

Great Comberton Annual Parish Meeting

Monday 13th May at 7pm: Village reports

- Parish Council Chair
- District Cllr B Hardman
- County Cllr A Hardman
- Village Hall
- Social Club
- Volunteer footpath warden
- Parish Lengthsman
- Local Police: Safer Neighbourhood Team
- Flower Show

Great Comberton Parish Council

Chairman's Report 2024

Notable events are recalled briefly here but for anyone who wishes to look further into PC activities the minutes of meetings are posted on the Great Comberton PC website <https://e-services.worcestershire.gov.uk/MyParish> This year has been a bit quieter than previous ones.

We are still awaiting the arrival of full fibre broadband into a final few individual houses. It's clear that Airband have connected those houses which were easy to do and left the more difficult ones. We continue to push them to finish the job.

The wet weather this winter combined with ongoing work connected with the Spitfire Homes development in Eckington have closed the road there and sent a lot of traffic through the village more frequently. We met Harriet Baldwin recently to press for a new bridge or a raised causeway which is the only permanent solution. Traffic monitoring has been carried out and we await the results, and we are still trying to get a community speed watch set up. Other forms of traffic calming all have their problems and many are not suitable for this village.

Planning is the other concern. We continue to make representations on planning applications, with limited effect. We intend to undertake a review of the Conservation Area to provide updated guidance. This can include a review of the boundary which is drawn very tightly at present.

We attempted to confirm the ownership of the Quay. Worcestershire County Council acknowledge that it belongs to the PC but the Land Registry will not register it to us. Nonetheless, since it is confirmed as a Village Green the rules are clear that traffic is

forbidden along with various other activities so we concluded that the protection in place is adequate.

Thanks to all our parish councillors for the work put in to improve life in the village, including Shelagh Inglis, who has now retired from the PC and who worked tirelessly against official apathy on speeding and towards securing the Quay. Simon Hickey has rejoined the PC and our new District Councillor, Beverley Hardman has attended meetings and proved helpful. Thanks also to our helpful and efficient clerk, Nicola Harding.

Kate Collingwood 8th May 2024

District Cllr Beverley Hardman report

Wychavon District Council continues to be in sound health. But even Wychavon this year; having frozen the council tax for the past six years, is increasing its council tax by £5. It has just refreshed its local plan for housing, and this is currently at the stage where it has been submitted to the inspectorate. It has also revised its corporate plan putting greater emphasis on basic efficiency and the health and well-being for all communities, while trying to grow the economy of Wychavon. This is a new Wychavon Strategy for 2024-2028. This has been developed following an extensive and inclusive process involving an analysis of local needs, consultation with residents. The priorities are: - Providing opportunities for everyone, helping people to live healthier lives and supporting young people, creating vibrant and accessible places, affordable homes and preventing homelessness.

In the environment: boosting our natural environment, cutting carbon emissions and building resilience to climate change by enhancing our natural environment.

2024/25 Budget & Money Plan to 2028/29

The budget for 2024/25 has been agreed at £12,852,000 which results in a Band D council tax increase of £5 resulting in Band D council tax being £125.08. This is the first rise in Wychavon's council tax for 6 years and reflects the challenges of increases costs and demands for services.

The Chair of Wychavon was honoured to open the village fair last year. I myself enjoyed the dog's classes with my very young puppy and of course the smashing of china stall. Please to have assisted with getting the police to become engaged with the speeding issues in the village. Now awaiting the police feedback after their speed checks. There have been a few planning applications and refused plans where clearly stated as to why. Information about an current or old application can be found on Wychavon website.

County Cllr A Hardman report

In view of tonight's meeting being the annual meeting and last month's Panorama programme, which focused on Councils going bust; my brief report focuses rather a lot on the money.

Worcestershire County Council continues to navigate a challenging financial landscape into the financial year 2024/25. Despite sustained efforts to manage costs, we face significant demand and cost pressures in key service areas: Children's Social Care Placements, Home-to-School Transport, and Adult Social Care. These pressures are compounded by the council's fixed cash budget and limited income generation capabilities due to national restrictions on council tax, business rates, and trading income.

In the Current Financial Year (2023/24): The council anticipates a significant overspend, around some £20M; albeit mitigated by additional business rates income, further adult social care grants, and the one-off use of reserves.

