

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF  
THE PARISH OF WASPERTON  
HELD AT WASPERTON VILLAGE HALL  
ON MONDAY 23<sup>RD</sup> APRIL 2007 AT 7:30PM**

Present                    Mr David Hunt (Chairman)  
                                 Cllr J V Murphy (Chairman of the Joint Parish Council)  
                                 Cllr L Caborn (Warwickshire County Council)  
                                 Cllr Mrs C Sawdon (Warwick District Council)  
                                 Twenty-four Wasperton Electors

**Minutes**

- 1            The Minutes of the meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2006 were approved as a true record. There were no matters arising.
- 2            The meeting agreed to allow the minutes of the current meeting to be made public in draft form as soon as approved by the Chairman.

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

- 3            Cllr Murphy's report is at Annex A to these minutes.

**Report by Cllr Dr M J Metcalf (Wasperton Member of JPC)**

- 4            Cycle Track.
  - 4.1          Notwithstanding the public petition there were no plans to extend the cycle track from the Barford Bypass to Wasperton.
  - 4.2          Funds which might otherwise have been used for this scheme had been diverted elsewhere.
  - 4.3          Cllr Caborn promised to reopen the case with WCC.
- 5            Footpaths.
  - 5.1          A footpath runs from the Jubilee Oak in Wasperton to the river but not beyond. In the past the river crossing here was a ford but that had been dredged away. It would be desirable to extend the footpath from the river to Sherbourne.
  - 5.3          The importance of footpath development is acknowledged by WCC and this footpath is already on its list (placed there by the Ramblers Association).
  - 5.4          Two problems must be overcome:
    - It is unlikely that the work would be done before 2026
    - The river crossing could be reinstated only with a bridge and that is almost certainly beyond the financial means of WCC.
  - 5.5          He suggested that the latter might be procured by public subscription.
  - 5.6          The meeting agreed that with regards to the former, pressure should be brought on WCC to expedite the reopening.

- 5.7 Later in the meeting the wisdom of opening the footpath thereby affording an uncontrolled access to the village was questioned.

### **Police Matters**

- 6 The invitation for the police to be represented at the meeting had been declined with the rationale that there are so many such meetings in the area that to devote police time to them is a waste of resources.
- 7 This curt message set the tone for the subsequent discussions and there followed a catalogue of cases in which contact with the police over every-day issues consistently failed, with a response being assured only to a 999 call.
- 8 Cllr Caborn spoke on police matters:
- 8.1 The unfortunate manner of some members of the police team was acknowledged and the offenders would have this brought to their attention.
- 8.2 He lamented the lax police attitude to communicating with Neighbourhood Watch posing the question:  
“What is the point in running Neighbourhood Watch as well as you do if you have inadequate police support?”
- 8.3 The Warwick Western Safer Neighbourhoods Panel had identified three priorities:
- Nuisance youths
  - Speeding
  - Parking on pavements
- 8.4 He informed the meeting of the mobile police station with another coming.

### **Neighbourhood Watch**

- 9 Mr Jim Gilligan presented an annual report on the Neighbourhood watch scheme.
- 10 He spoke of previous difficulties in communication with the police and, picking up on the earlier discussion, said if that communication failed, he was willing to accept messages.
- 11 It had been a relatively quiet year, and he listed the incidents which had come to his attention.

### **Road Verges**

- 12 The state of the road verges in the village was deplored but there was no consensus on the remedy.
- 13 Widening the road or raising the verges or both were mooted but met with little enthusiasm.
- 14 Kerbstones were a popular although not unanimous choice.
- 15 Cllr Caborn undertook to clarify responsibilities for road and verge maintenance in the village.
- 16 Meanwhile Cllr Mrs Sawdon suggested that the Annual Parish Meeting could:
- Write to neighbours to draw their attention to the need for care when driving through the village to avoid damage to verges.
  - Arrange a consultation with WCC.
  - Write to WDC Planning Department to seek enforcement of planning conditions.

### **Speed Limits**

- 17 The meeting was as one in the view that the village needed a 20 mph speed limit. Cllr Caborn will investigate the options.

### **Conservation Area**

- 18 In response to a question about the impact of development on the conservation area, Cllr Mrs Sawdon stated that development could only be regulated by current planning guidelines.
- 19 Later in the meeting it was asked if further development was planned for the village. Cllr Mrs Sawdon said it was not earmarked.

### **Planning Notices**

- 20 A complaint was made that notices of application for planning permission had in some cases been posted in inaccessible places. Cllr Mrs Sawdon said she would investigate.

### **Barford Bypass**

- 21 With the bypass almost complete, the Chairman remarked that the impact had not been as undesirable as at first feared. It was less visible from the village than anticipated and the bollards at the Barford junction were an improvement on the plan.
- 22 There was however a need for a speed limit on the bypass (suggested as 50mph) and it was agreed that as many parishioners as possible should write to John Deegan (WCC) personally to emphasize the need for it and to express concern for safety particularly at Wasperton junction.

### **Opening of River Avon to Increased Traffic**

- 23 The meeting was opposed to an increase in river traffic and invited its parish councillors to bring this to the attention of the JPC.

### **Any Other Business**

- 24 Flytipping. Warnings that flytipping in the village was on the increase were given.
- 25 Bridlepath. Cases of cars driving on the bridlepath to exercise dogs were quoted.
- 26 Recycling. A written plea for the recycling of plastics was received.
- 27 Two-Tier Working. Cllr Clare Sawdon briefed the meeting on the functions of Warwick District Council in two-tier working:
- Planning
  - Housing (including affordable housing to which she gave a high priority encouraging those with Wasperton connections in need of affordable home to consider those on the Oldhams development)
  - Police (the introduction of the Safer Neighbourhood Scheme was a step in the right direction but it was not yet delivering the necessary police presence in villages and she was actively concerned to improve this)
  - Parks and amenities
  - Rubbish collection (she expressed concern over the prospect of rubbish collections every other week with its attendant health implications and possible increase in flytipping)
  - Recycling (she shared the disappointment that green bins were not available in all rural areas and was addressing the issue intending wherever possible to widen its scope)

- Fly tipping
- Rural Initiative Scheme

#### **Appointment of Chairman for 2006-7**

28 Mr David Hunt, having been proposed and seconded, was appointed by electors present as Chairman for the ensuing year.

#### **Closure of the Meeting**

29 There being no other business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9:10 pm, thanking those who had attended.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**A46 Sherbourne Bypass** – The proposals to improve the Longbridge J15 area with an A46 bypass have continued to progress throughout the year with publication of Orders and an exhibition in the summer and leading ultimately to a Public Inquiry in March 2007. The JPC has welcomed proposals for improvement and recognizes that bypassing in some form is the local solution but was most concerned that whilst building a new road enough was not being done to bring benefit to Sherbourne when a more westerly route could provide significantly more relief from traffic impact and restore Sherbourne to a tranquil

village, albeit closely adjacent to the Trunk Road and motorway network. The Public Inquiry can only approve or reject the Highways Agency preferred scheme, but if the scheme is rejected then the Inspectors reasoning, hopefully based on local input, may well direct and future proposals and perhaps initiate a proper and open consultation this time.

Before leaving roads, I should just comment on the A429 more generally. It cuts right through our parishes and continues to give concern. The JPC has repeatedly asked for a review of the speed limit on the road as it passes through and have suggested a 50mph limit would be appropriate – this would benefit Wasperton and Sherbourne directly, would also reduce the potential noise from Barford Bypass and would ease access from all three villages. We will no doubt keep on with the request where we can, but support from residents would be very helpful and should be directed at WCC and your appointed representatives.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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