

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF WASPERTON
HELD ON MONDAY 28 APR 25 AT 7:30PM**

Present: M J Metcalfe (Chairman)
Cllr J V Murphy (Chairman of the Joint Parish Council)
Cllr J Barrott (Vice-Chairman of the Joint Parish Council)
Cllr J Matecki (WDC & WCC)
Cllr P Phillips (WDC & JPC)
Cllr J Billingham (JPC)
PCSO Kimber (Warks Police)
Twenty-three Wasperton Electors
H Dexter (Secretary)
Cllrs Phillips and Billingham were present as both JPC/WDC members and Wasperton Electors

1 Opening The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting, and was glad to see some new faces. He introduced those representing the Joint Parish Council, Warwick District Council, Warwick County Council and Warwickshire Police.

2 Minutes The minutes of the meeting held on 22 Apr 24 were approved as a true record, there were no matters arising.

3 Report of Chairman of Joint Parish Council (Cllr J Murphy)

2024-2025 has been another busy year!

We started off the year by embarking on our IT modernization project, by installing a new JPC specific computer for the clerk, ready for the impending new clerk/RFO appointment. This is being slowly followed by our move to IT independence and security upgrading, progress on Social Media and specific domain names for emails and a new website – all taking a lot of time and concentration. Additionally, we are hopeful that we may get a new phone mast near to J15 and this may improve the poor mobile signal that we enjoy in our villages - basically, the nearer the mast is the better our signal will be, but we must be aware that the M40 is the priority – not us!

We formed a Succession Planning/Staffing Working Party to recruit a new clerk/RFO and this worked very well, progressing steadily over the early summer to a full appointment in June. James Johnson retired at the end of July and Helen Dexter took over in August ready for her first solo JPC in September. We started renovation of the Wellesbourne Road bus shelter early in the year expecting a relatively simple strip and re-tile, however once exposed the scale of the job was clear and a much more radical approach was needed. This caused delays in authorizing funding and getting licences for erection of scaffolding “on the highway”. Costs escalated from £4K to £13K and the project was finally completed in October!

Work on the Barford shelter drew our attention to the Sherbourne shelter, which looked a far more complicated job. As it happened, due to the sound roof and a very practical approach, the work was rather simpler than expected and was completed well under its £3500 budget.

CCTV installed at KGF proved its worth very quickly when a miscreant was easily identified and promptly handed on to the Police for their attentions. Thankfully the CCTV deterrent effect seems to have drastically reduced the vandalism seen on site and whilst a few parents were initially concerned about the CCTV presence, hopefully most are now feeling reassured.

CCTV has also been suggested recently as a response to car and house crime which seems to be on the rise. We have asked the Police to look at the possibilities which may help them and also act as a deterrent. Installation and management costs are likely to be considerable, and where do we stop and start with it?

The end of the year saw us completing the Allotment Path/Public Footpath W96 through to Wasperton Lane and BYCC, along with a tidier link to the latter. The footpath component was funded by JPC s106 contributions from developers and the BYCC section was funded by Barford Community Charity.

Also at BYCC the JPC managed the installation of a defibrillator – suitable for both adults and children – funded by a WCC grant and some money raised by the “Dads’ Football Group”. This will be maintained and funded ongoing by the JPC.

Meanwhile, along with various planning issues, the latest debate concerns the district and county councils – the “Unitary” debate – Unitary councils will happen as decreed by the current government, but there is a lot to discuss about whether it is a single body for Warwickshire or whether we divide into North and South. Also where else we align with and the possibility of local mayors? – and whether parish councils take on more duties and responsibilities? – lots to consider.

Currently the JPC is under quota for councillors and an extra member is required for both Barford and Wasperton – come and see how our meetings work and consider joining us. It is interesting and involving work.

Development Updates:

- Sand and Gravel Quarry – currently paused pending applicants’ responses. Further consultation expected.
- Land Around Barford House – Currently no progress due to funding difficulties. Other developers being explored.
- Glebe Hotel site – Permission granted at appeal for partial demolition and erection of 4 town houses. Demolition currently under way.
- W/23/1178 – Bremridge 3 – Permission granted with temporary access onto A429 Barford Bypass - development imminent.
- New South Warwickshire Local Plan – Now past the Preferred Option stage. We held a very successful public meeting with the lead officers presenting. JPC has made strong submissions. The next stage will be the Draft Deposit Plan due in late 2025 for further consultation.

