

**MINUTES OF THE
BARFORD ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
HELD ON MON 8 APR 24**

Present:	J V Murphy (Chairman) Thirty-one other electors
In attendance:	Cllr P B Phillips (WDC) Cllr J Matecki (WDC &WCC) Sgt J Calvert (Warks Police) PCSO Kimber (Warks Police)

Introduction The Chairman welcomed all present to the meeting.

Minutes of the annual meeting held on 17 Apr 23

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

Annual Report of Chairman of Joint Parish Council

2023-2024 has been a busy year! – It seems busier when I look back over it than it actually seemed at the time. The year started with my return as Chairman and with the appointment of Cllr John Barrott as Vice-Chair. We also added Ben Ranner as a new councillor for Barford and welcomed back Peter Phillips for Wasperton.

We promptly resolved to adopt the “**Civility and Respect Pledge**” and facilitated this by creating a “**Dignity at Work**” policy.

We started working on “**wilding**” – working with Warwickshire Wildlife Trust and funded by Severn Trent. We have installed over 500 hedging plants around KGF and the Rectory Paddock, along with two very large swathes of wildflower sowings.

We undertook a review of the **BNDP** - and concluded that it was still fit for purpose and represented our community’s wishes, and importantly should not be changed until the emerging **New SW Local Plan** was much further advanced. The challenge would be to get significant note taken of BNDP in the NLP... To better prepare us for the NLP we will undertake a **Housing Needs Survey** in the coming year and the JPC will receive a presentation at its May meeting.

We have now made significant progress with **s106 projects** and having completed the allotment path upgrade and increased the seating in KGF, we moved on to install the cemetery link pathway and renovate the Barford Village Green wall. Still outstanding are improvements to KGF signage, completion of the allotment path adjacent to BYCC and the external works at BYCC.

The **Land Around Barford House** has been an ongoing matter for many years now. We have had talks with the latest developers, Opus, who are offering an attractive scheme and have taken it as far as “Pre-Application” status with WDC. Whilst the JPC-LABHWP is largely or notionally supportive of the scheme so far, we must wait and see how WDC will respond to the scheme, which is still contrary to many local policies...

Within the JPC we chose to change the makeup of our **Planning Committee** to better represent our villages. The mix will now be Barford-6, Sherbourne-2 and Wasperton-2 – with the JPC Chair being “*ex-officio*”, but taking one of his/her parish’s places, rather than being additional as before.

King George’s Field remains popular and busy, despite all the wet weather of late. Sadly, recurrent acts of vandalism, at great cost to the JPC, has led us to install CCTV around the site. It went “live” in December 2023.

Water Safety near the river was raised as a significant concern by Barford St Peters School pupils after a recent visit to the river and they suggested that some signage was needed. These have been commissioned and will be erected soon, warning of the danger and giving location details to assist the emergency services.

In September we reviewed our support for **Village Voices**, the community magazine that we have delivered to every household in the three parishes. The magazine is much valued as a single channel for information and as such the JPC resolved to continue funding it at £3200 for the current year and inflating by CPI until November 2026 when it will be reviewed again.

Such funding brings us on to Council Tax which is an even hotter than usual topic in this time of **Cost of Living Crisis**. Most levels of council have caps on how much they can raise but PCs are not restricted and are free to reflect local needs and wishes to maintain services. The JPC increased its

precept demand by 6.7% to £66,963 in line with official inflation figures to protect our spending ability and conserve services and reserves.

And whilst on finances, a **LGA of 1894** restricted spending by PCs on church properties and caused much confusion and acrimony, with conflicts with later legislation. New legislation and clarification by the House of Lords has resolved the situation, to some degree, and PCs can now legally fund certain church projects, **where there is a clear “benefit to the general public”**.

NETWORKING – One of the few benefits of the pandemic was the growth in remote working and the increased use of video-conferencing. This is now being exploited by PCs and their advisory bodies. We have had discussion groups for “clerks” and separately “chairs” for some time. These have been very useful and replace some of the in-person divisional and area meetings we used to have but have now lost. Now we are to have “councillor meetings” for all PC members, EXCEPT chairs and clerks! We hope they will be well attended, and very informative.

In a similar vein we must accept that social media is seemingly here to stay, for good or for bad, and matters which should be debated solely in the JPC domain are often discussed there, often by those with little detail knowledge of the situations being discussed. As moderators on such platforms have limited powers and are often slow or reluctant to react, we are considering how we can improve the situation and perhaps have some form of official JPC monitoring, with possibly very limited JPC input (*restricted to factual statements and/or JPC policies – NOT engaging in debate*), perhaps directing folk to a more productive route such as attending JPC meetings or corresponding directly via the more formal channels. The use of a separate FaceBook page as a bulletin board is also under consideration.

And LASTLY, we must announce the retirement of our long-standing, and some would say, long-suffering Clerk and RFO.

Colonel James Johnson OBE came to us for what he thought was a short stay in early retirement - and has been with us for twenty years. He has out-stayed all but two JPC members and seen us through thick and thin, having dragged us from the old dusty paper-bound era, fully into the technological age. Everything now is electronic and efficient, and fast. Everything has always been very professional, but nowadays we are subject to far more regulation and scrutiny, all of which absorbs more and more of his and indeed our time. We have already started the replacement recruitment campaign, but he will be a hard act to follow. Watch this space...

