



EVERSHOLT PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PARISH

Tuesday 28th May 2024 at 8.15pm

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish 30th May 2023
3. Matters arising
4. Councillor M Gabrys - Report of Parish Council Chairman
5. Councillor J Baker – Central Beds Council Report
6. Representatives from Village Organisations
 - 6.1 PCC – Anna Blomfield
 - 6.2 Parochial Charity
 - 6.3 Swimming Pool
 - 6.4 Village Hall
 - 6.5 Website
 - 6.6 Cricket Club
 - 6.7 Eversholt Lower School
7. Public Participation

Signed: *Karen Barker*

Mrs K Barker
Clerk to the Parish Council
8 Bloomsbury Close
Woburn
Beds
MK17 9QS

Eversholt Parish Council AGM May 2024

The Parish Council meets on the last Tuesday of the month (except in August and December) at 7.30pm in the village hall and these meetings are open to everyone. I would like to express my thanks to all of our councillors for all of their hard work, dedication and support.

We continue to address day to day matters such as potholes, hedges impeding the highway, overgrown verges at road junctions and other issues which affect our environment here in Eversholt. We endeavour to ensure that such issues are dealt with as speedily as possible by Central Bedfordshire Council and/or private landowners.

There was considerable damage done to the railings at the recreation ground. Two oil tankers were parked in the vicinity of the damage and the companies were contacted and said that they would investigate, we also looked at CCTV footage but there was no actual proof as to what actually happened. We are investigating costs to repair this damage and other historical damage. We continue to look at having the railings painted.

Part of the repaired bank at Brook End collapsed and this has now been made good. Various roads have been surface dressed and we now are waiting for the SLOW sign to be painted back on the road before the bend approaching Church End from Witts End as this was missed when other road markings were done.

The footpath from Tingrith Road to Castle Farm has now been recognised by the Development Management Committee.

Three residents who live near to the noticeboards as well as the Clerk to they Parish Council have now got keys for the noticeboards so it will be easier for residents and groups to have information displayed.

Following the information we received informing us of the erection throughout the village of outbound and inbound bus stops for the new bus service due to start in June 2024, we requested a meeting with the Senior Public Transport Officer at Central Bedfordshire Council to discuss the plan and to explain that we did not want extra unnecessary street furniture. It was agreed that existing sites of public footpath/bridleway poles would be used where possible meaning that only three new sites would be needed. Only one pole for both outbound and inbound would be at each stop. The poles are black heritage poles with a finial and flags (a cross pole near the top) and they would be at the minimum height required. However, two poles were erected incorrectly; one will be moved to where was agreed and the other removed completely. This will be done when the finials and flags are ready for installation.

We continue to fund the purchasing of daffodil bulbs which are planted by a group of volunteers, in the grass verges around the village. We are grateful for their hard work as it definitely improves our environment. We are also grateful for the group of volunteers who tidy around the churchyard and who have also tidied around the phone box and the millennium pond. We are now looking to have some planters positioned in the village to further enhance our environment. It has been decided that this year, we will place one by the Eversholt village sign near the church and the cricket pavilion.

In October 2023, HRH Princess Ann attended a seminar held in our Village Hall on Affordable Rural Housing. The Eversholt school children came after the seminar to see her and we are now considering installing a plaque to commemorate her visit.

Having a Neighbourhood Plan is essential if we are to protect the things we feel are important to our village, for example, the protection of the nature of the "Ends". Without a Neighbourhood Plan, we could be vulnerable to any changes in government and/or council policies going forward. We have asked for volunteers to be on a committee to take the plan forward but, as yet, we haven't been inundated with names. We will continue to ask as this is not something that the Parish Council can do alone as residents must also be involved in the designing of such a plan.

Planning applications are always discussed and considered in the light of any resident's concerns or support. We submit our decisions to Central Bedfordshire Council and the final decision is theirs.

We are grateful to Lizzie Barnicoat and the village volunteers who coordinate, edit and distribute About Eversholt to every house in Eversholt. The Parish Council and Eversholt Parochial Charity continue to fund this publication.