4 Report from Warwickshire County Council (Cllr Jan Matecki)

I’m delighted to begin with our educational achievements. In September 2024, Oakley School in Bishop’s Tachbrook opened its doors—a state-of-the-art, £60 million all-through school that spans from nursery right through to secondary education. This flagship project, the largest capital programme the County has ever undertaken, welcomed its very first reception, Year 7, and Year 8 students. This bold new start not only equips our children with outstanding facilities but also marks an enduring commitment to the future of our young people.

Turning to our environmental goals, significant strides have been made. With nearly £864,000 secured from the Local Authority Treescape Fund, we have approved 24 community orchards—half of which are already flourishing. Alongside this, we’ve reduced our carbon footprint by almost 1,760 tonnes through innovative energy-saving measures in Council buildings, improved streetlighting, and smarter business travel policies. Looking ahead, an investment of £3.3 million will further accelerate the shift to greener transport by funding electric vehicle charging points across both urban and rural areas, providing accessibility to some 700–800 new points and 1,500 charging sockets.

Our commitment to sustainable transport continues with our expanding electric bus fleet. We now have 27 electric buses operating locally—plus an additional 11 for inter-county routes. The growing success of our IndieGo Plus demand responsive service and the impactful Companion Plus One scheme, which supports those who need a carer to travel safely, further underscores our dedication to ensuring that every journey is efficient and inclusive. In tandem, our proactive ‘find and fix’ pothole gang has nearly doubled the pace of road repairs this year, demonstrating that preventative care makes a real difference in our everyday lives.

Of course, we also recognize the challenges we face. Home-to-school transport now serves around 12,000 pupils a day—a 20% increase in just three years. As we work to manage rising costs while maintaining high-quality service, rest assured that every child’s safe passage remains a priority. Our children’s services have seen remarkable growth as well. By joining forces in the Families First for Children Pathfinder Programme—with partners like Warwickshire Police and the Integrated Care Board—we’ve established locality-based family help teams and opened four new Ofsted-registered children’s homes. These initiatives not only streamline service delivery but also help ensure that vulnerable children remain close to their families and communities.

As we navigate proposals for local government reform and the transition toward a single Unitary Council, we remain focused on addressing financial pressures and upholding sustainable long-term strategies. While discussions continue at the national level, we are committed to shaping a future that reflects local needs and secures a better tomorrow. A joint submission was sent to the government with proposals for a single unitary submitted by the County, and a North and South Warwickshire proposal by the districts and boroughs. It is expected to have feedback from the government on these proposals in May.

On a more local level, the proposed 20mph speed limit along parts of Barford has been delayed due to the design team not preparing drawings for the scheme. These are now being worked on and it is hoped that the formal consultation will be issued in the very near future, with completion later in the year.

I was also pleased to be able to help with a grant for a new defibrillator at the new Barford Youth and Community Centre, which will hopefully save lives in the future.

Finally, the planning application for the quarry at Wasperton is currently paused while the applicant provides additional information. The information is expected to arrive by the end of this month which will recommence the planning application. Please look out for the restart of the process and be ready to submit your comments in response to the new information.

Resident Question: Smiths Concrete Ltd (the applicant) have been promising a reply for over 12 months, why does the council expect it to arrive by the end of the month?

Cllr Matecki: The applicant has advised the council that their reply will be in by the end of the month. If the report does not arrive by the end of the month, Cllr Matecki would strongly recommend that the application is refused. This does not mean that the applicant cannot reapply however this would result in having to pay significant costs.

Cllr Matecki will do everything he can to give the public sufficient time to respond to the report, but urges that, even if the deadline for response has passed, please still respond as it is expected that it will take considerable time to work through the volume of replies.

5 Report from Warwickshire District Council (Cllr P Phillips)

Good evening.

As well as being a resident of Wasperton, I'm one of your Warwick District Councillors, alongside Jan Matecki, who has also been your County Councillor for the last four years. I am also one of your Parish Councillors on the Joint Parish Council with Barford and Sherbourne.

Our WDC report back is dominated by one issue for the whole of Budbrooke Ward – the South Warwickshire Local Plan, which sets out housing plans for the next 25 years. The current Green/Labour administration at Warwick District have proposed a total of 26,885 houses in Green Belt around Budbrooke ward, Kenilworth and the north of Leamington. In addition Barford in particular is also facing a potential 25,845 houses between the village and the south of Warwick. There is also the potential for a large industrial estate in Wellesbourne plus a further 11,000 houses put forward by the Liberal controlled Stratford District Council

The spillover effect on our village could be massive, with for example, significantly increased traffic on the A429, making it ever more difficult to get out of the village, pressure on local schools, hospitals, GP surgeries, the water supply etc.

