

Yattendon Annual Parish Meeting

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Wednesday 17th April 2024
in Yattendon Village Hall. Commencing at 7:00 pm.

Members Present: Councillor Adam McCormick, Chairperson
Councillor Philip Bickford Smith
Councillor James Hole
Councillor Tim Magee
Councillor Georgie Rudge

Officers Present: Sarah Marshman, Clerk/RFO

In Attendance: Carolyne Culver, District Councillor
8 Members of the Public

Minutes

1 Welcome by the Parish Council Chairperson

Councillor Adam McCormick opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

2 To receive apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence.

3 To approve the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 19th April 2023

Those present agreed the minutes of the last meeting be accepted as a true record. The Chairperson then signed the minutes.

4 Reports from the following local organisations and businesses:

a) Yattendon Estate

Over the last 12 months, we received 1150mm of rain, compared to the 10-year average of 717mm. This is 50% more rainfall than usual. The excessive rainfall has significantly impacted Christmas tree operations and farming.

This year has seen one of the worst yields experienced at harvest. The deluge of rain in May, June, and July, combined with insufficient sunshine, has been detrimental. Fortunately, no crops have been lost, and spring crops are still being established. It is anticipated that this will not be a great year for harvest.

Food production remains our top priority, but it must be conducted sustainably. The estate is joining a new government scheme, SFI, which includes more environmental measures to protect and establish new hedgerows and soil

protection. We have been a LEAF demonstration farm for the past two years.

Thames Water is considering a project funded by the estate to convert wetlands near the motorway into flood meadows. This scheme is being prepared for next year.

Farming and woodland operations are now carbon neutral, with last year being the first year of achieving this status. The current challenge is measuring the carbon footprint of the rest of the estate, as the available calculators are not sophisticated enough for this task yet. Solar panels have been installed at Charles Court Farm, Vicars, and Renegade Brewery.

We have entered into a new 10-year woodland management plan with the Woodland Trust. 15,000 trees have been planted over the last three years.

There have been several changes in the occupancy of the commercial properties, with only one unit currently available.

Six full refurbishments have been completed on residential properties to improve energy performance.

The Royal Oak is well supported. The Pot Kiln is currently undergoing a project to refurbish its rooms.

b) Yattendon and Frilsham Social Club

Difficult to run during/after covid. Lot of volunteers now which is helping. Events every Saturday night, some bands. Do weddings. Can provide portable bar. Can help out for family events.

The operation of the club faced difficulties during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. A significant increase in volunteers has been beneficial. Events are held every Saturday night, including performances by some bands. The venue also hosts weddings and can provide a portable bar. Assistance is available for family events.

c) Downland Volunteer Group

There was no presentation from the Downland Volunteer Group.

5 Report from the District Councillor

The recent budget consultation resulted in the retention of various services that were due to be removed.

Flooding and sewage problems are prevalent throughout the district, exacerbated by significant rainfall and rising groundwater levels. The council is addressing these issues by producing a Section 19 report to document and analyse the flooding incidents.

The Scrutiny Committee is currently reviewing the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic to better prepare for future challenges.

A Sub-Committee on Healthcare is focused on new developments, aiming to improve the process of planning applications to better support healthcare needs within the district.

6 Parish Council Reports

Report from the Chairperson

Good evening, everyone. Thank you for joining our Annual Parish Meeting. This is the second APM I've chaired.

I'm pleased to say that in terms of council members, unlike last year, it's been a very uneventful year, with no departures from the council in the last 12 months. We've also recently had James formally join the council, which is great news for us and makes a lot of sense as he's been to more council meetings than most of us.

Outside of the regular Parish meetings, the two main pieces of work I wanted to touch upon are the Speed indicator Device and the project on the playground.

If we start with the SID device, it was this time last year that we'd had our first rotation with HN. We rotated it across the six locations in the village before passing it back to them. We had our 2nd rotation toward the end of last year and finishing last month. There are several observations, and we are happy to share the data reports if anyone wants to see them, however, broadly speaking in all locations, the average recorded speed is lower than the legal speed limit. However, what we do see is on the locations with the straighter sections of road, out toward the school and just past the Whitneys toward Frilsham, we see a higher average speed and those in the 85th percentile and above are over the limit.

We will continue to SID sharing with HN, though it is currently aware for repair. After the next rotation we will have to decide on if we continue with the same 6 locations we currently have, do we remove those where we know the average speed is very low? Do we add new sites etc. If anyone has any ideas or suggestions, please let us know.

On the playground, we are in the early stages of looking at this project- which has been something that has been requested for several years now. The project will I run all this year and into next- hopefully not too far beyond! We have two potential locations just off Church Lane. We will be putting out something for local residents to offer feedback shortly as we know there will be a range of views. We've also worked with the school to have the children give us their ideas and suggestions on what they'd like to see included- some very ambitious suggestions were included.

We are also starting to talk to playground providers to get a detailed sense of costs and talking with WBC around planning permission, though their initial response was, uncharacteristically, less than crystal clear. This will be a long-term project which will require local input, fundraising, and a lot of time and energy - but one that we feel will deliver real benefit to the local community.

Other than this, I just wanted to say thank you to Sarah our Clerk, and to Karen who continues to do a great job keeping the village tidy. Thank you all for coming tonight.

Financial Report from the Clerk / Responsible Finance Officer

The Clerk presented her Finance Report for 2023/24, which is in Appendix 1.

7 Questions from members of the public

There were no questions from members of the public.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 7:50 pm.

Chair: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 1: Annual Finance Report

The finance report for Yattendon Parish Council for the financial year 2023/24 is presented.

Income

The total income received from all sources of funding was £11,981. This included:

- Precept £11,293
- Interest £31
- Refund of VAT spent during the previous financial year £657.

Expenditure

The total expenditure for the year was £11,701. Significant figures included in this total are:

- Total employment costs £6,107
- Grant towards the costs of maintaining the burial ground £2,500
- Grant for the Coronation event £100
- Refuse disposal (litter/dog waste bins) £596
- Insurance £634
- Courtesy lights £48
- Audit fees £130
- Battery and charger for the SID £123
- VAT (reclaimable in the next financial year) £227.

Reserves

At the end of the financial year, the council holds reserves of £4,119. This consists of £600 of earmarked reserves and £3,519 of general reserves.

Looking Forward to 2024/25

The precept will increase by £935 to £12,228. This is an increase of 8%. A Band D household will pay a total of £70.62 throughout the year. That is just £1.36 per week.

The Parish Council will continue to support the maintenance of the burial ground, with a grant of £2,500. There will continue to be the usual expenses involved in running the Parish Council, such as providing courtesy lights, insurance, employment costs, audit fees, and refuse disposal.

