

The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting for the Parish of Edington held at the Parish Hall Edington on Monday 20th April 2015

Present: Messrs Swabey, Pollard and King and Mesdames O'Donoghue, Greening, Dorgan Pike and Watts, PCSO Caroline Wright, Simon Coombes (Chairman of Limpley Stoke PC) and 16 members of the public.

Apologies were received from Mr Mitchell (Chairman of the PC), Mr Hinton and Mr Watts, Mrs Bromhead and Mrs Didcock.

The Vice Chairman of the PC Mr Swabey welcomed all to the meeting and to Mr Coombes who would make a brief presentation on Neighbourhood Plans. Unfortunately the Chairman of the PC, Mr Mitchell had been taken ill and was unable to attend the Meeting

The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 28th April 2014 were adopted as read and signed. The only Matter Arising from those Minutes was the latest on the Housing Needs Survey. This would be covered in the Chairman's report.

Chairman's Report

Mr Swabey in introducing the Chairman's report said that it had been another busy year for the Parish Council (PC), and he gave a brief summary of what the PC had been doing. First of all he thanked all the Parish Councillors for their commitment and ongoing support, each of whom had a particular responsibility within the village. Copies of who was responsible for what would be made available should anyone wish to see it. He also thanked the Neighbourhood Policing Team, PC Darren Foulger and PCSO Caroline Wright for their continued efforts in keeping the village a safe place to live in; and special thanks to Jerry Wickham, Wiltshire Councillor, who had been of tremendous support to the Village since he was elected. He expressed his thanks to the Clerk Malcolm Wieck who had given over 40 years of service and guidance as the PC Clerk.

The village continued to be a thriving community with much support from neighbours and friends who would always welcome newcomers to the village and provide them with the help and support needed to settle in. Jacky Hiscock had been at the front of providing that support and arranging for Welcome Packs. Jacky had decided to give this role up and he was on behalf of the Village very grateful for the hard work she had put into it. Chloe Watts had taken the role on, but it was important that neighbours let her know when there were new arrivals in the village to make them welcome.

The Parish Council had lost one of its long standing members, Mrs Susan Bromhead and so there was a casual vacancy as a result. Villagers were welcome to apply to fill this important vacancy. He thanked her for her hard work especially with regard to footpaths.

In 2014 the village had entered the Best Kept Village Competition after several years of not doing so. The result was that in the Small Village category Edington was placed second. Based on that result the Village would be entering the 2015 Competition. What it meant was that all needed to look after the village and keep the common areas tidy and free from litter.

A safety inspection of the playfield indicated some serious problems with the swings, plus some other minor issues. The Parish Council was successful in getting a grant from the Area Board for replacing the swings, but this required matched funding from the village. Thanks to the generosity of a number of local organisations and some individuals in the village the PC was able to the necessary funds and the new swings were installed during February.

Many would have noticed the poor state of the Parish car park opposite the Parish Hall. This was due to works carried out by BT Open Reach contractors who damaged the car park and then re-laid it with a totally unsatisfactory surface. After numerous meetings the Chairman was hopeful that BT would put the car park back to its former condition.

Wiltshire Council was also developing plans to improve the poor condition of the B3098. The PC was well aware of the poor condition of the road but awaited further information on this before the PC could advise residents of the plans.

The main planning focus during the year had been the prospective sale of two fields in the village. Although this had seemed desperately urgent at the time the owners had not made much progress. The field behind the playfield was no longer up for sale and the offer of interest from the PC to buy it had been rejected.

The Little Court Lane field was a different matter and remained on the market with housing developers making proposals for a new development. The village could not be immune from new developments, but it needed to be in keeping with the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the Housing Needs Survey which had had a very good response rate of 47%, with an overwhelming response for affordable housing in the village, either rented or owned. There had been no indication that the villagers wanted more executive homes.

The prospective sale of the two fields, combined with the Village Development Plan, which had served the Parish well, had prompted the PC to undertake the Housing Needs Survey. The results were welcome and the PC would look seriously at developing a new Village Development Plan or Neighbourhood Plan, which would take account of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the views of the residents. Creating a new Village Development Plan seemed onerous in terms of time and money and for that reason he had invited Simon Coombe from Limpley Stoke and Freshford Parish Council to talk about some of the issues. They were well down the path of developing their village Neighbourhood Plan and could, he hoped, help the PC with its own thoughts as to if and how to proceed.

Finally he said that the PC had decided to increase the precept from £6500.00 to £7300.00 for £2015/16. This would mean an increase for a Band D property from £19.65 to £21.90.

Wiltshire Council (WC) Report

In his absence the Vice Chairman read the report that Mr Wickham had sent to the PC.

