

**MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PARISH OF BARFORD
HELD AT THE MEMORIAL HALL ON MON 12 APR 21 AT 7.30 PM**

Present:	J V Murphy (Chairman) Twenty-four other electors
In attendance:	Cllr T Merrygold (Barford, Sherbourne & Wasperton JPC) Cllr L Caborn (WCC) Cllr A Rhead (WDC) Cllr J Matecki

- 1 Introduction by J V Murphy.** The Chairman welcomed all present to the meeting.
- 2 Minutes of the annual meeting held on 2 Apr 19.** The minutes were approved as a true record. There were no matters arising.
- 3 Report by Chairman of the Joint Parish Council (Cllr T Merrygold)**

We did not have any Annual Parish Meetings last year as we had only just gone into the first lockdown, so this report notionally covers the past two years. I intend to keep it short and just give an update on a couple of items and then talk about the effects of COVID over the past year or so.

Barford Bypass Northern Junction Changes were made to the A429 northern junction on the Barford bypass at the beginning of 2020. This involved installation of an additional traffic island, white lines producing a 'ghost island' and new signage. All of this is aimed to make the junction safer by stopping southbound overtaking as a car is turning left into the village. This seems to have had the desired effect, although within one month of being installed someone clearly did not see the changes and drove over the first island taking out the keep left sign and lamp standard. All since now replaced.

Sand and Gravel This saga continues, and the Public Enquiry took place during 2020 via Zoom with the JPC and a number of other people giving evidence.

Scout Hut/Community Centre I am glad to see that fund raising for the new Youth and Community Centre building to replace the Scout Hut is proceeding well. The JPC has made a contribution which demonstrates our support for the project, and we should be able to make a second contribution towards the grounds using some of the 'open spaces Section 106 money' we have just received.

The past year of coping with COVID has been a struggle for many people. I think we probably all know a number of people who have contracted COVID and some of us know people who have died of it. To comply with the COVID rules we have had to close some of the facilities on King George's Field at different times during the past year. The JPC has carried on throughout the year using Zoom to run our meetings. While some of the meetings have been very short and very productive, we also lost the personal interaction that comes along with face-to-face meetings. I want to focus on some of the positive side effects of the past twelve months.

I have seen our community in all three of our parishes working together as never before:

- The way the Village Shop quickly stepped up to the challenge – changing layout, making it COVID safe and new (younger) volunteers stepping up to help protect some of our more vulnerable volunteers
- Numerous instances of neighbours helping each other with regular shopping trips and just generally checking up on each other
- An interesting increase in recycling – previously things that would have been taken to the dump have been offered on the Barford Buy and Sell FaceBook page and most of them are taken up and re-used.

Finally, I would like to thank all our councillors and parish clerk who have served their electors well throughout the year.

4 Report from Warwickshire County Council (Cllr L Caborn)

This report is dominated by the year of Covid and its effect on the council and the citizens we serve. In October 2019 WCC embarked on replacing all IT with Microsoft Pro 365 computer systems for all staff and councillors as part of our transformation programme. This proved to be timely as when Covid struck we were immediately able to allow all staff to work from home. This meant as well as giving at times 24/7 support on Covid the day job was able to carry on. All staff not only worked on their usual role but on other roles to deliver our covid response.

Public Health lead on our Covid response being granted Beacon Status and mentioned for our vaccine success on a ministerial broadcast. We established infection control teams for South Warwickshire , Rugby and North Warwickshire , these teams working with boroughs and districts . these teams offered advice to businesses, care homes and schools etc.

Adult Social Care and commissioning has been commended by care homes for its excellent support including PPE from our own warehouse and prompt passporting of funds for care coming from central government . it also worked with all hospitals to minimise delays in hospital discharge for all needing support ensuring no one stayed in hospital longer than needed.

WCC's Test and Trace has helped keep positive rates down and our 6 testing sites and outbreak pop up sites have delivered 155,000 tests and continue to do so.

To plan and deliver our WCC future and Covid recovery , 3 documents have been produced and are publicly available

- 1 the Council recovery plan
- 2 the Director of Public Health's annual report
- 3 the Warwickshire Health and Wellbeing Boards Strategy 2021 – 2026

. These concentrate on recovery for business, mental health , and inequalities of race, finance education and health across all our communities.

As part of this recovery we have launched a Property Company to build property including housing and maximise our return for the taxpayer on property disposal. Also established our Recovery Investment Company to support business recovery and business start-ups to preserve and create jobs . £2.4 m has been invested in Mental Health with focus on young people and Dementia.

As portfolio holder ,Chair of HWBB ,and chair of the Covid members' engagement board ,I have been involved on behalf of WCC with all Health partners and WDC to deliver our covid response and the change in the Health system with the introduction of one Clinical commissioning Group and the progress of the National Scheme to move to an Integrated Care System for Warwickshire which sets in statute that all responsible for delivering care and health at any point to you will work together .

I have worked with parishes to produce road Safety Schemes although some are yet to be delivered but all funds are secured .

Finally, this is my last report to you as County Councillor as I retire at the May 6th election. It has been a pleasure to serve as your County Councillor for the past 16 years and I wish you all well for the future .

