

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF WASPERTON  
HELD AT WASPERTON VILLAGE HALL  
ON MONDAY 29 APR 19 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)  
Twenty-three Wasperton Electors

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

**2 Minutes** The minutes of the meeting held on 23 Apr 18 were taken as read. There were no matters arising

**3 Report by Chairman of the Joint Parish Council (Cllr Tony Merrygold)**

You have a very busy and informative agenda so I don't want to take up too much time, just pick up on a couple of items, some of which will be expanded on later in the meeting.

- 1) County Minerals Plan - Sand and Gravel
  - a. The fight against the County Minerals Plan continues. Glebe Farm has been dropped from the plan but Wasperton Farm remains. The plan has now gone into consultation and the JPC submitted our objections to the amended plans as did many people from the village. The next stage is for the plan to go to the Secretary of State to then appoint an inspector and go to independent examination scheduled for this summer. Sand and Gravel Action Group are on the agenda later.
- 2) Taylor Wimpey works at Bremridge Close
  - a. The Taylor Wimpey building work in Bremridge Close is under way and causing all sorts of problems.
  - b. One piece of information that has come out of the regular meetings between the JPC, WDC and TW is that the new section of road will not be adopted by the council – it will be a private road maintained under contract by Taylor Wimpey.

3) JPC Planning Applications – Analysis

A couple of people have commented to me, almost in passing, when discussing planning matters that 'the JPC objects to everything'. I know this isn't the case but it thought it worthwhile sharing with you some analysis of the planning applications for planning year 2018

JPC	#	%	WDC	#	%
No Objection	21	75%	Grant	21	81%
Partial Objection	2	7%	Grant after Change	2	8%
Objection	5	18%	Refused	2	8%
Totals	28	100%	Withdrawn	1	4%
				26	100%
<b>Of 5 Objections</b>					
WDC Refused that JPC No Objection				1	
WDC Refused upholding JPC Objection				1	
WDC Approved that JPC Objected				1	
JPC Objected - no decision yet				2	

Now onto more positive items which are about our community.

Barford Bypass Northern Junction. The JPC now have some S106 funds earmarked for improvements to the northern junction on the Barford bypass. There isn't enough money, or land there to build a roundabout so the improvements will be to do with layout, central reservation and signage. We are still waiting to see the designs.

#### King George's Field

- a. As you all know the work in Kings George's Field has been finished and this is now a very well used facility.
- b. However, all this use presents us with a different problem – that of parking in and around King George's Field. Some use of the school parking has been agreed for away team parking at football matches.
- c. The fund-raising efforts for KGF show just how successful our communities are at pulling together and raising fund when we put our minds to it.

#### **4 Report by Warwick District Council (Cllr Peter Phillips)**

I am one of your two District Councillors and I can report on the District's achievements over the last period and my own involvement.

- A. I am currently on the Executive and hold the Portfolio for Housing and Property Services; in that role I have placed emphasis on the following:
  1. 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, 50 of which will be provided by the Council and the balance by Waterloo. In addition, there will be a hotel, pub and community centre based around the stadium, which may include a health clinic of some form.
  2. One of the biggest challenges we face as a society is providing enough homes at affordable prices for our children and grandchildren. Every council has a role to play here. For example, over 1,000 affordable homes have been built since 2015 representing more than 40% of all major developments, which is the target set down in the Local Plan.
  3. We have opened a 24/7 hostel in Leamington for rough sleepers and homeless and in the six months it has been operating nearly 100 people have come through its doors, many of whom have now been helped back into the community or reconnected with their families. Overall the Council is putting £3 million over three years into this initiative along with the County Council, driven by Les Caborn.
- B. Alan Rhead and I have been pushing through the Executive and the Council important measures in respect of new technologies for new house building in the District. Alan has persuaded one developer to construct 8 houses with complete renewables and water saving technologies; In February and now with officers, I have instigated new measures so that we incorporate ideas from the Sustainable Development Foundation into building for new Council Houses.
- C. Plans are well advanced to acquire sites for up to 500 new Council Houses in the District in the next four years.
- D. Importantly for existing Council Housing, I took through Council measures to ensure that all our council houses will have an Energy Performance Certificate of at least D with a longer term aim to take this to C
- E. We are more than half-way through a program to upgrade our tower blocks following the Grenfell fire in 2017. Rather than just doing the minimum safety upgrade we have also looked at the aesthetics of the tower block and how they are perceived by residents, and have invested in completely new interiors in the common areas more akin to what you find in private tower blocks plus revamping the outside of the blocks. Even our hard-bitten MP was highly complimentary of the work the Housing team had done.
- F. Alan has also been closely involved in the comprehensive development of the major sites in East of Kenilworth, South of Coventry and South of Warwick/Leamington Spa. It is only by setting out design briefs in these major sites that well designed applications are comprehensive and in empathy with their surroundings;

