

BARFORD, SHERBOURNE AND WASPERTON JOINT PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Monday, 20th October 2003
in Sherbourne Village Hall at 7.30 pm.

Present: Councillor J V Murphy (Chairman)

Cllrs M P Byerley, R Clay, Mrs S Dean, Mrs A Gordon, G P Grima, Mrs M Hayward,
K S Hope, D H Hunt, G G Morris, R G Mulgrue, S G Starkey, W Worrall and J T Wright.

In attendance: Cllrs Mrs M B Haywood (WCC) and Mrs C Sawdon (WDC)

113. **Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs R G Butler and Mrs J Compton.

114. **Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests**

The following interests were declared:

Cllr J V Murphy (Chairman)

Agenda item 8 Members Allowances – New Regulations (*Chairman's Allowance*) –
'Personal and Prejudicial' as Council Chairman.

Agenda item 12 Applications for Grant 2003/2004 (*Village Halls*) – 'Personal and
Prejudicial' as member of Barford Memorial Hall Committee and (*Churchyard Maintenance*)
'Personal' as wife is member of PCC.

Agenda item 16 Restoration of Barford War Memorial – 'Personal' as wife is member of
PCC.

Cllr Mrs Hayward

Agenda item 12 Restoration of Barford War Memorial – 'Personal' as member of PCC

Cllr Hunt

Agenda item 12 Applications for Grant 2003/2004 (*Village Halls*) - 'Personal and
Prejudicial' as member of Wasperton Village Hall Committee.

Cllr Worrall

Agenda item 12 Applications for Grant 2003/2004 (*Village Halls*) – 'Personal and
Prejudicial' as member of Barford Memorial Hall Committee.

115. **Representations by Members of the Public**

Three members of the public were present and made representations concerning the traffic calming measures in Barford. They had inspected similar tables to those now being suggested as replacements for the Barford tables. These had been installed in Heathcote Road and though not intrusively noisy they were only marginally effective. Some vehicles even accelerated over them. If installed in Barford, they believed their construction needed to be more consistent and steeper or higher.

They expressed their view that the narrowing in upper High Street was still inadequately effective and that the chicane remained dangerous. They felt that Warwickshire County Council's proposals for improvement should not be accepted.

116. **Matters for the Constabulary**

Cllr Hope referred to the chestnut paling on Sadler's footpath which, after repair, had again been damaged.

Concern was expressed about the effects on community policing in the area arising from PC French's secondment. The position on cover in the short term, or in the long term if he did not return, was unclear.

Resolved: that the position on community policing cover for the area be clarified with the Constabulary and reported back to the Council.

117. **Minutes**

The minutes of the following meetings were confirmed:

Council (*with the change of the word
(bus) 'schedules' to 'usage'*)

8th September

Planning Committee

8th September

7th October

118. **Reports from Representatives Appointed to Serve on Other Bodies**

Cllr Clay attended a meeting of the **Stour Area Committee** on 15th October at which Wellesbourne Parish Council's bid for the provision of a sports facilities centre with swimming pool was being considered. The Parish Council had commissioned its own consultants' feasibility report. Costs were expected to be in the region of £3.25m to £4.5m.

Concerns about the scheme were based on value for money, increased road traffic and competition with other facilities in the general area. Cllr Clay said that he had conveyed support from the JPC.

The matter was referred for consideration by the Stratford on Avon District Council.

Cllr Mulgrue attended a meeting on **Warwickshire rural transport** on 14th October, the theme of which was 'rushing to get there'. He also reported that the **Dial-a-Ride Scheme** for Barford, Budbrooke and Sherbourne had now been approved by the Traffic Commissioners.

The Chairman said that he had attended the **Rowington Electoral Panel** on 26th September. Inspector Woodcock, Police commander for Warwick, Kenilworth and rural areas, PC Sarah Mumford (CBO), and Motah Singh (Chair of Police Authority) outlined Police priorities as burglaries, drug related crime, anti-social behaviour and motor vehicle crime. Current initiatives included Operation Gamet for vehicle crime, ANPR (Automatic Number Plate Recognition) which would become active in October 2003 in our area, Police Community Support Officers and SID (Speed Indicator Device) availability. SID was available in two day blocks from Barrack Street by contacting James Claridge on 01926 735661.

Resolved: to note the above reports.

119. **Barford Playing Field – Multi-Sports Surface etc – Noise Reduction**

The Chairman reported that further information on the availability of noise reduction measures and their costs is still awaited.

120. **Members Allowances – New Regulations**

Receipt of the new regulations had been reported at the meeting in September and Members had been supplied with a copy of the guidance note provided by the National Association of Local Councils. Consideration was deferred at that time to enable Members to consider this guidance.

After discussion of the issues involved the Council decided that it did not wish to pay the new general members' allowance.

