

## **The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting for the Parish of Edington held at the Parish Hall Edington on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2016**

Present: Messrs Swabey, Pollard, Johns and King and Mesdames O'Donoghue, Greening, Dorgan and Pike , Mr Wickham (Wiltshire Councillor) and 19 members of the public.

Apologies were received from Mrs Watts and Mesdames Peterson, Webb and Didcock.

The Chairman of the PC Mr Swabey welcomed all to the meeting.

**The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting** held on 20<sup>th</sup> April 2015 were adopted as read and signed. There were no Matter Arising from those Minutes.

### **Chairman's Report**

Mr Swabey began his annual report by thanking all of the Parish Councillors for their help, support and advice to him since he had become Chairman in the autumn 2015. Particular personal thanks to the Clerk for his help in easing him into this new role. Additional thanks were also due to all the village organisations, the Community Planning Team and Wiltshire Councillor Jerry Wickham for working proactively with the parish council to make Edington such a special place to live and work.

Since the last Annual Parish meeting there had been a number of changes to the Council with Eric Mitchell and Andy Hinton standing down. Their experience was greatly missed. 2 casual vacancies currently existed on the parish council.

During the year the PC had been extremely active in ensuring that village assets and fixtures were maintained and replaced where necessary and his fellow councillors would detail some of the work in their own area of responsibility.

The PC continued to ensure the village was represented in a number of key areas and had responded where required to WC and other agencies' consultations and requests for information. Examples of such work included representation on the Wiltshire Association of Local Councils, the Wiltshire Area Board, the Community Area Transport Group and the BA13 Partnership. This was important in not only ensuring Edington had a voice but was able to access grants and advice to pursue community initiatives. Recent examples included the inclusion of Tinhead Road and Lower Road into any future wider B3098 Freight Strategy, highlighting the need for sustainable and integrated rural transport, continued improvement to the rural footpaths, Mr Mitchell's persistence in pursuing BT to repair the damage to the Parish Hall car park and improvements to road safety.

It will have been noticed that the works to improve the B3098 and some additional work was achieved through consultation with CATG. It was important that residents were able to work in co-operation with the contractors to ensure the work would be completed as effectively and as swiftly as possible.

Once again, the village had entered the Best Kept Village Competition but unfortunately had not been able to emulate previous performances. A number of shortcomings were identified by judges and the PC would be looking to rectify these prior to the next entry. It was important to keep the street scene and common areas litter free.

Successful community events included the Christmas tree switch-on and the annual parish litter pick which this year had been carried out under the "Clean for the Queen" initiative.

Some of the work undertaken during the past year had been as a result of emergencies. Many would have noticed the work to various trees around the village and also some of the safety work carried out in the playing field. Although unexpected, all of the works were achieved within the annual budget set. However, few residents would have failed to notice the increase in this year's precept. This was regretted but had been unavoidable due to a reduction in the grant received from WC, rising costs in maintaining village assets and advice from the independent auditors regarding parish reserves.

In closing he mentioned that although the issues relating to development of land in Little Court Lane and the possible sale of land adjacent to the Playing Field had gone cold during the year, the PC remained vigilant and mindful of any new planning applications. This was also very topical to the development of a future Neighbourhood Plan which if accepted would assist the PC in dealing with Planning Applications.

Mr Swabey then invited the other councillors to give a brief update on their areas of responsibility in the village.

Mr King summarised the Planning Applications that had been received. Of the 33, 23 related to tree works and the rest to alterations and extensions.

Mrs Greening dealt with Highway issues liaising regularly with WC. A new system was being brought in with Parish Stewards who would be able to deal with minor works. She was hoping that verges would be cut at least once a year.

Miss O'Donoghue maintained the Village Emergency Plan.

Mrs Pike ensured that the Burial Ground was maintained and also prepared the note for the News of PC activities.

Mrs Dorgan was responsible for the Play Field. Moles had been a real problem requiring the professional help of a Mole Catcher. Work had been carried out to improve the entrance to the PF from the Three Daggers. She thanked Bob Miles for his work in keeping the PF tidy and cut.

