

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF WASPERTON
HELD ON MONDAY 27 APR 26 AT 7:30PM**

Present: Cllr P Phillips (Chairman, WDC & JPC)
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 Ranner (JPC)
Cllr J Billingham (JPC)
Cllr Mrs E Crow (JPC)
Dr Malcolm Eykyn (Stop the Barford Quarry)
PCSO Kimber (Warks Police)
Twenty Wasperton Electors
H Dexter (Secretary)
Cllrs Billingham, Crow and Phillips were present as both JPC members and Wasperton Electors

1 **Opening** The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting. He introduced those representing the Joint Parish Council, Warwick District Council, Warwickshire County Council and Warwickshire Police.

2 **Minutes** The minutes of the meeting held on 28 Apr 25 were approved as a true record, there were no matters arising.

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

Annual Report of Chairman of Joint Parish Council

2025-2026 has, as always, been a busy year.

Our IT modernization project has continued at pace, albeit rather slower than we might have hoped, bits completed so far include our move to IT independence and security upgrading. We have made progress on Social Media and now have a steady following, from those who use or often rely on SM – Additionally, the hope that we may get a new phone mast near to J15, to improve the poor mobile signal that we enjoy in our villages, moved forward when the applicant was granted Planning Permission – but we now await mobile operators to take up the option of actually using such a mast – only one so far – they need at least two - and we must be aware that the M40 is the priority – not us! And on the subject of communication, this has also been the year of the NOTICEBOARD – all boards across the three parishes have been renovated or replaced, and an additional one provided for public use at KGF. There is now a JPC dedicated section on the board at BMH where the latest meeting information and latest draft minutes can be seen, very promptly after every meeting.

CCTV installed at KGF continues to prove its worth and has helped investigation of a couple of potentially serious anti-social incidents. Thankfully the CCTV deterrent effect seems to have drastically reduced the vandalism seen on site.

CCTV was suggested last year as a response to car and house crime which seemed to be on the rise. We asked the Police to look at the possibilities which may help them and also act as a deterrent, but there has been no progress to date.

At BYCC the JPC managed defibrillator – suitable for both adults and children – funded by a WCC grant and some money raised by the “Dads’ Football Group” – has been deployed three times this year, and is kept fully maintained and ready for action when needed.

Meanwhile, along with various planning issues, the ongoing Unitary or Devolution debate concerns the district and county councils – Unitary councils will happen as decreed by the current government, but there is still doubt about whether it is a single body for Warwickshire or whether we will divide into North and South. Also, where else we align with as a Strategic Authority and the possibility of local mayors? – AND whether parish councils take on more duties and responsibilities? – still lots to consider – it doesn’t really seem to have moved on in 12 months, other than perhaps an indication that the government might allow smaller councils than previously indicated.

During the year the Barford School ZIG-ZAGS were removed and replaced with ones of a similar, but subtly different design. This allowed a new Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) to be put in place which gives the Police the power to take action against those that abuse the zig-zags – so please be careful! During the year we launched a Youth Forum, with a pretty blank script, but despite valiant efforts uptake has been disappointing to date. Cllr Ranner and his team have worked very hard at this and do not intend to give up just yet – we’ll see how it goes.

Community Speed Watch – Encouraged by WCC and the Police we have several folk signed up for this, although once again it has all gone quiet...

And still we wait for a 20's Plenty scheme.

Thanks are due to all the councillors who have contributed to another successful year and attended many meetings. When this report goes online as part of the Draft Minutes it will be accompanied by attendance records for the past year.

Helen Dexter took over in August 2024 and is coping with us all, admirably. She has now started on her formal training for the official clerking CILCA qualification, all whilst doing the day job, keeping us all in order and masterminding our IT transformation. Well done and THANKYOU Helen!

Currently the JPC is under quota for councillors and an extra co-opted member is still required for Barford – come and see how our meetings work and consider joining us. It is interesting and involving work. And there will be Parish Council elections in 2027 - and perhaps some changes...

