

**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of Piddington & Wheeler End Parish Council held on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2023 at 7.30pm in Piddington Village Hall**

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

Buckinghamshire Councillors Mr D Hayday.

Mrs H. Glasgow, Clerk

0 members of the public.

Apologies: Cllr O May.

**1. Chairman's Report**

A Parish Council is the basement level of democracy. It represents the closest elected representatives can get to the people who have put them in that position. Parish Councillors live in the community, meet their parishioners frequently and hear first-hand about the issues that beset the parish. This gives both the Councillors and parishioners the knowledge and confidence that, on local issues, something can usually be done.

It seems to me, as we become relatively better off than any generation which has ever gone before us, we are becoming less and less satisfied and more and more stressed about our lives. It is fashionable to blame the stunning inventions of the last thirty years, the internet, mobile phones and ubiquitous social media in all its manifestations. The consequences are often tragic with figures from the Samaritans tell us that suicide is the leading killer of men under the age of 50. Happiness seems elusive in an era of abundance. This has led to an upsurge in people asking themselves, in the words of the Velvet Underground,

*"And you may find yourself living in a shotgun shack*

*And you may find yourself in another part of the world*

*And you may find yourself behind the wheel of a large automobile*

*And you may find yourself in a beautiful house, with a beautiful wife*

*And you may ask yourself, "Well, how did I get here?"*

TED Talks and theories on the subject that I've seen purport two types of happiness. The first, Hedonic, is the buzz you get from an Amazon parcel arriving. Short term, short lived and ultimately transient. The second is 'Eudaimonic', derived from having meaning in life, where the definition of meaning is 'belonging to and serving something beyond yourself whilst developing the best within you'.

This brings me back to where I started, because an organisation like a Parish Council is exactly the type of arena where someone can use their strengths to serve others, bringing a sense of purpose and with it a sense of meaning. Volunteering to use your skillset to serve others with no recompense except the occasional nod must qualify as a particularly odd behaviour yet extremely psychologically rewarding.

It is with this thought that I'd urge younger people of the Parish to consider casting their net in this direction at some stage as vacancies appear. Bring in energy and ideas, shape the local future. Get the rewards that serving a community can bring. Get in touch.

The rewards are the biggest reason that I have served on this Parish Council since 1995 and chaired it for the last twenty years. But I feel that it is time to stop hogging all of the goodies that the role has to bring and hand the spoils on to someone new. I'll still be hanging around, but in a lesser capacity. The Parish Council still needs leadership, and it can come from anyone and anywhere, but it is a challenging task and needs energy and a do-able 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 –

- Parish Council strategy formulated, agreed and logged on our website
- The speed limit on the A40 was reduced from 60 mph to 50 mph
- Cut back of foliage in front of both the Wheeler End and Piddington place signs
- Fingerpost re-erected to highlight the cleared path at the Old Dashwood Hill
- Blocked drains reported and most of them cleared

- Emergency plan reviewed and issued
- Chipps Hill management plan created and kicked-off
- Input made into the Ward changes
- Queen's Platinum celebrations part-funded and delivered
- Pressure put on Bucks Council to deliver a better service from the new refuse collectors
- Website regularly updated and new historical documents lodged
- Environmental strategy created and logged on our website
- Coronation celebration plans created and funded
- Plaque for the fallen funded and erection ceremony organised at Piddington Village Hall
- Community input recognised and rewarded
- 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 and new flora flourishing
- Management plan continued for Ollie's Copse
- Childrens' equipment refurbished and replaced 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
- The AED at Piddington Village Hall checked and maintained
- Regular community updates on Facebook

My thanks go to the public servants in our area. Councillor Darren Hayday brings energy, action and humour and is a wonderful support to this Parish. His slew of follow-up, late-night, post Parish Council meeting emails always amazes me. Councillor Orshi Hayday has helped us on many issues, keeps our community informed and always delivers her commitments. It will be a tangible loss to the parish if the ward changes means that we lose these Councillors. They have been brilliant.

Our clerk, Hayley Glasgow, is the power station of the Parish Council. Her continuing ability to get things done in the most unflappable manner whilst always having the ability to laugh, keeps this Parish Council on the straight and narrow. The ever-smooth audit, a complete upgrade of the playground, a meticulous budget and accounts are all down to her. She keeps the community informed with creative FB posts which entertain and inform. She is a leader an inspiration and a motivator to us all. My massive 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 delivered important strides for the parish. He created, edited and published our first Parish Council Strategy document. We now know, and have documented, what we're about. His common sense and guidance have been invaluable to us. Councillor Tom Willett has brought action and energy to the Parish Council. Always the first to volunteer, he has revamped the Emergency Plan, organised and co-ordinated the Wheeler End Platinum and Coronation celebrations and has taken on the allotments. Councillor Wendy Pitcher and Councillor James Day are our connection with all things farming and rural and are valuable members. Councillor Ollie May has been key to our interaction with Piddington and is leading the Olly's Copse initiative.

We lost Councillor Simon Thomas as a result of his untimely death. He brought momentum, intelligence and humour to the Parish Council and we miss him terribly. Councillor Jason Smith 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 still plenty to be done.

My thanks to you all.

## 2. **Public Questions**

No questions were raised.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 19.40pm.