

## The Minutes of Kemerton Annual Parish Meeting held on Tuesday 2nd April 2024 at 7.00pm.

**Councillors Present:** Cllr L Croft (Chair), Cllr C Carver (Vice Chair),  
Cllr C Kulukundis, Cllr A Darby,  
Cllr J Wenham, Cllr O Alexander  
Cllr A Hardman (County& District)

**Council Clerk:** Carol Chambers

**Parishioners:** 23 Parishioners present

**Lengthsman:** Mark Farey

The chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**1. Apologies for Absence.**

Apologies were received from Councillor Andy Howel

**2. Minutes Of Annual Parish Meeting Held 21<sup>st</sup> March 2023.**

The minutes were **APPROVED** and would be signed at the next Council Meeting.

**3. Report from West Mercia Police.**

The Chair welcomed PCSO Claire Doughty to the meeting. she reported on the crimes within Kemerton Village for the 6mths period from September 2023 to February 2024 Stats. She advised that not all of the reported crimes in Kemerton in November 2023 showed up on the report given at the meeting. It was explained that the new police database is sub-standard and is very frustrating for the officers themselves. The logged crimes are all in the system but the data does not show up within every search parameter.

\*Several Parishioners told the PCSO they were concerned for their safety, also they had not had any follow up on their reported incidents. The PCSO advised that when a crime is reported, try to get from the police an Incident Log Number. This should look like: number/number/number/number/l/date and would be issued a Crime number at a later point, for an update about the reported incident, call 101 with the incident number and request an update. You can also email on [pershorerural.snt@westmercia.police.uk](mailto:pershorerural.snt@westmercia.police.uk)

The police are patrolling daily in Kemerton, on the lookout for crime. The Pershore Rural patrol Kemerton during the day until 10pm, and Evesham patrol Kemerton throughout the night. The 'clean-up' rate for solved crimes is less than 5% in West Mercia, according to the Police and Crime Commissioner.

The Chair updated the parishioners on the correspondence she has had with PCSO Ashley Smith and reassured them that all their queries had been passed on.

Following further questions from the floor the Chairman thanked PCSO Claire Doughty for her attendance and report.

#### **4. County Councillor's 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. As part of my cabinet role as the member with overall responsibility for Adult Social Care, and I sit 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.*

*\*The Clerk informed Cllr Hardman of the flooding in hill road, and that she had emailed Barrie Barnes and not received any reply, the \*Lengthsman, Mark Farey explained to him that the flooding was due to the bend in the pipe which gets blocked up and causes the road to be almost constantly flooding. Cllr Hardman acknowledged that the drainage is a problem but Highways has 'list' of works to be undertaken but they have to prioritise such as main highways, A & B roads and emergencies, he explained that were 800 outstanding repair issues on their books. They achieved 400 repairs this year, he estimated it could be up to 2.5 years before the fault is rectified. Kemerton cannot have gully clearance services as it is only applied to locations not needing repair.*

## **5. Wychavon District Council Report**

*Wychavon District Council on the other hand continues to be in sound health; this is partly because the services it delivers are not demand driven and it faces a less complex regulatory landscape. But even Wychavon this year; having frozen the council tax for the past six years, is increasing its council tax by £ 5. It is just refreshed its local plan for housing and this is currently at the stage where it has been submitted to the inspectorate. It is also revised its corporate plan putting greater emphasis on basic efficiency and the health and well-being all communities, while grow trying to grow the economy of Wychavon.*

*To more local issues, we have made some small progress on the issues of flooding in the parish but being the wettest winter for many years; it's been a challenge. The issue that has been raised most frequently with me is not this year the question of the state of the highways but parking in the Main Street around the crown inn. The government has continued to allow the use the highway outside the premises until the end of September when I hope that the parking outside the crown will be restored. I apologise for the disruption that the continuing works and flooding at Eckington bridge is having on parishioners who travel to the north as we had to repair both parapets and I think the bridge closed for 63 days in the past 12 months. The biggest cloud on the horizon continues to be the Tewkesbury Garden town. They are currently undertaking a round of consultation but it is being led by the developers. The planning decision that the committee gave last week for Applegarth was a big disappointment to me. I'm also aware that we have been unable to make any progress this year on renewing the pavements in the Main St but it is not being forgotten about.*

*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.*

*Questions from the floor:*

*\*Cllr Hardman also noted that Eckington Bridge had been closed for 63 days of the past 12 months. He encouraged parishioners & councillors to write to their MP and explain how parishioners were inconvenienced by this, as there is no coherent plan in place to fix the problem.*

