

Bredon and Bredon's Norton Parish Council

The minutes of Bredon's Annual Parish Meeting held at Bredon Village Hall on **Monday 25th April 2022** at 7.00 pm.

Present:

Cllrs Mr Nick Bradley (Chairman), Mrs Karen Brooks, Mr Adrian Darby (District), Mr Matt Darby, Mr Kevin Falvey, Mr Phil Handy, Mr Adrian Hardman (County and District), Mr Neil Leyden, Mr Ed Pyke, Mr Andrew Rhodes, Mr Declan Shiels and Mr Rob Sly. Also, Mr Tim Drew (Clerk), Mr Mark Farey, Mr Alan Newell and Mr Martin Newell.

1. Apologies for Absence.

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Mr Brod Whiting and PCSO Julie Pardoe.

2. Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting Held 26th April 2021.

The minutes having been circulated were **agreed** and signed as a true record.

3. Parish Council Chairman's Report.

After two years of convening this meeting via video conferencing software, it is with pleasure that we are now able to conduct this year's annual parish meeting in person.

It is pleasing to see life in the Parish returning to a form of normality, where clubs and organisations are now fully operational, bringing back the sense of community, which has seen the Village Hall return to being fully operational and welcoming members of the community through its doors. Something which has been made easier, through the implementation of the online booking system 'Hallmaster'. I wish to thank the Technology and Media Working Group for their work on this, especially Councillors Kevin Falvey and Neil Leyden for their efforts in getting this tested and operational. Thanks also go to our Village Hall Manager, Jo Lomasney, for embracing the move to modernise bookings through an App. It appears that we are starting to reap the rewards of the electronic bookings as the volume of new bookings is steadily increasing.

It is with regret that during this year the Parish Council lost a Councillor and friend in Richard Coghlan following a period of ill health. Richard served the Council for many years, ensuring Bredon's Norton was championed at Parish Council meetings. The Parish Council is donating £1,000.00 to Bredon's Norton to help fund the restoration and mechanisation of the clock at Bredon's Norton in memory of Richard, as this was a cause Richard was keen for the Parish Council to support.

I am pleased to say that Bredon's Norton continue to have a local representative on the Parish Council, as Karen Brookes has been elected on to the Parish Council. We welcome Karen to the Council; I am sure she will continue the good work done by her predecessor.

It appears that I have been reporting for many years now, the Parish continues to face the threat of large-scale development, as it continues to be the case that the planning applications for 500 homes at Mitton and a new primary school are still live and to be decided marking the fourth anniversary of the application for 500 homes. We have reached the stage that both applications are coming before Wychavon's Planning Committee this Thursday with an Officer recommendation for approval.

We hope and trust that Members of the Planning Committee will recognise that the open countryside within our Parish, which provides a landscape buffer between Bredon's Hardwick and Tewkesbury, is not a suitable location for these proposed developments, notwithstanding such development would be contrary to the policies laid out in the South Worcestershire Development Plan and our own Neighbourhood Plan.

The Parish Council will continue to campaign against these applications making representations to the Committee on Thursday, whilst also continuing to ensure the quality of the environment and life that led Parishioners to call this Parish their home, is maintained and preserved moving forward.

If the planning applications proposed for the Land at Mitton are refused on Thursday, work will continue to ensure that this land is not allocated as part of the ongoing South Worcestershire Development Policy review as it is proposed.

Testimony to our determination on such matters can be found in the Parish Council's un-precedented response to the proposed Ashchurch Bridge over rail, or as it has been more commonly known, the 'bridge to nowhere'. Whilst this development falls outside of our Parish, the Parish Council held real concerns over the threat and impact this initial piece of infrastructure presents to our Parish. So, we campaigned for its refusal, working alongside neighbouring Parishes on a Judicial Review, when the application was approved, with work currently progressing with an appeal.

