

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF
THE PARISH OF SHERBOURNE
HELD ON MONDAY 15 APRIL 2024 AT 7:30 PM
IN SHERBOURNE CHURCH**

Present :	Tony Merrygold (Chairman)
	Cllr John Murphy (BS&W JPC)
	Cllr Jan Matecki (WDC and WCC)
	Cllr Peter Phillips (WDC)
	Ten Sherbourne Electors

Opening

The Chairman welcomed those present and thanked the Church for allowing the use the building. He explained that this was to be a Parish Meeting and not a Parish Council meeting, even though parish councillors were present as was the Parish Clerk to minute the meeting.

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of 3 Apr 2023

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

Report by Chairman of Parish Meeting [Tony Merrygold]

As ever I'll try and keep my report short, covering off a few local village matters and then the Chair of the JPC will run through some issues affecting the wider parishes and Cllrs Matecki and Phillips will present report covering WCC and WDC activities.

Updates on Planning Applications.

Village Hall

1 A Planning Application has been submitted for 'Change of Use' of the Village Hall to offices. This was refused on issues around parking and the Applicant was told to 'actively market' the hall for public use for 12 months, to ascertain whether or not there is any demand for the facility, before WDC will consider a Change of Use.

2 National Highways Recovery Depot

The temporary National Highways (ex Highways England) Recovery Depot that was setup on the old Stratford Road, opposite Vicarage Lane, for the duration of the M40/M42 central reservation barriers, has been dismantled and removed.

3 Solar Farm Planning Applications

Applications were submitted for solar farms on two sites the other side of the A46. The JPC raised a number of issues on both applications, one of which was refused but WDC then proceeded to grant permission for the second solar farm. The first Application then went to appeal and approval was granted.

Both of these are now going through the process of meeting the planning conditions on archaeology, documentation etc. So work is effectively under way.

4 Sherbourne Priors – Two Houses

When Sherbourne Priors was sold, the plot was split in two and an application was submitted to build two houses in the section adjacent to Vicarage Lane. This was refused by WDC and then went to Appeal where it was refused.

However, last week contractors were onsite installing a new hedge along the boundary line of the site. While normally planting a hedge doesn't require planning permission the Planning Inspector referred to the whole 'open aspect' of the site as one of the main grounds for refusal. Mr Brewer, owner of Sherbourne Priors, has referred this issue to WDC Planning Enforcement copying the Inspector.

Happy Smiley Goats

As some of will know the paddock on the corner of Vicarage Lane and Fulbrook Lane has been used for some time by a person running a business called 'Happy Smiley Goats' offering people the chance to visit, pet and feed goats. This caused numerous problems with parking, traffic, mud on the lane, damage to the grass verge etc. After complaints to WDC Planning Enforcement the business owner

applied for a Certificate of Lawful Use – but was told this was not appropriate, and they would need to seek planning permission – which they were told would not be granted – and they were told to cease. While the goats are still onsite the visitor aspect of the business should no longer cause problems.

There is still however an issue with this site with 'Dogz and Mogz' using part of the paddock for dog walking causing issues with access (although not as bad as goats) and noise nuisance. This has been referred to both Planning Enforcement and Environmental Health. Dogz and Mogz have submitted a Planning Application to operate at a site in Lapworth which is receiving much local opposition. If this were to be granted they would not need the Sherbourne site. Enforcement's initial view was that there is nothing to actually enforce as there is no permission / conditions in place. We (with pressure from Cllr Matecki) are taking the stance that Enforcement should enforce precisely because there is NO permission.

Sand and Gravel Quarry

The Locals Minerals Plan saga continues and Smiths Concrete Ltd have submitted a detailed Planning Application to operate the Sand and Gravel Quarry at the site. This is still being fought by the Sand and Gravel group and Cllrs Phillips and Matecki (who will cover this briefly later). The best source for detail on this is to read the Sand and Gravel updates in Village Voices.

Severn Trent Water Issues

There have been a number of problems in Sherbourne with Severn Trent Water, both in terms of water supply and with sewage.

