

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF WASPERTON
HELD ON MONDAY 25 APR 22 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)
Nineteen Wasperton Electors

1 Opening

The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting.

2 Minutes The minutes of the meeting held on 26 Apr 21 were taken as read. There were no matters arising.

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

This is the first live Annual Parish Meeting for three years as 2020 saw us entering the first lockdown, and last year's was via zoom.

I intend to keep my report short as the main items that matter to the village are covered later in the agenda anyway.

COVID

Firstly a couple of word about COVID which is still with us. Anyone who uses the Zoe app to report Covid will know the rise in infections continues and they increased the scale on their graph from a peak of 10,000 to 20,000 and last week WDC reported the highest rate of infections so far.

A year ago relatively few of us had contracted Covid and fortunately few had died of it. We have now reached the stage where I am sure every one of us knows someone close to us who has had Covid and many of us have had friends or relatives who have died from Covid. Fortunately despite the increasing spread, a combination of the majority of the population being vaccinated, and the fact that the Omicron variant not seeming as strong as the earlier variants means the level of hospitalisations and deaths isn't as high as before. But the fact that some of you here are still wearing face masks shows that we should not become complacent.

On the up side I have seen our community in all three of our parishes working together as never before over the past two years. Our residents have always helped each other but this increased noticeably during COVID with neighbours helping out with shopping, hospital visits etc and long may this continue.

Minerals Plan

The Locals Minerals Plan (for the sand and gravel quarry) saga rumbles on with final responses to the amended plan being sent in in January. The Sand and Gravel group with the help of Wardell Armstrong sent in their final response and I, on behalf of the JPC, again with guidance from Wardell Armstrong sent in our update.

The Inspector is heading towards submission of his Final Report. He's suggested 'mid April' as a timeframe for submission this is likely to slip to the end of the month. Just before the final report is submitted the report is sent to the Council to undertake a 'fact check', it isn't an opportunity for them to question any of the findings, it's more of a proof read to ensure place names / figures are correct etc. Councils are given two weeks to complete a Fact Check before the Inspector then assesses any response, tidies things up if necessary and submits the report.

The JPC turned down an invitation from Smiths Concrete to visit an extraction site as this was premature. If Wasperton Farm is included in the final plan, then we expect Smiths to re-issue this invitation and submit a planning application. Cllr Murphy mentioned that Smiths have approached the Barford Scout Hut to book a date for a public meeting.

A resident asked a question about whether it would be possible to delay extraction until a screen had been planted and grow up. The Chair said that while he believed planting the screen would be one of the first actions on the site, he did not believe the contractors would delay the extraction and would then move straight into the first phase.

South Warwickshire Local Plan

I now want to turn our attention to the South Warwickshire Local Plan. Even though last week it was announced that the planned merger of Warwick and Stratford District councils will not take place, they have been working together on preparing a Local Plan for the whole of South Warwickshire to replace the current plans when they expire (2029 for Warwick and 2031 for Stratford).

As part of this, they put out a 'Call for Sites' so that any landowners or developers could put forward any sites that they may want to be considered for any change of use, for housing, commercial use, mixed use, solar farms etc.

This information has now been collated and published online on a new South Warwickshire Local Plan website. This includes an interactive map covering the whole of South Warwickshire and you drill into this map and see all the sites put forward within the boundaries of all three of our parishes. As chair of the JPC I have signed up to be kept involved in the Plan process and will be attending an online update session at the end of the month.

The two sites that affect Wasperton residents are the 'Paddock' and the site to the south of Sandy Way in Barford which is actually in Wasperton Parish. Both have been put forward for housebuilding but there won't be any detail until the plan process progresses.

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

4 Report from Warwickshire County Council (Cllr. Jan Matecki (in absentia))

In May 2021, elections were held to select the councillors for Warwickshire County Council. I was honoured to be elected as the representative for the Budbrooke and Bishop's Tachbrook Division, in which Shrewley is located, replacing Les Caborn. The Conservatives formed the new administration with an increased majority.

Covid still continued to dominate many activities throughout the year, with vaccinating the population being a priority. As a county, 86% of those eligible for vaccination received at least one dose, which includes 70% of under 18s. In Warwick district the numbers are 86% of eligible residents receiving at least one dose, with 74% of under 18s doing so. This compares to the national figure of 80% and 60% for under 18s.

The new Integrated Care Scheme (ICS) for Warwickshire is taking shape and a formal submission to Health England will be submitted in the coming weeks. As part of the new ICS, the county has been divided into "places". The South Warwickshire Place (SWP) covers Warwick and Stratford District areas. The SWP will be able to focus on the health needs of South Warwickshire residents as priorities. These priorities have been identified as Respiratory Health and Inequalities, Children and Young People, and Mental Health, Suicide and Bereavement. The SWP Board will now be working to put in place plans to tackle these local issues.

The Fire Service had Ben Brook appointed as new Chief Fire Officer appointed in July 21. This was because of Kieran Amos retiring after 30 years of service in the fire sector, and as the Chief Fire Officer in Warwickshire since 2019. Sadly, only 4 months later, in November Kieran passed away after an unexpected short illness.

