

Weston Under Wetherley Parish Council

Minutes of the ANNUAL PARISH MEETING held at 7.00pm,
4th April 2017, at the Village Hall, Weston Under Wetherley

Present:

Councillor Jeff Arnold
Councillor Jenny Arnold
Councillor John Hammon

Councillor Nick Harrington (Chairman)
Councillor Pam Redford (Vice Chairman)
Councillor Wallace Redford

In Attendance:

Jane Chatterton Clerk & RFO

Villagers: 24

The Chairman welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending.

CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE

It was noted that the previous Parish Council had resigned in May 2016.

The new Parish Council had been formed by a non-contested election in July 2017.

The Parish Councillors were now:

Vice Chairman - Councillor Pam Redford (Ward Cllr), Councillor Wally Redford (County Cllr), Councillor John Hammon (former parish/Ward Cllr), Councillor Jeff Arnold and Councillor Jenny Arnold. A Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer, Jane Chatterton, had been appointed in August 2016.

Unfortunately, it took three months to unfreeze the PC's bank accounts which meant there was a delay in paying bills and receiving the precept.

A successful application had been made to the Transparency Fund of £1,064. The monies were used to purchase software and a laptop. This would ensure that the PC were compliant with new compulsory Transparency Code and would help with the burden of keeping up with this.

In November the PC reduced the annual cost of the website costs from £300 to £14 per annum when two websites (PC and Village) were created. Migration costs were taken from the Transparency Fund and for ongoing updates. Both were free websites through BT Community Kit. Any updates to the website were welcomed and could be sent to either the Chairman or the Clerk.

Budget

With identified cost savings at the January Parish Council meeting it was agreed that the budget for 2017 - 18 would be set at £8,870.

As there had been little maintenance of village assets for a few years; namely the bus shelter, notice boards and benches required restoration works. An amount of £1,000 had been reserved for a local contractor (Dave Moorecroft) to start work in the next month.

A new Grants and Donations Policy had been approved and qualifying groups were encouraged to submit applications. The application form was available from the Parish Clerk or PC website.

Precept Request

WDC had reduced the Concurrent Services Grant and Council Support Grant by nearly £800 for 2017-18 and the same again next year with these Grants ending 2018/19.

The Precept for 2016/17 set by the previous PC plus Grants gave total income of £8,671.

The Precept for 2017/18 of £8,870 increased for a Band D per house by £5.35 to £43.21.

Bank Accounts

Bank accounts at 31st March 2017 were:

Reserve account	=	£8,920.08
Current	=	£8,649.48

UPDATE FROM ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH

Stephen Evans updated on events for St Michael's Church. The churches of Hunningham, Wappenbury and Weston under Wetherley had now been amalgamated into THE OFFCHURCH GROUP. The churches would now be known as "Chapels of Ease".

Services were still being held in St Michael's Church as before. Christenings and Funerals were taking place as usual.

The Worship would now be organised from Offchurch, where Church Wardens would be elected in April/May.

Hunningham Church's last Annual General Meeting would be held on Tuesday 25th April at 7.30pm. They would let everyone know how they were setting things up to look after the village's church - which becomes the responsibility of Hunningham Village.

New members of Friends of St Michael's Church were needed, anyone wishing to be involved could speak to Stephen.

UPDATE FROM THE VILLAGE HALL

Martin Roberts, Chair of the Village Hall Trust updated on the events at the Village Hall.

The Village Hall was run by a good team, mainly on goodwill. It was proving to be a sustainable and long term business with an average of £1,000 per month in bookings.

The Hall was now being offered as a wedding reception venue especially after the installation of a new sound system and lighting.

Bookings were also being made to hire out for corporate meetings. Villagers were given priority for usage.

With an average of £12,000 per year in bookings, the trust was retaining a £3-£4k profit for reinvestment.

The Committee had had a couple of members step down recently and they were looking for enthusiastic villagers keen to help maintain the hall. They meet about 4 times a year for a couple of hours and promote maintenance and projects that villagers want and request. Please make expressions of interest known to Village Hall Trust Chairman Martin Roberts at martin01james@gmail.com or call 01926 632484

The question was raised with whether the village hall would be installing broadband. Martin informed the meeting that this had been investigated and the costs discussed especially as there would be a need to pay for a commercial licence. When last investigated, there appeared to be no demand.

