

At the annual meeting of Whittington Parish Meeting held on Tuesday 26th April 2011 at 19:30 Hrs. at Whittington Village Hall.

2011.00 Welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone present, explaining that the meeting was primarily for the Parishioners of Whittington, and participation was encouraged.

2011.01 Attendance.

Nine parishioners were present and three guests were in attendance.

Apologies: L.R. Wiltshire

2011.02 Minutes of Parish Meeting Held 27th April 2010.

Copies of Draft Minutes having been previously circulated with further copies available for those present, they were taken as read, and on the proposal of M. Hallmark seconded by A. Lodge were adopted without amendment, and signed.

2011.03 Matters Arising from item 2011.02 - not dealt with elsewhere on agenda.

No matters were raised.

2011.04 Whittington Parish Council - Chairman's Report.

Martin Baker reported on the activities of the Council over the last year making reference to the excellent police co-operation, and the introduction of speed reduction (Driver Feedback Signs - DFS) measures on Pershore Road to reinforce the existing 40 mph speed limit and to provide information to lobby for its reduction to 30 mph rather than the increase proposed by the Highway Authority to 50 mph.

He regretted the lack of co-operation received from the Highway Authority in matters relating to traffic management and highways maintenance having had no response to matters raised at a meeting with County Councillor Derek Prodger almost 6 months ago.

He reported that S.L. Brooker and P.J. Wood had joined the Council in the last year and thanked them for their commitment.

Litter and glass spillage arising from the transport of materials to/from the EnviroSort Plant at Norton was an ongoing problem which EnviroSort were trying to resolve.

The Parish Council had set in train the production of a Parish Plan which it was hoped would receive sufficient public support for it to become adopted.

2011.05 Police Report.

No representative from West Mercia police was present.

2011.06 Presentation of Village Charities Accounts.

L.R. Wiltshire was not present. The Clerk had been asked to present the Fanny Clifton and Elizabeth Stephens Charities' report which noted negligible change in the status and funds of the Charities.

2011.07 Village Hall - Report by Chairman of Village Hall Mgt. Committee.

Roger Phillips reported on the acquisition of a small amount of land from Spetchley Estates which now gave the VPMC the option to build a new hall whilst keeping the current one in use. He thanked D. Hallmark for his legal assistance provided gratis.

He outlined preliminary thoughts on redevelopment indicating that an open meeting would be held on 31st May 2012 at which plans would be available for comment.

The Hall's financial year ran to 6th October and during the year 2009-10 a deficit of £700 had been incurred due to reduced income from interest and the cost of re-surfacing the car park. It was hoped that this year the hall might just break even despite the hard winter (from which signs of recovery were apparent) and the purchase of the land mentioned above, but a small deficit was not unlikely.

He thanked Users of the hall, and the members of the Committee and its auditors for their efforts.

2011.08 County & District Councillor's Report/s.

Councillor Rob Adams reported that he had been re-elected as District Councillor for Norton and Whittington, unopposed. He would be reducing his WDC commitment as he was likely to be put forward as Vice Chairman of the County Council next year.

He noted comments made by the Chairman regarding Highways matters and expressed his concern for improvement of the roundabouts at The Swan and Norton/Tesco junctions on Crookbarrow Way. Whilst he did not doubt that there were extensive services at The Swan roundabout he did not regard this as sufficient reason not to look for improvement there. Such improvements were essential if substantial housing was to be provided on the Southern/South Eastern periphery of the City.

He noted the pressure likely to be exerted by Worcester to incorporate Whittington into the City and that if the Community wished he would continue to support the rejection of any such proposal, as the new South Worcester Development Plan was brought forward. Outline planning consent had been granted for 74 houses at St. Peter's Garden Centre, and consultation had taken place on the provision of almost 300 houses on the "Worcester side" of Swinesherd

Way (near Kilbury Drive), but in the Parish of Whittington. Other proposals had been mooted for development on neighbouring land NW of the Swinesherd Way roundabout.

