

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting (APM) held on Tuesday 25th April 2023

Present Councillors

Mr Steve Edwards – (Chairman)
Mr Jeff Nicholls
Mr Alan Spackman
Ms Hazel Lambert
Mr Nev Clements

Miss Ann Brennan (Vice Chairman)
Mr Allan Till
Mrs Paula Brown
Mr Keith Hudson

Public - 9 members of the public

Mrs Mandy Pink – Parish Clerk

Apologies for Absence – Mrs Louise Reay, Mr Nick Tindall

Item 1- Chairmans Report - The Chairman opened the meeting and gave his report.

Hello and thank you all for coming along tonight.

I am going to start by thanking the Councillors for all of their help. All of the Councillors are volunteers and they give their time and effort to the Village to keep it clean and safe for all residents.

Thanks must also be given to the Clerk, Village Handyman, Cleaner and Caretaker who all help to administer the Council, the Village and now this Pavilion and between them managed to keep us safe and legal. I would also like to thank the Revd. Sheila for the help she has provided to our Villagers through the last few years and wish her well in her retirement.

The council is involved in a variety of things though the following is not a complete list:

- Looking down drains and reporting status to CC

- Liaising with CC roads team to report issues and try to manage priorities

- Keeping the playground safe, painting the rocking horse etc to ensure that we are able to pass Health and safety inspections. The next is coming very shortly.

- Lopping trees and hedges on Council maintained land to ensure safety and so that they are not overgrown

- Check condition of the footpaths and reporting issues to CC where appropriate

- Liaise with local groups and charities that have an interest in Earith

- Looking after the pond and its surround.

As you can see there is a lot going on that very often is not very visible but keeps everyone busy.

We continue to move forward with a number of village projects including the new Village Hall, managing the closure of the Old Village Hall (Fire Health and safety) and the 20s Plenty programme. Sadly, the Plastic Free communities project has closed through lack of support, however this is a daily activity we can all support from our own homes.

We have a report from the school and if any representatives are present this evening then they will provide updates regarding village organisations and projects, I shall allow them to speak for themselves.

Earith is a community which I think works quite well and I hope you agree with me and together we will continue to build on that in the coming years.

Item 2 – Earith Primary School Report – Headteacher Mr Tom Abbs was unable to attend the meeting but gave the Clerk an emailed report. See below

Organisation - Since the last Earith Primary School update, the school was successful in its bid for growth funding with the Local Authority. In September 2022, a fourth classroom was opened, with 98 pupils currently on roll. Next Academic Year, this figure should rise to approximately 110 pupils, with further talks around future growth in subsequent years currently ongoing.

Covid19 - As you can imagine, Covid19 brought many challenges to the school, not least the disruption to children's progress and subsequent gaps in learning. The school continues to make effective use of government funding in providing additional tutoring to a wide selection of pupils of different ages and for differing reasons in order to support this.

Ofsted -The school was judged by Ofsted as 'Good' across all areas in June 2022. Since our inspection, the school has not 'sat still': we have strengthened the school's curriculum offer and the capacity of our team to deliver even better outcomes for the young people we serve.

On behalf of the staff/volunteers, pupils, parents, Friends of Earith School (FOES), our governors and the Active Learning Trust, we would like to take this opportunity to thank the community of Earith for its ongoing support. Whether it be through your direct involvement with our school/curriculum; charitable donations (of both time and money) fundraising, or supporting/sponsoring school events, our school benefits from all the great people that surround it and – like us – care so deeply about the pupils in our community.

We are currently involved, or have been involved in many exciting events & projects over the past year:

Visitors & Visits - The return of the folk band, The Young Uns: we now have two official Earith Primary School Songs. One steeped in the history of Earith and one focussing on our school culture and values.

