

**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of Piddington & Wheeler End Parish Council held on Tuesday
18th May 2021 at 7.30pm in Piddington Village Hall**

Present: Cllrs Mr S. Digby, Mr J Day, Mr P Brown, Mrs W. Pitcher.

Buckinghamshire Councillors Mr D Hayday, Mrs O Hayday.

Mrs H. Glasgow, Clerk

3 members of the public.

Apologies: None.

1. Cllr Simon Digby as Chairman welcomed everyone present and thanked them for their support over the previous year.

2. Chairman's Report

We have seen unprecedented change in the World over the last twelve months. A global pandemic has coloured the lens through which we see everything. It has been an extraordinary time where the unprecedented has become the normal. We have been forced to reassess virtually everything that we had come to take for granted. Health, education, travel, socialising, entertainment, eating, drinking and exercising are just some of the activities that the pandemic has forced us to reassess. And where are we now, after some fifteen months of turmoil?

We have identified the societal heroes. Not the politicians, the bankers, the hedge fund managers, the football players (with one notable exception), but the nurses, doctors, care home workers, bus drivers, post office workers and retailers. Some of whom have died in order to serve or save others.

Can society re-set to place these people at the apex of humanity?

Unlikely.

However, every individual can make a difference. And that is down to each individual. Everyone has something to offer and can be an inspiration to those around them. Like Sir Tom, or Henry Sinclair who lives on Wellfield Road in Piddington. He has inspired people for over a year by collecting foodstuffs for One Can in Wycombe. He is eight years old. Leadership can come from anyone and anywhere, but it is a challenging task and needs energy and an executable plan.

A Parish Council is an example of grassroots democracy. Volunteers who give their time and efforts freely. Its reputation is of good-natured do-gooders who have an excuse to stick their beaks over a neighbour's hedge in the carrying out of their community duties.

It is so much more than this.

We are leaders whose responsibility is to lead our community into a better future. Each of us bears this serious task on our shoulders. Lead or be led.

I am proud of the leadership that this Council has shown in the last year and I urge us all to ignore convention, cast shackles aside, harness latent energies and make a difference.

The Chairman's report should be a public record of achievements in the last twelve months. I will get to this shortly, for the record.

The most momentous activity of the last year has been Parish Councillors taking ownership of blocks of houses across our two villages and doing their best to keep everyone safe. Harnessing volunteers via WhatsApp groups to watch out for their vulnerable neighbours, fetching medicine from the pharmacists, shopping and paying for the elderly, cutting grass, making meals, daily contact with people whose relatives were in hospital, helping access food banks are all activities that happened in the last year. This is a living example of wonderful leadership within a community. No guidelines, rules or red lines; just get it done.

I am very proud of each of you and the unselfish efforts that you have made.

Now, for the record, the other activities in the last year –

- Petitioning Bucks county to reduce the speed limit on the A40 after the tragic deaths of Andy Coles and Damian Natale on June 1st 2020
- A project team set up to enhance the environ, 'Project Pretty Wild Parish'
- New PC website up and running with a History tab and content by local historian, Simon Cains
- Full expert report on the flora and fauna of the Parish with recommendations for Project Pretty Wild Parish
- Fly tipping reported via fixmystreet.com and removed
- Regular organised litter-picking with each councillor responsible for a geographic area within the two villages
- Fly tipping camera organised and installed
- Solar powered Christmas lights installed
- Cherry trees planted
- Wild flower areas cordoned off
- An erroneous planning application exposed
- Group plantings in four different areas
- Grant of £1,000 obtained from Thames Water for hydrating the allotments
- Jonathon Cains volunteered to be our local resident biologist for ongoing advice on the flora and fauna of the Parish
- A full ROSPA inspection and refurbishment in the Playground
- Wreaths laid at the war memorial
- Ideas executed and paid for from savings
- Footpaths reported
- Continued efforts to making parking safer in Piddington
- Salt bin refurbished
- Attendance at LAFs, NAGs and Rural Forum Meetings
- DCLG, BCC and BASC Conferences attended
- Cutback of brambles and encroaching growth on Chipps Hill to encourage the spread of wild flowers
- More daffodil bulbs planted
- The Phantom Planter identified and trees replanted in better strategic locations
- Two new kissing gates installed at Pitcher's Barn and at the top of the steps off Piddington Lane
- The old A40 road completely cleared at Ham Farm
- A40 cut back up the Old Dashwood Hill
- Dead wood and epicormic growth removed on Piddington Green
- The AED at Piddington Village Hall checked and maintained

In the drive to keep this first public post-Lockdown meeting as concise as possible, I will include the financial highlights of the past year here.

Our precept of £23,715 was augmented by allotment income of £485, totalling £24,200. The clerk's salary and pension at £9,985 was 41% of our income. Grass cutting and environment investment was £6,999, 29% of income. These were our two biggest outlays. Every penny has been logged, accounted for and audited. We hold a prudent unallocated balance which this year is £23,066, down from £24,329 last year.

My thanks go to the public servants in our area. County Councillor Darren Hayday is a wonderful support to this Parish and ever present when things need to be done.

District Councillor Jean Teasdale has been great also. District Councillor Ian Mc Ennis is retiring this year and has been a stalwart supporter of the Parish Council. He has always been available to help on issues, has generously allocated available funds to local projects and turned up to support every function. We wish him, and his wife Sarah, the warmest of following winds in the next adventure of their lives.

Our clerk, Hayley Glasgow, has led us through the last year and has continually put in the unconditional effort to make things happen. Locked down and home schooling her young family, she was at her desk daily at 5am to ensure she got through her work. She organised our on-line meeting and put in hours of overtime keeping our community informed. She is a leader and inspiration to us all. My heartfelt thanks to her.

Each Parish Councillor has given their time unselfishly over the last year for which I thank them.

A big loss was incurred when Jane Roy moved out of the Parish and resigned from the Council. Always the first to put her hand up, she steered numerous initiatives with vision and energy. Councillor Peter Brown jumped into her vacated Vice Chairman's shoes, and is driving the role forward with intelligence, tact and energy. Councillor Wendy Pitcher was isolating for most of the year, but still managed to get her inputs across on issues. Councillor Ollie May injected a much-needed dose of youth and has been continually volunteering when things need to be sorted out.

Councillors Fiona Curzon and Nick Cloke have resigned from the council and will be sorely missed. I thank them for their inputs during their time with us.

James Day has joined us and is a valuable connection with our environ.

My thanks to the leavers and a big welcome to the joiners.

The year ahead is bright with potential.

I look forward to engaging our council more broadly with our communities and working with our councillors to lead and not be led.

Thank you all.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 19.50pm.