

BARFORD SHERBOURNE AND WASPERTON JOINT PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Joint Parish Council held at Barford Memorial Hall
on Monday 11 January 2010

Present: Cllr Mrs P W Wilkinson (Chairman)
Cllr: Mrs W Barlow, M P Byerley, R Clay, D C Morrow, R G Mulgrue*, A B Rhead*,
W Worrall, Mrs A Gordon, Mrs P Johnston, N F J Thurley, J T Wright,
Apologies: Cllr: Mrs D S Cobb, Mrs M A Hayward, J V Murphy, M J Metcalfe,
*Joined the meeting late

Opening

- 284 The meeting opened at 7:30 pm
285 No members of the public were present.
286 Apologies for absence were noted.

Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

- 287 None was declared

Minutes of the Meeting of Council 9 November 2009

- 288 The minutes were approved as a true record.
289 Subject to the correction of typographical errors there were no matters arising.

Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning Committee 30 November 2009

- 290 The minutes were approved as a true record. There were no matters arising.

Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning Committee 14 December 2009

- 291 The minutes were approved as a true record. There were no matters arising.

Cash Balances as at 31 December 2009

- 292 The JPC took note of the following cash balances
HSBC £ 2,529.07
Alliance & Leicester £36,242.24

Receipts and Payments

- 293 The JPC endorsed the following:

Date	Payee	Category	Total
2 Nov 09	J F Johnson	Travel Expenses	(20.58)
2 Nov 09	J F Johnson	Postage	(18.75)
2 Nov 09	S&D Window Cleaners	Bus Shelters Maintenance	(60.00)
7 Nov 09	MFM Services	Mowing Charges	(138.00)
7 Nov 09	Regent	Printing and Stationery	(13.25)
7 Nov 09	A&L	Bank Interest	1.94
28 Nov 09	HMRC	Employment Expenses	(521.30)
28 Nov 09	J F Johnson	Employment Expenses	(669.22)

28 Nov 09	J F Johnson	Office Accommodation	(50.67)
15 Oct 09	Hadley	Allotments Hire of Land	(37.50)
15 Oct 09	Smith	Allotments Hire of Land	(37.50)
13 Nov 09	Playsafety Ltd	Open Spaces Maintenance	(165.60)
19 Nov 09	CPA Horticulture	Open Spaces Maintenance	(438.06)
29 Nov 09	SLCC	Subs: SLCC	(135.00)
29 Nov 09	J V Murphy	Section 137	(20.00)
29 Nov 09	J F Johnson	Postage	(10.83)
29 Nov 09	J F Johnson	Travel Expenses	(27.83)
4 Dec 09	S&D Window Cleaners	Bus Shelters Maintenance	(45.00)
4 Dec 09	A&L	Bank Interest	2.51
9 Dec 09	Regent	Printing and Stationery	(9.94)
16 Dec 09	ICO	Subs: ICO	(35.00)
21 Dec 09	Viking Direct	Printing and Stationery	(186.22)
21 Dec 09	Wasperton Village Hall	Venue Hire	(91.00)
28 Dec 09	HMRC	Employment Expenses	(521.30)
28 Dec 09	J F Johnson	Employment Expenses	(669.22)
28 Dec 09	J F Johnson	Office Accommodation	(50.67)

Budget and Precept 2010-11

- 294 The JPC set the precept for 2010-11 at £29,515
- 295 The JPC adopted the budget for 2010-11 shown at Annex A to these minutes. Cllr Morrow undertook to investigate the need for civic facilities in the area of Barford Burrows."
- [Cllr Mulgrue joined the meeting]

