

Tidenham Parish Council – Report to Annual Parish Meeting 2023 by Councillor Swambo

Councillor Swambo gave an overview on Parish Council activities and of those of some of the Council's community partners.

Emily Timmins has continued to develop the Youth Engagement Project which is having a positive impact on the community. Good working relationships have been developed with the local policing team. (Councillor Swambo thanked the PCSOs present for their support.) Thanks to the grant funding from Gloucestershire County Council, the Project's Social Prescribing fund has been able to provide activities during each of the school holiday periods. For example, the Halloween scavenger hunt in which 57 young people took part plus parents. This was followed by a party and was very well received by parents and young people. A positive result of this was that there were no known complaints about young people 'trick or treating' in the area. The plans for a new Youth Club are under way along with other activities such as a 'Nerd Club' due to start soon. There has been a reduction in reported vandalism and drug issues, due partly to the introduction of the Police to young people.

Councillor Swambo has been involved in delivering a new initiative – How to Drug Proof Your Kids – in local schools.

The Parish Council is involved in the Aurora Project on climate and has committed to the climate emergency, working with the Forest of Dean District Council and European Universities. The first local project will be starting in Lydney and the Parish Council is looking at its own options, including solar panels on the village hall.

The Parish Council has submitted a proposal for expenditure of Section 106 monies paid to the District Council by local developers, specifically for use in the Parish to help improve air quality. The bid is for an electric vehicle / minibus for use by community groups throughout the Parish. With remaining monies a grant fund for local climate projects may be considered.

Councillor Swambo introduced the new Chair of Tidenham War Memorial Hall and Recreation Trust, Christie Love. The preschool group has now been at the Hall for 53 years. The Trustees are working to increase activities - warm space provision for next winter, improved lighting, access to Shirley's Grove including a new stile, improving signage and parking and moving the access to the children's play area on to Mopla Road. An online booking system is being introduced.

Thanks to Chris McFarling for supporting funding for a new kitchen at Sedbury and Beachley Village Hall which was first used to provide Christmas Day lunches for 85 people in the community by Sedbury Space – 50 seated and 35 delivered. The Council has also arranged for the installation of WiFi at the Hall, free of charge for 1 year through the Gigaclear community programme.

Sedbury Space continues to provide a range of services including Sunday lunches, coffee mornings and a walking group. The current manager, Susan Riordan, is retiring shortly. She has been a great asset to Sedbury Space and Councillor Swambo thanked Susan in her absence for her hard work.

The Council will continue with its Community Engagement Hubs which give members of the community an opportunity to let the Parish Council know what is important to them. Alongside these, the Council is establishing better links with groups and venues throughout the Parish.

As well as the electric vehicle proposal and solar panels, the Council is also looking at smaller projects to fulfil its declaration to support the Climate Emergency. These may involve more creative use of land in Buttington Road, introducing trees etc. and ways to provide insect habitats. The Council will also look to engage more with outside agencies, for example regarding the, sometimes confusing, regime of recycling.