

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

WHITNASH

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 27th April 2017 at 6.00 p.m. in the
Whitnash Community Hall

PRESENT: Mayor – Cllr S Button
Deputy Mayor – Cllr T Heath

Town Clerk – Jenny Mason

Members of the Public: 19

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

1. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 21st April 2016

The minutes of the meeting held on 21st April 2016 were approved and signed as a true record.

2. MATTERS ARISING OUT OF THOSE MINTUES

There were no matters arising.

3. MAYOR'S REPORT

Welcome to everyone and I look forward to hearing the reports from the organisations later. It has been an interesting year, especially with the Brexit vote and the initial turmoil that it caused, including the change of Prime Minister. Then we had the American Presidential election.

We have had our funding cut by Warwick District Council for all of our playing fields, which is a massive disappointment.

PC Pete Yeardeley has been replaced with a new Beat Manager, PC Rachel Smith, but we still retain the services of PCSO Steve Sample and in order to supplement the team, we also have PCSO Jessica West added to the team. If you combine the hours available each week through Steve, Rachel and Jessica, it will total more than that currently available through Steve and Pete.

We have lost a pub and gained another in its place.

As Mayor, I have arranged a number of charity events this year and raised some valuable funds for the charities. We have also been privileged to represent Whitnash on many occasions.

The community hub looks more like a reality now and I thank Judy Falp for her help with this.

After a tough month, where we had to deal with the travellers descending on Washbourne Fields, we can now look forward to the summer months ahead of us.

I would like to thank those of us who were involved in the speedy removal of the travellers, as it was a difficult and at times extremely unpleasant task for all of those concerned. This includes the Town Clerk, individual Councillors, the Groundsman & his team, the Police and other local authorities. Not forgetting the residents for their help and patience.

Those involved should be very proud of themselves in having the travellers removed in an extremely quick time and the field cleaned up and restored to its former glory.

Following the removal, we arranged an extraordinary meeting, where we agreed to allocate emergency funds to putting in additional security measures.

We now have the problem of Warwick District Council giving the go ahead to purchase Leamington Football Club, with the view to giving the Travellers a permanent home on Whitnash land. Thank you very much again the WDC for being so considerate to our residents! We will now have another hopeless fight on our hands.

Congratulations to Leamington FC who secured 2nd place in their league and have reached the play-off final on Monday.

All the best to Tony Heath as Mayor next year and his Deputy Terry Shepherd.

Cllr S Button - Mayor of Whitnash 2016 - 2017

4. WARWICK DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

Warwick District Council Reports:

Committees I am on.

Group Leader

Licencing and Regulatory Committee

Standards Committee

Health Scrutiny Sub- Committee and W.D.C. representative on Coventry and Warwickshire partnership Trust.

Finance and Audit Sub Committee

People Strategy Steering Group

Council representative on the Plato Trust

The start of the new district year was a busy one for Cllr Margrave and I as we covered for Cllr Heath who was recovering from his heart attack as well as undertaking our own roles. We are pleased that he is now back to full duties and in better health.

The District Council have been supporting us in our plans for the new Community Hub. The Deputy Chief Executive Andy Jones has and is very supportive on helping us to achieve our aim of this exciting new community facility.

Sadly, the Council's political Executive chose not to help Whitnash by cutting our and all other Parish Councils concurrent services. This meant we had to increase our precept in order to be able to maintain the same level of maintenance for our playing

fields. This was the first time in 14 years on the district council that I felt that the district had discriminated against a particular section of its residents. Causing our residents to pay to maintain parks and gardens in the three other towns in the district as well as our own but not expecting the residents of the other three towns to pay towards our parks.

Having won the vote to keep East Whitnash in the town boundary the district is once again trying to change the boundaries to include this in Sydenham ward. The district is consulting on this now.

Residents continue to ask for my support and advice with parking, speeding, housing and recycling being the main concerns

I have appreciated the support of Cllr Heath and Cllr Margrave during the year, we work well as a team and while small in number we manage to cover most committees

We also appreciate the support we get from the Town council by alerting us to W.D.C. issues in Whitnash that need attention.