Visitors to further enhance the curriculum/aspirations around careers & the wider world this year: Paul

Schofield, a local beekeeper; weekly visits from Pat & Dipsy (Pets as Therapy); visitor from Cambridge Synagogue; Tom Kitching (Author & Musician); Zoological Society of London; RAF Regiment; Animator; Maritime Careers Experience; Garden Designer; Travelling Community; Adrenaline Martial Arts; Young Farmer and Tim Bates, a local Sculptor, Stonemason & Carver. We are always interested in our pupils learning about different careers and life experiences. If you are interested in visiting our school to talk to pupils about what you do, please make contact with me at the school.

This year we have visited Hamerton Zoo, Peterborough Cathedral, The Raptor Centre and Africa Alive – all linked to our curriculum studies. Plans are afoot for this term's visits which already include a trip up the river on a boat (Ladybird Boat Trust) and three others to be confirmed. It was also a pleasure to visit the Earith Woodlands Residential Home at Christmas, class-by-class, and sing for the residents. Our Friends of Earith School (FOES) part-funded the cost of each class trip for £10 per pupil and will do the same again this term. Once again, this is thanks to the proactive FOES and the charitable fundraising/donations from parents and the wider community, which as we all know, at a time of rising fuel costs and the cost of living, makes these trips even more affordable for parents and therefore even more appreciated by our young people.

School Events - Other school events have included, but not limited to: school disco; sponsored danceathon; Quiz night; an outdoor DT & Science day linked to British Science Week; World Book Day & The Giant Picnic (plus other themed reading events); World Maths Day; our Christmas singalong & performances and Easter egg rolling, decorating and hunting events!

We are really looking forward to Healthy Week this year which will encompass many things, including pizza making with Caterlink; dance and Pilates sessions with Tracey from Cambsfit and our annual Sports Day. There will also be plenty more fundraising events with FOES including a sponsored walk around the community, another disco and the return of our class bake sales.

Outdoor Provision - Thanks to generous donations from FOES and the Earith Over 60s Lunch Club, the school installed an outdoor gym last year. This has been incredible. Pupils have been taught how to use it safely and simply dip in and out of the equipment at lunchtimes (when our field is open) in order to keep active and work on their fitness levels. You will regularly see pupils, across age groups interacting with each other whilst working out!

In the last year, we opened 'Cluck Cluck House'. Set by the woodlands, a purpose-built chicken coop housing Elizabeth (in memory of our late Queen) and Arabella. Elizabeth was the only successful chicken we hatched in Reception class, so we got her a friend! We are looking to extend the family this year: plans to hatch again in Reception class this Spring. The children are involved in looking after our chickens, as are a small group of parent volunteers who give up their time to visit weekends and holidays to provide additional love and support.

Wildlife Camera: we have seen multiple examples of wildlife in our grounds over the years and now we are trying to capture some of it – a badger visits regularly! Short videos/stills of what we have captured thus far is available on our website.

Swimming: we opened our pool again in summer 2021 and 2022. We are lucky enough to have a Teaching Assistant who is a trained swimming instructor. Lessons for pupils from Reception to Year 6 start again in the next couple of weeks and run four afternoons a week until the last day of the school year. Our offer exceeds the expectations of the National Curriculum and as you can imagine, costs us a lot of time and money to organise. We are whole-heartedly committed to offering this for as long as we can. Not just because of the obvious gains in terms of physical fitness, wellbeing and enjoyment, but also due to it being a life-skill: our pupils live in a village surrounded by rivers.

School Clubs - We currently offer a Breakfast Club every day and four afterschool clubs a week run by Premier Sports: dodgeball, invasion games, athletics and gymnastics. Volunteers within the community also give up their free time to run a popular sewing and gardening club. We are aiming to offer Aqua Fit again this year in our pool.

Future Challenges - You will have heard from the media that budgets in schools across the country at the moment are especially tight, so you will not be surprised to learn that we are no exception, especially so in fact: a small school means a small budget. Extra capital needs to be raised in order to sustain our curriculum offer and strive towards our school vision, making Earith Primary School the very best it can be. Fundraising supports the things our pupils deserve that otherwise we would not be able to afford, just some of which have been mentioned throughout this report, but what's next?

