

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF  
THE PARISH OF WASPERTON  
HELD AT WASPERTON VILLAGE HALL  
ON MONDAY 23 APRIL 2012 AT 7:30PM**

Present M J Metcalfe (Chairman)  
Cllr J V Murphy (Chairman of the Joint Parish Council)  
Nineteen Wasperton Electors

**Minutes**

1 The Minutes of the meeting held on 18 April 2011 were approved as a true record.

2 Matters Arising:

2.1 Minute 18.4. There had been no movement with regards to the extraction of gravel in the area.

3 **Annual Report by Cllr J V Murphy, Chairman of the Joint Parish Council.**

2011-2012 has again been a busy year – 9 routine JPC meetings, numerous Planning meetings, numerous Working Party or subcommittee meetings and the three Annual Parish Meetings. But no Special Meetings this year!

2011 was election year for local parish councils. Only Wasperton managed to fill all its places straight away. Barford promptly found three co-opted members and Sherbourne soon followed with its third councillor. Whilst this is unusual for us it is not unusual nationally and it does seem to be getting harder to persuade people to commit to local government service despite the fact that our sector is getting more and more opportunity to control our destiny; or perhaps it is a consequence?

**Difficult financial times** continue and all levels of government strive to achieve best value and minimize service reductions. Once again we have kept the parish element of the Council Tax at the same level whilst still maintaining safe reserves. The WDC and WCC have also kept their requirement level although the Police Authority have required a modest increase to maintain service levels. Our good reserves do enable us to ride out the financial storm to some considerable degree but we are currently looking at various projects which may make significant demands on those reserves if alternative funding cannot be found.

During the year the JPC funded the provision of a **Public Access Defibrillator** for emergency use – located at the rear of Barford Village Shop – for use only after making the appropriate 999 emergency contact, when the pass number will be given out.

Over the last several years our parishes, all of which have very significant Conservation Areas, have seen our street lighting improved. Sherbourne was fully replaced a few years ago, Wasperton is now complete and Barford is mostly done; there being a few remaining inappropriate and ageing lamps which will need attention. Limited funding at WDC means that in the short term these will not be dealt with unless we can find the funds to complement the £10,000 that WDC can scrape together between their lighting and conservation departments. We have been successful in securing a Community Forum grant for £3000 and but still have to find the balance elsewhere.

Given the change in attitude of insurers to self-help in adverse weather we have provided **grit bins** at strategic locations throughout the parishes to mitigate for what we see as inadequate gritting by the WCC. To be fair we have provided the capital cost of the bins and WCC will ensure that they are kept adequately supplied for cold weather. Furthermore we have recently secured agreement to provide gritting arrangements for the Wasperton lane flats.

**Following the installation of three new pieces of equipment** under the “Big on Play” scheme last year we have established a working party to thoroughly review all of the play area provision in

Barford and will soon be looking for residents' input in how things might be improved and augmented, and also what you do and/or do not want us to change.

**The boundary between the Barford Playing Fields and the cemetery** has been renewed during the last year along with careful trimming of the trees in that area. The boundary is now dog-proof and provides a pleasant open aspect drawing the two areas together. There is ongoing debate about whether to reinstate the old holly hedge in that area – what do you think?

**Inconsiderate, and often illegal, parking** around the Bremridge Close and Wasperton Lane junctions has finally been resolved by the installation of yellow lines. These have been generally welcomed but the problem has been partly replaced by nearby residents parking on the east side of Wellesbourne Road near the Bremridge Close junction. This has a significant traffic calming effect but can make passage difficult at times and we, along with the Police and WCC, will monitor the situation.

**All three village halls** have this year been supported by JPC grants with £1043 to each and the JPC also gave grant support of £418 towards maintenance of each of the three churchyards.

Following the change in government, the major planning issue has been the slow gestation of the New Local Plan. Earlier in the year we learnt of the intended housing numbers for our district – 550 homes per year – and we currently await the draft version of the Preferred Options (now due May 2012), which will indicate proposed locations for those numbers. We are assured that the rural areas will not have significant numbers imposed upon them so we wait in interest.