A villager thanked Martin for the Christmas tree lights and decorations which had been well received by the villagers.

WESTON EVENTS

Update provided by Bren Boardman.

Various activities were planned between now and Christmas, these included:

10th and 11th June – Open Gardens

There would be 11 gardens taking part in the National Garden Scheme – previous years this event had been very successful. Nationally the NGS had raised over £70,000 for charities, 2 charities to benefit were Marie Currie and Macmillan.

The event attracted many visitors, over 1,000 last year. Tea and cake would also be available.

Sat 26th August - Village Fete. This would focus on sporting activities and a dog show. Other attractions would include a bbq, pop up pub and live music.

Sat 28th October - ScareFest – scarey scarecrows with a party in the village hall.

Friday 22nd December - Advent Windows Celebration

Further details would be published in the Newsletter, Village Noticeboards, Website and Facebook Page nearer the dates.

Rounders

The group had purchased both adults and children's Rounders Sets these were available in the Village Hall for anyone in the village to use. They were looking for someone to take on the task of organising Rounders Team Events.

If anyone sporty that would be prepared to take on this fun challenge, please contact one of the Weston Events team: Bren Boardman, Glynis Hooper, Mandie Bradshaw, Chris Garden.

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION GROUP

Update from Trudy Birkmyre

An invitation to join the group on a St George's day nature walk. The group would meet up at the Wappenbury footpath entrance on Hunningham Lane at 2:30pm on Sunday 23rd April to explore the natural history of the landscape between Weston to Wappenbury, enjoying the style-free access now provided by the footpaths group.

The Wildlife Conservation Group now had 21 members. A monthly working part met on the first Saturday of the month. Recently they had spent 16 hours protecting the fruit trees from being damaged by grass cutting.

The trees in the Community Orchard were now in blossom and villagers were reminded that the fruit once ready was available to be picked and used by villagers.

The Wildlife Corridor was a link of wildlife habitat, generally native vegetation, which joined two or more larger areas of similar wildlife habitat. Corridors were critical for the maintenance of ecological processes, including allowing for the movement of animals and the continuation of viable populations of pollinators, so vital for the web of life.

Warwickshire Wildlife Trust had won a grant of £1.2m from the Heritage Lottery Fund to do this work in the local area. This would be an ongoing project over the next few years and to achieve this the Parish Council needed to become a partner of the Princethorpe Woodland Living Landscape Project.

The group asked for the village to help them to achieve this and for the Parish Council to give their full support for this nationally important project by entering into discussion with the project's sponsors to find ways of improving habitat wherever practical in the village.

Statement Concerning Wildlife Conservation Group by Weston Under Wetherley Parish Council

The April 2017 village Newsletter contained a report from the Wildlife Conservation Group (p7) claiming that the Parish Council had given its support to the Princethorpe Woodlands Living Landscape Project.

Notification was made that was not the position of the Weston Under Wetherley Parish Council.

The Parish Council would consider each individual Wildlife Conservation Group planting proposal in isolation and in consultation with Warwickshire District Council and Warwickshire County Council County Highways.

The Parish Council and WDC had rejected two planting proposals for:

- a) the layby after Wethele Manor on the Rugby Road entering the village from Cubbington
- b) the T-junction of Sabin Drive & Rugby Road

Weston Under Wetherley, WDC and WCC cannot permit planting areas adjacent to the road or junctions which would endanger pedestrians and road users.

WESTON TOTS AND BABES

Update received from Mandie Bradshaw

The group was running well and now with good financial management. Previously the health visitor attended the sessions, this had unfortunately stopped but it was hoped this would continue again soon.

The group held termly parties including Easter and Christmas – these were popular and very enjoyable. Users of the group came from the village and also from surrounding villages.

An idea which was being explored was to hold coffee mornings once a month for other users. The kitchen was already in use for refreshments for those attending the tots and babes group. It was hoped that if started this could also generate income.

