

# Little Wolford Parish Meeting

## Minutes of an Extraordinary Assembly, 21<sup>st</sup> March 2017

**Present:** David Farman (Chairman, DF), Chris Cond (CC), Gill Cotter (GC), Bill Keys (BK), Bob Large (BL), Simon Lewis (SiL), Sue Lewis (SuL), Jane Revere (JR), Michael Revere (MR), Diz Shirley (DS), Henry Warriner (HW) and Roz Warriner (RW)

The meeting opened at 7.35pm.

1. **Apologies** for absence were received from: Shirley Large, Simon and Louise Johnston, Charles and Jane Hobbs.
2. **The Minutes** of the General Meeting of 18<sup>th</sup> October 2016 were approved with one correction to the final paragraph of minute 7 (where “a solution” was amended to “a new Chairman”), and signed by the Chair.
3. **Matters Arising**
  - a. DS updated the meeting on the progress of restoration of the Village Hall. She explained that further estimates for necessary building works on the back and gable walls and the roof were being obtained from local tradesmen, some of whom were able to volunteer help. The final coat would be less than the original quotation. The meeting agreed to hold open the offer made at the October meeting of a grant of £500. DS agreed to bring new written quotations to the next meeting in April.
  - b. DF reported that he had obtained estimates for a new noticeboard which looked expensive. £400 was budgeted for this. GC suggested using local tradesmen. SiL suggested Colin Ablewhite and offered to ask him; this was agreed by all. RW stated that the notice board should not be lockable as it needs to be open to all. It needs to be large enough to hold at least six A4 sheets.
4. **Future Governance of the Parish of Little Wolford**

DF had written to all parishioners seeking views regarding the future of our Parish, and received only four responses, two of which were impractical.

On 9<sup>th</sup> February, DF had attending a meeting called by Dave Webb, Executive Director of Stratford-on-Avon District Council (SDC), to discuss options for the future governance of the Parish in the event that the Parish Meeting should fail to elect a Chairman for 2017/18. Also present at that meeting were Lynn Matthias and Jennifer Green, Chair and Vice-Chair respectively of Great Wolford Parish Council (GWPC); David Dalby, Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer; District Councillor Stephen Gray; and John Crossling, County Officer of the Warwickshire and West Midlands Association of Local Councils (WALC).

The options available would be for the parishes of Great and Little Wolford to merge under a single Parish Council, or the establishment of a Joint Parish Council for the two parishes. The expressed preference of the District Council officials and Cllr Gray was for a merger; DF and the GWPC representatives favoured a Joint Parish Council, there being a desire that the parishes should retain their individual identities. Dave Webb made clear that, if a Community Governance Review (CGR) was to be instigated by SDC as a consequence of a failure of Little Wolford Parish Meeting (LWPM) to elect a new Chairman, SDC would set its own terms of reference. Such a Review would not amount to a referendum: parishioners and other stakeholders would be consulted, but the outcome would not be determined by their views alone.

An alternative approach would be for LWPM and GWPC jointly to request a CGR, in which case the applicants could also request that the Review should consider recommending a particular outcome. It was agreed that this was the approach preferred by parish representatives, who agreed to meet subsequently to consider a form of words for a joint CGR request. That

meeting took place on 7<sup>th</sup> March, and a form of words agreed, including a recommendation that a Joint Parish Council should comprise five councillors representing Great Wolford and two representing Little Wolford. This wording was formally endorsed by a full meeting of GWPC on 14 March, but further action deferred pending events in Little Wolford.

DF reported these meetings to the Assembly and much discussion ensued. BK asked whether, given the difficulty in finding a new Chairman, Little Wolford would be able to elect two Councillors. RW thought it important, in that respect, that work would be shared between councillors, rather than falling upon a single individual as at present. DF emphasised the importance of the Parish Clerk in that regard. DS asked about timing: DF stated that the formation of any new body would be timed to coincide with local council elections scheduled for May 2019 in order to avoid the cost of an additional election. Dave Webb, as Parish Trustee, could appoint an interim chairman until then. GC was informed that there are currently five parish councillors on GWPC: there has not been the need for an election for many years, and two councillors are currently co-opted.

BK asked what would happen if this meeting was to decide to proceed with a joint CGR request and a new chairman then comes forward at the Parish Annual Assembly in April: DF replied that a CGR would not be initiated unless and until we fail to elect a new chairman. Bill asked the meeting to decide whether we should await a new chairman or initiate the CGR request. DS proposed that we await the possible election of a new chairman and JR seconded; all present agreed. BK then indicated that he might be interested in standing for election as chairman: the meeting cheered!

DF proposed the adoption of the form of words, agreed with GWPC, to be used to request a CGR in the event that we fail to elect a new chairman:

*"Little Wolford Parish Meeting requests that Stratford-on-Avon District Council should undertake a Community Governance Review to consider recommending that a Joint Parish Council be established for the Parishes of Great Wolford and Little Wolford, the working title for the new body to be 'The Wolfords Joint Parish Council' (subject to alteration if strong support is revealed during the Review for the names of both communities to be retained in the title). It is further requested that the Review should consider recommending that a total of seven Parish Councillors be elected to the Joint Parish Council (five from Great Wolford and two from Little Wolford) and that the establishment of such a Joint Parish Council be timed to coincide with the next local authority elections fixed for May 2019. It is understood that Great Wolford Parish Council will submit a similar request to Stratford-on-Avon District Council."*

The resolution was seconded by BK, and approved unanimously. GC proposed a vote of thanks to DF for much hard work and this was endorsed by all.

### 5. **Expenditure incurred since previous meeting:**

DF reported the following non-budgeted expenditure under delegated powers: £27.50 for postage (parish letters); £27.02 for re-registering domain name. These were unanimously approved. A further budgeted expenditure of £200 for churchyard maintenance was also reported.

### 6. **Issues of local importance:** None

### 7. **Issues raised by parish electors:** None.

### 8. **The meeting closed** at 8.35pm.

*Signed as a true record of the meeting*

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*David J Farman, Chairman, 25 April 2017*