

East Garston Newsletter 2010

**DON'T FORGET -
EAST GARSTON ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
Tuesday 27th April at 7.30pm in the Village Hall**

Parish Council Chairman's Report

Welcome Readers old and new!

Another year has gone and all too quickly it seems. The Community Shop is celebrating its first year in business and you can now drive or walk round to it without getting your car dirty or having to wear wellies. What a difference a bit of tarmac makes, so no excuses now. Please use the shop or lose it!

The Parish Community Plan is now in its final stages and hopefully will soon have been approved by the powers that be. The plan has been designed to portray how parishioners would like to see the community evolve over the next few years. Although I personally see this as bureaucracy, I have to admit that Martyn Wright and his team have put a tremendous amount of time and energy into ensuring that East Garston now has a plan registered with West Berkshire Council and that the voice of the community will be heard and we are not left out in the cold.

The Allotment programme has come on leaps and bounds largely thanks to Zak Frost gaining grants for fencing etc. and the owner of the land, Trevor Cripps, for all his practical help. In fact, I get a definite feeling of optimism in the village and a desire for things to work, as new initiatives and groups get underway. Zak's wife Nina has also helped the Parish Council get a grant for new play equipment for toddlers – it must run in the family! This will be installed in the Open Space by May. Following a very successful fete in the autumn, where over £3,000 pounds was raised for community groups, the Garston Gallopers, a Morris Side has been formed. The Film Society goes from strength to strength showing a variety of films during the season and a Local History Society has been formed due to a number of parishioners showing an interest in local landmarks and why things are the way they are! The Village Hall has been perked up with a new coat of paint inside and the internal lighting is much improved. The trustees and committee are now working on fundraising for further improvements.

The East Garston Website continues to be considered "second to none" by other communities and my thanks go to Ken Tarbox for his unstinting work in this area.

Thankfully, we escaped any flooding in the village in the past year and my thanks go to Gordon Swapp for keeping a vigilant eye on the state of the river and liaising with the Environment Agency on problems if they arise. We were not so lucky with snow and ice however and although the roads were not gritted well, I believe the salt bins were kept topped up most of the time and with a bit of patience we seem to have come through it unscathed.

It remains for me to thank everyone in the Parish for helping make this such a desirable place to live but in particular those that maintain various public areas. Richard Talmage for mowing and strimming in the middle of the village, David Knight for keeping in the war memorial looking neat and tidy and David Taylor for his work on the grass around Downlands.

Finally, a big thank you to our Clerk, Alan Breadmore for helping to keep the Parish Council on the straight and narrow and liaising with West Berkshire on matters arising during the year.

I look forward to seeing you at this year's Annual Parish Meeting.

**Jonathan Rabbitts
Chairman of East Garston Parish Council**

East Garston Village Hall and Social Club

The Hall and Club have continued to perform well enough. Turnover was approximately £31,000 for the year 2008/9 and this is up from around £25,000 about 2006/7. We made a small loss (£814).

There have been plenty of activities taking place in the Hall over the last year, including...

- The Valley Film Society – monthly
- Toddlers groups
- Annual Christmas Fayre
- Games nights
- Private Parties
- A sell out production by the Watermill Theatre
- Quiz Nights
- Snail Racing
- The Summer Dance
- Fireworks night
- Children's Christmas party and Disco
- Over 60's Christmas Lunch
- Coffee morning in aid of Cancer charity
- Meetings for Trustees, Parish Council, AGMs, Parish Plan meetings
- Various fundraisers
- Mamma Mia night
- A thriving table tennis club
- Morris Dancing

My personal highlight was the Cheltenham Preview Night which was a sell out with over 100 people attending. Chris Tonge has been organising this evening for 9 years now and it has gone from strength to strength. It raised over £1,200 for the Injured Jockeys Fund, £600 for the Village Hall Appeal Fund and took £900 at the bar. It had a full page feature written about it in the Racing Post and I have been reliably informed that if you had had £1 on each of the selections you would have been over £60 in profit.