The Budget for 2024/25: Despite an increase in public health-related grants and business rates pool funding (rising by £27.9 million), we are not keeping pace with the escalating demand pressures. The budget proposals aim to address these ongoing financial strains, projecting into the 2024/25 fiscal year to manage the structural deficit effectively.

In February 2024, the government acknowledged WCC's financial position, awarding an additional £5 million in grants for social care. Additionally, a 2.99% increase in council tax, coupled with a 2% uplift in the adult social care levy, has been approved through Full Council. These measures, alongside targeted investments in children's and adult social care, enable the council to uphold its capital commitments across critical areas such as the economy, environment, highways, and education.

The council undertook extensive consultations on its draft budget, engaging with a broad spectrum of stakeholders, including scrutiny panels, the school's forum, trade unions, business representatives, parish and town councils, and staff. This collaborative approach ensures that our financial strategies align with the broader community needs and expectations.

Our Corporate Plan underscores our dedication to championing business, supporting children and families, protecting the environment, and promoting health and well-being. Despite the financial challenges, we remain committed to these pillars, ensuring that Worcestershire County continues to thrive.

Worcestershire County Council is at a challenging point, facing significant financial pressures yet bolstered by strategic planning and external support. As we move into 2024/25 financial year, our focus will remain on delivering essential services, managing resources effectively, and advocating for additional government funding to mitigate these pressures further.

The promotion of Health and Wellbeing remains a key priority of Worcestershire County Council. When I was in the cabinet; with the role as the member with overall responsibility for Adult Social Care, and I sat on the Health and Wellbeing Board. Your health and well-being are of paramount importance. Worcestershire County Council are working closely with healthcare providers and community organisations to ensure access to healthcare services and promote healthy lifestyles for all our residents with Prevention being at the heart of all we do.

What a year it has been for flooding and sadly the closure of Eckington bridge for three weeks in August was only the start of the traffic being diverted through the village, with 10 named storms over the winter this led to considerable disruption and a large amount of verge damages which the County Council had not yet repaired. I will do my best to ensure this is done as soon as possible but one of the problems is that we have very little revenue for roads maintenance having capitalised most of the budget. We have continued to be able to improve the local roads and I look forward to seeing over this financial year the resurfacing work of the footway below Joe's farm to the junction. I was pleased that parish council was able to use some of the local member's divisional fund to do the fencing around that had failed around the Glebe field.

In closing, I would just like to leave you with this one key statistic: 72 1/2% of the budget at Worcestershire County Council is currently spent on 2 1/2% of the population and these are the most vulnerable in society. It is important that we continue to protect this cohort of our population. These are the most vulnerable, and the County Council are committed to ensuring these members of our community are supported and protected.

Thank you for your time and support

Adrian

Village Hall Chair Report

It has been a very challenging year and we've had to keep the hall running with few bookings and little income.

It is not an exaggeration, that without the very generous support of the Flower Show we would be in severe difficulty and in danger of having to shut down completely. (We do have a reserve of £10,000 but this would quickly disappear if the boiler or structural work was required).

The only regular use is the Line Dancers and although there are a few new green shoots – monthly Coffee Morning and possible Pilates – nothing else has happened apart from one wake and adult party (latter caused damage to the hall décor).

We have advertised several times in The Link but had no responses. We have a committed Committee, but need more bodies, so please volunteer. There are only 4 or 5 meetings a year and any support or sharing of tasks would be greatly appreciated.

I agreed to take on The Chair for one year but am willing to do one more year if elected.

I would like to thank those of the committee members who have served and hope that they will continue. Also, thanks to those who attended the AGM.

Great Comberton Social Club
Annual Report
May 2024

Since the last Parish Annual Meeting, the Social Club completed the installation of the Queen Elizabeth Platinum Jubilee Bench on 19th May 2023.

No further events were held until after the AGM which was on 21st August 2023 where I was elected as the new chair. We also have a new Treasurer and six other committee members.

In collaboration with the Great Comberton Church Home Group we had a very successful Harvest Supper Event on 8th September. We held the second Skittles evening of the year on 13th October at Pershore Sports & Social Club.

Our next event was the Christmas Party at the Village Hall on 8th December, another well attended event.

