

LAPWORTH PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE LAPWORTH PARISH ASSEMBLY HELD AT 7.30PM ON MONDAY 10TH MARCH 2008 AT LAPWORTH VILLAGE HALL

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

1. APOLOGIES
Cllr Cox
2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS ASSEMBLY
The minutes of the previous assembly of 12th March 2007, 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
C Councillor Mrs Compton gave a report of the County Council's activities over the previous year. It had been a busy year, the County Council provides many services to the residents of Warwickshire and during that time significant progress had been made in realising the priorities of the Council which are:
 - Raising levels of educational achievement
 - Caring for older people
 - Pursuing a sustainable environment

Children, Young People and Families – the schools across Warwickshire have achieved very impressive results at both Primary and Secondary levels, ofsted rated the County as 'good' and praised the partnership working to the Every Child Matters agenda. The County Music Service has received a prestigious diploma from the National Music Council for their extensive work across the County. Warwickshire County is still fighting to obtain fair and equitable schools funding as it receives one of the worst County Council grants in the country.

Adult Health and Community Services – a much better year with the CSCI inspection, which had previously received a nil star rating, being awarded 2 stars which was quite a leap, also the Supporting People service has shown a great improvement. The County is working to increase the number of older people who can live independently in the community via schemes such as warden controlled housing and telecare. Five new mobile library vans had been delivered which are much easier to access and provide IT services.

One Stop Shops agenda has seen the opening of a new facility in Whitnash to join the provision available in Kenilworth. Warwick should be open in Shire Hall in April and this should also encompass the main Post Office.

Environment – Highways – an extra £400,000 is proposed to be spent on highways next year with more money locally to reduce the risk of flooding by clearing gutters and gullies. Waste and Recycling is seeing a big change in Warwick District, as in partnership with the District Council a new contract is coming in to force on 1st April 2008. The Speed Limit Review for the A and B roads is coming to its conclusions and hopefully there would be some action locally in the near future.

Climate change is on everyone's' lips and the County Council had installed a new Biomass boiler in Kingsbury Water Park in the north of the County and other schemes such as its own Green Transport Plan are taking shape.

The Fire and Rescue Service suffered a severe blow with the fire at Atherstone on Stour and the loss of four firefighters – investigations were still proceeding and the review of the service put on hold.

New ways of working are envisaged with Local Area Agreements and locality forums now being put in place. Residents should see the County Council, the District Council working together to provide a more cohesive service, as along with the PCT and Police partnerships are forged.

The vision for Warwickshire County Council is – Working in Partnership to put customers first, improve services and lead communities. Councillor Compton aimed to contribute to this in her division.

Thanks were extended to Parish Councillors for their contributions and the clerk for her assistance with communication.

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

5. DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT

District Councillor Caborn advised it had been another interesting year at the District Council a third reorganisation had resulted new Directorates being established. A new Director had been recently appointed and was due to take up post in May.

High on the agenda had been waste and recycling – all households should be in receipt of the new bins and the new contract was scheduled to start on 1st April 2008. The District Council currently recycled and composted 29% of waste, it had target of 40% for 2010 and 45% of 2013. There were severe financial penalties if targets were not achieved.

The Council had received a very low public spending grant and was tasked each year with achieving efficiency savings. New ways were being looked at to achieve this. This included the introduction of 'agile

working' to enable staff to share office space so that some of the Council's offices could be let to generate income.

One hundred and ten acres of land had been bought adjacent to Oakley Woods Crematorium. The District Council aimed to return it to native woodlands, make the fort available to the public, and run it as a properly managed reserve.

The new Neighbourhood Teams had just moved in to Riverside House and would shortly be able to co-ordinate services approach to the public.

During Councillor Caborn's year as Chairman of the District Council the Council had been awarded with a Business Excellence award which it had won in competition with private sector businesses. An additional special award for the ways in which staff work had been awarded, together with a top ranking for the Council's website.

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 there was a steady stream of applicants for the properties. The Charity has maintained scheme payments within the parish to the Church Wardens of Lapworth and Nuthurst.

The Charity had also assisted Lapworth School with funding for a special needs teacher. Also on the educational front a series of grants had been made to support funding for university, higher education and vocational training.

The Charity has also assisted with funding donations to LOPA and the Elderberries. Christmas payments had been made to fifty residents to go toward fuel bills. The Charity supported Lifeline telephones in Pound Close and five in the community.