**Affordable Housing** – We have continued to work to with the Rural Housing Enabler and have identified the Wasperton Lane site as the preferred option for a stand-alone site. Unfortunately there is currently no funding available and we are advised that we must rely on a market homes scheme, sufficiently large to provide our needs through the WDC requirement for larger sites to provide 40% Affordable Homes. Currently there are two such schemes on the horizon.

Development proposals on **land around Barford House** have advanced considerably over the year and is currently the subject of an active Planning Application for 58 homes. The proposal addresses many of the issues identified in the 2011 BRA survey along with other issues raised relating to the site. The JPC voted to object to the scheme on the grounds that it was contrary to all current local policies and failed to meet our perceived local housing needs.

The site of the now closed Sherbourne Nurseries is also being considered for development and in February there was presentation by Taylor Wimpey who gave brief outlines of their involvement so far, indicating a wish to work with the community.

Coincident with the above applications the JPC has been working to develop a Housing Needs Survey to assess the requirement for both Market and Affordable homes in the three parishes. Given the Localism agenda this will significantly assist us considerably in both facilitating appropriate development and discouraging inappropriate development in the future.

**Riverside land** left over from the Barford Bypass construction has been taken over by the JPC and progress is well underway to establish a community orchard, a wild flower meadow and a riverside walk and seats. This has been partly funded by the LEADER scheme, supplemented by considerable amounts of self help labour. This will be one of the few public access points in our riverside parishes.

We have also taken the opportunity to rationalize the boundary between Barford and Wasperton parishes. To date all of the commercial buildings and parts of some of the houses on the old Oldhams site have fallen in to Wasperton parish despite their postal addresses and residents' rights being in Barford. To regularize matters the boundary has been moved to the east side of Wellesbourne Road until it meets the A429 Barford Bypass and then directly to the river, which is also the District boundary, and continuing to divide the riverside land the JPC now holds.

**Locality Community Forums** have continued to develop but there is still a long way to go before they achieve the potential which was been promised. Meanwhile we have been lucky enough to

secure Forum funding for several projects this year including the installation of play equipment, the jubilee beacon and the contribution towards upgrading street lighting ahead of schedule.

We are of course now in the Queen's Diamond Jubilee year and the JPC has where possible led and coordinated celebration planning. Wasperton will have a community picnic and a Royal Oak planted; Barford will inaugurate the Riverside walk, plant a Royal/jubilee oak on the site, erect a flagpole on the village green where there will be a grand picnic followed by a torchlight procession to and from a beacon on Watchbury Hill. Sherbourne had not finalized plans at the time of writing...

All councillors have attended many meetings and generally have served their electors extremely well, working as a strong team with James Johnson our excellent Clerk/RFO. This year we managed to exchange several long serving councilors for a considerable intake of new and younger blood. With no disrespect to those who have moved on I am confident that this change will be an excellent investment for the future. Many thanks to all for their input. Some have done much more than the expected minimum and these are particularly deserving of our community's gratitude.

Councillor attendance records:

2011-12	Meetings	Present	%
Cllr Mrs W BARLOW	9	9	100%
Cllr R CLAY	9	8	89%
Cllr Mrs J L LONGFIELD	9	5	56%
Cllr S J McVEIGH	9	9	100%
Cllr P A P MORRIS	8	6	75%
Cllr D MORROW	9	9	100%
Cllr J V MURPHY	9	9	100%
Cllr A RHEAD	9	7	78%
Cllr R A SHOTTON-OZA	9	7	78%
Cllr Mrs A GORDON	9	9	100%
Cllr Mrs NEWSOME	9	8	89%
Cllr Mrs P K PAYNE	5	5	100%
Cllr M J METCALFE	9	8	89%
Cllr N F J THURLEY	9	9	100%
Cllr J T WRIGHT	9	9	100%
Cllr J M HAWKESFORD	7	5	71%

4 **Written Report by Cllr Mrs C Sawdon (WDC)**

Alan Rhead and I were re-elected as your District Councillors in May 2011, it is an honour and a privilege to fulfil this role on your behalf.

