

## **MINUTES OF THE ETCHILHAMPTON ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON 28 MAY 2015 IN THE VILLAGE HALL AT 7pm**

**Present:** Mrs Bridewell, Mrs Cowdry, Mr Nash, Mr R Smith, Mr Whitehead (Wiltshire Council), Mr Woods (Chairman).

**Apologies:** Mr T Holgate. The Wiltshire Police did not attend, probably due to call-outs.

The Meeting agreed to take the invitees' items before the routine items.

### **1 Minutes of the previous Meeting**

The minutes of the previous Meeting were approved and signed.

### **2 Matters Arising**

- Broadband – Questions were raised as to why Coate had high-speed broadband but Etchilhampton, on the same telephone exchange, had only 0.75Mbps. It appeared that the problem lay in the final BT line from the box in Coate, which was still in copper. Until this was upgraded speeds could not be dramatically improved. There was a Wiltshire site showing the plans for the upgrading programme but nothing was immediate.

### **3 Accounts and Report by Parish Council Treasurer/Responsible Financial Officer**

Mr Nash presented the annual Parish Council accounts which had been tabled. No questions were raised. Mr Bearman had been contacted to act as the internal auditor. Relevant papers were approved and signed to send to the external auditors, Grant Thornton.

### **4 Annual Report by Parish Council Chairman**

Mr Woods reported on the Parish Council's activities over the year and tabled a written report.

Mr Woods thanked Mr Whitehead and Mr Nash for their presentations and all others for attending.

### **5 Highways Issues, including flooding**

(See Mr Whitehead's report, Item 7, below)

### **6 Discussion with Local Wiltshire Police Officer, PC Andy List**

PC List did not attend.

### **7 Discussion with Wiltshire Councillor, Mr Philip Whitehead**

Mr Whitehead reported that Wiltshire was facing severe budget constraints. £28m of savings were needed and central government grants had been cut by £30m. Priority was being given to protection of the elderly and child protection where resources would be increased. As easier cuts had already been made more difficult changes to

activities, such as collection of green bins, had to be re-examined. If council tax was raised government grant would be withdrawn.

Other possible money savings would be to close public lavatories, a general divesting of Wiltshire services to town and parish councils and reviewing car parking charges. As Wiltshire was geographically a very large county costs per head of population were high. Mr Whitehead quashed rumours that rubbish clearing would be transferred to parishes but there would be a change in opening times at the Hopton Road rubbish depot.

The Meeting expressed opposition to the closing of public conveniences in Devizes.

On highways and flooding, Mr Whitehead read out a brief prepared by Highways Officers who had been invited to the Meeting but did not attend. The need for a full and proper survey and remediation of the Etchilhampton drainage was known but it was not the priority in Wiltshire where many places had experienced severe flooding of buildings. It was also planned to do future drainage work in conjunction with road resurfacing to avoid double costs – though no precise timetable was given.

The Meeting reiterated to Mr Whitehead the importance of solving the village drainage problems to avoid a repeat of the previous flooding. Mr Whitehead noted this.

Mr Whitehead also agreed to check with the Highways Officers what was being done about the broken gully cover opposite The Mixon marked with a traffic cone.

On the hopper bus to the Royal United Hospital in Bath, after lengthy wrangling the RUH and the Community Care Group had at last agreed to meet Wiltshire to discuss the way forward. The health authorities were, unlike Wiltshire, under statutory obligations to provide transport to hospitals. Wiltshire was also encouraging RUH to make appointment times more convenient for distant patients, to telephone patients with OK test results and reserve call-in appointments for occasions when patients really needed to be seen face to face.

Devizes-Pewsey Connect buses – a new timetable was now approved for a pilot trial period.

## **8 Any Other Business**

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8pm with further thanks to all who had attended and a reminder about the Fete on 25 July at 2pm, suggestions and volunteers would be welcome.