Developments in Barford – an update (Cllr J V Murphy)

- **Sand and Gravel Quarry** – currently paused pending WCC consideration of applicants' responses to Regulation 25. 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. THREE new applications currently at WDC – 1 – Conversion of main building into a single dwelling, 2 – Listed Building application ref the same, and 3 – Three new “townhouses” in a straight line, separated from the main house, lower than previously approved – BUT with a new separate entrance. JPC was happy with the main house, but objected to the townhouses due to the extra entrance and the proximity/overlooking of neighbours.
- **W/23/1178 – Bremridge 3** – Permission granted with temporary access onto A429 Barford Bypass - apparently development delayed over details relating to s106 agreements and conditions for A42 access.
- **Land adjacent to Flat Rabbit Straight/Barford Road** – potentially 750 houses separated from the road with a “buffer” where the old tip used to be. No details received yet.
- **New South Warwickshire Local Plan** – Now past the Preferred Option stage. We now await the Preferred Sites/Draft Deposit Plan which was due in late 2025, but is likely late 2026, for further consultation.
- **New NPPF** – National Planning Policy Framework introduced this year – far more in favour of applications, especially more houses...
AND If you think there is too much development in our parishes – THERE IS A NEW PETITION – MICKLETON AGAINST INNAPPROPRIATE DEVELOPMENT – MAID for short - Mickleton seek a pause to these unplanned and unreasonable Government targets in order to properly direct new house building to where it is needed and to the right sort of house. If this reflects your views than please support Mickleton’s petition - <https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/762214> see the draft minutes or May Village Voices for more details. It may not change things but at least your views will be known...

Councillor attendance records 2025-2026:

Councillors	JPC Meetings			Planning Meetings			Overall Attendance Record		
	No of Meetings	Present	%	No of Meetings	Present	%	Meetings	Present	%
Cllr J T Barrott	11	8	73%	13	9	69%	24	17	70.83%
Cllr J D Billingham	11	11	100%	13	13	100%	24	24	100.00%
Cllr R Clay	11	11	100%	13	12	92%	24	23	95.83%
Cllr Mrs E Crow	5	2	40%	4	2	50%	9	4	44.44%
Cllr H Gadsden	11	8	73%	13	8	62%	24	16	66.67%
Cllr J M Hawkesford	11	5	45%				11	5	45.45%
Cllr G Jackson	11	6	55%				11	6	54.55%
Cllr Mrs S Jarratt	11	8	73%	13	8	62%	24	16	66.67%
Cllr T Merrygold	11	10	91%	13	9	69%	24	19	79.17%
Cllr J V Murphy	11	11	100%	13	13	100%	24	24	100.00%
Cllr Mrs R Newsome	11	4	36%	13	3	23%	24	7	29.17%
Cllr P B Phillips	11	10	91%				11	10	90.91%
Cllr B Ranner	11	10	91%	2	2	100%	13	12	92.31%
Cllr M J Sheard	11	9	82%	13	8	62%	24	17	70.83%
Cllr Mrs K E Thomson	11	5	45%				11	5	45.45%

4 Report from Warwickshire District Council (Cllr Peter Phillips)

I'm pleased to report back to you on the last 12 months on my work on your behalf.

There have been two themes that have dominated 2025/26. The Local Plan, and the Barford quarry.

Firstly, the continuing development of the Local Plan for new houses and industrial estates by both Warwick and Stratford District Councils – together forming, the South Warwickshire Local Plan or SWLP. There is a generally accepted need for some level of new housing, especially so that those in their 20s and 30s can get on the housing ladder. But it is important to ensure that development is sited in areas where infrastructure, schooling and entertainment facilities are well established.

The Labour Government increased our targets for new houses by 80% in early 2025, with a reduction in Coventry's target of over 50%. Given that Warwick District is largely covered by green belt and fields, this inevitably means that many of the proposed developments in the local plan will be on that type of land, which will completely lack any existing facilities.

