

## Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting (APM) held on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> October 2021

### Present Councillors

Mr Steve Edwards – (Chairman)

Mr Jeff Nicholls

Mr Keith Hudson

Mrs Paula Brown

Miss Ann Brennan (Vice Chairman)

Mr Allan Till

Mr Nick Tindall

Ms Hazel Lambert

### Public

Cllr Pippa Heylings (SCDC - South Cambs District Council) – Climate Change

Mr Tom Abbs – Earith Primary School

Mrs Alison Mottram, Mr Nick Ormesher, Mr Tom Fisher – Sisco Architects

34 members of the public

Mrs Mandy Pink – Parish Clerk

**Apologies for Absence** – Mrs Marilyn Russell, Mrs Louise Reay, Mr Alan Spackman

CC Mr Steve Criswell, DC Mr Jon Neish, Mrs Kate Woods from Eddisons

**Item 1 Climate Change Presentation from Cllr Pippa Heylings** - The presentation focussed on the COP26 global summit and the ways that the countries involved can work collectively to reduce rising levels of carbon emissions. Climate Change is directly affecting the general health and wellbeing of all people in all countries, not just the UK and the entire world is subject to the changing environment that is occurring due to Climate Change. There are many ways that the Parishes can help such as tree planting and global car free days along with other initiatives.

### **A question-and-answer session followed the presentation.**

The Chairman commented that lots of businesses are working towards zero carbon status and much of this work by organisations is not visible. Communication needs to be improved so that people can see what is being achieved.

Cllr Heylings stated that COP26 will feature a clock tower showing the tipping points that action now can help to change. The clock tower will show the amount of time left if no action is taken on one side compared to the progress being made with renewable energy on the other. A visible reminder of what needs to be done.

A resident stated that it is difficult to find information when looking at new projects for buildings. People know what they need to do to achieve zero emissions but who can they get to help them. The costs involved, structural needs of buildings and heating requirements all need to be investigated. Where can we find information about neutral heating systems?

Cllr Heylings stated that SCDC have a list of accredited organisations and an advisory service to provide information. In the East of England retro fitters are being trained about heating and a decarbonisation strategy is to be developed that should lead to large funding opportunities with lots of grants being made available.

A resident asked the Chairman what Earith Parish Council are going to do.

The Chairman commented that the Council are possibly looking to move forward a plastic free community initiative which will be discussed at the next Parish Council meeting in November, but this will need Community action as well and is not something that the Parish Council can do on its own.

**Item 2 – Earith Primary School Report** – Headteacher Mr Tom Abbs gave a presentation update about the school. There is a new governing body supporting the whole school consisting of parents and a Trust representative. There are currently 91 children split over 3 classes and the school is above national average for Special Education Needs. It is hoped that the pupil numbers on roll will rise to about 102-109 next year so that a potential fourth classroom can be added. Forty-nine percent of the school remained open during the Covid restrictions to help cater for a selection of Key Worker/Vulnerable Pupils and teaching staff still managed to deliver a combination of pre-recorded and live lessons each day. The school is involved with many exciting projects going forward and is working with Historic England and the Cambridgeshire Folk Band, The Young Uns so that the Children can learn about the local area, and they can produce their own school song or shanty. The school grounds are part of the Community, and the school are looking to improve the facilities with a possible outdoor gym, new trim trail, and more scooter provision. Monies will be raised to do this and within the last 24 hours a very generous cheque from the local community has been received. There is also a recently set up Breakfast Club. More information can be found on the school website.

**Item 3 – Eddisons presentation regarding 101 High Street** – This item was cancelled due to non-attendance.

**Item 4 – New Village Hall Report from Sisco Architects** – Ms Hazel Lambert gave a brief presentation to the meeting regarding the action taken by the Parish Council to gather information and views from the Village via the Open Village Forums that took place in 2018 and 2019 and the Villagers who attended these forums agreed that a new Hall was needed in the Village. The old Hall needs major improvement work to make it fit for purpose and with no outside green space and a lack of parking a new Hall should really be sited in a new location and so the Council have been looking at two possible sites that can be used. The Architects have been briefed to provide a building that is fitted out with the best materials and equipment to make it as carbon neutral as possible and with this in mind that have provided a concept image that can be seen on the display boards and flyers available at the meeting.

Mrs Alison Mottram from Sisco Architects gave a brief introduction to the Company and how it works and stated that a new Hall will be provided in collaboration with the Village following the suggestions already given and any new ideas that come forward and the final design will be informed by the site chosen as the process of design can only begin when the site is agreed. Mr Nick Ormesher said that the building should be connected to the environment and will be designed to blend in and engage with the countryside. Many items will need to be considered such as flood risk, acoustic design, drainage, security, disabled access, and lighting among others which is why the building will be a reflection of the community designed through a collaborative process and will provide a great facility for the Village to enjoy.

**A question-and-answer session followed the presentation.**

A resident asked why the concept images provided only show one site and the Chairman replied that there are currently two sites under consideration and that further discussion will take place at the next Parish Council meeting in November.