Councillor attendance records 2023-2024:

											Meetings	Attendance	
Cllr J T Barrott	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	10	8	80%
Cllr J D Billingham	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	10	9	90%
Cllr R Clay	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	10	9	90%
Cllr H Gadsden	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	10	7	70%
Cllr J M Hawkesford	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	10	8	80%
Cllr G Jackson	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	10	9	90%
Cllr Mrs S Jarratt	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	10	6	60%
Cllr Mrs L M Jones	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	10	6	60%
Cllr T Merrygold	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	10	8	80%
Cllr J V Murphy	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10	10	100%
Cllr Mrs R Newsome	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	10	7	70%
Cllr P B Phillips		1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	9	6	67%
Cllr B Ranner		1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	9	8	89%
Cllr M J Sheard	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	10	8	80%
Cllr Mrs K E Thomson	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	10	4	40%
Cllr Mrs L Wallis	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	10	6	60%

Developments in Barford – a brief update

1. **Land around Barford House** – The prospective developer, Opus, made a “Pre-Application” submission to WDC in December 2023. A response from the Planning Officer, Dan Charles, is still awaited. Whether the JPC should be supportive of the proposal was questioned but reassurance was given the JPC would not form a formal opinion until the final application was seen and there would then be full public consultation. The need to satisfy BNDP Policy B3 was discussed as was the reality or not of need for such accommodation on this or any other site.

2 **Glebe Hotel site** – Planning permission was granted last year for demolition of modern extensions and the erection of four new “townhouses”. The development has not progressed amid comments that the project was no longer viable in the current economic climate. There was some information that a

bid had been made to re-develop the site as a hotel/restaurant. Clearly, we must wait and see how the owner progresses things.

3 W23/1178 “Bremridge 3” – 35 dwellings – This application is still not determined, however there are substantial reports on the website concerning s106 requirements and Outdoor Space provision. Concerns were expressed from the floor concerning the access through the main Bremridge site and the provision of play areas within the site. Police had also expressed concerns about the “permeability” of the site from a crime perspective.

4 New South Warwickshire Local Plan – This is moving slowly and perhaps inexorably forward having now passed through the second Call for Sites. There were concerns that the proposals around Barford could swamp the current settlement and everyone was urged to review the Interactive Plan to see what had been put forward. All sites offered will not necessarily be taken forward or adopted, but we should remain alert to the next stage of the consultation – expected later this year – and submit our views as a matter of considerable urgency.

Warwick District Council [Cllr P B Phillips]

It's a pleasure for Jan and me to be here again, and especially for me after a four-year gap. I should start by thanking my predecessor Councillor Alan Rhead for his 16 years of service.

So what do we do as District Councillors? Jan and I sit on various committees in the District council. As well as sitting on the Full Council, I am a member of the Planning Committee, I chair the Asset Compliance Committee, and also sit on the Audit and Standards Committee and the Employment Committee. If you didn't know, all these meetings can be viewed on Warwick District Council's YouTube channel.

This report is actually rather a low-key report this year as not a great deal of significance has happened at the District Council. As you may be aware we have a Labour/Green coalition running the Council. I think the year can be summed up by the Leader of the Council stating in full Council, “we were led by the officers.”

In Budbrooke Ward, we both continue to work to support residents in a large variety of ways from planning issues too numerous to mention, bin collections, footpath works, playgrounds, path clearance and fly-tipping. And we have obtained additional funds for the Norton Lindsey Community Shop

Specifically in relation to Barford, we continue to support the Sand and Gravel Action Committee in whatever way they want us to. The fight on this is far from lost, and we will continue to do what we can. We are awaiting feedback from Smiths to the 2,500 comments/objections after which we have three weeks to respond again.

On a cheerier note, one of the last actions that Alan Rhead took as your district councillor was to secure the District Council's funding for the Barford Youth and Community Centre's new building and it's good to see the progress being made on the build.

More of a challenge has been the two major solar farm developments in the Green Belt which came to Warwick District's Planning Committee in the 2nd half of 2023. The mega schemes would cover the equivalent of 85 football pitches near Honiley and 65 football pitches near Sherbourne, and these were in addition to the previously approved second solar farm at Sherbourne.

As a member of the Planning Committee I voted against both schemes but both were approved. The danger I fear is that we are going to be salami slicing our way through the green belt. The Honiley scheme was called in after intervention of their local MP and is the subject of a Planning Inspectorate inquiry, due to report in June 2024. The Sherbourne scheme was not called in as no request was made by our MP, so is approved to be built.

Which leads on to a very important note. While we are here to help you there is one area where we need significant input from yourselves. That is the South Warwickshire Local Plan, which is slowly winding its way through its multi-year process. The second call for sites has just been completed and while putting a site forward does not mean it will be approved for development the SWLP has the potential to significantly alter the size and characteristics of Barford. Please go online and look for SWLP interactive map (at this link).

<https://tinyurl.com/5n8nnbwh>

You will see if all the proposed sites were to be developed in Barford it would more than double the size of the village compared to 2012. Your views are welcome at any time, but I have secured in Full Council that there will be a full consultation with villages affected. But you need to start pulling together your thoughts on this now.

