

LAPWORTH PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE LAPWORTH PARISH ASSEMBLY HELD AT 7.30PM ON MONDAY 9th MARCH 2009 AT LAPWORTH VILLAGE HALL

Present: Chairman Cllr Mrs Francis, Cllr Corney, Cllr Mrs Fox, Cllr Mrs Lester, Cllr Lewis, Cllr Henderson, Cllr Cox, Cllr Polgreen, C. Cllr Mrs Compton, D. Cllr Caborn, Mr Waldron, Mr Smith

1. APOLOGIES
Cllr Mrs Toogood
2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS ASSEMBLY
The minutes of the previous assembly of 10th March 2008, having been circulated were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chairman.
3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES NOT COVERED BY OTHER ITEMS ON THE AGENDA
There were none
4. COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT
Overall Warwickshire County Council had kept its Three Star Status awarded by the Comprehensive Performance Inspectors and had been judged as 'improving well'. Improved outcomes had been noted in raising educational attainment, caring for older people, pursuing a sustainable environment and economy and making Warwickshire a safer place to live. The services provided for Children have been subjected to an inspection and had also been judged as providing a good service, which had been especially heartening in view of public concern recently with several high profile cases.

Difficult decisions had to be made with regard to the Budget and setting of Council Tax for 2009/10 – services had experienced pressure to keep costs down while still providing high quality care. Recruitment of staff had been put on hold as some redundancies may occur but in the main WCC was trying to manage without this and re-locate staff if possible. Loss of income on fees and charges and interest rates, coupled with increase in energy costs have all had to be taken into consideration and following a lengthy councils meeting, a budget increase of 3.89% had been put forward.

Roads and drainage were of much concern to the parish and plans for next year, it is hoped, will see some improvement in the road surface/pothole service although after the recent winter weather potholes were appearing where the water has attacked the surface tarmac. The Warwick Area Committee had committed an extra £74,000 from its delegated budget to provide the services of the Drainage Team to concentrate on several trouble spots.

The long awaited speed reductions along the Old Warwick Road had now been put in place with Aylesbury Road being included before the end of March. C Roads would be looked and a report was expected in July on this subject.

The Safer Neighbourhood Panel had now been constituted into the Locality/Community Forum. This would broaden the remit of matters which could be taken forward for action as all partners were committed to work together. This included the Police, Warwickshire County Council, Warwick District Council and the PCT. The Police Report would always take first place on the Agenda but other items of general concern will also be highlighted with invited speakers if necessary. Parish Councillors from Warwick Rural West will always be able to attend these meetings and measures were being examined to ensure that members of the community could come along and express their views.

Councillor Mrs Compton advised she had been happy to allocated £300 of her Members Fund to support Lapworth in the provision of a bench and that she hoped that this Fund would be operational again next year.

Hopefully the footpath alongside the Station would be instated during the next financial year – funding was in place and should provide a much safer way for pedestrians especially school children.

Councillor Mrs Compton concluded by advising it had been another busy year and thanking all councillors, the chairman and clerk for the help and co-operation with matters concerning Warwickshire County Council.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Compton for her report and support over the previous year.

5. DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT

In his capacity as Member for Lapworth, Deputy Leader of the District Council and portfolio holder for Customer Services and Business Improvement Councillor Caborn updated in relation to activities at the District Council.

Against a backdrop of a meagre budget settlement the District Council was facing a shortfall of £1.6million in 2011-2012. Savings of 2.5% - 5% per year had been achieved over past eight years. Travel passes had incurred £149,000 expenditure and free swimming for the over 60's had been introduced. It was not possible to give free swimming to the under 60 due to lack of Government funding.

The 2009-2010 Council Tax had been set at 3.8%, this had included 2.3% for bus passes. Council House rents had increased by 6.5%, however Warwick District Council contributes £7.8 million from its housing income to Central Government. £100,00 had been earmarked for rural initiatives.