The most obvious change to the Hall and Club is the car park and the wall adjacent to the front of the Club. Luckily for us the Parish Council managed to raise £10,000 from West Berkshire Council which they put towards laying a tarmac car park and new wall. This had become essential as the old car park had become a morass of mud and debris as a result of the increase in traffic using the new village shop. It is early days but it looks very smart and gives a whole new feel to the area. Unbelievably (or perhaps not) 2 people have already reversed into the wall – we will try to paint this sooner rather than later.

We have recently received a £5,000 grant from Vibrant Villages and the Greenham Trust which has to be match funded by the 31st July. We have raised £1,200 so far and have got 2 fund raising dates in the diary – a quiz night on the 31st of March and a Games Night on the 14th May. The money will go towards re-doing the floor, smartening up the loos, re-aligning the store room and a new heating system – all of which is much needed.

We would like to welcome all parishioners to the Club and to invite everyone to try to use the Hall as much as possible – we need you, the village, to continue to support us.

Ed James
Chairman, East Garston Village Hall Trustees

East Garston Cricket Club

East Garston Cricket Club plays friendly matches on Thursday evenings and Sunday afternoons from April to September. Home matches are normally played at Lambourn Woodlands (although hopefully this will change in the future with a pitch in East Garston). Away matches allow a good tour of some stunning West Berkshire clubs such as Chaddleworth, Douai Abbey and Cold Ash.

The team had a very successful 2009 season winning 15 out of the 27 matches played – 3 were drawn and 9 lost. Last year we also took part in our first 20twenty tournament hosted by Aldbourne Cricket Club at Marlborough College.

We are always looking for new talent and if you would like to come and play, please feel free to come along to the net practise sessions which are held in the Millennium Field from 6-8pm every Tuesday starting from 11 April. Membership is £20 per annum for adults and £5 per annum for juniors (16-18 years) with a match fee of £5 per adult and £3 per junior to be paid for home games.

More information and contact details can be found on www.east-garston.com or alternatively, come along to a net session and join in. The new bowling surface at the East Garston cricket nets on the Millennium Field should be installed by the end of April

Emma Jones
Secretary, East Garston Cricket Club

East Garston Amenities

East Garston Amenities (EGA) was set up in 2001 and is a non-profit making body whose aims and objectives are “the provision, maintenance or improvement of public amenities within the parish of East Garston”. Our income is entirely derived from fund raising activities, grants and donations and we rely heavily on volunteers to achieve our aims. Over the years we have both instigated our own projects and provided financial support to other organisations whose aims are compatible with ours.

Over the last year:

- We continued to maintain the Children’s play area that we built in 2003, including organising the annual safety check by ROSPA.
- We organised a visit to the Village Hall by the Watermill Theatre with their production of “Bubbles” which was a sell out success. The Watermill Theatre have now chosen to premiere their touring productions at East Garston Village Hall and will be visiting again in May with “Gulliver’s Travels”.
- We have assisted the Community Shop with their acquisition of a computerised till and stock control system.
- We participated in the running of last year’s Village Fête.
- We supported the “Big Lunch” last July.
- We have replaced the football nets in the Millennium Field.
- Having originally helped establish the Valley Film Society in 2005 we have further improved the facilities available for the showing of films and other audio/visual presentations in the Village Hall.
- Finally, we have continued to help improve the infrastructure of the Village Hall.

If you would like to get involved with EGA or have any suggestions as to how else we could support the Village please contact any one of the committee members who are; Penny Locke (648534), James Pryer (648705), Julie Clayton (648121), Pat Glover and Chris Thorpe.

James Pryer

East Garston Allotment Association

As in so many small villages in England, the allotments once to be found in East Garston had long since disappeared. Two years ago a few keen villagers decided to take matters into their own hands and start a new allotment site. Before long the project had the support of the Parish Council and it had been included in our village’s Community Plan. After much hard work by the Council and the allotment group, a suitable site was finally found in a tranquil spot on Gold Hill, five minutes from the village with wonderful views across the Lambourn Downs. In August the East Garston Allotment Association was formed and two months later a lease on the site was signed with the landowner.

The field was then topped, sprayed and ploughed while the access lane was cleared sufficiently to allow basic vehicle access. Shortly before Christmas came the good news that the project had been awarded a grant of £5785 from the Big Lottery Fund, to cover all the main costs involved in getting the site established properly. These works included the installation of a water supply, a parking area and secure storage unit as well as deer / rabbit proof fencing around the whole site and further improvement to the access lane . With this initial helping hand allotments look set to thrive in East Garston for years to come.

