

East Garston Newsletter 2011

**DON'T FORGET -
EAST GARSTON ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
Tuesday 19th April at 7.30pm in the Village Hall**

Parish Council Chairman's Report

It's been a year of ups and downs for the Parish.

Firstly I'd like to congratulate the Allotment Association led ably by Zak Frost with a lot of practical help from landowner Trevor Cripps, on getting stuck in to what could only be described as a wilderness. This resulted in the abundance of fruit and vegetables displayed during the produce show at the, once again, successful and well-attended Village fete in September.

As many of you know, the newly acquired village marquees were also used for the 'Last Night of the Proms', screened the night before the fete. This was also a great success, dubiously and humorously compered by local celebrity Chris Tonge.

Sadly, I also have to report the decline and the finally demise of the well heralded and loudly supported village shop. Not helped by a total of five break-ins – it must have been an easy target. However, this was not the only cause for shutting. People didn't use it enough! For a village shop to be viable, it needs regular customers! On a more positive note, since the flyer was put around the village, there are one or two interested parties, keen to use the building, hopefully for use as some sort of service for the village.

Thank you to all those who attended the village cleaning day in the autumn, I didn't think that as much rubbish as previously was collected this year, so that is a positive sign.

Councillors Tonge and Cowan attended a West Berkshire Council meeting and in spite of objections managed to get the speed restriction on the main road down from 40 to 30mph. Thanks to them.

Thank you also to Gordon Swapp for his flood warden duties; his regular monitoring and prompt dealing with fallen branches etc. helps keep our village safer from flooding. This also appears to be an important issue with our District Council. They have several people who appear to be working on emergency action plans all the time – perhaps they know something we don't!

Many people contribute to keeping our village neat and tidy but I would particularly like to thank Richard Talmage for doing a not insignificant amount of mowing around the village, to David Taylor for maintaining the Downlands grass, and Dave Knight for his meticulous attention to detail around the war memorial.

As you probably know we are approaching the Parish Council elections and I would like to add my thanks to the councillors who have served the community over the past four years. Regardless of whether they stand or get elected again their past contribution has been greatly appreciated.

Finally, thank you to Alan Breadmore, our Parish Clerk, who appears to have an ever-growing amount of paperwork to do. Who said they would cut down on bureaucracy? The Government never will, governments thrive on bureaucracy. Such is Life!

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

East Garston Annual Parish Meeting - Tuesday 19th April - 7.30pm - Village Hall

Come and meet your councillors and hear about projects that could affect you in the Parish.

- The work that is being done to improve the habitat of the River Lambourn and protect its wildlife
- The work of the Alzheimer's Society in the Valley
- How mobile phone reception is improving in the village.

East Garston Village Hall and Social Club

The Hall and Club have continued to perform well enough. Turnover was approximately £30,000 for the year 2009/10 but we did make a loss of just over £1,000. (The accounts are being finalised as we speak.)

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

- The Valley Film Society – monthly
- Games nights
- Private Parties
- A week long hiring of the Hall to the Watermill Theatre
- Quiz Nights
- The Summer Dance
- Fireworks night
- Over 60's Christmas Lunch
- Coffee morning in aid of Cancer charity
- Meetings for Trustees, Parish Council, Parish Plan meetings
- Various fundraisers
- England World Cup viewings on the new flat screen TV – very depressing...
- A thriving table tennis club
- Halloween party
- New Year's Eve Party featuring Nigeria Blonde!
- Cheltenham Preview
- The Garston Gallopers Morris Dancing fortnightly practices

New events to have started up include:

- The East Garston Local History Society
- Mr. and Mrs. Night
- Pilates classes

We raised around £19,000 in 2010 through the generosity of the Englefield Trust, West Berks Council, Greenham Trust, the Garston Gallopers and local fundraisers. Much of that money has already been put to good use – we have installed a new boiler and quite a lot of new pipe work. Hopefully, this will reduce the oil bills and stop pipes bursting over the winter, something we have suffered from over the last two winters.

We are about to see some further changes as the Hall floor is about to undergo a complete overhaul and the storeroom is going to be realigned and done up.

The great sadness this year has the shutting of the village shop. We are now looking at alternative options for the building and will have to try to work out what is best for the community. We would like someone to come forward who would be prepared to keep the shop going and run it as their own business but no one has, as yet.

