

**THE ANNUAL MEETING OF PIRTON PARISH WAS HELD ON THURSDAY 24<sup>th</sup> MAY 2022  
AT 7:00 PM AT ST PETERS CHURCH, PIRTON.**

**PRESENT:** J Butterworth (Chair), T Homer, A Baxter, D Skeys, H Birch, S Coldbreath, L Turner, L Baxter, A Masters, K Masters, T Frimly, I Butterworth, C. Rawlings, A Tanfield, M Connolly, J Francis.

**IN ATTENDANCE:** County Councillor L Robinson, District Councillor Ward, Cllr Robert Adams & The Parish Clerk.

**1. APOLOGIES**

**2. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting held in May 2021 were reviewed, the actions were read by the Clerk

The minutes were agreed to be signed by the Chair as a true record.

**3. MATTERS ARISING**

None

**4. REPORTS**

**(a) Parish Council**

Mrs J Butterworth read the annual report as the Chair of the Parish Council:

**2022 PARISH MEETING REPORT FROM THE CHAIR OF THE PARISH COUNCIL**

The Parish Council met each month during the year. Some meetings were virtual meetings, and some were in person. But whatever the location there has always been plenty to discuss as members work hard trying to make a difference in the local community.

I know that sometimes it seems to take a long time for things to move ahead but it has been a busy year and we have made good progress again on many fronts. Things that are worth of mention include:

- Appointing a builder and working with a small team of people to completely transform the Village Hall in Drakes Broughton. Since the hall was included in the areas needing attention listing in the Neighbourhood plan that was adopted in 2017, a small group of determined people have been working to rejuvenate this once vibrant community asset. The Parish Council secured over £300k of funding to pay for the work which included a successful bid for a Legacy Grant for £200k from Wychavon District Council. The hall is opening its doors for business in June 2022 and it is hoped that the pop-up coffee shop will be a community hub for years to come.
- Our Open Space committee have been considering the second phase of development for the playing field in Drakes Broughton and we are planning a public consultation on the draft new master plan for the Drakes Broughton Playing field during the summer.
- In Pirton there has been a new bench, a phone box conversion, a tree that has needed attention for some time has been removed, and a street name sign that was causing confusion has been re located.
- In Wadborough the phone box is now a book exchange and funding has been secured for a defibrillator that will be housed on an outside wall at the Masons Arms.

- Speed awareness is always an area for concern, and we recently purchase of another Vehicle activated sign, meaning we have 3 in total, to use on our roads to try encourage people to observe the speed limits.
- The Parish Council received a satisfactory report on its 2021/22 accounts and have continue to work to ensure that finances are well managed, so once again there is no increase to the precept for the next year.

These things wouldn't happen without the people who do the work to make them happen. We're all really fortunate that they do what they do. My thanks go to County Councillor Linda Robinson and District Councillor Mark Ward for attending our monthly meetings and for supporting our endeavours.

I have to say a big thank you to the people in the community who are not members of the Parish Council, but have joined our working parties and subcommittees to share some of the work load associated with making things happen locally. I think the small group who have overseen the rejuvenation of the Village Hall deserve a special mention this year, as do the Open Space Committee who have been considering what's next for the playing field. I think the folk who turn out to open and close the car park gate in Drakes Broughton each day also deserve a special mention as does our lengthsman who continues to do a good job maintaining the verges and associated drainage along minor roads around our villages, I also say a big thank you to our Clerk Nikki, my vice Chair Tina and to all the Parish Councillors for everything they have done throughout this year. I am looking forward to a busy, but hopefully slightly less challenging year in which we will make solid progress with many things.

## **(b) County Council**

### **Worcestershire County Councillor**

County Councillor Robinson gave her report as follows:

#### **County Councillor's report**

As tonight is your Annual General Meeting for your Parish Council, I would like to say a few words of appreciation. It is hard to believe that nearly a year has passed since I became your new County Councillor. Taking the role on from Rob Adams was quite daunting and I would like to thank him for being a valued advisor for me as I got to grips with this new position. My thanks also go to all your parish councillors particularly your Chair and Clerk.

A large percentage of my time is spent on highways issues dealing with 11 parish councils and three parish meetings in our large Upton Snodsbury Division. I have been made Vice Chairman of Planning & regulatory services which can be quite challenging. I have also become a member of the Hereford & Worcestershire Fire Authority which is very interesting.

