

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF
THE PARISH OF BARFORD
HELD AT BARFORD MEMORIAL HALL
ON TUESDAY 26TH APRIL 2005 AT 7.30PM**

Present Cllr J V Murphy (Chairman)
 Twenty-seven Barford electors
 Cllr Mrs C Sawdon
 Cllr R G Butler
 Cllr Mrs M Haywood

Apologies: None

Minutes

- 1 The minutes of the meeting, held on 30th March 2004, were confirmed as a true record. There were no matters arising.

Report by Cllr J V Murphy. Chairman of the Joint Parish Council

- 2 2004-2005 has been an extremely busy year yet again – 10 JPC meetings, 16 Planning meetings, 3 Special Meetings, numerous Working Party and Officer Meetings and the three Parish Meetings.
- 3 Terry Offiler the clerk appointed in September 2004 regrettably resigned due to impending marriage and emigration to Canada. He did not leave for Canada, but happily for him he did go ahead with the marriage, although his resignation still stood and in September 2004 we appointed our new clerk Mr James Johnson. James is working very hard and with his enormous administrative experience has modernized us extensively and appears to have the system well under his control. In March 2004 we reviewed the terms and conditions of our Clerk's employment but employment law continues to change rapidly and the Association of Local Council Clerks has set new standards and these are currently being adopted.
- 4 Barford Shop and Post Office; Kay and Terry Cunningham retired this year and their shop was sold. Unfortunately the new owner has not kept the shop open and there appears to be some difficulty in getting a tenant or manager. This is causing major inconvenience to many people and the greater concern is that the longer it is closed the less likely it is to reopen. There is a fear that there will be an attempt to develop the site with a change of use to residential and infill.
- 5 The old butcher's shop has now been empty for more than two years and that has been refused planning permission for change of use to residential on several occasions, and we await a final decision on the current application, although the planners do not seem supportive of the change, wanting to keep employment sites available, and recognizing that the marketing exercise which has been undertaken is probably not realistic.
- 6 Play areas are under constant review – checked at least weekly by a Parish Councillor. The slide has been fully renovated and the climbing frames on the green have been brought up to latest standards by installing a new synthetic tile safety surface.
- 7 Dog Waste bins have been placed on Barford Playing Field and near the Scout Hut. Regrettably the WDC do not always seem to empty them as often as should be the case. A further litter bin was also installed near the youth shelter to reduce the litter problem there.

- 8 The Boundary Commission has recommended changes to WCC electoral wards put all three of our villages together with other more rural parishes (Bishops Tachbrook, Hampton Magna, Hampton on the Hill and Norton Lindsey) and the upcoming elections will reflect those changes, rather than as previously splitting the JPC.
- 9 Last year I reported that the JPC had decided to ask to change the proportion of representation on the JPC and this should take place in time for the next JPC elections. The Sherbourne councillors dissociated themselves from that decision and at the Sherbourne Parish Meeting 2004 elected to investigate separating themselves from the JPC and working independently or with another small community. We have yet to hear of any progress on that front.
- 10 On Planning specifically:
- 10.1 Oldhams' site was the subject of a mixed use planning application with part commercial B1 office use, part affordable housing and part market homes. The JPC supported the proposal, largely to get the affordable homes, but also to keep/gain employment uses. The WDC however are stumbling as the provision of market homes is outside their policy. We still await a decision.
- 10.2 Wasperton has had an appeal lodged over the fishing lake application and this was refused by the Inspector.
- 10.3 A further Glebe Hotel application in March to grossly extend their facilities and incorporate one of the Church Lane residences into the hotel was refused on grounds of over development, traffic issues and unneighbourliness. This was followed an appeal which was refused.
- 10.4 Land surrounding Barford House became a major interest when we were approached by an agent offering considerable planning gain. A special meeting was held to hear about the proposals and considerable discussion ensued. The agent has since asked for JPC support, which will be absolutely essential as the proposal is completely against current policy, however the JPC has suggested that the agent must conduct a proper planning consultation, probably with a public exhibition, to inform the community and gauge its support.
- 11 Barford Bypass is finally underway. The fencing contractors have started and this will be followed shortly by the archeological study. The construction proper starts this autumn and will take 18 months. There will be a liaison group, consisting of members of the JPC from the three villages, BRA and the elected representatives along with WCC officers and the contractors, to help ensure any problems during the build period are resolved as easily as possible.
- 12 Traffic Calming in Barford has been constantly under review by both the JPC and the WCC and there have been significant modifications made, most notably the installation of smooth surfacing on the Keytes Lane and Church Lane junctions raised tables. These are much quieter but regrettably much less effective at reducing speed. There have been minor improvements to the chicane and narrowing but the WDC and WCC continue to bicker over the lighting upgrade which has been recommended, although there may at last be some movement on this.
- 13 Opening the Avon Navigation was rejected by WCC in June and September. The matter however remains ongoing with the launch of the new Stratford and Warwick Waterways Trust with a much wider remit to include river and riverside users other than just the boating fraternity.
- 14 Enmainment of Sherbourne Brook has been a topic for most of the year and has needed two special meetings including a presentation by the Environment Agency. The JPC initially objected to the proposal but, on having evidence of the history of flooding effecting Snitterfield and their wish to have Bell Brook enmained, withdrew their objection in January. Sherbourne councillors have continued to object in their own right.