Report from Cllr Mrs Judy Falp - Warwick District Councillor

As may will be aware last year at the Mayor making I suffered a heart attack that night and spent the next six months in recovery. This meant I was unable to carry out my duties at Town or District until October last. I have to thank both Judy and Rob for standing in on my committees during that time.

Now I am back in full swing I have been serving on the Planning committee and Recreation and Leisure committee along with Employment and Trade Union committees at District.

The Planning Committee is very involved and satisfying to be on especially with the large developments being planned south of Leamington and Warwick. This year will start to see the applications for HS2 coming in that will affect Warwick District area. It is expected to be very busy and a separate evening has been allocated each month for these applications. The irony is that we as a committee cannot turn down an application but only comment on them.

The Leisure centre revamp is well under way despite a delay by Severn Trent not knowing where their water main runs at Newbold but it meant the contractor had to start the alterations at the opposite end of the building first. However, both Newbold and St Nicholas Park are progressing well and we have a briefing with the contractor who has been appointed to run them on the 8th of May.

Whitnash now knows what it is like to suffer a visit from Gypsy and Travellers within our boundary. The illegal encampment on Washbourne Field earlier in April caught everyone by surprise. They gained entry via Landor Road gate by bolt cropping the lock and then told all the friends via media what a lovely place Whitnash is to visit so the all came on the Saturday night completely filling the field with 50 caravans and cars.

Unfortunately, they did not bargain with the strength of community spirit in the residents of Washbourne and Chandlers Roads. Their feelings were let known and by some quick-thinking I and the clerk issued a notice on the Sunday asking them to leave our property within 24 hours. The police, who had been monitoring the situation all weekend decided on Monday morning that feelings were running very high between the gypsies and residents and therefore the Superintendent signed a section 61 order instructing them to move on by 10 o'clock Tuesday morning.

Once that had been served they decided not to wait until Tuesday and left by 1130 that night. Obviously, they did not want to spend another night in this lovely town.

My thanks must go to the police including PCSO Steve Sample who worked diligently over the weekend to maintain order and to speedily remove them. Now we have installed a proper gate at Landor Road and additional metal posts in front of the wooden fencing installed last year at the top of Chandlers and Washbourne Roads to deter them from returning. Later in the year we will be planting trees at the back of these.

Acre Close is the next priority and a similar gate plus a height restrictor is being installed there as well in the next week.

Hopefully next year will be peaceful

Report from Cllr Heath - Warwick District Councillor

This year I have served on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee once again and occasionally substituted for Tony Heath during his absence due to illness.

Other than the District's support for our proposed new Community Hub project which is greatly appreciated; the support and services provided by Warwick District Council are in significant decline. WDC took away Concurrent Services funding which has meant that a) residents of Whitnash are being unfairly discriminated against and b) your local town council tax rate has had to increase to offset that funding cut.

During the invasion of Washbourne Fields by travellers WDC provided some assistance and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the councillors and residents who helped to make sure they were removed so quickly.

Issues coming up that in the next year are:

The boundaries of Whitnash are once again changing with WDC proposing to put east Whitnash into Leamington. The consultation will begin soon. We, town and district councillors will need to come up some real good arguments to avoiding losing that area of Whitnash. The current justification is alignment of county boundaries.

We will be watching the progress of the leisure centre redevelopments and any plans for moving WDC headquarters.

Report from Cllr Margrave - Warwick District Councillor

5. REPORTS FROM CHAIRMEN OF:

Christmas Lights Working Group Annual Report:

Plans are now afoot for the 2017 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 past and present 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 Phillips 66 (better known as Jet Conoco) 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 4th December to enjoy a the 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, Ignite Youth 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 were introduced to the Un-Wanted, who entertained the packed arena with a range of wild and alternative music in their very own inimitable style. And then the Intruders, who performed some fantastic and popular rockabilly songs,

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 Terry Shepherd for his help with this.

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 3rd December 2017.

Cllr Simon Button Chairman Christmas Lights

Finance and General Purposes Committee Annual Report:

The committee held 8 meetings this year, its primary role is to manage the council's annual budget for the financial year which starts on April 1st through to March the 31st each year.