From my County Divisional funds I have been pleased to provide for D.B. a dropped kerb facility next to the village shop. I am disappointed though that it is still not in place but is now scheduled to be fitted on the 22<sup>nd</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> August. For Pirton a new village bench and for Wadborough a defibrillator.

In May last year we were in the middle of the Coronavirus pandemic, and I would like to thank all those in your community who gave their time to help others. Now we are involved in yet another crisis with the war in Ukraine and once again many of our residents are doing sterling work to help refugees and raise funds and send collections of essential items for those still in Ukraine. Please see below for the latest details from Wychavon & County.

## **Covid-19 update**

April saw the end of free testing, and this has affected the reliability of infection data. While official testing rates have fallen significantly, information from other sources presents a different picture, although data is still patchy.

What is clear is infection rates are significantly higher than the headline rates. In the south of the county, it is estimated about 1 in 14 people have Covid-19 which is the same rate as England and only slightly above the West Midlands (1 in 13).

This is being felt by our acute hospitals. As of 25 April, 129 patients had been admitted with Covid-19 in the last 7 days with about 158 now in hospital. Not all are being treated for Covid-19 though some may have arrived for a different reason but also have Covid-19.

Hospitals are reporting the age of people arriving with Covid-19 is increasing again with more people over 60 presenting. Visit the Worcestershire Covid-19 dashboard for the latest infection rates data.

In terms of Covid-19 vaccinations, our areas of lowest deprivation continue to be the areas where take up is lowest but take up of the vaccination has now largely stalled with numbers barely changing. View the latest vaccination data on the Worcestershire County Council website.

## **Homes for Ukraine update**

Staff continue to work hard to deliver the Homes for Ukraine scheme in Wychavon. As of 28 April, we have been made aware of 99 hosts in the district, with an anticipated 242 guests. We are finding that some guests are choosing not to travel after their visa has been issued for a variety of reasons, so we are treating this figure with caution.

As of 26 April, the number of visas issued by the Home Office for guests intending to travel to Wychavon was 160. We have been told the Home Office is speeding up the issuing of visas.

To date, staff have carried out a total of 72 property checks – all satisfactory – with a further 7 booked. We have also welcomed 40 guests to the Civic Centre so far to collect their £200 payment and inform us of any welfare or support needs. However, we are seeing an increase in arrivals now and have many more booked to meet with us in the coming days. Please also note that where guests cannot travel to the Civic Centre, we will visit them.

The main priorities we are picking up from initial welcome conversations are access to healthcare and particularly mental health / trauma support, school placements and support with financial matters, including bank accounts, benefits and right to work. Our local partners, and particularly local community groups, have been instrumental in helping us to provide the necessary support, including with basic needs such as clothing.

We are expecting further guidance on the local authority role in 're-matching' (e.g. when a sponsorship relationship breaks down) next week.

Worcestershire County Council is Working with Worcestershire Children First to issue guidance letting schools know that Ukrainian children should be able to access free school meals.

As of 27 April 2022, 72 applications for school places have been received countywide with 41 children and young people already offered places. 8 could not be offered their first preference

school and have been offered an alternative. There are currently 23 applications still to be processed.

In Wychavon we have had 22 applications for school places – 14 first and middle schools and 8 secondary schools.

For more information, FAQs and our Welcome to Wychavon pack, please visit Homes for Ukraine scheme in Wychavon - Wychavon District Council.

## **SWDP.**

The SWDP publication which was scheduled for consultation in July has been delayed. Work on the key documents relating to development sites and the infrastructure to support them is yet to be completed.

## **How Worcestershire's gritters travelled the equivalent of three times around the Earth this winter**

GRITTERS covered almost 70,000 miles across Worcestershire this winter as staff sought to keep the county open for business.

Since October, Worcestershire County Council has carried out 51 gritting runs, spreading 5,341 tonnes of salt, keeping roads moving and safe for motorists. This covered 69,972 miles in total, which is the equivalent of approximately three times around the circumference of our planet.

The council has now officially stood down its winter gritting team, following confirmation from weather forecasters that the risk of sub -zero road temperatures is over.

Jon Fraser, from Worcester County Council's Highways team said, "Although it's not been a particularly harsh winter, our teams from the County Council and our contractor Ringway have done a fantastic job during the season, including around the clock at times, to keep the roads safe for local motorists.

