

Barford, Sherbourne and Wasperton Joint Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Monday 12th January 2004 at Barford Memorial Hall at 7.30pm

Present: Councillor J V Murphy (Chairman)

Cllrs. M P Byerley, Mrs A Gordon, G P Grima, K S Hope, D H Hunt, Mrs J Jackson, G G Morris, R G Mulgrue, S G Starkey, W Worrall, J T Wright

In attendance: Mrs M B Haywood

167. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr R G Butler, R Clay, Mrs J Compton, Mrs S Dean and Mrs M Hayward.

168. **Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests**

Cllr M P Byerley – Personal – Grant Aid to Barford School
Cllr W Worrall – Personal and Prejudicial – Grant Aid to Barford School – School’s Trustee
Cllr K Hope – Personal and Prejudicial – that part of agenda 9 dealing with the Barford village envelope – property owner in area subject to decision.
Cllr Mrs A Gordon – Personal and Prejudicial – first item of b) under Payment of Accounts

169. **Representations by Members of the Public**

There were no representations by members of the public.

170. **Matters for the Constabulary**

Members reported the break-in and burglary of a woman pensioner’s bungalow in Sandy Way, Barford and a car broken into in Moat Green, Sherbourne.

Wasperton members informed the Council that the village Neighbourhood Watch was finding it impossible to make contact with the police since the transfer of the Community Beat Officer to other duties. The Clerk was asked to look into this and to ascertain what progress has been made in finding a replacement Community Beat Officer.

171. **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 17th November 2003 were confirmed with the amendment to declarations of interest to show Cllr Mrs Hayward’s name in place of that of Cllr Mrs Haywood and to show Cllr Worrall’s interest as a Member of the School Trust and not as representative on the school’s governing body.

Cllr Mrs Haywood reported that she had twice attempted to expedite action by the County Council on the agreed improvements to the traffic calming measures in Barford.

The Chairman reported some ‘spalling/crumbling’ taking place on the top of the War Memorial following reconstruction. The contractors will attend to it when the weather improves.

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council on 11th December 2003 were confirmed.

The Chairman said that he had since been lead to understand that the term ‘healthy’ in Section 3 – the Core Strategy of the draft Local Plan – referred to in the Minutes meant general well being and not human physical health as Council had thought.

The Minutes of the Planning Committee held on 11th November 2003 were confirmed with the amendment of Cllr Mrs M Haywood’s name to Hayward.

The Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 17th November 2003 were confirmed.

The Minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 2nd December 2003 were confirmed with the substitution of the word 'removal' for the word 'improvement' under application W20031801.

The Chairman reported that he had been contacted by the Highways Agency to say that they will undertake additional planting around the site of the traffic officer outstation to be sited at Longbridge as requested by the JPC. The Clerk was asked to seek this commitment in writing and agreement to undertake the planting in the next planting season.

The Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 18th December 2003 were confirmed after amending Cllr Clay's interest to W20031872 from W20031878.

172. **Reports from Representatives Appointed to Serve on Other Bodies**

Cllr Mulgrue reported that he had attended the training seminar on Meeting Procedure and Chairmanship. Although he had nothing new to report to the Council on these matters, the tutor had advised representatives of issues needing to be incorporated into the Clerk's conditions of service. These were annual appraisal, a disciplinary procedure and risk assessment (even where the Clerk works from home). The Clerk was asked to contact WALC for advice and any model procedures, for consideration at the next meeting.

173. **Grant Aid to Barford School**

Councillor Worrall, having declared a prejudicial interest, withdrew from the meeting, returning for the next item on the agenda.

At its last meeting Council received a request from the Chair of Governors for Barford School for grant-aid toward the cost of its proposed building work. The school's required contribution to the cost is £31,000. Fundraising events were planned to help meet this cost. Council decided to defer the matter for consideration at this meeting and requested a set of its current accounts or financial statement. It also wished to know how much of the outstanding sum was likely to be raised by the planned fundraising activities.

From information provided by the school the Council was informed that £10,000 of the school's contribution will be met from a loan by the Diocesan Board, and the Trustees propose to pay £6000 (plus another £6000 per year in the following two years to pay off the loan) if their other commitments allow. With a further £15,000 to find, and to allow for any slippage in the funding offered, the school was aiming to raise a further £16,000 to meet the building costs on completion. Appendix A to the agenda showed the School's development fund so far and a guestimate of the fundraising planned. Money is not available for this purpose from the School's revenue budget.

The Chair of the School's Governors and a colleague governor attended the meeting as members of the public and submitted a further paper aimed at explaining the shortfall in funding likely to arise and the difference between the funding to be found as reported to the last meeting and that reported to this meeting.

Cllr Byerley submitted a written report on the situation in the light of his attendance at his first meeting as JPC appointee to the School Governing Body.

