

East Garston Newsletter 2009

DON'T FORGET -

EAST GARSTON ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Tuesday 14th April at 7.30pm in the Village Hall

Parish Council Chairman's Report

Welcome Readers old and new!

After being badgered into becoming Chairman by "Mr East Garston" (Chris Tonge), I reluctantly agreed and we do seem to have had a busy year. A successful walking Treasure Hunt was well organised early last summer which raised a lot of money for East Garston Cricket Club. Also a late fete was very well attended on the Millennium Field and raised money for The Cricket Club, Kids Club, Church, East Garston Amenities and the Social Club and Village Hall. A great driving force headed by Maria Carver has somehow managed to erect a village shop located to the rear of the village hall. This will be managed by Alan Money and I hope very well used to enable it to prosper and grow. I have to say a very 'well done' to the committee of this project. We are currently awaiting news of whether the Parish Council has been successful in obtaining a grant for the partial levelling of the Millennium Field as a cricket pitch/sports field. If the grant is forthcoming it will stimulate a real prospect for the Millennium Field to become much more of a central focus for the village. Chris Tonge and Brian Cowan made a presentation to the Highways Agency for the reduction of the Top Road speed limit through the village from 40mph to 30mph. Happily their application was successful although we will probably have to wait a year for action – fingers crossed it will be sooner rather than later. Martyn Wright is heading a committee to provide a 'Community Plan' – no mean feat. This apparently is a necessity for future applications for grants from West Berkshire Council (another hooray for bureaucracy). Good luck to Martyn and his team.

We also reluctantly had to accept the resignation of Gordon Swapp from the Parish Council. Gordon Swapp has served on the Council for many years and we wish him well. He is, of course, still active in the village having recently repaired the bus shelter and volunteering to be the official village flood warden. Thank you Gordon. You will be pleased to know that we produced an action plan for village flooding as well and copies have been issued to all those at risk. If you haven't received one, but are interested, please contact the clerk or myself.

I would also like to thank the clerk, Alan Breadmore, for all his work over the past year. There have been less planning applications to deal with, however this year has been very busy with all the other projects going on and Alan's support has been much appreciated.

There is growing enthusiasm for the provision of allotments for a number of villagers. We are busy looking into this at the moment and will have more to report as time goes on. I believe this could be a long-term project so it is very important to get the right site for what could be a very rewarding hobby.

Ken Tarbox is probably our main asset as far as recording life in our village is concerned. He works relentlessly on the website and is forever updating and improving it. Please talk to him, inform him of any up and coming events and invite him along to take pictures which he can then add to the website.

We are grateful to those of you who help maintain the 'look' of the village. David Taylor who tends the green at Downlands, Martyn Donno for the War Memorial and the centre bridge area and Martyn and helpers, Dave Knight, and Chris Tonge for the time spent ensuring that the River Lambourn flows as freely as possible through the village.

Finally I have to report that Martyn and Carole Donno will shortly be leaving the village. They, along with Carole's father and mother are moving up to Yorkshire to join the rest of the family. They will be sorely missed.

Martyn has contributed a great deal to the evolution of the village, with his mowing, involvement in the running of the Social Club and Village Hall committees and his work on the river. Good luck to you both in your new life in the Dales. Richard Talmage will take over the mowing from Martyn in specific areas around the village, for which we are grateful.

To celebrate Martyn and Carole's contribution to the Village over the past 20 years, the Parish Council will be hosting a farewell gathering at the Social Club and Village Hall on Sunday 4th April from 12 noon.

I believe that concludes my report, if I have forgotten anybody, I am sorry, but I've no doubt you will tell me.

Jonathan Rabbitts
Chairman of East Garston PC

East Garston Village Hall and Social Club

Social Club

One of the many positive benefits of the new shop building is the installation of French Doors to the rear of the Social club. These in turn will lead onto a purpose built patio, serving both the Shop and the Social Club. This has brought together plans long held by the Trustees and management Committee not just to bring light and fresh air to the Club but fresh ideas to provide a wide scope of activities during the day. Coffee mornings are a good start and one of many ways to serve our local community and at the same time offering opportunities for those interested in voluntary work. This, together with plans to level the Millennium Field could in no small way, significantly change what the Social Club has to offer.

