

Meeting	Full Council
Date	16 th April 2024
Report Title	Annual Parish Meeting – Post Event Audit
Agenda Reference	Agenda Reference 18
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1. Officers Recommendation

1. To note the report.
2. To offer suggestions and feedback to assist the team with the organization and delivery of future Annual Parish Council Meetings.

Background

The Annual Parish Meeting took place on Tuesday 26th March 2024 at the GLL Haydon Centre.

The general feedback is that the event ran well, everything was very polished and professional, everyone felt very welcome, and the agenda really showcased the work that the Parish Council is enabling within the local community, via grant funding to external local groups, its civic award programme 'Haydon Wick Heroes' and its own regular events programme.

Considerations for Future Events

- **Event timing** – the time of the event could be pushed back to 7pm next year to allow residents to get home from work / other commitments before venturing out to the event. As detailed within the Local Government Act 1972 – the meeting cannot start any earlier than 6pm. Also, due to a previous regular event at the venue, there was only 30 minutes for set up, so that extra hour could resolve this and allow for a longer set up period.
- **Recording the meeting** – a suggestion to video the meeting and its contents for those that would prefer to review the meeting after the event. This would also give content for social media and marketing after the event, particularly the round up of the Council year and what it hopes to achieve in future years.
- **Venue** – The room was a bit worn and despite our best efforts to cover the worst areas with display boards etc. the room was still run down. Consideration for investigating other larger scale venues, such as the North Swindon Library to host future events.
- **Community Groups** – Could invite along someone that they have helped via their projects to speak on the subject and how the group has helped them. Also it needs to be clearer how much the Parish Council had contributed towards the project as at times it sounded like all the monies they had raised were received from the parish.
- **Engagement for Residents** – Attracting more residents to the event, everyone there was invited to attend to speak, receive an award or was a community grant



recipient. This could be achieved by adding more controversial and local community issues to the agenda to encourage participation. A local PCSO was in attendance towards the end of the event to listen in as part of the rapport between the Parish Council and North Swindon Police.

- **Speakers and Running Time** – Speakers were timely, interesting, and engaging. It was discussed that any future individual presentations should be no longer than 7 minutes to ensure ‘short bites’ of information, allowing networking opportunities for further conversations.
- **Refreshments** – Consider offering cake, tea and coffee prior to the meeting and trial cheese and wine for the networking session at the end.
- **Setting More Frequent Meetings** – There could be quarterly smaller scale networking meetings with grant recipients and residents, drop-in sessions with Councillors and all the events lead up to the ‘Finale’ which would be the Annual Parish Council Meeting in March. These meetings could give updates on the strategy and allow Councillors to give an update on their areas, which could be videoed and shared to a wider audience.
- **Freedom of the Parish** – Considering giving residents who have shown exceptional contributions to their community a ‘Freedom of the Parish’ award. This award is the highest honour that a Parish Council could bestow. Although it carries no rights, honours or powers, those who receive the award are able to accept the title Freeman or Freewoman.
- **Feedback Form Responses** – We had 6 completed feedback forms. All agreed that they found the meeting informative and that we included information on services that are important to them.
Parish services most important to attendees included: “Seven Fields, community projects, Parks & Open Spaces, Direct support of wellbeing initiatives and vulnerable people, community partnerships, supporting community charitable organisations, Hydrotherapy and the Memory Café”.