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**Minutes of the Easton on the Hill Parish Council
Annual Parish Meeting
Held at Easton Village Hall at 7pm on Wednesday 12th April 2023**

Present;

13 residents/village group representatives

7 Councillors; P Bates, P Firth, C Green, R Holwell, I Lawson, T Nicol (Chairman) and J Watson

Ward Councillor Helen Harrison

Clerk: Miss Jenny Rice

- **To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 27th April 2022.**

The minutes of the last meeting were confirmed as accurate and signed by the Chairman.

- **To receive and note reports from;**

1. Ward Councillor, Helen Harrison
2. Parish Council Chairman Tim Nicol's report plus finance report
3. Playing Field Management Committee Chairman's report.
4. Other Parish Council committee and working group reports (Trees and Greens, Traffic and Planning)

See collated reports below.

- **To receive and note reports from village groups;**

The village groups presented their reports as below;

1. The Cricket Club
2. The History Club
3. The Bowls Club
4. The T21 Birch Tree Café Trust
5. The Garford Trust
6. The Village Hall
7. The Horticultural Society
8. Neighbourhood Watch
9. Volunteer Action, Oundle

10. The Little Lane Nursery
11. Friends of Easton Church
12. Cycle path project/Connect Stamford
13. Rockingham Forest Vision

See collated reports below.

- **To receive comment from residents of the village on any other matters of concern.**

There was praise from members of the public for the new fingerpost pedestrian directional signs installed in the village, and also Paul Way wished to make Helen Harrison aware of a positive and pragmatic solution that he had reached with regard to emptying of bins for the churchyard, thanks to the co-operation of the operatives on the collection round.

There was a general theme running through all the group's reports and presentations on the need for "new blood" and more volunteers to step forward to help run the various groups and activities.

REPORT FOR ANNUAL PARISH MEETINGS, 10TH APRIL 2023, WARD CLLR HELEN HARRISON

As North Northants Council approaches its third year, I am pleased to report that we have delivered a balanced budget for our first two years and passed another balanced budget for 2023/24.

As the Executive Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing, I know only too well how important it is to manage and control the spending of tax-payers money and to budget wisely. One of my responsibilities is Adult Social Care, a demand led service whose costs are huge, in fact this is the largest part of the Councils budget costing us well over £100 million each year.

My other areas of responsibility are Public Health, Integrated Health, the refugee resettlement programmes, the Household Support Fund and anything else related to health and wellbeing.

I thought I would now highlight some of the things that would be of interest to you locally

Due to having come in under budget in the year 2021/22, we have agreed to use £1.5 million of that underspend on improving our roads, filling in potholes, cleaning signs, painting white lines, and cutting back vegetation. This is on top of the Highways contract we have agreed with Keir.

We have also been awarded an extra £1.5 million from government for pothole repairs. Now that the winter weather is receding that work will accelerate. Please do keep reporting highways defects on Street Doctor in order that we can prioritise pothole repairs in your area.

The Augean Fund (a revenue and small grants fund for projects within a 10-mile radius of Augean's landfill sites) has opened again for funding applications. The fund supports revenue projects up to £10,000 and capital projects of up to £5,000. The deadline for applying for this year's first round of funding closes on the 12th May.

I have been very pleased to support some great local projects with my Member Empowerment Fund this year; Volunteer Action – Oundle, The Pumptrack – Kings Cliffe Active, and improvements to the Spring Close Pocket Park – Easton on the Hill. Please do remember this fund if you are looking for funding for small projects.

The new Garden Waste service has been launched. The annual subscription rate is £40 per bin, a reduction on the previous service. For those people renewing their existing East Northants subscription, you will get a further discount for your first year of the new service of £20.

Back in October, the Executive Committee confirmed that Fletton Field in Oundle become a public open space, agreed that it was surplus to the Council's requirements, and authorised transfer of the site following the Council's Asset of Community Value process. The transfer will restrict the use to public open space. This is a hugely welcome development and I look forward to the transfer being completed and the land becoming a great local asset for the residents of Oundle and beyond.

Another development this year has been that of the Integrated Care System for Northamptonshire. A key part of the new system is the Local Area Partnerships (LAPs) which bring together key people who can contribute to improving the health and wellbeing of their communities. Town and Parish Councils are important partners in these LAPs and our LAP is East Northants North. I have attached a flyer for the next meeting on the 24th April.

We have a dedicated Cost of Living page on the Council website to direct people to the support that is available. Of particular interest is the page dedicated to the Household Support Fund and how to access that help.

There is so much more going on, but I hope this has given you a flavour of some of the important things we are doing at North Northants Council.

Cllr Helen Harrison

Oundle Ward

Executive Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing

EASTON ON THE HILL VILLAGE HALL ANNUAL REPORT FOR PARISH MEETING – 12TH APRIL 2023

Registered Charity No 272834

Easton on the Hill Village Hall is a registered charity and is governed by a conveyance document and trust deed established in 1976. The Hall is insured through Allied Westminster VillageGuard, a dedicated village hall scheme. The Hall has full insurance cover including employer's liability.

This report focuses on activities for the last twelve months up until 12th April 2023.

This last year has seen the hall usage and occupancy slowly increase post the Covid pandemic. Hall hire income is now c. 5.7K for 11 months of the year compared to c. £4k for the year 21/22 (financial

year end is 30th April). Hall usage in 2022/23 is now approximately 980 hours which is double 2021/22, and occupancy is approximately 25%.

Marketing has again been a major focus for the last 12 months. We continue to develop our website and now feature a calendar of all events with reference to our regular hirer activities. We include an update in the monthly What's on the Hill newsletter. Our Facebook page goes from strength to strength and is our major marketing tool for workshop events. We now have 161 followers and over 2,500 likes. Work has been done on our Google presence so that the hall now appears in venue searches.

Following our pricing review and subsequent price increases in 2022, we have reviewed prices this year and agreed that there will be no increase for 2023. We will continue to review this as energy costs rise.

During the last year we have run several hall managed workshops which have been very popular, and we now have a loyal and regular group of craft enthusiasts attending. We held two very successful book and craft fairs with Friends of Stamford Hospital. The major success of the year was the Open Gardens event run jointly with the Horti Soc which saw income of £2000 split between us and the Horti Soc as well as a £500 donation to T21. Bookings for Hall hire are slowly and steadily increasing, and we have welcomed back the Art Club every Tuesday afternoon as well as a new yoga class for CIPS and a weekly T'ai Chi class. It has been great to see the Hall being used for wellbeing of our village community and we have welcomed the church every week for their fantastic Winter warmer activity. As well as our regular monthly users including Burghley Crafty Patchers and a training group, we also now welcome Thermomix to the hall.

Health and Safety remains a key priority. This year we have carried out the required five yearly electrical condition report with no major issues found. Further emergency exit signage has been put in place. The required PAT testing, fire extinguisher check, and gas safety inspection have all been carried out successfully. In addition, we have conducted an asbestos survey and have no issues to report. A new legionella testing kit has been purchased.

Ongoing maintenance and improvements have included a clear out of the air raid shelter with additional storage space being made available for hall use. The old thermostat and audio speakers have been removed from the hall. We have installed a new Union Jack flag and key safe. Fairy lights and bunting have been put up to enhance the ambience of the hall. A new Wi-Fi contract has been negotiated which has much improved the speed and service levels. Minor repairs have been carried out in the toilets

We are grateful to Patsy Bates for the continued support of managing the Hall Clock and thank her for the weekly winding and follow up with maintenance and any issues. The PC continue to fund the annual service.

Our Treasurer resigned in July and we have struggled to find a replacement and currently operate without a Treasurer with the Chair picking up the financial responsibilities. It is a priority to find another individual to do this role.

We have spent time with Garford Trust trustees to understand the plans for the development of the school hall (Garford Hall) and explore ways of working together. Both sets of trustees agree that we do not want to see ourselves in competition but to build a partnership where we can work together to both benefit our village community. We wish the new tenant of Garford Hall every success in building their commercial venture.

Our focus is now on the hall environment and refreshing the look and feel of the internal space. We are working on plans for internal redecoration of the hall, new curtains, repairs to the front door and fire exit doors, new AV equipment and repairs to the gate. We are considering any available grants to help fund these enhancements.

Our business plan for 2023 includes holding more joint events, for example with the Horti Soc and FOSH, running more hall managed events, to increase the number of village events as well as more regular weekly hirings.

We look forward to a busy year where the hall continues to build itself at the heart of our village community as a centre for socialising, meetings and village and local events.

ANNUAL REPORT 22/23 FRIENDS OF EASTON CHURCH

The Friends of the Church continue to organise and contribute to regular maintenance of the church building, the churchyard and the peace garden. Many of you will have seen Jeff Davies' report in this month's What's on the hill, which explains the development of the churchyard to increase the diversity of plants and animal species which has been led by Jeff and Tim very successfully, as well as providing a peaceful space for graves and mourners. Regular clear outs by volunteers has helped keep the areas safe and beautiful for its many visitors.

The church building itself has historical and spiritual meaning and is a constant challenge for maintenance. It is a Grade 1 listed building and our aim has always been to keep the church open and used by everyone. A plan is being formed to reorder the church for the future, by a small steering group, who will fully consult with the village. We are well aware of other funding projects in the village over the past few years and respect that.

The church itself has wonderful acoustics and Emma Hanson has developed the idea of church singalongs on several occasions, making singing fun and having a bar for the evenings. These are to continue during the year.

It has been good to see how successful the Winter warmer coffee gatherings in conjunction with the village hall have been. They are going to continue as summer socials as follows;

Winter warmer continues for two more Mondays, 17 & 24 April.

We then commence our monthly Summer socials on the 5 June and continue on the first Monday of each month until November when we once more will commence the Winter warmer on a weekly basis.

Changes are happening within the church organisation. Our curate, Keir, is moving on to pastures new, but we are all grateful for his development of a fully inclusive church not only at All Saints, but outside and in the Blue Bell. His team of Sue, Debs and Emma have all been part of this success too. The Rev Eddie Smith will be joining the benefice in June.

The friends of the church has a small committee which meets every few months. We would be grateful for new talent to help inspire us all, so if you are interested, please contact Robert Woodfield, our chair.

Pat Firth
Friends of the Church

EASTON ON THE HILL HISTORY GROUP ANNUAL REPORT, APRIL 2023

1. We have continued to host nine meetings a year. The talks have been wide ranging and have included 'The bestselling book of all time, How the Bible developed' by Rev Keir Dow and the 'Stamford Racecourse' by Paul Way. Attendance has been very good, usually well over 30.
2. Any village history is of interest to us so we continue to collect material which could be archived.
3. We try to answer queries received on the village website or through social media. These are usually from people inquiring about their relatives.
4. We plan to develop our website and the archive.
5. We recently helped Tinwell discover who brought back their Altar Cross from the Somme. As a follow up Cheryl Dobbs, our new committee member, will be transcribing the Rev. Percy Hooson's War diaries with a view to publish them.
6. There has been a big development in our research into the village's Victorian Water Supply, we hope to arrange a tour later in the year.

Ian Lawson, **History Group**

THE BOWLS CLUB

It was reported that the bowls club are continuing until the end of the year, and that they need support from volunteers to continue further. They are playing other games other than just bowls and enjoy eg pétanque and are open to any similar games people are keen to try/introduce.

Ian Lawson, Bowls Club

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH REPORT EASTON ON THE HILL MEETING 12 APRIL 2023

Neighbourhood Watch has launched their BETTER PLACE TO LIVE campaign – the biggest recruitment drive in recent times to boost community participation and reduce both the fear and likelihood of crime. The campaign will run until the end of the year and will be delivered in towns, cities and villages across England and Wales. The campaign will have a particular drive during Neighbourhood Watch Week (between 3rd-9th of June). It has also been launched on social media platforms and the Neighbourhood Watch website. The campaign encourages greater participation in the nation's largest voluntary crime prevention movement. John Hayward-Cripps, CEO of Neighbourhood Watch said: *"The cost-of-living crisis and the pandemic have highlighted the importance of neighbourhood and community connections in tackling loneliness and isolation, as well as our vital work in crime prevention. We have a proven track record of bringing communities together and helping them to feel safer in a more uncertain world."*

Easton on the Hill presently has 87 members and the clerk of the Parish Jenny Rice has done her best to keep members informed and I appreciate what she has done. But Jenny does not live in Easton on the Hill and the Scheme is in need of a Co-ordinator.

Co-ordinators and Deputies have access to the membership online so it is much easier to keep in contact. The facility is there to edit the scheme to encourage membership and also to send out messages.

Members can choose the types of alerts that wish to receive and from which Information Providers for example Neighbourhood Watch, The Police or Action Fraud etc. There are currently 8 providers. This does not mean you would be inundated with alerts as you only receive alerts pertaining to your area.

Co-ordinators these days can register a member from their smart phone. The proviso is that the new member will have to consent to join the scheme and verify their email in just a click.

Also available to Co-ordinators is the Knowledge Hub available on smart phones or computers. There is support on the hub and opportunities to join the conversation on the forum from other Co-ordinators. (To join the hub go to <https://www.ourwatch.org.uk/knowledge-hub> Once a member go to www.ourwatch.myhubintranet.com)

Any new Co-ordinator or member should receive automatically a member's pack.

Neighbourhood Watch is evolving all the time, keeping up-to-date with the times. It is the best crime prevention association across England and Wales and strives to bring communities together.

A Co-ordinator is the main point of contact for members when issues arise but there are others that Co-ordinators can turn to for help if needed. NHW has a very good relationship with the police and often local councils can advise if the problem is under their jurisdiction.

If anyone is interested, please speak to Jenny Rice who can supply my contact details.

Thank you.

Christine Mackenzie, MSA East Northants

12TH APRIL 2023 REPORT FROM THE LITTLE LANE NURSERY EASTON ON THE HILL

The Little Lane Nursery in Easton will be 5 years this summer and continues to be a full day care setting, open all year round catering from 6 weeks to 5 years of age. We open at 7.30am and close at 6.30pm 51 weeks of the year. We employ 19 staff 2 of those live in the village and we have 69 children on roll of which 13 families within that live in the village also.

The Nursery comprises of 3 main classrooms which flows out onto 3 large outdoor gardens and an outdoor classroom with a yurt and log burner. All of the staff and children enjoy exploring the village for regular daily walks, the use of the park and woodland area. Our Forest School have done many Forest School sessions there with their Forest School Leader and they have met a group of children from our Stamford site as well to show them how amazing it is.

The children thrive from the engagement of everyone in the village when they are out and about from waving as we walk by to those that come and speak with us about our day. In September we will hold an open afternoon to allow local residents to come and have a look around the setting to see what it is we offer children and families locally.

We are very aware of the traffic & parking along the road and have tried to adapt things to try to support this and decrease the impact on residents. We do welcome any feedback from local residents and would happily discuss any ideas. We continue to enjoy being part of such a friendly and caring village.

The Little Lane Nursery, New Road, Easton on the Hill PE93NN

easton@littlelanenursery.com 01780752220 www.littlelanenursery.com

EASTON GARFORD TRUST

- The aim of the trust is to support the educational needs of the village by providing space / facilities for education or to generate income

- Grants: After successfully award of a grant from Augean, significant renovations have been completed to create the Garford Hall
The hall will complement the existing Village Hall, offering an additional space for community use - education and wellbeing
There is now a separate entrance, new toilets/heating/lighting, small kitchen and a super new hall space.
 - Via another grant a number of new tables and chairs are available
 - For at least the next twelve months The hall will principally be used by Emily Thornham - a registered physiotherapist, who will be running some Pilates classes, a young mothers class and one to one on reforma Pilates and treating one to one physiotherapy patients .
 - Also T21 will use the facilities currently for two sessions a week . there are also a number of slots available for additional bookings - we are looking at longer term regular bookings (min 12 hrs)
- If you're interested in having a look around, then contact either Steve Forster myself or Emily Thornham who will be managing any bookings.
- Income generated from hall hires will enable the Garford Trust to continue to provide educational grants.

CYCLEPATH PROJECT/CONNECT STAMFORD - JO WILLIS

The Greenway Slate Trail is an initiative to develop improved cycle connectivity between Stamford, Easton on the Hill, Collyweston, Duddington, Fineshade Woods and Kings Cliffe. It has had enormous advice support from North Northants Council, and is supported in principle by the various Parish Councils.

During the Autumn of 2022, Burghley Estates, and the MOD at Wittering, both agreed in principle to some of their land being included in a Feasibility Study looking into various route options for cycle paths. Although referred to as cycle paths, the paths will be open to pedestrians as well.

In November 2022, an application for funding the Feasibility Study was submitted to the Augean Revenue and Small Capital Grants fund. This application was made in the name of Connect Stamford, which is an existing CIC promoting a “Green Wheel” route around Stamford,

In January 2023, a grant of £9,000 was awarded for this Feasibility Study.

Jo Willis is now a Director of Connect Stamford and is in the process of becoming Treasurer. The first activity in this role is to set up a bank account to receive the grant. This is proceeding slower than anticipated.

It was intended that the field work for the Feasibility Study would be taking place this week, having commissioned Nicholsons in Corby to undertake the work. Nicholsons are a consulting business in landscape architecture and woodland management. This work has had to be delayed until a bank

account has been successfully opened.

Once the Feasibility Study Report is complete, it will be available to all that wish to read it, and discussions will take place with all interested parties, including the 4 Parish Councils in the study area.

After agreeing preferred route options, the project team will seek funding for significant capital grants to deliver the project. It is expected this will take several years.

BUILDING THE LINKS FOR ROCKINGHAM FOREST

- Guided walks and events, including 'bioblitz' wildlife recording events in Corby
- Training – for example: how to identify various wildlife, woodland management.
- Supporting parishes and towns to map their wildlife and plan for its recovery.
- Training and supporting people to be tree or river wardens.
- Expanding and promoting other volunteering opportunities and supporting groups.
- A small community grant scheme for environmental projects
- Training Forest School Leaders in schools in Corby.
- Teaching Trees school trips for Corby schools.

This partnership project aims to reconnect people to the habitats of the historic Rockingham Forest in North Northamptonshire. Using over £300k of funding, including £250k from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, the partners will be running a wide range of activities and opportunities.

Rockingham Forest Vision have joined forces with Nene Rivers Trust to oversee this exiting project. The other partners include: North Northamptonshire Council, Royal Forestry Society, Wildlife Trust BCN, North Northamptonshire Biological Records Centre, East Mercia Rivers Trust, Hazel Woodland Products, Butterfly Conservation, Natural England and Forestry England. Other local organisations are supporting the project. The project employs a Senior Project Officer, Corinne Muir corinne@neneriverstrust.org and Project Officer, Sophie van den Bergh sophie@neneriverstrust.org and will also place a Forestry Roots trainee.

For more info and event dates visit: How can people get involved? Find out more at www.rockinghamforest.org.uk

VOLUNTEER ACTION, OUNDLE – SEE SEPARATE FILE/NEWSLETTER



Apr23 Monthly
newsletter Volunteer



Annual-Newletter
Volunteer Action AP

CRICKET CLUB REPORT

A Cricket Club committee member gave a verbal update on the club. It is holding its AGM on Wednesday 10th May at 6.30pm in the cricket club pavilion. It is hoping to continue the committee of the club and the lease on the land with the Parish Council. Although it will be just doing social games and the Burghley 6s this year, it is looking to build up the club again with new members and players and enter league matches next season.

BIRCH TREE CAFÉ

The report for the café is included in the Chairman's report below.

PARISH COUNCIL CHAIRMAN'S REPORT – SEE SEPARATE FILE BELOW.



Parish Meeting
Presentation 2023 T1

Finance report for end of year – see also Chairman's report for headlines.

End of year 22/23	BUDGET	ACTUAL to date	% spent
Basic payments (excl VAT)			
Staff costs inc hmrc	10710	11,830.77	110%
Staff other costs HO, miles	444	£ 468.12	105%
Audit, int and ext	575	£ 585.00	102%
Memberships subs	664	£ 595.89	90%
Insurance	1200	£ 1,136.74	95%
Cllr/Clerk training	900	£ 188.00	21%
Cllr travel	100	£	0%
Admin, bank	100	£ 285.18	285%
Room hire	400	£ 394.00	99%
Website & email	500	£ 463.00	93%
Parks & Open Spaces grass, PF	2000	£ 2,450.00	123%
Parks & Open Spaces grass village	2000	£ 1,635.50	82%
Maintenance PF, incl caretaker	500	£ 1,454.39	291%
inspections	200	£ 370.00	185%
Asset Maintenance, grit, defib	610	£ 676.76	111%
Trees survey/works	1100	£ 1,100.00	100%
Lighting, total	2380	£ 2,270.39	95%
S137 payments	400	£ 434.00	109%

Other payments (not in budget)		£ 135.00	#DIV/0!
Total payments	24783	£26,472.74	107%
Reserves/projects SPEND	Budget	Spent	
General reserves	3000	£ 4,429.00	lighting and new signs *
LGR/Tgn	200	£ -	
Election	300	£ -	
Website/other	2250	£ -	
Ketton Drift/footpaths	1000	£ 306.74	
Playing Field	3250	£	
Total project spend	10000	£ 4,735.74	47%
Other expenditure, from grants		£35,834.26	Includes play equipment invoice from last year
Grand total expenditure	34783	£67,042.74	
Receipts ex vat reclaims			
Precept	35172	£35,172.00	100%
Allotments	140	£ 167.25	119%
Bank interest	0	£	#DIV/0!
Donations to PF		£ 1,115.53	#DIV/0!
Grants		£ 8,811.00	#DIV/0!
Hire income		£ 2,135.00	#DIV/0!
Rent CC		£ 14.58	#DIV/0!
Grand total income	35312	£ 47,415.36	134.28%
RESERVES			
Start of 22/23	Earmarked reserves		£ 34,060.00
	General reserves		£ 10,550.00
Bank balance end March 2023			£23,323
	earmarked reserves		£ 8,728.00
	general reserves *		£ 14,595.00

Notes

- **Basic expenditure** is 7% over budget
- Budget headings with **greatest variances** are
 - Staff costs with a higher than expected national pay rise
 - Councillor training and travel and clerk training only 22% spent
 - Admin costs higher than expected
 - Maintenance costs at playing field include caretaker costs (income from football pitch hire below offsets this)
 - Play inspections higher than budget due to extra post installation one

- **Project spend** is underspent at 47% due to playing field project/reserves not spent, village website changes addressed in alternative way, footpaths project monies will be carried forward.
- **Total expenditure budget** includes a play equipment invoice of 30k relevant to the previous year, and the remainder is all grant expenditure ie Woodland Area grant of £2550, Road Safety grant of £2875, NNC/Spring Close grant of £500 and Augean grant remainders. (This coming year starts with the Augean grant of 10k towards the power supply at the playing field pavilion.)
- **Reserves levels** are built up from general reserves at the end of 21/22 of 10k, to 15k at the end of 22/23. This is taking into account additional expenditure taken from reserves for street lighting repairs/improvements and new fingerpost signage.

EASTON ON THE HILL PARISH COUNCIL PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT 12 APRIL 2023

1. Councillor Tony McAllister has joined the Planning Committee of Councillors Ian Lawson, Claire Mountain, Jerry Watson and Simon Woodman.
2. The Committee has met during most months and has considered an average of 4 applications each time. Agendas are always posted to the council website and notice board 3 clear days before the date of the meeting.
3. Members of the public have attended on several occasions.
4. Most of the applications have been for the improvement to properties or the removal/pruning of trees and most have been supported. There is an outline application for a 44 bed care home on land at the rear of the Exeter Arms that a decision is still outstanding on, and a recent application for 3 houses on Orchard Way was refused and has gone to appeal.

Ian Lawson

Councillor and Chair of the Planning Committee, Easton on the Hill Parish Council

EASTON ON THE HILL PARISH COUNCIL TRAFFIC WORKING GROUP REPORT.

The parish council now have 3 speed detector devices. One has failed this year and a new one was purchased about 7 months ago.

This new one is solar powered and is on the main road opposite Cath cottages facing traffic come out of Easton (it does record data from both directions.) The data is easily downloaded, and a report can be produced.

Here is some of the data. From the 172 days it's been operational

Total number of vehicles 859961 Av of just over 5000 a day

456199 from Easton to Colly Highest number per hour 305

403762 from Colly to Easton Highest number per hour 325

Speeds Easton to Colly Colly to Easton

<40	92.7%	89.9%
40-50	6.5%	9%
50-60	.75%	.7%
60-70	.08%	.12%

A 2nd new one is hopefully going to be applied for from grant funding and this one will maybe replace the one on the Stamford side of the village to get a good data collection.