*\*Outside seating at The Crown Inn Kemerton: The government had extended all hospitality permissions to use the footway for guests until December 2024, so this summer will see no change at The Crown. Works on Footways in central Kemerton are still on the list and continue to wait.*

*Following*

*Thank you for your time and support.*

## **6. Parish Council/Chairmans Report.**

*The parish council have meet 5 times since the last AGM.*

*With excellent support of the Parish Clerk Jackie Sheilds who retired in March 2024, the council has undertaken numerous administrative duties.*

*The council agreed to increase the precept by 5%, increase to the tax payer of £2.21 per year to a Tax band D, this is necessary due to an increase in clerk's salary.*

*The council has continued to utilise the County Council's Lengthsman scheme, and thanked Mark Farey for his terrific work throughout the year in keeping the village accessible and well-drained.*

*The council had received a government Coronation Celebration Grant on behalf of the community.*

*The council would continue to support the parish magazine and applauded the work of Mrs Jeanette Way in its publication.*

*The council thanked Cllr Croft, Cllr Hardman and Jamie Lewis MRTPI for their time and effort in preparing and speaking at the planning committee meeting held on 28th March regarding the proposed development Planning application W/22/01837/FUL Applegarth, Hill Road, Kemerton. Tewkesbury GL20 7JN. (to which Kemerton Council had previously refused). WDC Planning Committee **APPROVED** the amendments.*

*\*Cllr Kulukundis noted that a review of the Village Plan & Conservation area in Kemerton, was overdue and out of date. Cllr Hardman will chase Wychavon for a date for the Review to be put to public consultation.*

*The council are very pleased with the work carried out in the village by Mr Jones and grass cutting team and thanked them for their reliable service this past year.*

## **7. Victoria Hall Report.**

1. The Hall Building Works
  - a. Completed & general feeling / feedback is that these were executed well, with the Hall now an excellent all-round facility, with well above average specifications & fittings
  - b. Final accounts, budgets & total spend has been collated and will be produced upon request
  - c. Generally, the scheme is considered to be a success and has put the Hall in a long terms strong position to capitalise as an asset of community value
- 2.
3. Committee Membership
  - a. I (John Harvey) as Chair, am standing down
  - b. The committee is in good hands, with the remaining members to remain in post, at this stage
  - c. Current membership comprises Di Atwell, Margaret Gillman, Tom Ryder-Smith, Jo Wenham, Rowan Hull, Claire Barber & Judy Woodman
  - d. Some additional interest has been confirmed with at least 1 new member keen to join (a local Kemerton resident)
  - e. Most roles are covered well with regular meetings scheduled & generally full attendance
4. Current status
  - a. The committee have successfully sub-let the former playgroup space
  - b. Losing this income was a substantial and unexpected blow to the ongoing financial position of the Hall
  - c. After a significant marketing period, and only a nominal level of proceedable interest, the only real viable tenant was engaged and has taken a 1-year lease, with effect from Jan 2024
  - d. This has secured £5,400 (inc. VAT) of income for the Hall, which was agreed as being vital
  - e. Additional events are gradually improving, with wine tasting, quiz nights & village events adding to the regular daytime & evening users, including the gardening club, yoga meetings, WI and other social groups
  - f. The general financial position is that the Hall is breaking even at this stage but emphasis on

- improving fee income is needed to run a healthy surplus into the future
- g. A Hall Manager has been appointed (a local Kemerton Resident) who actively manages the day-to-day running of the Hall
  - h. The committee feel this has generally been a successful appointment, is within budget and allows a single point of contact for much of the routine managerial decisions

5. Future projects

- a. Namely the Kemerton Open Gardens which has been planned for 29<sup>th</sup> June 2024
- b. This is in hand with a significant number of local resident's keen to support & assist
- c. Expectations are that the event will hopefully be a success, with experience gained from which future successful events can be built on
- d. Having noted the significant sums comparable Open Garden events raise (Beckford, Eckington etc), it is seen as a good & profitable enterprise & if executed well, and will significantly boost the reserves of the Hall & drive long term viability forward
- e. The committee have additional plans for a new website, which will assist significantly with the booking process, making the Hall more user friendly, improve income, and grow the user-bass significantly if produced well
- f. The current booking process is generally seen as slightly cumbersome, and a new website is seen as being vital to improve the speed & ease of booking & visibility of the space
- g. This is on standby, and will be funded from the profits of the Open Gardens event in July, with the website planned to be online by Q4 2024
- h. Continue promotion of the 200 club, which is actively supported

**8 Questions from the Floor.**

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The meeting closed at 8.15pm.