

EDGMOND PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING MONDAY 11TH APRIL 2016 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Parish Council Meetings

This time last year there were three vacancies on the Parish Council. These vacancies were advertised on the website, in the parish magazine and on the notice boards. As a result the following were co-opted onto the Parish Council, namely Mrs Rebecca Hayhurst, Mr Lee Bowers and Mrs Cath Edwards.

The first item on the Agenda of each Parish Council meeting is the Public Session. It is what it says it is - a public session - an opportunity for local residents to come and share their views with the Parish Council. We would welcome your attendance. Having said what you came to say to the Parish Councillors, it is your decision whether you stay in attendance for the remainder of the meeting or if you've had enough by then you may leave. Whilst we would hope that you will stay, we will not be offended if you leave.

The second item on the Agenda of each council or committee meeting is the Declaration of Personal Interests. This is where each councillor must declare if they have an interest in any item which appears on the Agenda. If they do declare an interest, this is recorded and they will be asked not to participate in that particular discussion and if necessary leave the meeting.

All agendas are available on the website, along with our Registers of Disclosable Interests and the Minutes of our meetings.

I thank all councillors for their help and support and also for giving freely of their time. Several councillors also represent the community on outside organisations and we are very grateful to them. A full list of these outside bodies is available on the website.

The Parish Council is pleased to consider applications for grant funding from local organisations who would then be asked to report back to the Parish Council in line with the grants policy regarding how the funding had been spent.

It is also important for residents to know that no councillor on Edgmond Parish Council claims the expenses to which they are entitled. The Parish Council is a non-political group who often do a thankless task. However they do what they do because they are trying to maintain and if possible enhance the quality of life for the local residents of Edgmond.

The Parish Council has 5 committees and it is through these committees that the work of the Parish Council is done. All but one hold regular meetings throughout the year. These committees are namely

- 1) the Planning and Development Committee
- 2) the Environment and Rights of Way Committee
- 3), the Highways, Transport, Road Safety and Street lighting Committee
- 4) the Communication Committee
- 5) and finally the Complaints and Appeals Committee

The latter committee is only triggered if there is a complaint or an appeal against any aspect of the Parish Council's work or against any individual on the Parish Council.

I am pleased to report that we have never had a Complaints and Appeals Committee meeting.

I will now take the four main committees in turn and try and give more detail about the activity of each of these committees.

1) Planning and Development Committee

The Planning Committee meets one week before a Full Council meeting and they look carefully at each application which has been received. Particular attention is given to things like property access, appropriate building materials, immediate neighbours' concerns, if any, and the impact of the new development on the locality and neighbouring houses. As the Parish Council is a statutory consultee in all applications within our Parish, it enables us to see and comment on each application. However the final decision whether to grant or refuse an application is made by Telford Wrekin Council.

It will come as no surprise to residents to say that 2015 has been a very busy year for this committee who were pleased when Telford and Wrekin Council announced that it does have a 5 year land supply for building houses. This was a significant statement as any planning application that came in would be assessed against Telford and Wrekin Council's current policies and no longer based on the guidelines for the National Planning Policy Framework.

Most applications received caused few problems, however, as you know, some applications do cause concern and in line with the Planning Principles of Edgmond Parish Council, - special meetings are called when an application is large or contrary to policy. Such a meeting was held on Sat 27th June 2015 when we received the first application to build houses on the land adjacent to Egremont House. At this meeting residents were able share their opinions with the Parish Council. Comments both for and against the scheme were welcomed and I can assure you that all comments received from local residents were read and taken into consideration before the Parish Council decided to oppose this application. Everyone was encouraged to write their comments and views on the Telford and Wrekin planning webpage.

As you know there has since been a second planning application on this land with fewer houses. Again there was an opportunity to express new views both for and against the application. Having again taken account of your views I can further inform you that the Parish Council has again decided to oppose this application. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Protect Heritage Edgmond group for working with the Parish Council on this matter and for helping to inform residents of the proposals.

In response to the Publication Edition of the Emerging Local Plan, the neighbouring parishes have made a Joint Statement. If you wish I can read this statement at the end of my report. However within the Local plan, if accepted by the Inspector, there is a guarantee that Edgmond's Shrewsbury Road Playing Fields will remain as Green Field land.

