

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF  
THE PARISH OF WASPERTON  
HELD AT WASPERTON VILLAGE HALL  
ON MONDAY 20<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2009 AT 7:30PM**

Present                    Cllr M J Metcalfe (Chairman)  
                              Cllr N F J Thurley  
                              Cllr J T Wright  
                              Cllr J V Murphy (Chairman of the Joint Parish Council)  
                              Cllr L Caborn (Warwickshire County Council)  
                              Twenty-seven Wasperton Electors

**Minutes**

- 1        The Minutes of the meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> April 2008 were approved as a true record, subject to the following amendments:
  - 1.1     Minute 13. Delete “seed” insert “speed”.
  - 1.2     Minute 14. Delete in total and replace with: “Although the village now had its long-demanded allocation of green and black bins there was considerable dissatisfaction about the implementation of the new collection regime.”
  - 1.3     Minute 19. Delete in total and replace with ‘Knotweed. The presence of Japanese Knotweed on the verge was reported.’
- 2        Matters Arising:
  - 2.1     Minute 15. It had been reported that Cllr A Rhead (WDC) had devised a questionnaire which those with comments on the new waste collection regime could complete and return to him, and it was agreed to use this medium to record Wasperton electors’ views. It was not known whether this had been done.
  - 2.2     Minute 17. No further details of Sherbourne’s efforts to create a separate parish council, withdrawing from the JPC, were available.
- 3        The meeting agreed to allow the minutes of the current meeting to be made public in draft form as soon as approved by the Chairman.

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

- 4        Cllr Murphy’s report is at Annex A to these minutes.

**Police Matters**

- 5        No police representative being available to attend the meeting to report, it was agreed to combine this agenda item with the next.

**Neighbourhood Watch**

- 6        Cllr Thurley read from notes compiled by Mr Jim Gilligan.
- 7        It had been a relatively quiet year, and he listed the incidents which had come to his attention. Several were innocent but he stressed that it is better to investigate a “non-crime” than to let a real crime go unreported.

- 8 The residents could take comfort from the knowledge that they lived in one of the safest areas in the county.
- 9 The response to the visits of the mobile police station had been good, pleasing the police.
- 10 The usual warning about telephone and internet scams was repeated as was the caution about callers without identification.
- 11 Finally, if the CPSO could not be contacted by any other means, incidents should be reported on 999.

### **Minerals Core Strategy – Revised Spatial Options**

- 12 Over the last few years WCC has been developing its Mineral Core Strategy to fit in with the new planning regime and now it has started to look at specific areas for mineral extraction. One of those sites is in the immediate vicinity of Wasperton.
- 13 There followed a detailed and well-informed debate on the measures available to register opposition to the proposal. They were:
- To write to WCC
  - To complete and return the WCC questionnaire (copies available in the Barford Village Shop)
  - To sign the petitions at the Barford Village Shop.
  - To submit comments via the arrangements provided on the WCC website.
- 14 Mr Cadogan pointed out that the Court of Appeal had rejected proposals to extract gravel from this site in 1992.
- 15 Cllr Caborn assured residents that all responses, however delivered, would be considered.
- 16 The JPC had formed a working party to respond to the proposals and its response is available for inspection on the Barford Website.
- 17 It was important for as many people as possible to register an objection.
- 18 The meeting resolved to form its own working party with the mandate to respond to WCC with a firm rejection of the proposals for the Wasperton site. Its composition to be:
- Mr Lacey
  - Mr Chambers
  - Cllr Metcalfe

### **Tree Planting on the Flood Plain**

- 19 The Joint Parish Council's attention having been drawn to the fact that the Birmingham Angling Association had planted some 13,000 trees on the bank in the bend in the river defining the south west boundary of Wasperton, it addressed the following questions to the Environment Agency::
- Was any permission needed for the tree planting?
  - What are the effects (short, medium or long-term) on the flood plain?
  - What are the environmental effects (short, medium or long-term)?
- 20 The Environment Agency's response was:
1. *We believe that planning permission is not required for woodland planting schemes. However, formal confirmation should be sought from your Local Planning Authority on this matter. Tree planting in the flood plain is also not covered under the Midlands Land Drainage Bylaws. Land Drainage Consent was therefore not required by the Environment Agency for this development.*

2. *There is very little guidance available regarding the effects (short, medium or long-term) of tree planting in the flood plain, and the risks associated with this. Guidance suggests that strategically located flood plain planting can assist flood risk management by alleviating flood flows, however, care needs to be taken to ensure that significant obstructions to flood flows are avoided. In this case it appears that the planting will not prevent access to the watercourse for maintenance, as a buffer strip has been left adjacent to the river.*
3. *In terms of long-term environmental effects, tree and shrub cover can be beneficial in maintaining a balanced ecosystem and is beneficial to aquatic wildlife. The restoration of tree cover can be a cost effective way of restoring habitats.*

*It should be noted that the Environment Agency does not have a duty to comment upon these types of sites, and as such we are neither in favour of, or in opposition to tree planting in this location.*

