

LITTLE WOLFORD PARISH MEETING

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 18 NOVEMBER 2014 IN LITTLE WOLFORD VILLAGE HALL

Present: David Farman (DF, in the Chair), Gillian Ablewhite (GA), Beryl Braithwaite (BB), Chris Cond (CC), Gill Cotter (GC), Charles Hobbs (CH), Bob Large (RL), Simon Lewis (SL), Jane Revere (JR), Michael Revere (MR), Chris Stretton (CS), Henry Warriner (HW), Roz Warriner (RW)

The meeting opened at 7.30pm.

1. **Apologies:** Colin Ablewhite, Diz Farman, Chris & Jim Heritage, Jane Hobbs, Shirley Large
2. **Minutes of Last Meeting:** The draft minutes of the meeting of 22 April 2014 were approved (proposed CH, seconded BB) and signed by the Chairman as a true record of that meeting.

3. Matters Arising:

- **Street Maintenance:** The collapsed surface water drainage pipe towards the western end of Rosary Lane had finally been repaired; however, it is unable to cope with the flow of surface water from Little Wolford Road following heavy rain.
- **Tree on the Green:** Stratford District Council (SDC) had “lightly trimmed” the large tree on the village green, which had been interfering with telephone lines.
- **Crime Statistics:** Our MP, Nadhim Zadawi had agreed to ask the Secretary of State for Justice to investigate the long-standing misreporting by Thames Valley Police of incidents of anti-social behaviour as having occurred in Little Wolford. This turned out to represent the tip of an iceberg of more than 8,000 locations in which crimes were being logged by more than one police force. The official crime statistics for Little Wolford have now been corrected.
- **Standing Orders:** No further progress had been made on the drafting of Standing Orders.
- **Road Safety:** The dangers posed by speeding vehicles at the staggered junction of the A3400 with the Little Wolford and Cherington roads, and the lack of any apparent enforcement of the new 50mph speed limit on the A3400, had been taken up with both the Warwickshire Police, in the form of the Shipston Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) and Warwickshire County Council (WCC).

Speeding had been voted one of the three “top priorities” for the Shipston SNT at the most recent Shipston/Stour Community Forum, and speed check campaigns undertaken in several local villages, all situated on A-roads and with 30mph speed limits. It seems that there have been insufficient casualties on our stretch of the A3400 to justify either a speed survey by WCC or police enforcement of the speed limit. Even if we were to pay for a speed survey to be undertaken, and irrespective of the results, the police would probably not have the resources to be able to take enforcement action. The Chairman encouraged residents to attend the Shipston/Stour Community Forum, where time is set aside to raise issues with the Shipston SNT.

4. **Chairman’s Report:** There was relatively little for the Chairman to report that had not been addressed under Matters Arising, or would be covered later in the Agenda.
 - Following the dissolution of the National Audit Office, and in view of its low income and expenditure, there would be no requirement from 2015 onwards for the Parish Meeting to submit its accounts to external audit. Internal audit, and the publication of the accounts for public scrutiny, would continue.
 - There had been no planning applications relating specifically to the Parish since the last meeting.

- The Parish Meeting's internet domain name (www.littlewulford.org.uk) and current website hosting contract will expire early in 2015. The associated costs are currently borne by the Chairman, who sought the view of the Meeting as to whether the website was useful, and whether the cost of renewal (approximately £40 p.a.) was justified and should, in future, be borne by the Parish Meeting. JR proposed, GC seconded and it was **agreed** unanimously that the Parish Meeting should bear the costs of running the website, but that the decision should be reviewed in a year's time.
- The next meeting of the Shipston/Stour Community Forum will take place at Shipston High School at 7.00pm on 10 March 2015, preceded at 6.30pm by the usual opportunity to lobby the local SNT. Anyone is welcome to attend these meetings.
- There will be a "Meet the Leaders" conference at 6.30pm on 4 December at Stratford Racecourse, which will provide "an opportunity to meet with key representatives from the District Council, County Council, Warwickshire Police, West Midlands Ambulance Service, South Warwickshire Clinical Commissioning Group and the Police & Crime Commissioners Office to raise any issues". The Chairman would be away, but invited anyone who might be interested to represent the Parish Meeting; there was no volunteer, however.