Finally, you may not be aware that every 10 or 15 years the Electoral Commission reviews the structure of all the UK constituencies for the Westminster Parliament. The latest such changes were approved by Parliament in Autumn 2023. The impact locally is that Budbrooke Ward, which includes the Barford JPC villages which used to be part of the Warwick & Leamington Constituency, will change to Kenilworth & Southam Constituency as of the date of the next general election, i.e. Barford residents will vote for the MP for Kenilworth & Southam. Until then all questions should be addressed to the Warwick & Leamington MP, Matt Western.

Warwickshire County Council [Cllr J Matecki]

The year has again been dominated by the cost of living crisis. The County Council continued to providing advice to families, and supported residents with financial support through various grants and schemes which were made available through the Household Support Fund. These schemes closed at the end of March 2024.

The new all through school in Bishop's Tachbrook, Oakley School, is still on target to open in September 2024. The year 7 intake that started in September 2023 have spent their first year in Myton School's new 6th form centre and will move to the new school building this September, along with a new year 7 and reception class intake. There is currently no catchment area set for pupils wanting to start at Oakley school.

The County Council secured over £7.5m of BSIP Plus funding from the DfT. The BSIP Plus funding will support, protect and enhance bus services and support new initiatives. The funding will help ensure Warwickshire can take forward some of its BSIP priorities and, coupled with the extension of the government's £2 bus fare cap, will help encourage patronage growth across the bus network. WCC was also successful in securing £3.3m for Warwickshire through the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) fund. This will provide hundreds more charging points across the county. This will help to facilitate the switch to low and zero emission vehicles. Potential sites, especially in rural areas, and areas with little or no EV infrastructure, continue to be sought from the public and community groups, and they will be evaluated for their suitability.

For 2023/24, WCC's budget for pothole repairs is £1.97m. In addition, WCC will spend approximately £1.75m of capital on small patching works. So far this financial year, 7,890 potholes have been repaired across the county's road network. Warwickshire has a strong reputation for making repairs and are ranked 4th out of 30 peer authorities in the National Highways and Transportation Survey for overall highways maintenance, condition of highway and how quickly we deal with potholes and damaged roads.

WCC Highways have also completed 63 schemes that delivered 21 miles of resurfacing works, a further 64 schemes that delivered 44 miles of surface dressing and 53 schemes that have delivered 10 km of footway reconstruction schemes.

Locally, the planning application for a quarry at Wasperton has now had all comments summarised and sent to the applicant for review. The applicant now has an opportunity to submit proposals to mitigate any concerns raised. These proposals can be inspected and commented on in a similar way to the original proposal. It is unlikely that the application will be in front of the Regulatory Committee before the summer. I continue to support the local community in fighting against this proposal, and will speak against the proposal at the committee hearing.

In Barford it has been agreed that a speed limit of 20mph could be implemented on Bridge Street and Church Street. I am using funding from my delegated budget to progress this scheme, and it should go out to consultation in the very near future.

Police Matters [Sgt J Calvert]

Sgt Calvert gave a presentation of the composition and role of the Safer Neighbourhood Team

Warwick Rural West Safer Neighbourhoods Team (WRW SNT)

Chief Inspector 66 Faz CHISTRY oversees local policing in South Warwickshire.

Inspector 1077 Jem MOUNTFORD oversees all the 8 SNTs in Warwick District.

PC 1565 YOUNG / PC 2563 CHRISTMAS / PCSO 8646 KIMBER / PCSO 8519 SCOTT / PCSO 6250 WRIGHT responsible for Warwick Central and PC 51 FINCH / PCSO 8192 MORGAN / PCSO KING responsible for Kenilworth & Cubbington. No specific officers for Warwick Rural West due to absences and PCSO POWER joining Warwickshire as an officer, but others will cover as much as possible until replacements are sourced.

Contact details for WRW: wrw.snt@warwickshire.police.uk

WARWICKSHIRE CONNECTED

Free messaging service where YOU decide when and how you hear about issues, whether regular crime updates, latest info on ongoing incidents and emergencies or learning more about what local police are doing.

There is also a place where you can get involved in helping to make your local area a safer place, tell us what police should be doing in your area, shape the initiatives that help to keep people and property safe and tell us what matters are causing your communities harm.

<https://www.warwickshireconnected.com>

To receive Police information for your area – we advise all Clerks and Councillors to sign up.

For crime mapping statistics go to <https://www.police.uk>

WARWICKSHIRE ROAD SAFETY PARTNERSHIP (WRSP)

The joint approach from Warwickshire Police and Warwickshire County Council is for members of the public (incl Cllrs and key community reps) to submit their concerns via the WRSP website

<https://warsroadsafety.org/safe-speeds/>

This is the central reporting method for speed concerns within Warwickshire, which enables a consistent and data-led approach.

WRSP has developed a new Central Speed Reporting System (CRS) that allows members of the public to submit a speed concern through a single online location. Learn more through this video under Roads>Guidance>Speed

School Parking Packs to help tackle dangerous parking around schools – templates, advice and support agency details to help reduce dangerous parking outside schools. Read more under Roads News about how you can use these resources to support communities.

CUPPA WITH A COPPER – Warwickshire Police are looking for venues to hold community engagement events – please contact the team to suggest venues and/or local events that would benefit your community.

REPORTING CRIME – Do not report direct to SNT

Telephone 101 – unless an emergency when use 999

Current SNT Priorities:

Operation Firebrick – burglary dwelling offences

Operation Calderwood – vehicle crime initiative for theft of and from cars, vehicle interference and damage.