Resolved: to continue to reimburse Members for expenses actually incurred in fulfilling duties on the Council's behalf but to consider at a future meeting the mileage allowance to be payable. Details of Warwick District Council members' mileage allowances were to be obtained.

At this point, having declared a personal and prejudicial interest, **Cllr Murphy vacated the Chair and left the room.** Cllr Hunt was asked to take the Chair.

Consideration was then given to payment of a Chairman's allowance in accordance with past practice.

Resolved: that the Chairman be paid an allowance of £320 for the current year.

Cllr Murphy then returned to the meeting to take the Chair.

121. **Number of Parish Councillors**

At the September meeting it was agreed that, in order to aid discussion on the review of the number of members representing the Council, to ask WALC if they could provide information on the number of councillors representing other combined parish councils. Information received from WALC was circulated by the Chairman. This indicated that in other JPCs in Warwickshire there is also over and under-representation, though in almost all cases the in-balance is considerably less than in this JPC. At the same time it showed the average ratio of electors to councillors for this JPC's parishes (about 80:1) to compare favourably with that for all parishes in Warwickshire (about 90:1).

Councillor Mulgrue proposed a move toward the number of councillors representing each parish being proportional to the numbers of their voters. This was seconded by Cllr Clay who said that Barford residents at the Parish Meeting showed unanimous concern that they were under-represented on the present Council.

Cllr Mrs Gordon felt that the overall size of council was the important issue. Referring to the recently formed Leamington Spa Town Council with 15 members, and Government advice that 16 is a reasonable size of council, she was in favour of leaving well alone.

The benefits of delay were considered but the Chairman said that he felt the matter could prove a protracted one and it needed to be decided before the next Parish Council election. This would also avoid personal issues at the time of an election.

Councillor Hunt was concerned about any reduction in the representation of the two smaller parishes leading to an effective loss of voice for their residents.

Resolved: that the Council will investigate moving to more equitable representation of its electors and will consider detailed possibilities and proposals at a future meeting

122. **Oldhams Transport Site**

Following the refusal of the Secretary of State to allow the recent planning application for residential development of this site on Wellesbourne Road a suggestion had been made that the JPC urge the Warwick District Council to prepare a development brief for the site to guide its future development.

Councillor Mulgrue said the site was inside the village envelope but outside the Conservation Area. It is therefore likely to attract development bids. However, the village needs 'affordable' not 'market' homes. He proposed WDC be asked to prepare a development brief.

Mrs Gordon felt that this should wait until WDC had completed its Local Plan but the Chairman referred to two other sites on which development briefs had been drawn up by WDC.

Cllr Mrs Sawdon stated that current policy directs that there should be no development in any of the villages.

Resolved: that Warwick District Council be urged to provide a development brief for the Oldhams site to guide its future development.

123. **Traffic Calming in Barford**

The Chairman informed the meeting of the limited improvements that WCC was prepared to make to the traffic calming measures implemented. There continued to be opposition to the calming measures, with or without the proposed changes, from some councillors (and from members of the public present who were most affected by them). However, there was also a strong feeling that they represented the best option for the village at the present time.

The latest proposals included:

High Street narrowing to be extended to 50% of the carriageway, with improved visibility;

Chicane - improvements be made to lighting, signage and visibility (on the understanding that it can be revisited post-bypass if it remains unsatisfactory)

Replacement of the blocked speed tables at Keytes lane and Church Lane with black tarmac ones, engineered to a higher standard as discussed with WCC

WCC to be asked to give future consideration to fibre optic signs on Barford Hill rather than High Street to slow traffic before it reaches the 30mph area

Improvements and rectification to fibre optic signs on A429.

Resolved: that WCC's latest proposals be accepted.

124. **Applications for Grant 2003/4**

Village Halls

Cllr Mulgrue was appointed to chair this item, Cllr Murphy having declared a 'personal and prejudicial interest' and withdrawn from the meeting whilst it was discussed.

In accordance with the Council's established practice invitations to submit applications for grant assistance had been sent to the three respective Village Hall Management Committees, and to the three Parochial Church Councils in respect of churchyard maintenance expenses.

Having agreed differential grants last year in recognition of the different needs and abilities of the village halls to raise income it was agreed to follow that practice again.

Resolved: that, as last year, grants be made of £500 to Barford Memorial Hall, and £800 each to Sherbourne and Wasperton Village Halls.

Members then considered the net expenditure of the PCCs on churchyard maintenance in their last financial year, and that £230 had been granted to each PCC by the Council last year.

Resolved: that each Parochial Church Council be given grant assistance of £240.

Cllr Murphy then returned to the meeting to take the Chair.

125. **Minimum Age for Voting and Candidacy in UK Elections**

The Chairman reported receipt of an Electoral Commission consultation document seeking views on the minimum age for voting and candidacy in UK elections.