The terrible weather (apparently the worst winter for 30 years!) has delayed the ambitions of most plot holders; now the first bright sunny days of spring have seen the site teeming with life. Everywhere you look raised beds and fences are appearing as well as the first plantings of crops. The ground is a real battle with vast lumps of submerged turf and roots to deal with; however those that have persevered have found that a nice crumbly soil is eventually produced that cries out to be planted.

The allotment site is already bringing out the best in everyone involved, with all plot holders sharing their skills, knowledge, equipment and hot drinks with other members. As well as producing lots of lovely things to eat it is hoped that the site will foster new links and friendships within the community, as well as being a great place to spend time.

Anyone wishing to follow the progress of the project can do so at www.eastgarstonaa.blogspot.com . If you would like to get involved please email eastgarstonaa@gmail.com to join the waiting list for a plot. The site is currently fully occupied but the waiting list is short and it’s first come first served so get your place booked fast!

Zak Frost
Chairman, East Garston Allotment Association

East Garston Bell Ringers

It has been quite a busy time for the ringers over the last few months. After organising the successful Newbury Branch outing around some of the beautiful towns and villages of south-west Gloucestershire last May (even the coach driver - a lapsed ringer - got to ring again after a gap of about 30 years) and helping out at the Branch Social event at Speen in the summer, we then had an outing of our own. Booked over a year in advance, November saw East Garston ringers, family and friends visiting Whitechapel Bell Foundry in east London. Squeezed into cramped premises - a former coaching inn - in the middle of Whitechapel's Bangladeshi community, Britain's oldest manufacturing business (founded 1570 and moving to the current premises a century later) made the Liberty Bell and Big Ben, and as well as large bells (for customers all over the world) also produces handbells, bell frames and fittings.

Since the traditional ringing-in of 2010, East Garston hosted the annual Newbury Branch dinner, at the end of a successful Quarter Peal Week. A quarter peal involves ringing for about 45 minutes to a complex pattern, from memory. Two quarters were rung at East Garston, one with our local band which was also Christopher Vaughan's first quarter. East Garston ringers also rang at several other towers during the week and notched up a number of personal milestones. Although our regular Wednesday practices have been rather intermittent, we often join the practices at other towers - notably Bradfield, Hungerford and Lambourn - to bolster numbers, and we have managed - with the help of ringers from Lambourn and outside the valley - to ring for most services and both happy and sad occasions.

As always, we would be pleased to see anyone who would like to learn to ring, or who is already a ringer and would like to join us - please give me a call on 648373.

Mark Brock
Tower Captain

East Garston Quakers

East Garston Quakers continue to hold our Meetings for Worship every Sunday at 11 am at the Quaker Meeting House, in Back Street just opposite the Village Hall. During the last year we have set up arrangements to welcome children to our Meeting on the third Sunday of each month. During their time with us the children are involved in all sorts of activities, ranging from building models to writing and acting in plays. Whatever the activity, it involves 'fun!' All children (and their parents) are always welcome.

We are delighted that our Meeting House and Children's Room continues to be regularly used by other local organisations and committees that value the peace and quiet that these rooms offer. We hope that this external use of our facilities will continue and grow in the future.

Stephen Wright
Clerk, East Garston Quakers

Valley Film Society

The Valley Film Society is now in its fifth year, showing films on the first Tuesday of most months, on the wide screen at East Garston Village Hall. The committee are delighted with the continuing support of between 40 & 50 members, who even turn up in the snow! Perhaps they appreciate the raised seating, but probably the thought of the Social Club bar being open & the delicious Nippy Chippy supper delivered during the interval that keeps them coming! As ever, we would like to thank Deena and the entire bar staff for their excellent service.

This season's top film so far has been Cabaret, with Lisa Minelli & Michael York with the delightful subtitled Chinese film, The Road Home a close second. Still to come on **11th May** (a later day due to the Watermill production in the hall) is **On Her Majesty's Secret Service** (1966) starring George Lazenby & Diana Rigg, Tuesday **1st June** "**Went the day well?**" (1942) wartime thriller set in rural Home Counties. On **6th July** our HADCAF offering followed by a meal, is **An Education** (2009) with Carey Mulligan & Alfred Molina starring in a coming of age story in the 60's in suburban London; screen play by Nick Hornby.

