

The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting for the Parish of Edington held at the Parish Hall Edington on Monday 17th April 2023 at 7.30pm

Present: Messrs Pollard, Hardman, King and Burgess, and Mesdames O'Donoghue, Dorgan, Watts and Pike and Mrs Wickham (Wiltshire Councillor), and 14 members of the public.

Apologies were received from Messrs Swabey, Johns, Mitchell and Dorgan and Mrs Greening and from the Police

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

The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 25th April 2022 were adopted as read and signed. There were no Matter Arising from those Minutes.

Chairman's Report

The Chairman gave his report by way of a Power Point presentation. .

This was the opportunity for the Parish to know what the Parish Council (PC) had done during 2022/23 and he would outline the PCs plans for the coming year.

Crime/Road traffic.

Unfortunately the Police were unable to attend the meeting but had emailed with Speed Watch figures from April 2021 to March 2023 showing:

Number of speeders – 478

Number receiving a 1st letter – 282

Number receiving a 2nd letter – 282

Number receiving a 3rd letter – 26

Number excessively speeding (over 45mph) – 7

Number of tractor letters – 1

Speeding, especially at the west end of the village, was a continuing problem, but fortunately general crime was low.

Finances for 2023/2024. At the January PC Budget meeting it was agreed to not raise the precept. However the future was uncertain especially with the increased costs being passed to the PC by Wiltshire Council (WC). The annual Council Tax for band D property would be £2108.59 - a slight reduction due to an increase in the number of inhabited properties in the village.

Achievements over the last twelve months included:

- Footpaths – working towards establishing a permissive path between the Parish Hall car park and the footpath opposite the City
- Coal Path field – now being used, and was becoming a useful area for the Edington end of the village with plans to improve it further with some hedging and placing some seating in the field.
- Second defibrillator in church car park
- Neighbourhood Plan – making slow progress because the PC was dependent on the input from WC officers which was not always timely

Working for a better village

Highways

- Establishment of 20mph limits on most of the village roads except for the B3098
- Double yellow lines were soon to be painted in the Tinhead Road/Long Hollow area to improve road safety there
- B3098 – Ongoing discussions with WC Highways as to how to reduce the speed of traffic through the village. The PC was awaiting proposals from Highways as to possible measures and a recent meeting with Highways engineer had again talked through options

•Community Speed Watch (CSW) was making an impact but this was only when operating. Policing the 20 limit – the PC would not be able to run CSW until 6 months had elapsed and a new traffic survey had been undertaken by WC. CSW operated on a month on and then month off basis with Bratton and the team was always looking for more volunteers

Data for the SID near Longmans Close

Only 36% of motorists were under 30 mph, 37% between 30 and 35, 20% between 35 and 40. The worst times were between 8 and 9 in the morning and between 4 and 5 in the afternoon. One recent session recorded 15 exceeding 36mph in an hour

Cost implications of the highway improvements

•In recent years the burden of paying for any enhancements to the village had fallen increasingly on the PC which now had to contribute 30% towards any project under £10,000. Above that application had to be made for a substantive bid but the PC would still be expected to make a significant contribution. And there was no guarantee that substantive bids would be approved. The precept for the coming year was £16,000 so any schemes would involve an increase in the 2024/25 precept.

Village volunteers led by John Richardson had made a significant improvement to the village.

Some of the tasks that they had undertaken included:-

Clearing footpath entrances

Tidying and improving the pond area

Renovating the various benches around the village

General maintenance.

The PC expressed its thanks to all the volunteers but, again, John was always looking for more volunteers for their efforts on the 3rd Wednesday of each month between 9.30 and 12 noon

Playing field.

Discussions were ongoing with the Three Dagers as to the possible enhancements to the playfield area. These discussions had been positive but rather slow due to the Three Dagers representatives having commitments around the world (only 2 meetings in the last 9 months). The PC in its discussions had sought to ensure that the concerns of the village would be addressed and that the eventual outcome would provide a significant enhancement to the playfield facilities for the benefit of the villagers. As soon as an agreement in principle had been reached on the proposals put forward the PC intended to publish that information on the village website and invite comments.

The PC would make a final decision on the transaction, and then hand the work over to its lawyers for them to scrutinise the proposals and draw up the necessary agreements. The proposals would then be submitted to WC for planning permission.

From the start of the negotiations the PC had ensured that no costs would fall on the PC for this work. The PC would provide further updates when able to do so but was bound by commercial confidentiality in the negotiations.

Specific projects. The Chairman then invited the relevant Councillor to speak about these

•*Pollinator project* – Mrs Pike explained that this was the initiative of Mrs Wickham to create a wildlife corridor covering Edington, Bratton, Westbury, Dilton Marsh and Hawkeridge and to be achieved by identifying suitable sites to establish wildflower areas to encourage wildlife. The PC had suggested some : The Car Park bank and Bramble hedge, the Coal Path field hedge line and Berry Road. Funding would be by the Area Board in consultation with Wiltshire Wildlife. The project would include bird and bug boxes and signage

•*New footpath to link the two ends of the village* – Mr King told the meeting that the proposal was to have a path from the B3098 pavement just east of the Monastery Road junction up the bank to the top of the Car Park bank. It would then go behind No 43 Westbury Road to the

kissing gate and continue to the east end of the field where it meets the stile down to the pavement outside the Three Daggers. The landowner had kindly given permission for this as a permissive path and it would provide access from Monastery Road to Tinhead without the need to walk along the main road

•*Neighbourhood Watch* – Mrs Greening confirmed that plans were in hand to re-create a Neighbourhood Watch for the village

Finally the Chairman thanked his fellow councillors for their hard work and support over the year

Wiltshire Council Report

Mrs Wickham mentioned several matters:

Planning. That over the year she had called 4 applications in to be dealt with by the Planning Committee

On Highways, apart from the regular work such as was being pursued by the PC, LHFIG was focusing on walking and cycling and the sustainable use of the network.

The Area Bord (AB). She had a seat on the AB which managed a WC fund to the AB. The funding had been increased by 30% to enable the support of more projects.

Her WC portfolio was Special Education Needs and Disability. She was working on the project for 16-18 year olds Pathway to Adulthood seeking to make them employable and helping with housing and transport and support of those suffering with dyslexia. She strongly supported special schools

Her Pollinator project was seeking to ensure that her constituents were aware of environmental issues

Any Other Business.

-There was some surprise at the odd siting of some of the new 20mph signs

-That it might help to concentrate the minds of the PC to have 5 key priorities for the coming year

- Should the village consider a dark sky friendly scheme?

- Mrs Perkins expressed her thanks to the PC for its hard work for the village

There being no other business the Chairman thanked all who had attended and the Meeting was formally closed at 8.37pm.