

The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting for the Parish of Edington held at the Parish Hall Edington on Monday 23rd April 2018

Present: Messrs Swabey, Pollard, Johns and Lupton and Mesdames O'Donoghue, Greening, Dorgan, Watts, Lewis and Pike, Mr Wickham (Wiltshire Councillor) and 21 members of the public.

Apologies were received from Messrs King and Perkins and Mesdames Hiscox and Totttingham

The Chairman of the Parish Council (PC) Mr Swabey welcomed all to the meeting.

The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 24th April 2017 were adopted as read and signed. There were no Matter Arising from those Minutes.

Chairman's Report

Before starting his report he asked all present to join in a moment of reflection in memory of Michael Jones who had sadly passed away on the 13th April. Michael had been a longstanding member of the PC, a West Wiltshire District Councillor for 20 years, an active member of the church and the wider community. At a personal level Michael had been a source of help and advice to Julie, his wife, when she became local councillor and to him when he began his role as Chairman of the PC. Michael would be sadly missed throughout the village.

The previous year had been a particularly busy one for the PC and throughout the year the burden on members of the council had been considerable. In addition to undertaking its routine business, time had been spent on a number of important issues which had emerged during the year. Alongside those issues, members of the council had also taken forward a number of priorities identified at the 2017 APM. He wished to record a vote of thanks to all parish councillors for their considerable efforts and contributions throughout the year and also to Malcolm Wieck, Clerk who had again supported the business of the PC and made sure that its finances were managed correctly and within the budgets set. In addition, the PC expressed its thanks to all those parishioners who turned out to help at various parish events and particularly all those who helped with the Local Development Plan.

Review of 2017/18

In reviewing the past year it was difficult to capture everything achieved but each of the parish councillors would cover their own area of work in a little more detail. A few of the items worthy of mention included:

- B3098 – This remained a concern for many residents. At the 2017 APM the PC had hoped through the Westbury Community Area Transport Group (CATG), to have it made a county priority for a strategic Freight Assessment. Unfortunately this bid failed but the concerns continued. A meeting had been held with neighbouring PCs to see whether a joint strategy could be developed.
- Local Plan – since the last APM this had now been finalised and had been launched on the village website.
- Dog Fouling – was a regular concern of residents and to try to help the PC had found several new and replacement bins.
- Village Footpath Guide – this had been revisited and updated with thanks to Mrs Pike.
- Footpath & Highway issues – the PC continued its strong links with the Parish Steward, Westbury CATG and Wiltshire Council's Rights of Way team. This enabled the PC to keep on top of many routine maintenance issues and to improvements on the public footpath network, notably the resurfacing of the footpaths in Monastery

Road and Long Hollow. The recent spring clean was a success with thanks to all who had participated.

- The PC remained represented at a number of community initiatives including the Westbury Area Board, BA13+ Partnership and Wiltshire Association of Local Councils. This was important in order to attract grant funding to the village including a recent grant for a projector for the parish hall.
- Defibrillator – part funding had been received enabling a bid to the Area Board for future funding in order to provide the village with this vital piece of equipment.
- Planning applications had been carefully considered throughout the year, including the application for the improvements to Tudor Cottage.

Future Plans

Looking forward, the Parish Council would focus on the main issues and targets identified in the Local Plan and use the enthusiasm of the work groups to start development of a Neighbourhood Plan. Although this would take time it was an opportunity for the whole village to get involved in shaping the village to 2030.

The village would again be entering the Best Kept Village Competition this year and hoped for a better result than 2017.

Maintenance of village assets continued to be important and the PC was investigating improvements to the play equipment in the playing field - even exercise equipment for adults.

Further footpath improvements between the Post Office and the Three Daggers were being looked at with some resurfacing being planned and the PC would push for a B3098 strategy. Community events would be held and the next one was the Newcomer's event in May. The Christmas Tree switch on was now a popular annual event and would be repeated.