- G. There are specific project boards for each of these major sites and Alan has been liaising with the County Council Highways and Education so that he has an opportunity to help steer on the phasing of new highways and schools which are so important to accommodate all of the new housing emanating from the approved Local Plan;
- H. This last 6 to 18 months, following WDC support to King George's Playing Fields in Barford, we have successfully sought from the District Council funding to help save Norton Lindsey's pub and build a new Norton Lindsey village hall; the Council has also provided important funding in support of the community centres at Bishops Tachbrook, Whitnash and Chase Meadow. These are all important projects to ensure that rural communities continue to be sustainable. On 4 years we have spent £4 million of the new homes bonus on community projects, largely in the rural areas,
- I. In support of the police in Leamington, your Council is upgrading the CCTV to help in the fight against crime and provide community protection.
- J. The Council provided a much-needed grant to the Playbox Theatre in Warwick so that an access could be constructed without which their car park could not be usefully used. This has resulted in the Theatre increasing their footfall and allowed them to return to being sustainable.
- K. The Council has set down plans to ensure that both St Mary's land in Warwick and Newbold Comyn in Leamington Spa can continue to be protected. I reiterate that there will never be any housebuilding on Newbold Comyn despite persistent rumours.
- L. Plans are also well advanced for a substantial country park running across the south of the towns between Warwick Castle, through to Bishop's Tachbrook and eventually onto Newbold Comyn. This will ensure that Bishop's Tachbrook will always maintain its identity as a separate community to Warwick and Leamington. We are also looking very closely at how to complete the riverside walk from Leamington to Warwick following the move in a few years of the athletics track.
- M. The Council is ensuring that there is a complete cycleway from the Woodloes through to Aylesford School.
- N. There are now two completely refurbished leisure centres at St Nicholas and Newbold Common parks. These refurbishments have been so successful that we have now exceeded one million visitors and they have yet to be opened for a complete year. Kenilworth is next to benefit.
- O. Alan as the District's 'Procurement Champion' has secured with the Procurement team that all District contracts insist on a plastics policy which demonstrates how the contractor will reduce and/or avoid plastic usage. This will form part of the award criteria.
- P. On air quality the District has imposed a planning policy that all new homes must include electric car charging points and are working with the County Council on how to improve air quality especially in the south of Leamington near the station, and also exploring opportunities for electric buses.

## **5 Neighbourhood Watch**

The Chairman thought that Neighbourhood Watch in Wasperton was moribund. An appeal at last year's meeting for new leadership had met with no response so by default he continues to head it until more local interest is generated.

He asked the meeting for examples of criminal behaviour in the village in the past year and was told:

- Lambs are being stolen and this is likely to increase as they grow and become fit for market.
- Deer are being poached.
- Quadbike vandals destroyed electric fencing.