Operation Corner - engaging with local shops and stores to assist in preventing shop theft.

SNT Role is:

- Victim engagement and support#
- Initial and local investigation – witness care and CCTV enquiries
- Community engagement

Recent SNT Operations:

Operation Sceptre - Knife crime with Community Safety, schools, youth clubs British Transport Police
CLIW – targeting criminality and vulnerability alongside immigration.

PSP/2793/23 Sherbourne village - monitoring of 7.5 weight limit traffic order.

Sand & Gravel Action Group [M Eykyn]

Since Smiths Concrete Planning Application (WDC/22CM008) was submitted in January last year there have been successive delays to the expected determination by the Regulatory Committee. This is thought to be due to three prime reasons;

1. Complexity of the application and high number of both concerned residents and many areas of concern by some statutory consultees.
2. Warwickshire County Council Minerals Planning Officer staff shortage
3. Dilatory response of Smiths to these concerns. So much so WCC Senior Planning Officer, Sally Panayi, served a Regulation 25 notice on Smiths listing the issues of concern of the WCC that they expected Smiths to answer without delay.

We have been advised by the present Senior Planning Officer, David Cooper, that he has met Smiths on the proposed site and Smiths have informed him that they will send their response to the WCC by early June. On receipt of this, the WCC will inform all consultees of Smiths response which will trigger

a second consultation period. At that point all the consultees will have the opportunity to “comment/object” to Smiths mitigations to the first-round consultation.

It is imperative that all those who raised objections, including 2,400 residents, in the first-round consultation, object again if they feel Smiths suggested mitigations lack evidence, are unworkable or cannot be enforced. If we do not comment, Smiths suggested mitigations will be seen by the planning officers to be acceptable and more likely that planning consent will be granted subject to those mitigations. If we do object, it is probable this could lead to a second Regulation 25 and consequent third consultation before the Regulation Committee adjudicate.

This delay in the planning process has given our campaign committee more valuable time to find more information to counter Smiths application especially in enabling more time to compile/refine our expert reports which we continue to submit.

The Senior Minerals Planner has now indicated to us that it could be September before the Regulatory Committee sit.

We have been advised that the Heidelberg Group, the largest concrete manufacturer in the world, now wholly own Smiths Concrete. This means that the shareholders of this German based company will benefit financially at the expense of damage to our community.

Also, last summer, after two failed attempts to acquire access to the unredacted Option/Lease agreement between Smiths and St.John's College, Oxford, who own the land, under the Freedom of Information act we succeeded in getting a copy agreement via the Land Registry. This not only reveals the financial alignment between Smiths and SJC but an agreement, subject to planning to recycle aggregate after the sand and gravel has been extracted. This would mean this proposed site could become an industrial complex for well in excess of forty years - as has already been the case at Bubbenhall, North of Leamington Spa.

Barford Allotments JPC [R Clay]

The slow decline in new demand for land from the highpoint of 2020 has continued. This has been added to this year by a few of our long term tenants deciding that time pressures and personal reasons mean they must leave. At present we have two vacant plots available a situation not seen for 15 years or more. However, we still have nearly forty keen new and established users.

We continue to discourage chickens on the allotments. Attractive as they may seem they attract rats and at present rates the cost of controlling any subsequent rat infestation can now become a substantial burden on the JPC.

We have also continued to discourage trespassing on the allotments by those using the land as a through route. This has become more relevant since it has become clear that such persons do not enjoy the same level of Public Liability Insurance protection as those legally using the lands under our ownership or control.

The construction work on the BYCC has caused the interruption of our water supply. Even though there is now a connection in place some work is needed to ensure that our pipework is in order before we use the supply. There does not seem, however, to be any shortage of water in general.

No notable non-recurrent expenditure is envisaged for this year.

Barford Allotments – PCC [J Partridge]

There are 31 current allotment license holders, 14 of whom pay in arrears and 17 who pay in advance having taken on their allotment since the rules were changed some years ago.

All of the plots are now taken except for one half plot which is rather overgrown.

The annual rental for a standard plot is still £50 (it was increased to this amount two years ago). At this rate, the church plots still represent very good value alongside the JPC allotments.

The PCC is very grateful to Jane Stamp who manages the allotments on a day to day basis and collects the annual rents from the license holders and also to Roger Clay who apportions the water charges between the JPC and PCC for their respective allotments.

Barford Community Charity [M Peirson]

Barford Community Charity continues to welcome applications to fund projects which benefit the villages of Barford Wasperton and Sherbourne.

The charity has committed £80k to the BYCC and is expecting to pay this imminently. It is very pleasing to see the progress that is now being made. £16,200 has been paid to Barford St Peter's for the school solar initiative as a combination of grant and matched funding. £5,703, out of our £10,000 commitment, has been paid for reports assessing the potential environmental damage from the Smith's Sand and Gravel application. £3,700 has been committed to the Barford Heritage Group to fund the publication of a book based on their recent successful school exhibition.

The Charity has received a donation of £21,000 from the Village Shop and also £260 from cancelled Village Shop Shares following death of the shareholders. Uncommitted funds currently stand at £47,598.

Funds are available for eligible projects. Applications can be made to the current Chair John Murphy or to any of the Trustees: Alison Gadsden, Liz Harrison-Hall, Alice Helps, Sue Jessett, Barbara Moore, Mary Peirson or Alan Rhead.