Resolved: that the Commission be informed of the Council's view that 18 should be the minimum age for both voting and candidacy in UK elections.

126. **Planning Policy Guidance (PPG)3**

Concern that PPG3 is being abused, specifically that gardens, agricultural storage units and green sites are being classed as 'brown field' sites and 'previously developed' land, had lead the National Association of Local Councils to seek feedback on examples of such abuse or of good practice in stopping it.

The Council considered that it had no examples of this abuse.

127. **Barford Bypass Public Inquiry**

The Chairman gave a report on the Inquiry that had been held at the Charlecote Pheasant on September 16th to 18th. After evidence had been given to the Inspector it concluded with site visits to various parts of our parishes. The Inspector expected to complete his report within a month and the Secretary of State and the Deputy Prime Minister would then have 6 months in which to reach a final decision.

Concern was expressed over the conduct of the representative from the Commission for the Protection of Rural England who presented major criticisms of the scheme. He had not consulted the JPC and had failed to consult relevant documents that had been available. It was suggested that the JPC should consider its membership of CPRE when subscriptions were next due.

Resolved: to note the above report.

128. **Barford War Memorial**

The Chairman reported that work to restore the Memorial had begun, with a view to its completion by Remembrance Sunday. Problems of unavoidable break-up of some of the original stone in the dismantling process were being addressed in an appropriate manner and work was on course for a rededication service at 10.45 am on 9th November, to which all Members were invited.

It was suggested that the Chairman should lay a wreath at the ceremony but, since its funding by the Council could not be considered without its prior inclusion in the JPC's agenda, it was decided to provide it at the cost of the individual Barford Councillors and any contributions received from others at their discretion.

Resolved: the above be noted.

129. **Regional Assemblies**

At a previous meeting, Cllrs Mrs Gordon and Clay were requested to draft a letter to the Chairman of the National Association of Local Councils regarding Warwickshire County Council's lack of consultation over its response to Government on regional Assemblies.

The draft letter (enclosed with the agenda) was considered by Members.

Resolved: that the letter (with one minor amendment) be now sent to NALC and copied to other relevant bodies.

130. **AGM of the Warwickshire Association of Local Councils**

Members were invited to attend WALC's AGM on 29th October at 7.30 pm when its Development Officer will give an address on the Quality Parish Councils Scheme.

Resolved: that the Chairman, Cllr Mrs Gordon, and Cllr Clay if he were able, should represent the Council at this meeting.

131. **Sandbags for Flood Defence**

The Council was informed that Warwickshire County Council's Emergency Planning Section is able to offer it up to 100 (unfilled) sandbags to top-up existing supplies.

Resolved: that 30 sandbags should be delivered to Cllr Clay's home and that the supply of sand should be a matter for consideration at the next meeting.

132. **Bank Balances**

As at 10 th October 2003	£
Bank Account	3,379.21
Building Society Deposit Account	30,657.67
Received second instalment of precept from WDC	7,825.00
Received from EME – wayleave re cable on playing field.	3.63

133. **Payment of Accounts**

a) The cheque signatories' action in making payment of the following accounts was approved:

	£
MFM – mowing service for August	106.00
Mrs P M Walters – August salary and expenses	191.60
BHGS Ltd – Bark for play areas	523.46

b) Approval was given to payment of the following account:

Mr D Hartwell – fee October 2003	166.66
----------------------------------	--------

134. **Support for New Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer**

Following Mr Hartwell's retirement as Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer on 31st March 2003 he was appointed for a period of six months to provide advisory only guidance and support to his replacement, Mrs Walters, and it was agreed to pay him a retaining fee of £1000 for the period, paid on a monthly basis.

It was felt by the majority of those present that Mrs Walters' successor from 1st October, Mr Offiler, should have the benefit of similar support from Mr Hartwell while he familiarises himself with his duties and responsibilities.

During discussion the question of providing Parish Council premises from which the Clerk would carry out his duties, rather than from his home, was raised.

Resolved: that Mr Hartwell's support services be retained for a further period of 3 months to 28th February 2004 at a pro-rata fee to that originally agreed, and that the question of providing Parish Council premises for the Clerk's office be placed on the agenda for the next meeting.

135. **Any Other Business**

135.1 **Boundary Commission**

The Council considered the draft recommendations of the Boundary Commission for England and were pleased to note that, compared to the original WCC recommendation, a more enlightened grouping, with similar communities, was proposed for our three parishes, namely Bishops Tachbrook, Hampton Magna, Hampton on the Hill and Norton Lindsey.

Resolved: that the Boundary Commission recommendation be supported and furthermore to request consideration of a name, such as 'Tachbrook Ward', which was not actually the name of one of the villages and would help avoid confusion.

135.2 **Warwickshire Rural Housing Association Letter**

The Chairman informed the Council of a letter received from WRHA in which they indicated interest in providing affordable housing in the grounds of Barford House fronting Wasperton Lane. It sought an indication of the Council's support for their investigation of such a development.