Funding for the Parish Council continued to be challenging and the recent rise in the precept was regretted but unavoidable given the rising cost in maintaining village facilities but the PC would continue to be prudent.

In concluding his report he again thanked his fellow Councillors, the Clerk Malcolm Wieck and Wiltshire Councillor Jerry Wickham for working so hard to ensure that Edington remained a strong community. Finally on behalf of the PC he thanked all the village community volunteers for making Edington such a special village to be a part of.

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

Mrs Greening dealt with Highway issues liaising regularly with WC and the Parish Steward who came to the village regularly dealing with clearing gulleys and paths, verges and leaf clearance.

Miss O'Donoghue maintained the Village Emergency Plan which was reviewed annually and briefly explained the reasons for it.

Mrs Pike had responsibility for ensuring that the Burial Ground was properly maintained. She also prepared the note for the News of PC activities.

Mrs Dorgan was responsible for the Play Field. Moles had been a continuing problem. The tractor had been damaged and was being replaced and a bollard was being located at the Tinhead Road entrance.

Mr Johns responsibility was for footpaths. Kissing gates had been installed at the entrances to various paths and more were planned. Some signs needed repair and he asked people to let him know of any others. He was also the lead on the B3098 Strategy in discussion with Mr Wickham and the general aim to improve the highways in the village with white lining where necessary, signage and other road markings.

A question was asked about cows in fields which had footpaths. This was the farmers responsibility to ensure that any cattle did not adversely affect the safety of walkers.

Mr. Lupton was responsible for Police Liaison and Speedwatch. He was pleased to report that the village suffered little serious crime and that the PC received regular reports from the local police team as well as occasional visits to its meetings by PCSO Caroline Wright. With the help of 2 others Speedwatch sessions took place whenever the speed gun became available. He hoped that more people would be prepared to join the team

Mrs Watts brief was Newcomers to the village. She confirmed that all newcomers received Welcome Packs and that each year in May a Newcomers coffee morning was held to which they were invited.

Mr Pollard maintained the village website and reported that it was receiving some 600 hits per month. The most popular were the Whats on page, history and the PC. He noted that some village groups were not submitting the detail of their activities and he encouraged them to do so.

Mrs Lewis had the Best Kept Village Competition. The 2018 application was in, judging would take place in the first 2 weeks in May and she encouraged all residents to do what they could to keep the village looking good. Litter was a continuing problem and she said that there would be a walk round the village just before the judging was due. She was also the liaison for Health and Wellbeing. Current focus was to reduce loneliness and the sense of isolation. Edington was a marvellous village and there was no need for any one to feel they were on their own. On the 1st October there was to be a national day focussing on these issues.

Wiltshire Council (WC) Report

Mr Wickham expressed his thanks to the PC for his attendance at nearly all of its meetings. It was always a good PC to attend, standing head and shoulders above the rest. At the election in 2017 had had seen his majority increase despite the austerity measures that WC had had to put in place. There was a budget deficit of £27M involving hard decisions and unfortunately that meant a 5.99% Council Tax increase made up as to 2.99% for WC and a 3% Social levy. £170M was the budget for his department which aimed to protect the vulnerable.

The B3098 was at the top of his agenda for the parishes. The attempt to have a freight survey had not been successful and because he felt that something needed to be done instead of waiting for it he and the PC had decided to draft their own strategy.

At Area Board and CATG level the villages he represented had done reasonably well against the dominant effect of Westbury especially in relation to grants but he noted that of the AB £30K budget £21K had been allocated at the first meeting of the year.

Edington Development Plan(DP)/Neighbourhood Plan(NP)

Mr Pollard had taken the lead on this. The DP had been completed and the PC was planning to progress to a NP. He then gave a power point presentation with a programme and time scales to implementation. This was well received and thanks were expressed to him for all his work in achieving the DP and for his presentation. The general feeling of the Meeting was to proceed to a NP.

Footpath Booklets

Mrs Pike was able to confirm that revised booklets were well in hand and should be available in May.

There being no other business 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; and the Meeting was formally closed at 8.56pm