I am pleased to say that Kinsham as well as seeing progress with broadband and Severn Trent improvements, will see that the bus shelter is currently undergoing improvements. I wish to express my thanks to Councillor Ed Pyke for managing these works as well as Ed's role acting as Parish Council liaison with Bredon Community Play and Recreation.

Bredon Community Play and Recreation continue to undertake voluntary role in maintaining and improving the facilities at the playing field for the benefit of the community. So, I place on record my thanks to Martin Miles and his team of volunteers for their work, I hope that the community events that we have so sadly missed during the Covid lockdowns will soon return.

The Parish Council has again made several donations to support community groups and projects, including to Bredon Community Care, to assist them with funding the invaluable support they give to local residents by providing them with assistance with transport.

We are fortunate to be able to draw upon the assistance of several local contractors, I wish to highlight the work of Adam Gallagher of Greenworks for the attention he puts into the grass cutting and grounds maintenance. Adam has also assisted with the supply and erection of the Christmas Tree at the Village Hall, hopefully this becomes an annual tradition.

The work the Parish Council undertakes to maintain and improve the setting could not be done without the support of various people and organisations which deserve the thanks of the Parish Council and the Community, some of which have already been noted such as Bredon Community Care and Bredon Community Play and Recreation, but others include:

Councillor Declan Shiels and the band of volunteers who have come forward to assist with the ongoing work with the Natural Networks projects at the Glebe Field and our Playing Field.

Parish Council employees:

- Jo Lomasney, who as noted earlier manages the Village Hall,

- David Gray our Lengthsman who continues to ensure that our Parish is so well presented and maintained,
- Tim Drew our Clerk and Financial Officer who is responsible for the administration and management of the Parish Councils work. I extend my personal and sincere thanks for the support and assistance Tim has provided me during this year and in previous years when assisting me in fulfilling the role of Chairman.

Our District Councillors

- Adrian Darby, who deserves specific praise for bringing forward arguments and a proposal for refusal of the planning application for 500 homes at the Land at Mitton site at last month's Planning Committee meeting. I trust that Councillor Darby will remain steadfast in his position and will resubmit an early proposal for refusal at Thursdays Planning Committee meeting.
- Adrian Hardman, who also acts as a Local County Councillor. As always, Adrian has worked hard for our community and since managing to get Worcestershire County Council to adopt elements of the footpaths within Queensmead last year, Adrian has managed to arrange for large parts of the footpaths within Queensmead to be resurfaced. The work Adrian does for our Parish goes above and beyond so it was pleasing to see Adrian secure re-election last year as he continues to be a valuable asset for our community in raising matters at District and County Council level.

I finally wish to thank my fellow Parish Councillors for their time and commitment, during another challenging year, along with the work they undertake sitting on various working groups and committee to carry out the work of the Council.

It continues to be an honour to serve our community and work with my fellow Councillors, as I believe I speak for us all in saying we care passionately and dedicate ourselves to preserving and improving our community and Parish

4. County and District Councillor, Mr Adrian Hardman's Report.

In Cllr Hardman's absence, Tim Drew read the following report:

it gives me great pleasure to be back with you again after the election in May 2021, but I'm very sad to say that I seem to be talking about the same topics as I talked about this time last year before the election. COVID-19 is still very much with us, and as I write this we have 152 people from across the county in our two acute hospitals which is just over 5 wards of very ill people but the worse news is that currently in the past seven days we had just under 40 people with the virus in the two district wards to the South of Bredon Hill and this puts us at the top of the league table, and the good news is that we only have three people with COVID-19 who are in the intensive care unit.

Throughout the pandemic this year the County Council has been able to continue to deliver its services either online or in a slightly different way and while we have not made as much progress in some areas as I would have wished; it is reassuring but we head into the end of the financial year very slightly overspent in our living disability's budget but generally there will be a minor call on reserves this year. In this year's budget but we had a 3% rise in the adult social care levy and a .9% rise in council tax making 3.9% for 2022 / 23. This budget means that we are fully funding all our adult social care and children's care pressures and currently have no waiting lists for social care. But there is little doubt that the government social care reforms will put considerable pressure on the

County Council to administer them and I just hope that we are able to fully fund them all and don't end up in the position that Scottish Councils find themselves in.