Thanks you for your support and friendship

5 Report from Warwick District Council (Cllrs A Rhead & J Matecki)

This report is from your two District Councillors, Councillor Alan Rhead and Councillor Jan Matecki. We can report on the District's achievements over the last period and our own involvement. One important matter is the closer joint working with Stratford District Council, where the intention is to consider a South Warwickshire 'Super' District Council, subject to a report from Officers confirming the perceived advantages to all of our residents.

Councillor Alan Rhead:

I am currently on the Executive and hold the two Portfolios of the Environment and Neighbourhood Services. In those roles I have placed emphasis on the following: -

1. The Climate Emergency is regarded by your Council as the biggest challenge facing not only the Council, but all of its residents. Despite the pandemic (which has had a large effect on the Council's budget) the Council's Officers have worked on several environmental fronts in support of its target for being a zero-carbon council by 2025. These include: -
 - a). Appointing a Climate Change Programme Director who is part of the Corporate Management Team (CMT).
 - b). The Council has agreed to place £0.5 million in its current budget to address climate change (this despite challenging times resulting from the loss of income as a result of the pandemic).
 - c). The Council held a Peoples' Inquiry into climate change, independently facilitated, and this Inquiry has provided a set of recommendations. The Council has committed to implement those recommendations or set out why it is unable so to do.
 - d). Engaging consultants to provide a feasibility report on the creation of both a hydrogen hub and a solar farm as an alternative or in addition to electric vehicles, particularly HGV's and buses.
 - e). The Council has secured external funding of £744,000 to address energy efficiency and carbon reduction in the Council's public buildings. Together with the Council's match funding of £150,000, 185 tonnes of CO₂ per annum will be saved.
 - f). The Council is embarking on installing LED lighting in its external lighting infrastructure.
 - g). Submitted Expressions of Interest (EOI) to the LEP for a Bike Share Scheme estimated to cost £700,000 but with a potential income stream of c.£300,000 pa.
 - h). Working with WCC on a Park & Ride scheme at the ASPS development which will include electric buses.
 - i). Reviewing proposals for external operators for a Car Club using EV only.
 - j). Signed contracts with BP Chargemaster for 50 EV charging points in the Council's facilities.
 - k). The Council has a single use plastics policy which, together with the refill scheme, will reduce the amount of plastic used within the Council's departments.
 - l). As a precursor for a major tree planting project (over 160,000 trees), a mapping exercise has been commissioned as the first important step.
2. Under Neighbourhood Services there have been a number of important steps taken including:
 - a). Going out to tender for a new waste contract which has taken advantage of the close joint working with Stratford District Council. The eventual contract will be for waste collection throughout both Warwick and Stratford Districts.
 - b). Developing the detail behind the proposed new Tachbrook Country Park which was a commitment within the current Local Plan. It is the intention to submit a planning application in the near future.
 - c). Following an extensive public consultation exercise on the future of Newbold Comyn, a planning application has been submitted for the first phase for a network of mountain bike trails. Other phases will be considered at a future date.
 - d). An extensive programme of thinning and replanting has been undertaken at Oakley Woods which is designed to promote wildlife and plant life.
 - e). New car parking charges have been set. While these changed charges are usually reviewed for January implementation, this year they have been delayed due to the pandemic. The Council took the decision to provide free car parking during the pandemic to assist in the help for local businesses in the town centres.
 - f). Plans are now well advanced for a new community stadium and athletics track at Europa Way. This development will also include c.200 affordable homes
3. Locally I have assisted the Barford Youth Club in making an application to the District Council for a grant. To date this has included the submission of a business plan and I will be continuing to lobby for a grant, despite the challenging budget times as a consequence of the pandemic.
4. I have been encouraged by the local community's concentrated involvement in the Bar Zero organisation which was started with my encouragement. I have been asked to lobby the Council for funding which I am doing, armed with the community's enthusiasm for climate change.

Councillor Jan Matecki

I am also currently on the Executive and hold two Portfolios, Housing and Property as well as Culture.

