

## ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

### WHITNASH

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 12<sup>th</sup> April 2018 at 6.00 p.m. in the  
Whitnash Community Hall

PRESENT: Mayor – Cllr T Heath  
Deputy Mayor – Cllr T Shepherd  
  
Town Clerk – Jenny Mason  
  
Members of the Public: 13

Apologies: Cllrs McFadden, Sage, Short, Sparkes, Mrs Wallace St Joseph's School, Friends of Acre Close.

The Mayor, Councillor Heath, welcomed everyone to the Annual Parish Meeting.

#### 1. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 27<sup>th</sup> April 2017

The minutes of the meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2017 were approved and signed as a true record.

#### 2. MATTERS ARISING OUT OF THOSE MINTUES

There were no matters arising.

#### 3. MAYOR'S REPORT

The past year has been very busy for Whitnash and the Town Council. With the developers having gone crazy with applications for many sites both within Whitnash and close by we are seeing a rapid increase in population which is not being kept pace with by infrastructure improvements. Harbury Lane is becoming a major route to work and the cross roads at Tachbrook Road and Harbury Lane/Fosse Way junction getting very dangerous in the rush hours. Hopefully WCC Highways will soon see sense and improve the latter of these two junctions.

Meanwhile the developments at Fieldgate Lane, Franklin Road and Mallory Court are almost complete and the only benefit to Whitnash has been the Section 106 agreement money given to Warwick District Council towards the towns facilities such as Education, Leisure, Police and Library services.

This has enabled your council to start the planning for a new Community Hub which was identified in our Local Plan as being a priority to give Whitnash a focal point in the community. The planning application was submitted last week and, all things being agreed, should be approved within six weeks and then we can proceed with the appointment of the building contractor with a view to commencement early autumn.

When I look back over the last forty years I have been on the council I see then we were concerned with four major problems in Whitnash. Rubbish collection, Bus services, parking around the schools at peak times and police coverage of Whitnash. We have solved two out of four and hopefully the visit of our Police and Crime Commissioner tonight can help us to solve the other two by improving the cover we get in Whitnash from our three excellent officers.

Cllr Tony Heath

**Mayor of Whitnash 2017 - 2018**

#### 4. WARWICKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

I am now almost 12 months into my first year as the Towns County Councillor. Residents are contacting me on a range of issues. Posts put in or wanting taken out, some for and some against, yellow lines and pot holes, street lighting, Community Forum and Education. I am pleased to have

solved some issues, I am working on others and some normally due to financial restraints are not possible.

Thank you to all Councillors and residents who notify me or the clerk of pot holes and other issues with the Whitnash Roads. Wherever possible they are repaired as quickly as possible but larger schemes have to wait for funding. I have been pleased to have speed awareness signs put in Golf Lane and I am now looking at some signage and road markings being improved especially around the mini Island in Heathcote Road.

I attended and spoke at the Cabinet meeting where school funding was agreed. All our schools are constantly finding funds are in short supply but the demands placed on them grow all the time. I also spoke at full council on the future of Children's centres. Sadly, Whitnash Children Centre is now closed but the baby clinic will be held at St Margaret's Centre.

The resources committee I sit on was looking at performance in a number of areas. This covers Property Services, Libraries and Customer Contact, H.R and Fire and Rescue. The discussion was also held on ways of working in the future with West Midlands Fire and Rescue Service that could lead to the forces working together. Warwickshire's force is a small one and they have looked to joining with other forces in the past to help give extra support to the County.

We have now had three meetings as a working group looking at Loneliness and Isolation. Presentations on the Men in Sheds project in Nuneaton and Age Concern gave us information on activities they provide. A moving report on the large number of children across the County as young as five who are carers was given with all members being concerned on the ages and numbers of children undertaking all types of care. An update on the suicide prevention strategy was again a moving report with the amount of deaths by suicide increasing in the County. Members have input information on groups they know of in their areas and information on the work the County Council already help deliver was given. Social prescribing by doctor's practices when applied works well but is not universally used. We have more presentations in the next meeting. The final meeting in May will look to prepare a report to go to full council.

