**MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT WILMCOTE VILLAGE HALL ON WEDNESDAY 18TH MAY 2022 FOLLOWING THE ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING – NO. 120**

1. **Present:**  Cllr. Ray, Chairman, Cllr Shilvock, Cllr. McMillan, Cllr. Stewart and ten members the public.

1. **Apologies:** Cllr Mahon for personal reasons and County Cllr. Daniell.

**3. To approve for signature the minutes of the ordinary Parish Council meeting held on 23rd March 2022:**

 These minutes were approved by all members present and signed by the Chairman.

**4. Public Participation:**

 Mr. Mander had put his concerns in writing last month about the location of the VAS in Church Road and these were circulated to Councillors and Mr. Stanley. Mr Mander reiterated the concerns of the objectors and whilst he agrees with the conservation officer that The Green is not the ideal place to position the sign compared to the original location, he would like to see a smaller sign replacing the current one and asked that this be included in the agenda of the next meeting for discussion.

 Mr. Hunt expressed his objection to the possibility of verge protection posts being installed on The Green to prevent vehicles parking or driving onto it.

 Mr. Allen and some residents of Edkins Park were attending but had nothing further to report at this stage.

**5. County & District Councillors reports:**

District and County Councillors reports are appended at the end of these minutes.

 County Cllr Daniell was caught up in London and sent the following comments:

 1. The second appeal regarding the unlawful Traveller encampment in Temple Grafton has been heard and the response is awaited.

 2. Make sure anyone looking for financial support from Councillor Grants should get in an application as soon as possible.

 3. Speedwatch has started up again. Anyone interested in joining group can contact Cllr Daniell.

**6. Annual Accounts of Wilmcote Parish Council for 2021/2022:**

a) The Annual Governance Statement was considered and it was agreed by all that boxes 1 to 8 be ticked. This was then signed by the Chairman.

 b) The Income & Expenditure account had been circulated

 prior to the meeting. This was approved by all and signed by

 the Chairman, Cllr. Ray, and the Responsible Financial Officer.

 The Accounting Statement was then signed by the Chairman.

**7. Planning applications:**

The status of current planning applications was circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting.

Planning application No. 22/00894/FUL The Laurels: Application for hair dressing business within the grounds of the property.

 After due consideration it was agreed that whilst the Parish Council is in favour of supporting local small businesses, and has no objection to this one, it was felt that parking arrangements, although meeting immediate needs, could become an issue in the long term. For this reason Cllr. Shilvock proposed refusal, seconded Cllr. Ray and agreed by all.

 Planning application No. 22/01376/TREE 13 Aston Cantlow Road, Wilmcote: Fell Ash tree. This application was received after the agenda was circulated. Cllr. Ray proposed supporting the application. Seconded by Cllr. McMillan and agreed by all.

**8. Correspondence:**

All correspondence received and previously circulated electronically was taken as read.

 **9. Willow Wood Play Area:**

 The latest inspection report did not raise any new concerns**.**

The Clerk received a message from Mrs. Compton on Monday to say the door on the notice board at the entrance to the area has been smashed and two fence posts have been snapped off. This was followed up this morning with photos of broken bottles and glass in the playground.

 Dog fouling has also been a recent issue and a message to remind dog owners that dogs, other than assistance dogs, are not allowed in the playground.

 **10. Queen’s Platinum Jubilee. To consider a ‘one off’ fund for local community**

 **Groups and organisations to assist with events:**

The Parish Council covered the cost of the SDC licence for the use of the field off Glebe Estate and made a donation towards the Public Liability fee for the Jubilee event from the previously agreed amount. No further applications were received.

**11. Keep fit/Tai Chi group**

 It was agreed at the previous meeting that if funds were available after grants were made from the Jubilee fund we would support this group. Cllr Ray proposed that £200.00 should be provided on the same basis as previously. The funds would remain in the Parish Council bank account and invoices presented to the Clerk for payment on their behalf. Seconded by Cllr Shilvock and agreed by all.

 **12. Verge protection posts on The Green:**

A budget quotation, subject to contract, of £1023.00 had been received from Jacksons Fencing contractors and this was circulated to all Cllrs. prior to the meeting. This figure was provisionally acceptable and should we wish to proceed a full underground survey would be carried out. The outcome of the planning application for the Barbers shop is awaited before final decisions are made.

 **13. Community Speedwatch update:**

An update is attached at the end of the minutes.

 **14. Car parking on Glebe Estate:**

Cllr Shenton is attempting to contact Orbit Heart of England regarding this issue.

 **15. Neighbourhood Watch:**

The Chairman asked if anyone would be interested in getting

 involved in a Neighbourhood Watch scheme in the Parish.

