

LITTLE WOLFORD PARISH MEETING

MINUTES OF THE PARISH ANNUAL MEETING OF 22 APRIL 2014 IN LITTLE WOLFORD VILLAGE HALL

Present: David Farman (DF, in the chair), Colin Ablewhite (CA), Beryl Braithwaite (BB), Chris Cond (CC), Diz Farman (IF), Charles Hobbs (CH) Shirley Large (SL) Bob Large (BL), Simon Lewis (SLe), Arran O'Dell (AO), Jane Revere (JR), Michael Revere (MR), Cllr Chris Saint (CS), Cllr Stephen Gray (SG)

The meeting opened at 7.30pm.

1. **Apologies:** Roz & Henry Warriner, Chris & Jim Heritage, Gill Cotter, Gill Ablewhite, Jane Hobbs, Chris Stretton
2. **Election of Chairman:** BL proposed and JR seconded that DF be re-elected as Chairman for 2014/15. There was no other nomination. DF accepted re-election as Chairman.
3. **Minutes of last meeting:** The draft minutes of the meeting of 29th October 2013 were approved (proposed by CH, seconded by MR) and signed by the Chairman as a true record of that meeting.
4. **Matters arising:**
 - DF has asked Stratford-on-Avon District Council (SDC) to include reference to No.1 (in addition to Nos. 4-6) The Green on the street sign at top of Broadmoor Lane.
 - The reported expenditure of £10 under delegated powers on postage stamps had not yet been incurred.
 - In response to the question regarding the need to include reference to insurance in the Draft Financial Regulations, DF had carried out a risk assessment, which would be discussed later in the meeting.
 - Warwickshire County Council (WCC) Highways Department appear to have filled the gaps at the edge of the carriageway at the top of Broadmoor Lane.
5. **Chairman's Report**
 - **Planning:**
 - Only one new planning application, for an extension at The Hollows: granted without comment.
 - Application to convert redundant agricultural buildings at Wolford Fields into four dwellings: granted on appeal.
 - Current Notification for Prior Approval to take down an existing grain store at Wolford Fields and rebuild at Broadmoor Farm: IF asked whether like-for-like replacement, DF advised that it is same building.
 - **Street maintenance:**
 - Potholes: variously reported and temporarily patched.
 - Road gullies by the fountain have been jetted, reducing puddling and run-off down Rosary Lane; jetting of other gullies requested.
 - Surface water drainage culvert beneath Rosary Lane (which also drains the fountain) has collapsed (confirmed by dye testing by Severn Trent Water), leading to localised flooding. WCC Highways Department has accepted responsibility for repair, but no timescale given. This has been a worsening problem over several years: DF now fears that the carriageway, which is sinking and cracking, may collapse. CS asked to try to persuade WCC Highways to move faster on this (**Action: CS**).

- BB and MR confirmed that there remains a problem with a large tree on the village green, which is interfering with telephone lines and shedding dead branches. SDC has agreed to undertake “light trimming”, but this is being delayed by nesting crows. SG agreed to chase SDC StreetScene (**Action: SG**).
- **Crime Statistics:** Recently-published official crime figures suggest that Little Wolford is above the 97th percentile for anti-social behaviour (ASB) in the whole of England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and second in Warwickshire only to one particular Nuneaton postcode area. The epicentre is apparently Rosary Lane, where 27 ASB incidents were logged in February and a total of 312 during the past 12 months! This is clearly rubbish, as Warwickshire Police have confirmed: investigation has revealed that all of these incidents were erroneously logged by Thames Valley Police, and presumably actually occurred somewhere in their area of responsibility. DF has written to the Stratford Herald, Ron Ball (Warwickshire’s Police & Crime Commissioner) and our MP, Nadhim Zadawi; the latter has asked the Home Office to ensure that the figures are corrected and the source of error eliminated.

