

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

EDGMOND PARISH COUNCIL – 11TH APRIL 2016

To bring this year to a close, I wish to thank everyone for their support, patience and particularly, this year, their understanding in the difficult times that we are facing here in the rural areas.

Cuts to services, I acknowledge, affect everyone within the Borough and the need to find massive savings can't be denied.

Equally, it cannot be denied that these cuts to our services are anything but equitable between the urban and rural areas.

For example, we face

- Poorly maintained roads
- Reduced bus services
- Limited school places, particularly in secondary schools
- Threats to play areas
- Lack of employment opportunities
- Reduced investment in rights of way
- Broadband as yet not delivered

On top of this, within the rural areas, we have witnessed significant changes to rural settlements from planning approvals which did not bring about developer contributions which would have gone some way to mitigation.

However, the rural communities do benefit from one thing – this is knowledgeable representations at the most local level. Not just from your Ward Members, Steve Burrell and myself, but from the electors and more importantly, your Parish Councillors. They dedicate their time, without reward, to objectively represent you, most of the time this is with their hands tied behind their backs.

Despite many constraints, they continue to meet regularly and air their frustrations. This is often evident when good reasoned and sound arguments and information are provided, for or against something, they are then ignored by the decision-makers.

In this end of year statement, I would like to take the opportunity to share with you time to reflect on what can be, and has been, achieved by working collectively.

You will be aware of the Waters Upton Neighbourhood Plan. This goes before the electorate on May 5th in a referendum which, when successful, will bring about planning decisions based on the views of the people who live in the Parish. I am aware that Edgmond Parish Council will be considering this in the coming weeks and I offer my full support to the Councillors, Clerk and Community who will work together, with agencies, to move this project forward. If you all continue to work together you will soon find that you are in control of your own destiny.

I know from attending many Parish Council meetings within the Ward, that every Parish Councillor works tirelessly and aspires to be part of a team that can make a difference. Working together to enhance your Parish, to protect your Conservation Area and Heritage and to change the attitudes of the few, who do not appreciate all that is so good about living in Edgmond.

One small example of this, is allowing dog fouling. I know many of you are frustrated and disappointed that people walking dogs think it is acceptable not to pick up after their dogs. This is a health hazard and I sincerely hope that no-one ever becomes ill before we are successful in making them pick up and discard appropriately, in the bins which are provided throughout the Parish. Once again, I will give my full support to the Parish Council as they undertake the 'We're Watching You' initiative later in the year.

I am pleased to have been able to support two of your local projects, the new bench and the re-sited noticeboard off Shrewsbury Road, with grants from my Councillor's Pride Funding. If further funding is available during the coming year, I hope you will find other projects that I can support in this way.

I have worked closely with the Rights of Way Officer at TWC over many years and know how committed he is to the access to the countryside in your villages as he is across the Borough and yet funding is limited for his role. I was so pleased to hear of your new partnership, working with neighbouring Parishes – this is a major step forward and I congratulate you on the initiative. You have rights of way to be proud of and landowners that, in the main, assist by keeping the routes open and accessible. The funding available through this partnership will certainly assist to ensure this continues.

I listen with great interest at Parish Council meetings about the many outside bodies that you work with and the meetings that your local councillors attend. You are a very active Council and you certainly do your community proud. Your regular meetings with the School Staff and University Staff are very useful and informative.

I have represented a number of local residents on individual and personal issues and both Steve Burrell and I act on your behalf at every opportunity when we are at Telford & Wrekin. We will continue to work together and with our colleagues for a better and fairer deal for the rural areas of the Borough

Steve