Resolved: That consideration of the matter be deferred to the next meeting to give members more time to absorb the new information.

174. **Upgrading of Safety for Barford Village Green Play Area / ROSPA inspection report**

In 2000 a schedule of repairs and safety improvements to play areas at Barford playing field and village green was drawn up and prices obtained from a contractor. Work went ahead on the playing field but not on the village green.

The work schedule drawn up for the village green was to provide a safety area beneath the play equipment.

ROSPA's inspection report for 2003 reiterated the need for this surface. It also advised that overhanging branches near the path be cut back and that remedial work be carried out in the playing field play area as follows

Attention to gates re entrapment of fingers
Repair or replace the slide.
Improve the safety fastening of the swing chains.
Put guards on the concrete tubes.
Attend to Basketball trip zones at edge of tarmac.
Tighten grindbox fixing in the skate area

It was observed that WDC's arboriculture officer had not yet advised on appropriate work to be undertaken on tree problems on the playing field and this should be followed up.

It was also felt that WDC should be asked for help with the cost of the safety surface under concurrent services since such provision is made by them in the unparished areas.

It was asked that replacement of the slide should not be during the school holidays, and that signs should be placed on the village green deterring owners from allowing their dogs into the play area.

Members agreed to examine the gate to see how its risks may be minimized.

Resolved: that quotes be obtained for the village green play equipment safety surface and the slide in the playing field play area, to refer the swings to the installer for advice/action, to research fixing rubber tyres as guards on the concrete tubes and that minor items be undertaken on a 'work-day'.

175. **Warwick District Council's Draft Local Plan**

In response to WDC's invitation to comment on its draft Local Plan for the period to 2011, currently 'on deposit' until 23rd January 2004, the JPC held special meetings on 11th December 2003 and 6th January 2004. At the latter meeting it appointed a working party composed of the Chairman, Cllr Clay and Cllr Mrs Gordon to develop a response to WDC on the following 4 areas:

Affordable housing for Barford and the possible need for special consideration for the Oldham's site if it could not attract employment enterprise.

Proposed alterations to the Barford village envelope.

Flood avoidance.

Respect for the Barford Village Plan within WDC's Local Plan.

The Chairman presented for discussion a draft response to be sent to WDC which he and Cllr Clay had produced and on which he had consulted Cllrs Mrs Gordon and Hunt as the other members of the working party.

Council approved the majority of the proposed submission, but suggested the following amendments:-

- changes to the Barford Village Envelope were thought to be inappropriate, except as they were applied to the Fishermen's Car Park and the School Playing Field. At the Oldham's site any restriction should be limited to the Barford Bypass line. Council could see no justification for changing the envelope in the area of the Villas on Barford Hill and in the garden of Little Watchbury.
- Policy RAP2 is only acceptable so long as Affordable Housing referred to in paragraph (a) relating to Limited Growth Villages is restricted to that appropriate for Local/Parish needs. It was felt that there was inadequate explanation within the Draft Local Plan of the planning implications of the designation of Barford as a Limited Growth Village. *(It was further suggested that this council should try to liaise with other LGV's to discuss/explore our*

concerns.) Given our concerns over LGV's and our need for Affordable Housing it was felt that we should formally request that Oldhams might be treated as an exception site under Policy RAP1.

Councillor Hope, having indicated his interest, left the meeting during the discussion of the Barford Village Envelope changes.

Resolved: that the working party's draft responses be submitted as amended.

176. **Oldhams Transport Site, Barford**

At its meeting in October Council decided to urge Warwick District Council to provide a development brief to guide the future proposals to develop the site.

A response from WDC to this request was circulated to JPC members (at the same time as the agenda for the Planning Committee meeting on 18th December). This indicated that WDC would prefer to use the new Local Plan for this site rather than develop a special brief.

Resolved: that in view of WDC's unwillingness to recognize the need for a Planning Brief it should be informed that it would expect due consideration to the Council's comments for an exception to the Local Plan when considering any future proposals for the development of this site.

177. **Warwickshire Fire Authority Draft Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP)**

Council was informed that all fire Authorities have been required to produce IRMP's, which are a central plank of the Government's agenda to reform and modernize the Fire and Rescue Service. They set out how each Authority's service will develop over coming years into community based services focused on reducing the number of incidents that result in deaths and injuries. Warwickshire Fire Authority are seeking comments on its draft IRMP by the end of February 2004.

Resolved: that a working party composing Cllrs Starkey, Hunt and Morris be formed to draft responses to Warwickshire Fire Authority's questionnaire for approval at Council's February meeting.

178. **Campaign to Protect Rural England – Renewal of Membership Subscription**

Council was informed the Campaign to Protect Rural England has requested renewal its annual membership subscription of £25.00.