Councillor Simon Woodman

PLAYING FIELD MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

It has been another busy year for the playing field management committee , I shall break this report into two sections

1) Achievements over the last year

2) Future plans and challenges

Achievements

In May 2022 we finished phase two of the playing field action plan namely installing the final pieces of the new equipment , this was finished on schedule and there has been a marked uptake of people of all ages using the equipment . - A real success story as we have a play area to be proud of . The Gazebo was erected in August - this was funded as part of the woodland project grant and can be used as a classroom . There are now fixed benches and the gazebo provides welcome shelter for

those using or supervising in the play area. The woodland walk has been extended and there is now a bug hotel , this has converted a unused scrubby woodland area into a great asset of the playing field . 150 new trees have been planted at the entrance of the woodland area and all along the boundary fence in in that area ; last summer was brutal for new trees and we await to see the survival rate . T21 are nurturing some more trees to be planted in due course.

We have secured a grant to run a electric power cable up to the pavilion and work to lay the cable is due to start in May . We now use the services of Jerry Rawlinson to act as a caretaker on a self employed basis .

Future plans / Challenges

Having finished phase two of the improvements we are now actively looking to embark on phase three. We are currently in consultation with the village to ask what the next phase of developments consists of . There was an open village meeting on 22/3/23 , where Kevin Cox gave a presentation outlining the current ideas , A MUGA , A “pump” bike track , more fitness equipment , restoration of the pavilion . All of the above have significant funding requirement and it is vital that we target our efforts as to providing what the village wants rather than what we think it wants .

Engagement of the village seems to be a challenge and I would urge people to voice their opinions . The woodland walk will continue to be developed The car park has proved to be a bit of a problem , with flooding and mud , and we face the challenge of remedying this problem . The relationship with the playing fields management committee and the cricket club needs re evaluating , the future of the cricket club appears uncertain . We are actively trying to improve this relationship and to understand what sort of cricket club is wanted in the village . There are serious implications to available funding streams to improve the pavilion dependent on where that pavilion sits within the village assets . With the provision of power to the pavilion there is an opportunity to utilise this facility more . As part of the success of the improvement of the playing field and its regular use by Wittering football club, there has been a significant increase in the number of people using the playing fields. This increase carries with it a challenge as we have seen an increase in antisocial behaviour, littering , vandalism and due to its position an increase in people using the bridelway to access the fields . I would point out that the vast majority of people who use the fields do so in a respectful way and it’s a small minority who cause the problems , never the less it is a challenge we are aware of and do try to remedy .

A constant challenge is trying to get more people involved in helping , we are constantly looking for more people to join the committee , and as mentioned above we need more engagement from the village in voicing their opinion as to what they would like doing in the future , (even if that is leave it like it is !)

I would like to thank all those who have helped in making the achievements happen , even it be planting a tree, picking up litter or helping to erect the gazebo .

I would particularly like to thank Kevin Cox, Simon Woodman , and Jerry Rawlinson for all they do for the playing fields, the village owes them a huge debt of gratitude .

Jerry Watson, Chairman 10/3/23

TREES AND GREENS WORKING PARTY

...continue to maintain and improve the green spaces within Easton-on-the-Hill.

- Following the work undertaken after the falling tree, in 2021, a professional tree surgeon has removed further trees that were showing disease.
- Owing to the extreme movement of the Poplars in Spring Close during High Wind, the committee has taken additional advice regarding their safety. The advice was that they are still relatively young and should be structurally safe. These will be inspected more frequently.
- A village working party spent a day in June clearing out the pond and tidying up around Spring Close.
- A grant was obtained to enhance Spring Close. A Rowan tree has been planted to commemorate Queen Elizabeth II. New railings are planned to replace the rotten ones.
- There will be another Spring Close tidy up in the early summer, and a further spruce up in preparation for the new Polish War Memorial launch.
- DofE volunteers have cut various hedges etc.
- Cllr Woodman has continued with the planting woodland trees as part of the jubilee celebrations in conjunction with the Playing Field Management Committee.

Cllr Chloe Green, on behalf of Trees and Greens Working Group