"The team has also supported numerous vaccination sites to ensure they could be accessed safely throughout the winter period.

"I'm extremely grateful to all those involved, who undertake winter duties in addition to their regular day job.

"I'm aware from feedback we receive, that everyone's efforts are greatly appreciated by those who use the roads around the county."

In addition to this, the winter season saw Worcestershire County Council welcome new gritters to the fleet, bringing the total to 36.

**WORCESTERSHIRE's roads** will be given a new lease of life when the county's surface dressing programme hits the streets.

The programme will see road surfaces across the county restored, with more 160 sites set to be treated over the spring and summer.

Surface dressing works follow on from the winter gritting season and various other ongoing works taking place to maintain and improve the county's road network.

Jon Fraser from Worcestershire County Council Highways said: “The surface dressing process is used to improve the surface of the road and slow down deterioration.

“Once the road surface has ‘settled down’ over a number of weeks, the road surface is as good as new. Using this quick and efficient process means that disruption to all road users is kept to a minimum.

“Please keep an eye out for signs detailing works in your road and do what you can to help works run as smoothly as possible.”

Surface dressing is a very effective way of restoring the road surface to extend the life of an existing surface, prevent deterioration, improve skid resistance, and seal the road against water preventing potholes forming in winter.

Signs will be displayed on roads prior to any work taking place and works are subject to change if weather conditions are suitable to carry out the process.

Visit [www.worcestershire.gov.uk/surfacedressing](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/surfacedressing) for the list of roads which will be subject to the works in 2022 and stay up to date with the surface dressing schedule on Twitter @WorcsTravel.

## **(C) District Councillor – District Councillor Ward**

### **District Councillor Report**

The last year has been dominated by the Covid 19 pandemic and more recently the war in Ukraine and the more recent energy crisis with the announced increases in Ofgem’s price caps. I will mention all of these in my report.

At the start of last year we were in lockdown and therefore officers and councillors could not go to the civic centre, however work still went on.

There was the installation of solar panels, external wall and loft insulation on 260 social housing properties in Wychavon, saving over £450/year.

By June of last year we had the Delta variant of Covid19

Wychavon rolled out vaccines for over 18’s

Seven of the underpasses in Droitwich became works of art with murals decorating these in Droitwich Spa Underpass Art project.

Wychavon District Council provided Young homeless support in Evesham with £660,000 invested in accommodation and support.

As lockdown eased, there were summer events around Wychavon.

There were outdoor cinemas in Broadway, Pershore, Evesham, Droitwich and Inkberrow. These were very well attended.

Wychavon also provided Summer Holiday clubs for children at over 70 locations across the district.

In terms of sport, Wychavon has helped deliver 3G artificial football pitches at King Henry V playing fields in Droitwich and at Evesham United football ground for the local communities with support from Grass Roots Fund from the Football Foundation.

There was also a national HGV driver shortage during the summer which also affected Wychavon and we had to suspend our bulky waste collections but managed to maintain refuse and recycling services throughout.

Bulky waste collections have now restarted.

During last Year all five of our main parks retained Green Flag status

Abbey Park Pershore

Lido Park Droitwich

Vines Park Droitwich

Abbey Park and Workman Waterside Park in Evesham

Wychavon invested £20,000 pounds in Breakfast Clubs, making sure children have a proper breakfast before school to help the most disadvantaged children and their families.

There was a funding boost to support skills and training with over £238,000 given to Malvern Hills and Wychavon to help young people into work and create the skilled workforce businesses need to succeed, providing training and subsidized college courses.

Christmas saw Wychavon putting on free events in Pershore, Evesham and Droitwich with music, games, food and stalls.

Pershore Wellbeing Hub was opened last year and has been well used, providing support, information and coffee.

There has been the Local Government Boundary Commission review and there is likely to be a reduction in the number of councillors from 45 to 43 and a reduction in wards from 32 to 26. We will know later this year.

Wychavon has provided Coronavirus Business Support to the Hospitality Sector of between £2,600 and £6000 with other sectors receiving a discretionary grant of between £500 and £6000

Wychavon has provided over £53 Million pounds worth of support to businesses.

