

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF  
THE PARISH OF BARFORD  
HELD AT BARFORD MEMORIAL HALL  
ON MONDAY 2<sup>nd</sup> APRIL 2007 AT 7.30PM**

Present J V Murphy (Chairman)  
Twenty-six Barford electors  
Cllr L Caborn (WCC)

**Minutes**

- 1 The minutes of the annual meeting, held on 10th April 2006, were confirmed as a true record. There were no matters arising.
- 2 The meeting agreed to allow the minutes of the current meeting to be made public in draft form as soon as approved by the Chairman.

**Report by Cllr J V Murphy (Chairman Joint Parish Council)**

- 3 The report is at Annex A to these minutes.

**Report by Cllr L Caborn (Warwickshire County Council)**

- 4 Barford Bypass.
- 4.1 The Barford Bypass nearing completion, he thanked members of the Barford Bypass Liaison Group for their contribution as intermediary between the people of the village and the contractor.
- 4.2 He stressed the need for a post-construction analysis of traffic.
- 4.3 He confirmed the plan to extend the cycle way from the bypass to Sherbourne Corner and over the M40.
- 5 Barford Village Shop. He declared his support for the project and his disappointment that although WCC had made a grant it was not more generous.
- 6 Barford Parish Plan. He shared the frustration of the of the village that the plan had not been embraced by the officers at WCC and had apparently been ignored by WDC.
- 7 WCC Budget. Having received a bad report on its efforts to keep older people in homes, WCC had diverted an extra £5m to its Social Service programme. This meant that budgets which were already tight now had no spare capacity whatever.
- 8 Estate. With the relocation of office accommodation in Warwick, the future use of the Shire Hall was being examined with an aim to making it more accessible for members of the public to obtain services there.
- 9 Potholes. The subject of pothole repair had received critical analysis and this was no longer to be the preferred technique for road improvement.
- 10 Police. He gave an update on policing in the community.
- 11 Two-Tier Working. Warwickshire having opted for two-tier working as opposed to unitary status, the need to identify and eliminate duplication of effort was urgent if saving were to be achieved.

## **Report by Cllr Mrs C Sawdon (Warwick District Council)**

12 Cllr Mrs Sawdon's report is at Annex B to these minutes.

## **Report by Cllr R Butler (Warwick District Council)**

13 Cllr Butler was unable to attend the meeting and sent his apologies.

## **Police Matters**

14 In the absence of a police representative, Cllr Worrall (the JPC Representative to Safer Neighbourhoods Western Area) briefed the meeting on police activities in Barford and in particular the recently introduced Safer Neighbourhoods initiative.

## **Reports on Village Activities**

15 Barford Directory (Angela Watkins)

- Funding has been secured.
- Distribution planned to every household in the parish.
- Publication in May after the parish council election

16 Barford Parish Plan (Ian Findlay)

- All 33 projects are complete or ongoing with the exception of the following which have been abandoned:
  - Expand the provision of recreational and sporting facilities in the village.
  - Campaign for the introduction of a Warwick Parkway taxi-bus service.
  - Investigate ways in which Barford could have its own Youth Club.
  - Discuss with Dial-a-Ride possibilities of a regular minibus service for youth to use the facilities in Wellesbourne and Warwick.
- Disappointment was expressed that WDC neither acknowledged responsibility for nor indicated an interest in Barford Parish Plan (despite these being recognized as a useful adjunct to the planning process). The Chairman however had received a personal commitment of support from John Archer, Head of Planning to assist where appropriate and in particular to make staff available for the development of our VDS.
- Disapproval was expressed that although the elected members of WCC had shown a commendable interest in and an appreciation of the Barford Parish Plan, the officers could not be prevailed upon to engage with the village to bring some of the projects to fruition.
- **RESOLVED:** That the JPC be invited to write to the chief executives of WDC and WCC to make these views known and to request them to expedite a positive reception of the Barford Parish Plan.

17 Barford Post Office (William Worrall)

- Reopened November 2006.
- Part-time; three afternoons per week.
- Part funding received from Post Office Ltd grant.
- Additional funding received from JPC
- Acknowledgement of the important contribution made by Ms Jane Symonds (sub-postmistress)
- Future relocation in Barford Village Shop? (qv)

18 Barford Preschool (Stephanie McVeigh)

- Preschool is vibrant and successful.
- OFSTEAD inspection rated school as "Good"
- Questions about the future numbers attending.

