

BARFORD, SHERBOURNE AND WASPERTON JOINT PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 16th February 2004 at Sherbourne Village Hall at 7.30pm.

Present: Councillor J V Murphy (Chairman)

Cllrs M P Byerley, R Clay, Mrs A Gordon, G P Grima, K S Hope, D H Hunt, G G Morris, S G Starkey and J T Wright.

In attendance: Cllrs Mrs M B Haywood and Mrs C Sawdon

199. **Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs R G Butler, Mrs J Compton, Mrs S Dean, Mrs M Hayward, Mrs J Jackson, R G Mulgrue and W Worrall.

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

Cllr M P Byerley – Personal – Grant Aid to Barford School – JPC appointee to governing body.
Cllr R Clay – Personal – Grant aid to Barford School – Wife member of School Trust.

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

There were no representations by members of the public.

202. **Matters for the Constabulary**

The Chairman reported that a new Community Beat Officer had been appointed but he did not yet know when he would take up his new duties. The Clerk was asked to ascertain this information.

203. **Minutes**

The Minutes of the special Council meeting on 6th January 2004 were confirmed, and the Chairman informed the meeting that receipt of Council's submitted views had been acknowledged by WDC.

The Minutes of the meeting of Council held on 12th January 2004 were confirmed with the amendment, in Minute 191, of 'EME' to 'WCC' and the amendment, in Minute 195, of 'Fosse Farm' to 'old fruit farm'.

The Clerk reported that:

- (1) under Minute 171, the Highways Agency had written to express its appreciation of the Council's approval of its planning application, and to confirm that it would undertake a planting programme to enhance the environment of the site in the Winter next year.
- (2) under Minute 189, he was completing the necessary Land Registry documentation.;
- (3) under Minute 192, WCC had mislaid his letter and a copy had been forwarded.;
- (4) under Minute 195, WDC planning enforcement officers had met with the landowner and tenant and required submission of a planning application for the current use of the land within 28 days;
- (5) under Minute 196, WCC highways department had agreed to check on the state of gulleys and had said that their vehicles could not take on board the material extracted and aimed to deposit it on grass verges where possible but on the roads if not, where it was not regarded as a traffic hazard.

The Minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 12th January 2004 were confirmed with amendment to read 'on appeal to the Secretary of State' in the comments on application W20031974 in Minute 101.

Cllr Hunt reported that, on the basis of plans with greater detail and information than that given to the JPC, officers were recommending to the WDC Planning Committee the following day (17th February) that application W20031974 be approved.

Council instructed the Clerk to E-mail the Head of WDC Planning and the Planning Committee Chairman before the Committee met expressing its concern that it would be considering the matter

on the basis of information that had not first been provided to the JPC for comment under the agreed consultation procedures.

The Minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 3rd February 2004 were confirmed.

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

There were no reports to be made.

205. **Grant Aid to Barford School**

At its last two meetings Council considered a request from the Governors of Barford School for grant-aid toward the cost of the school's proposed building work. However, because Members were unclear from the information presented to them about the likely shortfall in the school's fundraising activities they deferred consideration for more clarification. This was provided showing that, after assistance from the School Trustees and other fundraising there was likely to be a shortfall of between £1,615 and £2,690.

Resolved: that a grant of £1,700 be made to Barford School towards the cost of its building extensions under the provisions of section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972.

206. **Grant Aid to Warwick District Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)**

CAB is forecasting a deficit in its accounts for the current year of some £5,500, but knows that its funding for next year will leave it with a much more severe deficit.

Its funding difficulties have been building over the years as grant-aid from the County and District Councils (£89,000) has fallen behind the inflationary effects that the Service has experienced. Hitherto, it has managed to maintain adequate funding for its services in the district through project work for other bodies (£132,000). It will lose one of those projects next year.

In the light of these difficulties CAB was seeking financial assistance from alternative sources, including parish councils.

Resolved: that, in view of previous precedent on grant applications, this application be refused but that the local Member of Parliament be asked to urge the Government to provide this valuable service provider with direct and secure funding adequate for its needs.