A resident stated that they had not heard anything about the new Hall before this evening and wanted to know how information had been gathered.

The Chairman stated that this had been discussed at several Parish Council meetings and notices were posted on the Noticeboards in the Village and in the Earith Echo village magazine which is delivered to every home in the Village.

Ms Hazel Lambert also reiterated that there had been two open public forums regarding this item. A lot of advertising was carried out via Facebook and the Council email system as well as the Noticeboards and Earith Echo.

Residents queried the potential site at the Recreation Field as there would be noise, disruption, and anti-social behaviour. The area also floods and is in a Conservation area and a traffic survey would be needed.

Ms Hazel Lambert said that the placement of the Hall at this site would make it a great hub for the Village as it is connected to the play areas and the recreation field and that it could be seen from the road so that could possibly mean that anti-social behaviour would not occur as frequently as it does now. There would also be added drainage and security if a new building is installed here.

The other site under consideration is the field formerly known as the ECA field which lies at the end of Vermuyden. Presently there is no direct access to this site, but provision of access is being investigated. This site would provide a location for a new Hall with associated outdoor grassed area and parking. Only a small part of the field would be used for the Hall as open green space is needed in the Village so most of the site would remain fenced off and kept as a field for grazing animals.

Mrs Alison Mottram stated that many of the items noted such as traffic surveys, access, drainage, and lighting etc would all be conditions of the build and would be part of the planning application.

A resident stated that they felt that the site at the recreation field was the best place for the new Hall as Earith was slowly becoming a transit Village with no activity hub and this new building would provide this much needed facility.

The Chairman ended the discussion by stating that all views would be considered and taken back to the Parish Council to discuss at the next meeting in November.

**Item 5 – 20's Plenty Campaign** – The Clerk read out a report provided by the 20's plenty campaign as their representative was unable to attend the meeting. The report focussed on the need to normalise 20mph speeds in the County and gave examples of why this is needed as more accidents occur due to higher speeds being travelled. Lower speeds would be better for the environment and for the people and would improve the lives of those living in the areas where a 20mph limit was evident. There would be a reduction in casualties, an increase in physical activity as cycling would be easier, lower pollution rates would be noted and it would also help to meet the Climate Change obligations. The places that we live in will also be more pleasant and attractive areas. The campaign needs to be supported by the Community and the Parish Council and so it urges the Community to ask the Council to pass a motion showing support for this initiative.

**A question-and-answer session followed the presentation.**

Several residents asked questions about the current speed limits within the Village and the Clerk stated that the MVAS indicators in the village are recording speed data and this data is being given to the Police to be analysed. All speed limits are set by the Department for Transport based on different road criteria and

any changes to the limits need to be passed by the County Council along with speed data and casualty records and Police involvement before a Traffic Regulation Order can be applied for. The County Council Consultation concerning the A1123 is still ongoing, and this will look at introducing some speed reduction measures along the High Street.

**Item 6 Chairman's Report** – The Chairman thanked everyone for coming along and reported that the Parish Council, despite the restrictions placed on them by the Pandemic have managed to keep working via zoom meetings to enable the Village services to carry on during this time. Thanks were given to the Revd. Sheila for her help and encouragement to all Earith Villagers who needed support due to Covid 19. The Village Hall is now open again and Zumba classes have resumed, along with the Second Saturday Café and the WI meetings. The Hall is also host to HGV driver training classes to help with the regeneration programme for the Country now that businesses have opened again. Panto rehearsals are also going ahead at the Hall and the Pantomime this year will be Aladdin.

The Parish Council are also looking to move forward the New Village Hall project following the earlier presentation. Work is also hoped to start shortly on Climate Change issues that the Council can influence, and the Clerk would like to begin a community initiative to help to make Earith a plastic free community. If any residents would like more information on this matter, then please contact the Clerk or attend the next few Council meetings where this idea will be explored further.

The Parish Council will also be moving forward with an event programme for the Pavilion on the Recreation Field when the Charity Commission paperwork is all complete. Some ideas for events have been highlighted in the Earith Echo and feedback from the Village is highly anticipated.

The Parish Council, in conjunction with 7 Squadron have installed a new memorial bench at the memorial at the Bridge and a remembrance service will be held on Thursday 11th November.

There are currently two allotment plots available for hire and you can find out more information from the Clerk.

Even though we are only in October I would also like to inform you that the Christmas Lights switch on will be Saturday 27th November at 5pm. It is hoped that the Hall can be open, and refreshments provided.

This report highlights the major projects that the Council have undertaken or are working towards and with this in mind I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Councillors for all their help. All the Councillors are volunteers, and they give their time and effort to the Village to try and make changes for all residents. Special thanks also need to be given to the Clerk, Village Handyman, Cleaner and Caretaker who all help to administer the Council, Village, and the Hall and who all managed to keep things going even during the unprecedented times that we have all been working in over the last year and a half.