2) Environment and Rights of Way Committee

Unfortunately dog fouling continues to be a problem in the village and every complaint we receive is forwarded to the dog warden who does an excellent job in following up our concerns and complaints. When you realise that there is only one Dog Warden for the entire Telford and Wrekin area, he has a mammoth task and his efforts are commendable.

Children should not have to be subjected to avoiding dog mess as they walk to and from school. I again appeal to all dog owners to clear up their own dog's mess and pop it into a bin. If you think we need more bins or if you think the bins need to be situated elsewhere then please let us know. If anyone has any other ideas which we could consider to eradicate the problem of dog fouling on our

streets then please let us know. The Parish Council has volunteered to take part in the We're Watching You Campaign (which has been piloted in Newport recently) and I am pleased that the Clerk met with officers last week and they have agreed to accept our offer. Further details will be available in the near future.

Another problem we have in Edgmond is fly posting especially on telegraph poles. This is illegal and those who do it are risking an on the spot fine of up to £80. Unfortunately these posters or flyers are quick to go up but rarely taken down and the staples used to put them up are often left in the poles with their points sticking out. These are dangerous and could cause a very nasty accident. So far we have been lucky and we have not heard of any incidents but it could happen. The staples should be removed.

There have also been concerns about notices in private gardens. It is hoped that when appropriate these will be removed as they do have a detrimental effect on the village scene and may be stopping the sale of property.

Rights of Way

Our aim to link together all the Rights of Way within the Edgmond Parish for the benefit of the community is nearing completion. This is thanks to a close working liaison between Cllr Doherty and Andrew Careless the Rights of Way Officer at Telford and Wrekin. When completed an exhibition will take place in the village hall to disseminate information to the residents.

At present with Andrew Careless' help the Parish Council is setting up a Rights of Way Partnership between the parishes of Tibberton and Cherrington, Waters Upton and Edgmond. Hopefully once in operation this partnership will make better use of any funding available and prioritise work that needs to be done on all Rights of Way throughout the 3 parishes.

Tree Project

In February 200 trees were planted in the hedgerows around Edgmond. When they are ready in the Autumn there will be a lot more trees to be planted and we need your help. We appeal to you to suggest locations for these trees in preparation for the Autumn planting. The Parish Council would like to thank Cllr Edwards for taking the lead in this project and I know she would welcome the names of more volunteers. The more volunteers there are, the easier the task of planting. So if you can think of anywhere where a tree could be planted especially in the hedgerow or if you would like to help with the planting then please let the Clerk or Cllr Edwards know.

While I talk about trees may I make the usual Springtime Appeal for local residents to keep their hedges trimmed back to the boundary for safety reasons. Overhanging hedges or branches can be a danger to both vehicles and pedestrians so please ensure they are trimmed back and do not become a hazard.

Grants

Thanks to a successful application to the Telford and Wrekin Pride in the Community, our Ward Members, Councillor Stephen Burrell and Councillor Stephen Bentley funded the purchase of a new bench and supported much needed work on the noticeboard. The new bench can be seen, and sat upon, next to the path to the bowling club in Shrewsbury Road car park.

Also an application for a grant from Veolia was successful. Our aim is to use this money to smarten up the village. Some signs within the village need sprucing up, some paths need to be tidied up and we'd like to plant more bulbs in and around the village. No doubt there will be other suggestions but if you think you could spare some time to help us then please let the Clerk know.

Harper Adams University

The regular meetings between the Parish Council and the University staff are working well. We are regularly informed and updated on future plans and the notes on these meetings are available on request. We are pleased that the University is going from strength to strength. It is very highly rated in the country and in last year's What Uni? Awards, as voted by the students, it achieved one first and 2 second awards. The Parish Council congratulate the Vice Chancellor and his staff and welcome the continued development of the University. The Parish Council is also grateful to the Farm Manager for his help with Rights of Way and also to the Student Union for the letters informing residents of forthcoming events. This is greatly appreciated.