Can I thank my fellow District and Town Councillors for their support and the staff at the Town Office who help with reporting concerns raised

County email address [judyfalp@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:judyfalp@warwickshire.gov.uk) or [Cllr.falp@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:Cllr.falp@warwickshire.gov.uk) and phone number 07771339183

***Cllr Mrs Judy Falp – Warwickshire County Councillor***

## 5. WARWICK DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

### **Warwick District Council Reports:**

#### **District Council Report for Whitnash Annual Parish meeting April 2018**

This time of the year we start to look at what we have achieved at meetings over the previous year (May to April) such as what we have scrutinised, what influence have we had on decisions and also what actions have been taken since those decisions were made. At shadow portfolio meetings I look to see if targets set are being achieved and if not ask why not. Figures are normally produced quarterly. Sometimes you question why some figures are kept while others that seem more important are not. Staffing shortages both through ill health and recruitment difficulties (especially in some more technical areas) can be the cause of targets not being met. General Staffing issues are looked at in the Personnel Staffing Group meetings and reports then go to the Employment committee where I am the Whitnash Residents Association Representative. Employment law is complex and has to be well understood and adhered to and Employees rights protected. Recruitment and retention are important and so is providing opportunities for training, employing apprentices and new skills.

The District Council continue to support us with the Community Hub project both with funding and officer advice.

I have been trying to get an updated working PA/Video and broadcasting system installed in Leamington Town Hall so residents can watch the debates and decisions. The County Council do already do this from Shire Hall. Sadly, it is taking a long time to get this facility up and running.

Residents contact me on housing needs, planning issues and waste problems.

While we are looking at Issues across the District us three District Councillors for Whitnash are working both in Committees and with one to ones with relevant officers to look after Whitnash' s interests and concerns. This is not always easy but negotiation rather than confrontation usually works best.

***Report from Cllr Mrs Judy Falp - Warwick District Councillor***

#### WARWICK DISTRICT COUNCILLORS REPORTS

This last year I have served on the Planning Committee, Licensing and Regulatory Committee, Trade Union working group and the Small Grants/Voluntary services group of which I chair. Having taken over from Cllr Mrs Falp as group Leader I am also shadow portfolio holder for Leisure services.

The Planning Committee has seen some of the largest applications within Warwick District for a long time with meetings ending at 1045 and 1100 on two occasions and then carrying over to the following night.

Now we are expecting a large influx of HS2 applications to come forward but we have no power to stop them only to make comments.

The leisure facilities at Newbold and St. Nicholas Park have now been almost completed with St. Nicholas Park opening last week and the final touches to Newbold expected to be by August. Already the new organisation running the centres have seen a vast increase in users and membership compared to previous years.

The Small Grants Committee no longer exists and grants to local organisations will be dealt with from other department's i.e. Community Forums, Leisure or Arts Departments.

Along with Cllr Mrs Falp and Cllr Margrave we are a small group but we do influence decisions with the help of the other groups

***Report from Cllr Tony Heath - Warwick District Councillor***

This year I have served on the Finance and Audit Scrutiny Committee and just a couple of times substituted for Tony Heath during his absence due to illness on the Planning committee.

I have learned that Finance and Audit meetings can often be long and dry with lots of time taken up asking for clarification on detailed financial points. As with the other scrutiny committee, this committee has little real chance to impact decisions made by the Executive. For example, we pointed out that they were giving last-minute grants to groups from Kenilworth who applied after the grant pot was already used. The money was simply sourced from another reserve.

The District Council's support of our community hub project continues and following last year's District Council decision to remove Concurrent services that cost must be now born by the Town Council tax-payer instead.

We didn't support the District Council's proposed move from Riverside House.

We still have not had any further reports or updates on the Gypsy and traveller's sites despite being told in November there would be. But the DC's planned moved of the Leamington FC continues with a briefing due before the Council to explain the development of the new site, road layout involving schools and other businesses that are affected.

So far as I can recall during the last twelve months I have not had any residents contact me about a District Council related issue.

***Report from Cllr Margrave - Warwick District Councillor***

#### 6. REPORTS FROM CHAIRMEN OF:

##### **Christmas Lights Committee Annual Report:**

Plans are now afoot for the 2018 Christmas Lights Switch-On, which as ever will be organised by volunteers from Whitnash Town Council, their families and friends.

Huge efforts go into arranging this event, which is always the flagship event on the Whitnash calendar.

I cannot thank the team of volunteers enough for their help.

Jenny Mason and her team are constantly sorting things out throughout the planning process and her diligence and invaluable expertise help to ensure that all loose ends are tied up, for the event to run smoothly.

The committee, made up of Town Councillors, all put themselves out from the early days.

Unprecedented thanks go to Kitty for her tireless endeavours to raise sponsorship and raffle prizes.

We will do everything we can to keep you on our team.