The Campaign's stated intent is to promote the beauty, tranquility and diversity of rural England by encouraging the sustainable use of land and other natural resources in town and country.

Members were reminded that, in a report to a previous meeting on his attendance at the Barford Bypass Inquiry, the Chairman expressed concern about the conduct of CPRE's representative. He had presented major criticisms of the scheme without having consulted the JPC or relevant documents in the public domain.

Resolved: on majority votes that membership of CPRE be not renewed and and the Council's reasons be not notified to them.

179. **Company signs in Debden Hollow**

Council was informed that, at its last meeting, a question was raised about the new large signs in Debden Hollow indicating the premises of Wenman Mobility and whether they required planning permission.

They were informed that the company had written saying it had planning approval, expressing concern about criticism and indicating its willingness to consider reasonable change to the signs.

Resolved: that the company be informed that, after reconsideration, Council had no objection to the signs.

180. **Exclusion of Press and Public**

Resolved: that in view of the nature of the following item, involving contractual matters, and the next, concerning the Clerk's conditions of service, it is advisable in the public interest that the public be temporarily excluded and they be instructed to withdraw.

181. **Mowing for 2004 Season**

Council were reminded that, in accordance with Financial Regulations, the contract for mowing the village green and the playing field for the 2002 season was put out to competitive tender. Although some half-dozen contractors were approached only three showed interest and only two submitted tenders. The successful tender from Frank Mann Farmers, trading under the title of MFM, was little more than a third of the price quoted in the other tender. For the 2003 season, therefore, MFM having not increased its price and the Council being satisfied with the standards maintained, it decided that Financial Regulations should be waived so as to renew the contract with MFM.

A quotation has been received from MFM for the 2004 season in which the price has been raised by just 3.8%.

Resolved: that, given that it is unlikely that a better price could be obtained by competitive tender and the satisfactory service given, Financial Regulations be waived and the mowing contract for 2004 be given to MFM.

182. **Standing Order No 9 – Pay and Conditions of Service for Employees**

The above Standing Order requires the Council annually to review the pay and conditions of its employees at a meeting no later than that at which estimates are considered.

Resolved: that, having reviewed the pay and conditions of service for its only employee, the Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer, they be renewed for a further year but the hours of employment may be reviewed in due course in the light of time-recording (over a period of three months) currently being undertaken.

183. **Release of Earmarked Funds carried forward in previous years**

Council were reminded that it provides a sum in its financial estimates each year earmarked for the cost of the elections for the new Council in 2003. The sum accumulated and brought forward in balances to the current year is £1880. The invoice from Warwick District Council for the cost of the elections has been received for payment.

Resolved: that the earmarked funds to help pay the invoice for the 2003 elections to the JPC be now released to pay the invoice received.

184. **Revised Estimates 2003/2004 – Estimates 2004/2005 – Precept for 2004/2005**

Council considered its draft estimates and proposed precept for 2004/2005 prepared by its Clerk in consultation with a working party appointed at its last meeting.

Under the provisions of the Local Government Finance Act 1972 the District Council is required to consult over the dates on which it proposes to pay precepts. As in previous years it intends to pay 50% by 30th April and the remainder by 30th September of the year.

Resolved: that

- (1) the estimates and proposed precept for 2004/2005 be approved subject to the following minor amendments:

- a) the annual subscription to WARNACT be not renewed and the provision made for books and publications be reduced to £100.
- b) the total sum of £70 arising from the changes in a) above and by the decision not to renew the subscription to CPRE be transferred to increase the provision for repair and maintenance of roadside seats to £100.

(2) WDC be notified of a precept of £15,613 for 2004/5 and that its proposed payment dates for the precept are acceptable.

185. **Annual Return for the year ended 31st March 2003**

Clement Keys Chartered Accountants, the Council's Audit Commission appointed auditors, have now satisfactorily completed their audit of the Annual Return for 2002/2003.

The Auditor asked that the letter attached as appendix E, necessary to enable him to complete the audit, be reported to Council.

Resolved: that satisfactory completion of the audit, and the information in the Clerk's letter necessary for satisfactory completion of the audit, were noted.

