

The minutes of Kemerton Annual Parish Meeting held at the Victoria Hall on Tuesday 21st March 2017 at 7.00pm.

Present.

Cllrs Ms C Kulukundis, Mr C Carver, Mr A Darby (District and Parish) Chaired the meeting, Sir D Logan, Mr J Van den Brooke, Mr A Hardman (County) Mrs C Ford, Mr N Coleman, Mr G Long, Dr and Mrs Phillip, Mr P Truscott, Lady Logan, Mr and Mrs Warner, Mr and Mrs Parrott and Mrs D Atwell.

1. Apologies for Absence.

Apologies were received from Cllr's Mr R Davies and Mr S Papacostantinou and Mr B Ford.

2. Minutes Of Annual Parish Meeting Held 15th March 2016.

The minutes having been previously circulated were approved and signed as a true record.

3. Report from West Mercia Police.

The last 12 months has continued to be busy throughout our policing area which extends from Whittington, Upton Snodsbury and Dormston in the north to Bredon and Beckford in the south. We have carried out active engagement within our policing area in the form of monthly police surgeries and local parish events. The whole team remain committed to tackling all levels of crime throughout the area including rural crime and poaching and providing security advice and support to victims and vulnerable residents.

This report is based using the recorded crime figures between 12/03/16 and 14/03/17 the comparison is relating to the corresponding dates in 2015/16.

Overall the police recorded 32 incidents that were reported by members of the public this is compared to 39 incidents reported the previous year.

Of the 32 incidents the Parish had 9 recordable crimes (incidents where a specific offence has occurred) this was in comparison to 8 recordable crimes the previous year.

The breakdown of offences is as follows:

	2016/17	2015/16
Burglary Dwelling	1	1
Burglary Other	2	1
Criminal Damage	1	0
Theft other	2	1
Theft of motor vehicle	1	0
Theft from motor vehicle	0	2
Vehicle Crime	1	0
Other Offences	1	3

(Includes mostly domestic related incidents)

Overall the figures show a steady but low crime rate for the past few years however the area has seen a slight increase in thefts from outbuildings and sheds. We have continued with increased patrols in the area and have issued security advice.

The figures clearly present the picture that Kemerton and the surrounding area is still a safe place to both live and work, however we all have a responsibility to ensure we maintain this.

On behalf of the team and myself I should like to offer my thanks to the Parish Council for all its help over the last 12 months. I would also like to say thank you to the Parish as a whole for its continued support of the local policing team and for the numerous calls we have received relating to suspicious activity, all we ask is that you continue to do this.

Pershore Rural North and South Local Policing Team Non-emergency phone number: 101

4. County Councillor's Report.

I am delighted to be with you tonight, and to be able to field your questions at the end of this report. Though I am no longer leader of the Council, it has meant that I have been able to take a step back, and appraise how the County Council is running. But most importantly spend more time around Bredon Hill.

We continue to have a series of budgetary challenges in a series of areas, some in some areas caused by demand pressure and some by the reductions in Government funding which we are still, some ten years on from the crash, having to cope with. As I highlighted last year there are four areas of concern; the numbers of Children in our care, Adult Social care, dealing with the cuts, and devolution. We have more children in our care now than at any time in our history, with some 740 now under the care of the Council. This pressure has not helped us in our recent OFSTED inspection, where we are found to be inadequate in some areas. This meant in the recent budget were had to find some £3.5M to fund this pressure. The issue is one of staffing and leadership in my view.

Our demographic pressure has been shown up in the performance at the Worcestershire Acute, were the pressure over the Christmas period nearly meant in had to call an stage 4 alert. We have diverted some extra £9M into the adult social care. This does not improve the service but keep it in a steady state. The improvements are to come by supporting the frail in their own homes, with enablement support. The budget has helped with some £21 M being sent from the centre to support us. To be financial sound and strong is a great advantage at times such as these, so one can role with an unexpected blow.

The devolution debate has been on pause for the year.

On the plus side of the balance sheet we still have the forth lowest council tax, the waste to energy plant is now finished on time and even slightly under budget, so we no longer have to rely on Hill and Moor landfill. The Worcestershire economy has been the 3rd fastest growing LEP area in the Country for the past 5 years averaging over 3.2%. . 9 out of 10 of our schools are rated good or outstanding. We continue to invest in the road, rail, and digital infrastructure, as seen by the works on the Southern link (despite the views of the Worcester News), the Worcestershire Parkway station is under way, and broadband has been improved in the village. Unlike some Counties we continue to maintain the road network in a fair condition. Try Cheltenham for an example.

On a local level, this is what really counts; the improvements to the village which we alluded to in last year's report have been delivered. The footways in the middle of the village for the village hall to the shop have been resurfaced. Back Lane has been resurfaced, but we will be back to repair the small section we missed outside the Villa.

We have done a couple of flood improvement schemes. I urge you to use the 540 bus service to keep it going.

