

THE ANNUAL MEETING OF PIRTON PARISH WAS HELD ON TUESDAY 30th APRIL 2024 AT 7:00 PM AT ST PETERS CHURCH, PIRTON.

PRESENT: J Butterworth (Chair), T Homer, D Skeys, A Masters, K Masters, S Coldbreath, I Butterworth, A Tanfield, M Connolly, A. Price, D. Price P. Hare, H Birch
G. Quinton, S. Quinton, E. Turner, L. Baxter and A Wilkinson.

IN ATTENDANCE: County Councillor Linda Robinson, District Councillors Rob Adams & Liz Turier and The Parish Clerk.

1. APOLOGIES

J. Kitchener, P. Kitchener, S Wild & A Baxter

2. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 23rd May 2023 were reviewed, there were no outstanding actions.

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

3. MATTERS ARISING

The Chair and residents agreed it was pleasing to having the Parish Polling place reinstated.

It was noted that the person taking it upon themselves to weed kill around the village, as raised last year, was doing it again this year, and whilst some thought keeping Hog weed and Hemlock at bay was good, others, were concerned regarding the spraying of the Alexanders. The Chair advised that concerns should be raised to Worcester Regulatory Services.

4. REPORTS

(a) Parish Council

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

The parish council is a local authority that makes decisions on behalf of the people in the parish and has an overall responsibility for the well-being of its local community. It is the level of government closest to the community, with the district authority above it in the hierarchy. Its work falls into three main categories:

- representing the local community
- delivering services to meet local needs.
- striving to improve quality of life in the parish.

Our Parish Council serves the Parishes of Drakes Broughton and Wadborough and the Parish of Pirton. The Parish Council meets each month throughout the year and as you would expect there is always plenty to discuss.

As well as the 12 full council meetings there have been many subgroup meetings during the year.

At the start of the year there were 4 vacancies; currently there are 3. Our new members include: Mark Grisdale, who represents Drakes Broughton and Mark Williams, Lawrence Abercrombie and Simon Roberts who all represent Wadborough. Leaving members are Jon Yeo and Jo Murphy (Wadborough) and Ray Roberts and Roy Small (Drakes Broughton). Roy has been a member for Drakes Broughton for over 40 years.

During the year the Parish council has considered and commented on 27 planning applications and we have spoken at 4 Wychavon District Council planning committee meetings. We have also represented the views of the community as members of the Joint Parishes Committee at Wychavon District Councils meetings about the South Worcestershire Development Plan and in particular about the proposed new town at Worcester Parkway.

We have also represented the community by successfully challenging Wychavon Districts Councils decision to remove the polling station from the Parish of Pirton. We are currently trying to locate a copy of the "Group Order" which is the document that details the linking of the Parish of Drakes Broughton and Wadborough with the Parish of Pirton to form one Parish Council.

During the year the Parish Council have made many representations to Severn Trent Water Company and lobbied our local MP to try to get the infrastructure upgrade and improvement project for foul water and drain systems in Drakes Broughton reinstated on the infrastructure project slate. We're still not certain that this has happened and will keep lobbying until we are. The terrible problems that are happening because the systems are old and over stretched need to be eradicated.

As in previous years we have continued to focus on traffic speed and with the help of a grant from our County Councillor we purchased another Vehicle activation sign and now have one for each settlement and one for the B4084. The community speed watch is up and running in Drakes Broughton – if you would like to help expand the speed watch team scheme do let us know; new members are always welcome.

I am pleased to report that after several years (maybe 20?!) of lobbying changes are happening to improve safety at the Wadborough crossroads, and after several years of discussion, additional warning/ information signs have been erected by the ford on Walcot Lane. And in Pirton Worcestershire County Council have at last found the opening to a land drain that disappeared under tarmac several years ago, It's a start!