He noted the introduction of the "New Homes Bonus" proposed by Central Government which would offer a "grant" of 6 years council tax in respect of all new homes in the District. He had heard rumours that this would be split 80/20 between the District and County Councils and he would be pressing the District to feed some of the grant down to Parish level as much of the burden would be borne by the Parish.

He thanked the Chairman and Parish Council for the courtesy extended to him and hoped to continue the good working relationship established over many years, hoping that if he did become Vice Chairman of WCC he would be able to use his good offices even more effectively on behalf of the village. He also thanked the Clerk for his excellent service to the Parish Council and his ready liaison between the Council and himself.

Budget cuts had affected both District and County Councils but both wished to pass on the message that they were "still open for business", and he urged the Parish Council and individuals to respond to all consultations and let him know how they felt, if cuts were to be appropriately apportioned.

On the matter of the Norton Parkway station whilst dualling of the Cotswold Line had not stopped it had slowed and might not be complete before 2015. Operating franchises were due for review in 2014 and might affect negotiations towards establishing the new station.

He briefly commented on the award of £1000 by the Market Town Partnership which had assisted WPC with the purchase of the DFS.

The Chairman thanked him for his report and past service.

2011.09 Whittington Church.

Rev. Duncan Ballard reported on the "Parish" focus of the last 12 months and the support received for this local initiative, 12 weddings and 34 baptisms were presently booked indicating the "success" of this initiative in popularising Whittington Church. Close links with the school had been extended and reinforced, and last summer a joint effort had been made for the village fete. A Thursday "drop in club" for children and carers had attracted 12 families and would be re-started after Easter. It was hoped that next year the Portakabin "Church Hall" in the churchyard would be replaced by a more suitable and permanent structure. Regrettably he would not be present to see this as he was moving to take up other duties based in Solihull.

2011.10 Whittington School.

The Head teacher, Gary Richards, reported briefly on the close ties of the school with the Church and the local community, and the wider involvement with schools in Cumbria and Tanzania using IT equipment with which the School was well provided. He encouraged people to view the school's website which had evolved over the last year from the school's "Learning Platform".

In addition to a strong curriculum commitment the School provided a good selection of extra-curricular activities - especially notable was a strong choir of about 40 members.

The school maintained close liaison with and mutual support with its 5 fellow cluster schools and with the Nunnery Wood High school into which the cluster fed.

The school was proud of its local ties and communicated more widely using the Parish Magazine. He encouraged Parish Councillors to visit the school.

In response to a question about admissions policy he reported that as a C of E controlled school admissions were controlled by the Local Authority. In response to a query as to whether the school would be able to cope with the children from an additional 300 houses (mentioned above) he indicated that the present makeup of the 208 on roll was approx 1/3 from outside the catchment area, but that as the proposed new houses would be within the catchment they would take precedence. Expansion of the school was not out of the question but other "cluster" schools had recently been expanded and could probably take up some of the Whittington School "non catchment" intake in future.

2011.11 Any Other Business.

None.

2011.12 Date of Next Annual Parish Meeting.

It was suggested that the next meeting would be on Tuesday April 24th 2012 subject to availability of venue. There was no objection to this.

At this point a short break was taken to serve refreshments and to set up for the Parish Plan presentation

The second part of the meeting comprised a presentation by Members of WPC re proposals for a Parish Plan, with the preliminary analysis of the approx. 20%-25% responses received indicating commonality in respect of limiting development in the village, enhancement of the "Community" feeling (Village Hall project and events), and concerns regarding noise, parking, and speeding.

Councillor Adams asked if the responses indicated support for the redefined conservation area and the "heritage" part of the village. It appeared that although not a specific question the nature of many responses valued the retention of what had been the "Strategic Gap" to Worcester and the maintenance of the "rural feel" of the Parish.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 21:10 hrs., thanking all present for attending.