsorship, to keep the church running. It costs us £11,000 per year even before we open the doors, so we need to work hard at this in the year ahead. We would like to thank all those who have so generously made donations or sponsored us this year – without you things would be considerably more difficult. The maintenance of a building dating back to the 12th century is a costly business, so we are extremely grateful for any help that people can give.

We have fresh plans for the year ahead, which we will talk to you about in our next newsletter due shortly, but in the meantime, my churchwarden and I would like to express our heartfelt thanks for all your interest and support. Success in this last year has been due to a huge team effort by the whole parish. **Well done to you all.**

With every blessing

Reverend Tony Cumberlidge

EAST GARSTON VILLAGE HALL AND SOCIAL CLUB

January 2007 was to witness the launch of "East Garston Village Hall Appeal", although long awaited it was essential the Trustees first addressed serious water damage the heavy rains of last October brought to the games room and part of the village hall. The support given by East Garston Amenities and the Parish Council both in terms of financial and administrative assistance gave the Management Committee and the Trustees the ability to act quickly and thus prevent further damage.

All this essential work was completed by the end of last year, leaving the Trustees free to launch the appeal in January. Its main purpose was to raise sufficient funds for the Trustees to enlarge and completely refurbish the hall's kitchen, then turn their thoughts to improvements of the disabled toilets and redecorate the interior and exterior of the hall. This appeal was to prove one of the most successful ever, meeting all our expectations in a remarkably short time.

By the end of February they successfully raised over £6000 by attracting generous contributions from our Parish Council, Millennium 2000 Committee (proceeds from the sale of the book "East Garston Past and Present") and of course East Garston Parishioners. This was more than sufficient to achieve a match funded grant from the Vibrant Village Project sponsored jointly by West Berkshire Council and the New Greenham Common Trust. The impact of these funds became more significant through the generosity of Tony Hawkins and Chris Wilder who gave their time so freely to carry out the necessary alterations and install the kitchen. Dave Knight giving his time redecorating the Hall's vestibule further enhanced this work.

Work on the kitchen is now entering its final stages and is due for completion by the end of the month; it will then offer users a spacious and clean environment in which to work.

The Trustees and Management Committee have long held the view that these improvements will encourage the Hall's greater use; it will become less dependant on outside resources and move its finances in the direction of self-sufficiency. They wish to acknowledge this achievement and offer their grateful thanks to the Millennium 2000 Committee and East Garston Parish Council for their generous contributions, East Garston Amenities who have over several years supported the Village Hall and the many parishioners who have given their time and financial support. They wish also to convey their thanks to West Berkshire Council and the New Greenham Common Trust for their invaluable help and guidance.

Martyn Donno
East Garston Village Hall Trustee.

If you need to book the Village Hall for any function, big or small, call Wendy on 01488 649691 or if you are out walking of a weekend – pop in and have a drink and a chat!

VALLEY FILM SOCIETY

The Valley Film Society is happy to report a successful Season Two. Membership has grown and we have many regular attendees from Eastbury, Great Shefford, Hungerford and Newbury – more so than from East Garston funnily enough. It's a friendly crowd and we're always happy to see new faces. Thanks to the support of the Social Club the bar is open on film nights allowing people to mingle before the film (where else can you watch a movie on the big screen with a pint in your hand?!) And from the number of calls we get from people asking advice, it seems we have inspired several other local villages to start their own film societies.

The committee works hard scheduling each season. We aim to offer a wide selection of genres and include black and white films and foreign films as well as recent releases that are 'good films' rather than blockbusters. Members value the opportunity to see films that they wouldn't normally go to see on their own. Season Two's highlights have included *The Constant Gardener*, Korean film *Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter, Spring*, *Kinky Boots*, *Philadelphia Story* and Pedro Almodovar's *Mala Educacion*.

Last summer we applied for a grant from the Lottery Awards for All for new equipment for the hall. Our application was successful so we now have new audio-visual equipment – thank you John for providing storage - and raised seating that can also be set up as flat staging.

The last film of Season Two will be on Tuesday 1st May. Doors open at 7pm, the bar is open and screening starts at 7.30pm. Food can be ordered on the door to be delivered in the interval. May's film is *Serenity*, the cult Joss Whedon sci-fi flick that we've chosen to put our new sound system through its paces.

