

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Tuesday 01 April 2014

- 1 Chair: Mrs Sue Williamson, Chair of Eckington Parish Council.
- 2 Present: 8 Parish Councillors. There were no electors.
- 3 Apologies: No Apologies received.
4. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Monday 09 April 2013: Mr Smith proposed, and was seconded by Mr Glaze, that the minutes were a true record of the meeting. All present agreed, and they were duly signed by the Chair.
5. Parish Council Report: The Chair gave the following report:

The main objective of the Parish Council is to work together as a team, combining our energies and skills to serve the Parish of Eckington. There are 9 elected councillors, the Parish Clerk & the Parish lengthsman.

We try to have at least one councillor representative on each of the main village committees and some of the local government committees. This keeps us up to date on what is happening within the parish and surrounding area.

Over the last twelve months we have done many things. Some of which are as follows

The PC have received & dealt with 27 planning applications within the village and surrounding area. CALA Homes are putting in a new application for houses behind Roman Meadow & we will watch this very closely. We will make sure our comments on their proposal reflect the look and feel of the area, but also take into account the future housing needs of our thriving village. This development should also bring in Section 106 money, like the money currently being spent at the Rec, which we will need to consider carefully on where best to spend.

The Churchyard & Cemetery are both maintained by the Parish Council. This includes the mowing of the grass and maintenance to the trees, hedges and boundary fences. An annual safety inspection of all the grave stones is also carried out and any repair work undertaken.

We recently gave permission to the War Graves Commission that a Commonwealth War Graves sign be erected to recognise and honour the 4 war graves within the cemetery.

Thanks must go to Nils Wilkes for working hard in all weathers to keep the War Memorial looking tidy and weed free.

The parish footpaths are regularly walked by our footpaths officer and any problems are reported and rectified quickly keeping them in good order. This year a new bench has been erected on the approach to Woollas Hall.

The Modification Orders for the footpaths at Piecing Lane & Hammock Lane are now with the Secretary of State and they have 6 months to reach their decision. As soon as we have any information on this we will report it in the Parish Magazine.

We also manage the allotments. There is currently no waiting list and there are one and a half plots available for immediate rental.

The Parish council continue to support the Recreation centre with a grant each year to help with their running costs.

The Section 106 money received from the Hanford Drive development will be spent at the Rec this year. Plans have been approved, and the contractors have been appointed, so hopefully the work will begin as scheduled, before the end of April.

During the year we continue to monitor and move the Vehicle Activated Speed Sign on the main road. We have also gained approval from Worcester Highways department for two new locations up New Road and these will be used at varying times.

Speeding continues to be an issue within the village and we are constantly looking for more effective ways of solving this problem. The 'Safer Roads Partnership' carried out a speed survey earlier in the year and from the data they received, they agreed to

carry out speed enforcement. The mobile speed camera has been in the village on a number of occasions and will continue to do spot checks for a few more months. The New Homes Bonus Scheme has continued to be very successful. Despite the government changing the goal posts, we have spent money on a projector for the WI, equipment for the Cricket Club & also 2 defibrillators for the village. One of these will be placed at the Rec and the other in a more central village location which has yet to be confirmed. £30,000 of current & future funding has also been allocated to the village hall for their ongoing improvements and should be available for when they need it.

The New Homes working group, but in particular George Glaze, has been very vigilant and hard working - keeping up with all the government changes, making sure applications are dealt with efficiently and also holding a village open meeting to discuss future options last October.

We continue to contribute to the Parish Games each year and with Colin Chapman at the helm, Eckington have won the competition for the second consecutive year. Well done to all the people who took part and thank you to Colin. Because we won, the prize giving will be held in The Bell again this year.

There has been a village run initiative, where 3 councillors got involved, to encourage all households and businesses in the village to register for superfast broadband on the Worcestershire website. Thanks to this group it looks like the village will be in the next phase of the rollout at the end of this year.

We keep in contact with the local police and the Bredon Hill Conservation Group and the local County & District Councillors attend our monthly meetings on a regular basis and keep us up to date with more county wide matters.

Currently the biggest issue for us appears to be the effects of continued central government cuts, which have a knock on effect on our village in ways such as a reduced bus service and delayed repairs to roads & pavements. We continue to chase highways about the many ongoing issues in the village and will continue to do so until the work is done.

Finally I would like to thank the team of councillors for the time they give and their ongoing hard work. Louise, the Parish Clerk, for keeping us all organised, doing all the paperwork and making things run smoothly and also Philip the parish lengthsman for his work keeping the village tidy.

Please continue to come along to meetings and discuss any issues you may have within the Parish. You may always get in touch with any of the individual councillors, details of whom are in the Parish Magazine each month.

Thank you.

There being no further comments, the Chair thanked all present for attending and the meeting closed at 7.10pm.