A donation had been made to Lapworth Cricket Club in its centenary year and the Charity continues to support the monthly shopping bus to Solihull on the last Friday of each month

The Chairman thanked Mr. Waldron for his report.

7. VILLAGE HALL COMMITTEE REPORT

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

It had been a busy year for the Village Hall Committee, which had risen to the challenges.

New to the Committee were Mrs Pat Lewis, representing Elderberries, Mrs Patricia Giles representing WI and Mrs Christine Hughes representing LOPA. Mr John Upton had resigned after 18 years of service. Councillor Mrs Fox had replaced him as Committee Secretary. The new Committee was operating as a cohesive hard working group.

Major work in the past year, apart from the day-to-day problems such as blocked drains, leaking water heaters etc., has been the refurbishment of the kitchen with new stainless steels units, new wall cupboards and complete redecoration. Grants from the Rural Initiative Fund, the Parish Council, the Lapworth Charity and fundraising events run by different organisations have contributed to the cost. The Village Hall Committee's own events have included a Quiz night, Brass on the Grass and Burns Night.

Plans for the coming year are for the refurbishment of the committee rooms to include a new carpet and smartening up of the frontage of the Hall. There is also any ongoing 'to do list' for more minor repairs which is discussed at each meeting.

The Youth Club have a regular Friday Night booking and this was working well.

Due to the illness of the Caretaker, two new cleaners are employed twice a week and this too was working well. There was no change in the responsibility for Hall bookings.

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 he had taken up the post of head teacher the previous September but had been at the school as deputy head teacher for two years prior to that.

Mr Smith advised that the school was at bursting point, it had been build 18 years ago to house 100 children. Admissions were currently in the 144 – 147 range, with 7 mixed year groups being schooled in 5 classrooms.

Whilst the building was not old it was in need of renovation and a programme of works was scheduled for the summer, including the updating of the toilets.

Over the past year the school had achieved the first level (bronze) of the Eco Award, with the children setting up and running their own recycling scheme. Shortly this was to expand in to plastic and cardboard, and composters were being bought to enable the children to recycle waste from the healthy eating initiatives.

The School had achieved the Healthy Schools award in just five months, normally this took 2 years. The Travel Plan which had been put together with the Community was just one small part of this. The school was aware that with 100 families attending there were issues about how children were transported to school and whilst encouraging parents and pupils to walk there were also issues around the speed of traffic and the pavements.

A cycle shed was planned and a shelter for parents to encourage more walking/cycling. The school was not able to cook school meals onsite due to lack of facilities but bought in a balance menu from a local supplier.

The school had achieved the Active Mark, whereby 90% of children had 2 hours or more exercise each week. Swimming took place at Warwick School and one pupil was representing the County at a crosscountry event.

Whilst Mr Smith was most proud that the children left Lapworth School as well rounded individuals ready to move on to secondary school, the school also attained a high level of academic attainment, with 80% of pupils this year achieving the highest possible level, and five pupils being successful in their 11 plus examinations.

The Chairman thanked Mr Smith for his report.

9. SAFER NEIGHBOURHOODS REPORT

The Warwick Rural West Safer Neighbourhood Team (WRW SNT) had provided a written report to be presented to the Parish Assembly, which was as follows:

“Much has happened since the introduction of the Government SNT initiative in Warwickshire. The area given to our team, known as the Warwick Rural West Safer Neighbourhood Team (WRW SNT), was the area formally covered by four Community Beat Officers (Constables) that being the Wards of:

Bishops Tachbrook (PC Emma Matthews)
Hatton (PC Andy Rouse)
Lapworth (PC Ken Fowler)
Leek Wootton (PC Tom Quinlan)

The WRW SNT upon formation used to be one Sgt, the four CBO Constables and two PCSO's. However, following an internal review, which HQ have called 150 Forward, we have now been reduced to half a Sergeant, two Constables and three PCSO's.

The team is presently made up of Sgt Johal, who also manages the Warwick Rural East SNT in Kenilworth, PC Tom Quinlan, myself and PCSO's Lucy Hague, Paul Coleman and Nathan Parry-Hall. PC Tom Quinlan will leave the team on Monday 17 March to be replaced by PC

Leon Carter and PCSO Lucy Hague is set to leave Warwickshire Police to join West Midlands Police as a Constable in May 2008.

