

**MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF WASPERTON
HELD ON MONDAY 26 APR 21 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 L Caborn (WCC)
Fourteen Wasperton Electors

1 Opening The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting.

2 Minutes The minutes of the meeting held on 29 Apr 19 were taken as read. There were no matters arising.

3 Report of Chairman of Joint Parish Council (Cllr T Merrygold)

We did not have an Annual Parish Meetings last year as we had only just gone into the first lockdown, so this report notionally covers the past two years.

I intend to keep it short and just give an update on a few items.

- The past year of coping with COVID has been a struggle for many people. I think we probably all know a number of people who have contracted COVID and some of us know people who have died of it. The JPC has carried on throughout the year using Zoom to run our meetings. While some of the meetings have been very short and very productive, we also lost the personal interaction that comes along with face-to-face meetings. But I want to focus on some of the positive side effects of the past twelve months. I have seen our community working together as never before across all three of our parishes:
- Numerous instances of neighbours helping each other with regular shopping trips, trips to pharmacies / doctors /hospital appointments, and just generally checking up on each other.
- Barford Village Shop quickly stepped up to the challenge – changing layout, making it COVID safe and new (younger) volunteers stepping up to help protect some of our more vulnerable volunteers

The Sand and Gravel saga continues very slowly. The Public Enquiry took place during 2020 via Zoom with the JPC and a number of other people giving evidence. It was very thorough, and the inspector sent WCC back to provide much of the information he was missing. The next stage in the process will not be until toward the end of this year so we have at least another full year of uncertainty ahead of us.

The other Wasperton related issue of note was the demolition of the bus stop by an errant driver. The cost of rebuilding this was covered by our insurers, who unfortunately opted for the lowest quote. While work initially progressed reasonably well, contractor's health problems put the repair on hold for some months. Finally the patience of the JPC ran out and the work was completed by two Cllrs: John Murphy and Mike Sheard and a separate contractor.

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

Cllr Thurley proposed a vote of thanks to Cllrs. Murphy and Sheard for their work on the bus shelter. This was strongly supported by the meeting.

Cllr Billingham proposed a vote of thanks to all the volunteers who had provided support to villagers throughout the Covid period. This was also strongly supported.

4 Report from Warwickshire County Council (Cllr L Caborn)

This report is dominated by the year of Covid and its effect on the council and the citizens we serve. In October 2019 WCC embarked on replacing all IT with Microsoft Pro 365 computer systems for all staff and councillors as part of our transformation programme. This proved to be timely as when Covid struck we were immediately able to allow all staff to work from home. This meant as well as giving at times 24/7 support on Covid the day job was able to carry on. All staff not only worked on their usual role but on other roles to deliver our covid response.

Public Health lead on our Covid response being granted Beacon Status and mentioned for our vaccine success on a ministerial broadcast. We established infection control teams for South Warwickshire , Rugby and North Warwickshire , these teams working with boroughs and districts . these teams offered advice to businesses, care homes and schools etc.

Adult Social Care and commissioning has been commended by care homes for its excellent support including PPE from our own warehouse and prompt passporting of funds for care coming from central government . it also worked with all hospitals to minimise delays in hospital discharge for all needing support ensuring no one stayed in hospital longer than needed.

WCC's Test and Trace has helped keep positive rates down and our 6 testing sites and outbreak pop up sites have delivered 155,000 tests and continue to do so.

To plan and deliver our WCC future and Covid recovery , 3 documents have been produced and are publicly available

1 the Council recovery plan

2 the Director of Public Health's annual report

3 the Warwickshire Health and Wellbeing Boards Strategy 2021 – 2026

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These concentrate on recovery for business, mental health , and inequalities of race, finance education and health across all our communities.

As part of this recovery we have launched a Property Company to build property including housing and maximise our return for the taxpayer on property disposal. Also established our Recovery Investment Company to support business recovery and business start-ups to preserve and create jobs £2.4 m has been invested in Mental Health with focus on young people and Dementia.

As portfolio holder ,Chair of HWBB ,and chair of the Covid members' engagement board ,I have been involved on behalf of WCC with all Health partners and WDC to deliver our covid response and the change in the Health system with the introduction of one Clinical commissioning Group and the progress of the National Scheme to move to an Integrated Care System for Warwickshire which sets in statute that all responsible for delivering care and health at any point to you will work together .

I have worked with parishes to produce road Safety Schemes although some are yet to be delivered but all funds are secured .

