

**SWINDON PARISH COUNCIL**  
**Vice Chair's Address to the**  
**Annual Parish Meeting 26<sup>th</sup> April 2023**

Good evening everyone,

My name is Lisa Whitaker, I am vice chair of Swindon Parish Council.

I am delighted to be here to address you today and to celebrate the achievements of our Parish Council over the past 12 months. On behalf of our entire community, I want to express my gratitude to all of the Parish Councillors and Shaun, the clerk, for their tireless work and dedication.

First, I want to recognise the contributions of our two new councillors, Alison and Lynne. Their passion and commitment to our community have already made a significant impact on our work. We are thrilled to have them on board.

A year ago we said thank you and farewell to Peter Allen as he stood down as Chairman of the Parish Council. The council elected James Cornish as Chair, and myself as Vice Chair. We made Peter 'Freeman of the Parish' in recognition of his many long years of service on the Parish council, and to the wider community.

Over this past year, we have accomplished a great deal as a council.

A major recent concern has been planning, with three applications standing out: the approval of 260 homes to be built on Swindon Farm; an application for a 5G mast and associated cabinets within the conservation area; and an outline application for 180 homes on Home Farm. The final two applications attracted nearly 400 objections all together.

We understand the concerns of our community, and we will continue to engage with Cheltenham Borough Council and other stakeholders to ensure that any development in our community is sustainable and in line with the needs of our residents. We have produced substantive responses to these proposals, publicising major applications where relevant, and holding events for residents to ensure that everyone has a voice in the development of our community.

In May, we held a 'community garage sale', with over 50 houses in the parish taking part on what was a lovely and sunny spring day. This event brought our community together and helped to promote a sense of unity and togetherness.

Our successful monthly litter pick has helped to keep our neighbourhoods clean, and we are proud and grateful for the team of volunteers who turn up rain or shine to tidy up our verges, footpaths and green spaces. On behalf of the whole parish, a heart felt thank you to everyone involved.

Alongside these activities, we are delighted to report that we have progressed the purchase of the Village Hall car park, which will safeguard its future for our residents.

We engaged with the police and our serving MP, Laurence Robertson, on the issue of Nitrous Oxide use and associated littering in the parish. We take the concerns of our residents seriously and will continue to work towards a safer and cleaner community.

We've also distributed a large number of road safety bin stickers, to promote road safety and low speeds through the parish. These were the result of a successful bid to the OPCC and we hope to continue with further road safety projects through into the coming year.

We have appointed a new flood and snow warden, which is an essential role in ensuring the safety and well being of our community during challenging weather conditions.

Looking forward, we have several exciting projects planned for the coming year. We will

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continue with the purchase of the village hall car park project to safeguard its future for our residents. We will also work on improving the 'amenity area', including clearing rubbish, maintaining trees, and planting new ones to create a more beautiful and vibrant environment. In addition, we are exploring the possibility of restoring the sundial, which is an essential part of our heritage and history.

These projects are the result of the hard work and dedication of our Parish Council and Shaun, the clerk. We are fortunate to have such a talented and committed team, and I am proud to be part of this community.

Finally I want to take this opportunity to thank our Parish Councillors and Shaun, for their outstanding work over the past year. We are grateful for their service, and we look forward to continuing our work together to make our community an even better place to live, work and thrive.

*Lisa Whitaker*

*Vice Chair of Swindon Parish Council*