WESTON CINEMA

Update from Robert Birkmyre

The first showing at the Weston Cinema was in October 2015. Since then there had been 11 screenings, showing a variety of films. The maximum attendees had been 35 and the minimum 11.

Thanks was given to the Parish Council and WDC for grants awarded to start the facility. Thanks was also given to Live & Local who brought and provided the equipment and arranged the licensing.

It was noted that 30 attendees were needed at each showing to be financially viable. Refreshments and a raffle were also available at each showing.

The next film night was Saturday 29th April, when Spectre would be shown.

Tickets were available from:

Gordon: westoncinema@gmail.com.

Jeff and Jenny Arnold: 01926 632330, jandjarnold@btinternet.com

Robert and Trudy Birkmyre: 01926 632680, birkmyremh@hotmail.co.uk

COUNCILLOR KNIGHT

Councillor Knight WDC thanked the meeting for letting her visit. She had found the meeting a lovely experience and would pass on the delights of Weston to her colleagues.

An event was taking place which was a walk from St Nicolas Park to the Pump Rooms. The event was promoting the environment. There would be locally produced food available at the end of the walk. The eco-friendly day would take place on 7th May. All welcome.

A civic reception was taking place on 9th May to showcase what help and assistance was available to help people suffering from debt problems and homelessness.

WESTON FOOTPATHS GROUP

The Weston Footpaths Group started nearly four years ago as a result of the interest in local footpaths expressed by many villagers via the Parish Plan. The aims were twofold:

Firstly, to help open up new footpaths including from Alderman Way towards Hunningham. However, the group had not yet been successful in this, the creation of a new right of way was a very time-consuming process with a long backlog of applications, and was less likely to be successful without the support from the landowner or tenant. For these reasons, they were not currently pursuing an application, although if anyone had the time and enthusiasm to do so, they would be happy to help and advise them.

Secondly, there was an aim to improve the condition and accessibility of the existing footpaths, to enable more people to enjoy the beautiful countryside. In this they had achieved several successes, most recently to install the final kissing gate on the walk from Hunningham Road to Wappenbury. With the help of the Country Council Rights of Way Team, the stiles which were difficult to navigate for many had been gradually replaced.

The group had liaised with local landowners (John Hammon) who had helped by cutting back vegetation, and improving muddy areas in winter.

Instructions for the three routes which included all the paths in the parish had been printed in the village magazine and were available on the website with photos and maps.

Thanks were given to Peter Haine, Paddy Taylor Carolyn Davis, Sue Alan and Ben Keffler – if anyone else would like to be involved, please contact Sue Keffler.

UPDATE FROM COUNCILLOR PAM REDFORD (VICE-CHAIRMAN AND WDC COUNCILLOR)

In the last year, District Councillors had kept all Parish Council's informed of WDC issues.

To recap:

WDC's element of the Council Tax had this year risen by 3%, meaning an increase of £5 per year for a Band D household. This had been largely due to the reduction of Grants from Government. However, WDC continued to manage their finances prudently and were achieving a balanced budget for the benefit of residents.

The Local Plan had been an ongoing issue which would have an impact on some PCs more than others. The Inspector had now informed WDC of the further amendments/alterations he required and following discussion with officers, these alterations/amendments would go out to the public for a 6 week consultation period. Following this it was hoped that the Plan would then be adopted towards August/September time.

WDC still eyed to consider the question of Gypsy and Traveller sites within our District. This was not an easy subject to address, as the subject always raised concerns with local residents. However, the need to identify areas for this use was now becoming urgent. As we all know over the past months there had been a large rise in illegal encampments across the District and with these came the problem of, the legalities of trying to move them on, and the cost of clearing up the rubbish left behind after the Gypsie and Travellers had moved on, this alone was costing WDC

thousands of pounds to clear. The position of transit sites must be looked at together with a possible site for fifteen caravans. This would be an ongoing issue for WDC to address.

Another problem was the increase in fly tipping within the District. WDC officer would be bringing forward a report sometime in April, looking at what could be done to discourage this activity. I would ask that if you see fly tipping occurring then take as much information as you can, such as registration numbers of the vehicles, dates and times and any further information you may believe to be useful and pass this to WDC Neighbourhood services, or your local District Councillor.