I won't bore you with detailing all the scores of meetings that Jan and I have attended over the last 12 months in support of the opposition to these proposals, including public meetings, such as the recent one in Barford School, meetings with the portfolio holder and planning officers, as well as at parish councils and knocking on doors to talk directly to residents, getting information, answering questions and encouraging residents to respond. It has been our key focus this last year. I'm pleased to say there were at least 23,600 responses across South Warwickshire and these are now being processed by officers. I have no doubt that we in Wasperton played our part.

We can expect further consultations later this year and we will continue to keep you all informed of these as and when they arise.

Also an issue of increasing concern has been the siting of solar farms on agricultural land in the Green Belt, such as the two at Sherbourne. We look at each proposal individually on Planning Committee, on which I sit, and see if there are exceptional circumstances to approve these on Green Belt land. For instance, I note that there are masses of rooftops in and around our District that could provide solar as well, so I will continue to keep an open mind, but for me to support such a proposal it has to be truly exceptional and I have not seen one that meets that criteria yet.

Jan and I continue to respond to the ongoing normal issues that come up across the ward. We realise that to the individual and families concerned it is far more important than just "day-to-day." It would be inappropriate to go into details in a public forum, but suffice to say that if any resident has an issue that they want help with from the District Council, please get in touch with me or Jan.

Both Jan and I continue to support the work of SAGAG in its fight to stop the Barford quarry. There still appears to be silence from the proposer, but when they have responded to the questions from the County, we will have just three weeks to respond. As your councillors we will support you the residents in this fight with whatever it takes.

I will briefly cover the government's proposal to create a unitary authority in Warwickshire – that is merge all 5 District/Boroughs plus the County into one new unitary council. In principle, I support this – yes, a turkey voting for Christmas – as there is complete confusion on many doorsteps as to which council does what. As an example there are some county council candidates, from a different party to me, who believe that they are responsible for bins. This is a district matter, not county. And this list of confusion goes on and on.

Simplifying the structure will both make it easier and be more cost effective for the residents of Warwickshire. But the cackhanded way the government has gone about this, means we have no idea

how, when, or even if there will be changes, which creates a great deal of uncertainty, especially for the District Council's employees.

Thank you again for your ongoing support of our work as Councillors and we look forward to working for you over the coming 12 months.

Resident Question: Given the current political and climatic uncertainty, does the District Council have a policy on food security?

Cllr Phillips: We do have Bio Diversity Net Gain and are waiting for further guidance on this. WDC policy is that we shouldn't be using farmland for solar farms however this is not key in the decision making factor.

Resident Question: Is the proposed Industrial and technology park on minerals reserved land? If developed, would there have to be a second quarry?

Cllr Phillips: A full mineral survey would have to be undertaken before applying for planning permission.

Cllr Phillips commented that he is aware that the Paddock has been put forward as a development site and he will be monitoring the situation closely.

6 Police Matters (Michelle Kimber - Warwickshire Police)

Looking at previous calls into our control room, over the past 12 months there have been two suspicious circumstances whereby unknown vehicles have been in the area and seemed very suspicious. These occurred in January and April of this year. There may have been more, but these are calls that have been recorded.

There have been three burglaries that have taken place over the past 5 months, which is worrying. These have been reported in January, February and April of this year.

This is showing that there is an increased interest in Wasperton. It is possible that it is related to scoping out vehicles, and there is an easy route to the motorways.

We are still awaiting statistics from intel for Barford and Wasperton as there has been a delay due to unforeseen circumstances. We raised in the Barford meeting in March a possible need for cameras/ANPR that cover entrances/exits to help capture registrations. There is a possibility this may not help as vehicles may be on false plates, but may help reassure residents. We would be happy to have a further meeting with the Parish when further information is received – e.g. costings etc.

We have produced a poster which can be given to residents to help them take extra steps with security. Further patrols are also being done when resources allow.

Resident Comment: Despite cameras and alarms they have been a victim of burglary twice. Latterly, it took the police 20 minutes to respond.

Michelle Kimber: The call was logged as 'immediate response' and should have only taken 10 to 15 minutes as response would have been on blue lights. Apologies that it took longer.

