Agenda Item 4.3

Dear All,

I wanted to share an idea I've been thinking about and to ask for your thoughts.

A number of parish and town councils run annual Community Champion or Community Awards schemes as a way of recognising residents who go above and beyond for their communities. For example, Hamble Parish Council runs an Annual Community Awards Scheme where residents nominate individuals or groups, and the council then selects recipients based on contribution and impact rather than public voting. Hartley Wintney Parish Council holds a dedicated Community Awards Evening each year to celebrate volunteers, groups and local businesses, with nominations coming from the public and decisions made by the council. Odiham Parish Council presents its Community Awards at the Annual Parish Assembly, recognising people who have gone above and beyond for others in the parish.

My idea is whether something similar might work for parishes across the Yeo Ward, in a way that is simple, fair and proportionate. The basic principle would be to invite residents to nominate individuals or groups they feel deserve recognition for their contribution to community life, while avoiding the process becoming a popularity contest. In the examples above, this is done by allowing open nominations but not public voting, with a small panel of councillors agreeing recipients against clear but flexible criteria focused on impact, commitment and service.

Awards themselves would be modest, typically a certificate and a small token of appreciation, with the emphasis on civic recognition and saying thank you.

One thought I wanted to float is whether there might be appetite for parishes in the Yeo Ward to hold awards on the same evening at a shared venue, while still recognising recipients from each individual parish. Other councils have found that a single annual event creates a positive atmosphere, reduces costs and feels like a genuine celebration of community contribution, but this would of course only be worth exploring if it felt helpful rather than burdensome.

At this stage, this really is just an idea, and I'm keen to hear what you think, whether this feels useful, whether something similar already happens in your parish, or whether there are obvious reasons it wouldn't work locally. If there is interest, we could look at developing a very light-touch framework that parishes could opt into or adapt as they see fit.

I'd really welcome your views.

Kind regards,
Sandy