

**ETCHILHAMPTON PARISH COUNCIL
CHAIRMAN'S REPORT (2016)**

1 Meetings

The Council has had four meetings in 2105/16 together with the Annual Parish Meeting the minutes of which have been tabled.

2 Councillors

Mrs Elizabeth Bridewell; Mr Tim Holgate; Mr Jon Nash (Treasurer & Responsible Financial Officer, unpaid); Mr Ralph Smith and Mr Mervyn Woods (Chairman and unpaid Clerk).

Mr Woods has been mandated to attend the Devizes Area Board, the Devizes Community Area Partnership and sub-Committees and ad hoc meetings.

No councillors have received any payments from the Council for work done. Their pecuniary interests have been notified to Wiltshire and declared at relevant Council meetings.

3 Accounts

The Council's accounts for 2015/16 have been presented to the Annual Parish Meeting by Mr Jon Nash, the Responsible Financial Officer. These have been vetted by the Internal Auditor, Mr Peter Hanson, and will go the External Auditors, Grant Thornton.

4 Broadband

Following discussion at last year's Annual Parish Meeting the Council has pursued Wiltshire/BT for action to bring high speed broadband to the village. This has now been included in the BT 2016 survey of connections but without any definite date for completion of the links between the Cannings exchange cabinet and properties in the village.

The problem of lack of connectivity seems to be shared with many other rural communities.

5 Flooding

Remedial work has been done by Wiltshire between The Green and 4 Manor Farm Cottages.

In the very recent heavy downpour the drains there have coped well with the volume of water. Wiltshire has been reminded about the continuing need for the Vactor between the Village Hall and Sandiacres.

6 Dog Fouling

This continues to be a problem, on roads, footpaths and in the playing field, despite notices put up by Wiltshire's Dog Warden some of which were destroyed.

7 Buses and Bus Shelters

The Council responded to Wiltshire bus consultations and the resultant new service between Devizes and Pewsey is up and running albeit on an experimental basis

Following more recent consultations Wiltshire's latest proposals are now awaited.

Timetables have been posted in all noticeboards and bus shelters.

The steps at the bus shelter at The Mixon have been replaced by the Council following passengers' safety concerns and a handrail installed. Passengers have reported that they are very pleased with this emergency work.

8 Play Equipment

Following very close co-operation between the Council and the Village Hall Social Committee, new play equipment has been installed, generously paid for by Bishops Cannings PC and donated to the Council. Mr Eric Clark of Bishops Cannings played a key role in negotiations with Wiltshire.

The Council has appointed Mr Dave Roberts, who has requisite experience in safety inspections, to regularly inspect the new equipment and the swings and to produce a requisite health and safety reports.

9 Wiltshire Public Conveniences Cutbacks

The Council responded to Wiltshire's consultations on shutting down all public conveniences in Devizes unless these were taken over by the local council or private businesses. The conveniences have been taken over by Devizes Town Council and thus saved.

10 Devizes Area Board

This Forum run by Wiltshire Council continues to discuss local issues with Devizes Area residents and Devizes Community Area Partnership. Bus transport and air quality remain key issues. Similar bodies exist in Marlborough, Pewsey and elsewhere. Mr Philip Whitehead has been appointed Vice-Chairman of the Devizes Board.

11 Playing Field and Hedge

Mr James Cowdry has very kindly cut the hedge at no cost to the Parish. Mr David Stevens has cut the grass in the playing field very thoroughly and has been re-contracted for 2016/7.

12 Highways

Wiltshire has now taken back direct responsibility and appointed Ringway for most local jobs and resurrected the Parish Steward scheme which will become fully functional in October. Recent tasks reported include:

- Road erosion opposite Moss Cottage.
- Road erosion near the corner of the Etchilhampton/All Cannings road at the Mixon and on the opposite side near the large stone in the bank of Etchilhampton House.
- Displacement of a large concrete slab at the roadside between Manor Orchard and Etchilhampton House next to a gully.

- The need for the Vactor machine between the Village Hall and Sandiacres
- Verge grass cutting at the Monument/A342 junction
- Grass cutting on the bank outside No12 Church View now that Wiltshire have agreed with Aster that Wiltshire are responsible.

Wiltshire's budget constraints mean that work will be done on a priority basis so some tasks may not be done at all.

As regards speed limits and road safety concerns on the All Cannings road, the Devizes Area Board endorsed the Council's request for action and commissioned Atkins to conduct a survey. The outcome is awaited

Despite the Council's requests to the Devizes Area Board no action has yet been taken to curtail the rat-run traffic from the A361 at Bishops Cannings through the village to the A342 at Stert Corner.

13 Planning Applications

A number of routine applications have been approved during the year. Controversial plans by Manor Farm All Cannings for a new slurry pit and silage platform near Wayside Lodge have been opposed. The outcome is awaited.

14 Subscriptions and Donations

St Andrew's Churchyard maintenance was given £250; subscriptions were made to Wiltshire Association of Local Councils, CPRE and Community First and donations to the Citizens Advice Bureau and the Bobby Van Trust all of which provide local support for parishioners.

15 Queen Elizabeth's 90th Birthday Celebrations

To commemorate HM Queen Elizabeth II's 90th Birthday the Council has distributed flyers asking parishioners if they would like free medals for village children of school age and under and offering "paid for" medals to all parishioners at cost. These will be distributed at the meal in the Village Hall after the Birthday "Big Walk" on 19 June.

16 Thanks

The Chairman would like to take the opportunity of this report to thank everyone who supports the Council's activities in many different ways.

Mervyn Woods
Chairman, Etchilhampton PC
May 2016.