In January we held a New Age Kurling taster session where we invited the village along to try out a new sport for all ages and abilities. We had twelve people taking part and received positive feedback.

The first Skittles evening of 2024 was on 15th March, always a popular event although numbers were down slightly.

We invited the village to participate in the Easter Windows and Gardens from 29th March – 1st April, with quite a few displays.

There was an excess of £231.14 of the grants received for the purpose of celebrating the King's Coronation, and a further £67 of fundraising for the purpose of the Queens Jubilee Bench, and it was decided to plant royal themed roses in the churchyard commemorative rose garden on the south side of the church. This was completed on 26th April.

We are going to hold a meeting in the Village Hall on 20th May to gauge the level of interest for an Arts and Crafts Creative Group with the aim of meeting in the village hall on a regular basis to share hobbies, interests and craft.

On Sunday 9th June, in collaboration with the Church Home Group, we are having a Strawberries and Pimms afternoon in aid of Church Funds, and we are in the process of planning a Summer BBQ for Sunday 21st July.

We would like to thank everyone who attended the events organised by the social club committee as your continued support is much appreciated.

Jayne Wilks – Chair, Great Comberton Social Club

Volunteer footpath warden

There are no reports at present, not least because the weather has been very wet this year so the warden has not been out as much as he would have hoped. Any issues on local footways may be reported online via: [Report other road and footway issues | Worcestershire County Council](#)

Lengthsman

The lengthsman has been completing his usual duties around the parish. The recent prolonged spell of wet weather has kept him busy with the drains and grips, pushing the road debris into the gullies. Issues may be reported online via [Report a road or path issue | Worcestershire County Council](#)
Foliage and brambles have needed cutting back, and when the weather improves there will be more growth and weed treatments completed.

Local Police: Safer Neighbourhood Team

A response awaits from the road safety team regarding the implementation of a new mobile speed box to register speeds in the parish. The team has also now received a new hand held speed monitor and will be conducting speed checks at peak times throughout the next few weeks.

Great Comberton 77th Flower Show 2023

This was another great success – in summary a great fund raiser and a wonderful community event.

With a wonderful willing team to help prepare the field, setup, run stalls and clear up on the Sunday the village pulled together to put on the show. In total over 115 people in the village helped along with at least 25 friends and locals. Making a volunteer base of over 140 people involved. A huge effort.

After a couple of years of fantastic weather, we were not so lucky this year. The rain started promptly just as the bells finished ringing at 2pm. This reduced the number of visitors by 30% (650 down from 950) and made the schedule a little harder to manage. It also reduced the overall profit – but felt much easier numbers to handle on the field.

The safari theme was fantastic, a bit more laid back on the colour. Wonderful tigers, safari lodges,

We were honoured to have Pat and Bill Graham open the show and present the Cups. The Chairman of Wychavon visit us as part of his 50th year anniversary. Our local community police man also brought his patrol car which proved a great hit with the children and a good deterrent for unwanted visitors.

The children had fun thanks to the Punch and Judy. FREE sand pit and games. The dog show and games were as successful as always. We introduced reusable mugs for the Bar as part of our environmental push. 170 were taken home, but luckily, we have lots in stock for next year.

We managed to run all the normal stalls and games – plus the marquee which is a tremendous achievement for such a small village. The quality of the display in the tent remains very high thanks to a couple of wonderful exhibitors.

Profit wise we took £9515 (down by 18%) with expenses of £5134 (up by 7%) giving a profit of £4380 (down 36%). £2100 was given to each of the Church and Village Hall with £40 for a replacement 70th anniversary tree – one got run over by a judge! The remaining £1000 is kept in reserve for the entrance grading. (see below).

Car Parking was a little concerning at times – we need to find additional volunteers to control the traffic during the whole day from 8am – 6pm next year. The entrance to the field is difficult for our less confident drivers. I hope to get the field entrance graded and the new gate is on its way for the Side entrance to the village hall.

Sunday lunchtime drinks were enjoyed by all who came and a great opportunity to catch up after a very busy show and reflect on the events of the previous day.

So, another Stunning and successful Show, enjoyed by all who came, and I hope provided some fun moments for us despite all the hard work. It helps form friendships within the village as well as providing funds for our Village. It really is an amazing village effort.

Suzanne Hamilton - Chairman.