**Item 7 Police Report** – A Police representative was unable to attend the meeting, so the Clerk gave a very brief overview of the crime numbers for the St Ives and Ramsey area noted in June 2021

Violence and sexual offences 130

Anti-Social behaviour 62

Criminal damage and arson 37

Public order 34

The Clerk stated that other information can be obtained from Police.UK website.

**Item 8 Reports from Parish Charities** – Reports were given from:

**Skeeles Education Charity** no 311817 – Rhys Wilson – Chairman - reported via an email read out by the Clerk that 2020 saw an increase in applications for small grants from the Skeeles Educational Charity. Ten small grants were given in November 2020. One to Earith Primary School and nine to residents in the village.

There is a new website where information about the charity can be obtained and application forms for grants can be downloaded. <https://skeeles.yolasite.com/>

Owing to COVID restrictions it has not been possible to meet since the last meeting in Feb 2020 and this may cause some disruption to awards in 2021.

There has also been a formal resignation from Mary Broughton as Treasurer and Secretary on September 16<sup>th</sup> 2021. Mary and the Broughton family have been associated with the Skeeles Charity for many decades now and she will be sorely missed. She will continue to support the charity in an advisory role as we elect a new Treasurer and Secretary. The books are currently up to date. On behalf of the Charity and the Trustees, I would like to thank her for her dedication and expertise.

**Rectors Hall Earith** – The Clerk read out the following report emailed prior to the meeting from Sue Eddy - Secretary. The Trustees of the Rectors Hall are Frederick Eddy (chair) Rev Sheila Anthony, Catherine Berry, (bookings), James Woolstenholmes and Sue Eddy (secretary and treasurer).

Together with our caretaker and cleaner Joy Linnell, we look after the hidden gem of the Rectors Hall. It has been run as a charitable trust since 1977, for the benefit of the village and wider community, and is available to hire at competitive rates. Reductions are given for local groups meeting regularly.

For most of the period of this report the hall has been closed, in line with Covid restrictions. It reopened in April this year for Earith Tiddler group who enjoyed meeting once again. The mums were able to relax while the children were able to play safely in the enclosed garden.

Prior to the hall opening, the facilities for hand washing were upgraded. The hall is always kept lovely and clean.

Apart from the Tiddlers and a monthly Church service, none of the previous regular groups have returned. It may take some time before people feel confident about meeting together.

Obviously there has been no income for the hall during this time, and outgoings (insurance, utilities etc) have had to be paid. Thankfully, a grant from the District Council gave us the support needed to ensure the hall is financially secure and can pay its bills.

The Trustees look forward to the future, when the community can once again enjoy using the facilities of this lovely hall.

**Samuel Saywell Church Causeway Charity** – no report provided as the Trustees have not had a meeting this year.

### **Item 9 Reports from Parish Organizations -**

**Earith Women's Institute** - The Clerk read out the following report emailed prior to the meeting from Ann Campbell – Secretary. Earith W.I. has had a rather different 18 months, primarily because of Covid!

We celebrated the 100th birthday, between lockdowns, in August 2020 with a tea party in our President, Jenny Lloyd's lovely garden. We had individually wrapped cakes and scones kindly made by Andre at the Chelsea Tearoom, Colne Road, Somersham. Everyone was socially distanced, and food was served already packaged. We also supplied suitable fizz!

We have kept in touch with our members via the internet and at various times have delivered flowers, plants, chocolates, and a Christmas gift voucher for a garden centre.

The New Year saw little change. The W.I. have not been able to meet, again Covid restrictions. However, in August 2021 we celebrated the return to near normality with a tea party. Again, in Jenny's garden, and invited members, friends, partners and hopefully some new members.

The first meeting was held in September when we had a talk by Lucy Lewis who was the first female bomb disposal expert! After this we hope to have a full programme into the next year and beyond. Details will be advertised in the Earith Echo.

**Earith Day Care and Friendship Club** – The Clerk read out the following report. Mrs Mary Broughton and the Committee for the Earith Day Care and Friendship club would like to report that after many very successful years of operating they have finally taken the decision to close the Club. This was primarily due to the age demographic of the Committee and the Club members who do not want to take any risks with their health in these uncertain times.

The Club has provided a great entertainment and support facility for the older Village Residents and enabled friends to get together so that they were not isolated in their own homes. A hot cooked meal was always available along with the chance to learn some new crafts and activities. The Committee worked hard to make sure that all members enjoyed their day, and many happy memories were made.

The final monies have been distributed for the good of the Village as follows

£4,500 has been given to the Primary School who are thinking of providing some outdoor gym equipment for the school.

£2,000 has been given to the Skeeles Educational Charity

£1,000 has been given to the Pre-School

And £500 is to be given to the Parish Council to be spent on an item that will benefit the Village.

Any other remaining monies will be distributed to Charities.

### **Item 10 Questions from the Floor –**

A resident asked why Eddisons did not attend the meeting and the Chairman stated that they simply do not have any current updates regarding this development at this time.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.

Meeting closed at 9.35pm

[www.earithparishcouncil.org.uk](http://www.earithparishcouncil.org.uk)