1. For Housing and Property we have achieved the following:
 - a) Increasing the Council's housing stock by purchasing Section 106 housing from developers, which includes 25 homes in Bremridge Close, Barford.
 - b) Embarked on a building program to increase the housing stock further, with 51 new energy efficient homes being built on Europa Way, with other sites identified for development.
 - c) Established a local housing company, Milverton Homes Limited, which is fully owned by WDC. Its aim is to provide homes for rent at market rent levels and to develop sites for both market sales and for the Council's housing stock, which in turn will provide a new and diverse income stream for the Council.
 - d) Secured £1.35m of grant funding for a project that will see 50 of the least energy rated Council homes undergo a whole house energy refit. This will not only improve their energy ratings but will reduce energy costs for the individuals and will also improve air quality.
 - e) Released a new Housing Allocations Policy which meets latest legislative requirements and allocates affordable housing in a fairer manner, ensuring those in the greatest and genuine need get the greatest priority. It also eliminates loopholes which allowed individuals to register for social housing when they were not in need of housing.
 - f) At the start of the pandemic the Council provided accommodation to all homeless and rough sleepers before the government announced their Everyone In policy. We have helped over 80 individuals to be kept secure, with the vast majority remaining to be housed and supported. Some have secured permanent tenancies.
 - g) Released a new Homelessness policy for consultation, which would see a new approach of housing the homeless in their own accommodation and the support services they need being brought to them.
 - h) Closed William Walsgrove House, the homelessness walk-in hostel, so it can be converted from dormitory style accommodation into individual rooms. We found during the pandemic that individuals were far more likely to stay in accommodation where they had their own rooms, and with everyone taken off the street it was felt that the need for dormitories, which can accommodate far more individuals, were no longer needed
 - i) Switched electricity supply to 100% renewable and green electricity to all Council corporate buildings, reducing their carbon footprint.
 - j) Provided CCTV at Oakley Wood Crematorium to enable more people to attend services remotely during the current restrictions. These will continue in the future.
2. For Culture we have achieved the following:
 - a) Support for Everyone Active, who manage our leisure centres, during the pandemic to ensure that the facilities remain available for people to use once allowed.
 - b) Secured a £170k grant to support our cultural services during the pandemic, to ensure that places like the Spa Centre and Pump Rooms could open as soon as lockdown restrictions are lifted.
 - c) Have been awarded 2 events for the 2022 Commonwealth Games, Lawn Bowls to be held in Leamington and Road Cycling that will start and finish in Warwick.
 - d) Secured funding for the relaying of the lawn bowls greens in Victoria Park Leamington to an international standard. This will not only benefit the Commonwealth Games, but will leave a legacy for the staging of more international tournaments, which will attract more visitors and further benefit the area.
 - e) Improved Victoria Park with newly laid footpaths. Not only are they new but they are smoother and brighter, and overgrown foliage has also been trimmed back.
 - f) Commenced a project to provide a new Wayfinding scheme in time for the Commonwealth Games. This will help both competitors and spectators during the games and will also be another lasting legacy which will benefit all tourists in the future.
 - g) Early last year, to further promote the creative sector in our District, we held our first SPARK conference for the coming together and sharing of ideas of that industry. This year the event was held remotely due to the current restrictions but was still very well supported and productive.
3. Locally I have assisted families in securing housing, as well as those requiring modifications to their homes through the HEART service.

6 Police Matters

Warwick Rural West Safer Neighbourhood Team

PC 1772 Joanne Whittaker

PCSO 6253 Marie Gisbourne-Hanks

PCSO 6189 Paul Coleman

We have been patrolling the village day and night monitoring the ASB and Covid breaches. Marie and I have been discussing plans for the Tractor issues that you brought to our attention.

We have had a meeting with other departments to discuss a way forward for a potential operation through the village.

There are a number of options we can go with and I will be suggesting we firstly

- Educate farmers on a number of things including secure loads.
- Secondly when the farming picks up again in the next month when we have a steady flow of tractors coming through the village, we will pick the busiest time and set up an area to pull over the tractors so they can be inspected by the specialised team. (Following the educating period earlier)
- This will then either result in the problem being solved/improved or action taken against them.

This is still in the planning stage and the hope is to start the first phase soon with the traffic department. If there are any specific times the tractors come through more regular it would be helpful for us to know as we want a good steady flow for it to be beneficial.

We are concentrating on suspicious activities at the moment as there has been an increase in vehicle Crime / Burglaries and shed breaks.

We are also doing sporadic speed checks in all areas of our patch so you may see our team with the speed gun.

With restrictions starting to be lifted we expect life to start returning to some kind of normality. We are starting to think ahead, and I am drafting up dates for our "CHILL WITH THE OLD BILL" Look out for our posters with dates for coffee and a chat about issue or just a general chat with your local Safer neighbourhood team.

7 Covid Support Network (H Gadsden)

A sub-group of the JPC, consisting of Mike Sheard, Vicky Hunt and myself provided a dedicated e-mail address and mobile number which anyone in the community could contact if they needed help or information. In addition, the existing Street Coordinators, established in the first lockdown, were asked to continue providing support if and when required.

We also put together an information sheet and flyer, called 'Information and Sources of Help for Residents of the Parish', which was distributed to every door in the parish. It was also put on Facebook and the Barford Community Website. Hard copies were placed on the village notice board and furthermore a copy was sent to Village Voices, for inclusion in the December edition. Since then, we received a few Covid related requests for help which were dealt with as required.

With the incidence of Covid in this area now extremely low, the telephone support has been discontinued, although the email, Facebook and Barford Community Website links will still be maintained for the moment.

8 Developments in Barford (J Murphy)

Land around Barford House - Restful Homes Group (RHG) A proposal for a care home complex with bungalows, cottages and apartments Seen at exhibition November 2019 to which some modifications have been made and shown to JPC which is pleased that it addresses BNDP Policy B3, but it still requires access via demolition of a house on Wellesbourne Road. The JPC remains concerned about access and scale and massing

The JPC has met WDC planners and communicated its concerns to RHG. This is a difficult site for all concerned and further activity is awaited when a dedicated public meeting to appraise local opinion will be needed.

Bremridge 2/Avonbridge Walk Mostly completed. Affordable homes element sold to WDC to act as social landlord. There is some interest in a pedestrian/cycle link to Westham Lane which is being investigated.

