

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF
THE PARISH OF WASPERTON
HELD AT WASPERTON VILLAGE HALL
ON MONDAY 21ST APRIL 2008 AT 7:30PM**

Present Mr David Hunt (Chairman)
 Cllr J V Murphy (Chairman of the Joint Parish Council)
 Twenty-seven Wasperton Electors

Minutes

- 1 The Minutes of the meeting held on 23rd April 2007 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.

Police Matters

- 4 No police representative was available to attend the meeting. Instead the letter at Annex B to these minutes was sent.

Neighbourhood Watch

- 5 Mr Jim Gilligan presented an annual report on the Neighbourhood watch scheme.
- 6 He spoke of previous difficulties in communication with the police but with the introduction of the mobile police station he hoped that electors in the parish would make a point of speaking to the occupants when it called at Wasperton.
- 7 It had been a relatively quiet year, and he listed the incidents which had come to his attention. Several were innocent but he stressed that it is better to investigate a "non-crime" than to let a real crime go unreported.

Road Verges

- 8 This matter still caused considerable concern in the village but it had not progressed from the discussion last year when the following was recorded:
 - 8.1 The state of the road verges in the village was deplored but there was no consensus on the remedy.
 - 8.2 Widening the road or raising the verges or both were mooted but met with little enthusiasm.
 - 8.3 Kerbstones were a popular although not unanimous choice.

Speed Limits in Wasperton

- 9 The meeting still held the view that the village needed a 20mph speed limit. Cllr Mike Metcalfe spoke about his efforts to secure this. It appeared that Wasperton met WCC's criteria for a 30mph limit but since a traffic survey had shown that the average speed in the village was little more than 18mph this would be a useless restriction merely adding extra road signs for no tangible benefit.

- 10 What was needed was a limit to force those few who travelled too fast in the village to drive safely, and that was at speed less than 20mph. He would continue to press the case.

Speed Limits on the A429

- 11 Serious concern was expressed about the danger of entering and leaving the village from the A429 because of the excessive speed of traffic on the Barford Bypass. There was an evident need, on the grounds of safety, for there to be a speed limit of 50mph.
- 12 The Joint Parish Council had already commented to the WCC on its A & B Roads Speed Review, arguing the case for a 50mph limit on the A429 from the Longbridge Roundabout to Wasperton. So far however only that length between the M40 and the first turn-off to Barford was to be designated a 50mph zone.

Barford Bypass

- 13 The Chairman remarked that despite Wasperton's apprehension about the effects of the bypass, in the event there was little about which to complain, seed of traffic notwithstanding.

Wheely Bins

- 14 Although the village now had its long-demanded allocation of green bins (and red and black and grey) there was considerable dissatisfaction about the implementation of the new collection regime.
- 15 It was reported that Cllr A Rhead (WDC) had devised a questionnaire which those with comments on the scheme could complete and return to him, and it was agreed to use this medium to record Wasperton electors' views.

Any Other Business

- 16 Telephone Box. BT is seeking permission to remove the telephone box in Wasperton. The consensus was that even if the telephone itself was removed the distinctive box should remain as a local landmark.
- 17 Joint Parish Council. Cllr John Murphy gave the meeting details of Sherbourne's efforts to create a separate parish council, withdrawing from the JPC.
- 18 Planning. A complaint was made that planning permission was forthcoming for large, new dwellings in the village which some thought inappropriate and not in keeping with other buildings. Whatever the merits of this point of view, there was little that could be done at the local level since these decisions were based on national criteria.
- 19 Watercourses. The presence of Japanese Knotweed in the local watercourse was reported.
- 20 Upper Avon Navigation Trust. In response to a question from the floor it was stated that this project "had not gone away".
- 21 Footpath. The ambivalent response last year to the question of reopening the footpath from the Jubilee Oak to the river meant that no progress had been made on this matter.
- 22 Cycle Track. There was no progress to report

Appointment of Chairman for 2008-9

- 23 Mike Metcalfe, having been proposed and seconded, was appointed Chairman for the ensuing year.

Closure of the Meeting

24 There being no other business the Chairman closed the meeting at 8:51 pm, thanking those who had attended.

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

2007-2008 has again been a busy year – 9 routine JPC meetings, numerous Planning meetings, 2 Special Meetings, numerous Working Party or subcommittee meetings and the three Parish Meetings.

The year began with parish council elections, adding two new and extra councillors for Barford – Cllr Mrs Dulcie Cobb and Cllr Alan Rhead, who was also elected as a District Councillor. Cllrs Mrs Petra Johnstone (nee Smith-Ryland) and Mrs Peta Wilkinson were elected without a poll for Sherbourne and all are already playing a very active role in JPC activities.

Barford Shop and PO – The shop and Post Office projects have moved forward at a pace during the year, focusing initially on feasibility, location and design and moving on to fundraising and legal matters. During the year there have been extensive negotiations with Robin Smith-Ryland in order to secure relaxation of the restrictive covenants on the Barford village green and all this has now moved on to the point where construction is actually under way and the shop is hoped to open in the autumn. Doubts are currently resting over the future of the Post Office elements of the project due to the closure review which will remove many outlets from the system.

Barford Bypass has settled into use and has brought important relief to the village. There are still outstanding matters which we are struggling to get resolved but we will continue to pursue these. The northern entrance to the village seems to provide most problem and continues to catch out the unaware who fail to slow and signal early enough and are then often harassed by following traffic, and this is an aspect that we will be drawing yet again to the county's attention.

A small number of properties are apparently severely adversely impacted by noise from the new road and levels are apparently significantly in excess of those predicted. This is a civil matter and must be pursued by individuals as parish and district councils have no powers to act formally in these matters. Extra planting has also been provided to shield one property which is adversely suffering from lights from vehicles on the road.

