

EATON BISHOP

PRE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING - COFFEE MORNING.

A Pre Annual Parish meeting took place on April 28th with a completely new format compared to meetings held in previous years. The meeting, held in the Village Hall, took the form of a “drop in” coffee morning with all of the village organisations, clubs and societies having table displays to outline their activities over the past 12 months. Over 70 people attended during the morning, a huge increase over the numbers who used to take part in previous formal meetings.

The Parish Council was represented by several members and the Clerk who all explained the significant increase in the responsibilities devolved from Local Authorities. Perhaps the main achievement over the past year was the adoption, in August, of the Neighbourhood Development Plan by Herefordshire Council. This followed an overwhelming vote in favour of the plan by the local community in the referendum. Another major project has been the work undertaken on both Littlemarsh and Honeymoon commons under the leadership of Caroline Hanks and David Richards supported by several volunteers.

The meeting also gave an opportunity to recognise the efforts of the chairman of the Parish Council, Ray Christopher, who was to stand down after 21 years in the post. On behalf of the members of the Parish Council and the residents of the Parish, Tim Coleman gave an appreciation of the retiring chairman's role pointing out that Ray Christopher had always dealt with issues referred to the Parish Council with thoroughness, attention to detail and a consistent approach in addressing issues in an even-handed and fair way taking into account both the views of individuals alongside consideration of the wider effects on the Parish as a whole. He had led the Parish Council with great skill, tact and diplomacy along with good humour. The unerring support of his wife, Eleanor, was also recognised as crucial to his success as chairman. Caroline Hanks and Becky Wall then presented the chairman with a copy of the 1839 tithe map of the Parish and his wife with an Acer Tree for their garden.

The recently elected membership of the Village Hall Management Committee were continuing to upgrade and develop the hall and, in addition to increasing their fundraising activities, were keen to organise a number of “not for profit” events.

A lack of available funds has meant that the Parochial Church Council (PCC) have been unable to undertake all of the repairs to the church which had been identified in the 2015 Quinquennial Review. However, the PCC is in the process of drawing up plans for a modest “re-ordering” of the church to provide better facilities and allow an increased range of events to take place in the building.

The Footpaths Officer and Tree Warden and Parish lengthsman were also present at the meeting to outline their roles and village walks are planned to familiarise residents with the extent of the footpath network and, as a spin-off, increase recognition of the trees within the Parish.

Fund raising through the organisation of village events has been the role of "Team EB". In the year, 2017 – 2018, they had raised over £4,600 of which 75% was donated to the church and 25% to the Village Hall.

The Gardening Club, Eaton Camp Historical Society, Golden Valley Safer Neighbourhood Team were also represented at the meeting and gave accounts of their activities and future plans.

Overall, the new format of the meeting was judged a success and a provided a great improvement in communication within the Parish.