

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PARISH OF BARFORD
HELD AT THE MEMORIAL HALL ON MON 7 APR 14 AT 7.30 PM**

Present:	J V Murphy (Chairman) Fifty-four other electors One Sherbourne observer
In attendance:	Cllr L Caborn (WCC) Cllr A Rhead (WDC)

1 **Minutes of the annual meeting held on 2 Apr 13.** The minutes were approved as a true record. There were no matters arising.

2 **Barford, Sherbourne & Wasperton Joint Parish Council Report** by Cllr J V Murphy (Chairman):

2013-2014 has again been another busy year – 9 routine JPC meetings, numerous Planning meetings, numerous Working Party or subcommittee meetings and the three Annual Parish Meetings and three Special Meeting this year!

Difficult financial times continue and all levels of government strive to achieve best value and minimize service reductions. This year, for the second year, after several years of no change, we have increased the JPC Precept. Last year's modest increase helped us cope with changes to the way Council Tax rebates were administered, which threatened to seriously erode our finances. This year with steadily increasing demands on our resources we have taken the brave step of a 33% increase in the parish element of the Council Tax. Of course 33% of a modest amount is a very small real increase and hopefully will be seen as excellent value. Amongst beneficiaries from the new financial regime are improved lighting schemes in Barford and Sherbourne, Barford Neighbourhood Development Plan, relaunch of Neighbourhood Watch, improvements in Sherbourne Village Hall, maintenance of Wasperton War Memorial and funds to defend our parishes in the face of the emerging New Local Plan.

The Sherbourne traffic scheme to extend the weight limit and impose speed limits throughout the village came into operation but remains contentious and councilors are still working with WCC officers to refine the scheme to better suit our situation. In particular the 40mph limit on Watery Lane remains controversial.

Last year we were successful in securing a Community Forum grant for £3000 towards the modernization and replacement of our streetlights. The latest scheme includes all the outdated lights in Barford and Sherbourne and subject to economies of scale the work should be completed this year.

After a very slow and frustrating year the Working Party to review the facilities at Barford Playing Fields has begun to make real and steady progress. We were hoping to get the Diocese to agree some arrangement to include the Rectory Paddock within the scheme but it seems they prefer to view it as a long term investment despite every offer to deal with this in a flexible manner. The Open Day on March 1st saw over 100 visitors to Barford Memorial Hall to see various proposals and possibilities. There was great support for all sorts of facilities, covering, access drive improvement, car parking, 5-a-side football, mini-rugby, all-weather pitches and courts, tennis courts, adult fitness equipment and perimeter pathways. After further analysis of the questionnaire returns the WP is drawing up a business plan and will get solid quotations before launching into major fundraising.

All three village halls have this year been supported by JPC grants with £1070 towards general maintenance each and the JPC also gave grant support of £430 towards maintenance of each of the three churchyards. Additionally the JPC also supported Sherbourne Village Hall's project to renovate its toilets with a further £2675 grant for that specific project.

The **New Local Plan** has continued to be a major theme over the year. The Preferred Options stage was revised and relaunched as the Revised Development Strategy which moved Barford to a slightly less sustainable category but only marginally reduced the number of houses we might be expected to accept. The Draft Local Plan, which was expected in June 2013 is now likely to appear in May 2014 after considerable extra work has been carried out on total numbers, cooperating with

neighbouring authorities, and in particular for us on the Village settlement Boundaries and numbers. The new settlement boundary for Barford will more realistically represent the current developed state and incorporate the areas of land deemed appropriate for future development, whilst giving considerable protection to areas outside that boundary.

After last year's Annual Parish Meetings it was agreed to explore Neighbourhood Plans and Barford finally agreed to go ahead. Although Sherbourne and Wasperton could not get sufficient support to undertake them. The Barford group have worked extremely hard and the process is now well underway and will be reported elsewhere.

In mid-2013 the Gypsy & Traveller Consultation was launched to run parallel to the NLP process. Alarm took hold and we rapidly arranged a public meeting with a 300+ attendance where WDC officers explained the situation and residents asked sensible and probing questions, in particular relating to sites within and near our parish. The public response was enormous and it was not until February 2014 that the Preferred Options paper was produced targeting the vast majority of sites into the non-Greenbelt area and again several near Barford. The consultation of POs will run until May 5th.