Lastly just a topical subject, sadly the Cllr for Tewkesbury East Vernon Smith has launched a consultation on new routes for the A46, one of which runs along the Carrant to Junction 9, and the other joins A46 to Junction 8 of the M5 / M50, which of course cuts Kemerton of from Bredon, crosses the SSI, and in partly in the Cotswold ANOB. This idea is just a line on the map, it has no backing from Highways England, The County Council, or me. It is sad he is the Chair of the cross county group the A46 Partnership. It would appear he needs training on Partnership working. I encourage you to respond and tell him he is nuts.

Q When will the LTP4 comments be known?

A June or July this year.

5. District Councillor's Report.

I have been looking back over my last few years report and the same major concerns turn up each year.

Finance

This year I was away when the budget was finalised. Once again Wychavon has continued with its business plan Grow, Save, Charge. This was its proposal to cope with a reduction of £4m of central government funding between 2010/11 and 2017/18, which represents 59% of our budget. In fact the council has comfortably exceeded its target, realising an extra £5m so far with a further £700k targeted by March 2021.

The council tax was raised by 2%. This is only half of the £5 per house which the government would allow before requiring a referendum.

Planning

The South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP) was adopted on the 25 February 2016, and there was no referral for judicial review in the High Court. Since then the work of the planning committee, on which I serve, has been much reduced, since developers risk considerable wasted costs if they chance their arm in making applications which would conflict with the plan's policies. However Kemerton does not need only to pay attention to its own local plan, the SWDP, but also should watch carefully the situation in the adjoining county of Gloucestershire. Here the Gloucester, Cheltenham, Tewkesbury Joint Core Strategy (GCT-JCS) was intending to allocate a very large area of housing land within a quarter of a mile of the parish boundary.

It had identified the Ashchurch MOD site and some green field land to the north west of it as a strategic allocation for 2725 dwellings and 20 ha of employment land.

I had been urging Wychavon to object to this unless various safeguards can be achieved. In particular we need control of traffic to prevent rat-running through the Bredon Hill villages when there are blockages on the A46, and adequate screening from Bredon Hill plus proper protection of the sensitive biodiversity of the Carrant Valley. To make this case I attended sessions of the Examination in Public of the JCS last year. These extended beyond the end of March date which I reported to you a year ago, because the inspector had increased the total number of houses required for the strategy area. She proposed that Wychavon be requested to help meet the shortfall by allowing 500 houses to be built in its territory at Mitton between Tewkesbury and Bredons Hardwick. I drove Cllr Hardman and my son Matthew who is a member of Bredon PC to the resumed hearing on 6th July. They spoke against anything other than a small extension northwards into Bredon Parish, while Wychavon's Policy Officer made it clear that Wychavon would want to retain control of any extension.

However the whole matter has now been thrown back into the melting pot since the MoD won't release all of its site. The inspector has now produced a new set of modifications, including taking the MOD allocation out of the strategy. However this leaves her very short of housing number even though her latest proposed modifications include the suggestion that Wychavon commits itself to accepting her idea (she can't actually allocate Mitton as it is outside her plan area). Wychavon has not yet formally responded to this suggestion and will consider it at its next full council meeting. However it has a legal duty to cooperate with a neighbouring authority and this is specifically recognised in the SWDP. However even with Mitton it is not clear to me how Tewkesbury will meet its target and there is clearly an assumption that a lot of development will in fact happen on the Ashchurch site.

Mercifully Robert Hitchins Ltd lost their appeal for 550 houses on the part of this allocated site which is still farmland and lies to the east of the railway, south of Aston Fields Lane and north-west of the camp. The key deciding factor here seems to have been the lack of proper access to the road system and in particular to the A46. This takes me to the concern which has exploded on social media in the last few weeks over what improvements can and should be carried out to the A46 and its interchange with the M5 at junction 9. The chairman of the A46 partnership of local authorities Cllr Smith of Gloucestershire has started the hare of looking for a bypass to Ashchurch running north of the existing road from Little Beckford. He has suggested two routes one joining the M5/M50 interchange and crossing the Avon over the SSSI and going just south of Kemerton through the

middle of the Kemerton Woods nature reserve, the other going along the Carrant Brook local wildlife site and joining a new M5 junction beyond Northway. He seems to be running an unofficial survey asking for comments on his ideas. Needless to say our County Councillor who is the vice-chairman of the partnership does not think much of the idea.

Lastly I can report that Wychavon have approved the Bredon Neighbourhood plan after taking account of the inspector's modifications and a date for the referendum has been fixed for 8 June 2017. We should congratulate all those who put in so much hard work. The Bredon plan should have great benefits for Kemerton, and we should perhaps consider making our own.

Q What is happening with the planning application at Ashton Fields?

A The appeal was dismissed.

Q Can you clarify the planning position of Tewkesbury Borough Council?

A No, however 2,000 at Pamington is a possibility.