Here is a brief outline on some of the activities we have been involved with over the last 12 months:

**Council Tax** - We have frozen the Council tax at the same level for a second year due to good management by the council.

**Local Plan consultation** – There is a lot more to the local plan than housing. This is your opportunity to comment on locations, infrastructure and open spaces. It is a chance for the public to help mould your District. What do you want? Where do you want it? Jobs, schools, public transport, hospitals, town facilities and rural community sustainability. Alan and I are working to bring the officers to meet in our ward to hear your views on initial ideas. I would urge people to attend and contribute to this plan which will mould our area for the next 20 years.

**Travellers** - This is also part of the local Plan design. WDC must find locations if Travellers are going to be dissuaded from settling anywhere. Before this can happen the Public need to understand that such sites have to go somewhere.

**Procurement** - WDC want to encourage more local businesses to provide vital services. WDC are actively involved in reducing the overall cost of procured services as one of the most important methods of savings.

**Localism** - We want to work ever closer with the JPC to ensure that the Localism Act has real meaning for the local community.

**Queen's Jubilee** - WDC is actively considering how to help local communities in their plans for this great occasion.

**Rural Initiative Grant** - Barford, Wasperton and Sherbourne need to continue to consider what requirements they may have that this WDC grant can help finance.

**Housing Needs Survey** - Congratulate the JPC in undertaking this most comprehensive survey not only of affordable but market homes. It is this kind of work at local level that can make Localism work.

**Recycling** - WDC continues to have one of the highest rates in the country and the public need to be congratulated on their efforts. Is there any further recycling you would like to see? Please let me know.

**Neighbourhood Watch**. -It is vital that we re-invigorate Neighbourhood Watch across the joint parishes. Hatton Park, Hatton, Norton Lindsey and Hampton on the Hill and Magna now have thriving groups and Paul Coleman our PCSO is very keen to help set schemes up across the ward. In all we have around 1500 households signed up across our area. It allows us all to keep in touch with what is going on and where within our neighbourhoods. I am keen to help where ever I can.

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

It has been an interesting and eventful year on the County Council. The County Councils latest strapline is "Going for growth" We believe that notwithstanding the Budgetary restraints and the overall national policy, Warwickshire County Council should endeavour to contribute to the recovery by encouraging employment and businesses especially amongst the under 25's, reducing Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETs) and improving education standards as far as the governments academy programme involves us and make Warwickshire a safe and healthy place to live.

This will be achieved by moving resources to areas that will encourage these aims and work in Partnership with both our neighbours, Districts and Boroughs. We will engage the Residents through meaningful community forums and where applicable Parish councils. We are fully engaged with the LEP with Coventry and will soon be signing a memorandum of understanding encouraging cooperation and combined working between the two authorities. We expect to match and thus take advantage of a government grant to improve the broadband in rural areas. The fire service has formed a strategic alliance with Northamptonshire thus making more resources available and saving on back office costs. The police force too is proposing to work more closely with West Mercia police. This is being influenced by the impending elections for a police commissioner, this November, and the programme to replace the police committee with Police panels.

Adult services are now becoming more of a commissioning agency paying the private sector rather than WCC to run homes and care services. Personal payment plans are being introduced for all residents who want them. This will show a saving of over £2million a year. Public Health will be transferring from the NHS to the local authority and they have already moved to Barrack Street above the library. Together with the other major reorganizations to the Health service whereby GP's become fund holders and PCT's and SHA's are abolished and a new "Health and wellbeing Board" is being established to oversee all Health matters in Warwickshire. Added to this there will be a new body called Health Watch which will work in conjunction with Scrutiny to challenge health administration and individual complaints. All this of course is subject to the Health reform act passing successfully through Parliament.