- 15 Street lighting in Barford has been much improved over the year. Various lights have been upgraded, notably Wasperton Lane and outside the Memorial Hall and new lamps have been provided on the service road in Wellesbourne Road. Thanks must go to Cllr Butler for his help in this area. He has also been successful in getting all the Barford manholes and gullies cleared which had been a problem for a very considerable time.
- 16 Elliot's Meadows, Barford have been walked under the Countryside Stewardship Scheme for many years however following the Hunting ban permission was withdrawn earlier this year. Mr Smith-Ryland called a public meeting and stated his position whilst agreeing to issue "personal licences" to any Barford residents who might wish to walk the land.
- 17 Barford Relief in Need Charity found itself in an unconstitutional situation in the middle of the year and called on the JPC to assist it in re-establishing itself. The JPC appointed new members and it is now working again with a full committee. Rob Mulgrue keeps the JPC informed and Terry Offiler is acting as their clerk.
- 18 The three village halls have again been supported by JPC grants - £400 Barford, £1000 Sherbourne and £1000 Wasperton – although members have suggested that they would wish to see more active management and fund raising taking place in Wasperton to make their hall more viable.
- 19 The JPC allotments have been poorly used and falling into a state of neglect. Cllr Matthew Byerley has started restorative works and a JCB was employed to clear heavy vegetation and saplings, along with old sheds and fences. Large amounts of scrap metal were removed and combustible items were burnt on site. It now remains to plough the land and divide it up into usable allotments ready for eager new tenants.
- 20 All councillors have attended many meetings and served their electors well. The Clerk/RFO has as always borne the majority of the work and pressure, and this was well demonstrated during the changeover periods that have occurred this year. Many thanks indeed to our new and excellent Clerk/RFO, Mr James Johnson.

Report by Cllr Mrs C Sawden Warwick District Council

- 21 Cllr Mrs Sawden began by remarking that of the parish council meetings she attended the JPC agenda was invariably the fullest and the meeting the longest.
- 22 She thanked Cllr Mrs Haywood and Cllr Mrs Compton for their conscientious and diligent work as representatives on the WCC and wished them well on their retirement.
- 23 She reiterated her involvement with planning and related matters citing "Llwyn" in Wasperton and the Upper Avon Navigation as cases in point.
- 24 She closed by expressing her concern that the WDC was perhaps geared towards urban matters and it was her concern to ensure that the needs of rural parishes and rural areas were not overlooked.

Report by Cllr R Butler Warwick District Council

- 25 Cllr Butler stated that through his regular attendance at meetings of the JPC he had been well placed to convey concerns to WDC.
- 26 Examples of projects he had influenced were:
- 26.1 The inspection and repair of the surface-water drainage system in Barford, (and he again paid tribute to the efforts of Mr David Elliston of WCC).

- 26.2 Improvements to street lighting.
- 26.3 Resolution of the stalemate between WCC and WDC over the installation and maintenance of lighting of traffic calming locations in Barford.
- 26.4 Repair of road edges in Barford.
- 26.5 The repositioning by Severn Trent of the water main from beneath the road surface of Barford river bridge (where it leaked and caused pot-holing) to beneath the bridge.
- 26.6 The proposed surface dressing of roads in Barford in August to September this year.

Report by Cllr Mrs M Haywood Warwick County Council

- 27 On her retirement Cllr Mrs Haywood said it was for her the end of an era.
- 28 She left on a high note; the start of the Barford Bypass project, which she had championed for thirty-two years, which was scheduled for completion in 2007, explorations permitting.
- 29 She thanked the electors for their generosity and friendship and wished them well on her departure.

Constabulary Matters

- 30 In the absence of the CBO there was no report.
- 31 Cllr Mulgrue regretted the absence and said that too often other demands on the CBO's time kept him from village matters. The Clerk was instructed to draw this to the attention of Warwick Police.

Barford Parish Plan (BPP)

- 32 Mr Peter Webb reminded electors of the inception of BPP in 2003 with the formation on August of that year of working groups for:
- Heritage
 - Environment
 - Buildings
 - Transport etc
- and five reports had been produced.
- 33 Electors' views had been sought and a questionnaire delivered to every house; 67% were returned. The data were analyzed and a report produced in March.
- 34 The next step was to distil the information into action plans for representation to higher authorities.
- 35 Additional views were always welcomed and to stimulate them an exhibition was planned for 18-19 June in the Barford Memorial Hall.
- 36 The BPP project was planned for completion by October for approval by the village.