Barford Relief in Need Charity [J T Barrott]

The objects of the Charity are defined in its governing document as the relief of poverty, sickness or old age and the advancement of education amongst residents of the parish of Barford or in exceptional circumstances those immediately outside the parish, which is interpreted to mean residents of Sherbourne and Wasperton.

Over the last year we have given grants totalling nearly £25,000 to 10 Barford residents and families in need, plus a grant towards the new Youth & Community Centre. This level of expenditure was exceptional and considerably more than the Charity's annual income because two long-term building projects came to fruition during the year and drew down their grants. This expenditure had been planned and provision for it had been made from accumulated surpluses from earlier years and by setting aside some of the 2023 income.

Early in the year we received several applications from young working families hit by the increases in the cost of living and we became concerned that if this level were to continue we would have to reduce the size of grants. However, the trend reduced later in the year and we were able to continue to meet demand.

Looking to the much longer term, the Trust needs a larger endowment. It has not received a bequest for 50 years but in that time the size of the village has grown significantly and so, in particular, has the amount of social housing, from which many of our applicants come. Our funds are coming under pressure and there may shortly come a time when we will not be able to help good cases to the extent that they need. All of our work with families and individuals necessarily has to be carried out in the strictest confidence and so is not visible, but it is still vital for the well-being of many in our community. If you are thinking of making a charitable bequest, then bear us in mind.

Barford School Trust [H Clay]

For any new members of the public here tonight here is a little background history of the Trust: Barford St Peter's School Trust is a Charity established under the Charity Commissioners sealed 22nd July 1997, and combines two former charities, the Dugard and Mills Endowment created in 1667, and the Barford School Trust created in 1836. There are 6 trustees all of whom are local people.

The Charity owns land and buildings for the purpose of furthering education for the children of the parish. The buildings owned by the Trust are The Old School House and The old School building both of which are rented out to provide and income for the Trust. This income goes solely to support the school and its pupils present and past (to the age of 25)

Here is a report of the activities for the past year:

- Whilst the Trust has not given the school any financial support for capital expenditure this year, as a considerable amount was given a year ago for building improvements, the Trust still continues to support individual pupils for such things as residential trips and specific equipment they may require for day to day use.
- Bright Horizons Nursery – Lease the old school building and have been tenants for many years. This year the trust agreed to remove an old toilet block and store area to enable the nursery to provide separate staff accommodation. This hopefully will show Bright Horizons that we value them as tenants for the foreseeable future.
- The Old School House continues to be a reliable source of income, it is therefore the aim of the Trust to ensure it is maintained to a good standard to obtain maximum rental. This year all windows were fitted with secondary double glazing, this was a substantial project to provide a warmer home and improve the heating efficiency and costs. The long term tenants gave notice so the decision was taken to completely decorate both the interior and exterior of the house along with other improvements to outbuildings. We were fortunate enough to secure new long term tenants immediately.
- The Trust has received several requests for help from ex pupils, these include helping with further training for a medical student, travelling costs for three pupils to attend further education and a residential trip for another.

Barford School [M Baker]

Barford St. Peter's has continued to go from strength to strength. Last year saw our best ever results for children at the end of Key Stage 2, with 94% of children achieving the expected standard in reading, 87% in writing and 97% in maths. This placed us as the 10th most successful school in Warwickshire out of 288 primary schools.

The school continues to be oversubscribed with an increasing number of applications from families outside of the area, including Chase Meadow, Warwick, Hatton Park and Wellesbourne. We recognise that families attending St. Peter's out of catchment do add to the traffic issues and this is something I have sought to address with the council, but unfortunately have not had a successful response. We do issue regular reminders about considerate parking in the school newsletter.

Last summer it was a pleasure to work with the community to take part in the King's Coronation Celebrations. The children performed some songs and tea and cake was enjoyed by all. This was a very special occasion and created memories for all the children and their families. A special tree was planted in King George playing field to mark the occasion.

Last year our choir had the opportunity to perform alongside 'The King's Singers' at St. Mary's Church in Warwick.

Over the course of the Summer we had new fencing installed around the perimeter of the school grounds, which has enabled us to keep children safe and secure. We are very grateful to the diocese for providing funding for this.

Our breakfast and after school club, Barford Bright Stars, has continued to grow substantially and we are very grateful for our new space to be able to accommodate the children in a purpose built facility. This has also ensured we have much needed space during the day for learning support and for our new nurture provision for children.

Our on site pre-school continues to be popular with families both inside the village and beyond. We are looking to extend the number of places available due to a high level of demand.

In July we said a sad farewell to our SENDCO, Mrs Wendy Steward after many dedicated years at Barford. Fortunately she still volunteers with us on a Tuesday. We have a new SENDCO and Deputy Head, Mrs Lucy Rose. There have also been several changes to the Governing Body over the past 12 months, with some of our much valued and long established governors retiring from their roles, including Alison Gadsden, Chris Harris and Jenny Hocking. We are thrilled that Jenny will be joining us again in the Summer Term as clerk to governors. We have welcomed Matt Adam, Alan Rhead, Cassie Philpotts, Lynda Wardle and Jen Herbert onto the governing body.

During the Easter Break, solar panels have been fitted onto the school building which we are hoping will help to reduce the very high energy costs which have significantly impacted on our budget. We would like to thank the Barford Community Charity for their support with this project, and thanks to FABs for their work in securing the grant funding.

