

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING FOR THE PARISH OF WOLVERLEY AND COOKLEY
HELD ON TUESDAY 4TH APRIL 2023, 6.30PM, COOKLEY SCHOOL

1. **Welcome**

Councillor R Drew, Chairman of the Parish Council, welcomed all present and presided over an attendance of 1 Local Government Elector plus Councillors together with the Clerk to the Parish Council, County/District Councillor I Hardiman and PCSO Kate Easthope.

2. **Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 5th April 2022**

The minutes of this meeting were read, and it was RESOLVED that the minutes be accepted as a correct record of that meeting and that they be signed by the Chairman.

3. **Chairman's Annual Report**

The Chairman, Councillor R Drew gave his report.

Report appended to minutes.

4. **Reports**

a) Police Report - PCSO Kate Easthope reported;

Wolverley - nothing of note to report

Cookley - vehicle crime, Kate re-iterated to please report all crimes through the proper channels. The Lea Castle new builds - there have been 4 burglaries in the last week, new boilers are being targeted.

PCSO Alice Owen Jones has moved to another priority area, Horsefair and Broadwaters but we now have PC Ryan Bridgewood.

John Wood advised of a drug dealing incident at Cookley Club car park, PCSO Easthope was not aware.

b) Annual Report from the Wyre Forest Rural Ward Councillors: Cllr. Ian Hardiman, Cllr. Marcus Hart and Cllr. Lisa Jones.

c) Annual Report from County Councillor Ian Hardiman.

Reports were read.

5. **Residents Open Forum**

Nothing

Meeting closed at 6.50pm

Chairman's Report 2023

Councillor Robin M Drew

I would like to start my chairman's report by thanking all of you for giving up your time and working together to support and improve our community. It is only when you reflect at the end of the year do you realise how much we all have done.

We spend a lot of our time looking at planning applications, in fact we have looked at 56 this year, passing on our comments to the planning officers at Wyre Forest District Council. Our biggest planning application Lea Castle Quarry went to appeal only two months ago and we the parish council had submitted three statements against the Quarry and many of us attended the appeal hearing. Again I would like to thank Wolverley Councillor Simon Sherrey for speaking on behalf of the Parish Council.

Along with planning comes Enforcement, and we have had our fair share of these to contend with. I would like to thank District Councillors Ian, Lisa and Marcus for their support on these difficult issues and all other district issues. And Ian as our County Councillor for all your help throughout the year.

We continue to offer our community three important services, Grass cutting, Litter bin emptying and the Lengthsman Scheme... we contract local people to do these jobs which allow us to provide a tailored service and I am pleased to report it is working very well.

Last Year Councillor David Jones suggested giving Austcliffe Bridge a "in his words..a lick of paint and a tidy up" Well as you all know this changed into a full scale project that Phil Coulson at WCC took on and the result was a completely rebuilt bridge, it has just won an award "New Life category 2023 Bridges" but probably more importantly it's been saved, it is a great asset, it's accessible for everyone and now well used.

Councillor Bill Southam continues to drive Cookley in Bloom and again the village did fantastically and picked up another Gold award.

We have continued and added 8 more gateways and 5 planters including one on Wolverley island to further enhance the entrances to our villages.

We also sourced another VAS with funding from Police and Crime Commissioner John Champion, so now we have one in each village.

I was very delighted to get your support to have a carving of The Wolverley Swan at the entrance to Wolverley village, The Swan being part of an ancient legend has become a much talked about feature, and only last week Wolverley High School copied and revealed a large swan carving in their entrance!

In Wolverley we also erected two Queens Platinum Benches and seeded three areas to Wildflower Meadows last summer for the Queens Platinum and just seeded them again for this year's King's Coronation..

Elections.....

And to finalise I have to mention our Clerk, always at the end of a telephone, always willing to help or give advice... you do a fantastic job so a big thank you from all of us..

Wyre Forest Rural Ward Councillors
Cllr. Ian Hardiman, Cllr. Marcus Hart and Cllr. Lisa Jones

28th March, 2023

Dear Bev,

Wolverley and Cookley Annual Parish Meeting – 4th April, 2023

Please find herewith our District Councillor's Annual report to the Parish Council and residents for the Annual Parish Meeting.

We would be grateful if you could circulate this report to the Parish Councillors and that it is available for electors.

It has been yet another busy 12 months for the three of us in the Wyre Forest rural ward of which Wolverley and Cookley is one of six parish councils that we have in the ward.

At least one of us has represented the District Council team at every Parish Council meeting.

We have dealt with the usual routine casework, reporting litter and fly tipping on the main A roads and along the country lanes. In particular, what appears to be the constant litter problem on the A449.