207. **Quality Parish Council**

At its meeting in November 2003 Council was asked to consider a document explaining the route that Parish and Town Councils would need to take to gain the status of 'Quality Council' and was asked if it wished to commit to taking that route. Members felt they needed more time to study the detailed requirements of the scheme, and deferred the matter to this meeting.

The document circulated to Members set out 7 tests to be passed by the council seeking 'Quality' status:

1. Electoral Mandate
2. Qualifications of the Clerk
3. Council Meetings
4. Communication
5. Annual Reports
6. Accounts
7. Ethical Framework

The Council was informed that it already passes test 1 by having more than the minimum 80% of all seats filled at the beginning of the current 4-year term by members who stood for election at that time.

Test 2 is not met. The current Clerk, while holding high-level local government qualifications and experience, does not hold those specifically for clerks at parish council level required by the scheme.

Council meets test 3 by publicizing and holding at least 6 meetings per year with time allowed at each for public participation, but it does not meet the need to make its Minutes available for public inspection. This appeared to be easily met, for example by appending a copy to notice boards and/or advertising their availability at the same time as notifying the next meeting.

The Communication test 4, involving the publishing of a regular newsletter, information for contacting Members and the Clerk and an annual report, available at public sites, is already met in principle at least, through 'Plurality', but could be improved.

The Chairman reports annually to each of the Parish Meetings. To meet test 5 his report could be made more widely available by the same means as for the Minutes of meetings or the newsletter referred to above.

Although it was not clear what the first part of the Accounts (accountability) test 6 involves, the second would appear to be met through the existing public audit arrangements.

Council appeared already to meet test 7, the Ethical Framework test, having adopted the model code of conduct and Members having declared their interests.

Resolved: that the steps outlined above be taken in preparation for achieving 'Quality' status without commitment at this time to seeking it;

208. **Upgrading of Safety for Barford Village Green play area / ROSPA inspection report**

At its last meeting, Council resolved that indications of cost be obtained for provision of a safety surface beneath the village green climbing frames and replacement of the slide in the playing field play-area. It was also resolved to refer comments on the safety of the swings in the playing field play-area to the supplier for advice/action.

It was reported by the Clerk that provision of a bark safety surface would be approximately £1850, but it had not been possible to get an indication of cost for other types of surface in time for the meeting. A local firm had quoted a cost of £1,250 to thoroughly refurbish the slide.

Advice on the safety of the swings was also awaited.

Resolved: that, since all requested information had not yet been received, a decision on these matters be deferred until the next meeting.

209. **Provision of Dog-Waste Bins for Barford Playing Field**

At the last meeting the Chairman informed Members that the bins provided by a local resident were too large for the purpose and he would discuss their possible modification. It was hoped to consider the matter further at this meeting including the cost of alternatives.

The Chairman informed the meeting of the range of costs for dog-waste bins and that WDC had indicated that bins supplied through them cost in the region of £250 installed. They also provide a regular emptying service for an annual fee, and if that service is to be requested it is important to liaise with them over the choice of bin to be used and their siting. If they don't suit the contractor's processes it would involve special arrangements at higher costs.

Resolved: that

- (1) two bins be installed by WDC, one on the playing field and one by the Scout Hut, to be emptied using their service;
- (2) application be made to WDC for grant towards the costs under the concurrent services scheme;

(3) costs to the JPC be met from the contingency reserve of £1000 in its budget for unforeseen expenditure.

210. **Litter Removal in Sherbourne**

Sherbourne Members expressed concern that, while an eight week litter-picking service was supposed to be provided by WCC contractors, evidence of litter suggested that it was not being carried out satisfactorily in the Sherbourne area.

Resolved: that the Clerk contact WCC requesting that they monitor the present service to Sherbourne with a view to assuring the JPC of its future satisfactory nature.

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

At its last meeting the JPC received an invitation to contribute to the Warwickshire Fire Authority's production of its Integrated Risk Management Plan. The draft Plan sets out a strategic framework that identifies the risk in Warwickshire, examines how effective the current arrangements are and then presents opportunities for further improvement with a strong emphasis on prevention.