 Cllr. McMillan pointed out that there is a WhatsApp Group in the village which provides similar benefits.

 **16. Countryside Wilding project:**

Mr. Perry has advised that he will be putting an article in the parish magazine and any interest received will be passed to Warwickshire Wildlife Trust as they cover this area.

 **17. Defibrillators**:

 The Clerk has spoken to the representative of Henley 1st Responders and was advised that afternoons are more flexible for them although evenings other than Wednesday or Thursdays may be possible. The Clerk was asked to arrange a date in September to avoid the holiday season.

 **18. Councillors’ reports and items for the agenda for the next meeting**.

 Verge protection posts for The Green.

 VAS Church Road

 **19. Date of next meeting:** 20th July 2022.

No further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.25 pm

**Wootton Wawen Ward - District Councillor’s report as at 18/05/2022**

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**County Councillor John Horner**

**It is with great sadness that I have to report that John passed away last week. The official press release is:**

John had recently been slightly ill and had undergone some surgery from which he appeared to be improving. He deteriorated quickly and his family informed on Wednesday morning 11th May that he had passed away overnight.

John had been a member of Warwickshire County Council since May 2013 and served as a Councillor for Arden Division.  He has been such a valued member of the Group having served on the Cabinet for Fire and Rescue Services, he Chaired Overview and Scrutiny and has Chaired the Pension Fund subcommittee for many years.  Most recently he has been Vice Chairman of the County Council and would have become Chairman on Tuesday at the Annual General Meeting - a role he was looking forward to and would have been immensely good at.  He would have been a fantastic representative for our County.

John had a wonderful dry wit and a huge intellect.  He has been a great advocate for the villages and communities he has represented and a valued member of our Group.  Our thoughts and sympathies are with Lucy, his wife and his Children at what must be a very difficult time.

**Rest in Peace John.**

**Proposal to merge with Warwick DC will not now go ahead.**

Obviously, most residents will now know that we are not proceeding with the merger. The press release gives the key reasons for ceasing talks and the continued work on merging the teams. The Environment teams (think waste, car parks, street cleaning, grass cutting etc.) which is part of my Portfolio as a Cabinet member (the other part being Climate Change) have to a large part been merged and several employees either given notice of impending redundancy, put on fixed term contracts, or appointed to new roles and it isn’t clear, yet, how we will deal with the implications of the fallout. Obviously, those who were at risk of losing their jobs are now not at risk and any further merging of teams has ceased but the waste contract from the 1st of August with Biffa was set up with a merger in mind but in the meantime, costs were split roughly 50/50 until the merger process was completed by April 2024. I will keep you informed on progress but in the meantime if you have any questions regarding the failure of the talks then feel free to ask me by getting in touch with me.

**In the meantime, at the end of this report I have put some key points on what this means.**

**Revenue & Benefits - £150 payment to Band A – D Council taxpayers**

In previous months reports I mentioned the £150 payment and residents should now see this in their bank accounts for those in Bands A – D.

In the meantime, I would also add the following reminder from that report:

*Over 20% of people don't pay by DD so we don't have their bank details. Revenues & Benefits section will have to write to those residents, so it's not going to be quick or easy. If any resident pays by their council tax any other way than by direct debit, I suggest that you contact the customer service team at Stratford and check that they do have your bank account details. The number to call is 01789 267575.*

***SDC are NOT calling residents about the £150 Council Tax Rebate to help with fuel bills so any approach is a scam and people should not divulge their bank account details.***

**For those residents that don’t pay by DD and don’t contact SDC we will just deduct the £150 off their council tax bills but this is unlikely to be done before June at the earliest.**

**Parking issue Glebe Estate**

Whilst Orbit are saying that they look into this again I get the feeling that they will not do anything as they see it as a Police and Highway issue. With regard to the tenant that wanted to buy land in front of his house, Orbit say they cannot divulge this to me but as they are saying that they can’t do anything about the parking I’m assuming that the sale will not happen.

**G & T site at Pathlow**

No issues reported recently. The County are progressing with their compensation package negotiations with the landowners bordering the site.

**Neighbour dispute**

I have been made aware of an issue and have been in touch with Orbit who are investigating the issue where threats have been made to a resident by their neighbour.

**Elections and boundary changes**

One of the other effects of the failure of the merger talks is that I will lose Wilmcote, Langley, Preston Bagot Parishes and Billesley (near Wilmcote) in April 2023 but gain Ullenhall and Mappleborough Green. This makes WW Ward one of the largest wards in Stratford on Avon geographically even though in pure electorate terms it is a similar size to other wards.