Future Expenditure - Key funds need to be raised and saved within our budget in order to carry out necessary building works, including redecoration throughout our school (1) and by October 2025, new computers for pupils need to be purchased in order to successfully deliver the Computing, amongst many other aspects, of the National Curriculum. Other IT infrastructure-related improvements also need to be made e.g. purchasing interactive whiteboards/TVs in every class (2).

Concluding Remark -To get a better flavour of school life, you can visit our website; read our recent newsletters; watch our weekly celebratory assemblies; see what Sid the Cygnet (our school mascot) has been up to as well as check out our Reading Blog and Wildlife Camera, amongst many other things. Thank you for taking the time in reading our report and supporting our school. I am happy to answer any questions or queries you may have; these can be made directly to me at the school.

Item 3 – Village 20mph limit to be discussed – The Chairman gave a brief outline of the 20mph speed limit application that the Parish Council can make to the County Council to lower the speed limits within the Village of Earith. The application needs to cover roads that will benefit the Village if the speed limit is lowered. Signage, road marking and traffic regulation orders will need to be provided and this could cost in the region of £18-20,000 depending on the amount of roads included in the application. Each year the County Council will fund the top eight applications, but this funding will be prioritised, and all applications will then be taken in rotation until they meet the criteria needed to be placed in the top eight. If the Village wish to achieve a change to the limits quicker then this will need to be paid for. The Parish Council are hoping to put together a working group to carry out Village consultations to find out if residents would like to see lower speeds within the Village. If the consultations highlight a need for lower speeds, then monies will be placed in the budget each year until enough funding is saved. The residents present at the meeting all agreed that they would like the Parish Council to put together a working group and move this forward.

Item 4 - 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 February 2023

Violence and sexual offences 104

Anti-Social behaviour 28

Other theft 26

Public order 26

All other crime 73

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

Item 5 - Reports from Parish Charities – Reports were given from:

Skeeles Education Charity no 311817 – Skeeles is an educational charity that provides bursaries for books to students in unfunded further education. The application forms are printed in the Earith Echo. Normally 10 bursaries are provided each year. The Charity is a non-fund raising charity.

Samuel Saywell Church Causeway Charity – No report as the Revd. Sheila has not yet been replaced following her retirement.

Item 6 - Reports from Parish Organizations -

Earith Women's Institute – The Earith branch of the WI was on the point of closing earlier this year until a new committee was formed and the group is now meeting again in the Rectors Hall. Five new members have joined, and a new programme of activities has been put together. The meetings are always the third Thursday of each month (except August)

Item 7 - Questions from the Floor –

A resident asked if there is an update concerning the new Village Hall. – No new updates as yet.

A resident asked who was responsible for the upkeep of the cycleway and the hedge – This is the responsibility of the County Council.

A resident asked if the Earith Echo could be printed any earlier as some advertised events were in the past. The printing and delivery of the Echo is according to a schedule. Advertisers are advised of the expected delivery dates when they place the adverts. It is then delivered as quickly as the volunteers are able. Thanks to the delivery team for your help and commitment over the last year.

A resident asked if bins would be provided along the cycleway – The Chairman will investigate.

A resident asked if the planning application for the Mast on the cycleway had been approved - The District Council have refused this application.

A resident thanked the Parish Council for their help with the Envar planning application that has been refused.

A resident asked if planning applications were needed for the installation of telegraph poles in the Village – Planning applications are not needed for telegraph poles or telecommunication cabinets on the Highway.

A resident stated that there have been incidences of dogs on the playing field – If any dogs are seen on the field, then the owners are asked to remove them.

A resident asked if the Parish Council are informed when footways are dug up to provide access for cables and pipes especially for the full fibre installations currently underway in the Village – The Clerk stated that the Council are not made aware of any upcoming works. Traffic regulation orders need to be placed with the County Council by the contractors carrying out the work.

The Church Warden present at the meeting stated that an advert has been placed for a new Vicar at St Marys but it could take between 6-9 months to find a replacement as there is a shortage of clergy at this time.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.

Meeting closed at 8.45pm

These minutes are unadopted

Clerk – Mrs Mandy Pink – 29th April 2023