

## Wembdon Annual Parish Meeting

Held at the Parish Centre Wembdon on the 14<sup>th</sup> April 2014

At 7pm

**Present:** 7 members of the Parish Council, 2 members of the public and District Councillors Bown and Dyer and County Councillor Edney.

### Opening Remarks by the Chairman:

Welcome and approval of the minutes from the last **APM 8<sup>th</sup> Apl 2013** they were proposed and accepted by the meeting as a true and accurate reflection of the meeting

### Chairman's Report

Thank you all very much for coming along to this year's annual parish meeting. My name is Mike Solomon and I am chairman of Wembdon Parish Council.

Let me open my report by saying thank you to all of our councillors and paying tribute to all of the work that they do totally un-paid to try to keep our parish one of the nicest places to live in this district. This year our councillors have continued to represent the whole community in discussions with district, county and other organisations to try to work as a team and achieve the best results for our parish.

The other key member of our team, is of course our Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer, Owen. I would like to give my personal thanks from the Chair to Owen for the professional guidance he gives to me and the support he provides to us all both within and outside of our Parish Council meetings.

To consider the achievements of the key working groups within the Council:

Our project to bring the allotments and the whole allotments area up to scratch has been a great success. I'm pleased to report that we have a steady demand from members of our community to take up allotments when they fall vacant and that with the addition of new benches I am seeing more people using the area along the ridge from which we have views right across the Bristol Channel. After a great deal of input of time and funding from the council I am pleased to say that that project has now been completed and I am always complemented on its success.

We have also worked closely with our field and hedgerows maintenance contractor and as a consequence we have a playing field that is one of the finest in the district and our footpaths are well used by dog walkers and ramblers alike. As our community grows in size these opportunities to enjoy a little open space is very much appreciated and we can see the playing field full of people enjoying the fresh air every weekend.

Our speed watch team has struggled to maintain a level of support and members have been a little disillusioned when their efforts have not resulted in follow-up letters from the police

service. I am pleased to report that that situation is now changing, we have recently gained an additional two members to the team and the police service are organising training and follow-up letters for those caught speeding are being reinstated. This is a very important volunteer activity within the village as we are seeing vehicles travelling at almost twice the limit on occasions. We are also investigating the opportunity to purchase a lollicam to see if this would be beneficial in pursuing prosecutions.

I'm delighted also to report that we have had a busy year in communicating our activities within the parish. Our parish paper grows from strength to strength and we have a new website with a much more modern style and content. We have also opened access to our website to all community groups in the village with a view that this is the best way to encourage increased coverage.

The year has been a quiet one for planning applications in general but there have been two decisions, both submitted and decided by the County Council, that will have a major impact within our village for many years to come. These were the introduction of a roundabout at Sandford Corner and the permanent increase in the size of our village junior school. This parish council has grave reservations over the impact of both of these decisions on our village and community and strongly objected to both. As chairman of this council and a long-term resident of the parish I am deeply disappointed at the effect that this will have both on the community and on the general disillusionment in the political process when local views are not adequately considered when decisions are made.

I noted last year we had been actively reviewing our financial position such that we could better understand our expenditures and provide a suitable level of contingency funding to enable the Council to implement its objectives. I can report that we are on a sound financial footing at this point, on which the clerk will shortly go into greater detail and that we are creating reserves that should enable a shorter term pay off of the loan from the public works board and ensure that we have finances available to meet those funding pledges that we have made. Again I would note that we have achieved this whilst remaining one of the lowest costs per household Council in the district.

Finally I would like to report that the new village hall and village green project is proceeding according to plan. The project is a significant one and is absorbing a large amount of time from all of those involved with it. There are numerous regulations and complications along the way but the challenges are being addressed one by one and steady progress is being made.

So at the end of another year let me record my sincere thanks to each and every one of our councillors for the hours of work that they have put in despite the all the other demands on their time and I look forward to another year of working with this enthusiastic, professional and fully representative team. I know that every councillor is doing everything that they to keep Wembdon a great place to live and to bring up a family my thanks to them all.

### **Questions from the attendees**

No questions were raised at this meeting

The meeting Closed at 7.30pm