

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Wednesday 29th May 2013 at 7pm held at Escrick and Deighton Social Club

Present:

Councillor E Casling (Chair)
Mrs L Reader (Clerk)

Around 35 members of the public

1. Reports

Councillor Casling welcomed everyone to the first Annual Parish meeting for a long time and invited the presenters to speak first.

Escrick Playing Fields Association

Mr Huw Edwards, representing the Escrick Playing Fields Association (EPFA) addressed the meeting. He reported that for those who were not aware, the EPFA consisted of 12 committee members and was responsible for maintaining the playing fields, continuing improvements to the playing fields and raising money for that purpose. The main fund raising events are the 10K run and the York Dragon Boat Race. EPFA have recently added a basket swing and a zip wire to the park. In addition, they hope to add a roundabout in September 2013.

Mr Edwards reported that the anti-social behaviour issue in the park area has now started to calm down although there have still be problems with teenagers smoking and drinking in the park. A member of the public asked if any needles had been found in the area but it was reported that there had not although some silver packets had been found which suggested some drug use had been going on in the area. The police have been involved. It was felt by the members of the public that the girls from Queen Margaret's school were something of a "magnet" to youths from the surrounding area. One member suggested that the problem was that whilst the park catered for younger children, there was nothing in the village for the older children to do and these problems were arising from boredom and lack of facilities for the older children and teenagers. A skateboard park was suggested as an option but Mr Edwards replied that this had been suggested previously but had proved too unpopular with the local residents and too expensive.

Another parishioner suggested that Queen Margaret's School had a responsibility to keep the girls under control, particularly after 9pm at night when they are not meant to be outside the school grounds. It was reported that Queen Margaret's School were aware of the issues and are addressing them.

A final comment from one parishioner on this subject was that if by-laws were introduced then these would be enforceable by law whereas the current "rules" at the park of no smoking etc could not actually be enforced.

Escrick Village Hall Committee

Mr Michael Luscombe spoke on behalf of the Village Hall Committee (VGC) and said that the Village Hall had benefited from a lottery grant. The VGC was actively promoting the use of the Village Hall and continued to hold at least 2 jumble sales per year in order to raise funds. The VGC was looking at updating the Village Hall ceiling and hopefully this will be done this year although it would be quite expensive.

Escrick Village Green Committee

Mr Mike Russell spoke about this committee. The Escrick Village Green Committee (EVGC) had a committee of 6 plus a secretary. The EVGC usually held 2 functions per year for fundraising purposes; these being the June/July sports day and evening entertainment and the Children's Carol Concert on the Green in December. The summer event hoped to raise around £1000 and it was hoped that this would go towards the Carol Concert in December.

After the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations last year, it was hoped to identify some way of commemorating this event. The village was asked for opinions and it had been decided to erect a timber structure on the village green. There would be public consultation when the design and costs had been finalised. The EVGC would contribute to the cost but there will be a shortfall.

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There was a question at this point regarding the difference between the Village Green and the Playing Fields. This was explained.

District Councillor and County Councillor

Councillor Elizabeth Casling gave these reports and reported that North Yorkshire County Council had had to make a lot of savings and streamline background services in order to focus on frontline services. This had resulted in the saving of millions.

The Core Strategy has resulted in Escrick being proposed as a designated service village and as such has had identified a need for a certain amount of new houses in the village. This is likely to go through and could equate to possibly 30-40 additional houses being built.

The Green Belt is crucial to the future of Escrick, as the village is surrounded on 3 sides by green belt.

The A19 has been resurfaced on the northbound side and is going to be on the southbound side as well.

The North Selby Mine application decision – to approve it – was a shock! The North Selby Mine Action Group was hoping to go to Judicial Review which is the only thing left to do once the decision has been made. Escrick Parish Council doesn't have the funds to do this but will support the action group in any way they can.

Escrick and Deighton Club

Cllr Casling reported that the club has been doing a lot better financially under the financial controls put in place by David Lane. Cllr Casling said that the club had been there for a very long time, over 100 years and wanted to stress to the parishioners that it is not a members only club. It is available for anyone to come in and have a drink and take advantage of the green area at the front which is great for families. If it is not used, it will be lost!

Neighbourhood Watch Scheme

It was stated that Mr Mike Russell would like to hand the responsibility of this over to someone new. A volunteer was requested but no-one at the meeting offered to take it on. Mr Russell is prepared to help handover the role to whoever takes it on. The Parish Council will take this forward and see whether someone can be found to do this.

2. Matters raised by parishioners

There were several issues raised by parishioners and it was decided to group these together so that the ensuing discussions would not be disjointed. The parishioners who had contributed were mentioned by name and thanked for their input, these were

Eric Hardy
John Gaskin
Jean Samuel
Chris Robinson
Peter Horsefield
Mrs Mackay
David Sinclair

Traffic Issues

Parking congestion in Main Street around primary school start and end times, parking on double yellow lines in Main Street and heavy goods vehicles delivering to the abattoir and noise pollution.

The question here was what did the Parish Council intend to do about this. There was concern based around the large vehicles, the number of cars parking at primary school start and end times and that this was just an accident waiting to happen. It was felt that too many parents drove to the school to drop children off and pick them up again at home time when most of the parents lived in

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the village and should walk. It was mentioned that a lot of these parents have to get to work and do not have the time to walk back home to get the car and then go to work. A suggestion was made that perhaps the school could allow use of their car park as a run in/drop off point. However, firstly it was pointed out that the school car park had conditions of use in place that meant that parents were not allowed to drop off or pick up in the car park and secondly it was mentioned that parents do not simply "drop off" their children, they have to stay with the children until the bell rings at 9am.

There is still a problem with parents parking on double yellow lines on Main Street and parallel to the double white lines on Carr Lane despite the school frequently advising parents not to do this. It was felt that the local Police Community Support Officers needed to make a more frequent appearance and enforce these parking laws.

Cllr Casling reported that elsewhere in the area, NYCC had been into schools teaching children about the highway code and where it was safe for parents to park their cars.

The issue of lorries delivering to the Abattoir was discussed and it was stated that there is a restriction on the hours that the HGVs should be delivering to the abattoir. This should mean that the lorries do not coincide with the school times but it appears that quite often the two do occur at the same time and this was a cause for concern. A number of residents felt that businesses cannot be dictated to and that the abattoir had been here a lot longer than many of the houses and therefore villagers. Another resident felt that the issue was more about the safety and that no-one was trying to dictate to the business. It was reported that one resident was planning to leave the village because of the noise of the deliveries to the abattoir and noise from the pub. However, another parishioner who lives opposite the pub said that they do not hear any noise from the pub and a couple of other local residents stressed that the noise was not that bad and should not be blown out of proportion. There were a few residents that felt that it was a case of just being patient when the vehicles were reversing or manoeuvring in Main Street.

Implications of the planned development in Main Street on traffic

It was felt that this development would only make matters worse. A resident stressed that recently a contractor had struggled to deliver a mini-skip to the road which would form the main access to the building site should it go ahead and the only way that deliveries of large loads for building could be made would be to transfer from large vehicles parked in Main Street to smaller vehicles to take them up the proposed site entrance. This could only add to the congestion especially around school times.

On a more personal level, one of the tenants of the houses whose gardens will be reduced by a large percentage stated that they chose to live there because of the large garden and would not have anywhere to park their cars and their visitors' cars except on the road, again adding to the traffic problems in Main Street.

Cllr Casling advised these residents to get together and try to attend the planning meeting to object in person.

Painted Road Signs in the wrong place

Apparently the School sign on Carr Lane is the wrong way round – this was an observation by one resident.

Impact of moving the bus stop from outside the social club

Cllr Casling reported that Escrick Parish Council had made an objection to the removal of the bus stop but that it had no say in bringing the bus back into the village. The bus service is not subsidised so there is nothing Escrick Parish Council can do to make them come back.

One resident asked whether it was because a large proportion of those using the bus service were elderly and therefore held bus passes but it was thought that this could not be the case as the bus company still get paid for the use by pass-holders.

It was asked whether a pedestrian crossing could be installed near the bus stop in its current position but there is not really a good position for this due to the proximity to the road to the

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Parsonage, doctor's surgery and the junction with Skipwith Road. This junction is now the most dangerous in the area. A roundabout is not an option because there is not enough room.

Cllr Casling reported that NYCC had suggested moving the bus stop into the lay-by outside the Thai restaurant but Escrick Parish Council had asked them not to do this for now. This would continue to be discussed by the Parish Council.

Impact of Selby Mine development on traffic

It was felt that this would also only worsen traffic matters in and around the village.

Village Matters

What should be done to improve communication about what is happening within the village

Mr Keith Charge was concerned that there was never anything in the Parish Magazine about the Parish Council meetings. Escrick Parish Council intended to communicate via the Parish Magazine in future and also put together a website to improve communication. Cllr Casling also suggested that Mr Charge attends the Parish Council meetings. It is also intended to produce a simple newsletter after Parish Council meetings to communicate important issues to residents.

A resident asked whether the Parish Council would publish dates and times of meetings in the local press. Cllr Casling said that the Parish Council would think about it but that this would incur a cost.

How can residents contribute to a plan for the village which will guide decisions about issues such as the development of the village and planning applications?

A resident requested informed debates on what is happening relating to planning applications. This resident also requested that the Parish Council Committees such as Planning, meet in public and that the villagers be consulted on big issues when the Core Strategy has been decided.

Parish Council Meetings

Improving public participation in Parish Council meetings

Mr Eric Hardy spoke on this subject, He gave a brief background on his career and why he felt qualified to make this statement, having been involved at all levels of a lot of meetings. He requested more interactive discussions with the Parish Council.

With specific reference to the closing of the gates to Queen Margaret's School he was concerned by the lack of intended action to the extent that he had started attending meetings. He feels that no-one cares. He was not impressed by the Parish Council's conduct and feels that it has drifted away from representing the village and started doing its own thing. He felt that the Parish Council was influenced by the person who owns most of Escrick. He also felt that there were many people on the Parish Council with a vested business interest and felt that the lack of public attendees at meetings had allowed this to happen. He asked that the Parish Council find a way to get people in the village involved and contributing to village matters at meetings.

It was pointed out that the whole of the Parish Council had recently been elected, albeit that a large proportion of them had also been on the previous Parish Council. However, there has just been an election and people were asked to give the new Council a chance to get established and to find a new way of doing things. It was also pointed out at this point that the purpose of the Annual Parish Meeting was to discuss Parish Affairs and not an excuse to criticise the Parish Council. The previous Parish Council had suffered from an administrative oversight and up to that point everything had been fine. There had hardly ever been a high public attendance. The question going forward was how can the village come together with Parish Council?

Cllr Casling asked any parishioners who wanted to receive emailed copies of Agendas and Minutes to leave their email address with the Clerk and a distribution list would be set up for this purpose.

A final question that had been received was read out in the interest of fairness to the contributor who raised it:

On the leaflet received are the two names disgruntled villages who failed to get enough votes in the election?

The answer to this was no, as one of the names on the leaflet had not stood and the other did not feel disgruntled.

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There being no further business, the Chairman thanked everyone for coming and the meeting was closed.

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