Engagement with Local Area Community Forums

- 296 The Chairman presented the paper at Annex B to these minutes. Cllrs Mulgrue, Worrall and Clay spoke for the meeting when commenting upon its perception and clarity.
- 297 There followed an informed debate with unanimity that the status quo failed to meet the declared aims.
- 298 WALC had sent the following to all parish councils:
The County Council is committed to carrying out a review of current locality working arrangements and Nick Gower-Johnson County Localities and Communities Manager, has been asked to progress this speedily with a view to producing a draft report by the end of January 2010.
The County Council is particularly keen to engage with key partners in this process including parish and town councils. The Association has undertaken to contact parish and town councils for their views.
Attached is a Draft Terms of Reference for the Review and on page 3 at Appendix 1 is a Suggested List of Key Issues to Be Addressed. Your council's response to any of the Key Issues or any other issue they wish to raise in relation to the Locality Forums would be welcome **by Friday 15 January 2010 please** [Subsequently extended to the end of January]*
The Association has pointed out the short time for responses and the fact that it is over the Christmas holiday period.
If your council feels strongly about any of the issues and would like to meet with WCC reps we are arranging a meeting during the week beginning 18 January. Please indicate in your reply whether your council would like to send representatives to this meeting.
 [*not herewith]
- 299 It was agreed that the JPC's response should be to submit the Chairman's paper (modified in the light of points raised in the debate) and to ensure that it reached as many influential recipients as possible.
- 300 JPC members were encouraged to complete and return the Warwickshire Community Forums Evaluation Form distributed by WCC.

[Cllr Rhead joined the meeting]

Meeting dates 2010-11

301 The JPC took note.

Date	Location	Type
Mon 12 Apr 10	Barford	APM
Mon 19 Apr 10	Wasperton	APM
Mon 26 Apr 10	Sherbourne	APM
Mon 10 May 10	Barford	Annual
Mon 14 Jun 10	Sherbourne	Ordinary
Mon 12 Jul 10	Wasperton	Ordinary
Mon 13 Sep 10	Barford	Ordinary
Mon 11 Oct 10	Sherbourne	Ordinary
Mon 8 Nov 10	Wasperton	Ordinary
Mon 10 Jan 11	Barford	Ordinary
Mon 14 Feb 11	Sherbourne	Ordinary
Mon 14 Mar 11	Wasperton	Ordinary

Reports on Contact with Other Bodies

302 In anticipation that he might be too late to present his reports verbally Cllr Mulgrue had submitted the paper at Annex C to these minutes.

303 Cllr Clay reported details of his attendance at:

- Warwickshire Rural Housing Association exhibition at The Granville, Barford on 18 November
- M40/J15 Liaison Meeting on 7 December
- Celebration of the opening of the A46/J15 bypass held at the Glebe Hotel, Barford on 14 December
- A WALC sponsored meeting between Parish and Town Councils and the WCC Focus Group (from which it emerged that councils should expect to have to finance services (verge mowing, gully emptying etc) from their own resources.)

304 Cllr Mrs Barlow announced the Friends of Oakley Wood AGM to be held on 23 February at the Bishops Tachbrook Sports & Social Centre.

305 Cllr Rhead reported that he had secured a further £310 from the WDC "Listed Buildings and Conservation Area Fund" to finance the rescue of the Glebe Hotel Cedar tree. There was however a funding shortfall and the JPC would be approached at its February meeting for an additional grant.

Any Other Business

306 Cllr Worrall had receive a request for the provision of a grit bin in Hareway Lane. This was greeted with circumspection because there was anecdotal evidence of councils removing grit bins to avoid the potential adverse legal implications of their use. The Clerk was instructed to investigate the legal aspects, to obtain prices and to include the matter on the February agenda of the JPC.

307 Cllr Byerley reported that the traffic lights at the junction of the A429 northbound with the M40 roundabout did not detect single motorcycles.