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

Although not quite the Cricket World Cup, East Garston's Cricket Team have continued to enjoy thrilling matches against local village and business teams such as Chaddleworth, Speen, Woddlands St Mary, Cold Ash and Vodafone.

We are especially excited that the Parish Council has levelled an area of the Millennium Field to allow more sport to take place there. Once this has settled and been seeded we are hopeful that cricket will once again be able to take place in East Garston.....watch this space.

We play Thursday evening 20Twenty games and Sunday afternoon games and are always happy to welcome new players and spectators. If you would like to take part in the team or merely practice your skills, please come and join in our regular net sessions on Tuesday evenings from 6pm starting in May.

For full details contact Chairman and Captain Mick Highnett on 648858; or Club Secretary on 648868; email dragon_jones@hotmail.com

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.

This year we are planning to organise bicycle safety training for children in the village and a Kwik Cricket course for children in the summer holidays. We are also able to help organise adult learning courses provided free by Newbury College. Over 30 courses are available covering many topics including, gardening, handicrafts, IT skills and job searching skills. Small groups of interested people just need to identify a local venue and the tutor is free of charge. If you are interested in attending or organising a course please contact one of the committee members listed below. Finally we are now actively involved in the implementation of the Parish Community Plan and in particular working with the Sport & Leisure group.

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 and making some recommended improvements.
- We organised a visit to the Village Hall by the Watermill Theatre with their production of “Gulliver's Travels” which was the premiere before it went on tour.
- We assisted the Community Shop with their fund raising Rock ‘n’ Roll night and also contributed to improving the shop’s security.
- We participated in the running of last year’s Village Fête and setup all the audio visual equipment for the very successful “Last Night of the Proms” concert.
- We supported the “Big Lunch” and Open Gardens last July.
- 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. This has included the acquisition of radio microphones to be able to provide a PA system.
- Finally, we have continued to help improve the infrastructure of the Village Hall which has included insulating the roof space.

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

We're fast approaching one of the most exciting times of year at the allotment site - the main sowing season. This time last year we were struggling to set the site up in time, battling the wettest spring on record and trying to remove huge infestations of dock and couch grass. We never expected to harvest much in our first year but in fact most of us had a bumper crop of a huge variety of fruit and vegetables. A year on and the project continues to go from strength to strength; there is a real sense of community at the site with everyone helping each other out and sharing knowledge, equipment and crops. In November last year we had a brief brush with fame when we were featured on ITV's "Meridian Tonight", as an example of how communities can work together to achieve common goals. This was followed in December by less positive news - our first (and hopefully last) break-in at the site. Some damage was caused to the storage container and a shed but luckily nothing was taken. Following a very successful inaugural produce show at the village fete last September, raising over £300 for the Association and other village groups, we plan to repeat the event this year and hopefully make it even bigger. Once again this will be open to all so please get in touch if you would like to help out or get involved. eastgarstonaa@gmail.com

Please also check out our blog for regular allotment updates - www.eastgarstonaa.blogspot.com

Zak Frost
Chairman, East Garston Allotment Association

East Garston Bell Ringers

Although you won't have heard the regular Wednesday practices for a while – due to reduced numbers as a result of other commitments – we have generally been able to ring for most of the services and, of course, for New Year. The band continues to practice at other towers in the area whenever possible as well as helping out with ringing for services, and we again participated in the "Quarter Peal Week" organised by the local branch of the Guild. Our "quarter", which lasted 52 minutes, took place in our Wednesday practice slot on 16th February, ably assisted by Marcus Allum (who was the conductor) and his wife and former East Garston resident, Tessa. The week was concluded with an enjoyable branch dinner in Frilsham.

This year, I am again organising the annual Branch Outing, which will take a coach-load to the Wye Valley and Forest of Dean area to ring in a variety of towers and – especially for the non-ringers - enjoy the local scenery.

I was pleased to hear of the appointment of a new Church Architect - I am hoping we can meet soon to discuss the works required to facilitate the much-needed repair work to the bells, and make some progress on this. In the meantime, I will be continuing with the routine maintenance needed to keep them going reasonably well, given that the last major work was well over a century ago.

If you are a lapsed ringer or are interested in learning to ring, please do not be deterred by the fact we are not practising here regularly – you will be more than welcome to come along to one of the other towers we visit if you need tuition. Please contact me on 648373 or mark.brock@btinternet.com.

Mark Brock
Tower Captain

East Garston Quakers

I am pleased to report that during 2010, East Garston Quakers held Meetings for Worship on every Sunday morning at 11-00am, and, as in many past years, we held a short Meeting for Worship on Christmas Day morning. On the third Sunday of each month we welcomed children who undertook a number of activities. We will be continuing with our children's meetings during 2011, again on the third Sunday of the month, and we hope to obtain their ideas on how we can turn the large lawn area between the meeting House and the road into a Peace Garden. We hope, that the Peace Garden when (and if) completed can be used by the whole village community. All village children are welcome, even if parents do not join us for our Meetings for Worship.

As in previous years, a number of village, and not so local, organisations welcome the peace and quiet offered by our Meeting House and Children's Room, and hold their committee meetings and run various functions in those rooms. If any individual or organisation would like more information on the availability of our rooms then please contact me, Stephen Wright, on 01635 247143 or by e-mail on chieveley@aol.com.

Stephen Wright
Clerk, East Garston Quakers

East Garston Local History Society

Further talks have been given, both of which have been very well attended.

Dawn Tonge spoke in October on *The Village Shops of East Garston* and also (as Chris was ill) on *100 Years of East Garston Parish Council*.

Dave Knight spoke in February on *East Garston at War - the effect of two World Wars on village life*.

Contact me 648265 for details of the next meeting.

Jonathan Haw
East Garston Local History Society

Valley Over 60's Club

The club meets monthly, now on a **Monday** (previously Friday) in Great Shefford Village Hall. We continue to share interesting talks and exhibitions followed by a substantial tea. If you would like further information contact me on 01488 648442.

Audrey Boyle

Valley Film Society

We are so fortunate to have a traditional village hall with brilliant bar staff in the social club to help our film evenings go with good cheer! So many thanks to Deana & her team and to James Pryer for his energetic commitment.

Membership is £27 or £18 for concessions and has remained steady at around 50, plus a group booking of 10 from The Hermitage in Eastbury. Having the money in the bank at the beginning of each season makes scheduling reasonably stress free and it's a bargain! At £2/£3 a film, on your door step, what a gift!

Our audience has the chance to record anonymous comments about the film, food & evening in general, so the committee is in no doubt about the wisdom of their programme choices. We try to have a good mix of new releases, golden oldies, epic, fascinating foreign & UK made films. We welcome suggestions for films to show, so come along & join the fun.

We meet on the first Tuesday of the month and the next film on

- 5th April is The Bridges of Madison County(12) USA (1995) Clint Eastwood & Meryl Street star in a bitter sweet romance set in 1960's USA.
- 3rd May Master & Commander (12) UK (2003) Starring Russell Crowe
- 7th June Easy Virtue (12) UK (2008) with Colin Firth & Kristen Scott-Thomas
- 5th July our HADCAF film is Exit through the Gift Shop.

Screenings at 7.30. Doors open 7pm. Food orders by 7.20pm. Guests £5

Website is www.valleyfilmsociety.org or ring me for more details on 01488 72305

Penny Brewer
Chair, Valley Film Society

The Garston Gallopers

Last year was a busy one for East Garston's own Morris side, and the coming season promises to be even busier. Over the summer of 2010 we danced at several local fetes including our own here in the village. We also celebrated May Day at Kintbury and were invited to perform at Sheepdrove Lambing Day and in Lambourn Market Place. We enjoyed meeting up with other local sides (Icknield Way Morris Men, Lumbawakk and The Kennet Men) at evening events in West Hendred and West Ilsley.

Later in the year, we performed at a corporate event at The Vineyard, Stockcross and in December, despite freezing conditions, we celebrated the Winter Solstice at The Plough, Eastbury and Boxing Day at The Queen's Arms in our village.

As the season progressed we welcomed new members to the side and currently have a group of 11 dancers including three from East Garston, three from Eastbury and two from Lambourn. We are fortunate to have three regular melodeon players to accompany us for practices and when we dance out. Our repertoire is gradually expanding and thanks to the generosity of our teachers, Penny and Jean of Kintbury Morris, we can now perform ten different dances – some with hankies, some with sticks, and now a dance with one of each!