Michelle Kimber offered to meet with residents to discuss recent car theft.

Resident Comment: The outbuilding at Wasperton House used to have CCTV – is it still working?

Resident response: CCTV installed by previous owner and no longer working. Mike Metcalfe will contact the current owner of Wasperton House and investigate.

7 Parochial Church Council (Wendy Smith)

Wasperton have been without a priest for a considerable time now, the parishes of Hampton Lucy, Charlecote, Loxley, and now Alveston come within the benefice.

A new priest is in charge but only part time, however, finally an advert is about to be issued.

A new treasurer, Anne Stokes, has been appointed, who we share with Sherbourne, and she is excellent.

Church and Village Hall finances have now been separated. Church pays for upkeep (£120 per week) and maintenance. Friends of the Village Hall raise funds for improvements.

Repairs to the bell turret progress slowly, a faculty is required from Coventry Diocese and there has been many problems, we are hoping to apply for grants towards the work. An architect was appointed

to do a survey however could only produce an architects report due to the lack of scaffolding. An estimate to provide scaffolding has come in at £11k + VAT.
An arborist completed a survey of all of the trees in the churchyard and all recommended work has now been undertaken. The PCC are aware that ivy being cut at the base of each tree has resulted in a lot of leaf fall.
When David Burbidge opens his gardens for private parties, we at his request, also open the church. We are grateful to all villagers who help keep the churchyard tidy.

8 Village Hall Committee (Diana Phillips)

The Village Hall committee has been continuing to fundraise for the village hall and now has its own dedicated bank account. A number of events have been held throughout the year - Wobbly Wasps pubs, a Sunday lunch, a village sale and a Christmas event, some events we had planned had to be cancelled at short notice due to lack of interest.
Claire Brook and Caroline Aspden have held a Coffee Stop on the first Saturday of the month, for the past year, and this has been very successful with between 7-8 people and 12-14 people attending each event.
In August, David and Sandra Burbidge asked if we could do tea and cake in the hall for visitors to the Open Gardens at Cedar House. This was very successful and we served tea and cakes to well over 200 people.
The Coffee Stop which is due to be held in May has been cancelled as Cedar House will be opening their gardens on Sunday 4th May and have requested that the Village Hall Committee provide tea and cakes.

Resident Question: Does the defibrillator located in the village hall require maintenance and is there a possibility of further training for those who could not make the original session.
Resident Response: The defibrillator was checked recently by Toby Cox. If repeat training sessions are required, these can be arranged.

9 Planning Matters (the Chairman)

Proposed Sand and Gravel Quarry – No further questions
South Warwickshire Local Plan – Cllr Phillips confirmed that he will request a 2nd consultation on smaller sites. He advised that the timetable will inevitably slip because of the scale of responses.

10 Any Other Business

It was stated that the notice board at the entrance to the village was rotting away. This notice board was not very visible and rarely used. It was suggested that residents would concentrate solely on the Village Hall Notice Board - Resolution passed unanimously.
The PCC had received a quotation of circa £800 for a new notice board and would be replacing the existing Notice Board but commented that any contribution would be gratefully received.
Cllr Murphy asked the Wasperton PCC to let the JPC know what funding they had in place and how much they need to raise to complete the work. The JPC will be reviewing the notice boards in all three villages with a view to repair/replace where necessary.
Cllr Matecki suggested that each village apply for funding from the Cllrs Grant Fund. The first round of funding will take place in May/June.
This topic will be discussed as an agenda item at the JPC meeting due to be held on 12th May.

Mike Metcalfe brought to everyone's attention that the Hampton Lucy Educational Trust (HLET) had a vacancy for a trustee.
The HLET is an educational charity providing grants to young people, under 25 years of age, who live in the Parishes of Hampton Lucy, Charlecote, Wasperton and Alveston.
The Trust has been successfully used by residents in the past and is a useful way of helping young people.
If anyone is interested, please visit the website for further information.
www.hlet.co.uk

11 Appointment of Chairman for 2025-26

Michael Metcalfe advised that after many years of service he will now retire as Chairman. Mike proposed that Cllr Peter Phillips take over the role. This was seconded by Cllr Billingham and carried unanimously.
Cllr Peter Phillips appointed as Chairman for 2025/26

Cllr Phillips thanked Mike for doing a great job, this was followed by a round of applause in appreciation of Mike's hard work over the years.

12 Close

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8:40pm.