Closure

308 There being no other business the meeting closed at 8:50pm.

Date of Next Meeting

309 The next meeting of JPC is on Monday 8 February 2010 at 7:30 pm in the Sherbourne Village Hall.

BUDGET 2010-11

RECEIPTS	
Allotments Rents	700
Bank Interest	20
Barford Playing Field Lettings	173
Concurrent Services Contribution (WDC)	2,480
Precept (WDC)	29,515
VAT prior year (HMRC)	400
Wayleave	4
TOTAL RECEIPTS	33,291
PAYMENTS	
Allotments Hire of Land	-150
Allotments Maintenance	-150
Allotments Water Charges	-50
Audit Fees	-395
Bank Charges	-20
Bus Shelters Maintenance	-465
Chairman's Allowance	-392
Consideration Covenant Release	-5,000
Employment Expenses	-14,515
Grants: Churchyard Maintenance	-1,136
Grants: Village Halls	-2,831
Insurance	-980
Mowing Charges	-1,562
Office Accommodation	-600
Open Spaces Maintenance	-1,200
Postage	-200
Printing and Stationery	-600
Subs: Information Commissioner	-35
Subs: SLCC	-135
Subs: WALC	-448
Training and Seminar Expenses	-150
Travel Expenses	-387
Venue Hire	-180
TOTAL PAYMENTS	-31,581
NET TOTALS	1,710

Community Forums – Supporting and Encouraging Engagement and their Better Functioning

Background and Context

Across Britain the political rhetoric espouses the need to increase public engagement in political life. The Power Inquiry (2006:24) called for a ‘culture of political engagement in which it becomes the norm for policy and decision making to occur with direct input from citizens’. Political and civic participation covers a range of activities from engagement with local communities, through involvement in organized politics to radical protest on key issues.

A number of developments provide the context for the renewed value placed on political and civic participation, most notably the central Government devolution agenda. Research demonstrates that public services work best where there is public engagement and involvement evidenced by the success of patient liaison services and other participation in public sector provision. Social science research argues that as engagement in national politics wains, evidenced by falling engagement in voting and party membership (Dixon and Paxton, 2005), there is a greater need to engage the public in the provision and development of local communities and services.

The social and economic status of individuals undoubtedly influences their engagement based on their communities ties and social capital, however, there is a great deal of evidence to suggest that whilst poverty and inequality shape levels of engagement they do not determine them. To date neighbourhood management has focused on the availability of special funding linked to deprivation. On this basis I believe there is a need to place a greater emphasis on community engagement within local neighbourhoods.

One important factor in determining strength of participation is the resources that citizens have access to as part of their engagement. This can come in the form of money, education or civic skills. However, this is not the only factor as the behaviours of local leaders plays a big part in relation to their levels of engagement, openness and responsiveness to local citizens. Institutional factors linked to the behaviours of civic players are also a important. The engagement and transparency of executive members of authorities plays a crucial role in mobilizing social capital as are the structures set in place by local authorities to stimulate and sustain engagement. In rural areas parish and town councils are an important part of the civic infra-structure and should be utilized in a formal capacity to provide synergy between political and civic society.

Purpose of the Paper

The JPC has been concerned that there has been a lack of priority placed on the devolution agenda and local engagement and that the establishment of community forums has been carried out in a tokenistic manner which has had a negative impact on the engagement and influence of local communities. The forums have been slow to embed and have been characterized by the following:

- Have a limited overview of community issues
- Infrequent meetings due to a lack of designated resources
- Difficulties in getting substantive items placed on the agenda
- Slow responses from local authority executives
- Domination of particular issues
- Lack of clarity about the links with other related partnership groups such as LSPs
- Failure to meet the targets within the strategy for locality working
- Lack of scrutiny and performance monitoring of local services
- No ability to influence the commissioning of services at local level

This paper sets out a prioritized set of recommendations to support the revision and further development of the forums and the structures that support them.