Four households present mentioned problems with water pressure, one of whom has a pressure monitor in place for a week. STW have worked on water mains to one house in Vicarage Lane and one in Watery Lane. Problems have previously been reported by two households in Moat Green with SWT checking on water pressure. SWT seem to be treating each incident as a separate issue and are not admitting to any general problems.

Problems with sewage coming up through the ground have been reported in Church Road, in the garden of one property and in the field on the corner currently used for grazing sheep. SWT have fenced off half of this field and are reported to be planning to strip and replace some of the contaminated surface soil.

A tanker is being used several times a day to collect sewage from the works adjacent to the stables on Sherborne Park and this has been continuing for several weeks with no apparent work in place to fix the underlying problem.

The Chair agreed to try and raise the issues with SWT as general problems affecting the village.

Wild flowering Project

Warwickshire Wildlife Trust are running a project to help spread wildflowers and extra hedge planting across the county. Barford have already benefited from this with some wildflower planting in the paddock we rent from the Church and extra hedging around parts of King George's Field.

The challenge here is that WWT will only help with the initial work and the landowner's have to sign an agreement to maintain the planting. While the JPC own KGF and lease the paddock, the JPC does not actually 'own' any land in Sherbourne, so we are looking at what can be done on some of the non-JPC-owned land – which really restricts us to roadside and footpath verges.

Following a site visit we are looking at wild-flowering the edge of the footpath between Vicarage Lane and Watery Lane at the A46 end and the two corner patches with the old A46 – Stratford Road. No-one officially maintains the footpath verge. Moat Green residents maintain their own fencing and the Chairman has been cutting the grass for about 25 years along with the corner patches.

The margin beside the road is normally cut about twice a year, as with rest of the verges along our lanes. The Chairman has submitted a request to WCC to find out who owns the land on the corners to give us the necessary permissions.

Assuming we are allowed to go ahead, nothing needs doing until the autumn when the grass would need a fairly short cut. WWT would then come out with some serious scarifying equipment and would need the help of some volunteers to clear and prepare the soil and sow all the seeds.

Then basically we let it all grow.

The only potential downside of this is that if you all prefer a relatively short trimmed, semi-tidy, grass only verge, this will disappear. It will be cut at the end of autumn and early spring, but then left as soon as the wildflowers start to appear. These will be allowed to grow, flower and then re-seed themselves so will not be cut throughout the spring and most of the summer.

One resident asked if this could include some tree planting on the National Highways land adjacent to the A46 to improve the traffic screening. The SWT funded project does NOT include tree planting.

The meeting agreed to proceed.

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

Report by Chairman Barford, Sherbourne & Wasperton JPC [Cllr John Murphy]

2023-2024 has been a busy year! – It seems busier when I look back over it than it actually seemed at the time. The year started with my return as Chairman and with the appointment of Cllr John Barrott as Vice-Chair. We also added Ben Ranner as a new councillor for Barford and welcomed back Peter Phillips for Wasperton.

We promptly resolved to adopt the “Civility and Respect Pledge” and facilitated this by creating a “Dignity at Work” policy.

We started working on “wilding” – working with Warwickshire Wildlife Trust and funded by Severn Trent. We have installed over 500 hedging plants around KGF and the Rectory Paddock, along with two very large swathes of wildflower sowings.

We undertook a review of the BNDP - and concluded that it was still fit for purpose and represented our community’s wishes, and importantly should not be changed until the emerging New SW Local Plan was much further advanced. The challenge would be to get significant note taken of BNDP in the NLP... To better prepare us for the NLP we will undertake a Housing Needs Survey in the coming year and the JPC will receive a presentation at its May meeting.

We have now made significant progress with s106 projects and having completed the allotment path upgrade and increased the seating in KGF, we moved on to install the cemetery link pathway and renovate the Barford Village Green wall. Still outstanding are improvements to KGF signage, completion of the allotment path adjacent to BYCC and the external works at BYCC.

The Land Around Barford House has been an ongoing matter for many years now. We have had talks with the latest developers, Opus, who are offering an attractive scheme and have taken it as far as “Pre-Application” status with WDC. Whilst the JPC-LABHWP is largely or notionally supportive of the scheme so far, we must wait and see how WDC will respond to the scheme, which is still contrary to many local policies...