Affordable Housing – We continued to work to with WRCC and have conducted a further “official” Housing Needs Survey” to accurately measure both affordable and market needs. This produced slightly reduced numbers compared to previous surveys which is perhaps to be expected but still demonstrates the need to find appropriate sites in the near future, although given the loss of the Wasperton Lane site these will now almost certainly have to come on the back of private market home sites built within the emerging New Local Plan.

Proposals on **land around Barford House** remained high profile. The Planning Application for 58 homes was refused by WDC and was refused at Appeal. A revised application has also been refused, on similar grounds to the original but additionally on failing to meet the mix indicated by our HNS. It is pending going to Appeal but meanwhile there is a proposal to demolish the front wall on public safety grounds...

The site of the now closed **Sherbourne Nurseries** was also the subject of a further Planning Application for 60 houses by Taylor Wimpey with access via demolition of the Police House. This has now been withdrawn but is expected to re-appear after negotiations on a revised or new access.

Over the year **Riverside land**, community orchard, a wild flower meadow and riverside walk have continued to thrive and mature but were currently the centre of a proposal for a G&T site although latterly it has been removed and only the adjacent private paddock is being promoted.

The Localism Act brought various powers including the “Community Right to Bid” which embraces the “Assets of Community Value”. This gives a modest window of time for community action to raise a rescue attempt in the event that a community asset is likely to be lost or sold. The work to list and evaluate these assets has been quite involving but is now largely complete pending final WDC approval.

All councillors have as always 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.

Councillor attendance records:

2013-14	Meetings	Present	%
Cllr Mrs W BARLOW	9	9	100%
Cllr R CLAY	9	8	89%
Cllr Mrs J L LONGFIELD	9	8	89%
Cllr P A P MORRIS	9	4	44%
Cllr J V MURPHY	9	9	100%
Cllr A RHEAD	9	5	56%
Cllr R A SHOTTON-OZA	9	4	44%
Cllr Mrs A GORDON	9	9	100%
Cllr Mrs NEWSOME	9	7	78%
Cllr M J METCALFE	9	8	89%
Cllr N F J THURLEY	9	8	89%

Cllr J T WRIGHT	9	9	100%
Cllr J M HAWKESFORD	9	9	100%
Cllr T MERRYGOLD	9	9	100%
Cllr I BOAK	5	4	80%

3 **Warwickshire County Council Report by Cllr L Caborn:**

BUDGET
 County council set budget @ 1.99% rise to minimise saving need. At this level the council needs to find savings of £92 million over 4 years. This will be achieved through review of staffing, premises but mainly redesign of services and concentrating on front line services and our most vulnerable citizens. ie adult services, safeguarding, children and disabled services, though none exempt change.
 With savings of £65 million taken out over past 3 years, it means our central government support is down by over 30% These changes will be delivered through our One Organisational Plan which sets the way forward for delivery of services.

ECONOMIC development
 Looking for growth through being part of LEP. Partner in Strategic Economic Plan which bids for regional funding for infrastructure ie Nuckle, Junction 12 M40
 Partner in City deal for Warwickshire and Coventry WFRS Commencing consultation on Transformation Programme designed to deliver savings and improve operation. Includes 2 new fire delivery points.
 New training facilities, but most important better response times of target of 10minutes urban and rural. Achieved through rostering firefighters especially full time to cover busiest periods for call out. 60% calls rescue,40% fire nowadays

HIGHWAYS
 No cuts in gritting or pothole repairs .extra £2 million won from central government for winter repairs Area funds spent by District on small schemes ending after 2014

GENERAL Rise in numbers of looked after children Old Courts likely to be run in house as business and cost centre Still not supporting HS2 Gravel plan expected soon Community forum continues to be partly funded by my £5000 member allowance for division.

UNITARY
 Following debate council will continue to explore unitary.
 Thanks to clerk and chairman for support and help.

