

BARFORD SHERBOURNE AND WASPERTON JOINT PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Joint Parish Council held at Sherbourne Village Hall on Monday 12th October 2009

Present: Cllr J V Murphy (Chairman)
Cllr: Mrs W Barlow, Mrs M A Hayward, DC Morrow, R G Mulgrue, A B Rhead,* W
Worrall, Mrs A Gordon, Mrs P W Wilkinson, Mrs P Johnston, N F J Thurley,
J T Wright,

Apologies: Cllr: R Clay, Mrs D S Cobb, Dr M J Metcalfe,
*Late by arrangement

Opening

- 219 The meeting opened at 7:30 pm
220 No members of the public were present.
221 Apologies for absence were noted.

Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

- 222 None was declared.

Minutes of the Meeting of Council 14th September 2009

- 223 The minutes were approved as a true record. There were no matters arising.

Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning Committee 14th September 2009

- 224 The minutes were approved as a true record. There were no matters arising.

Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning Committee 30th September 2009

- 225 The minutes were approved as a true record. There were no matters arising.

Cash Balances as at 30th September 2009

- 226 The JPC took note of the following cash balances
HSBC £ 4,071.62
Alliance & Leicester £26,235.93

Receipts and Payments

- 227 The JPC endorsed the following:

Date	Payee	Category	Total
1 Sep 09	A&L	Bank Interest	2.06
11 Sep 09	MFM Services	Mowing Charges	(207.00)
28 Sep 09	HMRC	Employment Expenses	(507.40)
28 Sep 09	J F Johnson	Employment Expenses	(653.72)
28 Sep 09	J F Johnson	Office Accommodation	(50.67)

Barford House Development

- 228 The JPC received a briefing on the actions taken in response to the proposals by Sharba Homes for the development of the land at Barford House and took note of the verbal report from the Special Barford Parish Meeting convened on 5th October 2009 to stimulate informed discussion, make residents aware of the consultation and planning processes and to encourage meaningful numbers of responses to the questionnaire which formed part of the consultation.
- 229 In recognition of the danger of too close a role in the negotiations creating a prejudicial interest, individual members of the JPC agreed to maintain a watching brief and not to become identified with either of the opposing factions in the village.
- 230 If then the proposals become a planning application the Planning Committee could meet and consider it on its merits with no hint of partiality.

[Cllr Rhead joined the meeting at 7:43pm]

Debden Hollow – Hedge Maintenance

- 231 The JPC received a verbal report on the site meeting on 1st October 2009 between Cllrs Worrall and Murphy and Ms Williamson (WCC). There was little meeting of minds with promises of action by WCC reluctantly and slowly given.
- 232 The JPC representatives declined to be burdened with tasks more properly the responsibility of WCC (for example identifying and contacting the land owner) and it was agreed that a response would be made by WCC within one month.
- 233 Acting upon the advice of Cllr Mrs Gordon the JPC agreed to send a letter confirming the JPC's notification of the problem, the attendance at the meetings and the expected responses thus placing the liability for any perils posed by the state of the hedge on WCC. Cllr Worrall undertook to draft it.

Glebe Hotel Cedar Tree

- 234 The JPC received a verbal progress report from Cllr Mrs Hayward.
- 235 The prognosis for the survival of the tree was poor and so the recommended actions were to take steps to rescue it but, as a precaution against failure, to plant another tree of that type at a suitable location on the car park making room for it by the removal of one or all of three unattractive and inappropriate conifers.
- 236 The estimated cost (to the Glebe Hotel) was £1,250.

“The Big Bulb Plant”

- 237 “The Big Bulb Plant” is an initiative launched by the Eden Project and the Netherlands Flower Bulb Information Centre to encourage people to get together with their neighbours for a day of planting bulbs. The JPC was asked to consider whether this would be appropriate for Barford village green.
- 238 Members were unenthusiastic, pointing out the problems to grass mowing caused by the flowers which needed to be left for long periods after flowering without mowing if they were to thrive or even survive. Nor were they willing to approve any expenditure for such bulbs in the current economic climate.
- 239 It was concluded that private individuals could be given permission to plant limited numbers of more natural varieties around the edges of the green at their own expense under the guidance of the Chairman, who was asked to thank the individuals for their offers of donations of bulbs.