The number of District Councillors will increase from 36 to 41 across SDC. There will be 39 wards; 37 single-councillor wards and two two-councillor wards. This is three more wards than there are now. The boundaries of most wards have been changed.

**Climate Change**

I have a proposal for large scale tree planting that will be considered by the Cabinet over the next few weeks. It had been due to be discussed during April 2022 but due to the collapse of the merger talks with Warwick District Council I have allowed this to be pushed back to late May. My proposal was to spend up to £220k on a tree planting scheme but I feel it is prudent to hold this back just for a few weeks as there is still a lot of work to do on the “divorce” from WDC and the shuffling of portfolio holders roles.

Photo voltaic canopies (Solar Panels) over the Leisure Centre Car Park in Stratford. The feasibility study should be with me during May and the aim is to assess how feasible it is to cover the car park with a PV canopy that will allow cars to park underneath whilst providing all the power that the Leisure Centre needs and have enough to sell to local businesses (should the Local Electricity Bill (a private members bill) ever get passed. This would put SDC on the world stage for an innovative project such as this and would pave the way for us to fit canopies over the multi storey car parks as well.

A reminder that I am currently the Chair of the Climate Change Panel which is broadcast live on You Tube. The next one is due to be held In July. You can attend in person (subject to conditions and pre booking at this moment in time) or via Teams (we send you a link to join the broadcast) so if you have any questions regarding the SDC response to Climate Change then get in touch at least two weeks before the meeting and ask your questions or email me at [climate.emergency@stratford-dc.gov.uk](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Cian.shenton%5CAppData%5CLocal%5CMicrosoft%5CWindows%5CINetCache%5CContent.Outlook%5CXSJ6LNW9%5Cclimate.emergency%40stratford-dc.gov.uk).

**Waste and the 123+ service (reminder) –from 1/8/2022**

Residents of WW should have now received their food caddies, a 7litre one for inside the house and a 23-litre lockable one for outside. Along with the Caddy’s will be new collection calendar effective from 1st August 2022. Please don’t use the new caddies until the 1st of August 2022. Until then food waste should be put in your green bin, if you have subscribed for a permit or, if you have one of the old food caddies placed out on green bin day. If you do not have one of the old food caddies or a permit then bag the food waste, tie the bag (to avoid unpleasant smells), and use the grey bin.

**More details and Frequently Asked Questions can be found here*:***

***https://www.stratford.gov.uk/waste-recycling/123-waste-collections.cfm***

**South Warwickshire Local Plan**

The SWLP timetable has been agreed and envisages adoption after examination in public by the end of 2025. This is a back stop date. Opportunities to bring forward the adoption date will be taken, if possible. This is primarily dependent upon whether HMG moves the 2023 election to account for the merger. More details can be found on the dedicated website. At present there appears no reason why we cannot continue with this work going forward as it is possible with or without a merger for two or more authorities to produce a joint Local Plan

***https://www.southwarwickshire.org.uk/swlp/***

**Key Points re the End of the Merger Process**

* **As part of the preparation for agreeing to the merger, we had reports from both Deloitte and the LGA.**
* **No showstoppers were identified but the LGA report identified that we should carry out due diligence on WDC’s house building subsidiary.**
* **Between the initial reports and the WDC MTFP being produced at the end of February, WDC had borrowed a further £100 million. There was no discussion with us about the additional borrowing. Indeed, WDC made it very clear that it was an independent sovereign body, and we had neither influence nor veto over what they did.**
* **WDC’s MTFP also showed WDC would have to make cumulative savings of £7.2m compared to SDC’s £2.05m.**
* **Everyone needs to be very clear that once the merger is completed, there will be only one organisation. The borrowings of both Councils would become one and the cost savings to be made by both Councils become the responsibility of the single council.**
* **The risks for SDC council taxpayers were, therefore, substantial.**
* **Once we better understood WDC’s financial position, our view was that the need for the due diligence became much more important.**
* **We agreed to commission two independent organisations to carry out the due diligence exercises - one joint on both Councils and one for SDC alone looking at the WDC house building subsidiary.**
* **The original intention was that both due diligence exercises would be completed by end of April, and we could have evaluated them before the likely decision by the Secretary of State expected at the end of May.**
* **WDC then informed us that we would need a Non-Disclosure Agreement regarding the subsidiary, and this would need to be agreed by its Board which would not meet until md-May.**
* **In our view, this increased the risk that we would end up with the Secretary of State (SoS) being minded to support the merger. We would end up sleep walking into a merger and all the risks that would entail.**
* **We had some very intense discussions in Cabinet about our options. The strategic rationale behind the original concept of the merger was still strong. The financial risks to our residents, however, appeared far greater than had been anticipated.**
* **WDC’s borrowing requirement had gone up from £302.6m to £405m according to their Treasury Management Strategy.**
* **Whilst their strategy may have been possible previously, the world has changed. Interest rates are increasing rapidly – rates on gilts have risen to 2.2% - and have further to go. This makes borrowings more expensive. The Government is changing the rules on Minimum Reserve Provision from April 2023 which may mean that 4% p.a. must be set aside to repay debt. This, added to the increase in interest rates, means debt becomes very expensive.**
* **Therefore, we needed the due diligence exercises to be completed. They are a normal part of any merger process.**

