

THE ANNUAL MEETING OF DRAKES BROUGHTON PARISH WAS HELD ON FRIDAY 10th MAY 2024 AT 5.00PM AT DRAKES BROUGHTON VILLAGE HALL

PARISHIONERS PRESENT: R Cother, T Gardner, PM Fenny, S Drysdan, A Brown, J Brown, J Cooper, R Mason, V Baker, Harry Williams, I Wilcox & J Phodes

PARISH COUNCILLORS PRESENT: J Butterworth (Chair) T Pell, M Williams, R Booker, M Grisdale & R Turner

IN ATTENDANCE: County Councillor L Robinson, District Councillor R Adams, District Councillor L Turier & The Parish Clerk.

1. APOLOGIES

Parish Councillor R Bessant. Parish Councillor Mark Williams.

2. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held in May 2023 were reviewed and signed by the Chair as a true record.

3. MATTERS ARISING

The Clerk read out the matters raised in 2023:

Wadborough crossroads has an improvement project due to start to improve safety. Some residents didn't think it went far enough and suggested the speed limits needed further review. County Councillor Robinson advised the plan had been developed by the Highways Team in conjunction with the Police and that there was a need to let the adjustments happen and review if there was a reduction in collisions and near misses, if not then WCC maybe need to re assess.

It was noted that the hedge at the crossroads was being kept well cut back to improve visibility.

There were no other matters arising.

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) County Council

Worcestershire County Councillor

County Councillor Linda Robinson read 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 all your Parish Cllrs who work very hard on your behalf. My thanks also to your clerk Nikki for her significant contribution.

Much of my time across our Upton Snodsbury Division is spent on Highways' issues which comes under my remit as your County Councillor and Drakes Broughton & Wadborough are certainly no exception. I am passionate about road safety for our resident and am pleased that in the last year we have seen improvements to Wadborough crossroads and the installation of a new VAS sign on the B4084. This was provided from my Highways Divisional funding and the eagle eyed amongst you will have spotted a bare pole on the other side of the road back from the pedestrian crossing. This will provide an additional site for the VAS from the opposite direction which is proven to avoid driver complacency. I am also currently in conversation with West Mercia Safer Roads partnership to conduct some mobile speed enforcement along this stretch of road as is carried out regularly in Stoulton to discourage excessive and dangerous speeding.

I was happy to provide two life sized mannequins for placing outside the school at pick up and drop off time to encourage safer parking. I also managed to get clearance work plus new gambions at Walcot Lane Ford together with better signage but was sad to see it vandalised soon after. I am pushing with some success for inclusion in a trial for high flashing lights to be fitted to alert drivers when it is in flood and unsafe to cross. I am a member of Hereford & Worcestershire Fire Authority and statistics show three fords which contribute to the highest number of flood related incidents. One is in the North of Hereford and the other two are Shell Ford and Walcot Lane. I fear it is only a question of time before we have another tragedy.

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.

I am happy to take questions if you have any or alternatively can speak to you outside of the meeting.

A resident asked if it was still the farmers duty to keep ditches clear. County Councillor Robinson advised that under Riparian Law it was but some ditches may belong to Highways its not always clear cut. The resident raised concerns regarding the large farm machinery cutting up the verges, County Councillor Robinson advised it was a common issue as the size of the farm machinery has increased in recent years.

A resident advised that on more than one occasion he had seen ambulances on blue lights using the ford route and having to turn around. County Councillor Robinson would advise her contacts with the emergency services regarding the danger of the route.

(c.) District Council

District Councillor Liz Turier gave her report as follows:

I was elected District Councillor for the first time in May last year and I have really enjoyed meeting and talking to local residents and to be working with Drakes Broughton, Wadborough with Pirton Parish Council.

I have been extremely impressed by the Parish Council's enthusiasm, hard work and dedication to the well-being of the Community, in what has been a challenging year, in particular because of the

drainage and sewage situation here, which is dire and the onslaught of Planning Applications which have been received and the ongoing problems with traffic and speeding. The Parish Council's work has been phenomenal, but the whole village has been supportive and active as well. You have all worked your socks off! I am keen to get involved wherever possible – and I have nearly completed the petition on speeding.