6. County Councillor Chris Saint invited to address the Meeting:

- Unitary Authority for Warwickshire: WCC meeting in February approved the idea, with an eye to potential cost savings, but much hostility, particularly from District Councils. Would need to be approved by Eric Pickles; unlikely to proceed in the short term. Meeting had been attended by Ron Ball and his deputy.
- Drew attention to the current consultation regarding the future of Warwickshire’s Fire & Rescue Service (see WCC F&RS website for details); emphasised that, in our particular area, fire services are not constrained by county boundaries; the proposals include the ending of funding for the young fire-fighters service
- Despite also being Leader of SDC, considered more appropriate for SG to talk about options for District planning strategy.
- Progress towards improving broadband speeds in rural areas disappointing, but CS still pushing to achieve improvement in this area

7. District Councillor Stephen Gray invited to address the Meeting:

- District Council and European Parliament election on 22 May 2014.
- Proposal to revise ward boundaries and reduce the number of District councillors from 54 to 36 will require another election in 2015.
- Electoral Registration to become an individual responsibility, probably via the internet.
- Due to current lack of a Core Strategy, all planning refusals by SDC likely to be overturned on appeal. Strategy should be approved next month. Consultation regarding sites for future house building recently concluded: Gaydon/Lighthorne Heath the preferred option, followed by Long Marston Airfield. If Gaydon approved, Long Marston will not go ahead,

DF enquired whether opposition by Jaguar Landrover to Gaydon/Lighthorne Heath development had been surmounted: SG advised that a way forward had been agreed. DF asked whether the last-minute addition of Wellesbourne Airfield to the list of options would be considered: SG advised that this proposal would not be taken further.

The Chairman thanked Councillors Saint and Gray for their contributions and they left the meeting.

- 8. Expenditure under delegated powers:** DF reported that no such expenditure had been incurred since the previous meeting.
- 9. Review of 2013/14 Accounts:** DF outlined the audit process and timetable before tabling the draft accounts for the financial year ending 31 March 2014 (attached), which had been approved by the Internal Auditor, Gill Cotter. The Parish Meeting’s sole source of income had been the

£500 precept, received via SDC in two equal tranches in April and September; the major item of expenditure had been a contribution of £200 towards the cost of cemetery maintenance. The £235.84 surplus of income over expenditure would be transferred to reserves. CH proposed and CA seconded that the accounts be approved and this was agreed by all.

10. Draft Financial Regulations: Following previous discussions, DF had sought legal advice and carried out a risk assessment in order to decide whether reference to insurance should remain in the draft. In summary:

- The Parish Meeting has no legal responsibility for enforcing the village speed limit;
- The Parish Meeting owns no property or other fixed assets, thus no requirement for buildings, contents or public liability insurance;
- All meetings are held in the Village Hall, for which a hire fee is paid, and are therefore covered by the Hall's own public liability insurance;
- A Parish Meeting, as distinct from a Parish Council, has no right to employ staff, thus no potential liability as an employer can arise;
- There are some modest financial risks: (i) that DF may abscond with the pre-paid debit card (maximum risk £100), and (ii) that cheque signatories may misbehave (maximum risk £500), but it was felt that it would not be cost-effective to insure against these risks.

SLe enquired whether any liability might arise in the event of injury caused by a branch falling from the previously-mentioned tree on the village green; DF advised that liability lay with SDC as owner of the green and thus of the tree.

It was agreed that there is currently no requirement for insurance, but this should be kept under review and therefore should be included in the Financial Regulations.

DF proposed that the Draft Financial Regulations be adopted; this was seconded by JR and unanimously agreed.

11. Standing Orders: DF advised that further guidance had been received from NALC in the light of legislative changes, and therefore proposed that this item be deferred to a future meeting; this was agreed unanimously.

12. Issues of local importance: DF reported that renovation of the Old Forge had resulted in the loss of one of the village notice boards, and initiated a discussion regarding possible alternative locations. It was agreed that this matter would be brought to a future meeting should it become apparent that the remaining notice boards were inadequate.

13. Matters raised by Electors

- Trimming of large trees on the village green (BB) – see earlier discussion.
- CH reported continuing concern with the safety of the junction of Little Wolford Road and the A3400; was compliance with the new 50mph speed limit on this stretch of the A3400 being monitored? DF agreed to discuss with WCC (**Action: DF**).

The Chairman thanked those present for attendance; the meeting closed at 8.40pm.