A46 Sherbourne Bypass – The proposals to improve the Longbridge J15 area with an A46 bypass were approved after the Public Inquiry despite strong objections being made by the JPC. The scheme is progressing at this very time. Many aspects of the scheme have been designed to minimize disruption during the build period but there will be disruptions and delays including closure of the B4463 for six months from the end of 2008 and a weekend closure of the A46 Warwick Bypass for demolition of the Budbrooke Bridge. However, despite all the ensuing inconvenience we may look forward to improved traffic flows and hopefully the gridlock we often endure will become less frequent in the future.

The JPC has repeatedly asked for a review of the speed limit on the A429 as it passes through all three parishes and have suggested a 50mph limit would be appropriate – The A and B roads Speed Review was conducted this year and we were disappointed that once again we were being overlooked, despite the fact that there appears to be a move towards more general speed control, often by signage alone. We have made a forceful comment upon this and the matter is now being reconsidered and we are hopeful that we may still get a speed reduction which will benefit all three parishes.

Barford Parish Plan –. The original BPP Committee continues to monitor and report on the implementation progress, but progress is slow. At last we are seeing some signs that the higher authorities are beginning to look more favourably on our proposals but there is still, despite all the rhetoric, a reluctance to accept bottom-up government and grass-roots input. Old paradigms are being discarded and obstructions are being displaced – a slow process but we will continue to press for response.

Play areas are under constant review – checked at least weekly by a Parish Councillor. The skateboard area continues to generate comment. The new spray produced minimal improvement and one of the ramps has now been boxed in. Despite expert predictions this has made little difference to sound readings but complaints have reduced, at present but no doubt better weather will tell us the real result.

New play equipment will be provided on Barford Village Green as part of the shop project and the older equipment removed will be relocated at the Playing Fields to provide a wider range of activities there.

Graffiti at the Playing Fields was becoming excessive and unpleasant and a major campaign was initiated to remove it using specialist equipment and materials provided via the Probation Service. The results whilst not perfect were most welcome and to date the problem has not recurred to any great degree.

Dog Fouling – This remains a constant problem and although much less than in years past is still causing concern. There are strict rules and severe fines for offenders and the Dog wardens promise zero-tolerance. Dog mess bins are available at the Playing Fields and near the Scout Hut so there is little excuse. Persistent offenders are clearly not listening so it may be that names need to be passed on to improve matters.

Police Matters –The safer neighbourhood Initiative has now been with us for more than a year. Despite assurances of ongoing stability we have suffered continual changes of personnel and latterly a significant reduction in man-power; currently reduced to a sergeant, two PCs and four PCSOs when fully staffed. Rota patterns have been changed to give greater coverage of the day. Although actual presence in our villages remains small given greater priorities in other parts of their “patch”. The mobile Police station now calls regularly in our villages and times of attendance are posted well in advance on the notice boards.

Sherbourne and Wasperton village halls have again been supported by JPC grants - £1250 Sherbourne and £1370 Wasperton – members have again recognized more active management and fund raising taking place in the smaller villages, to make their halls more viable, and Barford waived its claim to JPC funding in the light of good occupancy and reserves

The JPC also gave grant support towards maintenance of each of the three churchyards.

Allotments –Most are in good productive use and the water supply to all parts of the allotments has been fully implemented.

Bus shelters – shelters throughout our parishes have been reviewed and the older brick-built ones have been found in need of significant renovation. Detailed specifications have been drawn up and contractors will be implementing repairs in the near future.

On Planning specifically:

Oldhams’ site is now well progressed with nearly all the market homes sold, all the original rental Affordable Homes taken and some of the shared-equity Affordable Homes being converted to rental status. We had a stressful time when WDC failed to deal with the Affordable Homes allocations according to the s.106 agreement which we had negotiated and various worthy people were initially denied access to the properties. After much debate a temporary “work-around” was agreed and largely addressed the shortfall. However, it is still not working as it was intended and we will be pressing firmly for the WDC Allocation Policy to be changed and for s.106 agreements to have greater precedents in such schemes.

Proposals at 20 Wellesbourne Road Yet another application, two backfill bungalows, has been made and refused at WDC. The site remains vacant and neglected and we await further developments – hopefully a return to single household occupation.

Land surrounding Barford House still remains a matter of interest although there has been little public activity this year. The JPC refrained from comment on previous informal proposals for fear of prejudicing its position in the event of an actual application on the site, but we believe that a new approach may be made, by a new interested party, in the near future.

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

JVM
25/03/2008

ANNEX B

PCSO's Letter

My apologies for not being able to attend the meeting on Monday in Wasperton, due to commitments beyond my control.

Here are some details of what PCSO's do and also how to contact me and the Warwick Rural West SNT.

Could you please reassure the community in Wasperton that I will be patrolling the village on a regular basis and if there are any problems or questions that would like to tell me about they can ring or send me an email.

Many Thanks

PCSO Nathan Pony-Hall

PCSOs Can

- Assist with road closures and direct traffic and pedestrians. Guard Crime Scenes.
- Have involvement with schools and assist with truancy sweeps.
- Assist with crime enquiries e.g. enquiries to identify witnesses, collect property whilst patrolling etc.
- Represent Warwickshire Police at meetings and community events.
- Assist with major incidents e.g. evacuation of people, staffing of cordons etc. Gather evidence for ABCs and ASBOs
- Monitor compliance with ABCs and ASBOs
- Complete CIs for minor criminal damage
- Provide disruptive patrols at Crime Hot Spots.
- Deal with low-level anti social behaviour.
- Have a face to face contact with the public.
- Organise, or participate in, crime reduction initiatives.
- Provide a main point of contact for community groups and community leaders.