4 **Warwick District Council Report by Cllr A Rhead:**

- The Conservative lead Council has, for the third year running, frozen the Council Tax and has continued to provide a surplus against last year's budget;
- The District Council has further cost savings to make for future years but as a result of 'Fit-For-The-Future' and other long term plans, cost savings to date have not resulted in any loss of services provision;
- The Council has been successful in encouraging new businesses to relocate to Warwick District. Since 2010 those seeking job seekers allowance has halved from 2,000 to 1,000;
- One major future plan is the relinquishing of the Riverside House headquarters for a much smaller and appropriate building which will be considerably more energy efficient and provide significant cost savings.
- I am actively involved as one of three 'Procurement Champions' tasked with ensuring that procurement processes yield better quality of services at reduced costs borne out of collective procurement.
- The Local Plan continues to dominate most of the Council's time and energy. Clare Sawdon and I are continuing to make representations on the current Preferred Options with particular emphasis on infrastructure provisions; all opinions need to be represented including the need for housing that our young people can access on the one hand with protection of our heritage on the other.
- In particular the matter of Gypsy & Traveller sites has taken up some of our time; Clare and I have made representations about all of the 'Preferred Options' that are within the Budbrooke Ward; I have written to the Council and its Executive on two occasions in early February and again last week pointing out the errors in the report regarding the two sites here at Barford while also pointing out the dangerous Bypass crossing and conflict with the Village's recently acquired Green Space;
- I have supported applications from Village organizations for funds from either the Forum or Rural Initiative Grants. It is important that community organizations remain aware of these funds which are available for worthwhile community projects.

- I am currently chairman of the Planning Committee and also sit on the Finance & Audit Committee scrutinizing all projected expenditure.

5 **Police Matters Report by Beat Manager Manjit Sidhu:**

- Low level of crime in the area
- Neighbourhood Watch. Currently Barford has 213 members and it is hoped to increase this number to 400 by active recruitment. Advertising will be achieved in part by having stall at local fairs and fetes.

6 **New Local Plan** The Chairman reported:

- Of the additional 12,900 houses required in Warwick District, 86 are allocated to Barford on 4 or 5 sites.
- Cllr Caborn announced that the final version would be published on the WDC website at 1700hrs on Fri 11 Apr 14

7 Matters Arising. Mr K Hope remarked that the original Green Belt legislation dated from the 1930s and ought to be reviewed in the light of changing circumstances. Whilst acknowledging this would be too late to influence the current Local Plan (not least because the agreement to such a step would be required of all Districts and Boroughs in Warwickshire) he thought this should be undertaken to allow it to influence the succeeding local plans.

8 **Gypsy & Traveller Sites** The Chairman reported:

- WDC had identified a number of potential sites for Gypsy and Traveller pitches. They were designated as "Red" (totally unsuitable), "Orange" (suitable but only after remedial works) and "Green (suitable).
- Of the Green sites, five had been nominated as the Preferred Options and of these two were in the vicinity of Barford on Westham Lane (8 pitches) and Brookside Willows/Banbury Road (8-10 pitches).
- This was not a problem which could be wished away. Without a firm commitment to the provision of such sites WDC's New Local Plan would be rejected by the Inspectorate (as had other new local plans already)
- Objections had to be evidence-based and be supported by viable alternatives.
- For his part the Chairman thought the concept of piecemeal imposition of these sites on established communities was conceptually wrong. Far better to satisfy the requirement for them by properly investigating inclusion and integration of G&T sites within the bigger, new developments of several thousand houses and commercial developments which lay in the area south of Warwick and Leamington. This suggestion received support from the vast majority of residents present at the meeting.

9 Matters Arising.

9.1 There was wide support for Mr E Kirkby's suggestion that Barford should send a delegation of say four people to lobby WDC on the strength of feeling in the village. WDC had been alerted to this matter by the efforts of Cllrs Rhead and Sawdon (vide Paragraph 4 above) and it was thought appropriate should be delegation should be provided not by the JPC but by Barford Residents' Association.

9.2 Mr J Evans was concerned lest the presence of Cllr A Rhead, who was attending the meeting in his capacity as a member of WDC (as well as being a Barford resident), should compromise his ability to continue speaking forcefully on behalf of Barford in that forum. Cllr Rhead assured the meeting that he was alert to the danger of predetermination which was why his comments at this meeting were confined to the factual and devoid of personal opinion.

9.3 Mr M Griffin said he understood that WDC eschewed incorporation of these sites into larger, new developments on the grounds that this diminished land values for the developer; a justification he found unacceptable.

9.4 Mrs R Lloyd said she understood that land for these sites could no longer be the subject of a compulsory purchase order. Cllr Caborn said that he was unaware of any change and would check on it, adding that so fundamental was the inclusion of G&T sites provision in WDC's new local plan that if all else failed the CPO route would have to be followed.