Finally, this is my last report to you as County Councillor as I retire at the May 6th election. It has been a pleasure to serve as your County Councillor for the past 16 years and I wish you all well for the future .

Thanks you for your support and friendship.

[The Chairman moved a vote of thanks to Cllr Caborn for the years of service he had given to the village and wished him well in his retirement.]

5 Report from Warwick District Council (Cllrs A Rhead & J Matecki)

This report is from your two District Councillors, Councillor Alan Rhead and Councillor Jan Matecki. We can report on the District's achievements over the last period and our own involvement. One important matter is the closer joint working with Stratford District Council, where the intention is to consider a South Warwickshire 'Super' District Council, subject to a report from Officers confirming the perceived advantages to all of our residents.

Councillor Alan Rhead:

I am currently on the Executive and hold the two Portfolios of the Environment and Neighbourhood Services. In those roles I have placed emphasis on the following: -

1. The Climate Emergency is regarded by your Council as the biggest challenge facing not only the Council, but all of its residents. Despite the pandemic (which has had a large effect on the Council's budget) the Council's Officers have worked on several environmental fronts in support of its target for being a zero-carbon council by 2025. These include: -

- a). Appointing a Climate Change Programme Director who is part of the Corporate Management Team (CMT).
- b). The Council has agreed to place £0.5 million in its current budget to address climate change (this despite challenging times resulting from the loss of income as a result of the pandemic).
- c). The Council held a Peoples' Inquiry into climate change, independently facilitated, and this Inquiry has provided a set of recommendations. The Council has committed to implement those recommendations or set out why it is unable so to do.
- d). Engaging consultants to provide a feasibility report on the creation of both a hydrogen hub and a solar farm as an alternative or in addition to electric vehicles, particularly HGV's and buses.
- e). The Council has secured external funding of £744,000 to address energy efficiency and carbon reduction in the Council's public buildings. Together with the Council's match funding of £150,000, 185 tonnes of CO₂ per annum will be saved.
- f). The Council is embarking on installing LED lighting in its external lighting infrastructure.
- g). Submitted Expressions of Interest (EOI) to the LEP for a Bike Share Scheme estimated to cost £700,000 but with a potential income stream of c.£300,000 pa.
- h). Working with WCC on a Park & Ride scheme at the ASPS development which will include electric buses.
- i). Reviewing proposals for external operators for a Car Club using EV only.
- j). Signed contracts with BP Chargemaster for 50 EV charging points in the Council's facilities.
- k). The Council has a single use plastics policy which, together with the refill scheme, will reduce the amount of plastic used within the Council's departments.
- l). As a precursor for a major tree planting project (over 160,000 trees), a mapping exercise has been commissioned as the first important step.

2. Under Neighbourhood Services there have been a number of important steps taken including:

- a). Going out to tender for a new waste contract which has taken advantage of the close joint working with Stratford District Council. The eventual contract will be for waste collection throughout both Warwick and Stratford Districts.
- b). Developing the detail behind the proposed new Tachbrook Country Park which was a commitment within the current Local Plan. It is the intention to submit a planning application in the near future.
- c). Following an extensive public consultation exercise on the future of Newbold Comyn, a planning application has been submitted for the first phase for a network of mountain bike trails. Other phases will be considered at a future date.
- d). An extensive programme of thinning and replanting has been undertaken at Oakley Woods which is designed to promote wildlife and plant life.
- e). New car parking charges have been set. While these changed charges are usually reviewed for January implementation, this year they have been delayed due to the pandemic. The Council took the decision to provide free car parking during the pandemic to assist in the help for local businesses in the town centres.
- f). 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

3. Locally I have assisted the Barford Youth Club in making an application to the District Council for a grant. To date this has included the submission of a business plan and I will be continuing to lobby for a grant, despite the challenging budget times as a consequence of the pandemic.

4. I have been encouraged by the local community's concentrated involvement in the Bar Zero organisation which was started with my encouragement. I have been asked to lobby the Council for funding which I am doing, armed with the community's enthusiasm for climate change.

Councillor Jan Matecki

I am also currently on the Executive and hold two Portfolios, Housing and Property as well as Culture.