Planning enforcement issues have continued to occupy a lot of our time, whether it be the former Red Lion Pub and former Post Office in Cookley or Six Ashes, Castle Hill or K9 pawfection along Drakelow Lane or the London City Bond at Drakelow tunnels in Wolverley.

We opposed the proposals for a dog walking area in Lowe Lane.

Marcus and Lisa have actively opposed, in the appropriate way as permitted under our code of conduct and respecting pre-determination rules, the proposed Quarry at Lea Castle Farm.

Since our last Annual Parish Meeting, the WFDC Local Plan was adopted by a special meeting of full council on 26th April, 2022. The plan was supported by the Labour, Independent and Green led Progressive Alliance. As your 3 local councillors, we opposed the Local Plan, taking the view that far too much Green Belt land was being released. Sadly we lost that argument and were out voted. No member of the 14 strong Conservative Group supported the adoption of the Local Plan.

The outline application for the additional 800 houses for land released from the Green Belt has still to be determined by the WFDC planning committee.

We have continued to represent the Parishes' interests at council meetings and lobbied for better funding and service for our rural areas.

We lobbied for more frontline planning enforcement and civil enforcement officers as part of this year's budget process and are pleased that at least one additional post each has been created, albeit we were pressing for an additional two posts each.

We have attended and supported village events such as Wolverley carnival, Cookley carnival and Remembrance Sunday services and church coffee mornings.

We have often used our £1,000 councillors community leadership fund within the Parish, for example supporting the Jubilee and events at the Primary Schools and towards Defibrillators.

This is our last report of our four year term. Lisa is stepping down after four years we are sure everyone will wish her well as she pursues other work commitments. We thank her for her support and loyalty.

Marcus and Ian have a job interview on 4th May and no doubt we will see if we are successful in due course but we both hope and look forward to continuing serving the Parish Council the circa 4,000 residents within the Parishes of Wolverley and Cookley.

With our very best wishes.

Yours sincerely,



Cllr. Marcus J. Hart
Cllr. Ian D. Hardiman
Cllr. Lisa J. Jones
Wyre Forest Rural Ward Councillors

County Cllr Ian Hardiman's Annual Report, April 2023, for Wolverley & Cookley Parish Council:

During the last twelve months, I have again been very busy attending to a wide range of issues. Most of my casework typically refers to Highways Issues, some of which are relatively straightforward but others not so.

I am pleased that we have seen in Cookley, such as resurfacing of pavements in Westhead Road, resurfacing of Austcliffe Lane/Road, and in Wolverley, reshaping and resurfacing of pavements around the Blakeshall Lane junction. I am especially pleased that in Cookley, I have been able to utilise my Divisional Devolved Highways Fund to cover the cost of reconfiguration works in The Crescent; in Wolverley, I have also been able to utilise the same Fund to resolve safety concerns brought to my attention by the Head of Wolverley Secondary School, enabling the introduction of new safety railings, gate and bollards outside the school entrance which prevent children from running directly across the road from the school gates.

I am proud that the County Council have completed the fantastic restoration of the Austcliffe Cast Iron Bridge bringing it back to its former glory; the cost of this project was circa £250,000 .

I have also agreed with County Highways to utilise my next year's fund allocation to finance the introduction of flashing Safety signs and road roundels for the approach to the Wolverley Secondary School in Blakeshall Lane.

For Cookley, Castle Road, I have been lobbying the County Council to install a pedestrian crossing and whilst this is not yet something the Council can commit to, owing to the costs (possibly £80,000 plus), I am persisting with both the District Council's Planning Manager and County Highways to establish whether local housing developers can be called upon to help finance this through section 106 monies.

The Lea Lane Landslip restoration works, 4 years on have still not commenced; despite my frequent lobbying of the County Council to get this work done, progress is still be prevented because the landowner will not agree to the County Council proceeding with this.

I am pleased to have joined with the Parish Council in ensuring the purchase and installation of a Defibrillator at Wolverley Memorial Hall by contributing from my County Divisional Fund.

From this Annual Fund of £10,000 I have allocated grants to 19 various good causes and organisations which provide support to the residents of my Division.

I provide written Reports for each Wolverley & Cookley Parish Council meeting and attend most in person.

During this year, I have attended all WCC Full Council meetings and have stayed for the duration of each meeting.

I serve on the County Council's Planning Committee, the Economy Overview & Scrutiny Panel, the Members Advisory Group on Biodiversity & Carbon Reduction; I am a member of the Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority and serve on their Audit Committee. I am the County Council's representative on the Kidderminster Educational Special Benefits Trust.

Together with my District Councillor colleagues, Marcus Hart and Lisa Jones, I will always endeavour to provide the best possible support to Wolverley & Cookley Parish Council and all the residents it serves.

Ian Hardiman, County Councillor for Cookley, Wolverley & Wribbenhall.