We thank Inspired Villages for the major sponsorship and as usual the support from an array of local companies and individuals.

Without this generosity we could not put on this popular community event.

We are currently looking for a main sponsor for this year's event.

The crowds turned out in force on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> December to enjoy a hugely successful event to celebrate the switch on at the Plough & Harrow Pub.

The weather was on our side again this year.

The Whitnash community was entertained by live musical & dance acts and a master Magician, John Gordon.

The eclectic mix of local talent included: St Margaret's Church Choir, singing traditional Christmas Carols, CDP Dance, a very young and excited dance troupe, Fit2Dance, who performed some fabulous dance moves in 3 different acts.

We welcomed 2 live bands, the crowd enjoyed the Intruders, who performed some fantastic and popular rock / blues songs. And then we introduced the Chalk Drawings, who performed some Jazz / Funk / Rock tunes

There was as usual sideshows and selection of stalls for local organisations and charities.

As ever I was proud to compère the event.

Father Christmas was visited by around about 300 excited little children. Massive thanks go to Dave Sage for his help with this.

The switch-on was performed by Our Mayor, Cllr Tony Heath and a representative from Inspired Villages.

Sadly, Sheila Gowlett passed away earlier this year.

Following the switch-on the illuminated buildings around the town were judged by the Town Council.

Awards were presented at the Town Council meeting in January.

Again, thanks go out to all concerned and we are now looking forward to this year's show on Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> December.

***Cllr Button - Chairman Christmas Lights Working Group***

### **Finance and General Purposes Committee Annual Report:**

During the year 2017- 2018 the Financial and General-Purpose Committee had to deal with cuts that Warwick District Council imposed. The Revenue Support Grant was reduced by 1/3 and will cease from 2019 / 2020. The concurrent services grant was paid in 2017 – 2018 but will cease from April 2018. Concurrent services support was a payment by Warwick District Council toward the maintenance of play equipment, grass cutting and maintaining open spaces.

Whitnash Town Council managed to maintain all the existing services.

The precept for 2018-19 was increased by 0.10 pence per week on average on a Band D property and it was approved at a meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee in January 2018.

The financial year for Whitnash Town Council is from 1st April to 31st March each year and the main role of the Financial and General Purposes Committee is to manage the annual budget and set the precept for the next financial year. The Committee meet approximately eight times a year.

With the building of the new Community Hub we feel positive and ready for any new challenges that this may bring.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the committee for all their attendance and input.

***Cllr Cancilla – Chairman Finance and General Purposes Committee***

## **Hall and Playing Fields Meeting Annual Report:**

This is my first year as Hall and Playing Fields Chairman after taking over from Judy. Regular maintenance and remedial work continue to be done on our parks.

Washbourne Fields:

Many of you can't fail to have noticed the fantastic and popular new play equipment that has been installed at Washbourne Fields. Good news following on from the disaster with the travellers earlier in the year. We will have to install more play equipment as the S106 money we have can only be used for more equipment on the site.

We have also started a new regular programme of tree maintenance. The next phase is running a little late due to our gardener having some health issues.

We are looking into ideas for revitalise the Millennium Garden and have asked a consultant for advice.

I apologise for the delays in adding additional traveller's protection measures. This is partly due to the weather and partly due to myself and others finding the time when we are not working. But I can assure you it has been forgotten.

We had very little interest in the idea for a "Friends of Washbourne Fields" and it doesn't look like this will materialise.

Acre Close Fields:

There isn't too much to report. The trees and wild flowers for the bund were planted. The play equipment is holding up well and vandalism has been minimal so far.

Community Hall:

We are continuing to keep maintenance to a minimum whilst keeping the hall usable. As you heard last year our caretaker retired / resigned and we had a replacement for nearly a year. We are now again without a caretaker. An interview takes place this week for the single applicant. Hopefully we can appoint someone successfully, if not we have a critical problem to overcome.

Red Phone Kiosk:

The refurbishment was completed and the kiosk was returned to its former position outside the church. We are pleased with the results and have had many compliments too, which is always good to hear. If you have any new and original ideas as for what to do with it, then please get in touch.

Church Green:

The flower bed has been just rebuilt at a cost of £2680. We now need to get some top soil and plants. Hopefully this one will have some longevity.

***Cllr Margrave – Chairman Hall and Playing Fields Committee***

## **Planning Committee Annual Report:**

The Whitnash Town Council planning committee is currently made up of 10 councillors, with many years of experience of planning in the town and district between them. We meet monthly to consider applications that have been submitted since the previous meeting.