Within the JPC we chose to change the makeup of our Planning Committee to better represent our villages. The mix will now be Barford-6, Sherbourne-2 and Wasperton-2 – with the JPC Chair being “*ex-officio*”, but taking one of his/her parish’s places, rather than being additional as before.

King George’s Field remains popular and busy, despite all the wet weather of late. Sadly, recurrent acts of vandalism, at great cost to the JPC, has led us to install CCTV around the site. It went “live” in December 2023.

Water Safety near the river was raised as a significant concern by Barford St Peters School pupils after a recent visit to the river and they suggested that some signage was needed. These have been commissioned and will be erected soon, warning of the danger and giving location details to assist the emergency services.

In September we reviewed our support for Village Voices, the community magazine that we have delivered to every household in the three parishes. The magazine is much valued as a single channel for information and as such the JPC resolved to continue funding it at £3200 for the current year and inflating by CPI until November 2026 when it will be reviewed again.

Such funding brings us on to Council Tax which is an even hotter than usual topic in this time of Cost of Living Crisis. Most levels of council have caps on how much they can raise but PCs are not restricted and are free to reflect local needs and wishes to maintain services. The JPC increased its precept demand by 6.7% to £66,963 in line with official inflation figures to protect our spending ability and conserve services and reserves.

And whilst on finances, a LGA of 1894 restricted spending by PCs on church properties and caused much confusion and acrimony, with conflicts with later legislation. New legislation and clarification by the House of Lords has resolved the situation, to some degree, and PCs can now legally fund certain church projects, where there is a clear “benefit to the general public”.

NETWORKING – One of the few benefits of the pandemic was the growth in remote working and the increased use of video-conferencing. This is now being exploited by PCs and their advisory bodies. We have had discussion groups for “clerks” and separately “chairs” for some time. These have been very useful and replace some of the in-person divisional and area meetings we used to have but have

now lost. Now we are to have “councillor meetings” for all PC members, EXCEPT chairs and clerks! We hope they will be well attended, and very informative.

In a similar vein we must accept that social media is seemingly here to stay, for good or for bad, and matters which should be debated solely in the JPC domain are often discussed there, often by those with little detail knowledge of the situations being discussed. As moderators on such platforms have limited powers and are often slow or reluctant to react, we are considering how we can improve the situation and perhaps have some form of official JPC monitoring, with possibly very limited JPC input (*restricted to factual statements and/or JPC policies – NOT engaging in debate*), perhaps directing folk to a more productive route such as attending JPC meetings or corresponding directly via the more formal channels. The use of a separate FaceBook page as a bulletin board is also under consideration.

And LASTLY, we must announce the retirement of our long-standing, and some would say, long-suffering Clerk and RFO.

Colonel James Johnson OBE came to us for what he thought was a short stay in early retirement - and has been with us for twenty years. He has out-stayed all but two JPC members and seen us through thick and thin, having dragged us from the old dusty paper-bound era, fully into the technological age. Everything now is electronic and efficient, and fast. Everything has always been very professional, but nowadays we are subject to far more regulation and scrutiny, all of which absorbs more and more of his and indeed our time. We have already started the replacement recruitment campaign, but he will be a hard act to follow. Watch this space...

Councillor attendance records 2023-2024:

	Wed 10 May 23	Mon 12 Jun 23	Mon 10 Jul 23	Mon 7 Aug 23	Mon 11 Sep 23	Mon 9 Oct 23	Mon 13 Nov 23	Mon 8 Jan 24	Mon 12 Feb 24	Mon 11 Mar 24	Meet ings	Pres ent	%
Cllr J T Barrott	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	10	8	80%
Cllr J D Billingham	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	10	9	90%
Cllr R Clay	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	10	9	90%
Cllr H Gadsden	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	10	7	70%
Cllr J M Hawkesford	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	10	8	80%
Cllr G Jackson	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	10	9	90%
Cllr Mrs S Jarratt	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	10	6	60%
Cllr Mrs L M Jones	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	10	6	60%
Cllr T Merrygold	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	10	8	80%
Cllr J V Murphy	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10	10	100%
Cllr Mrs R Newsome	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	10	7	70%
Cllr P B Phillips		1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	9	6	67%
Cllr B Ranner		1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	9	8	89%
Cllr M J Sheard	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	10	8	80%
Cllr Mrs K E Thomson	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	10	4	40%
Cllr Mrs L Wallis	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	10	6	60%

Report by Warwick District Council [Cllr Peter Phillips]

It's a pleasure for Jan and me to be here again, and especially for me after a four-year gap. I should start by thanking my predecessor Councillor Alan Rhead for his 16 years of service.

