

TIDENHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held at 7pm on Wednesday 31st May 2023 at Sedbury and Beachley Village Hall, King Alfred's Rd, Sedbury NP16 7AQ.

Present: Parish Councillors: Jan Koning - Chairman, Sheila Bollen, Michael Swambo, Clive Russell, Karan Strong, Audrey Tullett and Chris Wall.

9 members of the public.

Also Present: Mrs Carol Hinton – Parish Clerk, Mr David Stevens – Assistant Clerk.
Nick Evans – District Councillor and Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner.
Johnathan Lane – District Councillor.
Chris McFarling – County Councillor.
PCSOs Lucy Smith and Tom Oliver.

The Chairman welcomed all present. He congratulated both Parish and District councillors recently elected and thanked Parish councillors who had stood down for their service to the community. Clive Russell has joined the Parish Council since the last meeting and Karan Strong at the recent election – both were welcomed. The Council now has three vacancies which will be advertised and, hopefully, filled by co-option as soon as possible. The Chairman also welcomed Nick Evans and Johnathan Lane who, along with Adrian Birch who was not able to attend the meeting, were recently elected to the District Council as representatives for the Tidenham Ward. Chris McFarling was also congratulated on his re-election to the District Council. The PCSOs were also welcomed to the meeting and the Chairman thanked the Hall Committee for providing the refreshments.

1. Apologies: had been received from Parish Councillors Graham Drew and Maria Hartford Beynon, Emily Timmins – Parish Council Youth Worker and Adrian Birch District Councillor.

2. Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting held 4th May 2022:

The minutes were approved as presented and signed by the Chairman.

3. Matters Arising:

Housing Needs Survey – of 2500 dwellings in the Parish, 13% responded. Whilst a relatively small number, the results from these responses were interesting. The Survey identified 94 households with an urgent need for affordable housing. The new Parish Council will continue to work with other partners, particularly regarding the need to introduce small developments in the Parish.

Local Plan – the original District Council Proposed Local Plan was not adopted. This proposed several major developments, including within the Parish. Now that a new District Council is in place this may change. The Parish Council will continue to be involved with any plans or proposals for the future.

4. Presentation on behalf of Tidenham Parish Council by Michael Swambo:

Councillor Swambo gave an overview on Parish Council activities and of those of some 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.

Hazel Evans – the Church is carrying on with its warm spaces provision but calling it by a different name. Also - who will drive the electric vehicle? Councillor Swambo - each community group will be able to provide a volunteer driver.

Nick Evans – will there be more 'How to Drug Proof Your Kids' events? Councillor Swambo – hopefully there will be.

The Chairman added that the Council still has a way to go to improve attendance at the Community Hubs. Mary Vittle commented that they have not been well advertised – the Chairman acknowledged that that is a good learning point. Engagement with the community is important to the Council. 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.

5. Police Report:

PCSO Tom Oliver introduced himself and Lucy Smith and passed on apologies from PC Mark Evans who was unable to attend the meeting. Lucy is the team member dedicated to Tidenham parish. The team have been working to integrate themselves into the Parish and have been developing their engagement with schools, including sessions on stranger danger and internet safety. The overall reported crime statistics during 2022/23 have fallen from 817 in 2021/22 to 710. Incidents of Anti-Social Behaviour and nuisance have fallen by 62% and 48% respectively and incidents involving vulnerable adults fell from 185 to 109. The overall rate of burglary is very low in comparison to other areas. Good community relations are very important and it has been great working together with other organisations in the area. Tom explained that he is responsible for co-ordinating the Community Speedwatch Programme which has been used successfully in Tidenham Parish and five sites have now been identified as suitable locations to carry out Speedwatch sessions.

PCSO Lucy Smith introduced herself. She joined the team in November 2022 and is passionate about getting involved in the community. She has been working with Emily Timmins, Parish Council Youth Worker, and is attending as many community events as possible. Members of the community do not always want to interact, but it is useful to attend events such as coffee mornings to try to change this.

Helen Molyneux – headline news has been that the Met. Police will no longer be attending incidents involving mental health issues. Do you have support for these type of incidents in Gloucestershire? Nick Evans (Glos. Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner) asked if he could respond to this. Gloucestershire are introducing a dedicated mental health ambulance allowing for medical professionals to be ‘blue-lighted’ to an incident. Where there is a threat to life, the nearest available blue light will attend. This needs to be properly resourced providing the ‘right care by the right person’. Lucy Smith added that the local police team do try to get to know people with mental health issues in the area which, whilst not always successful, can help in some situations. She stated that there is good training provided and there is, for example, a colleague dedicated to dementia issues.