Over the past year WDC had brought in a scheme for charging for lost or damaged Grey and Green bins, boxes and replacement bags. So far this scheme was working and had been fairly well received by all residents. The bins damaged by WDC lorries or machinery would have no charge for replacement, if your bins were damaged in this way the collection team would leave a leaflet with your bin so that you may claim a replacement. The only problem, although small was that there now seemed to be something of a black market in bins. So your Councillors' advice to you would be to make sure your name, number or some identifying mark is on your own bin.

The Leisure Centres' improvements/upgrades in Leamington and Warwick were ongoing and we looked forward to Newbold Comyn Leisure Centre re-opening by the Summer.

There were plans to relocate WDC offices from Riverside House to a new building in Covent Garden, this was a more central location and would enable more housing within the town. A percentage of which would be for affordable homes.

The District's objective of upgrading it's parks and open spaces was continuing, Jeffson Gardens had over the last years seen an upsurge of visitors and had won an award for it's displays. There were plans in the pipeline to revamp the green space around the Bandstand and the bandstand itself would undergo a refurbishment. WDC's Collections and Engagement manager recently contacted councillors to advise that the Royal Pump Rooms had been voted No 35 in a list of top attractions in England.

Lastly your District Councillors continued to work on your behalf with any issue or problems that you may feel need to be addressed.

ANNUAL REPORT FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR, COUNCILLOR WALLACE REDFORD

Locally

The village footpaths from Sabin Drive towards the Cubbington end of the village were scheduled to receive maintenance, involving cutting back to increase the width and some resurfacing.

The footpath from the "Bull Inn", towards the first house had been cleared.

Highway repairs were to take place at the end of the junction of the Rugby Road and Hunningham Road.

Community Forum Grant

The next meeting would be on the 14th June – the venue to be announced.

Applications for this meeting needed to be forwarded by the end of May.

Application forms could be obtained from the Community Partnership Forum, Riverside House, WDC. Telephone number 01926 456102.

On a Wider Front

1. HS2: Construction would start in earnest in 2018 with the construction of the maintenance storage areas.
2. During 2017 HS2 teams would be carrying out soil surveys etc.
3. During the construction period there would be considerable disruption likely to our road network with road closures and diversions.
4. A new bridge was to be constructed across the A46 at Stoneleigh adjacent to the existing one. This would assist in keeping HS2/HGV traffic away from the village.

The Parish Council would be updated on progress and matters that may affect Weston.

West Midlands Combined Authority

WCC had become an associate member but as yet no discussion had been taken regarding becoming a full member costing £500,000 annually.

This decision was being left until after this year's County Council elections in May.

Bank Holiday – Waste Recycling Centres

The Cherry Orchard Centre at Pipers Lane, Kenilworth, would be closed on bank holidays. However, Princes Drive Centre would be open.

OPEN FORUM

All Weather Court

The previous Parish Council had been looking at creating an all-weather court. The initial quotes for this were very high. Councillor Pam Redford had investigated the grants that may be available. It was noted that they would only be available if bonafide groups existed and were to use the facility. Further consultation was required.

Sabin Drive

Brambles and an overhanging tree were causing damage to the villager's fencing. It was established that the adjacent land belonged to the Village Hall. Martin Roberts kindly agreed to visit the property and sort out the problem.

Signage

The issue around signage in the village was raised. Some had been damaged. The village would raise the issue with Councillor Wallace Redford.

Speed Limits

There were incidents of speeding in the village especially along Sabin Drive into the estate. There was discussion of what the speed limit was. Councillor Wallace Redford would arrange a site visit with the Safety Officer to progress with the potential to reduce to a 20mph limit.

It was noted that the villagers were able to attend the Community Forum meetings and raise issues with the PCSOs who attend. They were able to input into items on the agenda and vote. Villagers were also encouraged to log incidents of speeding or concerns on the police website.

Meeting closed at 9:00pm

Signed BY THE CHAIRMAN

20th June 2017