Doors open at 7pm for **7.30pm** start and Social club bar open, with an option to order a Nippy Chippy supper, last orders by 7.20, to be delivered in the interval. New members are very welcome and can join for **Season Six** on the HADCAF evening. Membership fee £27; £18 concessions; guests £5.

For more information ring Penny Brewer 01488 72305, email penny.locke@freeuk.com or www.valleyfilmsociety.org

Penny Brewer
Chair, Valley Film Society

All Saints Church, East Garston

For a second year, we have very much missed having our Vicar - **The Revd Tony Cumberlidge**, back with us. However, Tony was able to take a fair number of services, including weddings and baptisms, during March, April, May and June 2009, while he was awaiting a further operation. He was also able to be with us on occasions like the opening of the Shop, the Fete and our Maintenance Day.

A wide range of people are now involved in helping to run and maintain the church: our **Young Families Group** who are prominent in so many things; the **new members who joined our Parochial Church Council in April 2009** – including our new secretary - Ann Phillips and treasurer - Rachel Brown; **the Churchyard Group** – Dawn and Chris Tonge and Glenys and Ivor Denton together with the team that cut the grass, tidy and maintain the churchyard: Martyn Wright, Richard Talmage, Trevor Butcher, Danny O'Neill and David Kelly. The **Church Cleaning Team** of Diana Smith, Dawn Tonge, Mary Lane, Renee Rookes, Julie Rodbourn and Madeleine Thomas, who keep the church looking so cherished and special; **The Bell Ringers** under the captaincy of Mark Brock, who work so closely with us, ringing on many occasions beyond normal church services – weddings, baptisms, funerals, ringing in the New Year and more. Teenager Jade Digweed who learned to ring some three or four years ago, has been joined by her mother Sarah, so now we have a mother and daughter team. We thank the visiting ringers particularly those from Lambourn tower under Ross Couch's captaincy, and those from other parts of the Newbury Deanery. We depend so much on our **Flowers Team**: the principals being Diana Pilling, Nicky Wall, Julie Pennycook and Ann Phillips. Not forgetting our long suffering clock winder, Peter Cook, who climbs the tower twice a week to wind the mechanism by hand

Other features of 2009 have been that we have had 7 Baptisms, a Wedding, a Blessing after a Civil Marriage and a Thanksgiving and Renewal of Marriage Vows. We are due to have two more Weddings in East Garston Church in the summer of 2010.

Maintaining a mediaeval church is of course a costly business: our Gift Appeal in December 2009 raised in excess of £1200 – thank you to all who donated. We were fortunate and are extremely grateful to the fete committee for awarding the Church one third of the profits - £1043 from the fete.

The church cake and food stalls were on a much larger scale this year and we thank Julie Pennycook for her help on this.

We have deliberately cultivated a relationship with The Society of Friends in East Garston – we are very pleased to be able to use the Meeting House and Schoolroom, for church meetings and activities and shall be doing so again on 29 April for our Annual Parochial Church Meeting. We did not hold a Gift Festival in 2009, mainly because we wanted to wait for Tony Cumberlidge to be back with us. In 2010 however we plan to do this, with a wide range of exhibitions, a concert, special services and lots more, for every age group and interest.

It has been with great sadness that we said goodbye in just over 12 months, to four prominent parishioners who were also regular Churchgoers: Angela Lee, Ann Bett, David Rabbitts and Hazel Wayman. Each of these people was a special character in the village and their exceptionally well attended funeral services honoured them accordingly. We miss them all a great deal.

Highlights of 2009 include:

Mothering Sunday – the service taken by The Revd Canon David Winter jointly with the children!

Easter Day when children placed posies in the life size Easter Garden after the service.

Rogation – the service at Lorne Hill farm, Jo-Anne taking the children to feed the animals and very happy parish lunch in the Village Hall with Tony and all 3 parishes represented.

Maintenance Day – a happy band cleaning and clearing the church and churchyard!