Barford Residents' Association (BRA)

- 37 Mr Nick Ellis said that the role of BRA was to fight major issues affecting the village but to independent of formally elected bodies. Nevertheless it operated in collaboration with the JPC and welcomed members of the JPC to its two-monthly management committee meeting. Membership of BRA was automatic to all Barford electors.
- 38 Current issues:
- Closure of Barford Shop and Post Office
 - The Oldhams' development
 - The Barford House development
- 39 A fund-raising event was planned for September and details and invitations would be issued nearer the date.

Barford Relief in Need Charity (BRINC)

- 40 Cllr Mulgrue (a nominative trustee of BRINC) briefed electors on the composition and role of the charity.
- 41 BRINC had an annual income of some £8,000 and its charitable purpose was to disburse it on the provision of such things as transport and appliances for those in need in the village.
- 42 Publicity was through notice boards, mail drops and the web-site. There was a simple application procedure and the applicant received a visit where the need was assessed.
- 43 He urged anybody who knew of a deserving case to contact BRINC.

Barford St Peter's C of E Primary School

- 44 Mrs Ann Fawcett (Chairman of Governors) expressed gratitude to the JPC for the grant which had contributed greatly to the programme for improvements to the school:
- The IT Suite: very valuable and much in use.
 - Enlarged Hall: more space for parents' meetings, PE, school plays
 - Staff Room: better facilities
 - Car Park: larger
- 45 The opening of these new facilities had been a success.
- 46 The school, in collaboration with the Parents' Association, was already planning future enhancements such as improvement to the grounds and a hard-surfaced playground.
- 47 She concluded by reiterating the gratitude of the staff, parents and pupils for the JPC's generous donation.

Barford Bypass

- 48 See Minute 11 above.
- 49 Cllr Clay drew attention to traffic calming on the A429 in association with the works and urged careful thought be given to it.

Barford Shop and Post Office

- 50 This was perhaps the most charged discussion of the evening with a consensus that the closure was a very severe blow to all three villages.
- 51 Nevertheless there was little the JPC was empowered to do to alleviate the problems the closure caused, which engendered a sense of frustration. Some felt that the rent being demanded was too great for the business to be viable and there was some disagreement on how long it would take for the business to be rebuilt should a new tenant be found.
- 52 Certain individuals were investigating the option of a satellite post office, so far without certainty of success, but even were that to have the desired outcome, it would not re-provide the shop and the newsagency.
- 53 The topic having been fully aired it was closed without resolution.

Public Access to Barford Meadows

- 54 See Minute 16 above.

Barford House Site

- 55 See Minute 10.4 above.

Oldhams' Site

- 56 Cllr Mulgrue reported that he had recently visited WDC to obtain the latest information.
- 57 It was pleasing to note that the opinions of the JPC had been heeded and that the development was now one with more modest housing than originally approved:
- Of the sixty houses only three are four-bedroomed.
 - There are ten two-bedroomed terraced houses.
 - There are three bungalows and five flats
 - There are twenty-four affordable houses
- 58 The WDC had not consulted the Warwickshire Rural Housing Association as the JPC recommended. Neither had it responded to concerns about the capacity of the foul drainage system, nor the terms of the Section 106 Agreement, but these latter would be dealt with later in the development.

Trafalgar Weekend

- 59 The Chairman called for volunteers to organize an event to celebrate Trafalgar Weekend. None was forthcoming.

Parish Work-days

- 60 The Chairman said the aim of the work-days has been to spend a Sunday morning on tidying activities to promote village pride in an atmosphere of camaraderie with little skill but a bit of effort needed. He said that his attempts to promote them were resulting in few volunteers coming forward and questioned whether it was worth continuing.
- 61 Although there were no volunteers to help with their organization and promotion, those present felt they were a good thing and should be continued but thought that this was a project which might be picked up by Village Pride, an offshoot of the Barford Parish Plan

Other Matters

62 Cllr Clay raised the matter of grants to village halls.

62.1 This year the allocation had been:

- Barford £400
- Sherbourne £1,000
- Wasperton £1,000

62.2 Only Barford owned its village hall; the other two were owned one by the church, the other by a private individual. He wondered whether it was right for the JPC to use electors' money to pay for the repair and improvement of these latter. Furthermore the ratio of the number of electors in the three villages was such that the allocation meant that Barford was providing the bulk of the funds to subsidize Sherbourne and Wasperton. Was that too acceptable?

62.3 The mood of the meeting was that his points were well taken, but for the moment Barford electors were content with the status-quo although a watching brief should be maintained in future years.

Appointment of Chairman for 2005-6

63 Cllr Murphy was proposed and seconded, and in the absence of other nominations, was elected Chairman for the ensuing year. He was publicly thanked by those at the meeting for his efforts as Chairman.

Closure

64 There being no other business the meeting was closed