186. **Bank and Building Society Balances**

The following were noted as at 19.12.03	£
Bank Account	5905.21
Building Society Deposit Account	20,667.00
Receipts banked in the last period:	
War memorial donations and buy-a-brick	845.00

187. **Payment of Accounts**

a) The cheque signatories' action in making payment of the following accounts was approved:

	£
MFM Services – <i>Mowing fee for October</i>	43.00
Hornton Masonry Co – <i>Work on war memorial tablets</i>	4021.26
F.E.R.N. Contractors – <i>War memorial reconstruction work</i>	6025.40
Hitchman Stone Partnership – <i>Professional oversight of War Memorial reconstruction</i>	587.50
Clement Keys Chartered accountants – <i>Fee for statutory audit of 2002/2003 Annual Return</i>	293.75
Prontaprint – <i>November printing</i>	73.72
T. Offiler – <i>Trav expenses(paid with November salary approved at last meeting)</i>	39.42

b) Approval was given to payment of the following accounts: £

Cllr Mrs A Gordon – <i>Bulb planting in Sherbourne</i>	99.75
(Subject to noting that, whilst there was funding for such expenditure in the Council's budget, this specific expenditure had not been authorized by the Council)	
T. Offiler – <i>December salary (202.91) and Office Accom. (41.66)</i>	244.57
D H Hartwell – <i>Consultation fee for December</i>	166.66
Viking Direct – <i>Envelopes and print cartridges</i>	63.04
Warwick District Council – <i>Costs incurred in arranging the 2003 JPC elections</i>	3444.85
Society of Local Council Clerks – <i>Renewal of membership for 2004</i>	64.00
Inland Revenue – <i>Income taxpayable for October, November and December</i>	171.82

188. **Affordable Housing in Barford**

Council were reminded that it had given encouragement without commitment to Warwickshire Rural Housing Association's interest in providing a scheme for affordable housing in the grounds of Barford House fronting Wasperton Lane.

The Association had now informed the Council that WDC's only indicated concern was about such a scheme going too far back and thereby having a detrimental visual impact upon Barford House because of its listed status. The Association believes it can design a scheme that is sensitive to this concern. It says that, subject to seeking its Housing Department's views, WDC is receptive to the idea of incorporating the current flats into any proposal.

The Association says it will now have drawings prepared and will forward copies to the JPC so that it can take on board members' comments at the earliest opportunity.

Resolved: that this matter be noted.

189. **Access to River Avon between Avonside Cottage and Waters Edge, High Street, Barford**

Council was reminded that WCC had indicated that it would be unable to deal with this matter for some years because there are a large number of cases on file and it intends to deal with them as part of the review of the Definitive Map of Public Footpaths, Bridleways and Byways. Council requested that WCC be asked if more urgent steps be taken in this case where individuals have taken adverse possession and fenced against public access.

WCC's reply, which said that it would not be taken up for at least 5 years because of the workload, was considered by Council.

Resolved: that WCC's reply be noted and that, if not already done, Land Registry be informed of the Council's claim of Public Right of Way on the land.

190. **Expenditure on the Barford Parish Plan**

Council was informed that the Barford Parish Plan Committee have applied for grant aid from the Countryside Agency to meet expenditure incurred in progressing the Plan. Such grants are made payable to the Parish Council and the Committee would need to pass invoices against the grant to the JPC for release of funds to pay them.

Resolved: on a majority vote, that these arrangements be approved.

191. **Street Lighting adjacent to Granville Arms, Barford**

The Clerk was asked to contact EME for repair of this light.

192. **Parking Provision in Sandy Way, Barford**

In response to a member's question the Clerk reported that WDC had indicated that it was a matter for WCC as the highway authority and that he was now awaiting a reply from that Council.

The Chairman reported that some further residents of Sandy Way had complained of constant parking of large vehicles on the first roundabout causing damage to the grassed area. Cllr Byerley said that he had indicated in an unofficial capacity that the driver responsible should park there to avoid obstructing emergency vehicles. (This could be further considered on receipt of WCC comment and the appointment of a new community Beat Officer.)

193. **Dog-Waste Bins for the Playing Field Area in Barford**

In response to a member's question the Chairman said the bins provided by a local resident were likely to be too large for the purpose, that he would investigate their possible modification and report back to the next meeting where expenditure for alternatives could be discussed.

194. **Final new bus shelter for Barford**

Cllr Hope reported that he had now agreed a specification with WCC and the shelter was being ordered for erection as soon as possible.

195. **Unauthorised parking off the A46 at Fosse Farm, Sherbourne.**

Members reported that this matter was continuing, with up to a dozen vehicles over-night parking at any one time. They requested the Clerk to follow up on the complaint made to WCC and report back to them.

196. **Gully emptying at Sherbourne**

Members reported that, following the request to WCC to empty blocked gullies, one had been emptied that day and its contents left on the road. They asked the Clerk to question with WCC whether this imposed a risk to road users, and to ask them to empty the other blocked gullies in the village.

197. **Barford Web-Site**

The Chairman reported contact from the web-site manager to see if the JPC wished to display further information. He suggested that short Councillor biographies might be displayed.

198. **Skateboard Park noise reduction measures.**

The Chairman reported that he was still looking into this but it was difficult to find effective measures. However, WDC Environmental Health Officer had again pressed to resolve the matter so that residents can be assured of this before the coming summer.