

The minutes of Kemerton Annual Parish meeting held via zoom on Tuesday 20th April 2021 at 7.00pm.

Present where Cllrs C Barber, L Croft, C Kulukundis (Chairman), C Carver, A Darby (Parish and District), and A Hardman (County). J Shields (Parish Clerk) and 2 parishioners.

1. Apologies for Absence.

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr G Stacey and J Wenham, a parishioner and The Local Policing Team.

2. Minutes Of Annual Parish Meeting Held 19th March 2019.

The minutes were approved and will be signed when appropriate.

3. Report from West Mercia Police.

Unfortunately we will be unable to make this meeting so I have done my best to review the last 12 months and give an overview of incidents.

The last 12 months have certainly been different in the policing world and has brought with it new challenges. Half way through 2020 we had a new call recording system installed which has taken a lot of adjusting to and is not user friendly when it comes to producing reports such as these. That said due to COVID the crime figures have been skewed and to compare the figures to the previous 12 months would not achieve anything.

I have reviewed the last 12 months and there are only a handful of incidents mainly focussed on apparent COVID breaches and one incident of anti-social behaviour.

We have had a number of COVID breaches reported to us. They were dealt with via the four E's 'engage, explain, educate, enforce'. None of these have gone to enforcement.

As a team we are grateful to everyone who has followed government guidelines and stayed at home however we have been made aware and have dealt with visitors to the area who have travelled from further afield causing disruption and concern to the residents of villages surrounding Bredon Hill."

There is a website www.police.uk where you can enter your postcode and this will give you the crimes by month for your area. I'm not sure if this will be of any use to the PC for future reference.

Any questions please don't hesitate to ask.

4. County Councillor's Report.

It is with great pleasure that I can give you my annual report using a system that at this time last year I would not have anticipated that I will be able to use or indeed knew of.

It's been a year that the County Council has been dominated by one issue that had emerged just before last year's parish council meeting as a real threat. That is the question of responding to the global pandemic which is COVID-19. This has dominated the activities of the County Council for the past year with three lockdowns; and tragically some 370 deaths in our care homes; and over 830 deaths in our hospitals. At peak of the pandemic in the third week of January 2021 we had some 3480 cases reported in a day and some 260 people in hospital suffering from the virus. Currently the position is much improved with only some 9 cases per 100,000 in the District in the past week and no cases reported in the area around the hill. The great news is that some 98% of the over 60s are now vaccinated, and we are starting to move to the over 45's.

Against this background The County Council did its best to keep services running during be locked down and managed to restore most of them during the summer but our facilities for the disabled, for instance, were badly affected. We did manage to keep the household waste disposal services going and the bus service did still call in the village. Education of the pupils of Kemerton has been badly affected by school closures and the lockdowns. Domestic and adult social care has continued to operate throughout this year, but the staff have had to learn new skills to stop the spread of the infection.

Work on the highways has been sporadic due to the lockdowns but by large we have managed to keep the road network to a reasonable standard and works have been carried out.

The weather has been yet again rather severe, even snow in April. We have had a very wet autumn and winter which has led to disruption in the Bredon Hill area, but by in large I believe that the condition of

the roads in the surrounding area is reasonable. While we still have work to do on flood mitigation on the highway towards Bredon, we have done a considerable amount of this work over the past 10 years. And I would applaud the efforts of the parish council has put in over the years so that the flooding even when we had as much rain as we had in 2007 did not cause the same scale of trouble.

I was pleased to be able to help the rebuilding of the Village Hall with a small grant, last year.

Against this backdrop I have been impressed by the way that the parish council and the residents have Kemerton have managed to remain positive, And at once stepped up and formed their own community self-help group which Linked In to the County councils own" here to help" scheme. I am optimistic that next year we'll see a return to a more normal way of life. It has been a privilege and an honour to be in your councillor for the past four years and I hope that you will consider re-electing me in May.

I would be delighted to answer any questions.

5. District Councillor's Report.

Since the lockdown in March last year following the outbreak of Covid-19 all meetings both of the District Council and the Joint Advisory Panel overseeing the revision of the South Worcestershire Development Plan have been held remotely. This was first done by telephone conference but we quickly changed to Zoom which was also used for the meetings of the parish councils in my ward. Once we had all mastered the use of Zoom things went comparatively smoothly although we were not able to hold our usual site visits before planning meetings.