Harvest Festival children and adults decorated the church, school children made bread, Harvest Lunch at The Queens Arms

Our Patronal Festival – candles lit to remember the faithful departed. Parish lunch at The Plough.

Remembrance Service at the War Memorial, Wantage Youth Brass band. Coffee at Queens Arms.

Carol Service entirely by candlelight. Special Message from the Vicar, unable to be with us.

Children's Nativity Service with Christingles, followed by Tea Party, organised by treasurer Rachel.

Christmas Morning Holy Communion in the snow, 90 children and adults attend, Poppy lights the candle dressed as a Christmas Tree!

The Revd Tony Cumberlidge and I would like to thank everyone for your support, your willingness to take part in the Church at East Garston and for your outstanding generosity.

Sally Wright
Churchwarden

The Garston Gallopers

The Garston Gallopers began life in September 2009 when the village fete committee was unable to book a Morris Dancing side to perform at the fete. Someone had the bright idea of villagers taking up the challenge to learn Morris dancing so after only three (very enjoyable) lessons, a nervous group walked out wearing the East Garston colours of green and purple, between marquees and danced at the fete. Some members of the group were hooked and we have continued from there.

We meet fortnightly on Mondays in East Garston Village Hall, from 8:00 to 9:30pm. We are extremely fortunate to have the support and encouragement of experienced members of Kintbury Morris who are teaching us an ever-increasing set of dances. We have recently put together our own dance, 'The Garston Gallop'. Kintbury's musicians have also taken us under their wing so we are able to dance to live music, making practice sessions even more enjoyable. There is a nominal charge of £2 per session to cover the cost of hiring the hall.

We are looking for new members (male and female), so if you are interested, please get in touch on 648851.

Jackie Breadmore

East Garston Community Shop

The first year of the shop has been at times challenging but for the most part rewarding as the staff have experienced a steep learning curve, supported by invaluable volunteers. We have coped with heat waves, snow conditions, a burglary and an impassable car park; increased our opening hours; hosted cooking demonstrations and wine tastings; and enjoyed brief fame as the only retailer besides Fortnum & Mason's to sell English summer truffles – locally hunted to boot.

The shop is a not-for-profit business, with any surplus income (after salaries, stock and overhead costs are covered) going to the village. At the end of its first year however, the shop is just breaking even which makes it very hard to keep as many items in stock as we would like. In order to continue to improve the service provided and generate funds for the village, the shop must increase its income by increasing the number of people who use the shop and the amount of money spent by each customer. We hope that with your thoughts and, dare we say it, constructive criticism, we can do that. We will be soon distributing a village questionnaire and very much hope that everyone will respond.

We obviously cannot compete with supermarkets for the range and price of products but we try to keep as competitive as possible. There are different opinions about the type of products to sell and difficult choices have to be made about the type, size and supplier of each product.

Looking forward, we aim to supply as much local produce as possible. Last summer villagers kindly donated surplus produce and this spring we are already offering East Garston duck eggs and Eastbury lamb – as well as our continuing range of local sandwiches, cakes and arts and crafts.

A lot of people have worked very hard during the first year of community shop and now it is time to celebrate our 1st anniversary with a Shake, Dine & Dance Rock'n'Roll Party, 8pm Saturday 24 April in East Garston Village Hall. The band will be Rudy La Crioux and the All Stars, supported by top rockin DJ's The Bourbon Boys. Tickets are £15 and will include an American-style BBQ buffet featuring local produce from the shop, homemade brownies and ice cream sodas. There will be prizes for best fifties dress and a raffle.

Finally I would like to thank our friends and shareholders, the Parish Council and West Berks Council for arranging and paying for the car park to be tarmaced and our regular customers. I think everyone will agree that it is great to have a place in the village again where you can have a chinwag and post local notices.

P.S. Do you have any DVDs gathering dust on your shelves that you would like to donate to the shop to help start a DVD rental service by donation? Adult (but not X-rated!) and children's DVDs wanted. DVDs will then be available to rent at a suggested donation of £1 for children's DVDs and £2 for adults.

Penny Locke
East Garston Community Shop Committee

East Garston Parish Community Plan

Although it may appear that not much has happened with the Plan lately, nothing could be farther from the truth!

Following the excellent response to the questionnaires that were sent out, a huge amount of work has been done to turn a lot of good ideas, views and suggestions into a feasible Plan of actions for the future. The Plan is nearing completion and the final stage of consultation was completed on 26 March 2010 when an open evening was held in the Village Hall giving all residents the opportunity to comment on the final draft.

The Plan has now been adopted by the Parish Council and has been approved by West Berks Council.

We are on target to publish and launch the Plan in early May. Once the Plan is published, we will be looking for more volunteers to help make the actions happen. There are plenty of opportunities for anyone who is interested in helping, across a wide range of activities. If you would like to get involved, the following list shows the members of the Planning Group to contact with their specific responsibilities.

Alan Breadmore	Technology/Treasurer
Vikki Brooks	Environment
Maria Carver	Transport/ Shop
Zak Frost	Allotments
Micky Highnett	Cricket Club (within Sport & Leisure)
Ed James	Village Hall & Club
Deana Carpenter	Assisting Ed James with Village Hall & Club
Penny Locke	Young People/Communications
James Pryer	Planning & Development
Chris Tonge	Parish Council/Road Safety/Crime & Security
Sally Wright	The Church
Martyn Wright	Employment & Local business
Jean Banfield	Planning Group Secretary

One of the more recent initiatives that has been launched, following a significant level of interest, is a Local History Society. If you would like to join please contact Jonathan Haw at Goldhill House.

The sub group that is really leaderless at the moment is Sport & Leisure, which is of course, one of the biggest and potentially most grantworthy. One of our urgent tasks, as soon as we have published the Plan, will be to find someone to head this up.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank not only the Planning Group who have put a lot of their time and effort into producing the Plan, but also all of you who have given your views, ideas and suggestions, without which, there would have been no Plan to produce. Thank you!

Martyn Wright
Planning Group Chairman

East Garston Local History Society

As a result of the Community Plan consultation process there appeared to be a wide interest in learning more about the history of our Parish. The final consultation event for the Community Plan at the end of March saw the launch of The East Garston Local History Society. This will meet about four times a year and encourage research about the village, its surroundings and our local history. If you are interested in joining please contact me on 648265.

Jonathan Haw
East Garston Local History Society

Village Views

Village Views is the local magazine covering the parishes of Lambourn and East Garston. Edited by local people for local people, the monthly magazine is full of interesting articles and information concerning the valley and is supported by many local businesses.

The magazine costs just 40 pence per issue and is available from the Community Shop or by subscription. For just £4 per annum our team of dedicated volunteers will deliver the magazine to your door each month.

For subscriptions in East Garston please contact **Alan Breadmore** on 648851

East Garston Village Communications

Communications within a community is always challenging but there is now a good infrastructure to enable everyone to know what is going on.

www.east-garston.com is a mine of information about the village, community, activities and events both past and present. It now includes an events calendar where community groups can directly input their activities. See the website for more details on this or how to contribute to the website.

Penny Locke publishes regular news for the community via email. If you are not already receiving East Garston news in this way then please contact Penny. penny.locke@freeuk.com

Formal notices from the council are now posted on notice boards by the "middle" bridge, at the Village Hall and in the Community Shop as well as on www.east-garston.com

The **Annual Parish Meeting** will be held on Tuesday 27th April at 7.30pm in the Village Hall. This is an opportunity to meet both your Parish and District Councillors. This year the Neighbourhood Police Team will be attending and representatives of the Ambulance Service who will be talking about the Community First Responder Programme. The social club bar will be open.

The biggest Community "Get Together" is the **Annual Fete**. The provisional date for 2010 has been set as Sunday 12th September. Community groups or individuals who wish to participate and/or benefit should contact me as soon as possible.

Alan Breadmore

East Garston Parish Council

Your councillors are always willing to discuss village matters with residents. They are:-

Jonathan Rabbitts (Chairman)
Christopher Tonge (Vice- Chairman)
Peter Smith
Monica Eyre
Brian Cowan

Official communication with the council should be via The Clerk,

Alan Breadmore.
Lime Tree Cottage, Back St.
East Garston, HUNGERFORD
Berkshire RG17 7EY
Telephone: 01488-648851
e-mail: egpc@breadmore.me.uk