Council had appointed a working party composed of Cllrs Hunt, Morris and Starkey to draft the Council's response and, on its behalf, Cllr Morris indicated its proposed responses to the questionnaire provided. A copy of the submission would be circulated in the 'members' envelope'.

Resolved: that the working party's submission be approved for dispatch to the Fire Authority.

212. **WCC Library and Information Service Best Value Review**

Over the last 2 years the Library and Information Service has undertaken reviews focused on the management of stock, the mobile and van service and how membership is managed, and reservations and debt recovery. It now wishes to explore issues around the themes of *Lifelong Learning, Social Inclusion and E-Government* and to investigate innovative approaches to joint service delivery. In addition it wishes to identify local priorities, potential partnerships and how collaboration with libraries can benefit partners and the community.

To ensure effective consultation with partners and members of the community it is holding workshops in the five districts and borough councils.

Resolved: that no delegate be appointed.

213. **Decriminalisation of On-Street Parking**

The Road Traffic act 1991 gives local highway authorities, in our case WCC, the power to apply to the Department of Transport for the creation of 'Special Parking Areas' in which on-street parking violations cease to become criminal offences and enforcement becomes the responsibility of the Highway Authority and not the Police. WCC has already published plans to introduce these 'Special Parking Areas' across each of the Districts over the next few years.

The JPC is one of a number of local interest groups invited to attend a briefing session on the discussions between WCC and WDC on this matter at the Town Hall, Leamington Spa on Thursday 26th February. At this stage numbers are limited to 2 delegates per organization.

Resolved: that the Chairman and Cllr Clay be delegated to attend this briefing session. _

214. **The Slower Speeds Initiative – Rural Speed Management Conference**

In connection with his membership of a transport group for older people in Warwick district, Cllr Hope had received details of the above conference to be held in Birmingham on 25th March.

Resolved: that Cllrs Hope and Mrs Gordon be delegated to attend the conference in the interests of their respective parishes.

215. **Application by Glebe Hotel, Barford under the Marriage (Approved Premises) Regulations**

At its meeting in September last year Council decided to object to the granting of a license to the Glebe Hotel under the above regulations. Its concern was that it would increase patronage of the hotel and, thereby, the number of occasions when parking problems would cause inconvenience and danger to other road users in the vicinity of the hotel.

It is understood that WCC has agreed to grant the license request, with the following conditions which have been accepted by the hotel:-

- (1) A maximum of 80 guests attending the ceremony.
- (2) Only one such ceremony on any day.
- (3) Guest-parking to be in the hotel's car park wherever possible under supervision to achieve this.
- (4) Couples marrying at the hotel to be informed in writing that their guests should be asked to park in such a way as not to cause an obstruction or hazard to local residents or other visitors to the village.

Resolved: that this information be noted.

216. **Planning Application to Develop the Glebe Hotel, Barford**

This application was considered at the Planning Committee's meeting on 26th June last year and objections made to WDC on some 13 grounds. WDC subsequently refused the application.

Having consulted English Heritage, a firm of planning consultants engaged by the hotel had given it design advice to resolve the issue and wished to meet representatives of the JPC to try to allay its concerns before revised plans are prepared in detail.

Resolved: that such a meeting would be inappropriate and the planning application should be awaited.

217. **Barford Web Site**

The web-site manager has invited the JPC to display further information if it wishes. He suggests that short councillor biographies might be displayed. The matter was reported by the Chairman at the end of a lengthy meeting on 12th January, and he felt that Members might like a further opportunity to consider it with an example of the kind of biography that might be displayed.

Resolved: that the Council would be interested in taking further the web-site manager's invitation, and the Chairman would begin a dialogue to explore the possibilities.