A year had passed since his election to WC. He was joined by three fellow councillors from Westbury that ultimately sanctioned the work of the Westbury Area Board (AB). The AB met regularly throughout the year and interested parties and representatives from across the area attended to hear inputs and updates from statutory partners and bodies as well as topics of local interest. The AB was allocated funds, which it was able to use, following applications from bodies, for wider community projects. In particular the AB had met at Bratton on 9th April 2015 and received presentations relative to making the local communities friendlier to persons living with Dementia, as well considering additional grants to worthy causes and organisations.

He was pleased to report that in the 2014 Edington benefitted from a number of grants from the AB, which he had been able to fully support and included:

- £800 towards a bell ringing simulator at Edington Priory Church
- £2262 to the PC towards a new swing on the playing field
- £1000 for a new handrail on the path to the Parish Hall

It remained a firm objective of his to ensure the rural communities, in Ethandune, received an equitable allocation of AB funds.

Another area which he knew was of concern was the state of the B3098. He had repeatedly cajoled the Highways team in Wiltshire Council to repair various sections and finally, had been advised that sections, suffering from de-lamination of the surface, would begin being repaired in the early summer. This was something he would continue to monitor and ensure happened.

With the adoption of the Core Strategy for Wiltshire (which was the blueprint for housing development, employment, transportation and economic wellbeing until 2026) Edington as a community was now identified as a small village. As a county, additional homes needed to be found. Ordinarily, under the Strategy, these would generally be centred on the towns but there was also a need to provide more homes in villages, particularly to ensure that the younger generation were able to afford to live in these areas. Generally, villages such as Edington should only have applications for the odd property as part of infill and he was fully aware of the concerns in one part of the community, relative to proposals for homes being built. This was an issue that would have to be considered once a formal application had been submitted.

He was concerned at the dreadful state of verges due to the presence of litter and on 21 March he had been able to join a dedicated band of litter pickers from the village, jointly collecting many large sacks full of litter and rubbish. A change of culture was needed to encourage people to dispose of items other than from their car windows.

Finally, he had endeavoured to get to as many meetings of the Parish Council as possible, as well as other public functions in the village and really had enjoyed representing the community's interests as Wiltshire Councillor.

Neighbourhood Plans(NP)/Housing Needs Survey

Mr Coombes explained that Limpley Stoke together with Freshford were well advanced with the preparation of a joint NP. It took, he said, a long time as the consultation process was very involved and wide ranging especially with 2 PCs each within a different County Council area. It would be easier for a single village such as Edington. The concept of a NP presumed that some sort of development was wanted. If none was, then there was no point since development would depend on the current Planning policy of WC as it related to different villages. A NP had to conform to County and National Planning criteria and involved a parish referendum before being implemented. Whilst the PC was an appropriate lead body in the preparation of a NP it should encourage non parish councillors to take an active and leading part in the consultation process. Once finalised and accepted by the local planning authority it would give the PC statutory weight in considering planning applications that came before it.

In thanking Mr Coombes for his input the Vice Chairman confirmed that during the coming year the PC would be exploring with WC the possibility of inaugurating a NP for the village.

Policing and Community Speedwatch.

PCSO Wright was pleased to be able to say that during the year Edington had in the main been quiet with little crime. Of reported incidents there had been 3 of antisocial behaviour, 10 of theft of which 5 had been from motor vehicles and 3 non dwelling burglaries. Across

her area there had been a 2% reduction in reported crime. She repeated the regular police comment that residents should ensure that cars be kept locked and valuables out of sight and that out buildings be kept secure. It was also important that suspicious activity be reported – it helped the police build a picture of any criminal activity

The vice chairman thanked her for her attendance and to so many of the PC meetings.

As to Speedwatch the Vice chairman confirmed it had been continuing but the number of volunteers was much reduced and to that extent its continuance was at risk.

Edington Recreation & Leisure Advisory Committee (ERLAC) and the Village Website.

Mr Pollard said there had been 3 meetings during the year all held at the Three Daggers co-ordinating the activities of the various organisations in the village. He encouraged all organisations to be involved in ERLAC. .

As to the Website it had been set for villagers as well as other website visitors. There had been a total of some 22000 visits the majority from the UK followed by France and the USA. Favourite visits had been for local history, the PC and 'Whats on'. He asked for more input to make the site more interesting.

Any Other Business.

Only one matter was raised namely the recent excessive water flowing down Tinhead Road which the Vice Chairman confirmed would be taken up with WC.

The Vice Chairman then thanked all who had attended and to the catering team who had provided the refreshments; and formally closed the Meeting at 8.25pm