A national campaign for 20 is plenty was brought to the council as a motion to have all residential areas of Warwickshire reduced speed limits of 20mph. A task and finish group (TFG) was set up to investigate the feasibility of such a proposal. The TFG determined, and recommended to the Cabinet, that a widespread 20mph in all residential areas would be impractical for many reasons, including defining what was a residential area or not, and would probably have a negative effect on areas that needed 20mph limits such as around schools. The TFG recommended that the decision on 20mph limits should be a decision taken more locally, where the requirements and support for such limits were better known.

The Warwickshire Minerals Plan 2018 has still not been adopted and awaiting the Inspectors further comments. The replacement of fencing along the southern end of the A429 Barford bypass has been authorized and should be installed in the coming weeks.

A request for a controlled crossing on the A429 at Sherbourne has been evaluated. The threshold for a crossing was not met by a considerable margin. As a result, the county highways team have confirmed that they will not be installing a crossing at this location.

The Youth and Community Centre was unsuccessful in its bid for a Green Shoots grant. There will be a second round of bidding later in the year. I am also looking to see if there are other funds that might be available to submit applications for grants.

5 Neighbourhood Watch (M Brook)

Yet another quiet year in our splendid village. No problems at all reported either by residents or noted during the last twelve months. No incidents to report, other than a Police Car doing its best to further demolish the boundary fence of Wasperton House at the top of the village earlier this year. The newly rebuilt Bus Stop was spared during the incident. No injuries thankfully reported.

PCSO Paul Coleman, who has been our liaison with Warwickshire Police, retired at the end of December 2021. PCSO Naomi Sutton 6355, of the Warwick Rural West 'Safer Neighbourhood Team', is his replacement. All contact appears to now be via their webpage at 'Warwickshire Connected'.

Residents, as always, continue to do a great job in looking out for each other. Wasperton is still a very safe village in which to live.

6 Parochial Church Council (C Smith)

We still have 4 services per month with our Church wardens leading two evensong services per month. Our congregation has remained stable.

We had a good turn-out for Remembrance Day with one of the villagers reading out the names of the fallen.

We had a reasonably good turn-out for the Carol Service (Inside the church for the first time in 2 years)

The Churchyard wildlife and wildflower areas are doing well and we have recently installed a new bat box. And the mowing rota has increased resulting in everyone mowing less often.

Mary's Rickles family donated a memorial bench and has been positioned and fixed in the churchyard.

The Church also has new pew cushions.

We still have problems with the roof and more recently we have major problems with the Church bells.

We sent a drone up to the turret to take pictures and found that a spoke on the wheel had badly cracked and the bell cradle looked unstable

Due to covid we haven't been able to raise the funds to have the Church clock repaired.

7 Village Hall Committee (D Phillips)

Following a long break, the Committee was able to meet, once again in October where we planned events for the year. Unfortunately, a Sunday lunch, a Christmas Fair and a Christmas Wobbly Wasp Pub were cancelled because of concerns about Covid.

At last, in February we were able to hold a Wobbly Wasp Pub evening and, once again, this popular event was well attended.

Diana Phillips and Jane Markham have been liaising with Andy Larkin our Vicar over Wasperton Village Hall and how to go about refurbishment and improvement.

The Diocese at the moment will not proceed with an Albermarle Scheme or lease. It would be preferable to obtain a lease, but we may have to look at obtaining funding without one.

As a start, a Survey has been done by Tom Pickering from Godfrey Payton. We are at present waiting for the Survey report and costs. We will update the village when we know what needs doing and how we can go about it.

8 Arts Group

Michael Porter gave a summary of the activities of the Group. New members would be welcome, including those wishing to bring manageable craft activities such as needlework.

9 Planning: Sand and Gravel Extraction

Final decisions of the viability of the site in Wasperton are awaited.

Tribute was paid to the contribution made by Stephanie and Andrew Steel to the activities of the Sand & Gravel Action Group before their departure from Wasperton

Meanwhile attention is being focused of St John's College, Oxford in an effort to persuade it to reverse its decision to allow its land to be used for purposes of quarrying.

A suggestion from the floor that the site should be securely fenced before extraction could start was thought to be unenforceable

10 Planning: Development of Wasperton Paddock

Little progress has been made. WDC has however given an undertaking to review the application in the next few weeks.

11 Any Other Business

Following new legal advice, a Wasperton Churchyard maintenance grant has been included in the JPC budget for FY 2022/3.

Refurbishment of the riverside war memorial and the planting of a jubilee tree have both been funded by a bequest from Sylvia Fenwick, who used to live at The Dovecote. The work on the war memorial was commissioned by Mike Cleaver, who also used to live in Wasperton. The meeting expressed its gratitude to both Sylvia and Mike.'

12 Appointment of Chairman for 2022-23

M Metcalfe was elected unopposed

13 Close

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8:09pm.