

Draft

WEMBDON PARISH ANNUAL MEETING 2009

The Annual Parish Meeting was held on Monday 9 March 2009, at Wembdon St George's School, commencing at 7.00pm.

Present was County Cllr John Edney & the following Parish Councillors, B Webb, Chairman, D Lumber, J Riddle, K Perry, M Solomon, R Western & S Bagg

Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman offered his welcome to everyone in attendance but noted disappointment that no members of the public were present.

Apologies for Absence

These were received in respect of Cllr A Bown, Cllr C Brown & Cllr R Harris. Apologies were also accepted from County Cllr Edney & Cllr S Bagg for their late arrival.

Minutes

The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Monday 10 March 2008 were formally approved & signed.

Matters Arising

There were no matters arising from the 2008 minutes.

Chairman's Annual Report

The Chairman read out the following

The Council worked smoothly during the year to continue to further the interests of the Parish. We are fortunate in having within our ranks Councillors with considerable energy & expertise, which is applied unstintingly to Parish affairs. As a result, the Council has made progress on a number of fronts. We are also well served by the local representatives of the law. PC Tony Freeman & PCSO Nick Mizon offer a frequent & reassuring presence in the Parish & undoubtedly act as deterrents to potential troublemakers.

A major exercise was completed during the year when the WEMBDON VISION was produced. A considerable number of people were involved in the creation of the VISION, & this illustrated the depth of the community spirit in Wembdon. Many of the areas of concern highlighted are common to the nation as a whole. Highway problems such as speeding & parking & the perennial matter of dog fouling, for instance, are again being taken up by the Council, but there is no easy answer to those problems.

The enhanced playing field continued to be enjoyed by many parents & children. It was particularly encouraging that the Council's efforts on the playing field were recognised by the Somerset Playing Fields Association with the award of a Certificate of Merit.

Our efforts to raise more grant funds were once again successful when Somerset County Council agreed to contribute £5000 towards the cost of constructing a new & wider bridge on the footpath between the playing field & the NDR. This will open up the footpath to prams & disabled persons' vehicles. Tenders are now being sought for this work. Mike Solomon is to be congratulated on his diligent efforts to secure this money & to deal with the pre-construction bureaucracy. Preliminary work has also taken place to consider the viability of any schemes to drain parts of the playing field, which flood during heavy storms.

The Parish Council & the Wembdon Community Association are the two main bodies catering for parishioners' general interests & providing leisure activities. The Council is always anxious for the two organisations to work closely together & believes that some further progress in this respect has been made in the past year.

Throughout this period, the Council:

Dealt with, & passed comments on a considerable number of planning applications

Noted the keen current interest in allotments, partly due, no doubt, to the credit crunch. The Council is still trying to secure the long-term future of the allotments.

Ensured that footpaths were maintained to an acceptable level.

Arranged for the Willow trees on the Common to be pollarded.

Set up a dialogue with the appropriate authorities, following flooding in Church Road after a torrential storm. Steve Bagg has been in the forefront of these discussions & it is not yet clear what developments may ensue.

The Council has always sought to have an effective channel of communication with parishioners. To this end, a small team has been working on a new website for the Council. The fruits of their work will be displayed for the first time at this meeting.

On the financial side, costs have been carefully controlled and, as a gesture to the credit crunch, our Council Tax precept will be held at the same level as last year - £14,000. Our precept is one of the lowest in Sedgemoor District. Administratively, we must rank at the top end of Parish Councils. For this, much credit is due to Kevin Thorpe, our very efficient Clerk.

Recently, EDF the French company, which took over British Energy & will be building the new nuclear plant at Hinkley Point, made a presentation to the Council. This was wide-ranging & covered both the macro & micro aspects of the project. Issues such as transport, worker accommodation, health & safety & many other points were touched upon. This major project will develop rapidly over the coming months & the Council will be on its toes to ensure that issues affecting our community are properly considered. There will clearly be many more meetings & discussions to come.

As spring approaches & the daffodils reawaken on the Common, the Council will also ensure that it is active & alert, as ever in ensuring that the lively Wembdon Community continues to be well served & that the village remains a great place in which to live.

Questions from Parishioners

There were none.

Parish Council Website

A slide show highlighting the appearance & content of the Parish Council website was provided by Cllr M Solomon. The meeting was informed that it was nearing completion with final testing due to take place shortly. Following a final check by the Parish Council it would then be made available to the public. It would contain a mixture of information relating to the activities of the Parish Council as well as other information that parishioners would be interested in reading.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 7.26pm