

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PARISH OF BARFORD
HELD AT THE MEMORIAL HALL ON MONDAY 4 APRIL 2011 AT 7.30 PM**

Present: J V Murphy (Chairman)
Eighteen other electors
In attendance: Cllr L Caborn (WCC)
Cllr Mrs C Sawdon (WDC)
Cllr A Rhead (WDC) (also an elector counted in the above total)

1 **Minutes of the annual meeting held on 12 Apr 10.** The minutes were approved as a true record. There were no matters arising.

2 **Report by Cllr J V Murphy, Chairman of the Joint Parish Council.** See Annex A.

3 **Report by Cllr Mrs C Sawdon (WDC)**

The WDC had frozen Council Tax in the current year and anticipated doing so again next year.

The Travel Tokens scheme was being maintained but uptake was poor. She encouraged greater use of it.

The Core Strategy had been abandoned to be replaced by more local initiatives.

The Warwickshire Rural West Community Forum was a good concept but it was over-populated with District and Parish Council representatives and too few of the public. She urged wider participation.

Crime in the District was said to be dropping although she took leave to doubt this suggesting that fewer incidents were being reported and of those which were, increasing numbers were being dealt with by cautions rather than prosecutions

The recycling scheme was doing particularly well with WDC being amongst the best twenty authorities in the country.

It was planned to build 300 new homes in Warwick District in collaboration with a housing association.

She remained passionate about the preservation of the Green Belt.

Travellers posed a problem. The public enquiry for Leek Wootton should be completed by the end of August but Warwick District had discretionary powers.

4 **Report by Cllr A Rhead (WDC)**

WDC had met its austerity remit and had saved money as required over four years but without any compulsory redundancies.

With the abandonment of the Core Strategy work was in hand to draw up a new local plan which would shape society for the next twenty years. He championed this and urged the audience to give him their ideas of what was needed to realize this ambition. Such input was required by 8 Jul 11. Reacting to the lack of response from his audience he promised to arrange "drop-in" sessions to inform and enlighten members of the public.

He listed his appointments within WDC:

- Planning Committee
- Finance and Audit Committee
- Development Working Party

5 **Report by Cllr L Caborn (WCC)**

WCC with its present leadership had been a good council for two years.

It was being restructured from top down:

- Three directors to go
- The council organized into three business groups (from seven)
- The number of heads of services had been reduced to 17 from 27
- Reduced overheads by £60m
- One complete layer of management removed

Concurrently there was an analysis of the property portfolio with the intention of rationalizing the use of buildings in WCC's possession, guided by the notion the Warwick, being the County Town, should remain the focus of WCC activity.

He listed some of his personal achievements in office:

- Chairman Adult Health Scrutiny
- The additional grant from central government of £2.6m for pot-hole repair.
- The procurement of funds to ensure the safety of junctions on the Barford Bypass.

6 **Barford Parish Plan (R G Mulgrue)**

It is now nearly six years since the Parish Meeting approved the Barford Parish Plan and six and a half years since the questionnaire to all residents on which it is based. At this distance it is not surprising that activity in implementing the Plan is lessening because we have completed an Action or have progressed an Action as far as reasonably practicable or we have had to recognize that some actions cannot be implemented at present because of funding issues or the matter being outside the JPC's control.

Even in the case of the last category however we are always alert to any possibilities that open up to us at least partially to implement an Action, perhaps in slightly different ways than those originally envisaged.

Two of these Actions on which there at first appeared to be no way to make progress have had opportunities open up in the last year; better access to the river/more riverside walks and recreational woodland. The JPC is purchasing from WCC for a nominal sum land between the Barford Bypass and the river at the south end of the village. We will clear the land to give a recreational area, community orchard and canoe launching platform. The work will be part-funded by a LEADER grant from the EU.

One other Action on which we have been trying to make progress since the Plan was approved is the issue of illegal, inconsiderate and dangerous parking. This is particularly acute at the junctions of Wellesbourne Road/Wasperton Lane, Wasperton Lane/ Sandy Way and Wellesbourne Road/Bremridge Close where persistent parking near the junctions reduces lines of sight to the extent of making it dangerous for vehicles trying to turn out onto the main road. After exhortations had failed and notices from the Police Safer Neighbourhoods Team were ignored, we have been left having to ask WCC to introduce double yellow lines.

7 **Village Design Statement (J V Murphy)**

The Village Design Statement had become a useful document in that its standards and criteria were now being taken into consideration by the Planning Authority when considering planning applications.