We have started receiving applications for our Covid-19 Community Recovery Fund. This is the £150,000 grant fund we have set up to support community groups/organisations with their day-to-day running costs to aid recovery from the pandemic. You can find more details, and a link to our online application form, on [our website](#).

### **Homes for Ukraine**

Wychavon is supporting Homes for Ukraine with a number of homes having been assessed and visitors arriving. Further information on this can be found on the Wychavon Website. We have welcomed 100 guests to the district and provide support, including mental health, education, English classes, clothing and support payments.

The Council is helping residents to recycle more and in the best way by having a database of items and packaging. The database will hold approximately 10,000 items with details of how and where they can be recycled or disposed of safely.

Wychavon council tax has been frozen for the fifth year in a row while providing no loss in service. This equates to over £1.9 million pounds being kept in tax payers pockets

I have mentioned the energy crisis and residents in property bands A to D will receive a £150 rebate. Those people that pay their Council Tax by direct debit will receive the payment by 1st June. Those that pay by other methods will receive a voucher that they can take to a post office to claim the payment. Stating the end of May.

There is a discretionary scheme to help people in property bands E to H who are on low incomes which is still being finalised. There will be more information on the website when it is finalised.

### **And finally,**

Take a look at What's On (Spring/Summer Edition) 2022 to see what events and attractions are taking place in Wychavon. There are festivals, Markets, Street Food, Guided walks, and attractions such as the Battle of Evesham, The Blossom Trail and the Confetti Flower Field at Wick, to name just a few.

Visit [www.valeandspa.co.uk](http://www.valeandspa.co.uk) for more information.

### **(d) SWDPR update**

The slides which can be viewed on the Parish Council website, Worcester.gov.uk/myparish were presented to residents by Janet Butterworth and a preview of the 'Garden Town' proposed by Parkway Station and provisional maps were shown to those in attendance.

The Chair advised that WDC had recently announced a delay and the planned summer consultation had been postponed. The Parish Council would run further briefings for residents as soon as a new timetable was announced.

The Chair advised that the Parish Council were working with the other local Parish Councils affected by the development and advised there was a Joint Parishes Committee which met regularly, and all the Parishes were delivering the same information to residents.

Further SWDP information can be found on Stoulton Parish Council website:

<https://www.stoultonparishcouncil.org/>

## **5. REPORTS FROM PIRTON**

Laura Baxter gave a report on the book exchange at Pirton phone box – overall it was a resounding success, Laura requested that residents were mindful it was an 'exchange' and not to donate large numbers of unwanted books.

Derek Skeys gave an update from the Pirton walking group, which had grown from an Annual Christmas walk into to a regular fortnightly walk, meeting every other Thursday at the Phone box.

Derek also reported that he has signed Pirton up to the WDC adopt a street initiative and had received a number of litter picking kits, particular thanks were given to Anne and Dick Price who can regularly be seen litter picking. Harry Paddock too was involved as part of his Duke of Edinburgh award.

Jill Francis gave report from the thriving Pirton book club, established in 2007 they meet once a month.

Derek gave a report from the friends of St Peters Church, It was noted that the view and the bench in the churchyard has been a source of escape, joy, solace for many during the pandemic. The Church has at last re-opened and is open Wednesday & Saturday for the public. Derek gave thanks to Andrew Baxter, Dick Price, Simon Coldbreath amongst others for giving up their time for maintenance of the Church and Church yard. following the success of the heritage open days and the 'return of the Pirton stone' Derek will once again be organising some heritage open days in the autumn, this years theme being 'outstanding inventions' Derek is looking at the workings of the clock, known to be fairly rare but designed and made by a family firm from Pershore.

Jill advised that the Pirton Community Assets committee that manage fayres and funds in Pirton currently holds £450 in the bank account. Some funds have been used for the Jubilee Celebrations planned.

## **6.ANY MATTER AN ELECTOR WISHES TO RAISE**

Fly tipping of garden waste along the Worcester Road into the Croome Estate woodland, was noted as unsightly and essentially fly tipping.

A telegraph pole with a loose wire was reported.

A discussion arose regarding broadband speeds and the excessive cost to using the community fibre broadband partnership initiative.

The storm drain on the Worcester Road had been tarmacked over during resurfacing works.

It was noted that there was a Parish Council vacancy for the Pirton Ward.

Mrs J Butterworth thanked all for attending.

The Meeting closed at 8.50 p.m.