Jan and I have continued to lobby to protect as much of our precious green spaces as possible, but it would be unrealistic of us to promise that none will be included in the proposed local plan final allocation. We will know exactly which sites will be included sometime around mid-May and then there will be another consultation in June and July. In the meantime, as we have under a 5-year land supply – the required level for a local plan to be a major determinant in housing decisions – we are starting to see speculative developments across the two districts on sites which may or may not be in the proposed SWLP.

The other major item is the possibility of a sand and gravel quarry at Barford. This has been progressing slowly, with the latest consultation which ended in January still being processed. I think it only right to pay tribute to Malcolm Eykyn and all his team who have led an excellent campaign in opposition to what is an unnecessary quarry with insufficient demand justifying the opening of a major new quarry. Jan and I along with Malcolm and Val Eykyn have a fortnightly call with the relevant planning officer at the County Council, and continue to make the multiple arguments against the necessity of the quarry. The speed of progress towards a decision is such that it may not be decided by the relevant County Regulatory Committee until late in 2026.

We will continue to keep you informed and work to minimise the impacts of the local plan and the quarry as things progress this year.

In other matters, the government's proposal for local government reorganisation continues to grind forward. As I said last year, 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. Personally, I think it is important that as residents you do get a chance to decide on who to represent you every four years. We have elections scheduled for 12 months' time but we also have no idea what these elections will be for – or indeed if any elections will be held.

While as a councillor we look after issues that residents of Budbrooke Ward raise with us, we also are members of various committees that help run the council for all residents. I am on the Planning Committee and also chair the Housing Scrutiny Committee, both of which you can follow on WDC's YouTube channel. There is a lot of work that goes on behind the scenes that Jan and I also participate in to ensure we hold the administration to account.

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.

Question: SWLP – Will there be a decision on small sites, like the Paddock, in May?

Cllr Phillips: Yes, although it would seem fairly unlikely that the Paddock will be in the selected sites on this occasion.

5 Report from Warwickshire County Council (Cllr J Matecki)

The current administrative year began with the County Council elections in May 2025. The results saw Reform emerge as the largest party in Warwickshire, and they subsequently formed a new administration.

Within weeks of taking office, the newly appointed Leader of the Council resigned on health grounds, and a further Reform councillor was appointed as Leader. Since then, the Council has experienced a Motion of No Confidence in the current Leader, which was defeated by a single vote. I supported the motion calling for his removal.

County Council budget and financial position

One of the most significant decisions taken this year was the setting of the County Council budget, against a particularly challenging financial backdrop.

The budget resulted in the County Council element of Council Tax increasing by 4.4 percent, of which 2 percent is ring fenced for adult social care. This was lower than the originally anticipated rise of up to 4.99 percent, which had been expected.

The reduction became possible following a Government announcement made shortly before the reconvened budget meeting on 17 February 2026, relating to historic SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) deficits. For many years, councils have been required to borrow to meet rising

SEND costs, with those deficits accumulating year on year. The Government settlement will write off a large proportion of that historic debt, significantly reducing the interest costs associated with meeting SEND provision. This, in turn, enabled the Council to set a lower Council Tax increase than would otherwise have been required.

Ongoing financial pressures

Despite this, the County Council continues to face considerable financial pressures, particularly from:

- adult social care,
- children's services and SEND provision,
- rising costs driven by inflation and demographic change, and
- the limited flexibility councils have in how funding can be used.

As a result, the Council continues to prioritise statutory and legally required services, particularly safeguarding vulnerable residents, alongside early intervention approaches designed to reduce longer term demand and costs.

The budget reflects difficult trade offs and reinforces the reality that councils across the country are being asked to deliver more with increasingly constrained resources.

Highways and transport

Highways remains one of the most visible policy areas for residents. Over the past year, decisions have focused on:

- prioritising safety critical repairs,
- preventative maintenance where funding allows, and
- targeting investment to improve overall network resilience.

However, under the current administration's policy direction, investment in sustainable transport schemes, such as new or extended cycleways, has slowed and in some cases stalled.

On wider transport policy, the Council has focused on:

- retaining essential bus services,
- supporting vulnerable users, and
- coordinating transport planning with housing and employment growth.

