

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF WASPERTON  
HELD AT WASPERTON VILLAGE HALL  
ON MONDAY 23 APR 18 AT 7:30PM**

**Present:** M J Metcalfe (Chairman)  
Cllr T Merrygold (Chairman of the Joint Parish Council)  
Cllr J V Murphy (Vice-Chairman of the Joint Parish Council)  
Cllr P Phillips (WDC)  
Seventeen Wasperton Electors

**1 Opening** The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting.

**2 Minutes** The minutes of the meeting held on 24 Apr 17 were taken as read. There were no matters arising

**3 Report by Chairman of the Joint Parish Council**

The JPC has had a busy year as usual but rather than run through everything I want to highlight a number of items relevant to Wasperton. All three Wasperton parish councillors are present tonight. This year two new councillors joined the JPC representing Barford: Victoria Hunt and Dawna Haynes, and one resignation – Simon Morgan – which means there is still a vacancy on the JPC for one more councillor for Barford.

The Barford Neighbourhood Development Plan and Warwick District's Local Plan have both now been approved. This means that if land is not in the plans then any attempt by developers to build on it should be unlikely to proceed. While there has not been any large-scale applications in Wasperton, the JPC and WDC have seen off an attempt by Gladmans to develop a large piece of land on the edge of Barford, which is actually in Wasperton parish. As it is not in either the Barford plan or the Warwick one, Gladmans shouldn't have any success should they try again

However, the Sand and Gravel issue at Wasperton has not gone away yet. Unfortunately, the consultations for the County Minerals Plan are still ongoing with no resolution on what will happen to the two sites that affect us, at Wasperton Farm and Glebe Farm. The only glimmer of hope is that the plan has been revised and the total requirement for the amount of sand and gravel has reduced to 6.525M tonnes which means there is a chance that our two sites may not be needed. The next stage of the consultation is later this year. The Sand and Gravel Action Group is continuing the fight.

Now onto more positive items about our community, both of which are in Barford but Wasperton residents also benefit:

King George's Field. I am extremely pleased with the way the work in Kings George's Field has been finished and the amount of use that all the facilities receive from general users, Barford School and Barford Sports Club in particular. Increased use of the football pitch means that it will need some work done this year to improve drainage and reseed it and we are looking at longer term improvements although this will require additional funds from s106 monies.

Scout Hut Community Centre. The next big project in the joint parishes is replacing the Scout Hut with a new Youth and Community Centre building. The old concrete garages have been demolished and the new storage units built and formally opened. A new lease has been signed and planning permission granted, so fund raising can now get under way big time. The example of the playing fields shows what can be done when the community sets itself ambitious goals and rallies around raising funds. I am sure the fund raisers will achieve their goals and I look forward to opening the full Community Centre.

On a final non-JPC related item. Having attended a number of meetings in Wasperton Village Hall I must say that the most interesting one was the History Evening run by the man from Southampton University. It was good to see a full village hall held a community event that was not to do with a contentious planning

issue.

#### 4 Report by Warwick District Council

Over the last year I have been a member of the Executive and held the portfolio for Housing; In the last financial year, the District Council has achieved the following:

- Continued the substantial upgrade of the leisure centres at both St Nicholas Park and Newbold Comyn; St Nicholas Park has now been opened and it has been extremely well received with significantly increased membership; Newbold Comyn will be fully re-opened to the public over the summer;
- Reduced the rents for all of its Council House tenants for the third year in a row;
- Spent £2.5 million on reinforcing the safety of our 9 high rise blocks in the District following the Grenfell Tower disaster
- Through the planning system it has achieved over 37% of all housing development to be affordable housing
- Despite substantial reduction in central government funding, offset by a modest rise in Council Tax, there have been no reductions in services;
- Following the approval of the Local Plan for the next 15 years, all development is now controlled within a specified plan;
- As a result of this controlled development the landscape of the approach to the south of our towns of Warwick and Leamington Spa is changing as highway upgrades are started, to accommodate the planned new housing;
- The design process has started for a sizeable Country Park which will be created to both act as a buffer between the south of Warwick housing development and the rural settlement of Bishops Tachbrook;
- We will be providing a new football stadium for Leamington FC in the south of the town.
- A start has been made in planning for a creative quarter in the south of Leamington Spa, which will regenerate the south of the town;
- Plans for the development of St Mary's land in Warwick to include cycle ways and improved open space have been approved;
- Protected all the open lands owned by the District so as to prevent unauthorized Gypsy & Traveller encampments;
- Proposed a positive solution to regenerate the Leper Hospital and bring it back into use.
- As your District Councillors we have provided advice and support to the Sand & Gravel opposition group;
- Here in Barford I have, together with the JPC, continued to keep the latest housing development off Bremridge Close under constant review with the Planning Department to ensure that all planning conditions are met. Incidentally this development also provides suitable funds to help extend Barford School as well as contributing to the maintenance of Barford's Open Spaces and Playing Fields.
- As a result of continuing good financial management, the District has been able to continue to invest in building the capacity of the voluntary and community sectors with nearly £1million of expenditure over the next three years, unlike other local councils who have ceased to make a similar commitment for a number of years.
- Similarly, the Council continues to have a sizeable fund for rural initiative grants to aid worthwhile rural community schemes, none of which would be possible if good financial management had not been the cornerstone of the District's management. The adjoining Barford Community Shop and the King George Playing Fields are good prior examples of the contributions this grant facility has provided in the past.
- As the District's Procurement Champion, I have asked Procurement to investigate how future tender enquiries should include conditions as to how the elimination of plastics will be phased out over a period of any intended contract.

I would like to rectify fake news and misinformation on two important topics:

- First: The Riverside House and Covent Garden Car Park Redevelopment; the Covent Garden car park has “concrete cancer”, has already a reduced parking capacity and, in time, will have to be completely rebuilt; at the same time the District Council’s offices are neither fit for modern purpose nor economic to run; consequently, and after a District-wide search for alternative office accommodation none of which was either practical or possible, the Council approved unanimously a plan to combine the redevelopment of the Car Park with new modern state of the art Council Offices, and housing; these approved plans will now provide a car park with increased spaces, some apartments and the new smaller fit-for-purpose Council offices. In the possible future event of a unitary authority, these offices would then be easily marketed for use by others. Importantly this move, which includes the selling off of the Riverside House for housing, will save the tax payer £3million over the next ten years.
- Second: The Newbold Comyn Golf Course. The contractor has pulled out of the contract for running this golf course and the Council is looking at options on how to best use and enhance this area. However, it is grossly misleading by some to assert that the Council was about to set this area aside for housing. It is categorically not the case and never has been. Not only is this untrue, it would be impossible since it is Green Belt and the Council is currently consulting on the best continuing use of this important open space facility.

## 5 Report by Warwickshire County Council

### Budget.

For 2018-19 we set a budget rise of 4.99% made up of 2.99% for general purposes and 2% ring fenced for adult social care. Our Conservative group budget affirmed at council in February included some new and innovative projects namely:

- £150k for each of next two years to work with our borough and districts and health and primary care in partnership to reduce homelessness particularly relating to drugs, alcohol and mental health
- £125k for a year of wellbeing jointly with Coventry to help people take more control of all aspects of health and wellbeing in their lives.
- £100k for two additional planners to work on major transport schemes
- Additional funding for children with special educational needs

### Adult Social Care

We are continuing our transformation of adult services to make them simpler to access and allow users more control of their care.

### Children's services

We continue to implement smart start which aims to give all children the best start in life from birth to starting school in partnership with health, education and all partners.

We are experiencing a rise in children in care and foster homes and Warwickshire leads the West Midlands adoption agency.