**Our first responsibility is to our residents. As a Cabinet, we all feel that continuing with the merger would expose them to too much risk.**

**We want to continue to work together as much as possible with WDC because it makes sense.**

**Although some of the potential advantages of the merger will now not be achieved, the significant advantage to SDC’s current and future position is that we will retain control and the ability to make our own future.**

County Cllr. Piers Daniell 15th May 2022

Traveller Site in Temple Grafton:

The appeal hearing was heard last week and the District Council and Residents put forward a strong case as to why this appeal shouldn’t be allowed. The inspector carried out a site visit and we are now expecting his decision.

Mark becomes Chairman of Stratford District Council:

Mark was honoured to have been elected as Chairman of Stratford District Council on the 11th May 2022.

The role of Chairman is to effectively run the council especially at full council meetings. Another responsibility is to attend the many civic events over the year. The Chairman also gets to nominate their own charities to support over the year. These will be organisations offering support to those with Dementia and the RNLI, an organisation Mark have supported since his time at sea.

Mark welcomes invitations from local organisations to come and support them.

Library in Alcester up for Sale:

Finally, County Council have decided to sell the site. It is being prepared for market and we anticipate it will be 6-8 weeks before particulars are shared.

Speedwatch for Alcester:

Another session in Arrow on Friday and another planned in Alcester on Monday. If anyone would like to volunteer and join the Whatsapp group please email piersdaniell@warwickshire.gov.uk.

Tackling Knife Crime:

Warwickshire Police launches intensification week to tackle knife crime. From Monday 16th to Sunday 22nd May, Warwickshire Police will amplify activities to take knives off streets and reduce the number of people involved in knife crime as part of the national intensification week, Operation Sceptre. Operation Sceptre takes place twice a year and supports the work that is done all year round to ensure Warwickshire communities are safe from knife violence. More details will be circulated on the Warwickshire Police and Alcester Police websites plus their social media accounts.

New SEND school opens in Warwickshire:

Children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are benefitting from a new, multi-million-pound special school in Ash Green called The Warwickshire Academy.

Read more: https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/2915/new-send-school-opens-in-warwickshire

1,2,3+ Waste Scheme:

The scheme is due to start in August 2022 and comes about through the Environment Bill 2020. Most people should now have their food caddie. The instructions and timetable are in the caddies when you receive them. Stratford and Warwick are working together on this scheme, and you will see dual badging. Systems like this have been in operation for several years in other authorities.

Please visit www.stratford.gov.uk/123 for further information and FAQs.

* • Food waste - weekly. The small 7-litre caddy is intended for use in the home and contents to be transferred to the 14-litre caddy. The larger caddy is to be left at your normal collection point. Food waste can be put into compostable bags (i.e. paper) or wrapped in newspaper.
* • General waste – 3 weekly. The goal is to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill. When the new system is in place, most of the waste should be able to be recycled. However, there will be some items that must go into the grey bin such as disposable nappies. Please securely bag them first.

If you have a higher-than-average need such as two very young children, then you can request an additional 140 litre bin. These cost £35 for a two-year period. Flats will be collected weekly. Medical waste still goes into the grey bin. Please refer to the FAQs for more details.

* • Recycling – 2 weekly. As noted above, the aim of the new system is to increase our recycling rates.
* • Green bins - 2 weekly. Green bin collections are discretionary. When the new recycling facility becomes operational next year, it will be able to accept a significantly wider range of materials

New Centres:

The Fred Winter centre is finally up and accepting guests. The delays were due to building regulations changes following the Grenfell fire. The centre also includes a Portuguese restaurant.

RSC. The new wardrobe department is now fully open and tours are available. This is a fantastic place where all the costumes for the plays are made. Well worth a visit.

Stratford Town Consultation:

There’s still time for people who live, visit or work in Stratford-upon-Avon to have their say on proposed changes to the town centre.

Have your say today: <https://ask.warwickshire.gov.uk/transport-planning/stratford-upon-avon-town-centre/>

