

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF
THE PARISH OF SHERBOURNE
HELD AT SHERBOURNE VILLAGE HALL
ON MONDAY 16TH APRIL 2007 AT 7.30PM**

Present Mr Graham Morris (Chairman)
Cllr John Murphy (Chairman Joint Parish Council)
Cllr Mrs Clare Sawdon (Warwick District Council)
Twenty-one Sherbourne electors

Minutes

- 1 The minutes of the annual meeting, held on 24th April 2006, were confirmed as a true record. There were no matters arising.
- 2 The meeting agreed to allow the minutes of the current meeting to be made public in draft.

Report by Mr Graham Morris (Chairman)

- 3 The Barford Bypass nears completion and final adjustments are being made to improve it and subsidiary roads.
- 4 The Boffins' Goup (concerned with the A46/M40 Junction 15 (Longbridge) Bypass Project) had been reorganized and functions well.
- 5 Minor alterations to roads and footpaths have been made.
- 6 Parish boundaries have been redrawn.
- 7 Future arrangements for Sherbourne parish have been discussed.
- 8 He congratulated the Sherbourne members of the JPC for the effort they had made on various projects throughout the past year.

Matters Arising

- 9 It was RESOLVED that the feasibility of an independent parish council for Sherbourne should be investigated.

Report by Cllr J V Murphy (Chairman Joint Parish Council)

- 10 Cllr Murphy's report is at Annex A to these minutes.

Police Matters

- 11 The police had declined the invitation to attend the meeting; the rationale being that with so many similar meetings in the area, attending them was an unacceptable drain on resources. A police representative would attend any meeting which discussed specific, important issues.

Report from Warwickshire County Councillor

- 12 Cllr Les Caborn sent his apologies for being unavoidably detained elsewhere. In his absence his report was read to the meeting.
- 13 Barford Bypass.
 - 13.1 The Barford Bypass nearing completion, he thanked members of the Barford Bypass Liaison Group for their contribution as intermediary between the people of the village and the contractor.
 - 13.2 He stressed the need for a post-construction analysis of traffic.

- 13.3 He confirmed the plan to extend the cycle way from the bypass to Sherbourne Corner and over the M40.
- 14 Barford Village Shop. He declared his support for the project and his disappointment that although WCC had made a grant it was not more generous.
- 15 Barford Parish Plan. He shared the frustration of the village that the plan had not been embraced by the officers at WCC and had apparently been ignored by WDC.
- 16 WCC Budget. Having received a bad report on its efforts to keep older people in homes, WCC had diverted an extra £5m to its Social Service programme. This meant that budgets which were already tight now had no spare capacity whatever.
- 17 Estate. With the relocation of office accommodation in Warwick, the future use of the Shire Hall was being examined with an aim to making it more accessible for members of the public to obtain services there.
- 18 Potholes. The subject of pothole repair had received critical analysis and this was no longer to be the preferred technique for road improvement.
- 19 Two-Tier Working. Warwickshire having opted for two-tier working as opposed to unitary status, the need to identify and eliminate duplication of effort was urgent if savings were to be achieved.

Matters Arising

- 20 The case for a pedestrian crossing over the A429 at Sherbourne was restated.

Reports from Warwick District Councillor

- 21 Cllr Clare Sawdon briefed the meeting on the functions of Warwick District Council in two-tier working:
- Planning
 - Housing (including affordable housing to which she gave a high priority)
 - Police (the introduction of the Safer Neighbourhood Scheme was a step in the right direction but it was not yet delivering the necessary police presence in villages and she was actively concerned to improve this)
 - Parks and amenities
 - Rubbish collection (she shared the disappointment that green bins were not available in all rural areas and was addressing the issue)
 - Recycling
 - Fly tipping
 - Rural Initiative Scheme (she had obtained a grant of £24k for the Barford Village Shop. Next year the scheme's budget was to be increased to £300k and she invited applications from suitable projects in Sherbourne)

Conservation Matters

- 22 Mrs Gordon addressed the meeting:
- The hopes of having road name plates of a more rural character had been dashed by WDC which also refused permission for them to be purchased privately.
 - She lamented the uprooting of trees near the M40 Junction 15 which had been planted in the last decade.
 - In response to a complaint that some road verges had debris from tree pruning and lopping, she confirmed that WCC had undertaken to use a shredder to remove the offending matter.

