

The minutes of Kemerton Annual Parish Meeting held on Tuesday 21st March 2023 at 7.00pm.
Present: Present were Councillors C Barber, C Kulukundis (Chair), C Carver, A Darby (Parish and District), A Hardman (County) and six parishioners: a parishioner, Jeanette Way, Hilary Thomson, Roger Workman, Dee Clayton and Di Atwell.

The chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. Apologies for Absence.

Apologies received from Councillors L Croft and G Stacey and Julie Pardoe (West Mercia Police).

2. Minutes Of Annual Parish Meeting Held 21st March 2022.

The minutes were approved and signed.

3. Report from West Mercia Police.

Apologies but none of the team are available to attend the meeting.

Below is a brief report of what I have found recorded for Kemerton in the last 12 months. Due to our systems we are no longer able to provide an in depth report as in previous years but we are pleased to report that Kemerton and surrounding areas are still a low crime area.

May – report that a Land rover had been moved on the drive and parts removed

Aug – shed break and bicycles stolen

Sept – theft of a catalytic convertor

The SNT send out a Parish Council Contact Contract every quarter so that PC's can advise us if they have any priorities and what those are, negative replies are also requested. I note we have not had any recent priorities raised for Kemerton. The next contracts will be being sent out at the beginning of April.

We are still encouraging all PC members to register for our Neighbourhood Matters email messaging service which provides updates/advice/good news stories etc. The link for this is Home Page - Neighbourhood Matters

If there are any queries or questions arising from the meeting for ourselves then please do not hesitate to contact us on the team email pershorerural.snt@westmercia.police.uk

4. County Councillor's Report.

It gives me great pleasure to be able to be with you tonight. I'm sorry that my attendance has been as normal should be hit and miss during the course of the year but I try and keep a firm eye on events in Kemerton.

The County Council is in reasonable heart after C 19; maybe recovering from the disruption caused and is trying to embrace new ways of working so we don't expect staff being in five days a week, but we do hope they will be in three or four.

We have just set the budget for next year and the financial outturns was within our expectations, but it was still showing a considerable overspend in both areas of social care and so we were delighted by two things happened. one was the delay to social care reforms and the other was the amount of support the government put into adult social care. In Worcestershire faced some problems common across the Country but the message in Whitehall has finally been received but if you don't have an efficient social care system; you run large numbers of backlogs which affected the health system. on top of that we were delighted to receive and over 3,000,000-pound grounds for roads maintenance. One of the big factors in the budget was that the pension fund is now 100 percent funded and hence we can level our contributions to it.

Moving on to more local issues I am aware that we have not yet rebuilt wall on the overbury Rd and I will be having to chase this up since I suspect there is some debate going on as to who's fault and cost it is. generally, it has been a kind winter and well we have had to do a fair amount of gritting there hasn't been much snow and it's been a very dry start to the year. I think that at some juncture we are

going to have to have a conversation with the pub over the tables that they had put on the public highway.

And just as a final comment I have enjoyed working with your district councillor over a great number of years and I wish him all the best all the future and I am very sorry to see him retiring so early.

5. District Councillor's Report.

All last year meetings were held face to face in the Council Chamber at Wychavon with the exception of meetings on Zoom of the Joint Advisory Panel (JAP) which continues to oversee the long protracted Review of the South Worcestershire Development Plan.

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. Last year I reported that 'there has been a further delay and the final draft of the plan will now only be presented for public consultation this July and August with submission to the inspector in November.' If only that had proved true. The consultation on the final version of the plan was only completed on 23 December, and produced so many responses that officers are still collating them. The independent examination may not start until well into the summer, say five months later than I forecast last year, with the consequence that the plan is unlikely to be adopted until well into next year. This is extremely serious because the latest calculation showed that Wychavon at the end of 2022 does not have a five-year housing land supply. The consequence of this is that the existing SWDP's housing policies are out of date, and applications outside the village development boundaries cannot be resisted. Kemerton is likely to be better placed than most Wychavon villages as most of it lies within the AONB. The consultation draft of the SWDP still contains an allocation of 1000 houses at Mitton, despite the fact that a planning application for the first 500 houses was refused by the planning committee on 28 April 2022, and the decision was upheld on appeal by the planning inspector on traffic grounds.

Planning Committee. These take place each month and I attended all but two of them. Only major items and applications which the local member considers to be controversial or in which he has an interest are taken to committee. Last year there was one of the latter, the amended plans to Frame House, belonging to my son Matthew which was approved. Much the most important decision taken by the committee was the refusal of 500 houses at Mitton, already referred to.

Tewkesbury Garden Town. Plans for this very large new settlement of 10,000 homes which will stretch from Aston Cross to Mitton received a setback this year when the planning approval for the new road bridge over the railway, 'the Bridge to Nowhere' was overturned in the Court of Appeal on 7 February 2023. Whether Tewkesbury Borough Council will be able to once again give itself permission for this is still not clear. 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 was adopted 8 June 2022.

Budget. Wychavon once again froze its council tax this year. The Liberal Democrats had proposed two amendments to the budget

1. Funding for training community volunteers We proposed that £25k be moved into the community budget from reserves for each of the 2 years 2023/24 and 2024/25. This would be used to support necessary training costs for volunteers and specialist posts as bid for by key community voluntary organisations in Wychavon.

2. More effectively manage wetlands and introduce natural flood management where appropriate We proposed £500k over 4 years to fund an officer post along with project funding in order to work

with partners, including the Environment Agency, Worcestershire County Council and appropriate voluntary organisations, to • further the use of sustainable drainage techniques, particularly in our strategic settlements • further the use of natural flood management (NFM) techniques • further the implementation of wetlands in line with the Intelligently Green Plan • support the Natural Networks project, increasing biodiversity by effective management of wetlands and washlands and assisting in flood alleviation. We were not successful in persuading the Conservative majority to support our amendments, although members of the Green party did vote for them.

