

Wolverton Parish Council
Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting on Tuesday 23 May 2017 at 7.30pm
Held at Wolverton Church Hall

1. Present

Councillor D Stone – Chairman

Councillor P Anthony

County Councillor J Horner (part of meeting)

Parish Clerk – Nicola Everall

There were 3 members of the public – Mrs T Rowley, Mr E Read and Mrs D Mann.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received on behalf of Councillors S Easterbrook and C Tunbridge.

3. Disclosure of interests

There were no declarations of interest.

4. To Confirm & Sign the Minutes of the Meeting held on 16 May 2016

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 16 May 2016 were approved and signed by the Chairman

5. Chairman's Report

As a Council, we started the year with a vacancy following the resignation of Cllr Payne in anticipation of his move from the Parish. Following the required public notification of the vacancy we were subsequently able to fill it by the co-option of Paul Anthony.

The Parish Council have held 6 bimonthly meetings in the last 12 months. The main topics discussed continue to be regarding planning applications, highways issues, the work taking place regarding the Parish Plan Action Plan, and, of course, finance. Some of these aspects are separate items on the agenda.

Planning

There have been 13 planning applications and 1 planning appeal during the year. 1 of these was for a new build on a limited infill plot adjacent to the school which, following a reduction in size, the Parish Council supported and was passed by SDC. 2 two-storey extensions and a garage extension raised no objection and were also passed by SDC. 1 proposed extension in Norton Lea was objected to, was refused by SDC and was dismissed on appeal, on the grounds of impact on openness of the green belt and large size in relation to the original building. We have supported a revised plan and a decision from SDC is pending. The Parish Council raised no objection to an application to demolish and replace Park View, but this was refused by SDC because of the large size and impact on the setting of The Court, a listed building.

A decision is pending on the redevelopment of The Court outbuildings into two dwellings, which, in line with the Parish Plan, the Parish Council support, with suggested conditions, although with some reservations on lack of submitted details. Additional applications required minimal input as they were decisions resting solely with SDC, such as certain conversions of agricultural barns (1), minor non-material amendments (2), and certificates of lawful development (1), although the Parish Council are routinely notified in case of relevant local knowledge. Over the border in Claverdon an appeal over the Solar Panel Farm was dismissed for loss of openness of the Green Belt, an adverse impact on the visual amenity of users of the public footpath crossing the site and a failure to show that other non-green belt sites or brown field sites had been adequately considered.

Highways

Potholes, mud on the road and debris on the footway are routinely reported to WCC Highways with varying degrees of success. The bridleway to Gannaway has been cleared of overhanging vegetation through the Community Payback Scheme. The long running problem of excessive speed in the vicinity of the school is being addressed by WCC from its safer routes to school budget with a variable speed limit. 20 mph at the start and finish of the school day and 40 mph at other times to be reinforced with flashing speed signs. Although the posts for the signs are in place there has been a delay in receiving the signage.

Parish Plan Actions

Cllr Anthony will be reporting on progress with faster broadband provision as a later item.

Last year the Parish Council was able to announce the securing of a WCC grant for new and larger notice boards to replace those outside the Village Hall and on the corner of Norton Lea. These have been delivered and are awaiting installation.

The bench at the crossroads has been painted and re-timbered.

Finance

There was no increase in precept this year.

6. Year End Accounts – 31 March 2017

The Parish Clerk presented the Year End Accounts to 31 March 2017 which had signed by the Chairman. The Parish Clerk confirmed that the accounts would be presented the Internal Auditor for audit.

7. Report from County Councillor

Councillor J Horner reported that the Conservative and Labour groups at Warwickshire County Council agreed a joint budget in only seven hours on February.

WCC will be investing £1m more to extend the successful school safety zones programme, will maintain the Home to School Transport budget, continue investing in LED lighting and maintain the current level of fire cover so that no retained fire-fighter post will be lost. The £67 million reduction in annual Government grant by 2020 will be met by £62 million of annual savings and £5 million taken from accrued reserves. General council tax will rise by 1.99 % and there will be an additional 2% for adult social care making a rise of 3.99% on Council Tax next year.

New £2 million grant fund for businesses in rural Warwickshire. A new £2 million grant fund to grow businesses and create jobs in rural Warwickshire has been launched. For information about the range of support available to grow your business, including support with applying for the RDPE Growth grants, contact Coventry and Warwickshire LEP Growth Hub on 0300 060 3747, email support@cwgrowthhub.co.uk or visit www.cwgrowthhub.co.uk.

Warwickshire County Council on coveted list of 'Top 100' Apprenticeship Employers in the country. The Top 100 list, announced in the Sunday Telegraph, celebrates the best apprenticeship employers across the UK and the County Council was among ten selected from the West Midlands.

A salesman and two insulation fitters who took advantage of an elderly Atherstone resident by charging her for work that was overpriced, unnecessary and in some cases not carried out, have been successfully prosecuted by Warwickshire County Council Trading Standards Service.

If you are worried about rogue traders Warwickshire Trading Standards has entered in to a new partnership with No Rogue Traders Here - an approved trader scheme. 'No Rogue Traders Here' puts customers in touch with traders who have been fully vetted. 'No Rogue Traders Here' vetted traders include: Builders – Roofers – Plumbers – Double Glazing – Central Heating & Boilers – Electricians – Carpenters – Decorators – Bathrooms – Kitchens – Driveways. They also have handymen who will carry out small jobs. To find out more and register, visit: <https://www.noroguetradershere.com/> or phone 0800 233 5000.

John Horner
01926 842068

- 8. Report from District Councillor**
Councillor P Richards report is appended to these minutes.

9. Parish Plan

Councillor P Anthony reported on the Parish Plan indicating that Wolverton had suffered from very slow Broadband (1-2Mb/s) for years, due to being at the end of a long run of copper cables from the exchange.

The rural fast broadband initiative by CSW hasn't planned to bring fibre until 2018/2019, so the Parish Council looked into alternatives in 2016 and has now successfully installed a microwave wireless link with very good capacity for speeds of over 50Mb/s. More homes are being connected by the small supplier based in Oxfordshire after they proved the system with the initial ten properties.

Councillor P Anthony thanked Chaz & Frances Boys for the installation of the telephone mast.

Councillor P Anthony reported that a suggestion had been made to make the Church Hall a Community Asset and internal discussions had taken place.

There was little to report with regards to the Speedwatch scheme, but interest was increasing.

10. Emergency Plan

The Chairman gave an overview on the last Emergency Plan which was dated 1978 and it was suggested that a Working Group be set up to include Parish Councillors and representatives of the community. It was agreed that a date be set up for an initial meeting.

11. Questions & Observations from Members of the Public

Concern was raised over the dropped drains in the village and the Chairman was to draw up a list which the Clerk would then forward to Councillor J Horner.

It was also suggested that the drains in the village should be cleared of debris to allow the flow of rain water. Councillor J Horner was to look into the matter.

There were a number of cracked footpath slabs and uneven slabs and again, Councillor J Horner was to look into the matter and report to John Brown at WCC.

Concern was expressed regarding the 2 mobile homes and 2 touring caravans on land at Woolly Park Farm and the Clerk confirmed that the Enforcement Officer was aware of the situation.

The meeting closed at 8.30pm.