The situation in Ukraine continues to worry the County Council deeply and we are in the process of welcoming the Ukrainian guests that are undoubtedly going to end up in the county. This will be by working in partnership with our District Council colleagues and re purposing our "here to help scheme" so that if you take a Ukrainian guest into the home do you have a degree of support if it is with translation services or indeed just providing schooling. At the moment we find it very hard to gauge the amount of support or indeed the numbers of guests that will be arriving in our county. I am aware that we still have some work to do on flood alleviation in the parish but generally I feel that the roads are in a satisfactory state. last summer and winter we did manage to do more footway repairs and resurfacing in Queensmead. Following the village consultation, the village interconnector footway between Kemerton and Bredon is the next aim, but it remains very difficult to fund this class of footway in our limited budget. There will be disruption to the traffic flow in June as we repair the culvert in Moreton's Bank along the main road.

The middle school and the first school remain in good heart, and I would point out to the parish that we are in the midst of having a review of the Pershore pyramid which could well result in it going two tiers.

At the district level my main concerns had been in two areas both to do with planning, and I do not intend to spend a great deal of time talking about that since the development Mitton Bank, with its 500 houses, has occupied a great deal of time and effort by the parish council and I am sure that the chairman will have dealt with it in his report. The other issue is the site at Castle View and ensuring that the planning condition is fulfilled that was set when planning permission was granted to that site.

Just a final issue I have been unhappy with the level of Road sweeping in the village but at long last this appears to have improved slightly since Wychavon have struggled to find drivers to drive the road sweepers!

5. District Councillor, Mr Adrian Darby's Report.

I report to your meeting because my ward of South Bredon Hill includes Westmancote. Most of the issues dealt with by Wychavon will have already been dealt with by Cllr Adrian Hardman, the District Councillor for Bredon. However, I am a member of the Planning Committee and of the Joint Advisory Panel (JAP) supervising the review of the South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP) so I will report on my work there.

The year started last April with Wychavon meetings still being held in lockdown. From May onwards they were held face to face in the Council Chamber at Pershore, although the monthly meetings of JAP are still held remotely on Zoom.

SWDP.

This is the plan prepared jointly by the three district councils of Malvern Hills, Worcester City and Wychavon, which was finally adopted in February 2016 and is required to be updated after five years in operation. There was a public consultation on the preferred options version of the plan in December 2019. This included provision of 1000 houses at Mitton, 500 of which were to meet Tewkesbury Borough's needs under the duty to cooperate. As a result of this consultation some sites were ruled out and some new ones inserted. I reported last year that the process had been delayed by the pandemic. A new timetable was agreed by Wychavon last September under which the final

draft of the plan would now only be presented for public consultation this July and August with submission to the inspector in November. The independent examination would take from February to May 2023, with the inspector submitting his report in August 2023 and the adoption of the new plan in October 2023, six months later than I reported last year. However, in the last few days it has emerged that there are difficulties with the Infrastructure Delivery Plan which will mean that even this revised timetable cannot be adhered to and there will be a further delay of unspecified length which could be of several months. Since the review of the plan has already missed the five-year deadline, this is obviously worrying but officers assure us that we can still continue to use the current version in our planning decisions.

Planning Committee.

These take place each month and I attended all but one of them. Only major items and applications which the local member considers to be controversial are taken to committee and last year there were none, actually in my ward in Westmancote, though there was the application for a gypsy/traveller pitch off Kemerton Road, Bredon which was refused. I declared a prejudicial interest in this application and left the chamber for its determination. There were also the major applications for 500 houses and for a primary school at Mitton, which were deferred for a site visit at the last meeting on March 31, and which will be considered this Thursday. As a member of the committee, I must not predetermine how I will vote, but must only make my decision when I have seen all the evidence, including that presented at the site meeting.