19 Barford Pride (Helen Clay)

- Successful formation and progress.
- Area of activity in public places (but some private owners are responding to the stimulus of a tidier local environment).

20 Barford Relief in Need Charity (Gerard Veness)

- Two trustees nominated for a further period of four years (Mr Veness (Chairman), Rev Jessett (Trustee))
- Grants reduced from previous years.

- Assets are mainly in land whence income from rents.
  - Trustees in discussion with the Charity Commission to expand the eligibility criteria (now solely individuals) to include groups and organizations.
- 21 Barford Residents' Association (Ted Wilmot)
- BRA has continued its work but its future role is unclear.
  - The chairman (Nick Ellis) retires at the AGM in November and wonders if this is the appropriate time for BRA to amalgamate with a like organization, to suspend activities or to wind it up.
  - Those with views on the subject are invited to contact him.
- 22 Barford School (Ann Fawcett)
- The roll is oversubscribed and stands at 114.
  - OFSTEAD inspection yielded a grading of "Good" with some elements "Outstanding"
  - The inspection as a Church of England school graded it "Excellent"
  - Working towards "Healthy School" status.
- 23 Barford Shop Group (Kirsty Healey/Mary Peirson)
- The project has great impetus.
  - Planning permission for the building has been granted.
  - Funding; £80k raised with a target of £150k - £200k
  - Working on obtaining release from a restrictive covenant forbidding the construction of a shop on the Village Green.
  - JPC supportive of the notion and willing to grant a lease on the site when it is able.
- 24 Footpath Group (Andy Bolam)
- The group is active.
  - Liaison with Ramblers Association to share information and provide mutual help.
  - High priority given to reopening the footpath between Barford and Bishops Tachbrook, but within Warwickshire such matters are dealt with alphabetically district by district so Warwick's turn is several years away.
  - RESOLVED: That the JPC be asked to appeal against the alphabetical rule to allow the Barford-Bishops Tachbrook footpath to be reopened in the foreseeable future.
- 25 Neighbourhood Watch (Ian Findlay)
- Twenty-two coordinators in place in Barford
  - Questionnaire distribute throughout the village
  - Delivery of Blue Book
- 26 Village Design Statement (Kirsty Healey)
- Strong encouragement for photographs of the village to be taken to record what is like and disliked.
  - Statement to be used to identify the village vernacular as an aid to those planning future building.
  - Proposed timetable:
    - Village workshop                      Jul 07
    - Draft design statement              Sep 07
    - Village approval                      Oct 07
    - Final Plan                                Jan 08

### **Other Matters**

- 27 There was some discussion about the future use of the former Barford Village Shop & Post Office with adverse comment on its appearance. The Chairman explained that the building being in private hands, its future use was a decision for the owners.

### **Appointment of Chairman for 2007-8**

- 28 Mr J V Murphy was proposed and seconded and, in the absence of other nominations, was elected Chairman for the ensuing year.

### **Closure**

- 29 There being no other business the meeting was closed at 9:35pm.

### Annual Report of Chairman of Barford, Sherbourne & Wasperton Joint Parish Council

2006-2007 has been another busy year – 9 routine JPC meetings, numerous Planning meetings, 3 Special Meetings, numerous Working Party and Officer Meetings and the three Parish Meetings.

During the year Geoff Smith and Ken Hope resigned and have been ably replaced by Cllr Neil Thurley for Wasperton and Cllr Wendy Barlow for Barford who are both already playing a very active role in JPC activities.

**Barford Shop and PO** – Cllrs Mulgrue, Worrall and Hope forged ahead with the Post Office contacts and the sub-PO opened in December, just in time for the Christmas rush. We are very grateful to the new Post-Mistress Jane Symonds who has coped well and there seems to be a steady stream of custom.

From the JPC and from the Barford Parish Plan action plan, a Shop Action Group was formed. This group has worked incredibly hard and has formulated a plan, started raising funds, gained planning permission and is progressing steadily towards opening a shop attached to the Memorial Hall. Robin Smith-Ryland has indicated that he is supportive of the project and we are currently negotiating with him and the estate's solicitors to ease covenants on the land to allow the project to proceed. I have every confidence that he will grant the required permissions.

