

**ETCHILHAMPTON PARISH COUNCIL
CHAIRMAN'S REPORT (MAY 2017)**

1 Meetings

The Council has had five meetings in 2106/17 together with the 2016 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 2016/17 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

The Council has continued to pursue Wiltshire/BT for action to bring high speed broadband to the village. To this effect we have conducted an informal survey of the average broadband speed in the village. The results have been circulated to those who took part in the survey. Copies are available on request.

The latest information from Wiltshire/BT is that

"having reviewed the area and although the underground infrastructure does not fit neatly into or align with, any postcode, parish or community area boundary they will include the following postcodes for consideration:

SN103JL

SN103JN

SN103JP

SN103JR

SN103JS

SN103JY

and have confirmed that all the premises within these postcodes are in plan for a Fibre to the Premises (FTTP) solution. "

After protest by the Council, Wiltshire have further confirmed that:

“the following premises are now included in the current plan, subject to successful delivery, to deliver the FTTP service:

*SN10 3JJ
SN10 3JT
SN10 3JH
SN10 3JY*

The postcode SN10 3JU is in plan. However, the premises within this postcode are split between two different exchange areas and Wiltshire will need to wait for the outcome of the survey to provide more detail.

Premises in the postcode SN10 3JQ are not in the Intervention Area for our current phase of deployment as they already receive a fibre service from the Devizes CAB 23.”

Wiltshire has now said that following a site survey the installation work should be done in Summer/Autumn this year.

5 BT Phone Kiosk

As previously the Council has vigorously opposed closure of the kiosk in the light of the totally inadequate mobile phone coverage in the village.

6 Flooding

The Parish Council has agreed to liaise with the Environment Agency in a flood survey.

In the very recent heavy downpour the drains on the central track coped with the volume of water where they had been unblocked. Wiltshire has been reminded about the continuing need for the Vactor between the Village Hall and Sandiacres to complete the unblocking.

The road, C60, to All Cannings again flooded at Shortlands Lane after heavy rain.

7 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.

8 Buses and Bus Shelters

As reported last year as an emergency health and safety issue the steps at the bus shelter at The Mixon were replaced by the Council and a handrail installed. Passengers have reported that they are very pleased with this emergency work. This work was very costly because Wiltshire insisted that approved highways engineers had to be used and this led to a large increase in the Precept for 2017/18.

9 Play Equipment

The Village Hall Social Committee organised a small thank you event for Bishops Cannings Parish Council and its Clerk who had donated the climbing equipment to the Council.

In conjunction with the Village Hall Social Committee a seat was purchased for installation near the climbing frame and has been kindly erected by Mr Dave Sanders at no cost.

Mr Dave Roberts has conducted health and safety examinations of the playing field equipment. Defects have been reported to the installers for remedial action and rectified.

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, highway maintenance and air quality remain key issues. Similar bodies exist in Marlborough, Pewsey and elsewhere.

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 2017/8.

12 Highways

As reported last year Wiltshire has taken back direct responsibility and appointed Ringway for most local jobs and resurrected the Parish Steward scheme which became functional in October. Tasks reported include:

- Road erosion opposite Moss Cottage – now resurfaced by Wiltshire round to the telephone kiosk as stated on the road closure notices.
- The need for the Vactor machine between the Village Hall and Sandiacres
- The Council has persuaded Wiltshire that a “Slow Children” type sign is needed on the bank opposite Badgers. This will cost the Council £75.
- Road mirror – the Council decided not to ask for a road mirror at the village entrance finger post at the Mixon.
- Grass cutting on the C60 and at The Lion Monument junction with the A342.

Wiltshire’s budget constraints mean that work will continue to 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 C60 All Cannings road, the Devizes Area Board endorsed the Council’s request for action. The Atkins report was prepared but was not satisfactory. The Council is still pursuing this.

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.

Highly controversial plans by Manor Farm All Cannings for a giant, environmentally damaging, new slurry pit and silage platform in Etchinghampton were most vigorously

opposed in writing and at meetings of interested parties, including the Wiltshire Gazette. The applications were eventually withdrawn by the agent. An enormous amount of work went into opposing the applications.

The Council wishes to thank all those parishioners who joined in the campaign to protect the AONB and Conservation Area against these harmful planning applications with particular mention of the great work done by Mr Ted Bearman and Mrs Kate Freeman.

14 Subscriptions and Donations

St Andrew's Churchyard maintenance has been donated £250 and £42 for green bin collection; subscriptions were made to Wiltshire Association of Local Councils, CPRE, and Community First all of which provide local support for parishioners.

15 Queen Elizabeth's 90th Birthday Celebrations

As reported last year the Council acquired and distributed free commemorative medals to the village children and some extra medals were purchased by parishioners. There are still a few medals available for purchase at cost - £2.14 each.

16 Local Elections 2017

Parish Council and Unitary elections have taken place and Parish Councillors and Mr Philip Whitehead were all re-elected.

17 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 and to Mr Whitehead, Wiltshire Council, for his talk, Q&A and support and to Wiltshire Police for their report.

Chairman, Etchilhampton PC
May 2017.