The number of Directors at the District Council had reduced from 3 to 2 and Head of Service from 17 to 9, in line with portfolio holders

responsibilities. Approximately £100,000 had been saved in advertising costs by making better use of electronic and media advertising. The council continued to explore different ways to Invest to Save, including Joint Working in some areas with Stratford DC and the County Council. These included Benefits Investigation, One Stop Shops and Call Centres.

The recycling and waste contract continued to be successful, and a second recycling Roadshow was planned in Lapworth.

The District Council was aiming to reintroduce tokens for people over 60 who cannot take advantage of bus passes and was working with WCC on bus services and possible supports.

New projects included the re-establishment of Kenilworth mere, the redevelopment of Warwick Town Centre, Spencers year and a new public service centre for Kenilworth. The Althorpe Innovation Centre was scheduled to open shortly were new businesses would be supported – it would be possible to rent a desk for a day or office space for short periods of time.

The Council was endeavouring to support both resident and employees during the Credit Crunch and leaflets had been sent to all households. The 10 year high in benefits claimants had resulted in two extra benefits officers being needed – these were funded by Central Government.

Lastly localities working continued with Riverside House and a £40,000 budget had been set aside to support projects.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Caborn for his report and support over the previous year.

6. LAPWORTH CHARITY REPORT

Mr John Waldron, Chairman of the Lapworth Charity, reported that all the properties at Pound Close were let and the electricity and central heating systems were being upgraded.

The Charity has maintained scheme payments within the parish to the Church Wardens of Lapworth and Nuthurst.

The Charity had also assisted Lapworth School through the Educational Foundation and requests for specific items. Also on the educational front a series of grants had been made to support funding for university, higher education and vocational training. A grant had been made to Lapworth Pre School to renovate the fabric of the building.

The Charity had continued with funding donations to LOPA and the Elderberries. Christmas payments had been made to nearly fifty

residents to go toward fuel bills. The Charity was still supporting Lifeline telephones in Pound Close and the community.

The Charity continues to support the monthly shopping bus to Solihull on the last Friday of each month.

A contribution had been made to the restoration of the War Memorial railings and the windows of the Clerk's house were in the process of being renovated.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Waldron for his report.

7. VILLAGE HALL COMMITTEE REPORT

Councillor Mrs Fox, secretary to the Village Hall Committee, gave the Parish Council a report on the previous year's activities.

The Village hall Committee is a good working committee with committed members representing different organisations. This year we have welcomed Joyce Burn representing LOPA and Mrs Jackie Arnott.

The committee has had a busy year with continuing improvements to the Village Hall. The outside has been improved with new guttering and the front elevation painted with a new sign. All the windows have been replaced with double-glazed units, the roof vents blocked off and the Lapworth Payers had installed a smoked glass window to the loft – all of these measures have reduced heat loss from the main hall.

The Committee Room had been redecorated, the curtains cleaned and new carpet and heaters fitted. The Committee Room door had been replaced, fitted with a new lock and interior bar which did not work, much to the frustration of the users and the Village Hall Treasurer who had done his utmost to get it operating satisfactorily. This now appeared to be fixed!

The wiring and fluorescent tubes in the pelmets in the main hall had been replaced. Two new notice boards were commissioned, one on behalf of the Parish Council.

Last summer there had been a spate of vandalism – the toughened glass in the front door was broken – no mean feat – and a large hole made in the inner and outer layers of the vertical wall to the domed roof at the rear of the building. The Police had been invited to advise on preventative measures but thankfully there had been no more incidents of late.

It had been necessary to raise hiring charges by 10% to accommodate rising electricity prices. The payphone had been disconnected saving £400 per annum.

A very successful Burns night had been held, realising a profit of £1,400. Events planned for this year included a quiz night, a Black

County Event, a Beetle Drive and Christmas Carols with Shirley band. There had been a visit from a representative of 'Live and Local'.

The caretaker was leaving the area and new appointment being made. The job will be split between a 'Bookings Secretary' and the cleaners who come in on Monday and Friday mornings.

8. LAPWORTH SCHOOL REPORT

A report into the activities of Lapworth School was presented by, the head teacher, Mr Andrew Smith.