Schools, too are going through a major transformation The introduction of academies is proving more popular than envisaged and over 60% of Warwickshire schools have opted for academy status. The rest are expected to follow. Primary Schools too are being encouraged to form federations of clusters with a view to achieving academy status. All this leads to the downsizing of the Local authorities' role in education and hence staff.

Warwickshire being placed as it is in the centre of England is vital for the long term transport strategy of any government. The main motorway and A road links are the responsibility of the highway agency but the remainder of the roads are the responsibility of the County Council. WCC grit over 46% of the A & B roads (higher than any other shire County) and have recently entered a maintenance contract with Balfour Beatty. The present budgetary restraints have led to a reduction in money available for road maintenance although this group's commitment to £2million a year for additional road improvements has helped to alleviate this.

The latest infrastructure proposals are for a high speed railway through the county which will desecrate homes, farms, factories and the countryside but not stop anywhere in Warwickshire. Despite minor changes to the route it is generally thought that this is not good for Warwickshire. At a cost of £32 billion this line does not represent value for money and the business case, even over 60 years is flawed. Why upgrading of existing lines have not been considered is hard to understand. Warwickshire has joined Buckinghamshire in a group of mainly conservative councils called 51m and are committed to opposing these proposals. Three of our Districts are also in this group although all have voted to oppose the scheme. A Judicial challenge of the decision is being considered, indications are that this will not initially cost us anymore. The adverse effect on the infrastructure is also being costed and assessed but until detailed plans for the route and construction programme have been decided there is little point in challenging these. All costs associated with the project will be charged to HS2. The county Council are meeting with HS2 to discuss further consultation over mitigation prior to the hybrid bill being introduced. Both an environmental impact assessment and a proven business case are also awaited.

Finally, this year's budget. The county's element of the Council tax (about 80% of the total) will not be increased this year. We shall be accepting the government's offer of a grant which is equivalent to 2.5% rise. 1% is equivalent to £2million. This may affect next year's budget as this is not a year on year grant. Existing programmes of closures announced in last year's budget will continue as the county strive to make £60million savings over 3 years. It is of note that we have not closed one Library and the willingness of communities to take on their own library with our technical support is a credit to all and demonstrates the Prime Minister's vision of The Big Society in action. The future format of community forums and area grants should be decided by Easter.

Taking all this into consideration the Conservative controlled County council continue to serve you well and give you value for money as our programme of going for growth takes shape.

### **Changes In Wasperton**

- 6 Mr Neil Thurley, in his capacity as a member of the JPC representing Wasperton, drew four items to the notice of the meeting.
- 6.1 Speed Limit. WCC had published a list of villages in which a 30mph speed limit was to be imposed; it included Wasperton notwithstanding the carefully argued case which had been submitted earlier for a 20mph limit. The case was resubmitted and accepted and the speed limit reduced to the lower figure. This limit is now legally in force and will be subject to random speed checks by the police.
- 6.2 Street Lighting. Wasperton had been told that its old street lighting would be replaced at a rate of one standard each year. Last year two were replaced and this year, to general surprise and delight, WDC funded the replacement of the remaining seven, a process which is nearing completion.
- 6.3 Drainage. Ponding in road gullies is a problem (particularly close to the junction with the A429 and outside Farriers Court). WCC's contractors have pumped out the gullies but the problem returns after heavy rain. WCC has promised further remedial action.
- 6.4 HGVs in the Village. HGVs still enter the village under the flawed guidance of SatNavs with the attendant danger to parked vehicles, damage to verges and delays to other road users. The problem is not amenable to a quick fix and probably the best solution would be the installation of highly visible "No Entry To HGVs" signs at the village entrance. WCC will be asked to assist in this but it may be a case for funding from JPC sources.

- 7 The Chairman added to the list by reiterating that part of Cllr Murphy's presentation on Riverside Land saying this was an excellent amenity which could be enjoyed by the residents of Wasperton.