Funding constraints remain a major challenge, meaning expectations have to be realistic, but highways and transport continue to be among the most frequently raised concerns by residents.

Local government reorganisation

On local government reform, Warwickshire County Council submitted a proposal for a single unitary authority covering the whole county. This option was the only proposal that met the Government's original criteria and offered the strongest financial position for service delivery. Rugby Borough Council, which sits centrally within the county, also supported the single unitary option.

Since submissions were made in November last year, it now appears that the Government's original requirements may not be as stringent as first indicated. As a result, there is now speculation that two unitary councils, one covering the north of the county and one the south, may also be under consideration.

The Government is expected to announce its decision later this summer.

Local matters

Turning to local issues:

- The proposed 20mph speed limit for Church Street and High Street remains in the planning phase. A number of issues still need to be resolved, and officers are working through these. However, the suggestion to include Bridge Street within the 20mph zone is unlikely to proceed.
- On the subject of Bridge Street, I am working on measures to improve safety on the approach to the A429. This includes better signage warning motorists of the sharp bend, new "SLOW" markings on the road surface, and—subject to agreement—relocating the chevrons so they are more visible as drivers approach the bend.
- I continue to work closely with Warwickshire County Council officers, Cllr Peter Phillips, and the Barford Residents' Association Action Committee to oppose the proposed quarry. I would like to thank everyone who is working hard on this issue and all those who have submitted comments on the application. At this stage, the efforts do appear to be having an impact, with strong and lawful planning arguments demonstrating why the proposed site is wholly inappropriate.
- Finally, I was pleased to award grants from my County Councillor's Grant Fund to help cover the cost of repairing the two notice boards located at the Memorial Hall and by the former shop on Wellesbourne Road.

Question: 3 particularly dangerous potholes at the turning to Barford on the A429. Please can something be done?

Cllr Matecki: Once reported to the council, potholes are visited and graded within 24 hours. The severity of the pothole will determine how quickly it will be repaired. Members of the public can register an account on Warwickshire County Council and visit the Highways Page to report a pothole. As a

registered account holder you receive feedback on the issue reported. If you do not wish to register an account you can still report the issue or you can contact Cllr Matecki who will deal with it on your behalf.

6 Police Matters (Michelle Kimber - Warwickshire Police)

Warwick Rural West – covers Leek Wootton, Hill Wootton, Barford, Wasperton, Sherbourne, Bishops Tachbrook, Hampton Magna, Hampton on the Hill, Hatton, Rowington, Lowsonford, Lapworth as well as Wroxall, Honiley, Haseley and Beausale.

The main priorities we are tackling currently are vehicle crime, burglaries and anti-social behavior or speeding, also there have been a couple of reports of children on e-scooters.

Over the last 6 months we have had 6 reports of burglaries, mainly in Barford, and 2 vehicles stolen, also in Barford. For some of these burglaries (which occurred in November) suspects were caught and arrested, as they were caught on CCTV at the time. Also, there are ongoing investigations into recent burglaries in Bremridge Close which involved lock boxes being broken into to gain entry to homes. We are patrolling key areas, being more of a presence and increasing tasking to patrol overnight in areas of burglaries.

We also have a crime prevention event on Wednesday between 6pm and 8pm at Barford Memorial Hall.

CCTV – Ben Edwards, Cllr for Leek Wootton ward is making enquiries into costings over how much cameras would be in different areas, this was an idea last year, however the Warwickshire Highways Community Action Fund has been halted at present (where funding is matched from Highways). At the moment, it is unsure when this will be reopened.

<https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/hcaf>

Contact details sheets are available to take away, but as always, if there is anything happening at the time please ring 999 or 101.

Question: How do we report things to the Police?

PCSO Kimber: If you wish to report recent suspicious activity call 101. If there is an incident happening now and you feel threatened call 999.

Residents can also sign up to 'Warwickshire Connected' which is a free messaging service offered by Warwickshire Police. You can use the site to let the Police know your priorities, find out what they are doing to tackle them and be the first to hear the facts about any incidents and emergencies near you.

