

Meeting	Annual Parish Meeting
Date	24 th March 2026
Report Title	Annual Parish Meeting – Post Event Audit
Agenda Reference	17
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Officer's Recommendations

1. To note the report.

Background

Previous years had seen the Annual Parish Meeting take place in the GLL Gym which sits adjacent to the Haydon Wick Parish Council Offices. After discussion it was felt that a new location would be preferred and a decision was made to hold the meeting and an 'afternoon drop in' at North Swindon Library located at Orbital Park.

Figures

Number attended: 42

Room Hire: No Charge

Refreshments: Used in house goods, cost nominal.

On The Day

The event went very well despite low footfall it held itself very well for future events. The seating arrangements were excellent and the space made it possible to have stands showing all the areas of work covered by the Parish Council plus the Officers, staff structure, Councillors and events for the coming year.

An informal 'drop in' was open to the public from 2pm until 6pm where we welcomed a small number of attendees. Those attendees filled out Community Led Action Plan forms and discussed with Councillors what they would like to see in the Parish.

At 6pm sharp the formal meeting took place with which ran to clockwork and the speakers offered a wonderful variety and kept everyone interested, not to mention a brief exercise class kicking off proceedings. After presentations which included awards for our 'Haydon Wick Heros' and grant recipients, an overview of the Year from the Parish Chairman, the meeting closed at 7.42pm for a brief networking opportunity.

Event Review & Future Planning

Category	Point	Implication / Purpose	Suggested Action
Access & Venue	Use of the front door instead of side entrance	Easier, more welcoming access for residents; avoids confusion and safety constraints	Ensure main/front entrance is open and staffed for future events
Timing & Date	Review timing of event (subject to legislative constraints)	Different times may increase attendance and accessibility	Investigate flexibility in timing; consider alternative time slots



Category	Point	Implication / Purpose	Suggested Action
Entertainment & Engagement	Introduce children's activities during drop-in session	Attracts families and increases community engagement	Plan a children-focused activity alongside the event
What Went Well	Event ran smoothly; good attendance; suitable venue (library)	Confirms strong foundation for future events	Retain venue and general format
Improvements Access	Entrance should be open and staffed at all times	Prevents barriers to entry and improves experience	Assign dedicated staff to manage entrance continuously
Improvements Format	Add small events alongside drop-in session	Enhances engagement and dwell time	Incorporate mini-activities or themed elements
Improvements Marketing	Increase marketing before and during event	Boosts awareness and turnout	Develop stronger promotional plan (pre-event and on the day)
Councillor Attendance	Make attendance expected/obligatory for councillors	Ensures visibility and accountability	Agree expectations formally within council
Staffing	Five staff members attended – appropriate level	Confirms staffing model works well	Maintain similar staffing levels for future events

Annual Parish Meeting: What the Law Requires

The Annual Parish Meeting (APM) is not a parish council meeting. It is a meeting of the parish's electors, required by law and governed mainly by the Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12 Part III.

When the Annual Parish Meeting must be held

- Every parish must hold an Annual Parish Meeting once a year.
- It must take place between 1 March and 1 June (inclusive).
- The meeting must not start before 6pm.

Additional Ideas to Consider

Suggestion	Purpose / Benefit	Suggested Action
Hold event on a Saturday?	Likely to increase attendance if during the afternoon	Trial weekend scheduling but could be trickier to staff
Provide alcohol e.g. Cheese and wine	Creates more informal, welcoming atmosphere	Consider light refreshments (subject to policy/budget)
Children's event before official meeting	Engages families earlier	Schedule pre-meeting family activity
Networking session before meeting	Encourages interaction and longer attendance	Add informal networking period before start

Feedback from Presenters and Winners of Haydon Wick Heroes:

"The event was great, thanks for thinking of us and inviting us to present." – Harlequin



"Thank you very much. It has come as a huge surprise!" – A Worthy Hangout

"I am still smiling after your Parish Meeting: so much compassion and practical teamwork. I am hoping to involve Rebecca Rocker in the May Greener Swindon Community Day."
Swindon Climate Action: Jacky Macqueen

Summary – This was a first attempt at an event at the library and overall, it was a success with the agenda and timings all going to plan. Thoughts and discussion will be needed for further events to help enhance footfall and public attendance. The location is great and the space allows for expansion on news from the Parish and current services and up and coming events.

Thank you to all that made the time to attend and feedback on their experience.