

The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting for the Parish of Edington held at the Parish Hall Edington on Monday 8th April 2024 at 7.15pm

Present: Messrs Pollard, Hardman, King and Swabey, and Mesdames O'Donoghue, Dorgan, Watts, Greening and Pike and Mrs Wickham (Wiltshire Councillor), PCSO Alice Moore and 15 members of the public.

Apologies were received from Mr Johns, Mr and Mrs Fraser, Mrs Pollard and Mr and Mrs Davies

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

The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 17th April 2023 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 been doing during 2023/24.

Finances for 2024/2025. At the January PC Budget meeting it was agreed to raise the precept to £21000. This was the element of council tax paid to the PC. The reason for this increase was that: the cost of grounds maintenance had increased from £2100 to £3800 pa; an increase in highway costs to 30% chargeable to the PC for any proposed traffic scheme below £20,000; and the increasing cost of goods and services as a result of inflation. The annual Council Tax for a band D property would go from £47.21 (£0.91 pw) to £62.06 (£1.19 pw).

Achievements over the last twelve months included:

- Footpaths – work was progressing towards establishing the permissive path between the Parish Hall car park and the footpath opposite the City.
- Coal Path field – now being used. A bench had generously been donated by a villager and plans were in hand for planting a new hedge beside the Coal Path
- Neighbourhood Plan – was making slow progress, The PC was very much in the hands of WC, but following lengthy discussions a final draft document had been submitted on 30th January and it was understood that WC was carrying out an internal screening process to determine if a habitat regulation assessment and or strategic environmental assessment was required.

Highways

- There had been a delay but the Double yellow lines were soon to be painted in the Tinhead Road/Long Hollow area to improve road safety there as noted at the 2023 APM
- B3098 – Some progress had been made in the ongoing discussions with WC Highways as to how to reduce the speed of traffic through the village. Highways Officers were suggesting an enhancement to the signs and road markings at the western end of the village and for Lower Road. The PC would monitor the effect this would have on the SID data
- Community Speed Watch (CSW) continued making an impact but this was only when operating. Data from the SID confirmed that speeding remained an issue on the B3098

Village volunteers led by John Richardson had made and continued to make 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

Playing field.

Discussions were ongoing with the Three Daggers/ Grassy Creek (parent Company) as to the possible enhancements to the playfield area. These discussions had been positive but rather protracted. 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.

Other ongoing projects.

- Pollinator project* – Mrs Pike confirmed that the intention was to plant Hawthorn and Blackthorn on the car park bank; plans were in hand to replant the hedge on the Coal Path side of the Coal Path field and there were proposals for beehives for single bees, bug boxes and bird boxes

- Neighbourhood Watch* – Mrs Greening was continuing to explore ways in which the scheme could be made effective through Whatsapp/email

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

Wiltshire Council Report

Mrs Wickham explained the work of WC in connection with finances and future spending. She was pleased to confirm that WC was not struggling financially as some other councils were and that their 10 year business plan, invested over a long term ensured that WC would not be caught out by huge outgoings.

The WC Budget was for £466M and there would be significant spending on: the Whole Life Pathway dealing with mental health, autism etc; £83 million on living and ageing well; £49M on environmental waste; £41M highways and £28M education.

She made reference to the huge cost of children services and the provision of new special schools at Melksham, the old police station Salisbury and the proposals for Westbury which had been well received; and she confirmed that she held the portfolio for SEND - Special Education Needs and Disability

On planning there was a national shortage of planning officers and enforcement officers

She continued to take an active interest in highways matters affecting her constituents and the Area Board

Police report.

PCSO Moore reported that in the previous year – 2022/23 - there had been 27 incidents in the village but this current year 37, of which twenty had been crimes. This was considered to be very low for a village the size of Edington. There had been 4 thefts - up from 2, and 2 burglaries. She said that any suspicious activity should be reported. There had been three road traffic incidents one involving minor injury.

In the absence of **Any Other Business** the Chairman thanked all who had attended the meeting and formally closed it at 8:17pm.