Mr Johns responsibility was for footpaths. He had carried out various checks, identified some where stiles were in disrepair and was reporting to the PC on the options available to improve them.

Mr Pollard was the PC Chair of ERLAC which had met 3 times and sought to co-ordinate the Village's groups activities. He was also maintaining the Village Website. There were between 2000 and 2300 visits to the website each month each lasting an average of 3m24secs and not only from the UK but France, US and Germany. He was still anxious that more Village information be submitted.

### **Wiltshire Council (WC) Report**

Mr Wickham confirmed that his electoral area of responsibility was the villages of Coulston, Edington, Heywood, Hawkeridge, Dilton Marsh and Bratton. He was now into his third year and believed he was getting to grips with the issues affecting the area.

He was pleased to have been given the role of the Portfolio Holder for Waste upon his election but had recently moved from that role and was now the Portfolio holder for Highways – which had its own challenges. Wiltshire Council received £14m from central government for major maintenance to Wiltshire's roads which would only just maintain the A

and B class roads at their current level. Wiltshire Council therefore had agreed additional funding of an extra £7m per year so improvements were beginning to be seen – but this would take time. He was pleased that the B3098 was now being resurfaced in places and repaired. When he was going through the election, he had been especially concerned at its state and it had taken a long time and a lot of pressure to get it up the repair list! One concern when a road was resurfaced was to then consider that traffic might go faster and in greater numbers. He personally did not think that transporters etc should be using this road.

Mention had been made of the Parish Steward. This individual would have responsibility of responding with village priorities and acting upon them whereas the council's highways team would be addressing issues relative to statutory requirements and items of danger to road users only.

Westbury Area board covered the entire Westbury Area and consisted of 4 Wiltshire Councillors 3 of whom covered Westbury itself. Meetings were held on a regular basis and this was a key element of Council business in that it enabled the local community to meet and influence local decisions. Generally, the meetings took place in Westbury but there were visits to both Bratton and Heywood.

Westbury Area Board received about £35k each year for the entire community area but he had been determined to ensure that the villages, which didn't have access to as many facilities as the town, got their fair share. He had therefore encouraged the groups in the villages to apply and some had become especially adept at this. Over the last 2 years a sum approaching £50K had been allocated to the villages in Ethandune and Edington had been a beneficiary of this.

In terms of Court Lane, presently the Wiltshire Core Strategy prevented anything other than infill and accordingly he would continue to resist any attempts for development in Edington. It was important to realise that villages did need to grow but this should be proportional. He encouraged the PC and the village to pursue the formation of a Neighbourhood Plan.

Mr Jones asked if the AB would be given any devolved powers. Mr Wickham said that here were no planned changes to the current arrangements.

### **Neighbourhood Plans(NP)/Housing Needs Survey**

Mr Pollard referred to the results of the Housing Needs Survey as a necessary precursor to the preparation of a new Edington Development Plan and potentially a Neighbourhood Plan. It was clear that the expressed preference was for affordable starter homes and family accommodation for rent. The question that the Village faced was how any objectives might be achieved. The PC would be looking at these in conjunction with an updating of the Edington Development Plan 2005 which would be concerned with all aspects of the Village. There was a strong feeling from those present that before any final decisions were made there should be another Parish Meeting.

### **Policing and Community Speedwatch.**

There had been a continuing liaison throughout the year with the Police but unfortunately PCSO Wright or her colleagues had not been able to attend PC meetings as often as in previous years. However reported crime and antisocial behaviour had been low in the

village. The Police continued to be concerned that residents should ensure that cars be kept locked and valuables out of sight and that out buildings be kept secure.

As to Speedwatch this was currently on hold due to the lack of volunteers but the PC hoped that there would be some progress in the ensuing year.

### **Any Other Business.**

There was continuing concern at the constant flow of water in Little Court Lane. It was more than a minor nuisance. The PC would continue to monitor the situation the difficulty being that it was not clear what was causing the problem or whose responsibility it was to rectify it.

The Chairman then thanked all who had attended and to the catering team who had provided the refreshments; and Miss O'Donoghue thanked the Chairman on behalf of the PC for his work since taking on that role; and the Meeting was formally closed at 8.29pm