Bremridge 3/Westham Lane Proposal for more homes between Bremridge 2 and bypass - currently a pony paddock - with access through Bremridge for some and for others via Westham Lane. Although it has been presented to the JPC it has not appeared as an application yet.

9 Highways Improvements (J Murphy)

Bypass northern Junction Refuge and signage have been installed. It is a definite improvement although there have been some minor incidents and some demolition.

Wellesbourne Road – Three Crossings. New H-markings on Bridge Street at the old pelican crossing site, and on Wellesbourne Road near Nursery Meadow at the dropped kerbs for better visibility, and a new informal crossing south of The Granville with dropped kerbs, markings and footpath. These are fully funded.

10 Sand and Gravel Action Group (M Eykyn)

The main event occurred in October 2020, on schedule, but in a virtual format to respect the Covid restrictions. This was the long-anticipated Inspection Hearing where a government appointed Inspector conducted a two-day formal hearing into the arguments for and against the proposals laid down by the latest County Council Minerals Plan.

The Inspector listened and patiently challenged the evidence or lack of it that had been used by the Council to determine its plan. He then invited key members of interested groups such as the local Aggregates Industry, The Council for the Protection of Rural England and the Barford Residents to make submissions. Five Barford residents made individual virtual submissions including your joint Parish Council Chairman. Of note only one other person made a submission from one of the other five sites in the plan.

Clearly the Barford Residents' submissions carried some weight as the Inspector made reference to 'community concerns' several times throughout the two-day Hearing.

The Inspector concluded a few days after the Hearing that the County Council Minerals Planners would have to revise their existing plan to such an extent, they would have to submit to a fresh consultation period. Not only that but the Inspector directed that the revised plan would have to be agreed by him before being published.

Rightly or wrongly we took some hope from this in that we felt there was now an increased chance the proposed Barford/Wasperton quarry could be excluded from the revised plan. However it is safer to assume we will still be in it and campaigning again later this year to organise residents' responses to the next and 'final' consultation.

We continue to be fortunate in having good support from our MP Matt Weston. Not only for our local campaign but now also by way of a national petition set up by Matt in Parliament to try and eventually legislate for a national minimum distance of a thousand meters between residents and sand and gravel quarries mainly on the basis of the potential risk to health.

In the last two months we have struck up a dialogue with the campaign leaders of another proposed sand and gravel quarry in Worcestershire where they too, like us, have several thousand residents living within a few hundred meters of the quarry site. Again like us their MP is supporting them, and we are hoping we can coordinate our efforts to raise this issue in the minds of the public and County Council Minerals Planners around the country more effectively.

The Barford Residents Association have not been able to arrange an AGM so far but hope to do so later in year.

11 BLIS / KGF / Barford Sports Club (J Murphy)

Very busy with lots of visitors although some parking issues.

Managed by BSC, a mix of JPC members and other interested individuals, including regular groups and school.

There was some challenge for management during Lockdown, tennis, MUGA etc

The new website is clearer, together with the new booking system with the facilities still free to use but now with a modest "Reservation Fee" for advance bookings, and it seems to be working very well. Regular groups have priority access and Barford School has advance free access

There is some s106 developer funding – and ways to spend it for the best are being considered, starting with improving the allotment path

12 Barford Allotments (PCC) (P Swallow)

The Church's 'Allotment land' in Barford is represented by 38 separate Allotments, each of which is currently allocated to a Holder; some Holders have more than one Allotment. There are no disputes between Church and any Holder or vice versa. All Licence fees are fully paid up; credit and thanks are due to Jane Stamp for collection. Jane currently has two people waiting for an allotment to become available. Ten Allotment Holders pay licence fee in advance and the remainder pay in arrears. (The reason for this is that whilst all new Holders are asked to pay in advance historically Holders paid their Licence Fees in arrears). All Allotments are seemingly in good order and last year were very productive of produce. We look forward to another productive season; the great advantage that Holders have over other mortals is that Allotments generally lend themselves to social distancing and therefore not naturally virus friendly.

13 Barford Allotments (JPC) (R Clay)

The Pandemic led to an upsurge in demand in early 2020 We soon had the largest waiting list that we have seen. Four new plots were brought into use, but the list continued to grow during the year. The keenness of tenants and the social cohesion at the allotments has also grown and for the first time we organized a Best Kept Allotment Competition. A shield and other prizes were presented in August by the Leader of the WDC, Andrew Day. This year we are in process of creating another two plots from hitherto derelict land. Meanwhile there has been some easing of the waiting list but it is still substantial with 3 from within the parish and 6 from outside. We continue our successful campaign against pests and vermin. Sadly, our relationship with our water supply company continues to be fraught and time-wasting.

14 Barford Community Charity (M Peirson)

Barford Community Charity exists to provide financial assistance to projects which develop the villages of Barford, Sherbourne and Wasperton for the benefit of the whole community. This can be for the provision, improvement or maintenance of public amenities or recreational facilities or to make provision for groups with a particular need. Since its inception in 2008, the Charity has provided financial support totalling almost £100,000 for the following projects:

- Launch of Barford Community Shop,
- King George's Field,
- Piano for Barford Primary School,
- flagpole on village green,
- new chairs and disabled ramp for St. Peter's Church,
- street lighting for Sherbourne,
- Barford football team match kit,
- Village Directory printing,
- replacement play equipment for the village green.