In November, we start to plan for next year's budget which is finally approved by full council in January in the New Year. It is worked out by the total budget amount divided by the number of equivalent band D properties. This year Warwick District Council withdrew the monies they give to us for concurrent services (this is for cutting grass on public open spaces, maintaining play equipment etc. in the Town), also we lost the money which is given for rate support on houses which do not pay full rates.

We have had to increase the Precept (Budget) by 0.17 pence per week, this is due to cuts in grants detailed above.

We believe we give good value for money and where ever possible we seek grants from various organisations to fund projects the council wish to carry out.

The next few years will prove challenging with possibility of Warwick District Council trying to put more services onto Whitnash without proper funding.

Cllr Brian Smart Chairman Finance and General Purposes Committee

Hall and Playing Fields Meeting Annual Report:

This is my second year as Hall Chairman. All regular maintenance and checks for the hall and playing fields have been undertaken.

The County Council awarded the town council a grant to undertake consultation with residents on what play equipment they think the council should put on Washbourne Fields with money that will be received due to planning agreements for housing within the town. Linda Price a project worker was appointed by the town to take this forward and questionnaires, door step interviews and visits to groups took place with the help of Volunteers. Two schools were also visited and the young resident's thoughts on what play equipment they would like were sort. A report was produced which is informing the council as they tender to purchase the equipment that should be in place by August. A group of Community Champions were also recruited and one meeting so far has taken place with them to see what skills and ideas they might be able to use to help the town.

The new Community Hub has taken up a lot of my and other Cllrs time. We are now ready to agree a final business plan and look to obtain Architects drawings. It is hoped to seek planning permission by the end of the year.

With donations of trees from the Woodland Trust organised by David Clough and Lynne from the Friends of Acre Close organising free wild flowers the bund at Acre Close will start to become a haven for wild life. Thank you to them both for their support and thanks to Jon Holmes from the District Council for advising us.

A new notice board is now in place in Whitnash Road and the red phone box will be refurbished later this year after a grant was awarded to do so.

Our groundsman and his son have again undertaken sterling work keeping our open spaces clean and tidy and safe this year and we thank them. Our caretaker Josie gave us her notice to retire but has agreed to stay while we recruit a replacement. Thanks again to her for this and for the years of coming out all hours to open and lock up.

Thanks, must also go to Ian Colls who volunteers to help with repairs at the hall and to the Hall Management committee and the office staff, Jenny, Jane and Kerry who all contribute to the running of our hall and open spaces.

The only sad note for this year was for the first time ever travellers settled on Washbourne Fields. The committee had put a stronger gate lock on but this was removed by somebody to gain access to the field. The other entrances were already being looked at by the committee to increase the security.

Judy Falp – Chairman - Hall and Playing Fields Whitnash Town Council

Planning Committee Annual Report:

The Whitnash Town Council planning committee is currently made up of 11 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.

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 monthly 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 Barry Franklin – Chairman Planning Committee

FINANCIAL REPORT OF AUDITED ACCOUNTS FOR 2015 – 2016

Financial Summary as at 31 March 2016:

	Year ending	
	31 March 2015 £	31 March 2016 £
Balances brought forward The total balance at the start of the year	151650	197926
Annual precept Money received through precept in Council Tax	102602	112608
Total other receipts Other income additional to precept	95666	130547
Staff costs Total expenditure on staffing including salaries, employer's costs	63244	67475
Loan interest / capital repayments Cost of servicing the Council's borrowings	0	0
Total other payments All other expenditure not accounted for above	88748	158773
Balances carried forward The position at the end of the year and the start of the next year	197926	214832
Total cash and investments Money held in current and deposit accounts	186403	206955
Total fixed assets and long term assets Book value of the Council's assets	784220	861245
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 25th August 2016)

6. ANY MATTER OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Reports were given from Whitnash Charitable Trust and Coffee Morning; Short Mat Bowls Club; Neighbourhood Watch; Dementia Café; Youth Club, Whitnash Twinning Association and Whitnash Medical Centre Patient Participation Group.

There being no further business the Mayor thanked everyone for attending and declared the meeting closed at 6.45 p.m.

SIGNED: DATE: