

DRAFT
EARSWICK PARISH COUNCIL CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT
APRIL 2010

In my report last year I said that the Parish Council had decided not to increase the precept but I warned that unless interest rates picked up we would suffer a significant loss of income this year and so would have to raise the precept. As you are well aware, interest rates are at their lowest level for many years and the income from our investments had dropped significantly. As a result, in order to meet our contract costs the precept has risen by over 20%. Most of the work that is carried out to maintain the Public Open Spaces is on contracts which come up for renewal in early 2011. The Council has begun reviewing the existing contracts to see if there can be any savings without reducing the level and standard of services currently provided throughout the village. When residents compare the Earswick precept to those of adjacent villages they should remember that we are a relatively small village but own over 30 acres of land and offer more facilities than many of the others. A detailed break down of the income and expenditure for 2009/2010 will be attached to this report when it is distributed to residents.

At long last the legal transfer of the flower meadow and the River Access Land has taken place. The Parish Council has been in discussions with the Environment Officer in York about arranging for Natural England to assume stewardship of the land for the next decade. Natural England is keen to develop a River Foss corridor which would include land near Strensall together with some farm land between Earswick and Strensall. More work needs to be done on this suggestion but it promises to provide effective management of the land without incurring increased costs for the Village.

The Scented Garden was officially opened in May last year and was awarded a Silver Gilt Award by York in Bloom. More work has been done during the winter months and the revamped garden has now reopened. My thanks go to Joanne Gill and her dedicated team but especially to David and Irene Jones who have done much to maintain and improve the Garden. I must also thank Peter Thompson who has kindly provided an engraved oak sign for the Garden. Volunteers are very welcome to help maintain the Garden so if you have a few hours to spare please contact Joanne, Irene or a member of the PC.

Last year there was a debate about the location of swings for the older children. Agreement was reached and the swings are now in place, however, it was agreed that another piece of equipment would be provided for the younger children who had lost their nodding donkey. A new Rope Tunnel is now in place and I hope that it proves as popular as predicted. Funding for both the swings and Rope Tunnel was provided mainly by grants from the Ward Committee with the Parish Council providing approximately £1000 of 106 funding towards the total cost.

The balancing pond was overdue for a clear out and the Parish Council managed to get YorVenture to fund 90% of the work. The pond looks much better and, hopefully will not need further work for another 10 years or so. The fence around the pond has now been repaired and replaced where necessary.

After much debate the Parish Council decided that it would be in the long term interest of residents if it assumed ownership of the hedge on Strensall Road alongside the High Garth houses. The residents, the

builders and City of York Council all claimed it belonged to one of the others. Nobody would keep the hedge trimmed and the footpath clear and so the Parish Council wrote to all parties and stated that it would assume ownership. Maintaining the hedge is likely to cost around £100 per annum but it was thought to be worth the cost in the long term benefits to parishioners.

The Earswick Web Site has now been let to contract and is of a very high standard. Other parishes, having seen our site, have been in touch requesting details of the contractor. Paul Anderson and Martin Leach are the Web Masters so if you have any information that you would like included on the Web then please contact them. Sarah is now a trainee web master and so you can also pass details to her.

I doubt that many parishioners appreciate the work done by their Parish Councillors. During the past year your small team of Councillors has worked very hard to maintain and, where possible, improve things in the Village and I would like to record my thanks to them all for their commitment and dedication to the task. Sarah Millson has settled in well as our Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer and I must thank her for her hard work and for keeping us on the straight and narrow. Unfortunately, Pat Norman asked to stand down due to ill health – he had done much to look after the open spaces and had been instrumental in obtaining the YorVenture Grant for the pond. Pat has been replaced by Derek Jones whose expertise in contracting will be very useful in the coming months as we prepare the new contracts for the maintenance of the Public Open Spaces. Sian Wiseman has continued to represent the Strensall Ward effectively and to maintain our links with the City of York Council. We have requested approval from the City of York to increase the number of Councillors from 5 to 7 and await confirmation. The Parish Council is up for election in May 2011 and I hope that there will be a strong field of candidates to represent all parts of the Village.

I feel that we are all very fortunate to live in Earswick. The Parish Council looks forward to a year of consolidation and hopes that residents will continue to make full use of and enjoy the many facilities that are available to them.

W G GAMBOLD

Chairman Earswick Parish Council

INCOME

	1st April 2008 – 31st March 2009	1st April 2009 – 31st March 2010	1st April 2010 – 31st March 2011
Precept	£13,500.00	£13,500.00	£16,500.00
Interest	£9,889.01	£7,941.06	£2,890
Grants	£4,500.00	£9,495.00	
V.A.T. Refund	£1,400.55	£3,337.03	£2,000
Tennis subscriptions	£900.00	£510.00	£750
106 money from Planning Applications	nil	£10,084.06	
Other	£2,524.51*	£4539.00**	
TOTAL	£32,714.06	£49,406.15	£22,140.00

* includes an insurance claim for repair to the Village Hall.

** includes money for new swings

EXPENDITURE

	1st April 2008 – 31st March 2009	1st April 2009 – 31st March 2010	ESTIMATED 1st April 2010 31st March 2011
Public Open Space maintenance:- grass cutting, hedge cutting, shrub pruning.	£7459.42	*£18,749.87	£9815.00
Salaries, office consumables, rent, society memberships, Insurance, Audit, Training, Expenses	£5777.42	£7,245.91	£7935.00
Village Hall maintenance including boiler and fire equipment	£3408.05	£1319.59	£1000.00
Notice boards, signs, litter bins, benches,salt bins, salt, miscellaneous repairs and maintenance in Public Open Spaces	£3569.24	£1009.52	£2910.00
Web Site	Nil	£450.00	£200.00
Scented Garden Project	£1000.00	Nil	Nil
Play equipment Purchase and maintenance. Tennis courts	£4534.97	8348.17	£300.00
TOTAL	£25,749.10	£37,143.06	£22,160.00

* Includes Pond being cleaned.

PROVISION FOR FUTURE EXPENDITURE

	1st April 2008 – 31st March 2009	1st April 2009 – 31st March 2010	1st April 2010 – 31st March 2011
Parish Plan	£500.00	£500.00	£500.00
Tennis Courts	£500.00	£1000.00	£2000.00
Village Hall	£3000.00	£3000.00	£2500.00
Play equipment	£1000.00	£2000.00	£2000.00
Scented Garden	nil	nil	£3000.00
River Access Land& Flower Meadow	nil	nil	£4000.00
Legal Expenses			£5000.00
TOTAL	£5000.00	£6500.00	£19,000.00*

* Includes £10,000.00 106 money which cannot be used for maintenance.