

Chairman's Report – Tidenham Annual Parish Meeting 2026

Report from the Parish Council Chairman after another busy year for Tidenham Parish Council.

Jan Koning recently stood down as Parish Councillor after 8 years in post. I would like to thank Jan for his hard work during his term as councillor. Thanks also for the improvements he oversaw during his six years as Chairman in terms of the Council's governance and procedures. I would also like to thank him for his guidance and support for projects introduced during his tenure, including the community electric vehicle, improvements to the Sedbury and Beachley Village Hall and his work with the Poor's Allotments Charity.

Sadly, Graham Drew, parish councillor since March 2018, passed away in December 2025. Graham's contribution to the council will be much missed.

During the year the Council has welcomed Sara Warby as a councillor. Councillors Sheila Bollen and Elliot Cracknell have stepped down – thanks to them for their work for the Council.

The culmination of hard work and preparation has seen the installation of the fabulous new toddler play area at the front of the Sedbury Hall. Parish Councillors are very pleased with the new equipment which has been very well received by the community. Two fully accessible picnic benches will shortly be added to the area.

The Parish Council has recently sent out a survey to the community to gather views on the introduction of a new family park where the current skate ramp is. Councillors are trying to address the desperate need for equipment and open spaces for older children and families to access in the Parish. Councillors have already engaged with young people in the Parish through the local schools and have received some interesting and useful feedback on what they would like to see provided. Once the results of the survey are analysed the Parish Council will be moving forward with grant bids to help fund the development.

The Council is also starting a project with students at Wydean School art Department on a new corporate image and logo for the Council that reflects the Parish and its environments.

The Council's two CCTV cameras continue to be used. The Council works closely with the Police on the positioning of the cameras, which are able to be moved to where they are most needed. Data from these is recorded and only available for Police use.

The Parish Council's AutoSpeedWatch camera in Woodcroft records speeds of vehicles leaving the village, with data on those speeding being sent to the Police. The camera data is monitored weekly and information sent to the police, with 456 letters having been sent by them to registered keepers in 2025 with 9 further actions reported to have been taken.

In January 2025 the Parish Council became sole Trustee for the Sedbury and Beachley Village Hall and worked to introduce an online booking system, improvements to the Hall and increasing the number of hall users. The office at the hall will be available for rent as a meeting / therapy room. This will be used for NHS services and will hopefully allow for the introduction of a new community midwifery hub in the hall. A full report on the Hall will be shared later in the meeting.

The Parish Council has been active in liaising with the relevant authorities on speed issues in the Parish. It had organised several community Speedwatch events with the Police portable speed camera. It has also put the Parish forward as a potential location for the County Council's Safer Roads and Community 20s programme where speed limits would be reduced to 20mph.

The Community Electric Vehicle has continued to be used and the Parish Council, after consultation with local GPs, is introducing a trial scheme to transport patients to blood test appointments at Chepstow Hospital on Wednesdays.

The Parish Council owns and manages 4 defibrillators - Defibrillator usage (notifications from South West Ambulance Service but might not been used) – 10 times.

Thanks to the Forest of Dean Community Safety Partnership the Parish Council has installed a bleed kit next to the defibrillator by the chemist in Sedbury.

The Parish Council also received a Thermal Camera and set up the Thermal Camera Loan Scheme in the Parish. The camera can be borrowed to assess the thermal qualities of people's homes and help provide information for improving insulation etc. Contact the Clerk to book the camera. Thanks to The Rising Sun Woodcroft for keeping the camera and arranging its loan.

As ever, Councillors continue to review and assess their governance and processes. A new part of the annual internal audit of parish councils is that the Council can state an assertion that it has put in place arrangements for effective IT and data management in accordance with proper practices during the year under review. The accessibility statement on the website gives details on how the Council collects and uses data. During the year the Parish Council has taken part in consultations on the Forest of Dean Draft local plan, a draft Parish Settlements survey and a survey on the Local Government Reorganisation.

Local Government Reorganisation – in 2028 the District and Borough Councils will disappear and new unitary authorities introduced. The Parish Council has done much work on this, liaising with other local councils and the Forest of Dean District Council. The role of the parish councils in the new organisation is not yet clear but Tidenham Parish Council is working to ensure it is ready for any changes that may come its way.

The normal business of the Parish Council has continued during the past year.

- The Parish Council considered a total of 34 planning applications, 27 of which were supported, 4 not supported, 3 being considered. The Parish Council also liaises with Gloucestershire County Council Highways Dept. and other interested parties on numerous road and footpath issues.

- The Amenities Committee continues to manage the facilities in the Parish with a total budget for last year of almost £42k. Some funds have been carried over towards the planned new family park. The committee manages the ongoing maintenance of the play equipment and emptying of dog waste bins in the Parish as well as litter picking and emptying of waste bins on Parish Council land.

- The Finance Committee has carried on its business through quarterly meetings, part of which involves scrutiny of the accounts and payments and recommendation of budget to full council. Grants have been awarded to Read With Me for £700 to fund 7 volunteers to help with literacy in local schools, to Tidenham Residents Association towards a defibrillator in Tidenham and to Sedbury Space Sedbury Space towards the provision of a Christmas Day Lunch for up to 50 members of the community.

- The Mopla Cottages Committee has continued to maintain the cottages. Grants were awarded to Wyedean Wellbeing CIC for its SeeMe Initiative, providing tablets with simplified software and access to Wi-Fi that enables audio and video group engagement over extended periods of time and to Tidenham Parish Council towards the new toddler play area.

The Council is looking forward to the successful completion of its current projects and will, as ever, be working with the community to identify new initiatives.

I would personally like to thank all of the Councillors for their support and the time, work and effort that they have given over the past 12 months.

The role of a Parish Councillor can be very rewarding and we are now looking to recruit new members to the Council. Please think about volunteering to help improve the Parish for all of the community.