To deal with planning matters first.

Revision of the South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP). This is the plan prepared jointly by the three district councils of Malvern Hills, Worcester City and Wychavon, which was finally adopted in February 2016 and is required to be updated after five years in operation. There was a public consultation on the preferred options version of the plan in December 2019. This included provision of 1000 houses at Mitton, 500 of which were to meet Tewkesbury Borough's needs under the duty to cooperate. As a result of this consultation some sites were ruled out and some new ones inserted. However the whole process has been delayed by the pandemic and the final draft of the plan will now only be presented for public consultation this October and November with submission to the inspector in March 2022. The independent examination will take from May 2022 to January 2023, with the inspector submitting his report in March 2023 and the adoption of the new plan in April 2023. However at this stage there was a need for a technical appraisal of the sustainability of the preferred options version of the plan and this was produced early this year. A public consultation on this appraisal was held which ended on April 19th. I had made various comments on this in respect to Mitton in meetings of JAP, but the parish council has not thought it necessary to respond to the consultation.

There was a flurry of activity during the year when the government consulted on a new method for calculating the number of houses which local authorities would have to provide. In the case of the Revised SWDP this would have meant that Wychavon's requirement would double. Happily this proposal caused a storm of protest from Tory MPs and was scrapped.

Tewkesbury Garden Town. Plans for this very large new settlement of 10,000 homes which will stretch from Aston Cross to Mitton are progressing steadily and were given a significant boost by the granting of planning permission for a new road bridge over the railway to the north of Northway, linking Hardwick Bank Road with Aston Fields Lane. The original justification for this scheme was that it would make use of a considerable area of brownfield land at the Ashchurch MoD site, but we are now told that most of this will not be available and that the new town will have to extend east of Aston Cross. Because I have a minor financial interest in part of the relevant land, I was not able to take part in the parish council's objection to the railway bridge application. The Garden Town is a strategic allocation under the Cheltenham, Gloucester, Tewkesbury Joint Core Strategy and therefore does not fall under the Tewkesbury Borough Local Plan, which had its examination in public earlier this year. I appeared (by Zoom) at this for Kemerton Conservation Trust to argue that special recognition should be given to the

landscape and biodiversity of the Lower Carrant Valley. I hope that some recognition will be paid to this in the planning of the Garden Town.

Kemerton Planning Applications. As ward member I have the right to ask that an application which would ordinarily be determined by officers be taken to the planning committee. I only do this if the matter is controversial, and last year I did so twice in Kemerton and once in Westmancote. The two Kemerton cases were a new house at Boundary Cottage and an agricultural building at Ashbury Farm. Both were passed by the committee, although in the case of the former, only after it was amended to provide additional screening on its western side.

The application which has caused most public response is described as being in Kemerton although it is in fact in Bredon. This is the application for a Gypsy/Traveller Pitch at Long Furlong Allotments on Kemerton Road, Bredon. However I own half the access to this site and have therefore declared a prejudicial interest. It is not yet determined.

Other District Council Matters

Councillors' Discretionary Fund. I was awarded £500 to give to organisations suffering particular difficulties as a result of Covid 19. I awarded half each to the two primary schools in my ward at Ashton under Hill and Overbury.

Budget. Wychavon once again froze its council tax this year. The Liberal Democrats wanted to go further and earmark £1million of the council's reserve for exceptional help to those suffering particularly severely from Covid but we were unable to persuade the Conservative majority to do this.

Intelligently Green Plan (IGP). Wychavon produced a plan to meet the threat of climate change and other environmental issues. With other Lib Dem members I voted against this on the grounds that the measures proposed did not go far enough. In particular the extra housing proposed in the SWDP Review would create substantial further carbon dioxide emissions which would not be offset by the proposals in the IGP.

Kemerton Conservation Area Review. This had been put on hold with the resignation of the relevant officer. I am happy to say that a new officer has been appointed and the work is underway once more.

6. Parish Council Report.

The council approved the continuation of the Lengthsman scheme in March 2020 and again in March 2021. On behalf of the parish council and the wider community, we would like to thank Mr. Mark Farey for his excellent work and diligence in caring for our village.