For our first event in 2011 we are excited to be travelling to the Lake District at the beginning of April to dance at a wedding. Later in the month, we shall be helping to celebrate the Royal Wedding in Eastbury and East Garston. We then have a number of repeat bookings throughout the summer to dance at local events.

We practice on alternate Monday evenings in the Village Hall, 8:00 – 9:30pm. Dates can be found on the East Garston website. New dancers are always welcome - no experience necessary. For more information please contact me on 01488 648851.

Jackie Breadmore
Squire, The Garston Gallopers

Again in 2010, the church has enjoyed an ever widening circle of people in the parish lending support and contributing in many different ways. The response of the parish to requests for help, is impressive – whether cakes for the fete (we took £400 on the stall this year), arranging flowers, cleaning the church, cutting the churchyard grass, maintenance tasks, helping to fundraise, helping at festivals, contributing financially and coming to the church (in large numbers) for festivals, special services and events. Thank you all; for the tremendous support that you give.

There are far too many, to be able to refer to you all by name, but forgive me for mentioning just one or two of you: Ken Tarbox for his unfailing support in displaying our activities in such an appealing and professional way on the village website, Peter Cook who twice every week climbs the tower to manually wind our Church clock which keeps such excellent time, the bellringers who not only summon us to prayer, but ring for funerals, weddings, baptisms and special occasions such as our Saturday Remembrance Service and ringing in the New Year.

The Parochial Church Council, most of whom are relatively new to their tasks, are growing and developing into a lively and supportive team. They provide a strong link with The Young Families Group and are keenly involved with fundraising, under the stern and watchful eye of our very professional treasurer!

There have been though, some times of extreme sadness in 2010. In January David Rabbitts, much loved and respected East Garston farmer died. David was a splendid and generous supporter of the church. Hazel Wayman who had been a very regular, devoted and active member of the congregation died in February and then in June, Mary Lane a wise and valued member of our PCC died in hospital. We miss all three of them, but we do not forget them.

There have also been some golden moments during the year: the Rogation Festival in May, when a service was held at the farm of Neil and Alice Walker – Westfield. Neil talked about his progressive modern farming policy. Apart from his extensive arable operation, Neil has diversified and has taken part in a scheme to provide green fuel to local power stations.

Harvest Festival in October, with the children taking an active part in the service, had been preceded by mothers and children decorating the south aisle of the church. A splendid Harvest Lunch for 60 children and adults followed after the service in the Village Hall, expertly cooked and served by Antonia McAlpine and team.

A fundraising afternoon on the theme of local history took place during the Harvest weekend, when two superb speakers came to talk: Geoffrey Tyack author of the updated Pevsner Guide on the Buildings in Berkshire, spoke on the churches of Lambourn, Eastbury and East Garston and other buildings of note in the vicinity. Graham Dowding, conservator of glass at Gloucester Cathedral, gave an illustrated talk showing how he had restored the 3 Stained glass windows, which were vandalised during break-ins to East Garston church.

Our Remembrance service conducted by The Revd Canon David Winter, was again a splendid, but sober occasion. The Wantage Youth Brass were with us and Last Post and Reveille were played quite remarkably by 13 year old Matthew Ellacott and 15 year old Olivia Middlebrook.

Our Christmas festivities were a real high spot, with congregations and collections the highest in recent years. The church looked spectacular with the paths and trees candlelit in the snow and the Concert at which our Male Voice Group performed, was a huge success. The Children's Service and Tea Party was very popular and delightful to watch. We held a Gift Appeal for Church funds in December since, like many other country parishes, we need to strengthen our financial position. The good news is that our collections and donations in December amounted to the magnificent sum of £3189. However this is only the beginning, we still have a lot more to find.

Lastly, despite our Priest in Charge – The Revd Tony Cumberlidge, being in hospital again several times during 2010, this did not prevent him from staying very much in control of East Garston church activities. We are very grateful to him for his unfailing support and his claim that East Garston parish is every country parson's dream! Happily Tony was able to conduct David Rabbitt's funeral service and give the address at Mary Lane's funeral. He attended the Harvest Lunch, hosted the Local History afternoon and led The Act of Dedication at our Remembrance service. At Christmas time he hosted our Concert, was with us for the Carol Service, the Children's Nativity Service and for Holy Communion on Christmas Day. Thank you Tony, it has been so good to have you back with us whenever you have been able. May your health improve considerably in 2011.