<https://www.warwickshireconnected.com>

7 Parochial Church Council (Wendy Smith)

Still in an interregnum, the Benefice of Barford Wasperton and Sherbourne advertised for a priest, had one applicant, interviewed but did not appoint. We manage our services using retired clergy, local clergy and lay readers. Thanks are expressed to all; we are extremely grateful for their help.

Church is open to visitors when Cedar House is holding Open Gardens for private parties and under the NGS scheme.

The Bell Turret is in desperate need of repair and consolidation the oak timbers are rotten, we have submitted three Faculty applications to Coventry Diocese two were granted which gave permission for the church architect to access the Bell Turret from scaffolding to determine the condition of the woodwork under the cedar shingles and for the Bell Foundry to remove and restore the bells. The third Faculty is for permission to restore the Bell Turret. If granted a specification will then be sent out to tender to appropriate construction companies. We have been awarded a small grant towards this project from Coventry Diocese's Minor and Urgent Repairs Grant Fund. We do not have an estimate of the total cost.

Every five years the church is required to have a Quinquennial Inspection by the church architect to determine its condition. This took place in November 2025 following which the architect summarised the works required to maintain the building with timescales commencing with urgent to within five years.

A new Church Notice Board has been erected by the church gate.

Our enthusiastic team of churchyard mowers continue their excellent work leaving the churchyard looking well cared for and tidy. A big 'thank you' to you all.

A special thank you to flower arrangers and cleaners who quietly undertake their work without expecting any acknowledgement.

The church APCM Wednesday 13th May at 11 am and all on the electoral will receive a copy of the Annual Report by email.

8 Village Hall Committee (Wendy Smith)

The fundraising committee has been working hard all year; we have had Wobbly Wasp pubs and a very successful Sunday lunch. The Christmas fair at the beginning of December went well. Coffee stop is a regular feature and this year a lot of village ladies are helping out, making it even more relevant. Teas for the Cedar House open gardens last May were a great success with many compliments on the cakes. We continue with the 100 club, which helps with the fund raising. We've raised about £3,500 in total over the year.

9 Planning Matters (the Chairman)

Proposed Sand and Gravel Quarry (Dr Malcolm Eykyn)

We are currently in the middle of the 2nd consultation and in spite of an enormous revised application, significant problems have been uncovered which could lead to a further Regulation 25 meaning that determination could be pushed to this time next year.

No further information has been received to mitigate these problems.

Cllr Matecki commented that whilst the public consultation period had ended you are still able to make comments and therefore please write in as your views will still be considered.

Those of you who have already submitted views but wish to make a further comment can do so by submitting an addendum – please quote your personal details so that it can be linked to your previous submission.

The National Planning Policy Framework focuses on protecting valued landscapes. Barford is situated in a unique valley at the gateway to the Cotwolds. The Senior Planning Officer has visited the valley and seemed taken with the views and returned to the area with senior colleagues

The 'Wash Plant' which is planned by Smiths, and will sit in the middle of the valley, will stand 8 metres high, the bunds which will be installed to mitigate the view will be between 3 and 5 metres high. If you wish, you can comment on protecting this valuable landscape.

Question: Will there be a noise element?

Dr Malcolm Eykyn: Yes. If the site goes ahead it is the intention to move the wash plant which is currently situated at Wolston Fields Quarry near Rugby, to the potential new Barford Quarry. Should you wish to get a better understanding of what the wash plant will look like you can visit Wolston Fields Quarry.

South Warwickshire Local Plan – Cllr Phillips confirmed that there will be no further news until sometime around mid May.

Possible Wasperton Neighbourhood Plan – Cllr Phillips mentioned that the proposal of a Wasperton Neighbourhood Plan was being discussed by the JPC. The plan would be a community led project to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape development and growth of the local area.

10 Appointment of Chairman for 2026-27

Cllr Barrott proposed Cllr Phillips, seconded by Cllr Billingham and carried unanimously.

Cllr Peter Phillips appointed as Chairman for 2026/27

11 Close

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8:20pm.