

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF
THE PARISH OF WASPERTON
HELD AT WASPERTON VILLAGE HALL
ON MONDAY 28 APR 14 AT 7:30PM**

Present: M J Metcalfe (Chairman)
Cllr J V Murphy (Chairman of the Joint Parish Council)
Cllr A Rhead (WDC)
Cllr L Caborn (WCC)
Eighteen Wasperton Electors

Minutes.

- 1 The Minutes of the meeting held on 15 Apr 13 were approved as a true record.
- 2 Matters Arising. There were no matters arising

Report by Chairman of the Joint Parish Council.

- 3 Cllr J V Murphy reported:

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

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

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

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 The latest scheme includes all the outdated lights in Barford and Sherbourne and subject to economies of scale the work should be completed this year.

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

All three village halls have this year been supported by JPC grants with £1070 towards general maintenance each and the JPC also gave grant support of £430 towards maintenance

of each of the three churchyards. Additionally the JPC also supported Sherbourne Village Hall's project to renovate its toilets with a further £2675 grant for that specific project.

The **New Local Plan** has continued to be a major theme over the year. The Preferred Options stage was revised and relaunched as the Revised Development Strategy which moved Barford to a slightly less sustainable category but only marginally reduced the number of houses we might be expected to accept. The Draft Local Plan, which was expected in June 2013 is now likely to appear in May 2014 after considerable extra work has been carried out on total numbers, cooperating with neighbouring authorities, and in particular for us on the Village settlement Boundaries and numbers. The new settlement boundary for Barford will more realistically represent the current developed state and incorporate the areas of land deemed appropriate for future development, whilst giving considerable protection to areas outside that boundary.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Councillor attendance records:

2013-14	Meetings	Present	%
Cllr Mrs W BARLOW	9	9	100%
Cllr R CLAY	9	8	89%
Cllr Mrs J L LONGFIELD	9	8	89%
Cllr P A P MORRIS	9	4	44%
Cllr J V MURPHY	9	9	100%
Cllr A RHEAD	9	5	56%
Cllr R A SHOTTON-OZA	9	4	44%
Cllr Mrs A GORDON	9	9	100%
Cllr Mrs NEWSOME	9	7	78%
Cllr M J METCALFE	9	8	89%
Cllr N F J THURLEY	9	8	89%
Cllr J T WRIGHT	9	9	100%
Cllr J M HAWKESFORD	9	9	100%
Cllr T MERRYGOLD	9	9	100%
Cllr I BOAK	5	4	80%

Report by Wasperton Councillors

4 Mr John Wright had submitted the following in writing:

- The Coffee Stop has taken place regularly on the second Saturday of each month and has been well-attended. All proceeds are made directly to the village hall treasurer to whom thanks are due.
- The Village library has realized approximately £1000, with all proceeds going to the Village Hall.
- Wasperton War Memorial. The JPC decided to help with funding maintenance of the war memorial by creating a designated fund of £100 within the JPC's accounts. This amount will cover the cost of grass cutting around the memorial for 2014. When these funds have dried up it has been suggested that we reapply for further funding. Wasperton residents would like to thank the JPC for their generous contribution. The grass is cut 4 times per year by Jeremy Hunt of Hampton Lucy.

Report by County Councillor

5 Cllr L Caborn reported:

BUDGET

County council set budget @ 1.99% rise to minimise saving need. At this level the council needs to find savings of £92 million over 4 years. This will be achieved through review of staffing, premises but mainly redesign of services and concentrating on front line services and our most vulnerable citizens. ie adult services, safeguarding, children and disabled services, though none exempt change.

With savings of £65 million taken out over past 3 years, it means our central government support is down by over 30% These changes will be delivered through our One Organisational Plan which sets the way forward for delivery of services.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Looking for growth through being part of LEP. Partner in Strategic Economic Plan which bids for regional funding for infrastructure ie Nuckle, Junction 12 M40

Partner in City deal for Warwickshire and Coventry WFRS Commencing consultation on Transformation Programme designed to deliver savings and improve operation. Includes 2 new fire delivery points.

New training facilities, but most important better response times of target of 10 minutes urban and rural. Achieved through rostering firefighters especially full time to cover busiest periods for call out. 60% calls rescue,40% fire nowadays

HIGHWAYS

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

GENERAL

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

UNITARY

Following debate council will continue to explore unitary.

Neighbourhood Watch

6 The Chairman reported:

- Neighbourhood Watch was up and running at least to the extent that the Police were now able to contact a core group of residents directly by e-mail
- The post of Coordinator remained unfilled and until a volunteer was found, he would assume the role although the duties were minimal
- The warning mechanism is mainly by email; additions to the list were welcome and he would manage it
- Those on the list were in receipt of the Police Newsletter

Report by the Parochial Church Council

7 Mr C Smith reported:

We will be shortly be undertaking remedial works to the rotten timber church floor in the north aisle.

We have been given the authority to proceed with the works from the DAC subject to complying with the Archaeological constraints and. recording. This is because of the previous churches built on the site and the possibility of archaeological remains

Future projects to include — a new lighting scheme, which Nick chambers has kindly offered to design and help with, together with Possible extension to the lightning conductor system and formation of cross ventilation which will hopefully eliminate any further rot forming.

