

EASTON ROYAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Held in the Village Hall on
Wednesday 20th November 2024
At 19:00

DRAFT MINUTES

Present : Anna PATTERSON (Chair), Ben COOPER (Vice Chair), Tom DOYLE, Beverley HELPS, Paul NARIZZANO, James de PASS, Beverley TURTON, Jerry KUNKLER (WCC), Peta PUYO (Clerk)
3 members of the public

1. Apologies for absence: Emma DICKIE, Megan ASHTON
2. Declaration of Interests – **NONE**
3. Approval of the Minutes of the PC Annual meeting Tuesday 3rd September 2024 – **APPROVED**
4. Report from Jerry Kunkler (Wiltshire Council)
 - Area Board meeting to be held at Rugby Club on Monday, 25th November. Chief Constable is unable to attend. AP has asked JK to convey her apologies as she is unable to attend this time.
 - Grants are still available for this financial year.
 - The PC raised concerns about the costs of elections being passed down to small parish councils. This subject is still under discussion with WCC as many other councils are concerned by this change.
 - The PC shared their continued concerns about the lack of work carried out by the Parish Steward.
 - JK suggests that we write to Samantha Howell, Director of Highways & Transport with regards to the following issues **ACTION PP** :
 - Firstly to thank them for the good work carried out on the Burbage Road where a broken pipe had led to frequent flooding
 - Ask for confirmation of when the road surfacing/potholes would be addressed on the stretch of road between Easton Royal and Burbage as it is already disintegrating.
 - When is the main street down Easton Royal due to be resurfaced as many potholes are forming and the edges of the road falling away.
 - We would like to improve the state of the surface by the church, leading to the church gates. This is PC land and is used by delivery vans, cars turning at drop off and pick-up from school and is in a poor state of repair. The temporary filling of holes by the Parish Steward is pointless. Who should we address for this and how do we apply for it to be resurfaced and improved.
 - Blocked gullies at the bottom of the village and in front of the church and need for the culvert at the bottom of the village to be dredged.

5. Matters arising from previous meeting

Lease Yeomans

Following discussions with the owner of Yeomans, a letter was received by the owner with a proposal to maintain the area owned by the council in lieu of payment of the lease. The PC were grateful for the offer but have declined as there would be a grey area with regards to liability and also the PC were not comfortable with changing the legal arrangement that has been in place for so many years.

EASTON ROYAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Payment of the lease has not been received to date and no further response from the owner. A reminder will be sent from the PC. **ACTION PP**

Preparation of site for shed

Due to weather and work commitments, this has not yet been done. It was agreed that now is a good time to remove the small portion of the hedge required for this and to lay the slabs. The shed will then be ordered. **ACTION BC/PP**

Pigeon spikes

ROSPA approved the use of plastic spikes for the tops of the swing sets. These are to be ordered and installed. **ACTION PP/PN**

Installation of gate JdeP

This is to be done this month. **ACTION JdeP**

6. Clerks Report – Email received from PCAP highlighting dwindling financial support from local parish councils. PC discussed and **APPROVED** a payment of £100. **ACTION PP**
Playground inspection showed little need of remedial work. Thanks to PN and the volunteer team for having cut back some branches both here and next to the post box.
7. Budget and Precept
Each line of the budget was discussed and agreed as attached (annex 1)
The clerk's contractual salary is NALC Scale 6 and a national agreement approved an increase (from £12.42 to £13.05/hr) to be backdated to April 2024. It was **AGREED** with the clerk that this would only be implemented from November 2024.
The PC have been extremely pleased with Last Landscaping's services this year and **APPROVED** their quote for 2025/26 of £3840.
Last year it was highlighted that the approved budget for 2024/25 was only enough to cover forecasted costs and did not cover amounts to be placed in ringfenced reserves. At that time, it was agreed that the 2025/26 should incorporate and include these reserve costs. The proposed increase to a precept of £11350 reflects this.
Ringfenced amounts will be reviewed in the future depending on requirements.
The precept amount for 2025/26 of **£11350** was **APPROVED** by the council.
8. Adoption of Policies – No new policies.
9. Approval of Asset Register. – The location of the trimmers will be changed as BC now has them.
10. ROW
BH reported back from a Walkers are Welcome meeting. The PC are to contact Susie Brew to ask that we be kept informed should there be any issues with EROY 15. **ACTION PP**
The gatepost on EROY 10 requires replacing. BH has one and will ask a group of volunteers to help replace it. **ACTION BH**
Parish Steward to be asked to fill the potholes by the school
Following the completion of SEE works on the pylons, EROY 2 should be returned to its original state by the contractors. This will probably be in the spring now. **ACTION JdeP** for update.

EASTON ROYAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

11. Easton Royal Academy – Megan Ashton was unable to attend the meeting.
12. Items from the general public – NONE
13. Planning- see overleaf
14. Finance – Approval of payments – Payment of grant to Holy Trinity Church **APPROVED** as per budget agreed last November.
15. Proposed dates of next meetings:
 - Tuesday, 4th February 2025**
 - Annual Community Meeting – to be confirmed**
 - Further dates to be agreed**

The meeting was closed at 20h30

EASTON ROYAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

PLANNING:

New Applications since last meeting:

Reference	Details	Decision
PL/2024/09905	EASTON HOUSE Notification of proposed works to trees in a conservation area	Under consultation
PL/2024/08915	EASTON BARNES Notification of proposed works to trees in a conservation area	No objection ERPC No objection WCC

FINANCE:

Payments made (gross):