So what do we do as District Councillors? Jan and I sit on various committees in the District Council. As well as sitting on the Full Council, I am a member of the Planning Committee, I chair the Asset Compliance Committee, and also sit on the Audit and Standards Committee, and the Employment Committee. If you didn't know, all these meetings can be viewed on Warwick District Council's YouTube channel.

This report is actually rather a low-key report this year as not a great deal of significance has happened at the District Council. As you may be aware we have a Labour/Green coalition running the Council. I think the year can be summed up by the Leader of the Council stating in full Council, “we were led by the officers.”

In Budbrooke Ward, we both continue to work to support residents in a large variety of ways from planning issues too numerous to mention, bin collections, footpath works, playgrounds, path clearance and fly-tipping. And we have obtained additional funds for the Norton Lindsey Community Shop and Barford Youth and Community Centre.

Specifically in relation to Sherbourne, we continue to support the Barford Sand and Gravel Action Committee in whatever way they want us to. It will impact Sherbourne through the increased HGV traffic and the dust that will be generated and can travel for miles, especially with the prevailing winds coming from Barford to Sherbourne.

The fight on this is far from lost, and we will continue to do what we can. We are awaiting feedback from Smiths to the 2,500 comments/objections after which we have just three weeks to respond again.

More of a challenge has been the two major solar farm developments in the Green Belt which came to Warwick District's Planning Committee in the 2nd half of 2023. The mega schemes would cover the equivalent of 85 football pitches near Honiley and 65 football pitches near Sherbourne, and these were in addition to the previously approved second solar farm at Sherbourne.

As a member of the Planning Committee I voted against both schemes, but both were approved. The danger I fear is that we are going to be salami slicing our way through the green belt. The Honiley scheme was called in after intervention of their local MP and is the subject of a Planning Inspectorate inquiry, due to report in June 2024. The Sherbourne scheme was not called in as no request was made by our MP, so is approved to be built.

Which leads on to a very important note. While we are here to help you there is one area where we need significant input from yourselves. That is the South Warwickshire Local Plan, which is slowly winding its way through its multi-year process. The second call for sites has just been completed and while putting a site forward does not mean it will be approved for development the SWLP has the potential to significantly alter the size and characteristics of Sherbourne. Please go online and look for SWLP interactive map (at this link).

<https://tinyurl.com/5n8nnbwh>

Your views are welcome at any time, but I have secured in Full Council that there will be a full consultation with villages affected. But you need to start pulling together your thoughts on this now.

Finally, you may not be aware that every 10 or 15 years the Electoral Commission reviews the structure of all the UK constituencies for the Westminster Parliament. The latest such changes were approved by Parliament in Autumn 2023. The impact locally is that Budbrooke Ward, which includes Barford, Sherbourne and Wasperton, which used to be part of the Warwick & Leamington Constituency, will change to Kenilworth & Southam Constituency as of the date of the next general election, i.e. Sherbourne residents will vote for the MP for Kenilworth & Southam. Until then all questions should be addressed to the Warwick & Leamington MP, Matt Western.

Report by Warwickshire County Council [Cllr Jan Matecki]

The year was still dominated by the cost-of-living crisis. The County Council continued to providing advice to families, and supported residents with financial support through various grants and schemes, which were made available through the Household Support Fund. This scheme was going to close at the end of March 2024, but support has now been extended for a further 6 months.

The new all through school in Bishop's Tachbrook, Oakley School, is still on target to open in September 2024. The year 7 intake that started in September 2023 have spent their first year in Myton School's new 6th form centre and will move to the new school building this September 2024, along with a new year 7 reception class intake.