We are also planning on a Wasperton Open Gardens event on the 1st June 2014.

An updated guide book has been produced by David Hunt and copies are available at the back of the church at £2.00.

Report by the Village Hall Property and Grant Application Committee

8 Mr Neil Thurley reported:

Wasperton Village Hall Property and grant Application Committee (A Sub-Committee of the Parochial Church Council)

This Committee obtained a Grant of £2,716 from the West Warwickshire Rural Forum in February 2014, which brought the funds available for improvements to £15,000, equaling the estimated cost of the Phase 1 essential works required to comply with current legislation for Public Buildings.

The necessary works have been researched and identified, and approved by the PCC. Orders have now been placed for these improvements to be carried out during July 2014.

The Works comprise:

- Complete refurbishment of the Kitchen, equipment and floor

- Making Porch/Hall, and Hall/Kitchen steps safety compliant
- Upgrading of electrical installation
- Provision of emergency lighting
- Provision of fire alarm system
- Renewal of obsolete fluorescent lighting in Main Hall
- Provision of dimmable up lighters in Main Hall appropriate for social functions.

It is anticipated that all these Phase 1 works can be carried out for under £13,000.

Further improvements have been identified for which a further £15,000 will be required, to be carried out when funds are available; meanwhile fundraising continues

Report by the Village Hall Amenities Committee

9 The following written report was submitted by Mr D Derbyshire:

The Wasperton Village Hall Amenities Committee is responsible for social events and fund raising. We have now accumulated enough to commence the first phase of the Village Hall improvements.

Since the inauguration of the committee, there have been a variety of events including quiz nights, dinner with magic, safari supper, skittles evening and the Wasperton Sale. Funds have also been raised through coffee stop, books, cakes and produce sales.

It is gratifying to have reached this stage with the help and support of such a small community. Plans are now in hand for phase two of the fund raising drive.

New Local Plan

- 10 Cllr A Rhead (WDC) informed the meeting that on 23 Apr 14, WDC had adopted the New Local Plan for consultation. The consultation has an overarching purpose; to establish whether the plan is sound because, if it is not, the Inspector will reject it and the whole process will have to start again. Notwithstanding the support for the plan given by his party (the Conservatives) he had voted against it because he did not accept the plan met the ruling criterion. He wished to explain to the meeting why he, the elected representative, had done so.
- 11 He stressed that his objection was not on the principle of housing, the need for it was manifest, nor did he object to having a plan, only a fool faces the future without one, but he feared that with time the flaws in the plan would become evident and it would unravel. In that scenario developers could “walk all over us”. These are the main concerns:
- The provision of Gypsy and Traveller (G&T) sites had been poorly conceived and executed
 - The infrastructure implications have not been fully grasped
 - The projected population figures have been assessed on old data and are widely thought to be over-stated (a thesis which will be proved or disproved on 29 May 14 with the publication of the latest ONS statistics)
 - Specifically the two identified G&T sites near Wasperton result from a superficial and mistaken analysis (see below)
 - Greatly disturbed by the plan’s assertion that WDC must take account of other districts’ inability to meet their own obligations
 - The term of the plan is 18 not 15 years, for which no explanation has been offered
- 12 Cllr Caborn (WCC) was given the opportunity to respond which he did thus:
- The vote was 25 to 11 in favour of adopting the plan
 - He was confident that the plan was sound for the first five years with flexibility built into it thereafter
 - Overall he was more sanguine about the soundness of the plan than Cllr Rhead had been
- 13 The meeting was shown a diagram in the plan which showed Wasperton’s “limited infill” boundary. There appeared to be no scope for new housing within this boundary.

Gypsy & Traveller Sites

- 14 The meeting was shown the plans for the two G&T sites nearest to Wasperton, one of which was a "Preferred Option". It was abundantly clear that little real analysis had been applied in their selection, these being the major criticisms:
- The local facility of a doctor's surgery in Barford had closed thirty years ago
 - Alternative doctors' surgeries were some miles away but with no public transport links to them
 - Both sites were on the opposite side of the Barford Bypass from Barford which gave rise to concerns over safely crossing the road by pedestrians, and noise pollution for the travellers in their thin-walled caravans.
 - One of the sites is not level as is claimed
 - Both sites are immediately adjacent to the road and mar the scenery looking to the north-west
- 15 Those attending the meeting were urged to contact WDC before the expiry date of 5 May 14 to make their objections known; such objections however must be based on planning criteria and not just that the concept is alien.

Any Other Business

- 16 Cllr Murphy urged Cllr Caborn to attempt to make the procedure for public consultation much simpler. A Consulter has the duty to make the task of responding by the Consultee as easy as possible if useful data is to be obtained by the exercise. That could certainly not be claimed for the consultation process used for the New Local Plan and the Gypsy and Traveller Sites consultation.

Appointment of Chairman for 2014-15

- 17 Mr M Metcalfe was appointed Chairman for the ensuing year.

Closure of the Meeting

- 18 There being no other business the Chairman closed the meeting at 8:50pm, thanking those who had attended.

