

The Annual Parish Meeting for East Garston was held in the Village Hall on Tuesday 19th April 2011 at 7.30 p.m.

MINUTES

1. Present:
Councillors: - Jonathan Rabbitts - Chairman, Chris Tonge, Brian Cowan, Monica Eyre and Alan Breadmore – Clerk
Guests: - Graham Jones, Gordon Lundie (District Councillors); Jaki Evans (Alzheimer's Society), Karen Davies (Lambourn Valley Countryside Project); The Reverend Tony Cumberlidge.
Parishioners: - 19
Apologies: Councillors: - Peter Smith: Christopher Vaughan, Joan Jefferies (Parishioners)
2. Chairman Jonathan Rabbitts opened the meeting by welcoming those present and outlining the agenda. He outlined the activities of the Parish Council for the year and offered thanks to all those parishioners who voluntarily gave their time and effort to maintaining the appearance and safety of the village and also to those who run the growing number of community groups. He also reminded footpath users of their responsibilities to clear dog fouling and restrain dogs near livestock. A discussion followed regarding safety of walkers in livestock fields. He then asked Chris Tonge to pay tribute to the contribution of Councillor Peter Smith during his term on the council. Peter will be standing down at the forthcoming Parish Council election.
3. The draft Summary Financial Report of the Parish Council was distributed and explained by the clerk. Normal operations were within budget and the Clerk explained that the financial report appeared once again to be distorted due to the expenditure of grants awarded in the previous FY. These have now worked their way out of the system but there would be an excess later in the year due to the completion of repayment of the loan that was used to purchase the Open Space. Councillors are currently considering how these funds would best be re applied to benefit the community. Suggestions are welcomed by councillors and should be addressed to the clerk.
4. Graham Jones reported on West Berkshire Councils activities. He concentrated on explaining how WBC is addressing the "cuts" demanded by national government. He emphasised that where funding cuts and closures were being made that, wherever possible, alternative funding arrangements were being put in place to support "self help" groups. He used examples in the areas of Youth Services and Community Care. He and Councillor Gordon Lundie then answered a series of questions from the floor mainly regarding the finances of WBC. He also answered questions regarding pot holes and promoted the WBC Customer Services "Streetcare" telephone number for reporting problems 01635 519080.
Chris Tonge thanked Graham Jones for his support of projects in East Garston.
5. Alan Breadmore described the Community Plan project to improve mobile phone reception. East Garston is now a Vodafone national trial site for new technology that enables improved mobile phone reception in rural communities. Initial installations are now in place in the Humphreys Lane and Back Street areas with coverage coming soon to The Queens Arms and Westfield Farm. It is planned that the village will have as full a coverage as possible by the summer. More details from Alan Breadmore - 01488 648851
6. Jaki Evans described the work of the Alzheimer's Society in the Lambourn Valley following the award of the £50,000 Greenham Gift in 2010. Activities, meetings and workshops to aid residents of the valley with dementia are being established throughout the district. More details from Jaki Evans 07889 604721.
7. Karen Davies described the work of the Farm and Wildlife Advisory Group in the Lambourn Valley including the River Lambourn Countryside Project and the RENEWAL community project. More information and offer to volunteer by contacting Karen Davies on 01189 3205335.
8. AOB: - None
9. The Chairman closed the meeting by thanking attendees and all of the speakers.

The Meeting closed at 9.00 p.m.