The Charity can also be used as a temporary repository for charitable funds raised in the villages. As a Charity we are usually able to reclaim Gift Aid on these funds.

Since the parish meeting in April 2019, the Charity has

- Received donations of £13,620 from the Village shop in 2020 and recently a further large donation which will be made public after the shop AGM in June.
- Pledged £20k towards the earlier plans for redeveloping the Scout Hut with the prospect of a further £15k once certain conditions were met and to be transferred only when the project was clearly proceeding. The Youth and Community Centre plans have changed since then and the charity is open to discussing these, also bearing in mind that our funds have grown since the original proposals.
- Worked with King George's Field on the installation of additional benches, claiming gift aid on the donations. Charity funds increased by £773.
- Received a donation of £900 from Barford United upon its closure.
- Provided £6,250 to part fund the replacement of children's play equipment on the Village Green.
- Updated its objects to add protection and conversation of the environment which will enable it to support more projects.
- Promoted that the Charity can support local businesses where any grant would have a direct benefit to the parishes.

In July 2020, after serving for 5 years, Sue Partridge stepped down as a Trustee. Her sound judgement will be sorely missed. After advertising in Village Voices, Alice Helps from Wasperton and Barbara Moore from Sherbourne put themselves forward and, after consideration by the other Trustees, were welcomed to join the Charity. This increases the number of Trustees to 8.

The Charity currently has £112k. Funds are available for eligible projects. Applications can be made to the current Chair John Murphy or to any of the Trustees: Alison Gadsden, Liz Harrison-Hall, Alice Helps, Sue Jessett, Barbara Moore, Mary Peirson or Alan Rhead.

15 BRINC (T Offiler)

The Charity is a 'relief in need charity' regulated by the Charities Commission and has an annual income of some £12,500, mainly from investments. It has 7 trustees, 4 appointed by the JPC for periods of 4 years each and 3 appointed by the trustees for periods of 5 years. The trustees consider applications to the Charity and make grants in accordance with the Charity's terms of reference which are 'the relief of poverty, sickness, old age and the advancement of education'. Help from the charity is only available to residents of Barford, Sherbourne and Wasperton. Trustee vacancies arising are advertised in Village Voices. In the two years since it last reported to the Barford Parish Meeting the Charity made grants to 18 residents, spending 89% of its income for the two years. Grants were made to help with:

- Pre-School fees
- Transport costs for health visits
- Disability living issues
- Winter heating costs
- Furnishings for families under social services supervision
- Startup funding for mother and baby socializing group
- Mitigation of property maintenance costs and
- Course fees to improve educational qualifications

The present trustees of the Charity are Gerard Veness its Chairman, Anne Braithwaite, Kate Findlay, Rebecca Fraser, Angela Watkins, John Barrott and Rod Scott.

16 Barford School Trust (J Heap)

1 About the Trust:

- The Trust's main objective is to provide funding for equipment, services and facilities in support of advancement of education at Barford St Peter's Primary School and for pupils and ex-pupils of the school up to the age of 25.
- This is facilitated by raising funds from The Old School and School House, properties owned and rented out by the Trust.

2. The board of trustees:
 - Consists of six co-opted trustees and one ex-officio (the vicar)
 - Feb 2020 – Rev. Andrew Larkin took up the role of ex-officio trustee, replacing Rev. David Jessett.
 - Oct 2020 – Bill Worrall stood down as Chairman, indicating he would not stand for re-election as trustee in 2021. Jenny Heap was voted in to replace Bill as Chair.
 - Mar 2021 – David Woodcock was appointed to the board of trustees to fill the vacancy left by Bill.

3. Property News:
 - The Old School – Bright Horizons continue to be good tenants. During the year, they have undertaken major remedial work on flooring and drainage.
 - School House – Some improvements/upgrading were undertaken, specifically a new boiler and bathroom. The new tenant is taking excellent care of the property, in particular the garden.

4. Support for the School
 - The Trust is working with the Governors to provide financial support in line with their infrastructure plans for the school over the next 3 years. This covers items like lease costs for tablets and printers, ongoing software licences and capital expenditure items like the new electric gates on the driveway. Funding was also provided at the beginning of 2021 for some extra laptops to support the need for distance learning during the pandemic. Future requirements are currently being discussed with the new headteacher and are likely to include the replacement of all the interactive whiteboards with new smart screens in the near term.

5. Support to ex-pupils of Barford St Peter's Primary School
 - The trust has taken steps to advertise that they can also help ex-pupils of the school up to the age of 25. This has included an advertisement in Village Voices and a letter to be given to parents of Year 6 pupils as they leave for secondary school.

17 Barford School (M Baker)

Over the past 12 months it has been a very unsettled time for children's education due to COVID. In January I took up the headship and over Christmas staff prepared for the possibility of going back to home learning in January.

We reviewed what was being offered and felt it was important that children had live teaching each day. This was introduced in January via zoom for 2 lessons per day, and children's engagement was extremely high. The remainder of their learning was provided via an online learning platform called padlet. This proved popular with parents and children.