5. **Expenditure incurred under delegated powers:** The Chairman, as Responsible Financial Officer, reported that, since the last Meeting, he had spent £10 on hiring the Village Hall for the last meeting, and deposited £10 into a Royal Mail online pre-pay postage account, which avoided the need to purchase stamps. No objection was raised to either of these items of expenditure.

6. **Anticipated future expenditure for 2014/15:** The Chairman reported that the following expenditure was anticipated during the remainder of the current financial year:

- £200 budgeted contribution towards maintenance of Wulford Churchyard;
- <£10 on minor items of stationery;
- <£10 on hire of the Village Hall.

7. **Budget for 2015/16:** As this would be only the Parish Meeting's third budget, and we are still feeling our way regarding raising and spending money on behalf of the Parish, the Chairman, as Responsible Financial Officer, suggested that the budget for 2015/16 should remain the same as that agreed for 2014/15: this included a provision for a modest increase in our churchyard maintenance contribution from £200 to £250, subject to Great Wulford Parish Council increasing its contribution proportionately (this increase has not so far been requested, however). He therefore proposed a total budget of £500, including provisions of:

- £250 towards churchyard maintenance;
- £100 towards administration costs, including stationery, postage, hall hire, website, etc;
- £150 towards reserves for future community projects, such as any Parish contribution sought as part of the broadband upgrade programme.

GC seconded the proposal, which was unanimously **agreed** by the meeting.

8. **Precept for 2015/16:** Last year's parish precept was set at £500, although Stratford District Council passed on to the Parish Meeting a proportion, amounting to £70, of a central government grant to cover the loss of contributions from those residents claiming Council Tax Benefit; it was therefore necessary to seek a parish precept of only £430 to meet the agreed budget. It had not yet been announced whether central government would again make such a grant available and whether, if it did so, Stratford would once again pass on a proportion to parishes.

With a forecast current account balance of less than £200 to be transferred to reserves at the end of the current financial year, and a potential future need to offer a Parish contribution as part of the broadband upgrade programme, the Chairman, as Responsible Financial Officer, suggested

that it would be prudent to continue to build up reserves at the present time, rather than raiding them to reduce next year's Parish Precept. He therefore proposed raising the whole of next year's budgeted income from the Parish Precept by maintaining the Precept at £500, less any grant that Stratford may, or may not, award in respect of Council Tax Benefit. CH seconded the proposal, which was unanimously **agreed** by the meeting.

9. **Community-Led Planning:** This item had been included on the Agenda to assess interest in community-led planning within the parish, following a meeting organised by Great Wolford Parish Council in the Village Hall on 27 October (see Chairman's report at the Parish Meeting website). Great Wolford residents present at that meeting had mandated their Parish Council to update its 2004 Village Design Statement and to invite Warwickshire Rural Communities Council to conduct a Housing Needs Assessment on its behalf. Other villages in Stratford District, notably Long Compton, are developing statutory Neighbourhood Plans in order to shape the inevitable future development of their communities; such undertakings are expensive and time-consuming, however. The feeling of the meeting was that a Neighbourhood Plan would be beyond the resources of the parish, unless undertaken jointly with adjoining parishes (unlikely, since Long Compton has already opted to go it alone), and that non-statutory alternatives would be of little value.

10. Issues of Particular Local Importance:

- **Broadband:** The current broadband upgrade programme appears to offer little hope of significant improvement to Little Wolford's appalling broadband speed. Although Long Compton exchange is due to be upgraded during the second quarter of 2015, we remain connected, via long copper lines, to a distribution cabinet physically located close to the exchange, such that we may expect only a modest service improvement. The Chairman agreed to investigate alternative approaches.

11. Matters raised by an Elector of the Parish:

- GA asked whether there had been any developments regarding the Milestone Society's proposal to restore the early-19C mileposts alongside the A3400, particularly the listed milepost to the north-west of Broadmoor Lodge, currently obscured by dense hedging. The Chairman reported that he had invited the local society representative, who had originally contacted him in search of funding, to address the Parish Meeting but had heard nothing further. HW advised that he had been contacted by another society representative, who had wished to discuss removing the hedging but who clearly did not appreciate that it formed part of the boundary of an actively farmed field.
- GC reported flooding due to a mains water leak in Cherington Road; Severn Trent Water was dealing with this.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.30pm.