St Peter's Church of England Primary School

As the minor local authority no longer has a Governor assigned to a role at the school the Parish Council has introduced termly meetings with the Headteacher and staff. These are proving to be very useful and informative. The school is very highly regarded and we are proud to have it in our Parish. How lucky we are to have 2 excellent centres of education covering almost the full spectrum of education within the one Parish. The Parish Council is proud to be associated with both.

3) Highways, Transport, Road Safety and Street Lights Committee

Speeding in the village continues to be a problem. Unfortunately Marsh Road and Longwithy Lane are seen as a short cut from the A41 to Telford. Consequently the Police are introducing a Community Speed Awareness scheme. This will be taking place in High Street, School Road, Flatt Road, Hillside, Marsh Rd. and Newport Road. The Vice-Chairman and I will be meeting with the police to discuss this in more detail.

We are also grateful to the Police for speaking to some youths with unacceptable driving habits in the Shrewsbury Road car park.

Street Lights

Having received a letter from Eon who look after the street lights of Edgmond, the Parish Council was made aware of an EU directive stating that all mercury vapour lights in the village had to be phased out. After taking advice, the Parish Council decided to purchase 31 refurbished LED lanterns fitted with a 50watt SON lamp and photocell. I am pleased to report that this upgrade of our street lights which is ongoing has resulted in a saving in the cost of energy used. I am equally pleased to report that several favourable comments by local residents have been received regarding the new lights. I must thank Cllr Maurice Hughes for regularly cycling through the village at night in order to check that our lights are in working order.

4) Communication Committee

Website (www.edgmondparishcouncil.co.uk)

A government directive stating that Smaller Authorities like Parish Councils must adopt the Transparency Code is now a legal requirement and Edgmond Parish Council must act at all times under the regulations of this code. The website plays an important role in this. The Parish Council will look to ensure that all information required by the Code is available to the public on our website. I must thank Cllr Doherty ably assisted by Cllr Ryan for managing our website. Most local groups and organisations such as Edgmond Owls, the Village Hall, St Peter's Primary School and Harper Adams University are now linked to the website. If there are still groups who would like to make use of this free link then please contact Cllr Doherty or the Clerk for further details. Our website will also link to the Edgmond Facebook Page and we thank Cllr Hayhurst for maintaining the Facebook page on our behalf.

Noticeboards

As a consequence of alterations to the new shop front we have had to re-locate the Parish Council noticeboard. After much debate I can inform you that the notice board will be situated in the Shrewsbury Road car park.

Parish Magazine

The Parish Council wishes to record its' thanks to the editorial and distribution teams of the magazine. The Parish Council acknowledge the benefits of this excellent publication which is a great asset to the residents of Edgmond. Consequently the Parish Council has decided to make an annual contribution of £200. The Parish Council is grateful to the magazine editor for publishing its information and notices and is equally grateful to Cllr Doherty for writing the Parish Council reports and for ensuring they are submitted to the editor in time for each publication.

The Parish Council would also like to thank Mr Keeping, for his regular reports as Parish Warden which are much appreciated, and we also thank both Mr and Mrs Keeping for all their work with Neighbourhood Watch, not forgetting those who act as Neighbourhood Watch Coordinators. Furthermore together with Mrs Gibbs, Mr and Mrs Keeping have worked tirelessly on the Edgmond Rural Community Initiative group to raise funds for specific projects which have included the Multi Use Games Area, the defibrillator, the children's play area and the summer play scheme. Our sincere thanks for all their hard work.

The Parish Council thank our Ward Members Cllr Burrell and Cllr Bentley for their help and support throughout the year. Due to the closure of the recycling centre at Newport they have continued to press Telford and Wrekin Council for assistance for local residents. As a result Telford and Wrekin Council introduced an exclusive offer for residents in Newport, Church Aston, Edgmond and Lilleshall. They will accept bulk collections from residents up to a maximum of 6 items. If you want more details of this then please see the clerk or myself after the meeting.

Lastly and most importantly as we come to the end of another year we are again indebted to Katrina, our Parish Clerk for everything she does for Edgmond. She ensures that we maintain the financial regulations and we are working within our budget. Her knowledge is extensive and her advice invaluable. In short we rely on Katrina and we are very, very grateful to her.

Cllr Gwyn Jones
Chairman
Edgmond Parish Council