**Sally Wright
Churchwarden**

East Garston Parish Community Plan

The Parish Community Plan was finalised, printed and distributed to all households in June 2010 and was officially launched at a party in the Social Club.

West Berks Council awarded us an initial Grant of £5000 to help “kick-start” the implementation stage of the Plan, so our first task was to decide which of the many actions that had been planned should receive priority for funding.

The aim was to bid for grants that would provide general benefit to the majority of residents, rather than specific groups, and it was agreed that the grant should be used to fund three projects:

1. The purchase of two large marquees that can be used for a range of different Parish events. They were quickly put to good use to house the Last Night of the Proms concert and the Flower and Produce Show at the Village Fete. The marquees are available for hire at below market rates to Parish residents.
2. Funding for a new heating system for the Village Hall as part of the refurbishment programme. This has recently been completed.
3. Assistance with funding additional security shutters for the Community Shop building following a number of burglaries. Sadly, even this did not prevent a further break-in, leading to the closure of the Shop.

As well as those projects, some excellent progress has been made with implementing a number of other actions:

- The Parish Council arranged a series of regular open meetings with the Police to discuss residents' concerns.
- The e-newsletter organised by Penny Locke has grown from strength to strength covering news from around the local area.
- A Parish events diary has been established on the East Garston website for residents to publicise events and to help with arranging dates for events so that they do not clash with other activities.
- The Village Hall refurbishment programme is well under way starting with a new tarmac car park and including better storage space and improved toilets as well as the new heating system.
- Freddie Tulloch has taken on the lead role for the Sports and Leisure programme and has made an impressive start by organising a very successful Golf Day that raised £500 for the Social Club, a Social Club Sports Challenge and a Christmas Festive Fun Run. Freddie is setting up a strong organisation to cover all areas of leisure interests and is combining forces with the current East Garston Amenities group.
- Alan Breadmore, leading the Technology sub group, has made a huge breakthrough in his efforts to improve mobile phone reception in the Village. By persistently lobbying Vodafone and Richard Benyon, our local MP, Alan has gained commitment from Vodafone to use East Garston as a national trial site for some new equipment that gives network coverage in areas not covered by the main network signal. The first set of equipment has been installed and is working well to give a good signal around Humphreys Lane area with the remainder of the Village being completed as soon as possible. To gain advantage from this arrangement, you have to be on the Vodafone network.
- The Allotment Association, already under way before the Plan was finalised, has really done well with members producing some excellent crops. The highlight was the Flower and Produce Show at the Fete that attracted a large number of entrants and raised a good sum of money from the sale of produce.

So, overall, we have made a good start with implementing some of the actions that were planned, but there are still many to get under way. As always, there are too few volunteers to do it all, so anyone wishing to join in and help should contact Martyn Wright on 01488 648679.

Martyn Wright
Planning Group Chairman

East Garston Community Responders

Community Responders are local members of their communities who are trained by the ambulance service to provide life saving intervention in their local areas should the need arise prior to an ambulance arriving.

Community Responders can be aged from 18 years upwards and are initially trained over a weekend. They deal with such emergencies as heart attacks, strokes, sudden cardiac arrest and breathing difficulties.

Responders provide a vital step in the 'Chain of Survival' and we know that for every minute a person in cardiac arrest is without a defibrillator and resuscitation their chances of survival decrease by approximately 15%. Responders have their skills regularly updated and once part of the team South Central Ambulance Service provide all the support required to carry out this role.

If you are interested in joining this very important yet very rewarding volunteer group please contact me for an informal chat via phone or email. 0777043706; David.Hamer@scas.nhs.uk

David Hamer (SR Para)
Community Responder Training & Liaison Officer
South Central Ambulance NHS Trust, Berkshire Division

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 Post Office 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 and at the Village Hall as well as on www.east-garston.com

The **Annual Parish Meeting** will be held on Tuesday 19th April at 7.30pm in the Village Hall. This is an opportunity to meet both your Parish and District Councillors. This year we have several interesting speakers including a talk about the work being done to protect the River Lambourn and its wildlife. The social club bar will be open.

The biggest Community "Get Together" is the **Annual Fete**. The provisional date for 2011 has been set as Saturday 6th August.

Alan Breadmore

East Garston Parish Council

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

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

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