Our expenditure during the year was on plan with income pretty much equalling our expenditure. Reserves are held for maintaining and replacing assets, contingency situations and to provide a temporary funding facility for planned Parish Council grant funded activity when it's required.

Exciting project for 2024 will include focus on Phase 2 Open Space development programme for improved community facilities on the playing field in Drakes Broughton and a review and update of the Neighbourhood plan so we can try to ensure that any development that is agreed is in line with what the local community needs and wants.

Many of the things that happen would simply stop without the people who do the work to make them happen; we are all really fortunate that they do what they do. My thanks go to our County Councillor Linda Robinson and to our District Councillors Liz and Rob Adams who attend our monthly meetings and for the work they do behind the scenes to support our endeavours; and of course, to all of the Parish Councillors for everything they have done throughout this year.

My thanks also go to the people in the community who are not members of the Parish Council, who have joined our working parties and subcommittees to share some of the workload so that things happen locally. This year there has been the additional burden of representation at Wychavon Planning Committee meetings – and having the support of the small army of people who have been working in the background and coming to the meetings to show their support has been invaluable.

I'd like to say thank you to our lengthsman for all doing what he does to help limit local flooding on the roads in our area.

And last but not least is a big thank you to our Parish Clerk Nikki Nicholson for everything she has done to enable the Parish Council throughout this year.

We look forward to another busy year during which we will strive to represent the local community, deliver services to meet local needs and do what we can to improve quality of life in the Parishes.

b) Worcestershire County Councillor - County Councillor's report

County Cllr. Linda Robinson gave her report as follows:

Good evening and thank you all for attending your Annual Parish meeting. It is now just short of three years since I became your County Cllr. how time flies! I would like to take this opportunity to thank your Parish Cllrs who regularly represent you at Drakes Broughton's Parish Council meetings which of course are chaired by Janet who is also a Pirton resident.

Much of my time across our Upton Snodsbury Division is spent on Highways' issues and Pirton is no exception.

The abnormally high rainfall experienced this winter totalled 720mm over the last six months alone which would normally have equated to an average years' worth. This is off the scale compared to decade averages since 1980 and exceeds anything going back to 1960 in reference to data from our local weather station at Wychavon Civic Centre. Surface water levels have been abnormally high and the gulleys and ditches at the side of the roads are struggling to cope but efforts are made to keep them clear where possible.

Please report any Highways issues you spot direct to Highways on <https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/council-services/travel-and-highways/tell-us-about-road-highway-or-travel-route-issue/report>. with a precise location. Alternatively, e mail me on lrobinson2@worcestershire.gov.uk and I will report it to my Highways liaison officer. This also applies to any fly tipping you spot at the side of the road. The increase in littering along our country lanes is a big concern and much of it is just thrown from car windows when passing. WCC has a duty to litter pick the 'A' roads regularly and it is sad to see the amount their operatives find to put in their blue sacks ready for collection.

As many of you may be aware County Hall remains partially closed in its upper storeys due to the presence of defective cement known as RAAP. Surveys and quotes are being undertaken to assess repair costs. Obviously, we cannot afford the risk of re opening with any danger of collapse. Some NHS buildings are evidently also affected.

Council & Planning meetings are being held at District Council offices with many having been at Wychavon which is convenient.

Some difficult decisions had to be made in the 2024/2025 budget.

The recent rise in the County Council tax precept by 4.99% included a 2% Adult social care precept in order to contribute to existing cost pressures due to Worcestershire's ageing population.

Voluntary redundancies have also been offered to Management & Staff with quite a good uptake and it is anticipated that these Budget proposals will significantly reduce our current overspend.

In last year's report I mentioned a proposal to build a new Secondary School between the hospital and Newtown Road. This is currently on hold due to spiralling costs with the opening date delayed until at least September '28.

I have not made my report too long this evening as I am aware that there are other speakers to follow. However, my regular report from each Parish Council meeting is published in their minutes if you are interested.

Finally, if I may, a date to note for your Diaries in September. On Saturday 7th WCC will be hosting one of their roadshows with me in attendance at Peopleton's popular Flower & Fruit festival. You are all very welcome to come along and find out more about your County Council whilst enjoying a great day out. I hope to see many of you there.

There were no resident questions put to the County Councillor.

c) District Councillors

District Councillor Liz Turier, the Liberal Democrat District Councillor, elected May 2023 to join District Councillor Adams in the new 2 seat ward which includes, Norton and Whittington as well as DBWPPC. Cllr Turier introduced herself. Cllr Turier praised the work of the Parish council and noted highlights that stood out re Pirton, was the lobbying and ultimately successful reinstatement of the Pirton polling station. Also, Cllr Turier also noted the Heritage Open Day model railway presentation. Praise for D Skeys and his volunteers for setting this up.

District Councillor Rob Adams gave his report as follows:

At the time of writing, 20th April, I reflect on what has been a very challenging and different year from representing Norton and Whittington to now the new district Ward of Drakes Broughton, Norton and Whittington which includes Wadborough and Pirton. When we meet on 30th April, I will be days away from achieving 25 years as a District Councillor. I am still as keen as I was back in 1999 to meet and engage with you all whatever issues you and your families have.

It is a privilege to attend your Annual Meeting in the church because it always reminds me, when taking in the views after the meeting, we must never take our wonderful countryside for granted.

There is no doubt that when Pirton residents take on a project it happens and it happens well to great success: the wonderful model railway exhibition – well done Derek and his helpers, also the successful Christmas tree event with their important messages. My son, Mark, always wanted to visit Pirton Church, he was so impressed that he stayed on for the Carol Service.

For me the greatest achievement was to right the wrong regarding the removal of the Polling Station from 1 Elm View. To get this reinstated was a long hard and determined slog headed up by Ian Butterworth. Please, please use the Polling Station on 2nd May (Police and Crime Commissioner election).

I think it is fair to say not many Wychavon Councillors know where Pirton Parish lies, after a visit by the Wychavon Chairman to the railway event coupled with the Polling Station sage they do now!

I am pleased that the three Parish Councils: Norton, Whittington and Drakes Broughton are very supportive of each other especially where Parkway is concerned. There are no indications when South Worcestershire District Councillors will vote on a new plan. The indication I have is it will not be this year.

I want to say before I finish Pirton residents may feel they will miss out on representation being a small part of the now much larger Ward. I can assure you this will not happen. Please remember I was elected back in 1999 with support mainly from residents where there were no parish councils (White Ladies Aston, Spetchley, Churchill, Bredicot and Broughton Hackett).

I cannot thank enough Janet Butterworth, Chair, and Nikki Nicholson, Clerk, for all the help and guidance over this the first year back representing Pirton Parish.

5. ANY MATTER AN ELECTOR WISHES TO RAISE

Litter Picking J Butterworth thanked Mr & Mrs Price for the voluntary litter picking they do to keep Pirton as litter free as possible.

6. DISCUSSION ABOUT THE PARISH OF PIRTON – including Parish Boundaries, Neighbourhood Plan, Grouping Order and representation on the Parish Council.

Parish Boundary

D Skeys asked those present – does everyone know where the Parish Boundary is, The Chair thought it was interesting, for instance, there are some dwellings that we probably think are in Wadborough – but they're in the in the Parish of Pirton.

Derek D Skeys verbally walked the Parish Boundary with the aid of this map:



Grouping Order

The Chair gave the following talk:

What is a Parish – a **civil parish** is a unit of local government. Civil parishes are the lowest tier of local government, below districts and counties. It is an administrative parish in comparison to an ecclesiastical (church) parish.