The Parish Council is actively supported by our District Councillor John Baker, and he adds an extra voice to any issues not being dealt with in a speedy manner by Central Bedfordshire Council.

The minutes of our meetings can be found on the website.

Report to Eversholt Parish Council AGM on 28th May 2024:

Eversholt Church activities in the last year.

As I reported last year, we were very happy to welcome the Reverend Rachel Snow as our new Rector in March '23 and she has been leading our services since then. Unfortunately for her, she did have to take some time off when she wasn't well but she is fit again now and fully back to work, taking our Holy Communion service at 9.00 o'clock on the first Sunday of each month and Evensong at 5.00 o'clock on the third Sundays, with drinks and refreshments afterwards, so we can extend a social welcome to anyone who would like to come.

Rachel has also been guiding the members of the Parochial Church Council through a new Safeguarding procedure which the St. Alban's Diocese has asked us to study. It seems rather complicated but basically it asks us to be aware of the wellbeing of the congregation. We had to take a test on it, which some of us were rather hesitant about, but we all managed to pass!

Our Churchwarden, Rita Chidley, sadly stood down in September and Dunstan Arthur very kindly took over. He has been training as a Lay Reader which has meant that he could take some of our Church services while Rachel was ill, which is very helpful.

The other members of the PCC were Churchwarden Ann Clarkson, secretary Carolyn Howell, treasurer Chris Hawkes, organist Richard Ireland, with Sandy Smith, Mary Summers, Clare Faysse and myself, but Chris resigned in April, and Andrea Cawthorne has very kindly taken on the job of Church Treasurer. We are also grateful to Sandy Smith who has taken over Rita's role as organiser of the Church flower arranging team.

Now we have another new job. We are looking for a new secretary because Carolyn Howell is planning to move away from Eversholt. She wants to be nearer her family up North. She has been involved with running the Church for a very long time and she will be sadly missed. We do hope someone will offer to take her place.

Carolyn has been very instrumental in organising a new sculpture to go on the top of the war memorial to replace the St. Michael which was stolen. It is a design of a cross with poppies around it and we hope to see it installed, at last, this June.

Carolyn has also been striving to get the stone work repaired on the tower window. Hopefully this will happen in July but it will need scaffolding to be erected so it will be a major operation and it has been difficult to find anyone to commit to doing the work.

Concerning our finances, we just about broke even last year but we will need to do some fundraising this year to be able to keep up with our expenses. Please keep an eye on the Eversholt News WhatsApp to see what is planned.

We are of course very grateful for the churchyard money from the Parish Council but we would appreciate an increase to help cover our expenses which always manage to go up.

However, I must say how very grateful we are to all the volunteers, those who ring the bells, the men who maintain the churchyard, the ladies who do the flower arrangements, and to Eversholt School who encourage the children to sing in the Church and to make wonderful Easter gardens and Food Bank donations.

And now we have a new choir who practice in the Church which is a lovely way for the Church to expand into the community. We look forward to everyone's continuing participation in the coming year.

Thank you.

Eversholt Cricket Club – the 2023 season reviewed

The 2023 season had mixed results on the field for the club. The newly-promoted Saturday first team comfortably retained their status in Division 2A of the Herts League but the Sunday first team, punching above their weight for several years in the Premier division of the Beds League, were relegated despite a spirited struggle. Sadly, this led to a number of players leaving the club to continue to play Premier division cricket this year and the Club has had to disband this team.

The Sunday second team also comfortably retained their Beds League Division 2 status and the newly formed Saturday second team, consisting mainly of former Junior players, their fathers and a few other old lags performed well in the Beds Invitational League.

A pleasing feature of the season was the continued strength of the Junior Section, with over 80 children of all ages and both genders training on the ground on Friday nights. The Club fielded two sides at under 11, an under 13 and an under 15 side on weekday evenings and Sunday mornings.

Off the field, the Club finished in a good financial position, helped by record bar takings fuelled by Junior parents on Friday nights and villagers at Sunday afternoon “Last Session” events. The Club is most grateful to all those who volunteer on both Fridays and Sundays.

This year, 2024, is a “Lashings year” and the club will host the game on July 4th. The event should contribute strongly to club funds and there are plans to level the playing square to decrease the risk of flooding in bad weather and to undertake some cosmetic actions around the ground.

This has been another highly successful year, with the school continuing to go from strength to strength. We are delighted to have a full cohort starting Reception in September. We have a fully staffed team of high-quality teachers and teaching support assistants. We will be looking for a new Site Manager for the new school year if anyone knows of anyone who would be interested.

Our new sensory garden and Forest School land, generously acquired from the Duke of Bedford, have been fully utilised, allowing all children to attend weekly Forest School sessions.

In November, we had our long-overdue OFSTED inspection (the previous one was in 2009), and we are proud to announce that the school achieved 'Good' in all areas. One area highlighted for improvement was our offering of extracurricular clubs. Currently, we offer a diverse range, including choir, multi-lingual classes, gardening, tag rugby, football 2 music, dance, and STEM. When comparing our offerings to local schools in our pyramid, I can proudly say that Eversholt, despite being a small school, offers the best variety.

The number of SEND children has increased over the year, and our inclusive provision was highlighted as a significant strength in the recent Ofsted report. We have 13% of our students on an Education Health Care Plan or the SEND register, compared to the national average of 15%. Our SENDCo works tirelessly to ensure we meet all needs.

This year, 66% of our children will be transitioning to Parkfields, our feeder school. Another 17% will be moving on to Fulbrook, and the remaining 17% will be attending private schools in Bedford.

Like many schools, our budgets have been tightened, and this year, we faced unforeseen costs due to issues with the boilers, drains, and leaks. Our fundraising team is superb, frequently organising social events that include the whole village, as the school is an integral part of the community. We are immensely grateful to the Eversholt Charity for their continued support.

Looking ahead, we are currently working on becoming an OPAL (Outdoor Play and Learning) school, aiming to provide all children with quality play experiences. We plan to revamp our outdoor area, particularly for Early Years and hope to bring in more visitors to make learning come alive for the children.

**VILLAGE HALL & RECREATION GROUND CHARITY
REPORT OF THE CHAIR TO THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING (May 2024)**

OPERATIONS

2023 was a busy year in terms of activity. The Hall is well used by the village with regularly sessions for the Lizzy Lunches, Chair Yoga, young farmers and meetings of village committees.

The biggest source of income for the Charity is the hire of the Hall for weddings. 2023 was again very busy with 43 weddings held, perhaps still reflecting pent up demand following the pandemic. Bookings to non-residents are restricted to ensure that at least one Saturday per month (2 in summer months) are available for resident bookings although take up on these is relatively low this restriction eases the disruption to local residents.

The Recreation Ground is also a well used facility particularly in the summer months. The play equipment is checked regularly and repaired as necessary.

Major maintenance projects replacing part of the roof and the floor of the main hall were completed in early 2023. The roof repairs revealed the need for the remainder of the roof to be replaced in due course. The committee are investigating whether the roof repairs can be combined with the installation of solar panels, which will help reduce our very significant electricity costs, or whether there is a more optimum green energy solution. We would expect this to be a joint project with the pool as any solution will also benefit the pool who share our supply and also have significant electricity usage.

FINANCIAL

Financially the charity is in a good position. Income for 2023 was £64k. That said costs are substantial and the charity recorded a loss of £16k in 2023 due to the significant cost of repairing the roof and replacing the floor in the main hall and also the very large increase in electricity costs after our fixed tariff ended in April. 2024 should be again a good year for income as wedding bookings are strong.

COMMITTEE

Andrea Cawthorne has been Chair since March 2021 and the Committee currently has 11 members, with 6 members representing village organisations (Church, Parish Council, Parochial Charity, Cricket, Tennis & Pool) and 5 general members.

A thank you is due to all committee members who are all volunteers and work hard to ensure we have a high quality hall and recreation ground in the village. Their contribution is very much appreciated.

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TRUSTEES REPORT FOR PARISH AGM FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

The trustees present their report to the Parish Council AGM for the year ended 31st December 2023.

The following provides an overview of Eversholt Parochial Charity's activities for the year ended 31st December 2023. The Charity's aims are to support the upkeep of the Parish Church, relief of local people in need and the general benefit of the inhabitants of the village of Eversholt in such manner as the trustees think fit. The Charity achieves its aims by making grants (called Thirds) to the Church, to the education of children and those in higher education or vocational training; and to those in need via the Wellbeing Third.

1. ADMINISTRATIVE SUMMARY

As of December 2023 Eversholt Parochial Charity Trustees were as follows;

Anna Blomfield	Julie Todd (Vice Chair)	Reverend Rachel Snow (from 14 th August 2023)
Carolyn Howell	Mike Hood	Paul Collin
Catherine Doherty	Nathalie Muller	Simon Collier (Chair)
Sarah Denton	Pat Richardson	Steven Smith

As established, Trustee meetings continued to alternate between being focussed on general matters and property matters. Property meetings were attended by representatives from our managing agents, Carter Jonas, who also provided report updates for those meetings and interim reports as required. Meetings in the year were held in Eversholt Village Hall.

- 13th February 2023 (General/Charity Meeting)
- 17th April 2023 (Business/Property Meeting)
- 12th June 2023 (General/Charity Meeting)
- 14th August 2023 (Business/Property Meeting)
- 9th October 2023 (General/Charity Meeting)
- 11th December 2023 (Business/Property Meeting)

All meetings were also attended by our Clerk, Karen Barker who prepared agendas in advance and minutes of each meeting.

2. PORTFOLIO MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

Our land agents, Carter Jonas LLP, manage the estate on a day-to-day basis with regular communications to the chair, property sub-group, and all trustees.

In October the trustees agreed a policy for the reletting of charity properties. It was agreed that our managing agents, Carter Jonas, would hold a register of interest of residents/residents' families interested in renting a Charity property. This would be communicated through About Eversholt. Those on the register would then be given first option when a property becomes available before advertising. There would not be any selection criteria used. A notification of available property would also be placed onto the village WhatsApp group.

During 2023 trustees became involved with an energy project 'Greensand Community Energy Group' and Community Energy South in developing carbon saving initiatives within local communities. This included funding our Village Agent, Lizzie, to attend a course on energy efficiencies to assist with her work around the Wellbeing Third. The trustees continue to engage with the project which is researching

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solar and community heating schemes both in regards to the Charities estate but also the wider Eversholt community. The key themes are;

- 'Powering Up' – local production of electricity, eg solar panels.
- 'Powering Down' – reducing demand, eg through insulation.
- Community Heat Development (reducing reliance on oil)

The Green Man

The tenants continued to report challenging trading conditions, most likely linked to the cost-of-living crisis. Discussions were had in relation to the full repairing lease and the tenants' responsibilities in that respect.

The pub experienced flooding to the cellar which has required the installation of a sump pump to remove excess water.

A particular area of concern related to the use of the car park by non-patrons and the impact that has on the wear and tear of the surfacing. Both the tenants and trustees remain keen that the car park remains accessible to all.

10 Tingrith Road

Having been let to the same individual for more than 40 years, this property became vacant in March with that tenant moving to alternative accommodation. An amount of refurbishment and redecoration was undertaken during the late Spring with the property advertised for re-let in June. A new tenant took residence in August.

Elsewhere – Properties & Land

All other land and properties remained tenanted, with various repairs and rent reviews undertaken as necessary.

3. FINANCIAL SUMMARY

The trustees and their accountants continue to manage the Charity's finances to ensure that existing funds are sensibly invested, reserves are maintained and grown for future activities such as property refurbishments and that money is available for provision of the annual Third's distribution.

Accounts for 2022-23 were audited by independent accountants and submitted to the Charities Commission.

4. DISTRIBUTIONS – 'THE THIRDS' SUMMARY

In 2023 a total of £31,500 was allocated to the Thirds. £10,500 to each, a welcome increase of £500 per Third from recent years.

a) Wellbeing Third

This is our most active Third with much effort put in by a number of trustees and other local volunteers, we are so grateful for their kindness, time and varied contributions.

In 2023 a total of 22 residents received an award of £250 each from the Wellbeing Third. In addition to these individual awards the Charity also funded;

Village Agent

The Charity continued its commitment the Village Agent scheme led by Lizzie Barnicoat. Lizzie continued to be very busy and remains contracted to us for 12 hours per month. Lizzie offers a very

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valuable friendly, listening ear and has distributed various practical aids to help around the home and referrals to Community Transport services to increase independence. Lizzie also compiles and edits 'About Eversholt'.

Lizzie Lunches

The Lunch Club continues to be well attended, grateful thanks as always to those who volunteer their time. Feedback remains positive as always with it being great to see new faces still even with the group being so established.

Chair Yoga Class

The aim of these classes are to help people with balance and some strength, increase mobility and flexibility, help avoid falls alongside an increased chance for socialisation and to have fun.

The classes regularly attract around 20 attendees from Eversholt and surrounding villages. A session for men went very well with 19 attendees.

Trustees attended an evening hosted by Be Active Group (CBC) who funded the classes through the year. Prior to the evening Be Active attended a session, interviewed participants and made a short film.

About Eversholt

With funding from both the Parochial Charity and the Parish Council the publication continues to be enjoyed, with bumper editions thanks to the large amount of articles that were kindly contributed which continue to be diverse and cover a range of interest areas. There was even the need to split some articles to include across two editions.

Thanks for the continued support with the publication and this is some feedback our village agent received from a regular contributor 'Thank you for creating About Eversholt again, it is so useful for the village.'

The newsletter has proved very successful in reinforcing the connections between residents and also to ensure that the activities arranged by the Parochial Charity reach a wide audience to increase participation.

Flittabus

The charity made an award of £250 to assist them in a new bus purchase.

b) Education Third

We received and agreed Further Education Awards to 12 individuals of £400 each following receipt of their written applications, cheques were raised, signed and sent to those individuals. These Further Education Award applications are required to be received by the Clerk prior to August 31st of any year for consideration.

An 'Annual Discretionary Award' of £5,450.00 was made to Eversholt Lower School and £250 to About Eversholt.

The trustees received two updates from the Eversholt Lower School Chair of Governors during 2023, in February and again in August. We were updated on how the Annual Discretionary Award has benefited the school and played its part in maintaining such a vital village asset. We were reminded of what challenging times schools such as ours are in, both in terms of their finances and constant discussions about the restructuring of local education provision. The trustees were grateful for the updates and reiterated how proud as a community we are of what the school has achieved. We did note the use of the Green Man car park as being an issue for the pub tenants as the added wear contributes to the amount of repair and maintenance required.

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c) Church Third

The Church Third of £10,500 was awarded to the Eversholt Parochial Church Council to assist with the care of the fabric of the church and churchyard.

5. GOING FORWARDS; 2024

The trustees will continue to efficiently manage the estate with the assistance of the managing agents and professional accountancy services to ensure the Charity is fit for purpose. We are also discussing the potential for renewable energy projects and development projects alongside the refurbishment of property as necessary.

We intend to continue with the varied programme of Wellbeing Third activities and we are keen to broaden attendance to connect with as wide a demographic from our community as possible.

Led by our Village Agent, there continues to be a good flow of new referrals and existing clients needing support with a broad range of items, with some taking time to come to the conclusion that filling a form in or taking that next step to getting support is relevant to their circumstances.

We also aim to continue supporting Eversholt Lower School and residents undertaking further education.

As the current Chair of Eversholt Parochial Charity I would like to record my thanks to the trustees for their commitment, time and hard work which is given freely and to the benefit of our community. I would also like to thank our Clerk for her valued hard work supporting the trustees and helping to ensure that the Charity achieves its objectives.

Simon Collier
Trustee & Chair of Eversholt Parochial Charity
May 2024