05.09.24	P.PUYO (SIGN FOR BBALL COURT)	31.42
14.09.24	HUGO FOX (MONTHLY SUBSCRIPTION)	11.99
17.09.24	CLOUD NEXT (DOMAIN RENEWAL)	9.58
18.09.24	CLOUD NEXT (HOSTING RENEWAL)	59.98
26.09.24	ROSPA (PLAYGROUND INSPECTION)	127.20
27.09.24	CLERK SALARY (SEPTEMBER)	279.10
14.10.24	HUGO FOX (MONTHLY SUBSCRIPTION)	11.99
15.10.24	PJ AMOR BUILDERS LTD	678.00
15.10.24	VIKING OFFICE UK LTD (SUPPLIES)	69.41
27.10.24	CLERK SALARY (OCTOBER)	279.10
10.11.24	SLCC ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION	80.00
14.11.24	HUGO FOX (MONTHLY SUBSCRIPTION)	11.99

Payments to approve:

Payment to Holy Trinity Church	£500
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Payments received:

NONE	
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EASTON ROYAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

ANNEX 1

TAX YEAR 24/25	Budgeted	Actual	Difference	Comments	Tax Year 25/26	Reasoning
					Suggested budget	
ADMIN , AUDIT & SUBSCRIPTIONS	500.00	234.86	265.14	HF monthly payments still to pay = £50, Lloyds fees from Jan = £12.75, SLCC subscription to be paid = £100 £162.75	500.00	Increase necessary due to website costs. Subscriptions : HugoFox £120, Cloud Next £60, WALC £96, SLCC £100, Office supplies £110, Lloyds banking £51
BETTERMENT	420.00	226.74	193.26	Cost of village website to be paid H Helps = £70	420.00	Maybe cap expenditure on troughs?
BURIAL GROUND GRANT	500.00		500.00	Still to be paid £500	500.00	
CLERK SALARY	3500.00	1953.70	1546.30	5 months still to be paid at new rate = £1463.75	3750.00	Pay increase has just been agreed (13.05/hr) and should be backdated to April 24. PP will not apply backdate. Due to recent increase in national minimum wage of 6.7% applicable from April 25, expect knock on effect. Allow equiv £20/mth increase
DEFIBRILLATOR	75.00	260.00	-185.00	Pads need replacing every 2 years	100.00	Unexpected expense of fitting new defibrillator. Pads due to be replaced this year
GENERAL REPAIRS	500.00	667.00	-167.00	Bus stop repairs P Amor	500.00	Maintenance to the grass cutting equipment has to be covered here as well as any other general repairs.
GRASSCUTTING & DOG POO BINS	3760.00	535.18	3224.82	This covered mower costs. Shed not yet purchased. £3600 not yet invoiced by Last Landscaping. £3925	4000.00	Due to increase in NI contributions and minimum wages, this has an obvious effect on the cost of grasscutting. £3840
INSURANCE	400.00	433.44	-33.44		435.00	A 3 year contract has been signed. Next 2 years are fixed
PLAYGROUND INSPECTN	120.00	106.00	14.00		120.00	
S137 DONATIONS	125.00		125.00		125.00	Decision to be made re PCAP donation
ELECTION COSTS FUND	100.00	100.00	0.00	ringfenced reserves	100.00	To be ringfenced Elections due in 2025
PLAYGROUND REPLACEMENT FUND	500.00	500.00	0.00	ringfenced reserves	500.00	To be ringfenced
TREE WORKS	300.00	300.00	0.00	ringfenced reserves. Alder trees were trimmed before Y/E 24	300.00	To be ringfenced
Expected spend until end March		6170.25				
Total budget	10800.00				11350.00	
TOTAL PRECEPT	9960.00	11487.17	5483.08			
2024/2025 read				2025/2026 will read		
RESERVES				RESERVES		
ALLOCATED RESERVES	31-Mar-24			ALLOCATED RESERVES	31-Mar-25	
CIL	0.00			CIL	0.00	
ER PLAYGROUND COMMITTEE FUNDS	964.78			ER PLAYGROUND COMMITTEE FUNDS	964.78	Use of these funds to be discussed at Annual Community Meeting
PLAYGROUND REPLACEMENT FUND	1500.00			PLAYGROUND REPLACEMENT FUND	2000.00	
TREE WORK FUND	540.00			TREE WORK FUND	840.00	
ELECTION COST FUND	600.00			ELECTION COST FUND	700.00	
SPEED DEVICE INSTALLATION	1382.91			SPEED DEVICE INSTALLATION	1382.91	Elan City have indicated £2250 per device
	4987.69				5887.69	
Cash in account	13378.00			estimated CASH ACCOUNT BALANCE 31/03/25	13330.00	£19500 - £6170
UNENCUMBERED RESERVES	8390.31			UNENCUMBERED RESERVES	7442.31	
All figures exclude VAT which, if paid, are claimed back.						
Conclusion : The total spend for 2024/25 will exceed the precept as expected. This and some unexpected expenses explains the total and therefore reduced unencumbered reserves in our books.						
The estimated costs for 2025/26 show a sum of £11350. This is explained by the contractual increase to the clerk's salary and the expected knock on effect of the NI and minimum wage increases which will inevitably impact both the clerk's salary and the grass-cutting services in April 2025. Lloyds bank has now imposed charges for holding a bank account with them.						
It is prudent to continue to allocate funds to be ringfenced for a future Playground, Tree works and Election costs. We need to maintain sufficient reserves for uneventualities.						
As remarked this time last year, there was always going to be a discrepancy between the precept and the expected budget costs and that this would need to be addressed again this year. Increasing the precept to £11350 would represent an increase of between £5.11 and £15.34 , depending on your Council Tax Band and would represent an 14% increase to our precept (but an effective increase of just under 11% to each household).						
It was AGREED that the Precept for 2025/2026 be increased to £11350 so as to maintain prudent resources.						