Building on past successes, the Club continues to encourage its members to take part in sporting competitions with snooker and pool growing in popularity. The Club also sponsors for the first time two darts teams, both of whom are chalking up notable successes against visiting teams. The cornerstone of the Club however, remains unchanged; to provide a varied programme of social events throughout the year meeting the many diverse needs of its members and our community.

East Garston Village Hall

The Village Hall has undergone many improvements over recent years, not least installing a new kitchen. This has brought many advantages with bookings practically doubling over the past year. Our programme of refurbishment continues with plans to submit grant applications to improve the Hall floor, insulate and redecorate.

Local interest groups are always welcome; the recent film show and talk on the Lambourn Valley Railway attracted well over 250 enthusiasts over two nights, testifying to the Hall's ability to host large-scale functions. Toddler Group (held each week) and Kids Club (every other week) continue to enjoy enthusiastic membership with table tennis providing recreation for all ages and ability. Valley Film Society continues with their selection of films, offering its membership performances screened on the latest technology.

The Watermill theatre makes a welcome return to our Hall in April. They will be busy rehearsing for their next performance *Bubbles* which will be performed from Wednesday 22nd to Friday 24th April at 7.30pm and on Saturday 25th at 2.30pm. Tickets are available direct from the Watermill at £5.00 each.

This illustrates how versatile our Hall has become offering its users a venue with the widest possible choice of activity. The Trustees wish to acknowledge their grateful thanks to the Social Club Management Committee who along with the support of East Garston Amenities work hard to ensure its continued success.

Martyn Donno
East Garston Village Hall Trustee

Sadly, the year has been characterised by the absence of the Vicar, who has been on sickness leave now for 12 months. So, as churchwarden I am writing on behalf of The Revd Tony Cumberlidge.

It is very good to be able to say that Tony is now recovering – he looks and feels much better, is starting to get involved in meetings and is conducting baptisms and a few services. He cannot however fully resume his normal duties yet, as he has to have a further operation as soon as he is well enough. During his absence, Tony has constantly stayed in touch with what has been going on in his parishes and has been steering things from his sick bed in hospital and the Vicarage. We have benefited enormously from this, as he has lost none of his vision and commitment to East Garston parish.

Some high points of the year have been **Education Sunday**, when the school children organised displays illustrating education today, and conversed after the service, with the congregation. The memorable **Mothering Sunday** Service, when children played a very prominent part in the service, singing, taking the prayers, reading, making flower displays, posies and cards to present to mothers in church. Adults came together on Easter Saturday to build an almost life-size **Easter Garden**, and the children laid posies in the garden after the Easter Day service.

Rogationtide was celebrated jointly by all 3 of Tony's parishes with short services in Windsor House stables at Lambourn, Coldborough Farm at Eastbury and Maidencourt Farm at East Garston. Afterwards a very convivial group enjoyed refreshments at The Plough, at Eastbury.

We had **2 very successful joint services** with the other parishes: on 31 August, we said farewell to our organist Susan Holmes who has gone to Birmingham University to study for a degree in music. The children's choir that Susan trained, sang at the service and we all enjoyed a splendid parish lunch at The Plough, when happily Tony was able to join us and make a presentation to Susan.

The second joint service was extremely memorable: we celebrated our **Patronal Festival of All Saints** on 2nd November and the service was conducted by The Revd Canon David Winter, writer, broadcaster and former Head of Religious Broadcasting at the BBC. Canon Winter is regularly on Radio 4's Today programme, in Thought for the Day. This time we adjourned to The Queen's Arms for a fine parish lunch, with Canon Winter joining us.

Harvest Festival was an occasion when men, women and children came to decorate the church with flowers, fruit, nuts, bread, sheaves of wheat and barley and toys. Thank you especially to farmers Ivor and Glenys Denton, David and June Rabbits, also to John Brittain for bread, baked with the children of Shefford and Chaddleworth Schools, which was also distributed to other local churches. The young mothers and toddlers decorations brought some lovely touches to the font and the south aisle. Harvest lunch in the village hall was served and organised by the young mothers group under the leadership of Julie Pennycook and Vikki Brooks. We were very fortunate that Tony Cumberlidge was able to conduct the service and join us for lunch.