Every civil parish has a parish meeting, consisting of all the electors of the parish. Generally, a meeting is held once a year. A civil parish may have a parish council which exercises various local responsibilities given by statute. If a parish has fewer than 200 electors it is usually deemed too small to have a parish council, and instead will only have a parish meeting. Alternatively, several

small parishes can be grouped together and share a common parish council, or even a common parish meeting. In places where there is no civil parish (unparished areas), the administration of the activities normally undertaken by the parish becomes the responsibility of the district or borough council. There are about 8,700 parish and town councils in England, and about 1,500 parishes with only parish meetings.¹

Pirton is a Parish but is grouped with a grouping order with Drakes Broughton and Wadborough to form a Parish Council. The rules of association are written in a document called a grouping order. WDC minutes from 19th March 1975 it says:

“Review of Parish Electoral Arrangements and Representations

The Secretary submitted details of a number of Grouping Orders which had been approved by the Council, together with amendments to the Parish boundary of Hindlip...etc.” But nothing about Pirton.

DBWPPC minutes from 27th January 1976 say:

“It was resolved that the District Council will be informed that the name of the new council will be Drakes Broughton and Wadborough with Pirton.

That the number of Councillors for Pirton Ward will be three (3)

That the District Council be requested to increase the number of Councillors for Drakes Broughton to eight”

And the minutes from 9th April 1976 is says:

“The Grouping Order has now been approved and as from the election 6th May 1976 the ward of Pirton will be grouped with the Parish Council of Drakes Broughton and Wadborough and represented by three (3) Councillors.

There was also a reference in minutes dates 18/3/1975 that reports that the plan was for the Grouping order to come into effect at the election in May 1976.

We are still trying to get a copy of the grouping order -but it's taking a while! We need to visit the archives at the Hive and look in the minutes from Pershore and District Rural Council.

As a Parish we have to have an Annual Parish Meeting and we are entitled to have a polling place in the Parish.

We are grouped with the Parish of Drakes Broughton and Wadborough to form Drakes Broughton and Wadborough with Pirton Parish Council

Neighbourhood Plan

The Chair gave the following briefing:

What is a Neighbourhood plan – a Neighbourhood Plan is a local plan outlining where development could take place, where it can't and policies regarding green spaces and community facilities.

Where we are today? –We have a Neighbourhood Plan – it was adopted by public referendum in 2017 and has been used to inform planning decisions and other discussions.

If it is considered to be current, then it can prevent development in specified locations – however as it ages the protection diminishes. Our plan is considered to not be current, but this wouldn't be an issue except that Wychavon District Council cannot demonstrate that they have sufficient supply of building land for development – and so developers can apply to build almost anywhere, and as we don't have the protection of an up-to-date Neighbourhood plan then we are having to work really hard to try to stop more development, particularly in Drakes Broughton.

If you haven't looked at the Neighbourhood plan its available on Wychavon website. The document has lots of information but probably most importantly has policies about green spaces, priorities, development etc.

When the plan was made in 2017 it was the first one in Wychavon – and since then things have changed a little – so we need to have a thorough review and update the plan, making sure it details what is important to the local community wants – its really important that there is community engagement, and that each settlement is represented. We have someone who will lead/chair the project and consultants engaged to write the plan – and we need people to join the team to help shape what is written - is anyone interested in becoming involved? E. Baxter volunteered to join with I Butterworth and represent Pirton on the NP Steering group.

S Coldbreath asked what had happened to the Local Plan, he was advised that what was termed the 'Local Plan' is now the SWDP and that is considered out of date and the new SWDPR has been

indefinitely delayed for a raft of reasons but it leaves Wychavon and the area without a 5 year land supply for development, leaving the region exposed to speculative development due to how the Planning Legislation there is now an urgent need to review and update the DBWPPC Neighbourhood Plan to protect the Parishes from this speculative development.

Mrs J Butterworth thanked The Councillors for the presentations this evening and went on to thank everyone for attending. It was noted that there was a Parish Council vacancy for the Pirton Ward and she urged attendees to consider joining the Parish Council.

The Meeting closed at 8.20 p.m.

DRAFT