

Minutes of
The Annual Parish Meeting for Alderbury & Whaddon
Thursday 18th May 2023, 7.30pm in Alderbury Village Hall



Chaired by: Councillor Elaine Hartford (Chair of Alderbury Parish Council)

Others in attendance: Wiltshire Council councillor Richard Britton, Liz Holland (Clerk) and approximately 50 members of the public including other parish councillors

Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Considine, Hughes and Sloan, PC Harry Murphy, David Whetton

Welcome from the Chair

The Chair read a report from PC Murphy which is available on request from the clerk.

The Chair read a report of the actions of the parish council during the past year. This is available from the clerk upon request.

Wiltshire councillor Richard Britton (RB) addressed the meeting:

- WC is in a relatively comfortable financial position with balanced budgets planned for the next 3 years
- The recent local elections saw Swindon fall from Conservative control and this will have slight impact
- RB sits on a number of committees including 2 with budgets of their own – Southern Area Board and the Local Highways and Footpaths Infrastructure Group
- He always makes representing the 4,500 people in his ward his priority, which involves him a wide range of things. He also tries to regularly attend the 6 parish council meetings in his ward
- Locally he is currently working with Alderbury pre-school on the development of their new site
- Planning & enforcement issues tend to dominate his workload
- Questions from the floor:
 - Where does responsibility for footpaths lie? With the landowner, but WC and the parish council can act to put pressure on them to maintain the paths
 - Who can influence planning decisions which bring more and more traffic into Alderbury as the A36 becomes increasingly busy? The A36 is controlled and managed by National Highways who will be asked to comment on larger planning applications. Otherwise, Wiltshire Highways is invited to comment on every planning application
 - RB urged residents not to rely solely on comments to planning applications coming from the parish council. There is power in numbers, so each person with a view is encouraged to write in
 - RB is aware of the state of Lights Lane and already working to try to get it attended to
 - The Firs Road traffic safety changes are at an advanced stage of planning. The parish council has had a say in designing them and will be putting money into the part of the project funded by LHFIG
 - RB suggested the parish council take up the issue of parking on Southampton Road after Grimstead Road if this is causing a hazard

Chair Elaine Hartford thanked Cllr Britton for his continued support for Alderbury

Cllr Mel Lawrence (ML) gave a presentation on wildlife projects in the village:

- The wildlife volunteer group numbers about 25. Do contact the clerk if you would like to be a member
- The changes being made are crucial to doing this area's small part in combatting the climate crisis
- In Wiltshire the problem is exacerbated by the level of intensive farming, leaving a very low (compared to the national average) 8% woodland coverage

- Anyone can apply for a Tree Protection Order on any tree. The parish council does do this and has current plans for new applications
- ML encouraged everyone to reconsider the need for fencing – hedging is far more valuable
- The plan drawn up with the help of The Wiltshire Wildlife Trust is still available on the website and guiding new environmental ideas supported by the parish council
- The fruit trees on Waleran Close are an example of a project already completed and their fruits are available free for everyone in the village to enjoy
- The wild flower planting in the same area had less success last year due to the weather, but another attempt was made last November which has succeeded. This planting does result in a quite 'messy' look to the area which she hopes residents will learn to accept
- WC does try to leave verges during no-mow-May
- The hedges planted at Oakwood Grove are establishing nicely. It is hoped they will be part of a natural barrier to water which can flow down through this area and aid wildlife. This area has also been seeded with wildflowers.
- The second old oak in the area will need to be reduced in size by 2/3 and will be mulched for 2 years, reducing the availability of land to cultivate
- The next project is hoped to be a development at Spider's Island. ML called for a local champion to help the parish council to successfully install either a tiny forest, an orchard or a community garden together with some appropriate paly equipment

ML was followed by Daniel Kronenberg from the Salisbury and Wilton Swifts, a volunteer group working in the area to protect habitats for swifts, swallows and housemartins. He gave an entertaining and informative talk and drew people's' attention to the nest boxes he had brought with him. The parish council has agreed to consider funding nest boxes in the village if a survey, to be carried out later in the summer, shows resident populations.

The meeting concluded with a request from Cllr John Fuller that everyone present write down 2 things they love about Alderbury and 2 things they would like to see the parish council spend money on. A very lively discussion followed! The clerk will collate the ideas and councillor will review them at their June meeting (All welcome on 7th, 7.30 in The Fountain Room).

The Chair closed the meeting thanking everyone for coming and for their participation. She encouraged them to look round the stalls which included SWS, the Alderbury gardening club, an environmental display by Ken Carling, hedgerow saplings available free and the history society. Many thanks to those who brought displays.

Liz Holland
Alderbury Parish Clerk
23.5.23