**Barford Bypass** is finally in use and will be totally complete during April or early May. The road has brought benefits beyond expectation to many in the village

- Wellesbourne Road is much more peaceful
- Even Church Street, High Street and Barford Hill residents are reporting less through traffic
- non-supporters are now proclaiming the benefits
- and the traffic we do get seems to be behaving better!

The predicted queues to leave the village at peak times have not materialised, although the real test will come when the accesses are available at both ends and the speed limit is lifted.

We must not however forget any individual households or businesses who might be adversely impacted, in any way, by the new road and if they bring their problems to us we can assist them in negotiations with the appropriate authorities.

In the short term the Barford Bypass Liaison Group will continue to meet with the Contractors Galliford-Try and the WCC to deal with any matters arising from the new road. Whilst mentioning the contractors they must be congratulated on the exemplary way in which they have undertaken the project with minimal disruption and genuine consideration for the residents and road users. Of course there were disruptions at times of changing the road links and there were needs for traffic control lights and speed limits, which were inevitably not particularly popular and we did have to suffer some modest amount of queuing and impatient drivers. Everyone knows that the speed camera was unpopular and a great number of motorists, including far too many locals, were caught out by it. The Press of course had a field day and encouraged the moral outrage that always seems to follow getting caught breaking the law -

- whatever happened to the attitude of "it's a fair cop"?

Regardless, Barford is looking forward to a much more tranquil and environmentally happy future, and is grateful to everyone who has worked so hard for this project from conception to completion.

**A46 Sherbourne Bypass** – The proposals to improve the Longbridge J15 area with an A46 bypass have continued to progress throughout the year with publication of Orders and an exhibition in the summer and leading ultimately to a Public Inquiry in March 2007. The JPC has welcomed proposals for improvement and recognizes that bypassing in some form is the local solution but was most concerned that whilst building a new road enough was not being done to bring benefit to Sherbourne when a more westerly route could provide significantly more relief from traffic impact and restore Sherbourne to a tranquil village, albeit closely adjacent to the Trunk Road and motorway network. The Public Inquiry can only approve or reject the Highways Agency preferred scheme, but if the scheme is rejected then the Inspectors reasoning, hopefully based on local input, may well direct and future proposals and perhaps initiate a proper and open consultation this time.

Before leaving roads, I should just comment on the A429 more generally. It cuts right through our parishes and continues to give concern. The JPC has repeatedly asked for a review of the speed limit on the road as it passes through and have suggested a 50mph limit would be appropriate – this would benefit Wasperton and Sherbourne directly, would also reduce the potential noise from Barford

Bypass and would ease access from all three villages. We will no doubt keep on with the request where we can, but support from residents would be very helpful and should be directed at WCC and your appointed representatives.

**Barford Parish Plan** – The JPC Parish Plan Working Party consisting of all Barford councillors and is still working towards implementing or promoting as much of the plan as possible, as soon as is reasonably possible. Much has been achieved and much is in progress, but there are frustrations. The Plan was welcomed at the WCC Warwick Area Committee and support clearly indicated, however we have yet to see much material response from WCC officers, although there are now some signs that they are willing to meet with us to try to see where progress can be made. The original BPP Committee will continue to monitor and report on the JPC's implementation progress.

**Play areas** are under constant review – checked at least weekly by a Parish Councillor. There have been no recent changes, although requests for ideas for improvement have not generated much response from residents. We would like to know what would be appreciated on the site by way of improvements – do let us know.

The skateboard area continues to generate comment over noise and youth activity, and we continue to try to find ways to limit this impact on residents, albeit with only limited success so far, although we are currently investigating a new spray on process which may produce good results – watch this space.

**The Boundary Commission** changes to WCC electoral wards put all three of our villages together last year and this year we have seen Parish boundary changes to tidy up the parish boundaries around the M40, making parish custody much more logical. These changes will be operative for the May elections.

At the same time representation levels were adjusted to more fairly reflect population numbers and from this next election the parishes will be represented by ten councillors for Barford, three for Sherbourne and three for Wasperton. It should be noted that the stimulus for this latter change came from one of our Annual Parish Meetings and this should remind us that Parish Meetings are a powerful and democratic way for the residents to “have their say” and get things done.

**Police Matters** – Our police cover has remained patchy over the last year and there have been many instances where the service provision has still been considerably less than might be desired. The newly appointed CBO PC Emma Matthews for our area soon went on long-term sick leave but is thankfully now back with us. The safer neighbourhood Initiative was also started and promises considerably improved Police presence, including Community Support Officers and an occasional Mobile Police station. We are reserving judgement until it all settles down – but intelligence informs me that they have all been seen in the parishes.

#### **On Planning specifically:**

**Oldhams'** site plans went to Public Inquiry and the Secretary of State supported the granting of permission. As we all know the site is now well under construction and the major task for us is to ensure that those who need Affordable Homes on the site do in fact get first refusal. The system is complicated and unless people come forward promptly there is always the danger that those with local connections could miss out and others might take the properties. Cllrs Mulgrue and Byerley are particularly well briefed in that matter.

**Proposals at 20 Wellesbourne Road** are currently not proceeding, having been refused at WDC and gone to Appeal, but the site remains vacant and neglected and we await further developments – hopefully a return to single household occupation.

**Land surrounding Barford House** remains a matter of interest although the only open activity this year was the circulation of some speculative sketches, in September, of a possible hall/pavillion proposal, and a suggestion of a shop property fronting Wellesbourne Road. The JPC refrained from comment for fear of prejudicing its position in the event of an actual application on the site.

**The three village halls** have again been supported by JPC grants - £425 Barford, £1050 Sherbourne and £1050 Wasperton – members have recognised more active management and fund raising taking place in the smaller villages, to make their halls more viable.

The JPC also gave grant support towards maintenance of each of the three churchyards, and a small support grant to the newly established “Barford Beginners” baby and toddlers group.

**Allotments** – the JPC Barford allotments have now been cleared and ploughed and most are now let. Most are in good productive use although a few seem to be kept as lawns or protective shelter belts, which is not allowed within the allotment rules and users have had to be reminded of the need to keep the allotment in active cultivation and use. In the event of demand exceeding availability it may be appropriate to ask non-users to vacate plots in favour of new tenants.

BPP indicated a strong wish for water supply onto all the Barford Allotment areas and the JPC has worked with the PCC and the S&G groups to provide an installation which is currently being implemented.

All councillors have attended many meetings and served their electors well, working as a strong team with James Johnson our Clerk/RFO. Many thanks to all for their input.

JVM  
31.03.2007

**Report by Warwick District Councillor – Budbrooke Ward – Clare Sawdon – 01926 485035**

Firstly, I must apologise for not being present at your meeting this evening but I am away due to a long standing family engagement which was arranged prior to the date of the Annual Meeting being fixed.

The last twelve months have been relatively steady as far as the workload concerning Barford is concerned.

The highlights of the year have been the successful planning application for the new village shop, where I was happy to speak on behalf of the residents to support the application at the Planning Committee in February, this together with the successful bid for support from the Rural Initiatives Fund which has yielded financial support for the project in the region of £24,000.

I note the enthusiasm for the project by the vast majority of the village, this must be welcomed as epitomising what village life is all about. I look forward to the first clod of turf being cut and the work starting.

I would like to pay tribute to Cllr Les Caborn and before him County Councillors Haywood and Compton for the work they have put into the by-pass project. At last, now when you drive through Barford you are not faced with the pounding traffic and residents can cross Bridge Street and Wellesbourne Road in comparative safety, although we must be aware that with less traffic there maybe propensities to speed.

I have worked hard on your behalf to gain more regular police patrols in the village and hope that the Safer Neighbourhoods Scheme will be successful but I am cautious in my optimism due to lack of resources; only one police car for the whole of the Western Area, a mobile police station and the need for police personnel to attend a four day course before they are permitted to ride a bicycle, does rather disturb me! But we must all work together to make this scheme effective for the benefit of the rural areas and I urge you to put pressure on senior officers within the force to adequately fund and resource this initiative. We now have a full team – a sergeant, four Police Constables and two support officers in the area. If they are unable to attend Parish Council Meetings I have asked that at least a written report is supplied for each meeting.

I would like to thank the members of the Joint Parish Council for their enthusiasm and dedication to the vital role they play in the community over the past four years. I am involved with four Parish Councils across my Ward and I must pay tribute to the professionalism of your Clerk, James Johnson in the way he and Cllr Murphy, your Chairman conduct the meetings.

Clare Sawdon