Report from Village Hall Committee

- 23 Ms Gail Frost in her capacity as Secretary to the Village Hall Committee addressed the meeting:
- She reported the retirement of Mr Adrian Tallis as Chairman. His successor was yet to be elected.
 - A computer and modem for use in the Village Hall had been donated by WDC.
 - She thanked the JPC for its grant towards the maintenance costs of the hall.
 - She announced a survey of villagers' opinions on the priority of project in the village for which grants might be obtained.

Appointment of Representative to Sherbourne Village Hall Committee

- 24 Mrs Peta Wilkinson was appointed

Other Matters

- 25 Mr Adrian Tallis described a scheme for blocking access to the A46 for vehicles passing through the village bound for Stratford-upon-Avon (to prevent "rat-running" if the A46 bypass were constructed) and it was RESOLVED that this be brought to the attention of the Inspector at the Public Inquiry.
- 26 A vote of thanks to the Boffins' Working Party was moved.
- 27 Mr Smith Ryland announced his intention of closing a permissive path over his land but promised continued access to any villager seeking a licence from him.

Appointment of Chairman for 2007-8

- 28 Mrs Antoinette Gordon was proposed and seconded, and in the absence of other nominations, elected Chairman for the ensuing year.
- 29 Mrs Gordon paid tribute to the outstanding contribution to village life made by Mr Graham Morris.

Closure

- 30 There being no other business the meeting was closed at 8:40pm.

Annual Report of Chairman of Barford, Sherbourne & Wasperton Joint Parish Council

2006-2007 has been another busy year – 9 routine JPC meetings, numerous Planning meetings, 3 Special Meetings, numerous Working Party and Officer Meetings and the three Parish Meetings.

During the year Geoff Smith and Ken Hope resigned and have been ably replaced by Cllr Neil Thurley for Wasperton and Cllr Wendy Barlow for Barford who are both already playing a very active role in JPC activities.

Barford Shop and PO – Cllrs Mulgrue, Worrall and Hope forged ahead with the Post Office contacts and the sub-PO opened in December, just in time for the Christmas rush. We are very grateful to the new Post-Mistress Jane Symonds who has coped well and there seems to be a steady stream of custom.

From the JPC and from the Barford Parish Plan action plan, a Shop Action Group was formed. This group has worked incredibly hard and has formulated a plan, started raising funds, gained planning permission and is progressing steadily towards opening a shop attached to the Memorial Hall. Robin Smith-Ryland has indicated that he is supportive of the project and we are currently negotiating with him and the estate's solicitors to ease covenants on the land to allow the project to proceed. I have every confidence that he will grant the required permissions.

Barford Bypass is finally in use and will be totally complete during April or early May. The road has brought benefits beyond expectation to many in the village

- Wellesbourne Road is much more peaceful
- Even Church Street, High Street and Barford Hill residents are reporting less through traffic
- non-supporters are now proclaiming the benefits
- and the traffic we do get seems to be behaving better!

The predicted queues to leave the village at peak times have not materialised, although the real test will come when the accesses are available at both ends and the speed limit is lifted.

We must not however forget any individual households or businesses who might be adversely impacted, in any way, by the new road and if they bring their problems to us we can assist them in negotiations with the appropriate authorities.

In the short term the Barford Bypass Liaison Group will continue to meet with the Contractors Galliford-Try and the WCC to deal with any matters arising from the new road. Whilst mentioning the contractors they must be congratulated on the exemplary way in which they have undertaken the project with minimal disruption and genuine consideration for the residents and road users. Of course there were disruptions at times of changing the road links and there were needs for traffic control lights and speed limits, which were inevitably not particularly popular and we did have to suffer some modest amount of queuing and impatient drivers. Everyone knows that the speed camera was unpopular and a great number of motorists, including far too many locals, were caught out by it. The Press of course had a field day and encouraged the moral outrage that always seems to follow getting caught breaking the law -

- whatever happened to the attitude of “it’s a fair cop”?

Regardless, Barford is looking forward to a much more tranquil and environmentally happy future, and is grateful to everyone who has worked so hard for this project from conception to completion.

A46 Sherbourne Bypass – The proposals to improve the Longbridge J15 area with an A46 bypass have continued to progress throughout the year with publication of Orders and an exhibition in the summer and leading ultimately to a Public Inquiry in March 2007. The JPC has welcomed proposals for improvement and recognizes that bypassing in some form is the local solution but was most concerned that whilst building a new road enough was not being done to bring benefit to Sherbourne when a more westerly route could provide significantly more relief from traffic impact and restore Sherbourne to a tranquil village, albeit closely adjacent to the Trunk Road and motorway network. The Public Inquiry can only approve or reject the Highways Agency preferred scheme, but if the scheme is rejected then the Inspectors reasoning, hopefully based on local input, may well direct and future proposals and perhaps initiate a proper and open consultation this time.