21 The meeting took note.

### **Speed Limits in Wasperton**

22 Little has changed since last year when the following was minuted:

*“The meeting still held the view that the village needed a 20mph speed limit. Cllr Mike Metcalfe spoke about his efforts to secure this. It appeared that Wasperton met WCC’s criteria for a 30mph limit but since a traffic survey had shown that the average speed in the village was little more than 18mph this would be a useless restriction merely adding extra road signs for no tangible benefit. What was needed was a limit to force those few who travelled too fast in the village to drive safely, and that was at speed less than 20mph.”*

23 What has changed is the availability of a speed gun to monitor speeds in the village. Cllr Thurley (who had been trained in its use) asked whether a campaign should be run in Wasperton. There was a majority vote that it should. The results have no force in law, but they are passed to the police who may, in the most flagrant cases, draw the matter to the culprit’s attention.

24 The use of the portable electronic speed detectors with smiley faced displays for those under the limit and a glum one for those over was applauded. Cllr Caborn promised to investigate availability.

### **Dog Fouling**

25 Cllr Wright drew attention to a growing problem of dog fouling in Wasperton, with particular reference to the Churchyard, College Farm drive and the bridle path to Hampton Lucy.

26 After a debate it was agreed that the purchase of bins and “poop bag” dispensers should be investigated. If considered appropriate, a costed proposal could then be submitted to the JPC.

### **Appointment of Chairman for 2009-10**

27 Cllr Metcalfe, having been proposed and seconded, was appointed Chairman for the ensuing year.

### **Closure of the Meeting**

28 There being no other business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9:12pm, thanking those who had attended.

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

2008-2009 has again been a busy year – 9 routine JPC meetings, numerous Planning meetings, 2 Special Meetings, numerous Working Party or subcommittee meetings and the three Parish Meetings.

During the year Cllr George Starkey was taken very ill and decided to resign from active JPC duty. We were pleased that he has now made a good recovery and many were prompted by his experience to undergo CPR training and also to volunteer for First Responder service – and so enhance the health chances of all in our area. He has been ably replaced by Cllr David Morrow who is already contributing well to JPC activities.

**Barford Shop and PO** – The shop and Post Office projects have moved forward at a considerable pace over the year culminating firstly in securing the future for our Post Office and opening the shop in good time for Christmas. It is now a vibrant centre for our communities, a credit to all concerned and a focus for near-universal praise. The challenge now will be to maintain the standards which have been set and to reach out to those members of our community who have not yet realised its true value.

**Barford Bypass** has continued to settle in and is now the subject of less adverse comment. The contractors have been slow to complete some of the snagging list repairs but we are seeing some movement there. Signage has been reviewed both on the bypass and also within the village where there are now anomalies but attention to these is slow coming and complicated by interactions between WCC, WDC and Police on what is required or appropriate.

**A46 Sherbourne Bypass** – This has moved on at a great pace since last year and can be clearly seen to be taking shape. Whilst few people are truly pleased with the final scheme we should all be very relieved at the reduced congestion which we will hopefully eventually experience on J15.

The JPC has repeatedly asked for a review of the speed limit on the A429 as it passes through all three parishes and have suggested a 50mph limit would be appropriate and when the A and B roads Speed Review was conducted last year we were disappointed that once again we were being overlooked, despite the fact that there appears to be a move towards more general speed control, often by signage alone. We have made a forceful comment upon this and the matter was reconsidered and 50mph restriction was eventually agreed from J15 to the River Avon on both the Barford Bypass and the old road. We were hopeful that the review would produce a speed reduction which would benefit all three parishes, but any hope of that must perhaps now rest with a proposal for nationwide 50mph limits on all single carriageway roads - if we want such relief and would be happy with such blanket restrictions.

During the year the cycleway from Longbridge through to Barford was completed and has been much enjoyed by many cyclists old and new. We would now like to see the route extended through to Wasperton and hopefully, eventually, beyond...

**Barford Parish Plan** – The original BPP Committee continues to monitor and report on the implementation progress, but progress on the more difficult elements of implementation – notably those involving other bodies - remains slow – and we will soon need to consider reviewing the Plan to ensure that it remains fully appropriate for our future.

**Play areas** remain under constant review – checked at least weekly by a Parish Councillor. The skateboard area continues to generate some comment from a small number of nearby residents, but no real suggestions for practical ways to improve the situation. Last year the Environmental Health Officer was involved again but has failed to come back with any meaningful comments or suggestions, despite his promise to attend and monitor noise levels.

The play equipment provided on Barford Village Green as part of the shop project has been an instant and outstanding success and the older equipment relocated to the Playing Fields provides a wider range of activities there and was very welcome. Much of the work for those projects was carried out on a self-help basis and at minimal costs.

**Dog Fouling** – This remains a constant problem and although much less than in years past is still causing concern. There are strict rules and severe fines for offenders and the Dog wardens promise zero-tolerance. Dog mess bins are available at the Playing Fields and near the Scout Hut so there is little excuse. Persistent offenders are clearly not listening so again we say that names need to be passed on if we are to see an improvement.