Communication was increased with class teachers by providing class teacher email addresses which has continued to work well now that children have returned. During lockdown, key worker groups were all full with approximately 10 in each year group. Teaching assistants ran the key worker groups, enabling access to the learning set by teachers via zoom. We were incredibly grateful for the community support from the Barford school trust as well as cool breeze technologies for IT equipment which was urgently needed at this time.

On return to school, children have been incredibly positive in their attitudes to learning and resilience despite being tired. We have adapted the curriculum to focus on more practical learning during the afternoons, including music, drama, P.E. and outdoor learning. Each year group accesses the Forest school facility for one afternoon per week. We have also had a focus on children's mental health in our lessons and increased our counselling sessions for children who need it.

We have also introduced some specialist sports provision for children in every year group as well.

A new assessment system has been introduced which will allow us to identify which children need specific interventions to catch up with their learning. Government catch up funding is available to ensure that children are provided with effective interventions should they need it, although it is unclear how much this will be.

In the final week of term, we were able to join together for our Easter services in bubbles which was wonderful. We are hoping that we will be able to hold community events during the second half of the summer term, including the summer fair.

18 Barford St Peter's Church (C Murphy)

The church finds itself in an unusual position at the moment, along with many other organisations, because of the global pandemic. For much of the last year we have had to hold services online, as we were required to close our buildings. Except for the first lockdown in March 2020, we have endeavoured to have the church open for private prayer on two days a week, and now that restrictions are starting to be eased, we hope to get back to regular services in the church itself. That said, there has been a good response to the online Zoom worship, and we have been very grateful for the IT skills of our vicar, Revd Andy Larkin, who was licensed to our parishes in February 2020 – what a baptism of fire for him! Although he has ministered to us since then, the necessity of a lot of work on Barford Rectory meant that he was unable to move in there with his family until August 2020. Revd Andy has also established an excellent relationship with our school (as well as the two other church schools in the benefice) and was a great hit with the children during his time on sabbatical with us, before his appointment. He is known to the children as 'the magic vicar' owing to his dexterity with conjuring tricks!

Sadly, in March 2020 we lost our assistant priest, Revd Neville Beamer, who died suddenly and unexpectedly. He was well-liked in all the parishes and is greatly missed. We were very fortunate to be joined by the Revd John Horton as assistant priest towards the end of last year. Revd John lives in Wellesbourne and came to us after many years in the service of God, including some time spent in Africa working with the charity Tearfund. We are very grateful for his help and input into the life of our church, and also to the other members of our ministry team, our licensed readers Ann Fawcett, Malcolm Dawkins and Chris Farr. As always, the church relies on many volunteers behind the scenes, and we are grateful to all who give their time so generously. Although the Church of England in general is undergoing a decline in attendance, the parish church in a village always seems to be very precious to its residents, as shown by a wonderful response to our Gift Day appeal in October 2020. Revd Andy has a great love for rural ministry, and a great gift for inspiring others to undertake roles they had never even contemplated, so we hope and pray that the church in Barford, and throughout our benefice, will grow and flourish under his leadership.

19 Village Voices Magazine (H Clay)

During the last year Village Voices has only missed one month of publishing when we had a digital only version. After consulting our dedicated band of distributors they all agreed to continue delivery of the magazine making it part of their daily exercise. The editing team would like to thank you all. Village Voices has been an invaluable source for communicating news and information throughout the 3 parishes, which covers 900 households, during this prolonged lock down period. This has included regular updates on the Sand and Gravel situation, progress on the new community centre and the regular item from John Murphy keeping us all up to date with local matters. There has also been national information about the census and COVID information from both the Parish Council and the government. It has also allowed us to pass on some sad news of friends who have passed away during this period and many have told us that they would not have known if they had not read it in the magazine.

Although the Church services, village activities and events all ceased during lockdown many villagers came to our rescue. We were sent interesting articles telling us of your exploits during lockdown charitable events and personal achievements. We also received many photographs of excellent quality on many different subjects, and this has allowed us to build a back catalogue of good images we can use in the future. Even when village life returns to normal, we will still be pleased to receive these photos and interesting items and we will endeavour to include some of them alongside the reports of normal village business and activities. Thank you all. Village Voices has now very much become a Village Magazine with a range of contributions from an ever-expanding population. We also carry adverts from a wide diversity of advertisers, feedback from them is good and we currently have a waiting list for others wishing to take advantage of our large circulation.

We hope we have reached a happy balance and we the editors hope to continue to bring residents of all three villages an informative and interesting magazine well into the future.

20 BYCC (I Patterson)

Like all community and social activities and projects, we were severely affected by the Covid restrictions. Use of the Hut all but ceased completely, apart from a short 'window' last summer, and even outdoor use was very limited and only for short periods.

Progress on the project to replace the Hut with a new Youth & Community Centre was also much hindered, with local fundraising activities not being possible and work on the pre-construction stages of the building project and in seeking major grants being very difficult. Some good progress has been made, however.

Firstly, a quick update on the Uniformed Groups:

Scouting:

BYCC is not involved with the running of the Scouting sections, but we support the Scout Group by providing the venue for meetings and activities and contribute towards the cost of the Leaders uniforms and training.

The Scout Group Sections did meet as far as possible, by splitting sections into two and meeting outdoors at the Hut or at other outdoor locations.