10

Barford Neighbourhood Plan Report by Mr G Harrison-Hall:

Neighbourhood Development Plans, often known simply as “Neighbourhood Plans” allow communities, like ours, to set out a vision for their area. Neighbourhood Plans are usually promoted through Parish Councils and the Plan should be the first point of reference for any planning application. We are permitted to have one, but we do not have to have one. I believe that if we do not have one, those responsible for planning will not take account of the village’s views when applications are made.

In June 2013, the Joint Parish Council agreed that Barford should have a Neighbourhood Plan.

“The Barford Neighbourhood Plan steering group” was formed during the summer 2013. I was asked to chair the committee, and Richard Williams is the Vice Chairman. We have had many meetings. We have also canvassed opinion from other members of our community, for instance when the WDC presented their Local Plan we had a stall here, and asked people to give us their views. Ultimately it is your views that must go into this plan. Our next stage will be to produce a “working draft” for you to read, and to tell us what you like about it and what you disagree with. Our group comprises volunteers from many different sections of the village working under the auspices of the JPC. We hope to have a cross section to reflect the needs and interests of the whole village. We need to hear from all of you.

The Plan will include strategies for sustainable development (the new catch words) for the benefit of the whole community. The Plan must comply with the over-arching policies of the district-wide Local Plan, which as you know, has not yet been finalized. We shall be seeking your opinions on what you want for our village. I do not believe the Plan would carry much weight if it simply sought to say NIMBY because that would be contrary to the Local Plan, and as such would not pass the scrutineer prior to the referendum. Assuming the emerging Local Plan is adopted in its current form, we shall be expected to find sites for about 85 houses over the next 15 years. It is an opportunity for us to state what we want to achieve for our village. One aspect, for instance, is whether we would seek to say that those 85 houses should be phased so as to prevent more than, say, 17 houses being built in any three year period. One of the disadvantages with phasing is that the building work will continue throughout the period. Another is that services, such as the drains, will not be sorted out at the commencement of building. Our plan might express views on broadband, but at the moment that seems to be something that is already being looked at, and you will have seen e-mails from John Murphy publicizing the collation of information in support.

We are currently looking at Housing and new development, Local Facilities, Landscape, the environment, Transport, Traffic and Heritage.

When we present our draft Neighbourhood Plan we want to hear opinions from the village. Before the Plan can be adopted, we shall need to have a referendum at which we hope everyone will vote. By that time, if you have provided us with your opinions, the vast majority of you will support the Plan, because it will by then reflect your opinions. It is a lengthy process, but we are hoping to have gone through several hoops, and consulted you all by Christmas.

We have received some funding from the Joint Parish Council, and been promised funds by both Warwick District Council and Locality. We have appointed consultants to help us comply with planning law.

Please help us to help you, by responding. You are encouraged to discuss your views with any member of the steering group. If you have access to e-mail, that is the preferred approach; firstly to ensure we have an accurate note of your point, and secondly so that we can distribute your comments more easily within our group.

If you have any views please contact...Rob Mulgrue (Secretary) on robmulgrue@talk21.com Giles Harrison-Hall (Chairman) on gharrisonhall@gmail.com or Richard Williams (Vice-Chairman) on richard@aztecsolarenergy.co.uk

11

Barford PCC Allotments Report by Mrs W Barlow:

As usual we have a waiting list for the Church Allotments. Four new tenants were welcomed during the year .All of the plots were well cared for –probably better than at any time during the last 25 years. We have a good mix of tenants from the village and from further afield.

Last year was a season with many successful crops .Again, at specific times of the year the water supply proved invaluable.

Allotment holders supported the village show and won many prizes.

During the Harvest Festival weekend a service of thanksgiving was held on the Church allotment site, and was much appreciated by those who came and offered produce.

12 **Barford JPC Allotments Report by Mr R Clay:**

- All plots taken
- No waiting list
- Some plot holders are willing to consider sharing.

13 **Barford Community Charity Report by Mrs M Peirson:**

The Barford Community charity has recently produced a leaflet which will be on parish notice boards and in the May edition of Plurality

The charity was established in 2007 to facilitate the development and launch of the Barford village shop. The underlying focus of the BCC is to promote village cohesion, by raising and administering funds for projects and initiatives that will bring an element of regeneration to the villages of Barford, Wasperton and Sherbourne.