Mr Smith advised that the school would have 142 pupils after easter and was attracting applicants from out of catchment ares. Of the previous year's Year 6 class four pupils had been successful in the 11+ examination and 18 children had moved on to a variety of different schools.

There were numerous activities at the school including year 4 Spanish, indoor rowing and the school and it s pupils had had a number of sporting successes in athletics, football and cross country.

Unfortunately due to the economic downturn it had not been possible to secure funding for the new classroom.

The school had introduced internet TV which transmitted healthy lifestyles and eating messages. A bespoke and carved parents shelter had been put erected supporting the school's Green Travel Plan. Tesco's had donated funding for a new bike shelter. However parking remained an issued and the school was looking at further ways to promote walking to school.

National Lottery Funding had been secured for a new adventure playground which would shortly be opened by James Plaskitt, MP. Thanks were extended to the Lapworth Charity for its continuing support.

A key theme for the school was community involvement and cohesion, a coffee morning was planned for members of the community, the toddler group was being encouraged to stay and play and volunteers from the community sought to assist in the school. The potential to let the school hall was being explored and improvements planned to the outside fence.

Finally the school was hoping to get in touch with previous pupils to give examples to current pupils of what sort of things could be achieved.

The Chairman thanked Mr Smith for his report.

9. LAPWORTH PARISH COUNCIL REPORT

The Chairman, Councillor Mrs Francis, closed the annual Parish Council meeting by giving a short report covering most the major items of the year.

Many Planning Applications were considered. The most memorable was for a marina. A large number of the public attended that meeting and the Council voted against it. However, the application was subsequently withdrawn for further consultation. Another issue that brought a lot of people to the Parish Council meeting with strong opinions was the application to remove the prohibition of vehicles order from Dicks Lane. This challenge was brought by the motor cyclists organisation the Trial Riders Fellowship. This was strongly opposed and is being considered legally by Warwickshire County Council. All details of these and the Council's other activities can be found on the minutes that are available from the Clerk or the internet via lapworth.info.

A major road issue has been speed reduction on the Old Warwick Road through Lapworth. As part of a larger speed reduction move throughout Warwickshire this was now in place. Thanks were extended to County Councillor Mrs Compton for her efforts and also to Mrs Charlotte Jay of the Slower Campaign.

The Parish Council had been advised by the Highways Authority that in the near future a footpath would be constructed in Station Lane on the bend by the station, creating a safer walk for pedestrians.

Work had been done on the Oaks at the corner of Station Lane and Old Warwick Road. Improving the shrubbery and lawn and installing new low fencing. As this land was acquired as a village green when the houses were build the Parish Council was endeavouring to improve it. A bench had been bought purchased to be installed of the commemorative one that was destroyed by vandals.

The Village Hall play area had had some improvements to equipment and due to the loss of a tree in a storm, anew perimeter fence alongside the road was constructed.

Two new notice boards were not in place at the Village Hall, together with an extra facility for getting rid of cigarette butts.

The public toilets in Brome Hal lane Car Park were opened and managed by the Parish Council from Easter to October, very successfully. Unfortunately it had not yet been possible to find caretaker for this season to replace Mrs Chambers who was leaving the area. The Parish Council was continuing to pursue this matter.

The Parish Council had replaced part of the War Memorial railing, the cost being shared with the PCC and the Lapworth Charities.

The land responsibilities were in the process of increasing in a pleasing way as the allotments situated in Vicarage Road were being

transferred into Lapworth ownership by Warwick District Council. No charge – just the transfer fee!

Councillor Mrs Francis advised that it is only possible to mention some of the things the Parish council was involved in, but there is a lot that could be read in the excellent minutes, produced by the Clerk Elaine Priestley. Thanks were extended to the clerk for excellent work and for the good job done on the finances and audit.

The Parish council had patriotically decided to keep our precept the same as the previous year at £16,500.

Parish, District and County Councillors were thanked for the time and efforts over the past year.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS
There was none.

There being no further business to discuss, the Chairman declared the Annual Parish Assembly closed at 8.20pm.

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SIGNED

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DATE