Over the past 12 months we have continued to work closely with the church and have held many special services at St. Peter's, including Harvest Festival, Christingle, the Christmas Service and most recently our Easter service.

We continue to have a small but dedicated team of FABs who have organised a range of events in school, including a Christmas Fair, movie night, disco and Easter Egg Tombola. Unfortunately due to the timing, we were unable to hold the Bonfire this year, but hope to reinstate this from November 2024.

This year we have been developing children's love of reading in school by setting children a challenge to read 6 books before they leave each year group. There is a range of fiction, non-fiction and poetry for them to read and once completed children receive a special reading pin.

We are expecting an ofsted inspection during the summer term, during which we are looking forward to sharing our exciting and engaging curriculum.

Barford St Peter's Church – PCC [J Partridge]

The church was able to sustain its normal service pattern throughout 2023 and support all the major festivals in the traditional fashion.

Sadly, our Priest-in Charge, Revd Andy Larkin, was off sick for over six months of the year but returned to lead our ministry in the final quarter. In November he announced that he had tendered his resignation and he left his post during February at the end of his 3-month notice period. A leaving event was held on 7th February at which the church officers and some PCC members from across the benefice were able to offer their thanks for everything that Revd Andy had done and to wish him and his family well for the future.

We are extremely grateful to our assistant minister Revd John Horton and our three readers, Ann Fawcett, Chris Farr and Malcolm Dawson who have all worked very hard throughout this period (and continue to do so) to maintain normal church life as much as possible.

The church is very fortunate still to have the services of Chris Farr as organist. Sadly, during the year it was decided that it was no longer viable to maintain a regular church choir every Sunday due to declining numbers. However, it is still planned to try and assemble a choir for special occasions and festivals, and this was done for Christmas and Easter.

Each year, the church produces an Annual Report which is sent to the members of the Electoral Roll ahead of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting which this year is on 8th May. This provides a much more comprehensive overview of the church's activities and finances. A copy will also be placed in the church.

There are currently 71 people on the church electoral roll, two down on last year.

The escalating costs of energy, insurance and other items have put the church finances under pressure and, for the third year running, expenditure exceeded income despite some successful events and the generosity of the wider community during Gift Week.

This highlights the continuing need to try and attract newcomers to the regular congregation and find more ways to raise funds from the community and grant bodies.

The financial position has limited the amount of work on the fabric of the church that has been possible, but the major project in the churchyard extension to provide a hardstanding area for hearses to pull off the road and a hard-surfaced footpath through to King George's Field (the latter element kindly funded by the JPC) was carried out in May. It is hoped to be able to carry out some much-needed repairs to the gate piers for the main churchyard entrance in the near future.

The church was also able to donate £3,450 to a range of charities from monies raised through collections or events and from church funds.

A small group of dedicated people help in many ways to keep the church going – our wardens, cleaners, flower arrangers, welcomers, bell ringers, churchyard team – and we are very grateful to them all.

The priority for the PCC going forward is to work with the rest of the benefice and diocesan teams to try and find a new Priest-in-charge, but with several other neighbouring benefices also in vacancy, this may take a considerable time.

Village Voices Magazine [S Partridge]

We are now in the 6th year of publishing Village Voices and the magazine continues to be produced under the umbrella organization of St Peter's Church. Members of the Village Voices team work on behalf of the church and the wider community.

We continue to produce 11 editions each year (with a month off in January) and 900 free copies are distributed each month throughout our three villages (including Sherbourne and Wasperton). As well as going to each household, copies are made available in the village shop, the churches and the school. We also have a website which is updated each month with the latest edition and where you can access all past editions from an archive page. There is a link to the website on the Barford Community Portal.

The magazine finances are currently stable following 2 turbulent years of spiraling printing costs resulting from the cost of living crisis. We are grateful to the JPC and our commercial advertisers who continue to support us. We currently have 48 regular advertisers and our 15 allocated advert pages are full (we are now running a waiting list for new advertising enquiries). In addition to the job of editing, management of the advertising is a significant part of running the magazine.

We thank all our local community groups who regularly contribute material for VV and we are grateful to them for endeavouring to get their copy to us in good time each month. The copy comes in many varied forms and lengths, but we hope that we are successful in presenting it in an attractive and interesting way. We also continue to encourage local residents to send us 'one off' items and good quality photos to provide additional interest amongst our regular features.

Of course, producing a community magazine is not just about the editing and the printing. Thanks must go to the whole VV team; including Ed Kirkby who manages our website, Jonathan Partridge who, as church treasurer, looks after our finances and finally our group of deliverers who ensure that the magazine arrives through your letterbox each month.

A comment from the floor questioned whether Village Voices in its current format was diverse and inclusive enough to be truly representative of our community and whether, or not, it should be so generously funded from the precept. The latter point was a decision for JPC members and represented costs of distribution and JPC copy, without any overall editorial control. The former point

was a much broader one and it was agreed that it would be best dealt with by further debate between the commentor and the editorial team.

Barford Youth & Community Centre [I Paterson]

Looking back at my notes for previous years, I see that I habitually start with “Since this time last year, there have been major developments in our project to build a new Youth & Community Centre.....” and this year is no different, though a mixture of bad and good.

