

St Andrews Parish Council

ST ANDREWS' PARISH MEETING Held on Wednesday 19th May 2021 at 6:00pm at Redhouse Community Centre, Frankel Avenue, Swindon

Present: Cllr Daniel Adams, Cllr Jean Blake, Cllr Kola Beyioku, Cllr Ben Fenton, Cllr Mary Friend, Cllr Steve Heyes, Cllr Paul Morris, Emma Sylvester (Parish Clerk), Cllr Vera Tomlinson (Chairman), Cllr Vince Williams and Cllr Paul West with no members of the public.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Chairman, Cllr Vera Tomlinson, welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that this was a statutory meeting open to electors of the Parish at which only the electorate are permitted to speak.

2. APOLOGIES

None

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the Annual Parish meeting held on 8th May 2019 were approved and signed as true record by the Chairman.

4. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman read out her report as follows:

I have been asked to give you an update on our progress last year and I think you will agree with me that we have had a very productive and successful year. We have achieved a lot this year and have succeeded in turning St Andrews Parish into one of the best run councils in Swindon and all that is down to all of you present tonight.

We started the year with Luke Jones and his chosen team being TUPEd across from the borough and what a good move that was. Luke has worked so hard with his four men – what a difference they have made to our parish. We no longer are inundated with complaints but quite the reverse. I receive several compliments each week on how well looked after our parish is now. So, Luke on behalf of the Full Council thank you and please pass on our grateful thanks to your team.

The Borough Council decided a fair rent for the Waterside depot for this coming year should be £10k. We did not agree and managed to negotiate what we believed to be a much fairer rent of £3,500 – which saved us £6500.

Against all odds we won the battle of turning down the building of an extra house in the garden of No. 22 Dunley Close. The applicant took it to appeal and the Secretary of State agreed with us and again turned it down. Apparently, there were no reasons in planning law to be able to turn it down but fortunately I recalled why Crest had not put an extra house on that land and it was that that swung it in our favour. His decision cannot be overturned.

We finally exchanged contracts with Crest for the land at Redhouse village centre. As you recall we negotiated the buying price down from £850k to £280k. This is the first asset completely belonging to our parish and in future years we will build several houses which in turn will keep our precept at a very low charge.

Emma and I worked out the S106 and CIL monies we still had to our credit which was £35,343.17 and including the £6,616 left from the Redhouse land, giving a total of £41,959.27 which you voted to be used to put Wallis Drive play park to rights. You also voted the £8,000 money which is now due, to be added giving Cllr Heyes and his committee a total of around £50k. I think that should make that play park one we can be proud of.

We have formed a new task group under the leadership of Cllr Williams to build our new depot for Luke’s department and to include 2 offices – one for Luke and one for Emma. The building and sorting out finance for this depot is our main project for this coming year.

Our election strategy worked out very well. We were all re-elected and managed to save our Parish £10k costs by not needing an election. We have a new councillor, Beverly Elmer.

We managed to keep our precept low for the second year running. It was hard work from you all but well worth it in the end bringing in a precept for a Band D house at £55.39. Well done to all of you.

The community centre is picking up bookings from those lost during the pandemic and the hirers who moved to us because other centres closed during this last year have mainly stayed with us making the community centre profitable again. So, a huge thank you to the Centre Manager and team for all their hard work.

Last but not least we gave a substantial contribution to Tadpole Garden Village for their project of planting flowers and shrubs in their village. They were very grateful to us.

I would like to end by saying a huge thank you to you all, not forgetting Emma for all your hard work this past year. You are a hard-working group of councillors who work well together. I could not have wished for a better team of people to work with. So – thank you all.

5. COUNCILLORS’ FORUM

With no questions for councillors the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.

The meeting closed at 6:45pm

Chairman _____

Date _____