

Wembdon Annual Parish Assembly

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

At 7pm

Present at the meeting were 6 members of the Parish Council and 23 other local residents.

Opening Remarks by the Chairman:

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the assembly. The minutes from the last assembly on 16th March 2015 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:

I would like to start my address by giving my thanks to all of the Councillors, who put so many unpaid hours into the service of Wembdon village. We all live in the village and I want to take this opportunity to give just a brief outline of some of the activities that we are involved in to ensure that Wembdon remains a greatly preferred place to live.

Let me start with traffic:

Traffic speed continues to be a major concern which has been brought to the Council's attention many times this year. We do own a radar gun and already have a Speedwatch team and they must be applauded for their valiant efforts. We also now have a regular speed patrol bike setting up on Wembdon Rise and both show traffic speeds to be well above the 30mph speed limit. The Council has been working with SCC for some years to try to get better monitoring with Speed Indicating Devices (SIDs) and we have at last agreed on several positions for mounting posts and we have been given the go ahead to purchase and manage our own monitoring device. The posts will be installed over the coming months and training to work on the roads is being organized. I am hopeful that this will make a difference as traffic speed was one of the three major concerns identified when we completed the Parish Plan and it has been proven to be effective in reducing traffic speeds in other places.

And on the subject of volunteering:

Give a Day has become a regular event on our calendar and we have a team of volunteers who have brought into use an additional 4 acres of land donated by Persimmon which we now call Wembdon Parkland, a new area of open land for climbing a tree or exercising your dog and hopefully in the future, enjoying a picnic with your family. The team also take the opportunity for a good litter pick and I hope everyone is seeing the difference. We have also been fortunate in having a small team of volunteers who have cleared the footpath at the end of Wares Lane, making it a much pleasanter walk through and we continue to keep all of the main village footpaths strimmed so that everyone can walk them.

Drainage and rhyne clearance is another important task in Wembdon:

We can also all see that the rhynes and drainage ditches are more clear this year than at any time before and for the first time we were able to coordinate the clearing of Crowpill Rhyne, adjacent to Church Road, with the regular pollarding of the withies

and we also took the opportunity to give the trees on the Common a good pruning. Many years of meetings with the Drainage Board and Highways has also now borne fruit as the drainage along Church Road has been refurbished with new much larger drain covers and a new spillway constructed. Hopefully this will prevent any further flooding along that section of highway.

The Playing Field has been well maintained and the play equipment is regularly monitored, with a new gate now installed on the young children's area and new chains about to be fitted to the swings. Of course the new Village Green has also been opened up, with 11 acres of additional space for organized and disorganized play. Over the coming years as trees are planted and the area matures we will see this develop into a truly beautiful recreational space for everybody.

The Village Hall situation will be covered by one of their Trustees but I must just comment that this Council fully supports the work that the Trust is doing to provide our community with a new Village Hall. There is no dispute that the project was supported by a significant majority of the electorate when the poll was called and we see it as our responsibility as the elected representatives of that community to do what we can to help. The tendering for the construction of the NDR access is now underway and we are working with Somerset County Council to see it operational by the end of the summer holidays.

The allotments and the whole surrounding area along the ridge is looking very tidy and we have a waiting list for plots so I am pleased that this Council took the decision to purchase the land and then to make the improvements in the general area and also the water supply. I am also delighted to see this area being used for an afternoon walk or to exercise with your dog, a good use of community money to develop a community space.

The Parish Council work also includes participating in a number of regular meetings with Hinkley Point, the Parish Cluster, the EDF traffic forum where we try to influence the decisions that would impact our village and I am grateful for the often unseen work in these areas. Our Planning Committee also meets regularly to provide our comments on all of the planning applications in the parish and has also worked with other parishes and the District Council as the new Local Plan is developed.

I must also offer thanks to the teams who prepare the Parish Paper and to all of the Councillors who take responsibility for delivering it to every resident in the village and also to our Councillors who keep our digital presence updated.

So your Council is active many areas, some of these very much in the background, and so I will end by offering the thanks from the whole Council for a key member of our team who also operates very much in the background. Our Parish Clerk, Tony Jay, who provides us with accurate and experienced support in all of our activities. He is qualified to the highest level and his background in the police force gives me the confidence to sit in this chair alongside him.

Thank you all for your confidence in voting us in and for all of your help in making Wembdon a great place to live.

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 local organisations.

The meeting Closed at 9.05 pm