The Trustees of the Charity are:

- John Barrot (Chairman) 01926 624766 / 07815 600424 jbarrott17@googlemail.com
- Pam Harrison (Secretary) 01926 624548 pambri5@btinternet.com
- John Murphy 01926 624421/ 07710 033444 jvmurphy@talktalk.net
- Mary Peirson (Treasurer) 01926 624145 / 07739 091285 marypeirson@tiscali.co.uk
- Alan Rhead 01926 624416 alan.rhead@gmail.com
- Richard Shotton-Oza 01926 624788 richard.shotton-oza@hotmail.co.uk

The Charity is fortunate to be supported by Barford Village Shop and now has a bank balance in excess of £40,000 which means we now have funds to make a significant difference within the village. We have an application form so that all projects can be assessed fairly. We meet 4 times a year but applications can be considered outside the normal meetings if urgent. We ask that projects seek funds outside the village in the first instance so that we can act as the funder of last resort.

In the past year we have supported:

- A disability ramp for Barford Church
- A grant towards street lighting improvements in Sherbourne
- A piano for Barford School via FABS

If you would be interested in becoming a Trustee of the BCC please do let us know, as a vacancy currently exists.

14 **Barford Relief in Need Charity Report by Mr T Offiler:**

The Charity is known as a 'relief in need' charity and is regulated by the Charities Commission. Its income is derived from cautious investments and, to a much smaller extent, the rental income on some land in the south of the County It amounted to a little under twelve and a half thousand pound in 2013.

Unlike when it was established in the early 20th century, before the advent of a welfare state, the Charity has for many years struggled to attract applicants and spend its annual income. Since re-composition of the trustee body in 2005 there has been a strong emphasis on publicising the help available from the Charity and, with Charity Commission support and advice, widening of the Charity's scope. Comparing the number of applicants to the Charity in the 5 years to 2004 (when the trustee body was reconstituted by the JPC) to the number of applicants in the 5 years to 2013 there have been nearly twice as many in the latter period.

Continuing this theme, in 2013 on receipt of an application for grant from a Sherbourne resident, ordinarily ineligible for the Charity's help, trustees decided to extend eligibility for grant to Sherbourne and Wasperton residents. To do this they used provision in the Charity's terms of reference for grants to be given in exceptional circumstances to residents outside the parish of Barford where there is, in the trustees' opinion, sufficient reason so to do. Unanimously, the trustees took the view that Sherbourne and Wasperton are satellite villages of Barford, having very few services of their own (fewer than when the present trust deed was approved in 1972). They believe the Parish boundary to be a somewhat arbitrary line on a map and not reflecting the way people live their lives. Indeed, the Barford Parish Council, responsible under the Scheme for the appointment of the four nominative trustees on the Charity, has become the Barford, Sherbourne and Wasperton Joint Parish Council, reflecting these changes over time.

Contact was made in 2013 by a consultant apparently engaged by the Charities Commission to encourage 'relief in need' charities to interpret their powers to the fullest extent in order to maximise permitted spending. However, she was unable to suggest further ways in which the Barford Relief in Need Charity might do so despite her stated success elsewhere.

In 2013, cash grants were made to 11 applicants and a further 23 parishioners received grants to help with the cost of Christmas. Of those receiving grants for specific needs

- 1 was for dental treatment
- 1 was for laser treatment
- 1 was for disability aids
- 1 was to replace a washing machine and help meet winter heating costs
- 2 were to help with rent payments
- 1 was to help retrain as a teacher
- 1 was for a vocational training in saddle and bridle making
- 1 was for nursery fees and partner's funeral expenses
- 1 was for pre-school fees
- 1 was to purchase a bed

The trustees of the Charity, who are appointed for a term of 4 or 5 years, are Gerard Veness, its Chairman, Rev. David Jessett, Philippa Mitchell, Rob Mulgrue, Lorraine Sayers, Philip Swallow and Philippa Wilson. I and my wife Barbara act as Joint Clerks to the trustees.

15 **Barford Leisure Improvement Scheme** Report by Mr M Griffin

The key progress to date is:

1. There were 110 attendees at the memorial hall exhibition on Saturday 1st March
2. An exhibition with Working Group representatives were present to field questions and process comments
3. A total of 125 completed questionnaires were received following house to house and school drop in arrangement
4. Some key findings were:
 - 91% of people felt that playing field facilities need to be upgraded with additional facilities provided to existing
 - 5 % were against the provision of an all-weather sports /leisure facility
 - 90% of people support the upgrading of the lane for access
 - 68% of people completing the survey were aged 40 years and over
 - 97% of people lived in the three parishes of Barford, Wasperton and Sherbourne
5. The research has indicated support for the scheme to include the following:
 - Perimeter exercise track around the field
 - Keep full size football pitch
 - Create all weather all sports surface pitch
 - Include adult exercise activity
 - Modest upgrade to existing skate park
 - Allow dog walkers to still use field facility
 - Play area fenced /cordoned off for protected access
 - Limited accessible toilet provision
 - Provision of a zip wire
 - Seating and tables for picnic and leisure for all ages
 - Upgrade of play equipment area
 - Provision of bike racks
 - Replace fencing which is wooden and modern
6. Next stage : to prepare site drawings for layout , factor drainage implications of lane and field
7. Prepare specifications for obtaining various quotes for 4 key elements
8. Prepare Business Plan by 12th May
9. Present Business Plan for JPC approval on 12th May
10. Fundraising and grant applications begin May onwards with target to deliver all elements by Autumn 2015 (under review)

16 **Barford Residents' Association** Report by Mr R Scott:

BRA has been active in the last year in response to plans for developing the village which we believe would result in substantial and detrimental change to one of the '10 best places to live' in the West Midlands.

Threats have come from WDC Planning in terms of Gypsy & Traveller sites last Summer with a well-attended meeting held in Barford School. A detailed response was made by BRA, the JPC and many residents – those of you who attended the Drop in session last Friday will be aware that one site in Barford is on the list of preferred sites and unless we can take some positive action it may

very likely go forward. – More on this occurs later in the agenda for this meeting. Taylor Wimpey are proposing a large development on the Nursery site West of Wellesbourne Road. Their first proposal was rejected by WDC – a second, very similar, proposal has been made but is temporarily withdrawn to re-consider the position of the access to the Development. Sharba have made a second proposal for the land behind Barford House, WDC have rejected it and we believe that Sharba will make a second Appeal. There is now a Planning Application to knock down the ‘dangerous’ section of wall on Wellesbourne Road North of Barford House. This ‘iconic’ wall was coincidentally key to the rejection of Sharba’s Appeal against the refusal of Planning permission. BRA has a small committee that needs extra representation – I ask you to stay after this meeting and attend the BRA AGM and consider joining the committee to fight to conserve the village of Barford and its environment and the rural character of the area and to represent the interests of the residents in these and related matters. That quote is from the Constitution of BRA

17 **Barford First Responders Group Report by Mr A Rhead:**

- I am Chairman of the Barford First Responders
- The First Responders is a voluntary organization under the auspices of the West Midlands Ambulance Service.
- Every volunteer has gone through basic training with the Ambulance Service;
- As the name suggests the First responders are the First Response to a 999 Ambulance phone call and are available to go to an emergency while the Ambulance Service is on its way. In the first 8 minutes of a call, life can be in danger and the First Responders are equipped to provide initial treatment.
- Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SAC) is the number one killer at home killing 250 people every day and the First Responders can assist in avoiding this fatal event with defibrillation.
- In addition the Village has a Public Access Defibrillator located at the Village Shop on the Car Park side which, as the name suggests, is for use by any member of the public when a 999 Emergency occurs. The access code is provided by the Ambulance Service when a member of the public makes an emergency call. Do not forget that the first 8 minutes is critical in saving of life. The Barford First Responders maintain this PAD.
- Currently the Barford First Responders Group has only 7 trained volunteers which means that, at best, only a few half days per week are covered. The Group and the Village urgently need more volunteers if the service is going to adequately cover the complete week. Every volunteer will receive the necessary training and you would be helping to save life in our community.
- The Barford Group have attended to several incidents this year including falls, road traffic accidents and, on occasions, just providing re-assurance to concerned people **but we could do much more if we had more volunteers**. On each occasion we have been much appreciated by the recipients and the Ambulance Service rely on us as the first people on the scene in such a rural location.

18 **Barford Heritage Group Report by Mrs W Barlow:**

Events

April 6 and 7 saw performances of ‘**Barford at War – an affectionate look back at the War Years**’. This was the culmination of months of research using sources including records from the Parish Council, WI and School as well as reminiscences and old Parish magazines. The Memorial Hall was transformed into a black-out venue complete with copies of 1940s newspapers and period artefacts. The Drama Group came up trumps as usual, not only by taking part in the performance but by helping with the lighting, sound and video. In the interval canteen ladies served surprisingly delicious spam, fish paste and egg finger-sandwiches together with the usual wonderful cake and mugs of tea. The performance ran the gamut of comedy and pathos and the sell-out audience was unanimous in their appreciation

The visit of the International Gaskell Society in July proved to be a great success. Elizabeth Gaskell (then Stevenson) attended the Miss Byerleys’ school at Barford House between 1820 and 1825. Alan Roberts kindly allowed the visitors to view the house from outside and the gardens from the rear. Delegates then walked through the village to St Peter’s where they were presented with the full colour booklet researched and produced by Ann. Maggie welcomed the visitors and gave a brief talk about what the church would have been like before its enlargement and outlined the divisive social hierarchy in Elizabeth Gaskell’s time. David Jessett conducted a short church service with a gallery band comprising violin, viola and flute, singing of a metrical psalm and prayers for “our monarch, King George IV”, as in Mrs Gaskell’s time. The Society was very appreciative of everything

our group had laid on. An effusive thank you letter has been received from the Society saying it was their best ever meeting.

'This green and pleasant land – It happened in Barford' took place on 27th October. This was a so-called pop-up event in conjunction with Leamington Spa Art Gallery and Museum which received funding from Arts Council England to run the project. The brief was to look at significant people and events from the village in the nineteenth century up to the present day with a focus on Joseph Arch. The funds covered the cost of our exhibition materials and the Art Gallery & Museum also provided display furniture and curatorial support. We requested large scale cut out images of representative families eg the Hadley family picnic, The Hemmings, the landlord of the Red Lion and Joseph Arch with their respective families. Surprisingly these were manufactured in Leeds and only arrived on the day before the exhibition opened. Commercial enterprises may be happy to operate on a 'just in time' basis but it proved really nail biting for our display team. Similarly the A/V presentation had a complex gestation with the script being written in Cambridgeshire, the recording triumphantly being made in one take thanks to the professionalism of the cast from the drama group and much to the amazement of Vicky Slade, the Art Gallery's Senior Curator, the process being held together by plenty of cake. Then it was passed over to a technical geek at Leamington. For him it was a nightmare as he was so overloaded with work he had to tackle it in the evenings. At one point he was juggling 64 separate channels as he integrated images, sound track and music – nightmare! As a consequence the DVD arrived so late there was no time for a run through or any amendments. However the event itself was a triumph with a footfall of over 130 people some of whom came back for a second viewing. Thanks to the generosity of members and well-wishers the cakes didn't run out and the heritage team coped magnificently with the influx.

In a subsequent debriefing meeting with Vicky, she was fulsome in her praise and said that the event had far exceeded her expectations. When asked if we would be prepared to work with the Art Gallery & Museum again we responded that the Heritage Group were delighted to have been selected as partners but had too many projects of their own to occupy them for the foreseeable future.

Becoming Barford

The book continues to sell – albeit at a slower rate as most of the village have now got a copy. All the school leavers received the book, courtesy of the group, with the hope that it would remind them of their childhood in Barford.

Cards

Once again Carole produced some lovely Christmas cards, using both excellent colour photos and vintage ones from our archive. They quickly sell out as they are beautiful, different and popular.

Telephone box

The gleaming red kiosk with its gilded crown is a credit to the village thanks to those members who clean the glass, wash off the traffic film and populate it with displays. It is a wonderful exhibition capsule and has been used to advertise events as well as to house an illuminated Christmas display to delight the children as well as adults.

PLANS FOR 2014

Managing our archive

As a group we have accumulated an embarrassment of riches. Not, I hasten to add, in financial terms, but rather in a plethora of images, reminiscence transcripts, research findings and some artefacts. Every month it seems members are discovering new facts about Barford's past. Last year we stated that cataloguing our archive material was a priority but, as you have heard, our good intentions were overtaken by events. In 2014 we intend to seek advice from the County Record Office about how best to go about this task. Only then can we overhaul the web site to make it truly functional.

The Trail Leaflet

Our full colour trail leaflet has been very popular and stocks are running low. During the coming year we hope to review the content with a view to making amendments and perhaps coalescing the two trails.

Barford – the War Years

We have a surfeit of wonderful material which could not be incorporated into April's dramatic presentation. Another publication is planned – perhaps on a less grand scale than *Becoming Barford*. We have begun accessing further information about the Great War and would appreciate any help in this regard.

New members are always welcome.

19 **Barford Scouts & Guides Report by Mr R Scott:**

The individual groups are well supported with 16 Brownies, 24 Beavers, 16 Cubs and 9 Scouts. New adult helpers are always welcome so if you want to help the future residents of Barford this is a good

place to start.

The Leaders want to raise the profile of the youth groups so are involved in organizing a St George's Day service on April 27th and intend to have a presence at the School fete this year.

The Supporters Group (who look after the maintenance of the Scout Hut) have been investigating the possibility of replacing the asbestos roof and making some internal changes to incorporate a disabled toilet. The progress stalled last year when it was suggested that it might be more economic to knock the hut down and start again, but further investigation proved that this would be much more difficult to achieve. The new supporters committee will look at this again during this year with the aim of getting the work done in Autumn 2015.

20 **Barford Shop Report by Mr W Worrall:**

I am pleased to report that Barford Village Shop Community Interest Company (generally referred to as "The Shop") enjoys continued success and is in rude health.

Financially The Shop continues to trade profitably although I do not intend to disclose the figures for 2013-14 the last financial year as this has to be presented to Shareholders at the 2014 AGM in May. We continue to be supported by a wide section of customers drawn both from local residents and also by "passer by" traffic and tradesmen visiting the community.

In addition to offering a wide selection of merchandise we also act as a sales point for village activities. All part of The Shop ethic of not only providing for but being part of the community.

Our manager, Ms. Corenna Jennings continues to run the ship, as a good captain should, in a thoroughly efficient manner dealing with both customers and volunteers in a diligent and professional manner.

As I am sure you are aware The Shop is open for 6½ days per week, a total of some 26 shifts per week, all undertaken by volunteers. However this is one area where we need more support, in particular for weekend cover. Therefore, here's the advertisement, if anyone fancies spending a pleasant 3 hours on a Sunday morning meeting new faces and renewing friendships see me after the meeting or pop in and make yourselves known to Corenna. You will be made very welcome. Finally a reminder to those of you who are shareholders, which I expect is the majority, the AGM will be held on May 21st in the Memorial Hall Barford.

21 **Barford Post Office Report by Mr R Scott:**

An eventful year – Barford Post Office has been granted 'Community Post Office' Status which basically means it can continue in the present form rather than being changed to a 'Local' (less Services but open all the hours the shop is open) or a 'Main' (multiple counters and all services.) After 5 years I tried to recruit a successor as sub-postmaster – but to no avail. It became obvious that, if Barford could not provide a willing sub-postmaster, then the Post Office would have no chance and, if I resigned (as I wanted to do) then, the village would lose its Post Office. As a last resort we appealed again for additional volunteers to come forward, get trained and join the existing team. 2 more volunteers on a 1-day a week basis would enable us to continue to provide the village with post office services 5 days a week. I am glad to report that this appears to be successful and hopefully Barford Post Office will continue to operate - at least for another year.

The Sub-postmaster's salary is provided by the Post Office – but the staff (including myself) work 1 day a week as volunteers. To recognize this, a proportion of the salary is donated to Charities chosen by the team. In the last year, with gift aid that has resulted in donations worth over £3,000. Next year, with more volunteers, will see that increase significantly.

22 **Appointment of Chairman for 2014-15.** Mr J V Murphy was elected unopposed.

23 The meeting passed a vote of thanks (moved by Mr J Evans) to the Chairman for his stewardship during the past year.

24 **Any Other Business**

24.1 **Friends of Oakley Wood Report by Mrs W Barlow:**

Warwick District Council has now gone into Partnership with The Warwickshire Wildlife Trust. These two combined with The Friends Of Oakley Wood make a skilled and friendly team to maintain our local, precious Woodland.

The Friends of Oakley Wood continue to organize events within the wood such as The Bat Walk and Tree Walk using the knowledge and expertise of the Warwickshire Wildlife Team.

There are now well over 350 members of The Friends and our new improved website can be used by anyone wishing to input information.

The Horse Logging Initiative is coming to an end but the horse Loggers will be working in the wood

over the next days and their last visit will be as part of the very popular Woodland Craft day on Sat 12th April. There will not only be woodland crafts such as wood turning but a 'bio-blitz' (run by Warwickshire Wildlife) and den building.

- 24.2 Road signs at the northern exit from the village onto the Barford Bypass were dangerously positioned and blocked sight-lines.
- 24.2 The drainage in Wellesbourne Road are at capacity and the manholes near The Granville are lifting.
- 25 **Closure.** There being no other business the meeting closed at 9:12 pm.