Our **Maintenance Day** was well supported again with useful housekeeping work being carried out in the church and churchyard, coordinated by Martyn Wright, Chris Tonge and Diana Smith. We were well fed and watered by Mrs Widge Lamplough and Chris and Gordon Thorpe from the PJS hospitality caravan - thank you everyone.

The Bell Ringers organised a very successful Race Evening at the Village hall to raise funds for bell repairs. The **Railway Evenings – Tales from the Lambourn Line** were extremely well received. We sold out of tickets almost as soon as they were advertised. It was a winning formula: Kevin Robertson - author of a new book, talking about the branch line, with those who travelled on it spilling the beans on what they got up to! Thank you to our sponsors - Vertical Vision and The Queens Arms, to helpers - James Pryer, Martyn Wright, Glenys Denton, Dawn and Chris Tonge and to the star George Bodman, to Kevin and many others. Tony Cumberlidge, himself a railway man, as his father was Station Master on a North Wales main line, happily was able to chair the evenings.

As our **Remembrance Service at the War Memorial** was graced this year by The Wantage Silver Youth Band, happily we could sing hymns. Two young bandsmen of 15 and 13 very poignantly played Last Post and Reveille. Since the priest due to take the service, had a family bereavement 48 hours beforehand, Tony Cumberlidge was allowed in the emergency, to resume his role. With his Army Chaplain's background, this occasion is particularly important to Tony. We are grateful to Matt and Luke at The Queens Arms for their hospitality to the whole congregation, after the service.

At Christmas our **Candlelit Carol Service** was very well attended in a spectacularly decorated church. The **Crib Service** for the second year running was a delight, with the youngest member of the cast – Baby Jesus, being just 6 weeks old. 37 babies, toddlers, children and teenagers took part, in stunning costumes, along with a beautiful patient donkey.

The other sadness of the year has been the 3 break-ins to the church in 12 months. We are now on our way to the repairs being carried out, but it has of course been very upsetting to see the church treated in this way. It is sobering to think that we are desperately short of funds to maintain the church, which dates back to mediaeval times, and £10,000 worth of damage (paid for by our insurance company) has been needlessly incurred. Even the payment of our £250 policy excess, is something we can least afford.

We have many projects to tackle: heating, lighting, power supply, bell repairs, tree clearance in the churchyard repairs to masonry and the lychgate. At some stage we should be looking at installing toilets and there are many projects to tackle inside the church also.

We have an exciting programme of services, festivals and events in 2009, including a Gift Festival week – 30 August – 6 September. We are planning a pets service and a concert on Saturday 5 September, more historical talks, exhibitions, a joint service followed by a BBQ and more...

I think we can say that the parish has continued to respond to Tony's wish for the church to be at the centre of the community and not on the margins, and to his proposition that the church is there for everyone. We have an ever wider group of people joining in services, festivals and events: please forgive me for not mentioning everyone. I am thinking of the young families group, the children and young people, the churchyard group, the flowers group, Di Smith and her cleaning team, our organists- Stephen and Susan Holmes and the Lambourn Church choir, the bellringers and not forgetting our newly formed male voice choir group.

I'm sure the parish will join Tony and me in thanking all those clergy who have given their time so generously in taking services for us in the last year. We are privileged to have had such a distinguished group - The Revd Nigel Sands, The Revd Bill Stewart, The Revd Martin Partridge, The Revd Eric Hayden, The Revd Marion Fontaine, The Revd Christopher Ardagh-Walter, The Revd Tom Moffatt – Area Dean, The Revd Canon David Winter and The Ven. Norman Russell - Archdeacon of Berkshire .

Finally I would like to thank the parish for the support, help and encouragement that you have given to me in a difficult year.

Sally Wright - Churchwarden

Valley Film Society

The Valley Film Society is nearing the end of its fourth season at East Garston Village Hall on the first Tuesday of the month. We are delighted that each month the doughty social club team open up to serve the thriving & thirsty membership of almost 60 people from the surrounding area.

The bar is open from 7pm until after our interval food break, when most of the audience enjoy a Nippy Chippy supper, delivered from Lambourn.

We were lucky to win a lottery award to fund equipment, especially the purchase of special staging for the seats which doubles up for use as a stage for other village events. It can be lent out by arrangement. Having a block of raised seating makes it easier to read the foreign films subtitles & generally gives better visibility.

Our audience gives each film a rating and so far the top film ever is **Lagaan** (India), the Bollywood Cricket spectacular, shown on Sunday February 1st this year. The other four top scorers are **Kinky Boots** (UK) - Season Two, a comedy about Doc Marten's boot production; **Hotel Rwanda** (GB/US/South Africa/Italy) - Season One, about the genocide in 1994; **The Lives of Others** (Germany) - Season Three, about the Stasi in East Berlin in 1984 and **In the Shadow of the Moon** (UK) - Season Four, a documentary about the Apollo astronauts. The **Ladykillers**, an evergreen Ealing Comedy, **The Constant Gardener**, **The Queen** with Helen Mirren & **Butch Cassidy & the Sundance Kid**, as a tribute to the late Paul Newman, have also been popular screenings. Remaining films this season will be April 7th – **Juno**; May 5th - **Pan's Labyrinth**; June 6th - **Guernica's Children** & for our HADCAF evening on July 7th - **Whale Rider** will be followed by buffet.

Guests are always welcome but for more details please ring me on 01488 72305, email penny.locke@freeuk.com or try www.valleyfilmsociety.org

Season Four membership was £27 concession £18 guests £5. Screenings start at 7.30pm

Penny Brewer- Chair VFS

East Garston Bell Ringers

The main event recently was the wedding of Tessa and Marcus last November. Having been brought together learning to ring at East Garston under Marcus's instruction, we are sad to lose Tessa as a member of the band, but delighted that it is in such happy circumstances. Quarter peals were rung at both East Garston and Beenham to celebrate their engagement, and a full peal at Beenham on the morning of the wedding, with ringers from both towers. (A peal involves ringing a complex sequence of "changes", from memory, and lasts about 3 hours).

On the subject of peal ringing, the Newbury branch of the Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bellringers (to which we are affiliated) recently held a "Quarter Peal Week" including one at East Garston. In all, a total of 25 quarter peals were rung across the area, with a number of "firsts" including East Garston ringers, and ending up with a Branch dinner. The previous month, we had a visit from Peter Furniss who is the tower captain from Garston near Liverpool. Together with other ringers from as far afield as Devon, they rang a quarter peal then set off for home – a long day!

Our band is still making good progress – our young ringers Becky and Jade are doing very well with our rather difficult bells, and the rest of the band continue to improve – there is always something to learn in bellringing! We now have a quote from the bellhangers for the repair of the cracked treble bell – but there is also building work involved (at the moment, the trapdoor to allow removal of the bell from the tower has been boarded over) so we still don't know exactly how much money we need to find. However the very successful fundraising efforts so far have given us a good head start – thanks to all contributors and organisers.

On the social side - after hosting a Branch social event last summer in the Village Hall, Social Club and including a portable "mini-ring" outside, this year we are organising the Branch coach outing – a day out ringing in the scenic area around Stroud, in early May. And in November, we have a day up in London including a visit to the historic Whitechapel Bell Foundry.

As always, we are keen to get new ringers – so if you would like to learn to ring, or are a lapsed ringer who would like to start ringing again, please give me a call on 648373.

Mark Brock - Tower Captain

East Garston Cricket Club

East Garston Cricket Club has had another successful season. Although 7 games out of 22 were rained off or cancelled for other reasons, we won 10 of the remaining, lost 4 and drew in 1.

We have also enjoyed a good year in fund raising. We are attempting to raise money to level the Millennium Field so that we can have a cricket pitch here in the village but this doesn't come cheap and events such as the Car Treasure Hunt, Midsummer Walk, quizzes and the Village Fete are going a long way to helping us and we would like to thank all the local people who have supported us. We would also like to thank the Valley Film Society for donating profits from the showing of Lagaan to the Cricket Club, this was a uniquely enjoyable event bringing together two of the active community groups.