The new Drakes Broughton, Norton and Kempsey ward is large and had the added challenge of the Worcester Parkway New Town which is one of the major concerns for all of us at the moment and we are all working hard to monitor the plans, developers. Highways, sewerage and infrastructure requirements that the development and the SWDPR are proposing. I recently asked a question in Council about the Highways Travel Plan proposals, explicitly regarding the B4084 and hopefully the next meeting of the Parkway Development Group on 13th May will give us some clarification.

The Council has recently finalised its promises for the next 4 years and I have enjoyed contributing to the targets set. I am particularly interested in the motion to ban disposable vapes and to support schools in reducing the use of vapes by school children and the “citizen science” of involving us all in monitoring air quality and water pollution.

I am always really keen to hear what residents have to say, so if you think there is something specific the Council should do, or if I can help in any way, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

District Councillor Rob Adams gave his report as follows:

At the time of writing, 5th May, I reflect on what has been a very challenging and different year from representing Norton and Whittington to now representing the new district ward of Drakes Broughton, Norton and Whittington which includes Wadborough and Pirton. On the 2nd May I achieved 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 was an enjoyable evening to be at Pirton Annual Parish Meeting in the church on 30th April. I can report that the Polling Station residents worked so hard to get reinstated at 1 Elm View was well used on the 2nd May election.

With many new councillors representing Drakes Broughton, Wadborough and Pirton it is pleasing to see they are all working well together. I have appreciated the help they have given me, especially where planning applications are concerned. As many of you know I represented you as your County Councillor before Councillor Robinson took over. One of the Parish Councillors I became friends with was Councillor Roy Small who has just retired from the Parish Council after being a councillor for almost 50 years. Roy was recognised by Wychavon District Council for 43 years as a Drakes Broughton Parish Councillor some years ago: I add my own thanks for all the help he gave me.

I am pleased that the three Parish Councils: Norton, Whittington and Drakes Broughton are very supportive of each other especially where the Parkway development 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!

The Parish Councils of Norton and Whittington have recognised the pressure we have been under with regard to the necessity to take planning applications, with officers' approval recommendations, to the Planning Committee month after month. We have managed to have these applications unanimously refused. In all the years on the Planning Committee at Wychavon I have never had so much support from resident's month after month. Many Wychavon Planning Members have commented how lucky Drakes Broughton is to have Cllr. Janet Butterworth as their representative.

At Wychavon I continue to be Executive Board Member for Stronger Communities, Culture and Sport. In February we agreed a Wychavon Strategy for 2024 – 2028 which has 29 promises.

I will finish by thanking the Parish Councillors, residents and Clerk, Nikki Nicholson, together with Janet Butterworth (where does she get her energy from?!) for all the help and guidance over the last 12 months.

A Drakes Broughton residents asked the District Councillors how they were holding the paid WDC staff accountable for the delays and failings in the SWDPR which is resulting in the additional unwelcome development in Drakes Broughton due to the lack of a housing land supply. Cllr Adams said the head of planning had lost their job, the resident thought this was not enough. Cllr Adams suggesting any correspondence be directed to the Joint Approval Panel.

**** West Mercia –** A member of the Safer Neighbourhood Team addressed those present and received some questions regarding crime levels. The Officer assured those present that the 3 settlements were extremely low crime area and in the 3-month crime data only notable was some teenage antisocial behaviour at the Drakes Broughton Village which had been addressed.