8 **Proposals for land around Barford House (W Worrall)**

In response to the proposals by Sharba Home to develop the land around Barford House the Barford Residents' Association (BRA) was reactivated and subsequently organized an independent survey of village opinion and employed (after a competitive tendering exercise with ten consultants) Green Issues for the task.

Sharba agreed to fund the survey, but it was forbidden access to Green Issues at all times.

The questionnaire was distributed in January. There was a 48% response; 70% of the respondents rejecting the proposals and 27% were in favour. (The results are available on the Barford Village Website).

BRA is pleased to have conducted the exercise and anticipates its efforts may well be required in future.

The Chairman commented that Sharba "has not gone away".

The BRA AGM is scheduled for 20 Apr 11.

9 **Barford Village Shop & Post Office (R Scott)**

As most of you will be aware the shop was opened in November 2008 and has now been operating successfully for nearly 2 ½ years. We have a turnover of around £250,000 and growing – have paid back all our commercial loans and are well ahead of our target of paying back our personal loans by year 5.

We owe our success to Corenna (our manager) our band of 50 plus volunteers, and you, the village, for continuing to support us.

During last winter – the snow that disrupted shopping at Christmas enabled us to demonstrate how important the village shop is for those without transport (even if only temporarily).

We realize that the shop as such is only part of the story and there are major benefits in providing a reason to walk through the village and a meeting place for coffee when you get there. Information is available at the shop from the computer in the internet café and from the volunteers on duty.

The Post Office moved into the shop when it started and has been run as an independent business 3 afternoons a week. There is now a plan to incorporate the Post Office into the shop and open for 5 afternoons a week. This will take some months to accomplish as several new volunteers need to be trained to operate the Post Office. I can report that this is in hand and progressing well.

Finally - The shop AGM is provisionally booked for Wednesday 25 May 11 – here in the Memorial Hall. This will be the opportunity for our 529 shareholders to review the finances, hear the annual report and vote some new Directors in to make a proper job of it.

PS for those who are not shareholders – 471 shares are still available Limited to 1 per person, only £20 each – forms available at the end of the meeting.

10 **Barford Relief in Need Charity (T Offiller)**

The income of the charity is stable at £10k pa.

The JPC appoints the nominative trustees of the charity.

The name of the charity is dated and thought to be off-putting to potential applicants.

The original charitable purposes are less and less matched to the needs of today and the trustees are exploring the widening of the charitable objects to enable donations to be made to such things as education and training.

11 **Barford Community Charity (J V Murphy)**

The charity was formed to facilitate and complement fundraising for the Barford Village Shop with the future role of disbursing its future profits to charitable community causes Limited further information was available at the meeting but concerns were expressed about the election and accountability of trustees and about its method of acquiring and dispersing funds. The Chairman undertook to liaise with the current trustees and bring more information into the public domain.

12 **Neighbourhood Watch (I Findlay)**

A quiet year was reported.

Comments from the floor suggested that were some of the coordinators to be seen as more active then interest in the organization might be rekindled.

Meetings with the police were planned to discuss closer cooperation and to try to rekindle greater interest in the group's activities.

13 **Footpath Group (Mrs W Barlow)**

The main objective of the Group had been the reopening of the footpath between Barford and Bishop's Tachbrook and since Mar 10 it had collaborated with Bishop's Tachbrook PC.

The Ramblers' Association had proved that it existed before WWII.

The Footpaths Officer at WDC had suggested two avenues of approach:

- To enlist the support of the landowner
- To pay the cost of a part-time officer at WDC for two years to work exclusively on the case.

The former was refused, the latter was unaffordable.

There is no choice but to wait until 2026 when this will be considered in its turn as part of the county-wide footpaths review..

14 **Barford School and Preschool (Mrs A Lusty)**

Since the last village meeting, in April 2010, there have been some significant changes at our school.

Our headteacher, Mrs. Annette Delaney, started in April 2010. She has been very successful in leading the school during the year, keeping a clear focus on the quality of teaching and learning in school, in spite of the distractions of day to day life in a busy school.

Building work was sufficiently complete by the start of the Autumn term to allow the school to fully reopen after the summer break. A huge amount of effort from staff and others made this possible. The building work has provided a new Foundation unit and has improved other parts of the school (including a new craft room, a new music room, a covered reflection garden and increased classroom space). We were very pleased to welcome the Bishop of Coventry to formally open the new building in 12 October. We are proud of the first class premises that have been created and it is a delight to see the new facilities being fully used by our pupils.

The new Foundation Unit made it possible for Barford Pre-School to come onto the school site in September. From this date the Pre-School was renamed Barford St Peter's Pre-School and came under the governance of the school. The numbers of children have exceeded our initial expectations and the number of places booked for children in the next academic year is very encouraging. There has been tremendous feedback from parents, pupils and staff who are all delighted with the bright new facilities and appreciate the wonderful learning environment.

The school benefits from a significant level of support from parents and the wider community. Our links with Barford St Peter's Church, and our church school ethos, are very important to us. We very much appreciate the financial and other support given by our active Friends Association, FABS, and also the Barford School Trust.

We are looking forward to a new year of challenges, particularly as the changes in the wider education environment are addressed, but our focus will continue to be the children in our school.

15 **Barford First Responders Group (A Baylis)**

The Group has been operational for 12 months.

Volunteers have been trained in first aid skill and have two set of resuscitation equipment.

The Group (if on duty, it is not 24/7) is deployed by the Ambulance Service responding to a 999 call if it judges that the Group's response time would be shorter.

The JPC has funded an additional public-access defibrillator.

More volunteers are required.

16 **Barford Pride (Mrs H Clay)**

Nothing to report.

The only evidence of activity in the year was Mr Murphy's solo efforts.

More volunteers were required.

17 **Barford Heritage Group (Mrs W Barlow)**

The group maintains an income from the sale of the Barford book and cards.

The heritage sign was purchased and erected on Barford Village Green

The BT telephone kiosk had been refurbished.

The open evening had been well attended.

18 **Barford Allotments (R Clay)**

Demand for allotments had reduced and plots were still available.

The water system had survived the harsh winter undamaged which vindicated the decision to purchase heavy-duty fittings and piping.

19 **Barford Bus Service (R Mulgrue)**

WCC subsidizes bus services that might not otherwise be commercially viable. As part of its cost-cutting that budget has been cut by 45%. For Barford the subsidized journeys are those on a Sunday and in the evenings. WCC has decided to retain the subsidy for all Sunday services but almost all evening services, including our own, will have it withdrawn. This almost certainly means withdrawal of the service, though it is open to an operator to run it without a subsidy if it thinks it can be commercially viable.

The JPC is asking for consultation about how the reduced subsidy is deployed; it is not obvious that all Sunday services should be retained but all evening services cut. The abolition of evening services will hit teenagers in rural areas who have no local activities available to them, those people without cars who work shifts and hospital visitors - Warwick Hospital will be without any evening buses. So we are pressing for consultation on where the cuts should fall. We should also try to make common-cause with other communities along our line of route.

20 **Speed Stickers.**

The Chairman announced that speed posters had been provided by WCC and had been deployed in the village. Wheelie bin "speed stickers" were also available to residents on the through routes.

21 **Elections**

The Chairman reminded the meeting of the elections to be held for the new JPC on 5 May 11.

22 **Any Other Business**

22.1 Ms Healy drew attention to what she perceived as increased traffic noise since the opening of the A46 bypass of M40 Junct 15. Cllr Rhead (WDC) said that measurement had been taken and the levels remained within permissible limits.

22.1 W Worrall declared that the Warwick Rural West Community Forum "is not working", citing the example of bus service cuts (qv Minute 19). This was strongly repudiated by Cllr Caborn (WCC)

23 **Appointment of Chairman for 2011-12.** Mr J V Murphy was elected unopposed.

24 **Closure.** There being no other business the meeting closed at 9:43 pm.

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

2010-2011 has again been a busy year – 9 routine JPC meetings, numerous Planning meetings, 3 Special JPC Meetings, numerous Working Party or subcommittee meetings and the three Annual Parish Meetings.

A46 Sherbourne Bypass is now complete and seems to be working well. Predicted increases of rat-running through Sherbourne have materialized to some degree and this combined with our ongoing concerns over all of our villages' junctions onto the A429 has led us to continue our pressure to get these matters reviewed. Early in 2011 we heard that we had been successful in getting some considerable funding to start resolving Sherbourne village traffic issues, Barford bypass access junction issues and problems at the Wasperton junction. This is most welcome and whilst probably not sufficient to produce dream solutions it should certainly quantify the issues and start to fund some of the solutions.

Barford Village Design Statement was adopted in year 2009-2010 and during the last year has been quoted and acted upon to some good degree when Planning Applications have been considered at WDC. It is obvious however that its use earlier in the planning stage is not happening and it should be promoted at every opportunity to help guide emerging plans and designs.

JPC and WDC funding have assisted the **Glebe Hotel** to undertake remedial works to the ailing Cedar of Lebanon tree. These have been carried out fully and confirmed the situation to be even worse than feared with the top layer of soil totally impacted and bonded. This has now been remedied using air-spades and there has been proper mulching and watering with parking now made more remote by the new surrounding bed wall. We will have to wait and see if and how well it recovers.

Barford Heritage Group unveiled their magnificent oak tree notice board on Barford Village Green in June and it has been much admired by locals and visitors alike.

Dogs – Dog fouling remains an ongoing problem and although much less than in years past is still causing concern. There are strict rules and severe fines for offenders and the Dog wardens promise zero-tolerance when folk are caught and dog owners can now encouraged to put their pets' waste in the standard waste or litter bins. The problem of fouling and control is so significant that WDC are looking to impose quite draconian measures but it is difficult to see how these might be implemented in our rural locations – watch this space...

Inconsiderate, and often illegal, parking around the Bremridge Close and Wasperton Lane junctions continues to be an important issue and consultation is underway moving towards implementing formal restrictions in the problem locations.

All three village halls have this year been supported by JPC grants with £940 to each and the JPC also gave grant support towards maintenance of each of the three churchyards.

Most of the major **planning consultations** that were worrying us last year – Minerals and Core strategy - have gone quiet in the wake of the abolition of Regional Spatial Strategies by the new coalition government - but they haven't gone away and will re-emerge as new Local Plans, but they will take time and we have every opportunity to fully engage in shaping our District Council area in ways that we think will be appropriate.

Affordable Housing – We have continued to work to identify the most appropriate site and consensus currently comes down to land to the south side of Wasperton Lane and outline plans and negotiations are currently underway with the Rural Housing Enabler.

The threat of development on **land around Barford House** has remained topical again this year following the Barford Parish Meeting's rejection of Sharba's conclusions from their own surveys. Barford Residents Association was resurrected and a very able team oversaw the production of a truly independent assessment of village opinion. The result was clear although not everyone is happy or convinced so we must wait and see what follows for that site.

The opportunity has appeared to acquire a plot of **riverside land** left over from the Barford Bypass construction and plans are moving to develop an orchard, wild flower meadow and canoe launching point there with public access. The site is currently quite overgrown but the views are magnificent and will give our villages important new access to our river. Although it will require considerable self-help labour we are also fortunate to have secured LEADER funding for some of the more costly and specialist elements.

The three villages were given the opportunity recently to take part in the “Exercise Watermark” a nationwide flood defence exercise. Barford staged an evening “table top” meeting where we went through various scenarios, where, whilst finding ourselves relatively well-prepared, we identified measures which could be improved to assist us in dealing with any significant emergency or disaster which might just happen without warning.

Our parish councillors have played a significant part in developing Locality Community Forums into a much more useful body than they have been to date but there is still a long way to go before they achieve the potential which was been promised, even before the Localism Bill began to emerge.

All councillors have attended many meetings and generally have served their electors extremely well, working as a strong team with James Johnson our excellent Clerk/RFO. Many thanks to all for their input. Some have done much more than the expected minimum and these are particularly deserving of our community’s gratitude. Sadly several have indicated that they will not be standing for election for a further term and we will miss their contributions but will welcome new members to join the team in the coming year.

JVM
15/03/2011

Councillor attendance records:

2010-2011 year

Name	Meetings	Present	%
Cllr Mrs P W Barlow	11	11	100%
Cllr M P Byerley	11	3	27%
Cllr R Clay	11	9	82%
Cllr Mrs D S Cobb	11	5	45%
Cllr Mrs M A Hayward	11	9	82%
Cllr D C Morrow	11	10	91%
Cllr R G Mulgrue	11	10	91%
Cllr J V Murphy	11	11	100%
Cllr A B Rhead	11	8	73%
Cllr W Worrall	11	9	82%
Cllr Mrs A Gordon	11	11	100%
Cllr Mrs P L Johnston	10	3	30%
Cllr Mrs P W Wilkinson	11	8	73%
Cllr Dr M J Metcalfe	11	8	73%
Cllr N F J Thurley	11	9	82%
Cllr J T Wright	11	9	82%