## **6 Report by Wasperton Parochial Church Council (Mike Porter)**

This has been a mixed year for us, losing our Priest in Charge when David Jessett retired in January and we moved into interregnum. David had really cared for us for so many years. Twenty I think. Things have worked out very well for us since January with excellent support from Rev Neville Beamer plus our first-rate Readers. I fully expected a long interregnum, I must admit and then out of the blue came Andy Larkin who will be in charge of our six Parishes for six months, thereafter a review by all parties. Fingers crossed. Our Church attendance numbers are holding up but no real growth and no young people I'm afraid. Just us old wrinklies.

We are very fortunate in our Officers, possibly with my exception, Alice is such a good and efficient treasurer and Wendy keeps us regularly up to date as our secretary. Carl, Churchwarden is always ready to prepare the Church for our services and fulfil his role to the full. Our Churchyard is well maintained with our team of 15 volunteers including the wildlife areas.

The fly in the ointment is the condition of the Church roof, costly repair needed very soon. However we look forward with enthusiasm to the forthcoming year with Andy's appointment.

### **7 Report on Wasperton Village Hall (Diana Phillips)**

During 2018 the Amenities committee continued to organise fundraising events for phase two of planned improvements to Wasperton Village Hall. The committee has increased in size with new ladies joining. We are pleased to report that a total of £4,889.29 has been raised during the year.

One pantry sale has been held during the year, giving everyone the chance to buy homemade produce.

A very successful village BBQ was held in July, in College farmhouse garden, thanks go to Jonathon and Lucinda Wallace for hosting this event.

The Wasperton Sale was once again held in September. It always attracts people from outside the village and we now have many regular customers. It involves a lot of work and would be impossible without the help of the many villagers, and for this we are very grateful.

The popular quiz returned in November, this time with cottage pie being served. An enjoyable evening was had by all.

Our Fourth Christmas Fair took place at the end of November. It was pleasing to have visitors from outside the village support us. Coffee and mince pies were for sale, together with gifts, locally produced cards, home-made decorations and plants. Fun was had with a Christmas tombola and a raffle for a beautiful Christmas cake made by Jill Coles.

Three pop up pubs were held in 2018, which have proved very successful. They are now a regular feature of the Wasperton calendar and are very well attended by the village and Barford. The pub is now named The Wobbly Wasp.

Draws have been made for the Village Hall 100 club throughout the year. Whilst the 100 Club is well supported, we are happy to welcome any new members who are residents of Wasperton, Barford and Sherbourne parishes.

The money raised by the Friends of Wasperton village hall for the improvements has now reached a total of £15,000. We would also like to thank the JPC for their grant of £1200, without which it would be very difficult to manage the day to day running of the hall by the PCC.

Further investigations into obtaining charitable status have been done through the year, with advice from Verney Jeans, village hall advisor with the WRCC. After much deliberation we realised we wouldn't be able to set up a charity in the name of Friends of Wasperton Village hall. Following discussions with the PCC and David Jessett and a letter from the diocesan solicitor it became evident that an Albermarle scheme would be the only way of gaining charitable status for the village hall. This is now in the hands of the PCC and we are awaiting the outcome of their discussions.

If the PCC/ Church feel that an Albermarle scheme is the way forward there will need to be discussions with the church on the terms of the lease, so that it is acceptable to both parties. An application to the Charity commission will have to be made to make Wasperton Village hall a CIO (Charitable incorporated organisation) in its own right. There will then be the need for a management committee to oversee the day to day running of the village hall and all the repairs and improvements. It is hoped that members of the village will step forward to help in this respect. There is a lot of help and advice we can obtain from

the WRCC and ACRE in the respect of setting up a charity and management of the hall.

## **8 Sand and Gravel Extraction (Stephanie Steel)**

Good Evening – I am Stephanie Steel from Seven Elms at Wasperton and have been fully involved in staving off this dreadful blight to us all since it came out to the community in October 2015!