5. ANY MATTER AN ELECTOR WISHES TO RAISE

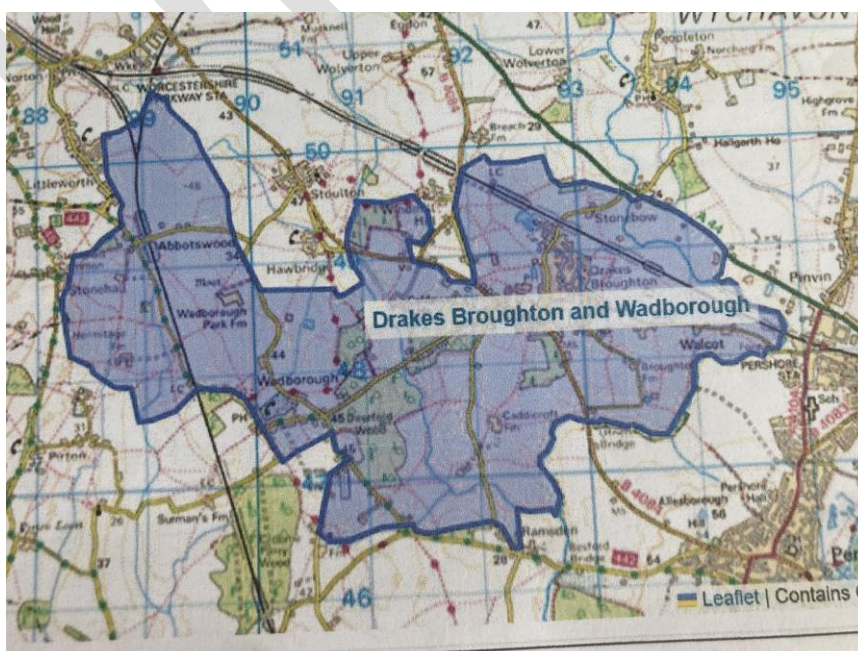
A Wadborough resident asked regarding the decision to hold the meeting on a separate day to the Annual Parish Council meeting. The Chair advised this was to try and increase the number of residents attending and judging by the turn out it had worked! The resident thought it was a pity as all members of the Parish Council were not in attendance and there were three new Parish Councillors in Wadborough and the residents were unsure who they were.

5. DISCUSSION/PRESENTATION ABOUT THE PARISH OF DRAKES BROUGHTON & WADBOROUGH

Maureen Williams 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.

Maureen explained how large and far flung the Parish was with house seemingly in Besford in the DB & W Parish and that it even extends to within meters of the Parkway Station which could potentially mean residents of any new town built would reside in the DB & W Parish!

Maureen verbally walked the Parish Boundary with the aid of this map:



Janet Butterworth presented information regarding The Neighbourhood Plan, Open Space Phase 2 and the Parish Council Grouping Order as follows:

What is a **Neighbourhood plan** – and why are they important?

A Neighbourhood plan is a document that sets out planning policies for your area and can: Protect local green spaces; Encourage better designed places; Bring forward housing that genuinely meets local needs.

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.

The current 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 – it's really important that there is community engagement, and that each settlement is represented. A working party has been set up and Mark Grisdale it going to lead/chair the project; consultants have been engaged to help shape and write the plan – please do contribute by taking part in the consultations that will happen over the coming months – it needs community input and community support to get approval to be adopted. and look out in the Villager for updates on progress.

Phase 2 Open Space development

Just to make you aware that phase 2 is in progress. A concept master plan has been agreed – and the Group looking at translating this concept into something tangible have started workand we will keep you updated as things progress.

A resident asked if any progress had been made in acquiring the strip of land next to the Playing Field. The Chair advised that the Parish council had approached the owner but it was a negative response, it is thought with all the land supply issues the owner is still hoping to have a residential development despite being turned down multiple times.

Grouping Order

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 the Parish of Drakes Broughton and Wadborough to form a Parish Council. The rules of association are written in a document called a grouping order.

We are trying to get a copy of the grouping order -but it's taking a while! We have found some references to the grouping order in parish Council minutes from 1974. They tell us that Drakes Broughton has 5 seats and Pirton has 3 ...but we are still trying to find a copy of the document.

****Janet DB has 8 seats??**

Representation on Parish Council

Janet advised there were 2 vacancies for people to represent Drakes Broughton – speak to the Clerk or to a member of the Parish Council or come to a meeting to see what we do.

Join to help with something that you're interested in.... and help make a difference!

Mrs J Butterworth thanked all for attending.

The Meeting closed at 6.40 p.m.