Last Spring, having in 2022 completed a full re-costing and hence re-specification assessment, and through consultation with the local community, WDC and other major funders, we had arrived at a design for a steel frame building with essentially the same footprint and layout as the earlier design. Very importantly, this approach brought us significant funding commitments and donations, and this time last year I said we were within £20,000 of being able to place the contract for construction to start.

A ‘final push’, in particular a very well supported event on the village green at the end of April, got us the funding we needed, and we were able to commit to going ahead.

Keen to show progress happening, we then agreed with the contractors for them to do the first phase, the demolition of the old Hut, while finalisation of the contract for construction of the new Youth & Community Centre was being completed. Hence, the Hut was demolished in May, with the regular user groups having made arrangements to meet elsewhere.

Very regrettably, the contractors did not complete their tasks to the agreed schedule and the date for work on the new building slipped back to early November. This finally culminated just a few days before they were to start as agreed, when they told us they were withdrawing from the project.

Thanks to some speedy work by our Project Manager and QS, we were able to secure a new contractor – Crowngate Construction (based in Coventry). They were able to complete their contractual work and commit to a start date in January.

We were also able to complete the various aspects of the process to complete the new, 50 year lease on the land with the Coventry Diocesan Trustees.

As many of you will have seen, Crowngate started work on time and have been making steady progress since (despite the very wet weather), with the new Y&CC scheduled to open in September. We are very grateful to Crowngate for being able to step in and we are pleased with the way they have approached and got on with the work.

We are also very grateful to the nearby residents of Wasperton Lane and Sandy Way for accepting the occasional disruption for necessary access to the site, and to our regular users who have had to adapt to not having a venue for longer than was expected.

We are continuing to seek additional funds, to give us cover against contingencies, enhance the new building and support its future. In particular, in response to a request from WDC, we switched to a solar-panel system to further support the ‘eco-sustainability’ of the new building.

We appreciate that the local community is keen to know how the new building is progressing and so have been giving updates through Village Voices and the Barford Community page on Facebook. We also plan to hold an event on the Village Green on 4th May, to share the latest news, and I’ll be saying more about the last year at our AGM in early July.

Although BYCC is not involved in the running of the Barford Scout Group, they are our most frequent ‘user group’ and a vital part of what we enable for the local community.

After nearly 15 years as Group Scout Leader, Martin Russell has moved on to a new position within the wider scouting district and Susan Heap is now Group Scout Leader. Susan has hence become an ex officio Trustee and Martin has been appointed as a new Trustee.

Susan has told me that, thanks to the continuing dedication of the leaders and support from parents, the Scout Group is currently able to give over 85 young people the opportunity to gain skills for life, in a safe and caring environment.

Activities have included nights away camping, a sleepover at the museum, dragon boat racing and den building, and several Scout Group members were in the cast of the WAGS show at the Spa Centre in Leamington.

The Scout Group is now looking to recruit more adult volunteers to grow the sections, including plans for a new section for 4-6 year olds, and to offer places to more of the 45 young people the waiting list. Finally and as always – great thanks from BYCC to the local community for your continuing support, which never fails to impress me, and for bearing with us as we’ve dealt with delays.

In summary – the new Youth & Community Centre is happening! Thank you.

Barford Shop [M Lusby]

Your village Shop has had another successful year. It is "Your" Shop and over 600 individuals have owned their one share in it.

The success is because of the people who give their time voluntarily to help in your Shop.

There are some 61 active volunteers with most doing their one weekly shift. All deserve our thanks but there are some stalwarts who regularly do extra shifts and merit naming. They are Rod Scott, Isla Franks, Alex Farr, Bill and Ann Worrall, Carol Mackay, Mary Peirson, Alice Helps, Anne Williams, Philippa Wilson. Goff Tilling comes in every day and does the newspaper paperwork. On Wednesday there is a team that helps with the major delivery of the week They are Sue and Jonathan Partridge, Matthew MacFadyen and Kirsty Healy and Rod Scott.

Your Shop though would welcome additional volunteers. At times it is a struggle to fill shifts. So, if you or someone you know would like to help, you would be most welcome. It is a rewarding opportunity to give your time each week.

And you will be contributing to the surplus cash that your Shop generates. Last year that amounted to £21,000 and since it opened your Shop had generated over £200,000. This money has provided significant funding for the King George's Field, the Youth and Community Centre and the village school.

The financial accounts for last year are being finalised and will be presented to the Annual General Meeting, which is planned to be held on Wednesday 12th June. Further details about trading will be given and the repairs and maintenance expenditure incurred in keeping your Shop in good condition.

At the AGM last year Mike Sheard stood down as a director having completed his 6 years. He is thanked for his contribution especially during the difficult covid period. Colin Oliver was appointed as a director and Jill Jeffery and Mary Peirson were reappointed directors.

Last but certainly not least our continuing thanks to Corenna for her work in your Shop. She organizes everyone with a positive and very friendly manner. She is a real asset and is much appreciated. And she would welcome any new volunteers with open arms.

Barford Post Office [R Scott]

The Post Office Scandal has not affected Barford Post Office - as far as we know – but there have been no details of how the discrepancies were caused or where the money went – so I am eagerly waiting for the refund of a loss we have not made.

CALL FOR HELP

The ideal number of volunteers trained to operate the Post Office is 5 - so we all do 1 shift a week. We have had 6, - this needed a bit of diary organisation. We are now down to 4, which gives availability problems when you add (or subtract) holidays.