It is approximately a year since we were sat here waiting to see what the planners would be presenting to The Cabinet. They eventually presented their new version of the plan to Cabinet in July 2018. There was an element of success in the new plan in that Site 5 Glebe Farm had been removed from the plan but regrettably the largest Site, Site 4, Wasperton Farm remained....so we still had everything to fight for. We yet again had good support from the community to both attend the meeting and to present our thoughts on why Site 4 should not be included in the plan.

Regrettably but not surprisingly the proposal was voted through and the plan was yet again presented but this time to the full council. This was a break in tradition and we feel had been offered as some type of platitude by Izzy Seccombe some 18 months prior when it was decided to re-draft the plan. Anyway - as I think anyone of us at that stage could have predicted the plan including the allocation of Site 4 was voted through by the vast majority of council members who were there / in attendance at that meeting.

It took another few months for the planners to prepare for the public consultation and during this time we were busy preparing the campaign and discussing with our professionals how to move forward. It was again decided that we would continue to work with Wardle Armstrong whose name and reputation is well known within the field and throughout the country. And that involved at their recommendation employing Nationally recognised Sustainability Appraisal experts, Jam Consulting. Between them they trawled through the lengthy documents identifying inconsistencies and breach of regulations etc. Their findings were submitted jointly on a rather lengthy Form 20 (on behalf of Barford Residents Association) which is available for people to read on the website

The consultation eventually started, - unsurprisingly during half-term at the end of October) and concluded on 12<sup>th</sup> December '18. We had an amazing campaign, the communities within the villages really got behind us and supported all the way through resulting in an absolutely fantastic 761 responses being hand delivered to the council office steps again strongly supported by over 70 members of the community who turned out on a dark and wet and windy to hand over the forms and have their photos taken and in the paper!! It was a brilliant atmosphere towards the end of the consultation period and we wish to thank all the people who did so much in so many ways, who did what they could to make it such a success!!

There were of course the additional responses that went in direct too but unfortunately as yet we are able to confirm the numbers.

So, what impact have we had and where are we now?

To be completely honest – we don't really know. Despite a gentle stream of requests, the planners are keeping things very much close to their chests.

Basically, as we understand it there are 2 options:

- 1) They follow their process and at some stage will make contact with the Inspectorate with regard to an inspection in a few months following
- 2) They review the responses they have received / recalculate figures etc and potentially could start from scratch or at least go back for a further cabinet decision and re-consult with the public again.

It really all depends on how much they feel they have to amend the plan following the consultation – if it is significant, they will need to go to consultation again.

Unfortunately, unless anyone else can shed any light on the situation we have to wait until the Planners decide to update the planning portal!! Very poor system really!

In the meantime, another group of Mums from the school have agreed to take on a campaign to focus on St John's College to see if with pressure from OUR communities and THEIR students we can get them to re-assess their position.

Once again, we are asking villagers to write to the college declaring their dismay by what St John's College are planning to do to our neighbourhood and environment.

There is further information on how to do this in this month's Village Voices and there will be some sample letters on the website but to be honest for those of you who have the time and inclination it would be infinitely better if you could draft your own letters with your own views as to why they shouldn't desecrate our landscape.

Part of this campaign will be to stage a protest outside St John's College in the near future and infiltrate the student's social media platforms to raise their awareness of the situation we find ourselves in and the devastation this college is planning to cause to our neighbourhood, our prized land and landscape and our health.

I'm sorry we can't provide you with anything more definitive but as soon as we know which way it is going; we will ensure that the community are brought up to speed as a matter of urgency.

Thank you all for listening.

## **9. Any Other Business**

9.1 Confirmation was given that the JPC could not legally make grants for churchyard maintenance and this would cease in future.

9.2 In his capacity as a Wasperton representative on the Joint Parish Council, Cllr Neil Thurley made an impassioned plea for the younger elements in the village to take on that mantle and relieve the three incumbents who had done their civic duty for many years and were now seeking retirement.

**10 Appointment of Chairman for 2019-20** 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 9:00pm