Season Three will start on Tuesday 3rd July as part of the HADCAF (Hungerford and District Community Arts Festival) with *De Battre de Mon Coeur S'est Arrete* (*The Beat My Heart Skipped*). This 2005 French film is a moving portrait of a man trying to choose between a life of crime or music.

Membership for Season Two was £24 with concession (unwaged) membership at £14 and guest price of £4 for an individual film. Prices for Season Three will be announced in the summer but are unlikely to vary much from Season Two.

If you would like to be on the Valley Film Society e-mailing list, please contact Penny Locke on (01488) 648534 or penny.locke@freeuk.com.

Penny Locke

VALLEY OVER 60s CLUB

The Valley Over 60's Club meets in Great Shefford Village Hall on the second Friday in the month with the exception of January and August. The meetings usually last about two hours during which time we enjoy illustrated talks, demonstrations, and sometimes Bingo when a speaker is unable to come!

Wickham WI always provide us with a delicious and substantial tea and excel themselves at Christmas with a splendid lunch with all the trimmings.

John O'Gaunt School continue to support us and invite us to their Christmas show.

We all enjoyed the outing to Basildon Park when the Pride and Prejudice costumes were being displayed.

Transport is provided and Audrey Boyle, 4 Rose Cottages, (648442) will be happy to supply further details.

VIEW FROM THE MEETING HOUSE

East Garston Quakers are hoping to stage an exhibition on Saturday and Sunday, the 2nd and 3rd of June 2007, in order to raise funds for the Macmillan Nurses. We are setting it around the theme of the beautiful Yew tree that grows in the garden of our small Quaker Meeting House. We also intend to produce a book about the Yew Tree's place in East Garston and about our exhibition in order to contribute to the history of the village.

Could you, your family and friends send us an item or creation around the theme of Yew trees? A postcard from your travels, thoughts, memories, associations, paintings, poems, photographs, bark rubbings, prints, weavings, mythology, songs, garden tips, uses, jokes – you will have more (and better) ideas! If you do send any items, we should be grateful if you would add your name and any written work separately. Our friend, Phoebe Fennell, will acknowledge the safe arrival of all artistic contributions. The address to use is Kilve Houser, 315 Andover Road. Newbury. RG20 0LN, telephone 01635 582755. It would help us if you could send a stamped addressed envelope with your item if you wish us to return your contribution.

We are also going to have an Open Day at the Meeting House for any children who would like to come and help us be creative and contribute to the project, if you would like to be involved with that too you will be most welcome. Further details of times and dates of this day will follow.

Audrey Boyle

EAST GARSTON CRICKET CLUB

Once again, it's the time of year when we look forward to the sound of leather on willow – yes, it's cricket season! With over 25 fixtures played on Thursday evenings and Sunday afternoons. We are always looking for new players – young or old. There will be an indoor net session at Hungerford Leisure Centre on Sunday 15th April from 10.00am to 12.00 noon. Outdoor nets start on Tuesday 17th April from 6.00 to 8.00pm, in the Millennium Field. Junior nets for 16's and under start on Friday 27th April from 6.00 to 8.00pm.

Anyone interested can just turn up or contact Mick Highnett on 01488 648858

Mick Highnett – Secretary EGCC

EAST GARSTON BELL RINGERS

Since the last newsletter, we sadly lost Doug Vellender, our former tower captain, after a long illness. Most East Garston ringers learned under his patient tuition, including several who have gone on to become very accomplished ringers, and he will be sadly missed by all of us. However, part of his legacy is having an active band of ringers in the village, and we have managed to ring for most services - in particular the special events such as Mother's Day and around Christmas and Easter - with some very nice ringing - not to mention the traditional ringing in of the New Year. Plus we had the very successful Open Weekend, welcoming many people into the tower to see the bells and ringers.

We continue both to help and be helped by other local towers, notably Lambourn, Brightwalton and Chaddleworth, and further afield Beenham, Bradfield and Hungerford, as well as enjoying the odd social occasion usually involving dinner and a pub! This year's annual Newbury Branch outing took place on 17th March, with some excellent weather to ring at towers in Langley, Stoke Poges, Beaconsfield and the Chalfonts - a very pleasant day out.

As always, anyone who is interested is welcome to come up on a Wednesday evening when we are ringing, either just to see what goes on or with a view to learning to ring and joining the band. Check first though on 648373 in case we are not ringing for some reason.

Mark Brock