Applications considered typically average about 4 or 5 per meeting and can range from something as innocuous as a new front porch, to large and small-scale housing developments. Most commonly, applications tend to be single or double storey extensions.

If any member has some sort of interest in a particular application, it has to be declared, and is noted in the meeting minutes. This is in line with the Standards Board of England rules and regulations.

Whitnash Town Council is a statutory consultee on planning applications made in and around the town that are submitted to Warwick District Council. We are consulted in the same way that local residents are consulted, but contrary to what some people think, we do not have the final say. That remains the remit of Warwick District Council.

We can only object on valid planning grounds, and we have to consider the potential impact of each application. Any comments we make are noted, and a decision made by the committee as to whether we object or have no objection.

A recurring problem is where a property is altered/extended under permitted development rights, without a planning application having to be made, and the work comes as a surprise to neighbouring properties.

Our comments and decisions are sent to Warwick District Council who then consider them and sometimes contact us if any new details of the potential development come to light that might impact on our decision together with other responses received. We sometimes send a representative from the Town Council to the District Council's planning meeting, who can then present our view to them. They then either grant or refuse the application as they see fit, and this is not always in accordance with the Whitnash Town Council response.

Tracey Darke head of planning at Warwick District Council has instigated a six-weekly meeting with myself as Chairman of the Planning Committee and the Town Clerk. In an effort to make the process on planning applications better for Town and Parish Councils.

I would like to thank all the committee members for their input and commitment, and also the Town Clerk and the administrative staff for all their help in preparing for our meetings, compiling the minutes, and submitting our comments to Warwick District Council.

***Cllr Franklin – Chairman Planning Committee***

## 7. FINANCIAL REPORT OF AUDITED ACCOUNTS FOR 2016 – 2017

### **Financial Summary 31 March 2017**

	Year ending	
	31 March 2016 £	31 March 2017 £
Balances brought forward The total balance at the start of the year	197,926	214,832
Annual precept Money received through precept in Council Tax	112,608	131,705
Total other receipts Other income additional to precept	130,547	68,325
Staff costs Total expenditure on staffing including salaries, employer's costs	67,475	73,543
Loan interest / capital repayments Cost of servicing the Council's borrowings	0	0
Total other payments All other expenditure not accounted for above	158,773	95,223
Balances carried forward The position at the end of the year and the start of the next year	214,832	246,097
Total cash and investments Money held in current and deposit accounts	206,955	233,184
Total fixed assets and long-term assets Book value of the Council's assets	861,245	867,171
Total borrowings Outstanding capital balance as at 31 March off loans from third parties	0	0

*(Statement of accounts was signed off by the auditor, Grant Thornton, on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2017)*

## 8. ANY MATTER OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Mr Geoff Barnes again raised concern about the Whitnash Sports and Social Club 'pulling out' of the Community Hub project. Cllr Heath explained the reasons. At the Town Council meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2018 Cllr Mrs Falp expressed her disappointment that view expressed by Mr Barnes in the Public Forum regarding the involvement of Whitnash Sports and Social Club in the Whitnash Community Hub project. A deadline was set for the grant from Warwick District Council to be used which meant the project couldn't be stalled. Cllr Heath explained that the Town Council had no option but to carry on with the Community Hub project as the feedback given to the Town Council by Mr Sparkes was that Whitnash Sports and Social Club were doing their own business plan and that the

pétanque terrain would not be moved and the boxing club was going to move onto the tennis courts. Mr Barnes was not aware of this and accepted the explanation from Cllr Heath.

Mrs Jean Fisher reported that the new Community Café was doing very well with an average of 60 people of all ages attending the session on a Monday morning.

A report from Whitnash Twinning Association was read.

Mr Ray Steele raised concern about the ongoing parking issues at Acre Close shops that is inadequate. He suggested doing away with the footpath up to the railings on Heathcote Road which would widen the parking area. He is willing to do a plan of his suggestion to be put to Warwickshire County Council Highways for consideration and will contact Cllr McFadden to assist with this suggestion. He also suggested getting rid of the double yellow lines outside the shops, but this may prove to be more difficult as yellow lines are very seldom removed. Warwickshire County Council will not change the current parking arrangement on Acre Close as this provides additional parking for the shops.

There being no further business the Mayor thanked everyone for attending and declared the meeting closed at 18h50

SIGNED: ..... DATE: .....