The AGM and awards dinner was held at the Queen Arms this year. Prizes this year were awarded as follows:
Champagne Moment - Arthur Hayes
Player's Player - Arthur Hayes
Most Improved Player - Michael Ellis
Captains' Player - Nigel Hayes

As ever we are looking for new blood of any age or ability to join us. We have regular net sessions on Tuesday evenings from 6pm, resuming in April, and play regularly on Thursday evenings in 20/20 matches and during the day on Sundays in 40 over matches. We are adding some fixtures against new teams and have a one day 20/20 tournament involving four teams this year so the 2009 season will again be very exciting and challenging.

There are many ways in which you can become involved, even if you don't play – if you are interested in umpiring, sponsoring a match ball or some other piece of equipment or just coming along to watch us play then contact the committee on dragon_jones@hotmail.com or check the East Garston website for our fixture list.

Emma Jones – Secretary EGCC

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. We organise an annual safety check by ROSPA and this year we have significantly cut back the hedge with the invaluable help of Chris Tonge and Martyn Donno.
- We organised a visit to the Village Hall by the Watermill Theatre with their production of “Micky Salberg's Crystal Ballroom Dance Band” which was a sell out success.
- We have provided support to the Community Shop which included organising a fund raising Rock ‘n’ Roll evening with The Crystals.
- We participated in the running of last year’s Village Fête.
- We have provided financial support to the Kids Club.
- Having originally helped establish the Valley Film Society in 2005 we have further improved the technical 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 Community Shop

The new purpose built shop is next to the Village Hall on Back Street and is close to completion.

The official opening will follow a ‘preview week’ and will take place on 4th April 2009, at 11.00am with Richard Benyon our MP, accompanied by long standing residents of the village, poised to cut the ribbon. There will be entertainment and refreshments available from 10.00 until 12 noon, including coffee, cakes, face painting for the children and an Easter Bonnet competition. There will, of course, be the opportunity to peruse all the wonderful items and services that the shop has to offer.

Our shop will sell newspapers, local produce, everyday goods, free range products, plants, seeds, compost, coal, logs ice creams, stationery, beers wines, and spirits, local arts and crafts and a lot more.

It will also provide these services: Paypoint, advertisement board, dry cleaning, shoe repairs, laundry service, clothes repairs and alterations, photo processing, parcel drop off point, broadband connection, free local food box delivery, tickets for local events, tea and coffee.

Please come and try us out during the preview week (28th March – 3rd April) and let us know what you think

Shop opening times: Monday - Saturday 07:30 - 6:00pm and Sundays from 07:30 - 12:30 pm

The Post Office will be moving from the Village Hall on 23 April, Monday and Thursday 09:30 - 12:30 pm

Maria Carver

East Garston Parish Community Plan

Following last year's annual Parish Meeting, when it was agreed that a Parish Community Plan should be produced, a group of parishioners volunteered to take on the task. Of the 12, more than half have lived in East Garston for over 25 years.

The Planning Team

Jean Banfield	Micky Highnett
Alan Breadmore	Penny Locke
Vikki Brooks	James Pryer
Deana Carpenter	Chris Tonge
Maria Carver	Martyn Wright
Martyn Donno	Sally Wright
Zak Frost	

Just as a reminder, the aim of this process is to produce a plan of actions designed to achieve a range of improvements or facilities that have been proposed by you, the parishioners of East Garston.

We started by carrying out a brief survey to find out what you thought about living in the Parish, and what improvements you would like to see. Although we had a response from over 30% of you we had hoped that more would have been prepared to give us your views.

This was followed up with a display of the results at the Open Day and the Fete, and many of you came and discussed your ideas and gave further suggestions for which we are very grateful.

A wide range of issues were raised, and to tackle them, we have formed a number of sub-groups to develop the proposals into plans for specific actions. There are, for example, sub-groups for Road Safety, Planning and Development, Technology, Transport, Crime, Sport and Leisure Amenities, the Local Environment and Local Employment.

We will shortly be sending out a further questionnaire to explore in more detail your thoughts about the proposals. To make this a meaningful Plan that is supported by the majority, we really need your input. For example, a lot of people are concerned about speeding, but we now need to know what measures you would like to see introduced. E.g. Speed humps, cameras, more speed limits etc. etc. That is why it is so important for us to know what you think, so please complete the questionnaire when it is sent to you.

We are also looking for more volunteers to help with the work, so if you think you can assist in any way, or if you have any queries about the Plan, please let us know.

Martyn Wright

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 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.

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