Resolved: that WRHA be encouraged to carry out its further investigation of such a development without commitment from the Council at this stage, and that the matter be further discussed at the next meeting when Members should be provided with a copy of the WRHA letter received and any further information then available.

135.3 **Audit Arrangements**

The Chairman informed the Council of the sudden death of the Audit Commission's appointed auditor and the arrangements to replace him. As a result, the Council had been informed that there would be a delay in auditing the accounts for 2002/2003.

Resolved: that the above be noted.

135.4 **JPC Representative on the Governing Body of Barford School**

At the last meeting, in relation to a request from the Barford School Governors to extend the appointment of Mrs Helen Clay as JPC representative until new rules of government take effect at the beginning of the academic year 2004/5, the Council was advised that it no longer had the power to appoint its representative on a school governing body. It is now clear, however, that while regulations had changed so far as the Council's powers are concerned, the regulations for the schools have not yet changed. Until their regulations change next year it is within their powers to invite the Council to propose a suitable person that they can then appoint as a governor. This will now be arranged, for consideration by Council at its next meeting.

Resolved: that the above be noted.

135.5 **Car Parking in Sandy Way, Barford**

The Council was informed of car parking difficulties in Sandy Way, leading to parking on the islands there, and it was agreed to seek the views of the District Council to alleviate this problem.

135.6 **Quality Parish Councils**

Members were informed of a one-day conference on 30th October, organised by the Society of Local Council Clerks, that would include discussion of the initiative to achieve 'Quality Parish Council' status.

Resolved: that the Clerk should try to obtain any available papers presented on this subject at the conference.

135.7 **Warwickshire South Electoral Panel**

The Chairman reminded members of the Warwickshire South Electoral Panel's meeting to be held on Wednesday 22nd October when the topics would include 'Racing to get there – Community Transport Project' and Barford Parish Plan.

Resolved: to note this meeting.

135.8 **WALC Area Committees**

The Council considered a letter from WALC concerning the establishment of WALC area committees as a forum for parishes to meet and talk over local and common interests. WALC was able to provide support for the establishment of such committees. The Council, however, thought that there were already adequate opportunities for such meetings.

Resolved: that no specific action be taken on this matter at present.

135.9 **Warwickshire Crime-Beat**

The Chairman described the establishment of 'Warwickshire Crimebeat' which is a recent public/private initiative to encourage young people to get involved with crime reduction activities. Funding up to £5000 was available for each project undertaken by young people between the ages of 5 – 25 years. The Chairman will retain details of the scheme and contacts, and any interested parties should be directed to him via members of the Council.

Resolved: that this information be noted.

135.10 **Barford Bus Shelter**

This shelter is in urgent need of repairs and its light had not been working for some time.

Resolved: that Cllr Byerly be asked to draw up a specification for repair and that EME should be asked to disconnect the power supply as per their previous quotation.

135.11 **Wall to Barford House**

Concern was raised about the safety and integrity of this wall, aside from the damage recently done to it by a vehicle.

Resolved: WDC's Building Control Officer be requested to inspect the wall.

135.12 **Lamp-post Damage in Sherbourne**

A damaged lamp-post was reported at the corner of Fulbrooke Lane and Barford Road

Resolved: that the matter be reported to the District Council, seeking repair.

135.13 **Sherbourne Fruit Farm – Parking of Commercial Vehicles**

Concern about this, and the question of planning permission, was discussed at the last meeting. It had subsequently been drawn to the attention of WDC's Planning Officer but no response had been received.

Resolved: that this matter again be drawn to the attention of WDC's Planning Officer.

135.14 **Road Gullies in Sherbourne**

Sherbourne councillors reported that the gullies in Watery Lane and Vicarage Lane had still not been emptied.

Resolved: that the matter again be brought to the attention of Peter Hallam, the WCC officer responsible for the area.

135.15 **WDC Review of Concurrent Expenditure Scheme**

After requests from parish councils and the publication of the 'Quality Parish and Town Councils Scheme' WDC has decided that its concurrent expenditure scheme should be reviewed. A meeting will be held on Monday November 10th 2003 at the Town Hall, Leamington Spa, from 10.am to 1.00pm, with a view to reporting to the December Executive Committee meeting. Parish Council members have been invited to attend.

Resolved: that the information be noted.

135.16 **WDC Annual Parish/Town Council Seminar**

This seminar will be held at the Royal Pump Rooms, Leamington Spa on Thursday, November 11th at 7.00pm. All councillors are invited to attend and the agenda will include the District Local Plan, revision of planning enforcement policy and implementation of the results of the 'Best Value' review of the Planning Service. The Chairman indicated that he would be unable to attend.

Resolved: that the arrangements for the seminar be noted.