Reports on Contact with Other Bodies

240 Community Forum.

240.1 Three members has attended the last meeting of the forum and reported as follows:

240.1.1 Cllr Worrall had raised the matter of footway lighting but had elicited no change in response from WDC. He was about to conduct a survey of lighting in Barford for submission to WDC which he hoped would stimulate the cleaning and replacement of lenses but not the replacement of mercury lamps in the conservation area.

240.1.2 Cllr Mulgrue had pressed for the formal recognition of the Barford Village Design Statement but WDC has no process to adopt it. Cllr Caborn (Chairman of the Forum) had said that he would ask questions in WDC with a view to having the VDS adopted as a supplementary planning document.

240.1.3 Cllr Murphy had reported to the forum the conduct of an unsatisfactory site meeting with a WCC representative (who could scarcely have been more unsympathetic) to discuss signs on the Barford Bypass. Cllr Caborn had since arranged for the matter to be considered by another department at WCC and progress is awaited.

240.2 These responses to matters of legitimate concern to Barford were all of a piece and prompted Cllr Rhead to ask what good was the Community Forum if it could not deliver the benefits it was established to provide.

240.3 This triggered a display of frustration verging on anger that this conduct of affairs made a mockery of the much-vaunted "management from bottom up" and "grass-roots democracy". It was succinctly captured by Cllr Mrs Wilkinson saying:

- Local engagement and responsibility are not enhanced merely by "raising questions" in the forum. There must be a process to ensure that adequate resource is devoted to dealing with the question and providing useful output.
- Whilst elected members can and often do show sympathy, their good intentions are stymied by the officers who appear autonomous, unaccountable and beyond their control.
- There is no apparent system for redress if the forum does not respond to the JPC's questions in an appropriate manner.

240.4 Cllr Mrs Gordon entered a plea in mitigation. The officers are a long-serving, professionally qualified body who have to deal with parish councils whose members are transitory (four-year election cycle) and not necessarily professionally qualified, but her intervention did not capture the mood of the meeting which went on to agree that in order to force the issue (and to overcome the delays inherent in a committee which meets a minimum of four times a year) matters for consideration by the Community Forum should, whenever possible, be framed as a series of questions to be circulated well in advance of the meeting. At the meeting the author of the response should be obliged to attend to present his conclusions.

241 M40/A46 Bypass. Cllr Mrs Gordon had attended the liaison meeting on 16th October 2009 and made the following observations:

- There is uncertainty on how pedestrian access to the bus stop on the north bound A46 is to be achieved given differences in heights between the stop and its access path.
- The plans for the footpath under the roundabout have the same problem.
- Photographs of the works which she was promised have not been delivered.
- The barrier to prevent vehicle lights shining into bedrooms of houses on SW Warwick is too short and inadequate.

Any Other Business

242 WDC Travel Tokens. Responding to a question from Cllr Mulgrue, Cllr Rhead (in his capacity as member of WDC) said that he had not yet established why Barford is excluded from the list of those villages enjoying this benefit but promised an answer soon.

243 Bus Service Consultation.

243.1 Cllr Mulgrue briefed the meeting on the response he had received when, on behalf of the JPC, he had answered the questionnaire. It included:

- Transport from the villages to Warwick Parkway Railway Station is not viable, but the No 18 bus does go to Leamington Railway Station.
- A real time passenger information system is being investigated and further advice will be forthcoming.
- Certain stops on the No 18 route will have raised passenger boarding platforms (but not Wasperton's).
- The lack of reliability of the last bus to Barford was inadequately explained with no mention of remedies.
- Bus laybys in Sherbourne and Wasperton would be too expensive.

243.2 Cllr Mulgrue was invited to respond to this correspondence and also to bring the matter to the Community Forum for resolution.

Closure

244 There being no other business the meeting closed at 9:00pm.

Date of Next Meeting

245 The next meeting of Council is on Monday 9th November 2009 at 7:30 pm in Wasperton Village Hall