

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 P Brown, Mr O May, Mr S Thomas, Mrs W. Pitcher, Mr T Willett.

Buckinghamshire Councillors Mr D Hayday.

Mrs H. Glasgow, Clerk

7 members of the public.

Apologies: Cllr Mr J Day.

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

1. Chairman's Report

Just when it seems that a global pandemic is under control, Putin decides to invade Ukraine.

The largest country (by area) in Europe has had Russian forces bombarding its cities with all of the horror that this brings. It is both geographically and metaphorically closer than any of the World's recent conflicts and has a real knock-on effect on us here in Piddington and Wheeler End.

We are all suffering the effect of rising energy prices, fuel going through the roof, rationing cooking oil in the supermarkets and even through all this, some residents have volunteered to house Ukrainian refugees. And it doesn't look like it is going to get any better any time soon. With fertilizer prices out of control, UK's farmers are not planting crops unless they can get guaranteed price increases for their produce. This is unlikely given the supermarkets' power and their distaste for paying fair prices for agricultural goods. Tesco made £1.9 billion profit in 2021/2022.

It is hard to work out what we personally can do about these issues, but I suppose we can help in small ways. We can help by making the environment we live in as pleasant as we possibly can. This can be funding national celebrations, litter picking, playground maintenance, football facilities, flower planting, grass mowing and the like. Although tiny actions in a global sense, these are the things that we do as a matter of course and are vital to help and keep community cohesion.

A Parish Council is the facilitator and initiator of many of these activities. We are a group of disparate volunteers who give their time and efforts freely. And we must continue to do this and be the leaders in our community. No effort is too small to make a difference; be it organising a litter pick or pulling together the Platinum Jubilee celebrations. People need to be led, and a Parish Council supplies those leaders.

But we need as much help as we can muster. It is here that local heroes emerge. People who get stuff done for the betterment of society. I'm thinking of someone like Simon Cains who had written up the history of the Parish and published it on our website. He additionally, with the assistance of Brian Robertson, has written, funded and published a book on Piddington incorporating the story of North's furniture factory. I'm thinking of people like our local lepidopterist, Ben Paternoster who has audited and written up an account of the 43 wildflowers and 10 insect species that he has found on Chipps Hill. Robin and Georgina Saunders have organised a committee to pull together the Piddington Jubilee celebrations. As has Tom Willett for Wheeler End. Also, Henry Sinclair at the ripe age of 9, and his One Can collecting has been fantastic.

Leadership can come from anyone and anywhere, but it is a challenging task and needs energy and an executable plan.

I am proud of the leadership that this Council has shown in the last year, and I urge us all to ignore how it's always been done, pull in talented people and make a difference.

Now some of the other activities in the last year –

- Working with Bucks County and local residents to reduce the speed limit on the A40 from 60 mph to 50 mph
- Facilitation of dialogue of interested parties for 10 Queen Street
- Cut back of foliage in front of both the Wheeler End and Piddington place signs
- Fingerposts erected to highlight the cleared path at Ham Farm and the Old Dashwood Hill
- Road sign heights altered at Chipps Hill to make the junction safer for large and farm vehicles
- Blocked drains reported and cleared

- Speed tubes installed at Bolter End and valuable data collected to create a case for further traffic slowing installations
- Emergency plan reviewed
- Platinum Jubilee celebrations funded
- Plaque for the fallen funded
- Fly tipping reported via fixmystreet.com and removed
- Regular organised litter-picking with each councillor responsible for a geographic area within the two villages
- Solar powered Christmas lights over the festive period
- Wildflower areas cordoned off
- Management plan proposed for Ollie's Copse
- 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
- Attendance at LAFs, NAGs and Rural Forum Meetings
- Input into the North West Chilterns Community Board
- Cutback of brambles and encroaching growth on Chipps Hill to encourage the spread of wildflowers
- Dead wood and epicormic growth removed on Piddington Green
- The AED at Piddington Village Hall checked and maintained

My thanks go to the public servants in our area. County Councillor Darren Hayday is an energetic and wonderful support to this Parish and ever present when things need to be done. We welcome newly elected County Councillor Orshi Hayday who has already helped us on many issues.

Our clerk, Hayley Glasgow, is the well-oiled machine that powers the Parish Council. Like a swan in fast-flowing water, a lot of unseen paddling goes on beneath the water whilst remaining cool, calm and collected. Her ability to navigate trick issues is uncanny whilst knowing exactly how to get things done in bureaucratic circumstances. A smooth audit, a hassle free ROSPA report, a meticulous budget and accounts are all down to her. Not to mention the unprompted FB posts that keep the community informed. She is a leader and inspiration to us all. My huge thanks to her.

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

Vice Chair Pete Brown has driven many initiatives with tact and energy. Councillor Wendy Pitcher is our go-to on rural issues and always has an intelligent input. Councillor Ollie May was co-opted back after an admin oversight and is most welcome back.

Councillor James Day has provided a connection with the land and is overseeing the allotments

Councillor Simon Thomas is a welcome addition to the team. He is doing a fine job of managing Buckland Landscapes and ensuring that our wildflower areas are flourishing.

The year ahead is bright with potential and there is plenty to be done

Thanks to you all.

2. Public Questions

No questions were raised.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 19.40pm.