1. For Housing and Property we have achieved the following:

- a) Increasing the Council's housing stock by purchasing Section 106 housing from developers, which includes 25 homes in Bremridge Close, Barford.
- b) Embarked on a building program to increase the housing stock further, with 51 new energy efficient homes being built on Europa Way, with other sites identified for development.
- c) Established a local housing company, Milverton Homes Limited, which is fully owned by WDC. Its aim is to provide homes for rent at market rent levels and to develop sites for both market sales and for the Council's housing stock, which in turn will provide a new and diverse income stream for the Council.

- d) Secured £1.35m of grant funding for a project that will see 50 of the least energy rated Council homes undergo a whole house energy refit. This will not only improve their energy ratings but will reduce energy costs for the individuals and will also improve air quality.
 - e) Released a new Housing Allocations Policy which meets latest legislative requirements and allocates affordable housing in a fairer manner, ensuring those in the greatest and genuine need get the greatest priority. It also eliminates loopholes which allowed individuals to register for social housing when they were not in need of housing.
 - f) At the start of the pandemic the Council provided accommodation to all homeless and rough sleepers before the government announced their Everyone In policy. We have helped over 80 individuals to be kept secure, with the vast majority remaining to be housed and supported. Some have secured permanent tenancies.
 - g) Released a new Homelessness policy for consultation, which would see a new approach of housing the homeless in their own accommodation and the support services they need being brought to them.
 - h) Closed William Walsgrove House, the homelessness walk-in hostel, so it can be converted from dormitory style accommodation into individual rooms. We found during the pandemic that individuals were far more likely to stay in accommodation where they had their own rooms, and with everyone taken off the street it was felt that the need for dormitories, which can accommodate far more individuals, were no longer needed
 - i) Switched electricity supply to 100% renewable and green electricity to all Council corporate buildings, reducing their carbon footprint.
 - j) Provided CCTV at Oakley Wood Crematorium to enable more people to attend services remotely during the current restrictions. These will continue in the future.
2. For Culture we have achieved the following:
- a) Support for Everyone Active, who manage our leisure centres, during the pandemic to ensure that the facilities remain available for people to use once allowed.
 - b) Secured a £170k grant to support our cultural services during the pandemic, to ensure that places like the Spa Centre and Pump Rooms could open as soon as lockdown restrictions are lifted.
 - c) Have been awarded 2 events for the 2022 Commonwealth Games, Lawn Bowls to be held in Leamington and Road Cycling that will start and finish in Warwick.
 - d) Secured funding for the relaying of the lawn bowls greens in Victoria Park Leamington to an international standard. This will not only benefit the Commonwealth Games but will leave a legacy for the staging of more international tournaments, which will attract more visitors and further benefit the area.
 - e) Improved Victoria Park with newly laid footpaths. Not only are they new but they are smoother and brighter, and overgrown foliage has also been trimmed back.
 - f) Commenced a project to provide a new Wayfinding scheme in time for the Commonwealth Games. This will help both competitors and spectators during the games and will also be another lasting legacy which will benefit all tourists in the future.
 - g) Early last year, to further promote the creative sector in our District, we held our first SPARK conference for the coming together and sharing of ideas of that industry. This year the event was held remotely due to the current restrictions but was still very well supported and productive. Locally I have assisted families in securing housing, as well as those requiring modifications to their homes through the HEART service

6 Neighbourhood Watch (M Brook)

The only activity worthy of note was the case of two fugitives from the police being apprehended in the village. The joy of living in a rural idyl.

7 Parochial Church Council (C Smith)

We have not been inactive during this period.

We have opened the church as and when we were allowed.

We have all the Hand Sanitizers and spare face masks in suitable places.

The seating has been socially distanced..

Test and Trace facilities have been implemented.

Generally, we have a safe one way in and one way out to stop any close contact.

We had a good turn-out for Remembrance Day.

We had a good turn-out for the Carol Service (Outside) in the churchyard under floodlights.

We had a reasonable turn-out on Christmas Day.

We have been positively following and acting upon revised guidelines from Government and the Diocese but trying to keep the facilities management, i.e. scheduling and preventative maintenance up to date.

We have checked every week the Church and Village Hall for Ecclesiastical Insurance purposes and have washed through the pipework in the Hall with 60°C hot water to kill any bacteria.

8 Village Hall Committee (D Phillips)

The village hall has been closed for most of the past 13 months. One socially distanced pop-up pub was held in August. Lights were put up outside at Christmas to add some cheer to the village. As soon as we are able the village is very keen to have another pop-up pub.

9 Appointment of Chairman for 2021-22 M Metcalfe was elected unopposed

10 Close There being no further business the meeting closed at 8:00pm.