Councillor Swambo – there is funding available for free counselling for people in social housing. Also – do the police still provide cycling proficiency training? Tom replied that this is not now provided.

Mary Vittle – why are the yellow line parking restrictions outside of the shops in Sedbury not being enforced? Tom confirmed that this is not the responsibility of the Police but the County Council. County Councillor Chris McFarling will look into why the County traffic enforcement is not working in the area.

Jo Jenkins – there is a lack of Police presence in Chepstow. Thank you for the increased presence in Tidenham which has been noticed. The pandemic will have skewed the 21/22 statistics and it would be interesting to see statistics for the past five years.

Hazel Evans – are the Police using CCTV to investigate the incidents of drilling fuel tanks in the area? Tom confirmed that these incidents are being looked into and emphasised that it is important for the community to inform the Police of any incidents.

The Chairman informed the meeting that the Parish Council reviews the Police statistics at each of its meetings – these tend to yo-yo somewhat, but the overall trend is down.

6. Reports:

- **Parish Council Chairman’s Report** – The Chairman had provided a written report for the meeting. He welcomed the members of the Council that have joined since the last meeting. The Council is looking forward to co-opting people to fill the three current councillor vacancies. In order to meet the busy workload and projects that the Council has underway or is planning to start, volunteers and/or associates would be welcome to help. This would allow people to gain experience and may create a pool of individuals interested in future co-option opportunities.

The Chairman was pleased to announce that the Parish Council has achieved the Foundation Award of the Local Council Award Scheme (Certificate shown). This is a national prestigious award and recognises that, as well as good practice in its governance and procedures, the Council goes above and beyond what is legally required to serve the community. The Chairman thanked the Clerk and Assistant Clerk for their work in helping the Council achieve this and announced that the Council will be working towards the next level award.

Hazel Evans – there are many people volunteering and working with young people in the Parish who deserve praise for their work. The Chairman informed the meeting that the Council is launching, in conjunction with Sedbury Space, a local Community Champion Awards Scheme to recognize the contribution volunteers make to the community.

The Council continues to work to address road safety in the Parish, working with Chris McFarling, County Councillor. The Council is in constant communication with Gloucestershire Highways and has been trying, unsuccessfully, for a safer crossing on the A48. It will continue to push for options to be explored. The Council has been actively involved in the Community Speedwatch Campaign and has held many speed monitoring sessions in approved spots in the Parish. A community speed camera is soon to be installed positioned, where it is unsafe to hold a Speedwatch session, on the B4228. The Highways Committee of the Council has introduced a pothole ‘warden’ role and will use the Gloucestershire County Council ‘Report It’ section of their website. Members of the public should report issues through this as well, or let the Parish Council know.

Finally – three of the previous parish councillors did not stand for re-election in May. The Chairman thanked Maria Edwards and Liz McBride, in their absence, for their hard work and commitment to the council during their time as councillors. Helen Molyneux had also stepped down, not only as a parish councillor but as a district councillor, having served over 10 years. The Chairman presented Helen with an engraved vase as a token of appreciation from the Parish for her hard work and dedication to the community, particularly supporting older people. Helen thanked the Chairman and added that she had enjoyed her time as councillor for the Parish and District.

- Financial Statements from the Parish Council and Mopla Cottages Charity.

There were no comments or questions on the statements.

- Reports were received from:

- Tidenham War Memorial Hall & Recreation Ground Trust.

- Sedbury and Beachley Village Hall Charity. The Chairman confirmed that, as the Hall landlord, the Council will be looking into the possibility of solar panelled energy being introduced.

- Poor’s Allotment Trust.

7. Public Forum:

District Councillor and Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner Nick Evans reported that he has been running local litter picks as part of the District Council – please let him know of any areas where this might be required. Christie Love asked where help regarding littering can be found. Nick suggested contacting the Street Wardens who can look for evidence to see if it is possible to prosecute. The Chairman suggested litter picking activities might be widened throughout the Parish and that this would be something to be included on a future Parish Council agenda.

Johnathan Lane introduced himself as a newly elected District Councillor for the ward.

Hazel Evans thanked the Council for all of the work it does for the Parish.

The meeting closed at 20.20hrs