### **Neighbourhood Watch**

- 8 The Chairman reported there had been little crime in Wasperton during the year, the one item of note being the theft of fishing tackle from a garden shed.
- 9 Mr Jim Gilligan confirmed his intention to retire as the Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator. The Chairman congratulated him for the outstanding service he had given the village during his 21-year tenure and moved a vote of thanks.
- 10 As to a successor for Mr Gilligan; the Chairman said that a potential replacement had been identified but until the scope of the task had been agreed with the PCSO, the appointment could not be confirmed.

### **Parochial Church Council**

- 11 Mr David Hunt informed the meeting of a visit by 48 members of the Victorian Society to view the church and from them it had been learned that not only had it been designed by Sir George Gilbert Scott with windows by Pugin but also a locally-born, celebrated architect - Thomas Garner - had contributed to the design.
- 12 Of the tasks listed at last year's meeting, the replastering of the wall behind the altar had been completed with pleasing results.
- 13 The next improvements to the church (funds permitting) would be new lighting in the nave and ridge tiles on the roof.
- 14 The size of the average congregation had increased to 17.
- 15 He thanked the many voluntary helpers for their efforts in fundraising and other activities.
- 16 He thanked the JPC for its generous grants to maintain the churchyard.

### **Village Hall Committee (Events and Fundraising)**

- 17 Mrs Phil Derbyshire listed a very full programme of activities including:
- Quiz nights
  - Skittles
  - Safari supper
  - Jumble sale
- 18 In addition plans were being made for the celebration of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee.
- 19 She thanked Mr John Newbery for his efforts in procuring a "Jubilee Oak" and the JPC for funding it.

### **Village Hall Committee (Maintenance and Structure)**

- 20 Mr Neil Thurley explained that the "wish list" for improvements to the village hall was estimated to cost £30k.
- 21 Of this the essential repairs to meet health and safety and other statutory obligations would cost £12k, 50% of which was held in reserves.
- 22 The committee was identifying strategies for obtaining grant assistance for the shortfall.

23 During the year all the fixed-leg tables in the hall had been replaced by folding alternatives thus yielding more space and making the venue more flexible in the use to which it could be put.

24 He thanked the JPC for its generous grants to maintain the village hall

### **Planning and Environmental Matters**

25 The Chairman gave a resumé of the effects of the Localism Bill which had passed into law in November last year.

26 One of its first effects on planning was the abolition of Regional Spatial Strategies and the consequent requirement to replace all local plans drawn up under the last government with new ones, but this (in the case of WDC) was proving a protracted task.

27 The encyclopaedic central planning guidance of the last regime had recently been replaced by a more concise National Planning Policy Framework which had "a presumption in favour of sustainable development". Much seemed to depend on how the word 'sustainable' would be interpreted in practice.

28 At the tier below WDC, groups of parishes, parishes or even parts of parishes were now enabled to draft Neighbourhood Plans (similar but not the same as Parish Plans, being much more planning orientated). Those without such a plan would have no influence on planning policy in their locality since this would then be entirely determined by the Local Plan. It was suggested that further consideration might be given to the possibility of producing a Wasperton Plan when the WDC Local Plan policies were known.

### **Any Other Business**

29 Mr David Hunt was concerned about the restrictions on access to the riverside and to the Commonwealth War Memorial imposed by landowners. The Chairman suggested that this was likely to be a temporary state of affairs which might be best alleviated by a "quiet word".

30 The Chairman briefed the meeting on WCC's ambition to make superfast broadband (24Mbps) available to 90% of users in Warwickshire and achieve a minimum speed of 2Mbps for the remainder. Those residents who felt the need for improved broadband speeds in Wasperton were encouraged to complete the on-line survey form which could be found on [www.cswbroadband.org.uk](http://www.cswbroadband.org.uk).

### **Appointment of Chairman for 2012-13**

31 Mr M Metcalfe was appointed Chairman for the ensuing year.

### **Closure of the Meeting**

32 There being no other business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9:05pm, thanking those who had attended.