Dear Villagers,

Most of you will be aware of the existence of the Parish Council which is made up of 7 villagers and represents the lowest rung of formal representative democracy in our country. You may be less clear about what it actually does. Parish Councillors are elected or co-opted onto the Parish Council where they sit as a council to manage aspects of village life, to help coordinate village activity and to allocate around £8,000 of public money each year to the good of the community. The Parish Council also has a formal if small part to play in the consideration of Planning Applications within the village, making recommendations to the Wiltshire Council Planning Officers on behalf of our community.

The Parish Council meets between 6 and 10 times a year, each meeting taking typically an hour and a half. Contrary to the view of some, it does make a difference. By way of example, recent achievements have included bidding for the 20mph zones shortly to be instituted at each end of the village on the minor roads through Teffont Evias and Teffont Magna; and also instituted a programme of repair and renovation of the network of beautiful public rights of way around the village. So the Parish Council does do worthwhile work; it isn't an onerous commitment for councillors and, if you care for your community, is something that you might perhaps consider doing.

The current Chairman (David Wood) will be stepping down after some 7 years on the Council and 6 years as Chairman. That will create a vacancy for a new councillor. If you are interested in being co-opted onto the Parish Council then I would encourage you to contact the Parish Clerk (Antoinette Wacher) or the Vice Chairman (Emma Worth) and put yourself forward for co-option at the next meeting on 12th November. We have always been lucky in Teffont to have been able to draw on a surprisingly strong vein of villagers willing to serve on the Parish Council and I think that most of us would consider ourselves fortunate as a village to have been able to do so. So step up, and put your hat into the ring!

The Parish Council also employs a part-time Clerk (currently Antoinette Wacher) who has also decided to step down after 4 years in the role. Unlike the Councillors the Clerk is not an elected representative but is an appointed officer of the Parish Council and is the only remunerated role within the Parish Council, paid currently at a rate of 4 hours per week. The Clerk’s role is essentially to help the councillors and the Parish Council by providing the formal means of communication with villagers and other parties, assisting the Chairman in organising the Council’s business and generally enacting the Council’s work. It is an important job that puts the holder at the centre of the community. If you have an interest in serving the community and are prepared to take on this important role then please contact Antoinette who will give you more details. Although she is standing down, Antoinette has kindly undertaken to mentor the new Clerk for as long as is needed. So whilst the role may seem daunting at the outset there is little to be afraid of in volunteering.

I very much hope that we will find two villagers willing to take on these two roles on behalf of us all. Do please feel free to call either Emma or Antoinette if you would like to discuss volunteering.

David Wood

Chairman