Recommendations

1. The forums require a revised set of aims and objectives which specify the scope of their remit and powers. For example, principle aims could be underpinned by specific undertakings which ensure the aims are achieved. The following is provided by way of example:
 - a. Aim 1 – To provide opportunities for communities to engage with elected representatives and statutory services and partners
 - b. Aim 2 – To give the local community a role in the design, planning, implementation and monitoring of local services
 - c. Aim 3 – To allow communities to highlight local prioritized issues
 - d. Aim 4 – To involve local communities in commissioning services and deploying funds
 - e. Aim 5 – To feedback to communities on the actions taken and their impact
2. The review of localities and community forums should not be limited to the groups themselves. Consideration needs to be given to the structures that surround the forums and any potential duplication of role, responsibility or resource deployment. This is vital in ensuring transparency and engaging local people. For example what is the added value afforded by the Area Committees? Should or could these resources be deployed to better effect by resourcing the forums more comprehensively and giving them a broader role and remit?
3. The link between the forums and other community groups needs to be defined more clearly and clarity needs to be given as to the exact remit and responsibilities of each group. The link to the local strategic partnerships is vital and very poorly defined given its key role in allowing communities a say in the way local services are developed and delivered. This will include statutory and voluntary services and community development measures. Links to overview and scrutiny also require further clarity.
4. The agenda needs to encompass substantive items linked to local service provision not just that which the local authority feels it wants to discuss with us. Consideration needs to be given to a rolling programme of prioritized areas for review which are scheduled on agendas for the year with more frequent meetings to ensure actions are reviewed and their impact assessed.
5. There needs to be a clearer , formal mechanism for voting on substantive issues such that the meeting is not lead by the chair and there is a level of transparency associated with the deployment of resources. This needs to be articulated clearly to all member councils so that they can ensure appropriate representation.
6. There needs to be a formal link with all relevant strategies and processes that affect local communities. For example planning and strategy documents for the locality areas such as parish plans should be referenced in agreeing priorities and resource deployment.
7. Locality plans need to be developed supported by well informed community profiles this will review the main services on offer in each locality and describe priorities for action with the agendas for the forum meetings and activities.

Conclusion

The JPC is asked to consider the above recommendations and provide feedback to be in corporate in the JPCs response to the review of localities and community forums.

Reports on Contacts with Other Bodies

County Council Warwick Area Committee Meeting, 17 November

I attended the above meeting since it was due to endorse a “Joint Protocol between WCC and WDC for Responding to Parish Appraisals and Parish Plans” and agree to run it “as a pilot scheme in Warwick District with a view to adopting it county-wide incorporating any revisions arising from the pilot”. As a JPC we have been pressing for over three years for a defined procedure for the Principal Councils to respond to proposals in Parish Plans and Village Design Statements. Thus, in principle we should welcome this paper. However, through the Community Forum, we had asked to see a draft before it was approved. This opportunity was not afforded to us. Whilst the paper contains many points with which we could agree, there were some points which required further elucidation, particularly one point which seemed to suggest that officers from the County/District Councils would have to “ensure [my emphasis] that the output from such exercises ... is in line with national and regional planning policies”. This seems to go against a “bottom-up” planning process, which is at the heart of Parish Plans, since there may be instances where a local community, through its Plan, will wish to try to influence changes to policy. There may be other points that Parish Councils will want to raise about the paper.

I suggested to the Committee, therefore, that, since there was no overriding need to approve the paper immediately, it should be referred to the two rural Fora for comment and then come back to the Committee for approval. This would be in line with the provisions of the Local Councils Charter and in keeping with the spirit in which the Community Fora were established. This received considerable support from the members of the Committee and the resolution, proposed by Cllr Caborn, was that the Committee endorse the principle of the Protocol but revisit it in January having consulted Parish/Town Councils and Community Fora. This was passed unanimously.

Warwick District Planning Committee, 18 November

I attended this meeting to listen to the discussion and decision on the Barford Village Design Statement (I was not allowed to speak but Cllr Barrott (Cllr Rhead was not at the meeting) was well-placed to speak to it since he had been a member of the Barford Parish Plan Committee). The Planning Officer in attendance stated that the document was well produced, thoroughly examined the present situation and “was very much what we would recommend to you” except for the section on large-scale development projects, which were not possible in Barford under the current and emerging Local Plans. The formal resolution, passed unanimously, was: “*that the District Council Planning Committee have approved the Barford Village Design Statement as non-statutory planning guidance for use in development control decision making and enforcement matters in the parish of Barford, alongside all other relevant Local Plan policies and guidance, with the exception of the sections of the Statement on pages 16 and 17 in relation to 'land between village and bypass' and 'land around Barford House'*” [The words in italics were inserted at the meeting replacing Cllr Mulgrue's original statement]