Before leaving roads, I should just comment on the A429 more generally. It cuts right through our

parishes and continues to give concern. The JPC has repeatedly asked for a review of the speed limit on the road as it passes through and have suggested a 50mph limit would be appropriate – this would benefit Wasperton and Sherbourne directly, would also reduce the potential noise from Barford Bypass and would ease access from all three villages. We will no doubt keep on with the request where we can, but support from residents would be very helpful and should be directed at WCC and your appointed representatives.

Barford Parish Plan – The JPC Parish Plan Working Party consisting of all Barford councillors and is still working towards implementing or promoting as much of the plan as possible, as soon as is reasonably possible. Much has been achieved and much is in progress, but there are frustrations. The Plan was welcomed at the WCC Warwick Area Committee and support clearly indicated, however we have yet to see much material response from WCC officers, although there are now some signs that they are willing to meet with us to try to see where progress can be made. The original BPP Committee will continue to monitor and report on the JPC's implementation progress.

Play areas are under constant review – checked at least weekly by a Parish Councillor. There have been no recent changes, although requests for ideas for improvement have not generated much response from residents. We would like to know what would be appreciated on the site by way of improvements – do let us know.

The skateboard area continues to generate comment over noise and youth activity, and we continue to try to find ways to limit this impact on residents, albeit with only limited success so far, although we are currently investigating a new spray on process which may produce good results – watch this space.

The Boundary Commission changes to WCC electoral wards put all three of our villages together last year and this year we have seen Parish boundary changes to tidy up the parish boundaries around the M40, making parish custody much more logical. These changes will be operative for the May elections.

At the same time representation levels were adjusted to more fairly reflect population numbers and from this next election the parishes will be represented by ten councillors for Barford, three for Sherbourne and three for Wasperton. It should be noted that the stimulus for this latter change came from one of our Annual Parish Meetings and this should remind us that Parish Meetings are a powerful and democratic way for the residents to “have their say” and get things done.

Police Matters – Our police cover has remained patchy over the last year and there have been many instances where the service provision has still been considerably less than might be desired. The newly appointed CBO PC Emma Matthews for our area soon went on long-term sick leave but is thankfully now back with us. The safer neighbourhood Initiative was also started and promises considerably improved Police presence, including Community Support Officers and an occasional Mobile Police station. We are reserving judgement until it all settles down – but intelligence informs me that they have all been seen in the parishes.

On Planning specifically:

Oldhams' site plans went to Public Inquiry and the Secretary of State supported the granting of permission. As we all know the site is now well under construction and the major task for us is to ensure that those who need Affordable Homes on the site do in fact get first refusal. The system is complicated and unless people come forward promptly there is always the danger that those with local connections could miss out and others might take the properties. Cllrs Mulgrue and Byerley are particularly well briefed in that matter.

Proposals at 20 Wellesbourne Road are currently not proceeding, having been refused at WDC and gone to Appeal, but the site remains vacant and neglected and we await further developments – hopefully a return to single household occupation.

Land surrounding Barford House remains a matter of interest although the only open activity this year was the circulation of some speculative sketches, in September, of a possible hall/pavillion proposal, and a suggestion of a shop property fronting Wellesbourne Road. The JPC refrained from comment for fear of prejudicing its position in the event of an actual application on the site.

The three village halls have again been supported by JPC grants - £425 Barford, £1050 Sherbourne and £1050 Wasperton – members have recognised more active management and fund raising taking place in the smaller villages, to make their halls more viable.

The JPC also gave grant support towards maintenance of each of the three churchyards, and a small support grant to the newly established "Barford Beginners" baby and toddlers group.

Allotments – the JPC Barford allotments have now been cleared and ploughed and most are now let. Most are in good productive use although a few seem to be kept as lawns or protective shelter belts, which is not allowed within the allotment rules and users have had to be reminded of the need to keep the allotment in active cultivation and use. In the event of demand exceeding availability it may be appropriate to ask non-users to vacate plots in favour of new tenants.

BPP indicated a strong wish for water supply onto all the Barford Allotment areas and the JPC has worked with the PCC and the S&G groups to provide an installation which is currently being implemented.

All councillors have attended many meetings and served their electors well, working as a strong team with James Johnson our Clerk/RFO. Many thanks to all for their input.

JVM
31.03.2007