We are redesigning the transition years for children and families with special needs as they move to adulthood

### Education

Our new head of education has embarked on a consultation aimed for parents to tell WCC what it expects from education for their children

### Highways

Throughout the weather this winter we fully gritted all routes on the list with numerous extra gritting to keep them clear.

A number of major schemes are due to start including Stanks Island , Heathcote dueling, A46 Stoneleigh Island

### Digital by Default

Our service transformation to full digitized services and access to WCC is gathering pace with a full internal redesign being mapped and expert staff engaged to deliver it. Next phase or how we join up to all partners including parish councils.

### Economy

Our economy continues to thrive outperforming the West Midlands. Employment remains low and WCC is recognized for its skills and apprenticeship work.

### One Combined Authority

Warwickshire continues to be a constituent member with the leader of the county council having the finance portfolio. I also attend the health and mental health meetings. This remains the WCC position.

### Old Shire Hall

This now operating as a stand-alone business unit and is available to hire for functions, weddings and the like.

**6 Report by Neighbourhood Watch** During the period there had been one theft from a garden shed in Wasperton

### **7 Report by the Wasperton Parochial Church Council**

The Church Architect produced a detailed specification of the roofing works which was the basis on which the tenders were obtained. Unfortunately, only 2 out of 3 tenders were returned, and because there was such a great differential between the two received it was decided to try and acquire at least one more tender.

The overhead heaters were in a dangerous condition, a number had stopped working and due to problems in the fuse box some of the heaters did not receive their full voltage and a decision was made to replace them during December 2017.

Alternative heating arrangements are still being considered with a view to the possibility of under pew heating.

We successfully extended the faculty for the lighting scheme until December 2019.

The wildlife garden, thanks to Mike Porter, has been a huge success and we are seeing a whole multitude of native plants and flowers together with different species of animals, birds and insects.

We continue to have a service every week but, as you are probably aware Rev David Jessett is stepping down as Vicar at the End January 2019.

### **8 Report by the Wasperton Village Hall Committee**

The Village hall continues to be used on a regular basis, by the art group, for coffee stop and by local residents for functions. In addition, there have been fundraising events, The Wasperton Sale, Quiz, Christmas Fayre and a couple of pantry sales. The 100 club continues with 3 draws a year and we welcome new members at any time. A thermometer to indicate the amount of money raised has been put up in the hall, for all members of the village to see.

The main aim of 2107/18 has been to form a charity in order to obtain grants towards the work that needs to be done on the village hall. This has been proving a more difficult process than anticipated with the first application being rejected. A new application will be submitted when all the issues associated with the first application have been resolved. This new application will be in the name of the Friends of Wasperton village hall, and the previous amenities committee has been combined with the friends of Wasperton village hall.

It is hoped that once charitable status has been achieved grants can be obtained and work can start on the structure of the hall and improvements that are needed. This will all be done in conjunction with the

PCC.

## **9 Sand and Gravel Extraction**

- Took advice – barrister – landscape and heritage reports – not BMV
- Committee and fundraising - thanks for support £26k
- Commissioned and submitted reports on landscape and heritage
- Planners reported back to Cabinet 17 Oct 17. Demand reduced from 8m to 6m tonnes – we have tried make use of the opportunity
- Sought additional advice and highlighted ecology and hedgerow – both being undertaken at the moment – identifying some interesting points to pursue
- Historic hedges Some of the hedgerows on the site fall into the category of protected hedgerows due to their age. They appear on a 1686 survey map. We have requested a survey of the affected hedgerows to present to WCC.
- Otter, badgers and great crested newts
- Delay to next consultation, now 14 Jun rather than Apr- May. Potentially next consultation in Sep-Oct
- Meeting planned for six SAGAG members with WCC.

**10 Appointment of Chairman for 2018-19** Mr Mike Metcalfe was appointed Chairman for the ensuing year.

**11 Closure of the Meeting** There being no other business the Chairman closed the meeting at 8:40pm