

EASTON PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman's Annual Report 2023/2024

The role of the Parish Council is to look after the interests of the village as a whole, to maintain certain services for the benefit of the community, as well as representing the village to outside agencies.

The Parish Councillors - the current councillors were elected in 2022 and serve for a period of four years. We are Pam Bell, Richard Burton, Steve Thomason, Clive Wood and myself. I am impressed by the commitment of our team – they have a genuine concern about the village and a willingness to help in many different ways.

The State of the Roads

The very wet conditions over the winter have impacted badly on the roads and the verges, but potholes are reported quickly by the Clerk and are repaired. The road leaving the village to the South (Stonely Road) is in a poor state.

Since the improved signs at William's haulage yard we do get far fewer "lost lorries" in the village but they can do great damage to the verges.

Traffic Speeds

We applied but failed to get included in the County Council's 20mph initiative. We are resubmitting our application and hope to be included next year (sometime after April 2024).

Posts for Interactive Speed signs on Easton Road near the bus shelter have been installed by the County Council and we expect signs to be delivered in the next few weeks. The technical name for them is Mobile Vehicle Activated Signs.

The A14

Despite promises from the Highways Agency that the central reservation at the Easton junction would be resurfaced and the drainage problem would be resolved, it has been delayed and we have no date for the work to be done.

The Route Manager is totally aware of our concerns about the junction and I hope that when the new funding agreement is place in 2025 we may see some plans for at least a deceleration lane on the west bound carriageway. I am meeting up with the Route Manager in April and will reiterate our concerns to him.

Parking outside the Church

We finally secured a grant from the Woolley Hill Windfarm Trust to pay half the money we need for four parking spaces to be grasscreted outside the church. We have confirmed our acceptancē of the contractor's quotation and we hope that the work will start within the next two months and that parking here will be a more pleasant experience!

Flood Prevention

No homes experienced flooding this winter!

The new ditch which means that water coming down the hill on Stonely Road now bypasses the existing drain at Greenacres and hence protects all the properties from Avens to Crown Cottage. It proved very effective but the Parish Council will continue to review the situation.

The internal Drainage Board has agreed to look after the village brook for 100 metres north of the Ford, where a great deal of debris has blocked some pipes.

Tree Planting

A large number of hedge plants were dug in at the edge of the Charity Field near the sewage works. These were to replace the ones lost in the hot summer. We are grateful to the Easton United Charities who paid for the trees. Other trees have been planted alongside Stonely Road, North of Shepherd's Close

The Playing Field

We are refurbishing some of the play equipment and putting down fresh bark chippings in the summer.

The Village Sign

This was put up 40 years ago and paid for by the Easton Social Committee. We are paying for all the woodwork to be renewed and it will be repainted by Linda Ramsey, who painted the original sign. We are grateful to the EFSC for contributing half of the repainting costs.

The Village Noticeboard

This has been refurbished and looks a great deal better.

The Village Photograph

This took place last May and all households in the photograph received a copy of the photo.

Grass Cutting

We are grateful to Anthony Abbs for his maintenance of village verges and to Derek Jolly who has cut the grass on the Playing Field.

Planning Matters

We continue to be consulted by the District Council on planning matters and we do our best to look carefully at all planning applications and to represent the views of people in the village as best we can. We only have the power to comment and do not have a "final say" on planning matters – that power is reserved to the District Council.

Residents

Once again I would like to thank all of those who either individually or in groups make a contribution to the appearance and to the social life of the village.

The Easton Fund and Social Committee have again organised a number of enjoyable social events. The organisation of these takes time and commitment from many people but they certainly provide great entertainment and promote great community spirit. The "Big Breakfast" continues to great acclaim from many, both within and outside the village.

The Church Council continues to maintain our beautiful Church and to look after the churchyard as well as organising events.

The Trustees of the Easton United Charities work hard to look after the assets of the Charities and distribute money within the village.

Anthea Beer is a very able and competent Parish Clerk, dealing most efficiently with correspondence, communications and the organisation of our council meetings. Dave Hindmarsh is the Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator, where his police background is immensely useful. Janet Thomason produces the monthly newsletter – thanks are due to her and Angie Smith who delivers it.

My particular thanks go to many individuals who help to make the village look attractive by picking up litter dropped by passing motorists. We do have some litter pickers and are always looking for volunteers!

So thanks are due too to all the organisations and individuals who are involved in the village, I know that the whole village community appreciates all the work you do. The efforts you make continue to make Easton a very attractive village in which to live!

Mike Baker

March 2024