6. Parish Council Report.

Councillors for the year were Christina Kulukundis, Clive Carver, Adrian Darby, Robert Davies, Sir David Logan, Savakis Papacostantinou and Jeff Van den Broek and the Clerk was Mrs Jackie Shields. There was a reluctance of any councillor to act as chairman for the whole year, so it was decided at the Annual Parish Council Meeting on 3 May to experiment with a rotating chairmanship. Cllr Van den Broek had chaired this meeting and the subsequent chairmen were to be Cllr Carver, Cllr Kulukundis, Cllr Logan, Cllr Papacostantinou ending with Cllr Darby in March who would then have to chair this meeting and give this report. I missed that first meeting and was unable to avoid this trap. Cllr Davies avoided the chairmanship but had to pay the price of being appointed as Finance Officer. In the event I missed the March meeting too, so Cllr Davies did in fact get to chair a meeting. This first meeting of the year agreed the contracts for Grass Cutting and the Lengthsman. It will have been noted that the PC this year has employed a different grass cutting regime, while using the same contractors, in an attempt to meet the guidelines for the maintenance of verges in the AONB proposed by the Cotswolds Conservation Board. This means that some stretches are cut less often to encourage the development of a richer wildflower flora.

The annual meeting also deals with technical matters such as approving the Parish Council Audit and the PC asked for repainting of the black and white direction pole and the installation of solar powered lighting in the bus shelter. This was to be provided by councillor Van den Broek. I will not deal with each of the other five meetings in turn but will consider decisions which we took under topic headings. As always one of the most important is planning. We are given the opportunity to respond to consultations on matters of planning policy as well as on individual planning applications. So far as the former is concerned I do not think that the PC has commented on any Worcestershire or Wychavon consultations in the last year, although it had made a submission to the inquiry into the CGT JCS which raised issues considered by the inspector last summer at which I spoke wearing my DC hat. The strategy is now out for further consultation till 10 April and the PC may wish to make a further submission.

The Parish Council considered a number of planning applications during the year which were listed in the minutes. It only formally objected to one of them, that to provide ancillary accommodation at Orchard House, which was subsequently withdrawn. Although it did not object to any of the others, it did make some design suggestions in the case of Meadow View and made some comments on the new entrance to St Judes.

During the year we received the appeal result for new radio equipment on "Parsons' Folly" Wychavon's refusal was overturned, their objection having been weakened by English Heritage's failure to list.

Other matters dealt with during the year included securing the future of the telephone box, producing leaflets to persuade people not to leave their cars outside the pub at night and the preparation of a list of assets of community value which is still being considered. In addition there was the normal routine of holding meetings, paying bills, fixing the precept (the Parish's part of Council Tax) and overseeing our contractors who cut the grass, manage roadside verges and operate the Vehicle Activated Speed sign.

Q Can anything be done about parking on the pavement opposite the shop/Crown.

A. Cllr Papacostantinou has some carefully worded notices to be put on cars.

Mr G Long volunteered to keep and administer some of the leaflets.

7. Chairman of Victoria Hall Report.

The sole change in membership of the Committee of Trustees of Kemerton Victoria Hall was the resignation of Kirk Ritchie. The chairman expressed the gratitude of the committee to Mr Ritchie for his support.

In the coming year committee membership will change significantly. The chairman, secretary and two members, Richard Bennett and Lizzie Millichap, have resigned with effect on April 3rd. Beth and Lizzie joined the committee in 2011, Richard in March 2014. They have been invaluable and hardworking servants of the hall and the community. I joined the committee almost exactly 6 years ago and have served as chairman for the last 4 years. Having reached my 75th birthday and moved away from the village it is appropriate that I relinquish the chairman's gavel. I have greatly enjoyed my time as a trustee and wish the village hall committee continued success.

During the year a survey of the asbestos content of the hall fabric was commissioned. No evidence of asbestos was detected except for the cement board ceiling of the entrance porch. The surveyor recommended that it be left in situ and maintained in good condition.

The village fete once again attracted a large crowd and raised almost £4,000 which was equally divided between the hall and the parish church.

The treasurer's report makes clear the continued health of our financial position. During the past year our most significant expenses have been the fee paid to an architect for the preparation of plans for the extension and refurbishment of the hall, the fee paid to Wychavon District Council seeking planning permission and the fee paid to a Quantity Surveyor for an estimation of the cost of the project. We are grateful to the Parish Council for allowing us to submit the planning application through them and thereby save 50 % of the cost.

The Planning Authority gave us leave to proceed with the project. The Quantity Surveyor has estimated the total cost to be £273K including a 5-6% allowance for inflation and VAT at 20%. At this critical juncture the committee called a meeting of Kemerton villagers to review the project before contemplating the arduous task of raising the money. The meeting was attended by 55 villagers and a broad range of views was expressed. It was particularly gratifying when several people indicated that they were prepared to seek election to the committee and to manage the future of the village hall.

Accounts Current £6,000, Savings £6,000 and 200 club 25,000.00

8. Questions from the Floor.

Could the meeting be better advertised, ie A board outside on the day.

Cllr Long volunteered the notice board in his garden.

Meeting closed at 20.05.