A 'Task and Finish' group set up to look into the inequalities of education throughout the county, continued to look at what drives these inequalities. It visited schools within Warwickshire and neighbouring counties that had achieved better than expected results, to further understand how the results were achieved. The group, which I am part of, continues to meet and will hopefully put out a report in the very near future.

The trial 'on demand' bus service, IndieGo Plus, which covers villages west of Warwick and replaced the old No.16 bus service, was a finalist for 2 awards at the national Citti Awards, which were held in London. It took first prize in the best 'Public Transport Award' category. It is also attracting interest worldwide, with a national Academy in the United States looking at demand responsive transport contacting me for information on our service. It continues to increase patronage, and this year has exceeded the number of passengers that travelled on the old No 16 service in the last year of its operation. I was pleased to have the service extended to Norton Lindsey which has not had a regular local bus service for many years.

The County Council secured over £7.5m of BSIP Plus (Bus Service Improvement Plan Plus), funding from the DfT. The BSIP Plus will support, protect and enhance bus services and support new

initiatives. The funding will help ensure Warwickshire can take forward some of its BSIP priorities and, coupled with the extension of the government's £2 bus fare cap, will help encourage patronage growth across the bus network.

WCC was also successful in securing £3.3m for Warwickshire through the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) fund, to provide hundreds more charging points across the county. This will help to facilitate the switch to low and zero emission vehicles. Potential sites, especially in rural areas and areas with little or no EV infrastructure, were sought from the public and community groups. These sites are now being evaluated.

For 2023/24, WCC's budget for pothole repairs is £1.970m. In addition, WCC will spend approximately £1.75m of capital on small patching works. So far this financial year, 7,890 potholes have been repaired across the county's road network. Warwickshire has a strong reputation for making repairs and are ranked 4th out of 30 peer authorities in the National Highways and Transportation Survey for overall highways maintenance, condition of highway and how quickly we deal with potholes and damaged roads.

WCC Highways have also completed 63 schemes that delivered 21 miles of resurfacing works, a further 64 schemes that delivered 44 miles of surface dressing and 53 schemes that have delivered 10 km of footway reconstruction schemes.

Budgets for all Councils remain a challenge. This year's County budget which includes, 2% for the adult social care levy, has been driven by the rising costs of adult social care which has seen an investment of £28m, children's social care services which has seen an investment of £8m, supporting children and young adults with special educational needs and disabilities, and home to school transport which has just under £9m of investment to ensure the County can continue to deliver high quality transport for over 10,000 children each day.

Locally, the planning application for a quarry at Wasperton has now had all comments summarised and sent to the applicant for review. The applicant now has an opportunity to submit proposals to mitigate any concerns raised. These proposals can be inspected and commented on in a similar way to the original proposal. It is unlikely that the application will be in front of the Regulatory Committee before the summer. I continue to support the local community in fighting against this proposal and will speak against the proposal at the committee hearing.

In Barford it has been agreed that a speed limit of 20mph could be implemented on Bridge Street and Church Street. I am using funding from my delegated budget to progress this scheme, and it should go out to consultation in the very near future. I continue looking at ways to improve road safety in all our villages, and I am talking to WCC officers on how to reduce speeds and heavy goods vehicles coming through Sherbourne village.

AOB - Issues Raise by Residents

Residents raised a number of issues:

1. Is it worth installing litter bins around the village to try and reduce the problem with discarded litter? This prompted some debate about whether passing pedestrians, cyclists and motorists would bother to use them and the issues surrounding emptying them.
2. Still on the litter issue – there is a pile of discarded metal frames, from old road works signs, on the bus stop central reservation on the Stratford bound carriageway of the A46.
3. A question on the odours from the dairy farm as to whether or not they had increased since the slurry lagoon was installed on the edge of the woods partway up Sherbourne Hill.

The Chairman agreed to investigate 1 and 2 and would keep a watching brief on 3.

Appointment of Chairman of the Parish Meeting for 2024-25

Tony Merrygold was elected unopposed.

Closure

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 8:53pm.