With the easing of restrictions, Scouting restarted (outdoors) at the end of March and should be meeting indoors again from later this month.

Currently, there are very nearly 100 young people involved, with increased numbers on previous years, and the Group is very much 'at capacity'.

The Scout Group is in the process of setting up a second Cub pack, so it very much needs some new Leaders.

Brownies:

Sadly, the Brownie group has now been closed for two years, so the tradition of Brownies and Guides in Barford since 1937 has ended. It would be excellent if a few volunteers came forward to re-establish Guiding in the village.

On the other main groups using the Hut:

The Hut Café met whenever it could and however it could and is restarting tomorrow, outdoors – weather permitting!

Other groups, such as the Art Group, Sewing Group and Parent & Baby Group, can't easily meet outdoors, so were inactive throughout the year, but plan to re-start soon.

All the groups will be working to the Government's "Roadmap out of Lockdown".

New Youth & Community Centre

I hope many of you will have seen our updates in Village Voices, so you will have some awareness of the progress we have been able to make, including further consultation on what the local community needed and wanted; from this and assessing what the site could accommodate, we substantially revised the design for the new Y&CC

At the start, the project was to replace the existing Hut with something a bit bigger but essentially similar; now, the new design really is a 'community venue for the future', with more space and additional facilities. This has been led by our Project Manager, with the architect and other professional experts.

We were very pleased to be able to use a 'Covid window' in August for a public event on the Village Green and show the scale model of new design. We gained Planning Permission for the new design and our thanks again to the very many local people who submitted 'In Support' comments on the WDC planning website – it was a huge demonstration of support.

Since then, we have been working to finalise some of the detail, including selecting air-source heat pump for the heating and hot water – making environmental impact our clear priority.

The new design does, understandably, mean the cost is greater than envisioned when we first started. After Quantity Surveyor and 'value engineering' assessment, the construction project has a budget of £600,000.

To support us in securing the funds for this, we have produced a comprehensive new Business Plan and made submissions to a number of local bodies. We are very grateful to have received commitments from the JPC and Barford Community Charity, amongst others, and have submissions currently with both WDC and WCC.

We have also made applications to other grant sources and will be making more. Many of the 'big donors', such as the National Lottery Fund, have not been operating as normal during Covid restrictions, but are now starting to be active again.

Although local fundraising has been very difficult during lockdowns, we hugely appreciate the donations we have received. There is not time to mention them now (and I would inevitable miss someone), but a big Thank You to all.

Our approach is to use local fundraising mainly to finance the continuing operation of the Hut and the costs of progressing the Y&CC project, with the great majority of Y&CC construction costs to be funded from major grant sources. Currently, we have some £60,000 in the bank, so are in a good financial position – ahead of the major task of securing the £600,000 for the 'new build'. With a fair wind, construction of the new Y&CC will start in late 2021 and take around 9 months.

Our AGM will be on Monday 28th June. We are looking for ideas for local fundraising events in July, August and September

Thank you to the people of the Parish for all the support we have had and continue to receive.
Ian Paterson (Chairman and Trustee)

21 Barford Village Shop (M Sheard)

The shop has continued to offer a comprehensive service to the three villages, despite the challenging situation. This has meant an adaption of working methods and opening hours. The continued presence, however, has been much appreciated by the community.

The restrictions on numbers of shoppers allowed in the shop, the masking and distancing have been taken on board by volunteers and customers alike, and managed by Corenna, who has continued to provide the service with efficiency, organisation, and good humour.

Our volunteer base has changed a little during the pandemic, understandably with the more vulnerable volunteers stepping back from their duties, and having been supplemented by additional volunteers, some of which were new to our shop, and who have assisted greatly in keeping the lights on.

As we look forward to a more stable environment, and the vaccination programme progressing, we look forward to welcoming back some of the older and more vulnerable volunteers, as life takes on a more predictable pattern

Thanks to all volunteers must be voiced.

The Café area benefitted from a refit during 2019/2020 to include decorations, furniture and cabinetry, and a new coffee machine, it is hoped that this can be more fully opened as restrictions allow.

Shop turnover has increased due to recent more local shopping patterns that we are currently experiencing, which in turn will allow for an increased contribution to the Community Charity, and this will be reported at the AGM as indicated by Mary in her report on the Community Charity.

There has been a change in Directors in the period, owing to retirement, and new faces Victoria Stokes and Jill Jeffrey have been welcomed to the Board.

Lastly, I would like to voice major thanks to our manager Corenna Jennings on behalf of the board and the community for exceptional work and flexibility in keeping this much used and much loved facility open, particularly over the last difficult period.

22 Barford Post Office (R Scott)

An eventful year

The Post Office had to close for 4 months from the end of March 2020 to the beginning of August. It re-opened for 4 days a week until the beginning of November and has been open 'as usual' from then. I say as usual because we have to deal with the one-way system in the shop, 1-person at a time, queuing outside and screens. With Corenna's help we worked out a system that protected customers and staff and maintained Social distancing. Post Office Ltd supplied some perspex sheets which were modified to stand on the counter and protect us from the customers and a flexible curtain was used to give a barrier between Post Office and Shop Staff. It is difficult to distinguish Customers from Robbers as both are wearing masks – but with only 1 robber allowed at a time we felt reasonably safe.

