

Wembdon Annual Parish Meeting

Held at St. Georges School, Wembdon Wembdon on the 16th March 2015

At 7pm

Present at the meeting were 9 members of the Parish Council and 4 other local residents.

Opening Remarks by the Chairman:

Welcome and approval of the minutes from the last **APM April 14th 2015**. They were proposed and accepted by the meeting as a true and accurate reflection of the previous meeting.

Chairman's Report

The Chairman delivered the following report:

Ladies and Gentlemen, good evening. I am Mike Solomon and I am the Chairman of Wembdon Parish Council. This evening we are holding the Annual Parish Meeting, which is not a meeting of The Parish Council but rather the opportunity for everyone in the village to come together to hear my report of the past year and to bring forward any ideas that you may have for us to incorporate into our future programmes. I am joined on the podium by Tony Jay, our Parish Clerk and all of the Parish Councillors are present to try to answer any questions and to participate in any discussion.

This year we have tried to give this meeting a new look and have invited representatives from all of the Community groups. I am grateful for those who have attended this evening and will give them each an opportunity to tell us a little of their activities.

This is an annual review of what the Council has achieved but as we are at the end of an election cycle it is really a review of what this Council, your Council has achieved.

You may recall that when this Council first met there was doubt if we could pay our bills. We were robbing Peter to pay Paul whilst we were organizing funding to acquire the allotments. I am pleased to report that with a combination of positive budgeting and careful management, we enter the next Council cycle in a much stronger position despite some significant expenditure.

This Council has taken as its mandate the desire to continue to make Wembdon a better place to live. There have been influences well outside of our control, the decision to double the size of the village with new housing estates was outside of our control, the decision to build Hinkley Point C without building an appropriate access road was outside of our control, the

decision to permanently expand the size of our Village School was outside of our control. It has been our task to try to maintain the quality of life in our village despite all of these events outside of our control.

The first challenge was to take on the purchase of the allotments and turn this into a recreational area that all can enjoy. The new track was constructed, the allotments administration overhauled and some fresh allotment markings sorted out. I see many people walking dogs along there and occasionally people using the benches so I consider that to be a great success.

We next supported the Queen's Jubilee, with this Council having a commemoration medal distributed to all of the children in the Parish and also planting a Jubilee oak tree on the Green at Lyndhurst Crescent.

Throughout the period of this Council there have been ongoing developments with the construction of the new Village Green and Village Hall. We now have a project well underway that will give Wembdon a recreation facility that is the envy of all. A 20 acre green space with a 5 acres Village Green as its centre piece, encircled by an avenue of specimen English Oaks with the character buildings of the Parish Centre and St George's Church in clear view as well as the new Village Hall. The latest addition to this green space has been the incorporation of land donated to the Council by Persimmon which, thanks to our "give a day" initiative, is now being cleared of 10 years growth of bramble and general neglect to become a community parkland space being designed as a joint project between the Council and senior year land management students from Bridgwater College.

The Council has also recognized that the significant growth in housing has also increased the pressure on our other open spaces and has taken a very pro-active approach to regularly trimming back the hedges and strimming the footpaths so that these too can be walked and enjoyed by everyone in our community.

The increase in the village population has also resulted in a rapid increase in the number of children in the village. The permanent increase in the size of our village school was not supported by this council but we have strongly encouraged and supported the formation of a traffic working group with the school, highways and the police to address the issues raised by this expansion, including the problems with parking throughout the Inwood Estate during drop off and pick-up times and the consequent congestion at the key junction in and out of the village. This Council believes that safe cycling and walking routes to and fro the school is an absolutely critical element of a successful travel plan and we are working with the Traffic Authorities in a number of projects to improve the quality of footpaths, to review the timing of the traffic lights and to look widely at the possible options available to reduce the speed of traffic running through Wembdon, especially as we all anticipate the traffic boom that will be associated with the new Hinkley Point C station.

Your Council prides itself on being an open and very pro-active team. We publish a regular Parish Paper to inform our community of what is going on,

we have a new website, our meetings are all held in public. We welcome inputs from any member of the parish, both positive and negative. We are all volunteers, who give freely of our time only to try to make Wembdon a better place to live and bring up our families.

My final comment, and as it is an election year it could be my final comment, is to give my sincere thanks to each and every Councillor for their personal commitment to making this team work. I have had the great honour and pleasure of leading this team for the past four years and helping to make these things happen. Two of your Councillors are retiring at the end of this session and I thank them especially for their past four years of effort. Each and every Councillor has made a difference and I hope to be working with all of them for the next four years.

Thank you.

Financial report for the period April 2014 to March 2015

The Clerk presented the financial report. No questions were asked.

Presentations from Village Organisations

Presentations were given by the following organisations:

The meeting Closed at 8.30pm