Warwick District Planning Forum, 7 December

Together with Cllr Murphy I attended the above Planning Forum meeting. The main points of interest were:

Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects – the new Act to speed up and simplify the planning process had now come into force. An Infrastructure Planning Commission had been established to make decisions on such applications. It would take into account National Policy Statements setting out Government policy on infrastructure issues; two such Statements had been produced so far: on energy and on ports. These would be followed by statements on strategic roads, railways, airports and major reservoirs. The Statements would also give a policy steer to Local Planning Authorities for projects below the threshold which triggered referral to the Commission. For major projects referred to the Commission, Local Planning Authorities could submit a local impact report and could in addition make oral representations.

Regional Spatial Strategy: the report of the Examination in Public had rejected the figures for additional housing in the Nathaniel Lichfield consultants report and thus Warwick District's figure remained at 10,800 (rounded up in the Inspector's report to 11,000), plus 3,500 for Coventry overspill to be accommodated south of the City boundary near Gibbet Hill. The report now awaits approval by the Secretary of State. There would be a period of consultation on any changes proposed by the SoS before the document was finally adopted. The Regional Assembly was expected to

consult shortly on a two “position statements” for the Phase 3 revision of the RSS, on gypsies & travellers (giving figures for the number of temporary and permanent pitches required) and on minerals.

WDC Core Strategy: the responses were currently being analysed ready for a draft to be prepared for the Council in May and subsequently for submission to the Government in August. It was expected that the Examination in Public would take place in December (all dates are provisional). In answer to a question, it was said that the infrastructure requirements of the Core Strategy were being worked on so that the Examination in Public could be assured that the strategy was deliverable.

LEADER Forum meeting, 16 December

The Central Warwickshire LEADER programme is an EU funding programme for rural parishes in Rugby and Warwick Districts. The programme is worth £1.5 million until 2013. Its themes are: community growing projects; community events and arts projects; activities that bring together villagers and the land-based rural industries. Delivery of the programme is overseen by an “Action Group” elected by the Forum.

I was elected as one of the members of the Action Group. There will be a number of application rounds, the first of which is now open. Applicants can receive advice and help from the programme team based at Garden Organic near Ryton-on-Dunsmore. Further details can be found on the web site: www.warwickshireleader.net

Model Section 106 Agreement, 17 December

Together with Cllr Rhead and Phil Ward, WRCC’s Rural Housing Enabler for the District, I attended a meeting at WDC to discuss the revised draft model s106 agreement and a draft Local Lettings Policy. This meeting was a follow-up to the meeting held in May 2009, previously reported to the JPC (minute 49) and which had commented on an earlier draft of a model 106 agreement. The whole process arose out of the unsatisfactory way housing allocations had been made for the affordable housing on the former Oldham’s site in 2007 and had been suggested by WDC’s Portfolio Holder for housing at a JPC meeting in June 2008 (see minute 52).

At the May 2009 meeting it had been recognised that alongside the model 106 agreement a revised Local Lettings Policy was required to recognise formally the exceptions to the Home Choice scheme for affordable housing in rural parishes. These exceptions were in order to give priority to people with various categories of local connections and to enable those without children to bid for two-bed houses. At the recent meeting the priorities to be given to categories of people with local connections was agreed, subject to some detailed changes of wording, but the main discussion was whether in subsequent lettings of affordable housing (i.e. after the initial lettings of new-build housing) greater priority at that stage should be given to people with children. This part of the draft was to be reworded and the JPC’s representatives will be consulted on this revised wording. It is intended to put the policy to WDC’s Executive in February.

[Cllr Mulgrue reported at the meeting that since drafting this statement he had learned that WALC's legal advice was: "In summary, the Council [JPC] is not able to be a party to the s.106 agreement but can seek to meet its objectives by liaising with and lobbying WDC."]

At the meeting we were also assured that WDC’s computerised system for registering bids was being amended to ensure that it recognised these exceptions to the general Home Choice policy. This was a difficulty in 2007 since the present computerised system does not recognise these exceptions for rural affordable housing and thus people without children were told they were ineligible to place bids for two-bed houses.