Kemerton Conservation Area Review. This had been put on hold with the resignation of the relevant officer. I reported last year that a new officer had been appointed, but sadly having brought the project to a form acceptable to the parish council, she too has now left and the plan has still not been brought before the planning committee.

Election. I will not be standing this May as I feel my age has caught up with me. Therefore this will be my last report as your District Councillor. I will still continue to keep an eye on the South Worcestershire Development Plan and am minded to object to the allocation of 1000 houses at Mitton because of the likely impact on nesting curlews.

The chairman thanked Cllr Darby for his work carried out in this role.

Boundary changes have moved Kemerton and Westmancote into the Bredon Ward, as yet no one from the liberal democrats is standing, however Cllr Darby is sure that the village will be in safe hands as Cllr Hardman is re-elected.

6. Parish Council Report.

The parish council have met 5 times since the last AGM. In May Gary Stacey was elected as chair of the council and the council agreed to accept the Local Government Association -Model Councillor Code of Conduct 2020.

With excellent support of the Parish Clerk, the council has undertaken numerous administrative duties. These include buying two new batteries and a charger for the Vehicle Activated Speed Sign and arranging a new notice board for the bus shelter. Thank you to councillor Clive Carver for the installation of the noticeboard.

The council has made another donation to the parish magazine and applauds the work of Mrs Jeanette Way in its publication.

The council has applied for a government Coronation Celebration Grant on behalf of the community, plus the council is making an additional donation towards a commemorative gift for young children in the village.

The Clerk's salary has been increased in line with National Guide lines and the payment for the regular relocating of the Vehicle Activated Sign has also been increased.

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

The council established with Rooftop that the lime tree in the garden of No. 1 The Limes is the responsibility of the shared owner/leaseholder and not that of Rooftop or the parish council.

The ditch located on Castle Hill road, opposite St Benet's, has been a source of trouble, but both Highways and the Overbury Estate are adamant that it is not their responsibility. This has reached an impasse but the Lengthsman will continue to monitor the situation.

The council had asked for the area under the cattle grid in Hill Road to be cleared out. This work was duly carried out.

The pothole at the bottom of Hill road which was filling with water and freezing, was filled in but then sank again. Unfortunately, this seem to be caused by a natural spring – Highways are going to monitor the situation.

The council thanked both Cllr Darby and Cllr Hardman for their time and effort in preparing and speaking at the planning meeting regarding the proposed development at Mitton W/18/00771/OUT. Wychavon is carrying out a review of the Conservation area in Kemerton, the council has made comment and Wychavon will be putting the Review out for consultation.

WCC have appointed a footpath warden, Mr Tim Ashley. The council wishes to thank Mr Ashley for undertaking this important community work.

The council is very pleased with the work carried out in the village by Mr Jones and grass cutting team and wishes to thank them for their reliable service this past year. If cars are parked on the area to be cut, this obviously impedes their work. Also, some residents have asked for the verge in front of their properties to be left un-cut, as they want to retain the wild flowers. The grass-cutting team try to accommodate these wishes, but they are working to a wider plan and it is not always possible to omit specific areas.

7. Victoria Hall Report.

We have welcomed some new members since the last annual parish meeting: Judith Woodman (treasurer), Rowan Hull and Tom Ryder-Smith. Great to have you aboard. We have sadly lost Faye O'Connell and Deb Manns, and wish to thank them for all the work they have done on behalf of the village.

A month ago, we passed the milestone of one year since the building work was completed. The professional team completed the 12 month check and the contractor put right the few things that needed attention. The hall has been holding up well in most ways.

Bookings are fairly plentiful at the hall, with a preponderance of exercise classes during the day. The hall continues to provide a venue for all the established groups and a few new ones too. If residents or friends of the village wish to put on an event, it is simple to book the hall and access support in preparing. Please visit the website kemerton.org.uk for details.

The new booking system had some teething problems as all our customers moved over to it, but these mostly seem to have ironed themselves out. Thank you for your patience with this and for switching to a system of paying in advance of your booking, which makes life much easier for our treasurer.

Following the sad demise of the pre-school, their space has been emptied and redecorated, curtains have been added and signage will shortly be installed. It has been renamed The Elizabeth Room (staying with the monarchy theme) and it is proving a favourite with smaller groups due to its

underfloor heating and kitchenette. We are feeling the loss of the income from the pre-school, but are being financially cautious and hope to make up some of the loss through increased space rental.

The National Lottery has withheld our final grant instalment until now, but following a big administrative push to dot all the i's, we have now fulfilled all their requirements and we expect to receive that money soon.

The boards commemorating donors have arrived and will shortly be installed in the entrance hall. Please remember that the hall has a terrific table tennis table and bats etc. as well as a badminton net and mini-tennis too. We do hope people will start using this equipment more.

All in all, a good first year since the build and lots to look forward to in the coming Coronation year. Our warmest thanks to all who find the time and energy to contribute to the life of the village by organising events, and whose enthusiasm ensures the success of the village hall.

8. Questions from the Floor.

- The condition of the pavements in the village, bus shelter side. Cllr Hardman has asked for a scheme and will follow up again.
- There is a concern regarding the destruction of grass verges by parked vehicles in the village. A voluntary group is forming to restore the verges. It would help if villagers and their visitors were more aware. Will be added to the next parish council agenda.
- Over hanging greenery by the village Hall – Parish clerk to write to the land owner.

- A parishioner asked how many underage, unaccompanied asylum seekers where being looked after by WCC social services. - Approx. 80

The meeting closed at 7.50pm.

DRAFT