218. **Clerk's Conditions of Service – Disciplinary, Grievance, Appraisal and Risk Assessment Procedures.**

At its last meeting Council was informed by Cllr Mulgrue that, whilst attending a WALC course, participants were advised to ensure that Clerks' conditions of service incorporated procedures for disciplinary and grievance issues, appraisal of job performance, and risk assessment (even for Clerks working from home). The Clerk was asked to contact WALC for advice and any model procedures so as to consider the matter further at this meeting.

The Clerk has obtained advice and model procedures from WALC and also from the Society of Local Council Clerks.

Resolved: that a working party composed of the Chairman, Cllrs Hunt, Morris and Mulgrue work with the Clerk to consider the development of his conditions of service where appropriate and to report back to Council with proposals.

219. **Skateboard Park Noise Reduction**

The Chairman reported that all involved in this issue were in touch with each other but that an appropriate remedy was proving elusive.

Resolved: that this report be noted.

220. **Bank and Building Society Balances**

The following were noted as at 19.1.04	£
Bank Account	1,651.57
Building Society Deposit Account	20,667.00

221. **Payment of Accounts**

Approval was given to payment of the following accounts:	£
T.Offiler - <i>January salary (203.13) Trav Exps (31.94) postages (32.74)</i>	
and telephone (76.96)	386.43
D H Hartwell – <i>Consultation fee for January</i>	166.00
W.A.L.C. – <i>Notice of Conclusion of Audit posters</i>	3.14
Viking Direct – <i>Computer ink cartridges</i>	33.93
Prontaprint – <i>Printing January 2004</i>	59.63

222. **Resignation of Councillor D H Hunt**

Council was informed of Cllr Hunt’s resignation from the Council to take effect immediately after the meeting on 17th March 2004, and that notices will be published in Wasperton to ascertain whether an election to the ‘casual vacancy’ thus arising on the Council will be needed. If no election is requested the Council may co-opt a suitable person to the seat for the duration of its life.

Resolved: that this report be noted.

223. **Restoration of Barford War Memorial – Costs and Contributions**

Council was informed that, the work having been completed, accounts paid and grants claimed, the financial analysis is as follows:-

	£	£
Total cost (excluding VAT)		9.050
Agreed contribution paid by PCC	1,874	
Agreed grant from WDC	2,000	
Agreed grant from ‘Friends of War Memorials’	500	
Donations and other contributions received	5,017	
Further contributions in ‘pipeline’ (approx)	<u>500</u>	<u>9,891</u>
Excess contribution over costs (approx)		841

Resolved: that this report be noted and that the above sum of £841 be earmarked in the estimates to help defray the costs of future repair or refurbishment of war memorials.

224. **Dates for Parish Meetings and Meetings of the JPC**

Members were informed of dates and venues for meetings of Council up to 9th May 2005 and that the dates for the Barford and Wasperton Parish Meetings will be held this year on 30th March and 1st April respectively. The Sherbourne Members agreed to hold its parish meeting on 26th April 2004

Resolved: that this report be noted.

225. **Bus Service X18**

The Clerk reported receipt of notice from WCC of changes being introduced by Stagecoach to its X18 route, serving Barford, Sherbourne and Wasperton, with effect from 13th April.

Resolved: that WCC be urged to ensure that users of the service are warned of the changes well in advance.

226. **Home Composting Facility**

The Clerk reported receipt of a letter from WCC offering to stage its 'Composting Roadshow' in the Council's area.

Resolved: that the letter be passed to Barford Gardening Club as a possible source of interest.

227. **Memorial Seat, Wasperton**

The Wasperton Members reported the need for repair and tidying of the base on which this seat, adjacent to the telephone box, stands.

228. **Wall to Barford House**

In response to a member's question, the Clerk informed the meeting that he understood that WDC officers had approached the owner of Barford House about the state of the wall, and were subsequently approaching the owners of the other land enclosed by the wall.

He agreed to contact WDC to ascertain the current position on the matter.

229 **Barford Allotments**

In response to the Chairman's question about progress on clearing and regenerating use of the allotments Cllr Byerley reported delay due to WDC procedures to establish whether it is permissible to cut down ash saplings that have grown on part of the land by the playing field.