Unfortunately, the Lengthsman has reported that the bus shelter is still sometimes being used as a 'urinal'. He had to clean and disinfect the interior regularly in December 2020. There have also been reports of broken glass which either Mark or generous residents have stepped in to clean up. The parish council installed a solar panelled light in the bus shelter a few years ago to try and combat this anti-social behaviour, but we will now have to look into the possibility of installing a security camera to further deter offenders. Due to National Covid regulations, Mark Farey had to stop work at the end of March 2020 but was able to resume in June 2020.

The parish council wishes to thank residents that have kept the water course in front of your properties clear throughout the year.

A new Kemerton notice board and three new benches have been bought and installed. The installation was beautifully done, entirely for free, by L.C.Millar & Sons. The parish wish to express our sincere thanks to them for that wonderful support and hopes that the benches and noticeboard add to people's enjoyment of the village.

The council also moved forward with the idea of shelving in the bus shelter to accommodate the popular 'Book Swap' initiative started by Ms. Zena Giles at April Cottage, Kemerton. The council provided the materials and wish to thank Cllr. Clive Carver for his quality workmanship and generosity in installing the shelves.

The council raised several issues with Rooftop, the managers of various areas in the village. The issues were:

- The state of the garages in Bayless Road, which is being looked into by Rooftop.
- The Lime tree in School Close. Permission for a crown reduction has to be sought by Rooftop before work can be carried out.

Concerns about parking and speeding traffic in Bayliss Road have been raised by members of the community, who have received a detailed response containing as much information as the council could had. These matters do not fall within the remit of the parish council but are the responsibility of Highways. The concerns of parishioners

have been passed on to Worcestershire County Councils Highways Department and to County Councillor Adrian Hardman. Parish Councillor Gary Stacey has offered to facilitate in the coming weeks an informal meeting of those concerned with traffic in this part of the village.

The PC has reported the footway to Westmancote/Bredon to Worcs. Highways on several occasions. We are told it is in the system to be sided out and repaired. Unfortunately, no date has been given for a major overhaul, but the suggestion is that some patchwork will be done by Highways in the meantime.

The bank of the watercourse in Hill Road, opposite the cattle grid, has been damaged again by a heavy vehicle. Highways are looking into different ways of addressing the problem and making repairs. The views of residents living in proximity to the affected corner have been welcomed and passed on to the relevant person at Highways. Remedial works are scheduled for this Spring, though the difficulties of maintaining this sharp and narrow corner for the passage of both domestic and commercial vehicles is a challenge which is likely to continue to be a problem.

Due to Covid all meetings from March 2020 to the present day have been carried out Via Zoom to enable the council to continue to function.

Thank you to the independent group set up to help Kemerton residents during 'Lockdown'. The energy and generosity of group made a huge positive impact on the village, the benefits of which will surely continue long after Covid has gone. The parish council applauds their efforts, and in particular Nicola Wilson and Claire White. Sir David Logan has resigned as footpath warden when he moved away. The council on behalf of the parish would like to thank him for filling this role. Due to the Covid-19, David's replacement Jane Bennett of Providence Cottage has yet to receive training from County and take up her role, but is eager to do so. The parish council wishes to welcome Jane to the role and thank her for volunteering for this important job.

The council had received a complaint regarding the erection of a marquee, concrete blocks and planters outside the Crown. As this is not in the remit of the parish council, the relevant authorities were informed. The marquee was removed as promised in the first week of January 2021.

In January 2021 a new Councillor was co-opted, and the council wish to welcome Mrs. Jo Wenham. The council will benefit hugely from her past experience as Chairman of Bredon Parish Council.

As part of the council's drive to improve the street scene in Kemerton, Parish Cllr. Claire Barber and her father removed the dead tree on the village green, and planted a new edible variety Crab-apple tree for the benefit of the community.

The council have decided to apply for a Tree Protection Order for the rare and important Medlar Tree located on Hill Road.

The parish council continues to support the efforts of the Village Hall Committee to secure the future of the hall through a full refurbishment program. In 2020 the Parish council consulted the village over a proposal to increase the parish precept to fund a loan from the Public Works Loan Board. Of the 317 people on Kemerton's electoral role, all of whom were consulted, 39.7% responded. Of the parishioners that responded, 83.33% were in favour of the increase to the precept to help the village hall. The loan application is currently with the Secretary of State's office and has not yet been approved.