I have had an almost constant appeal through Village Voices for new volunteers - Training is by shadowing the existing staff and help once trained is available by phone. Please get in touch if you want more information or to come and watch what goes on for an hour or two. The good parts of volunteering are that you are helping to provide a valuable service to the village and enabling donations of about £6,000 a year (the Post Office Salary) to charities.

New volunteers may have been reluctant as a result of the recent (or not so recent) problems with Horizon – but let me assure you that assistants are not liable. Liability is limited to the Postmaster and I can understand that no-one in their right mind would take on that position.

Barford Heritage Group [W Barlow]

Four meetings were held over the year plus others were needed to prepare for exhibitions. Many thanks to Hilary Maynard for her sterling work recording all our meetings and generally being a great secretary.

We remembered with sadness the death of Anne Hope who was our first ever Chair .

The main work over the year was on the school exhibition held in April.

Our other focus was on the book about Barford St. Peters School.

Our school history presentation, which was held in April was extremely successful and consisted of mounted displays, a screen projection, a timeline and an artefact display.

The exhibition was very well attended and made some money for the group. Many thanks to the small team who ran the whole thing. We are now very used to doing this and do it very well.

The group's book on the Village School has started, and though we did not get a lottery grant, we looked into other means of funding the project. Doug Warne has worked very hard on putting together

the applications and we have received funding from the Barford Village Charity. Letters of support came from the WI, Community shop, JPC, BRA, W.C.C as well as the school itself.

A great deal of work has gone into this by Doug Warne, Carole Whitely, Ann McDermott, Stella Rutherford and Wendy Barlow. Patrick Norton has been our proof reader to date.

Latest minutes show that we have looked at the scope of the book, the content, and the presentation. We now have a draft plan and a great deal of information, articles and photos. Carole has put forward a draft version.

Our October event was a showing of 'Living History' which was a drama originally performed and recorded in September 2007.

In the early 2000s it was our original intention, with lottery funding, to commission a playwright to devise a play about Barford. Instead we wrote it ourselves and used local people to design, direct and act in it.

This was well received by an audience of 60 people.

Many thanks to Alan McDermott who came and projected it on for us and had so ably edited the original version. It was amazing how clear and fresh it still is. Many of the members in it are sadly no longer with us but that added to the interest and poignancy. Thanks once again to committee members who turned up to help run it, and Rod Scott, who ran the bar.

In order to apply for National lottery funding. We had to amend our Constitution to state how we would dispose of our funds and archive material in the event of the group folding. This was a very useful exercise that we hope will never be used.

We continue to keep an eye on the garden and land around Little Watchbury and the aboretum which has many fine specimens of mature and interesting trees. We also continue to keep a watching brief on the state of the Dovecote in the grounds of the old Glebe hotel.

We have decided to charge an annual subscription of £10 to members of the group.

Our researchers continue to record information and we are still trying to keep on top of the organisation of artefacts and information. The website carries on, thanks to Alan, who has been keeping an eye on everything that we need to do. Hopefully he will carry on doing this.

Gerard Veness is still very keen and presently is re-furbishing the phone box.

We are funding its repair to replace some areas damaged by decay and possibly vandalism. We hope this will preserve a valuable village asset for years to come.

Bar Zero [M Peirson]

Repair Café

The move to the Church has been very successful and the repair café is thriving. We now collect blister packs, make up and dental items and other hard to recycle items at the café and this has brought in a number of new users and a large number of blister packs. Thanks to Ellie Lees for coordinating this. In March, James Knight joined our team of repairers offering a tech support desk which was popular and he managed to coach a number of PCs which were not operating properly back to life. A wide variety of items have been repaired and the tool sharpening service offered by Matthew Macfadyen has been particularly popular. Some visitors simply pop in for a chat, a cup of tea and some homemade cakes. Barford cubs came to help at some sessions which counted towards one of their badges.

Thermal imaging camera

The thermal imaging camera has once again been out on loan during the winter months. All users have been pleased with what it has shown them about their houses.

Veg Trug

The veg trug has been regularly maintained providing a range of herbs and salad/veg items for the community to use on a cut and come again basis.

JPC wildflower/hedge planting

Bar zero members have supported the JPCs initiative in collaboration with Warwickshire Wildlife Trust to sow wildflowers in the Rectory paddock and plant additional hedging around parts of King George's field.

Media

We have maintained a regular presence in Village Voices and on Facebook. We have started work on a website which will draw together all our activities and provide advice to residents.

Any Other Business

1 A question was asked about how to get items onto a JPC agenda. Answer: there is no absolute right for the public to put items on the agenda, however there was always a public session at

the start of meetings when members of the public could make statements or ask questions. These would be heard and where appropriate answered from the chair. No debate would be possible at that point. The JPC could consider at a later time whether any further action such as a future agenda item would be appropriate. If submissions were received in writing, then the Clerk and Chair would consider the situation and respond accordingly, circulating all members where appropriate or arranging an agenda item.

2 A comment from the floor suggested that the current Barford Community Website was dated and lacked functionality, particularly for mobile devices. Did the JPC intend to update it? Answer: The JPC does not operate the current site and was aware of some of the shortcomings but is grateful to the current operator for having provided the site from an early start. As the JPC now moves to review its online activity and presence then perhaps the review might also consider the issue of websites and bulletin boards.

Appointment of Chairman for 2024-25

John Murphy was appointed Chairman.