Christmas brought on its usual problems with queues now outside the shop and a large number of full sacks of mail behind the counter. We coped with all of these problems - except licking stamps while wearing a mask.

We now have a new set of screens which give extra protection from the customer and limits the size of the parcel .

The Post Office continued to pay us during the lockdown when we were closed– albeit at a slightly reduced rate. They re-instated the original pay rates when we returned so we have been able to keep donating £50 a month to 12 charities. We have unfortunately been unable to carry out our regular training evenings but when the rule of 6 extends to meetings indoors and the local training centres re-open we will have some catching up to do.

Brexit has been an added complication with Customs forms required for all foreign post. Exactly why 3 different forms are needed – all with basically the same information on - I dare not ask.

As always, my thanks are due to Ann, Judy, Rachel and Rita for their work behind the counter and of course Corenna for organising the rotas and acting as bodyguard while ensuring we follow the new procedures.

23 Barford Heritage Group (W Barlow)

Due to COVID-19 the Heritage Group only met twice. Once in February and once during the summer so planning has been difficult. However we managed to hold a successful Zoom AGM in December. Despite this a lot of work has continued to be done.

Ann McDermott has been an excellent website responder following up many enquiries. In fact eight families have been helped with research during lockdown. Hilary Maynard took on the onerous task of deciphering two 17th-century wills for the Dunn family. Various others have helped with requested research . (The Evans, Gardner, Clark and Way families).

Carole Whiteley has worked on Barford House queries and the Oldham and Rattray families. Doug Warne has helped out in all areas.

Ken Hope continues to write up Watchbury House History and the Greaves family.

A number of articles have made it into village voices which certainly helps keep up the interest levels. (Particularly good were the articles on Barford House and the Glebe Dovecote.)

We have received new and interesting photographs and newspaper cuttings over the year which we hope to share with villagers in the future.

We continue to manage the Telephone Box and it has held displays by the School, W.I. and Art Group.

A Horticultural cup for the Barford, Sherbourne and Wasperton 1925 show was returned thanks to a very kind gentleman who randomly found it in a relative's belongings. The family who won it many times were a farming family This was reported in Village Voices to see if any more information is forthcoming. The cup is now with the rest of our heritage artefacts. The website has been well kept by Kirsty Healey and Carole.(see Kirsty's report of the AGM).Particularly pleasing has been the use of flip books.

FUTURE PLANNING

Because of COVID it was decided to look to putting on a 2021 exhibition based on the School. Our next publication will be a booklet about 'Notable Women of Barford' edited by Doug. This is a direct result of our last Heritage performance of the same name.

24 Bar Zero Group (Mary Peirson)

We formed Bar Zero in the Summer of 2019 to encourage residents in our three communities to take personal action to ensure a sustainable future for the planet. After all, it is only by the cumulation of individual actions that real progress is made.

The founder members were Kirsty Healey, Liz Harrison-Hall and Mary Peirson supported by Matthew, Giles and Sandy. More recently we have been joined by Ellie Lees and Gill Heather. We ran a launch event in September 2019 in the Village Hall at which we had over 150 visitors. Our District Councillor, County Councillor and MP all attended and were very supportive. We subsequently gave a presentation to the County Council on Bar Zero.

From the event we were able to identify key themes we wished to pursue and set up a 'keep in touch' email list of supporters. Since then, we have had a regular entry in Village Voices adopting a different theme about sustainable living each month and including tips for growing your own produce. A Repair Café was launched in November meeting on the first Sunday in the month. We have a team of about 10 volunteer repairers. Villagers bring in their broken items, often lamps and bikes, but including backpacks, clocks, toys and much more. Teas and cakes are served. No charges are made, but donations are welcome. The last physical café was held in March 2020 at which we had a record number of repair requests. In June we devised a covid-secure method of running a collection/delivery service. To date since launch in November 2019 we have had over 100 items most of which have been repaired and returned to happy customers. We hope to be able to return to a physical café during this summer.

There was a Bar Zero party in January 2020 with silly games to beat the January Blues and to encourage thinking of New Year's resolutions with a sustainable theme. We planned a series of information evenings, the first of which was to be in March 2020 but have been unable to take place.

From January 2021, when we were joined by Ellie Lees and Gill Heather, we have re-invigorated our Facebook page and it has become an active hub to share ideas about sustainable living. We also participated in Green Week, a local event organised by the Warwick Climate Alliance, and set a week of daily challenges for our Facebook and 'keep in touch' members, ranging from a litter pick, to changing your search engine and deleting old emails, to embracing your inner activist. These were well received and generated a lot of positive comment. It is great to see that the growth in interest within our villages. Recycling points have been set up in the village for pill blister packs, corks and batteries, the latter not always being collected kerbside.

We are currently working on plans to apply for funding from the Warwickshire County Council Green Shoots Initiative and several other ideas. Possibilities include wildflower verges, e-bike loan scheme, native hedge barrier alongside the Community Orchard. Watch this space.

25 Appointment of Chairman for 2021-22. Mr J V Murphy was elected unopposed.

26 Any Other Business. There being no other business the meeting closed at 9:50 pm.