In March, Mr. Tony Jones and Mr. Richard Jones decided to end their verge cutting contract with the parish council. This understandable but sudden departure right at the start of the growing season resulted in a scramble to identify a replacement contractor. Three firms were approached for a quote. One of them, Sam Wakeman Maintenance, proposed performing a one-off cut to establish the parameters of the job. This proposal was accepted by the parish council and the details of the cut explained to Sam. Unfortunately, some may have got lost in translation and the parish council wishes to apologise for the excessively short cut in Hill Road which has caused upset and damage to glow worm habitat.

The factors which came together to allow this regrettable mistake were:

- The contractors were being extra diligent as they were on a 'trial' run and wanted to prove their efficacy.
- Unfortunately, Glow worms do not feature prominently in the AONB roadside verges directive which the parish council is endeavouring to abide by. Their protection had not therefore been prioritised by the parish council with regard to verge cutting.
- The parish council was not aware of the key importance of these sites to glow-worms. We are extremely glad to now have this information and encourage other site-specific information to be shared at any time with the parish council via the Parish Clerk on kemertonpc@hotmail.co.uk.
- And lastly, from now on the April cut **will no longer take place**. The November cut will likely go ahead as parishioners request that the village go into winter looking relatively tidy, but this too can be assessed later in the year if necessary.

Major Planning applications in the parish received by Wychavon during this period are as follows:

- 20/00431/FUL Ashbury Farm Wing Lane Kemerton Tewkesbury GL20 7JG. Erection of poly-tunnel for the housing of livestock.
- 20/01141/FUL Boundary Cottage High Street Kemerton GL20 7JD. Erection of new dwelling.
- Ashchurch Bridge planning application. The Glos. and Worcs. Parish Council Assoc. is organising a response to this application and is currently considering its options.
- 20/02640/FUL at Land off Kemerton Road, Kemerton. Due to the level of interest among parishioners, a separate meeting was held in December 2020 to discuss this issue.

7. Chairman of Victoria Hall Report.

Hall Building Project:

Due to the Coronavirus, the start date for the long-awaited refurbishment of the Village Hall ended up being pushed back from April to November. The weather slowed the contractor down further, but I'm pleased to report we are now on track. The foundations for the extension are in, the slab is poured and the walls of the new entrance are going up. During the course of the works, it was discovered that the chimney at the rear is on a dangerous lean. This had not been evident before the old extension was taken down. Wychavon have given us permission to reduce the chimney's height by 50% which will fix the problem.

The build is on budget so far, with only small changes to the contract. No application from the contractor to extend the build time has been received to date. We still expect to take delivery of the completed building during the summer months, in time for the pre-school to take up residence at the start of term in September 2021. Community bookings can also commence then, within Covid-restrictions.

Village Fete:

The 2020 Village Fete was cancelled due to Coronavirus. With the demands of the build and uncertainty around Covid restrictions, the Committee is not planning to hold a fete in 2021. We certainly plan to hold some smaller events in the refurbished Hall once restrictions have eased and the fete will be back for 2022.

Committee membership:

I am delighted that we have had four new members join the Committee. They are: Gemma Carter, Pundarick Ranchhod, Helen Butler and Gary Stacey. We welcome their input with great enthusiasm.

It is also pleasing that at our recent AGM the entire current Committee chose to stay on.

I myself will remain the Chairman until the completed Hall is delivered. At that time, I plan to resign but will be glad to stay on as a regular Committee member. The question of my successor as Chair will be addressed nearer the time, and I will do everything I can to make the transition smooth when the time comes.

Work to do:

The main tasks facing the Committee in the coming months are:

- the organisation of the October Launch Week
- a new website for the village
- a survey of our community to find out what they want from the Hall
- the continuation of the 200 Club
- figuring out how to make the Hall an enjoyable part of people's everyday lives.

I know we will achieve all these aims and I thank all my colleagues on the Committee, and our supporters in the wider community, for helping to make them a reality.

8. Questions from the Floor.

As no questions were received, the Chairman everyone for coming and the meeting closed at 7.35pm.