Other Westmancote planning applications.

There have only been two non-controversial applications for garden rooms at East Barn and Greenhayes both of which were approved.

Budget.

Wychavon once again froze its council tax this year. The Liberal Democrats had proposed an amendment to the budget which would have earmarked three tranches of £1million pounds each from the council's capital reserves to spend over the next three years to:

1. Increase household energy efficiency in the district by establishing a grant/loans scheme for households in Council Tax bands A-C to fund installation of energy saving devices in their homes and improve insulation
2. Create new wetlands for increased biodiversity, carbon storage and natural flood management.
3. Reduce carbon emissions from Wychavon's leisure centres.

All of these projects were envisaged as giving impetus to the council's Intelligently Green plan which the Lib Dems regarded as lacking ambition. We were not successful in persuading the Conservative majority to support our amendment, although members of the Green party did vote for it.

Boundary Commission Review of Ward Boundaries

The Boundary Commission has consulted on its proposals for a revision of Wychavon ward boundaries which will have the effect of increasing ward population numbers and reducing the number of district councillors by two. It proposed that Bredon Ward and South Bredon Hill should be lumped together as a two-member ward with the addition of Elmley Castle. As Adrian Hardman may have already told you, Wychavon has responded by asking to retain two separate wards with Westmancote going to Bredon and Sedgeberrow being added to South Bredon Hill. If this is accepted, it will mean that there will only be one more Bredon Annual Parish Meeting addressed by me or my successor.

6. Police Report.

In PCSO Julie Pardoe's absence, Cllr Falvey read the following report on behalf of the Pershore Rural North and South Local Policing Team:

I have done my best to review the incidents over the last 12 months for Bredon Parish but unfortunately our systems are not user friendly for recalling data. If you think there's anything vital I have missed, please let me know.

The number of incidents has remained low and relate mainly to vehicle crime and ASB. A more detailed view of crime levels in the area can be accessed via www.police.uk which is the national website for policing in England, Scotland and Wales.

There were a couple of incidents late last year where catalytic convertors were stolen and some damage was done to a van. Unfortunately, at that time we were seeing a number of catalytic convertor thefts throughout South Worcestershire.

The team are fully aware of the ASB which has been occurring in the last couple of months involving a small group of teenagers around the recreation area. I have spoken to Kevin and obtained details of the alleged offenders. We have not received any recent reports.

We note that the PC priorities are speeding, thefts and criminal damage. The team were out on a couple of occasions during the summer/autumn months carrying out speed checks but due to time constraints it has not been possible to carry out further checks. We do not appear to have received any recent reports relating to thefts or criminal damage.

The Pershore SNT has undergone some changes in the last 5 months.

I have been on long term sick after an injury sustained during my duties. I am currently on restricted duties, and I am not able to patrol until such time as I have had an operation to repair the damage to my knee.

PC Daren Riley is still the PC for the area but is now also covering Pershore Town. PCSO Faye Allen-Carter as she has now moved to Malvern. PCSO Ashleigh Smith has joined Pershore in a hybrid role and is covering both Pershore Town and Rural. We will also have student police officers assisting on the area as part of their training.

We are still encouraging all clerks/PC members and residents to register on our Neighbourhood Matters alert system. This allows everyone to get up to date information as to what is happening on their area including crimes, community engagements, good news stories and crime prevention advice. The SNT would be grateful if the PC could promote this.

<https://neighbourhoodmatters.co.uk/> We are also updating the PCs via newsletter on a regular basis.

Apologies for not being able to attend the meeting but if there are any matters raised that we need to be aware of please do not hesitate to contact the team.

7. Questions from The Floor.

Information was requested relating to the start time of the Mitton Bank site visit by Wychavon's Planning Committee on Wednesday 27th April 2022. This was believed to be at 10:20am.