**Police Matters** –The safer neighbourhood Initiative has now been with us for more than two years. Despite early changes in personnel we have latterly enjoyed more stable staffing and have actually got to know some of our officers. Safer Neighbourhood Forums have now become Localities Forums and have a wider remit and attendance of officers from WCC, WDC and Police, along with other interested parties. Police “priorities” have been established now for some time but we still are struggling to get the Police to adequately address some of the appropriate issues in our villages. Putting aside larger scale crime and the recent apparent increase in house burglaries our major concerns revolve around antisocial parking – both on pavements or near junctions, and on the Playing Fields track. Despite safety implications and infringements of byelaws the Police remain reluctant to act decisively and effectively and this is very frustrating for us – especially as their occasional efforts do produce good results. We would like to see more consistent and prompt action please.

Speed through and past our villages remains a major issue and we have recently been conducting Speed Checks. These are only permitted in the 30mph areas and are “informal”, although exact speeds and registration numbers are recorded and passed to the police who retain the right to follow up our findings. Surprisingly, given that we have to put out large signs, operate in 2s or 3s and wear fluorescent jackets there were still significant numbers of motorists flouting the limit – especially on Wellesbourne Road. The gun has currently gone on to other parishes but will be back in operation in the near future – please don’t let us catch you.

**Sherbourne and Wasperton village halls** have again been supported by JPC grants - £1368 to each of Sherbourne and Wasperton – members have again recognised more active management and fund raising taking place in the smaller villages, to make their halls more viable, and Barford waived its claim to JPC funding in the light of good occupancy and reserves

The JPC also gave grant support towards maintenance of each of the three churchyards.

**Affordable Housing** – In the autumn we carried out a Housing Needs Survey over the three villages – questionnaires were delivered to every household asking opinions on housing supply and particularly trying to identify any outstanding need for affordable housing. Results showed a clear need for 9 homes in Barford, 2 in Sherbourne and none in Wasperton. Housing Associations cannot practically build sites of only two houses so it has been suggested that the Sherbourne two should be incorporated with Barford and that we should look into providing up to 11 homes in Barford if a suitable “exception site” can be identified. An exception site is a site adjacent to current development but which would not ordinarily be developed, and so provides a cheaper site cost allowing the houses to be built “affordably”. The Rural Housing Enabler, Mr Phil Ward, is currently looking at and for possible sites.

**Allotments** –Most are now in good productive use and the few that were in poor shape have been either jollied up or reallocated. Some have also been subdivided and a few more plots cleared so that our waiting list has now been satisfied. Cllr Clay has taken on the role of Allotments Officer and as such has brought in new order and efficiency, which was much needed. The water supply to all parts of the allotments has been in place for two years and it is hoped that once the pattern of use has been established over a longer period we can incorporate the water charges into a fixed single rental charge.

One aspect of the allotments which is causing concern is the frequent and non-essential use of vehicles to attend them. It only serves to suggest to the younger element that vehicle access is acceptable and they struggle to understand why their form of social motoring to the Playing Fields should be any less acceptable. Byelaws were put in place to promote safety where young children are at risk and minimising motor access is part of this. Please only take cars to the allotments when absolutely essential or the JPC may need to seek reinstatement of the gate which used to be on that track and that will inconvenience everyone because of an inconsiderate few.

**Bus shelters** – throughout our parishes have been renovated and new raised platforms have been installed at the two southern Barford stops, funded by s.106 money from the Oldhams development.

During the year the **Telephone Kiosks** in our area came under threat – the Sherbourne one was summarily demolished in a road accident and not replaced. The other two were threatened with removal. Campaigns were launched to save them, albeit in a non-functional form, although the initial and ongoing costs and liabilities were considerable. Barford Heritage Group managed to fund saving the Barford one, and that will soon be restored. The Wasperton one could not be saved and was to be removed.

**Minerals Core Strategy – Revised Spatial Options** – Over the last few years WCC has been developing its Mineral Core Strategy to fit in with the new planning regime. It has all gone very logically so far but now they have started to look at specific areas for mineral extraction. Under the old 1995 plan there were “Preferred Sites” and “Areas of Search” and we were not particularly impacted by these and the challenges of Wasperton Farm and Castle Park had seemingly gone away. Under the old scheme many suitable sites, despite clear identification, had failed to come forward - presumably due to owner reluctance or possibly where their scale was uneconomic. The new plan seeks to identify “strategic sites” which are supported by their landowners and hence if adopted are more likely to go forward as full planning applications in due course. The JPC has formed a Working Party to mount an initial response and we have given a firm rejection on a multitude of grounds. In order to ensure that these sites do not blight our villages we will need to mount a strong and vociferous opposition to these proposals to ensure that they do not achieve “Strategic Site” status. If they do get adopted then we will again have a major battle on our hands once they proceed to planning approval stage.

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.