The large area the WRW SNT has to police, now with a reduction in staff is a big challenge, and unfortunately we have suffered more abstractions this year to date so far that the whole of last year. However, we will continue to do our best.

Another possible change following on from the 150 Forward recommendations may be a shift pattern change for the team. This is currently under discussion, and the Parish Council will be updated as soon as anything is agreed.

The Mobile Police Station visits have been altered from morning and mid day times, to early evenings. This has been a huge success, with recorded visits up by 76%. The next visits to Lapworth will be 15 March and 19 May.

The Lapworth Police Post will be totally overhauled in April 2008, being redecorated inside and out, with all new office equipment. Also, if the Parish Council agree, Warwickshire Police would like to place a small WRW SNT sign below the notice board outside the village hall. Any feedback on this proposal please?

Speed Checks have continued three times each month in the village to good effect, with a wide range of motoring offences being detected. The Criminal Damage being committed last year by spray paint has all but been eradicated and the youths congregating outside the railway station have been receiving regular visits from SNT members during the last two months.

It has been somewhat of a surprise to find the local youths present in the Railway Station being in company with others from Hatton Park, Hockley Heath, Warwick, Henley in Arden, Earlswood and Leek Wootton! SNT officers are advised by the youths that the Lapworth Station meeting venue is discussed at school and on the internet.

British Transport Police have been advised regarding the above, and the manager of the station has been spoken to regarding the CCTV camera system at the station, which when working is of an extremely high quality. Unfortunately, the system crashes far too often and recently an offence of criminal damage at the station could not be detected for this very reason.

The recent theft of £5000 of lead from the Church roof was extremely disappointing for the team, and although there have not been any similar theft of the other parts of our area, Stratford SNT areas have also recently lost lead from Churches. To this end PC Ken Fowler has been in touch with National Churchwatch and a plan of action is in the pipeline with a view to catching the offenders and preventing such thefts from other places of worship in our rural area.

The 'Week That Was' continues to go from strength to strength, with record numbers of recipients requesting to be added to the database. If anyone knows of anyone who may benefit from the weekly publication, please forward their email addresses to the team.”

10. LAPWORTH PARISH COUNCIL REPORT

The Chairman, Councillor Mrs Francis, looked back over the previous year when the Council had been influenced by three major personnel changes.

Amanda Dyhouse, clerk for the last 8 years had resigned and moved on. For a variety of reasons there had not been a formal opportunity to say goodbye to Amanda and thank her. Councillor Mrs Francis went on to record her thanks for Amanda's unstinted services to Lapworth Parish Council and the residents of Lapworth. Her work and guidance had been appreciated by all at the Parish Council.

Councillor Michael Thornton had retired after 40 years on the Parish Council and there had been the opportunity to hold a farewell party for him. This had been attended by the Chairman of the District Council, Cllr Les Caborn and County Councillor Mrs Compton. Councillor Mrs Francis wished him well in his retirement.

The third personnel change was to welcome Elaine Priestley, who started as the new Clerk in September. Elaine was getting to know the Parish Councillors and their ways. Her contact details are on notices, the website and in the Parish Magazine and residents and councillors were encouraged to contact her if they had matters they would like to discuss.

Councillor Mrs Francis went on to thank Keith Gascoigne editor and producer of the Parish Magazine, a valuable notice board for the Parish.

The website www.lapworth.info contains minutes, agenda and other interesting information for Lapworth. This useful service was run by Councillor Mike Polgreen and the Chairman thanked him for his time and efforts.

The Chairman was sorry to report two deaths on the roads during the year. One caused by surface water and speed, the other by a tree falling on the driver of a car. These deaths had shocked local residents and is still much on people's minds. The Parish Council had printed a notice to warn homeowners to be aware of tree vulnerability due to roots loosened by last summer's rains. However in the past weeks the Chairman had seen many trees that look unsafe. She urged those present to pass on this warning to friends and neighbours.

A lot of time has been spent discussing roads and how to improve them. Apparently the AA stated “They are no better now than when the

Romans were here". Lapworth Street is having a big-resurfacing job at the moment and the Parish Council had been delighted to hear that the Highway Authority reviewed the speed limits and has proposed to make a reduction from 60mph to 50mph on the Old Warwick Road. The Parish Council, with the backing of SLOWeR 40, was hoping for a further reduction to 40mph in parts.

A new warning sign had recently been erected on the Old Warwick Road on the approach to Lapworth and a new sign warning of Old People Crossing, near Harborough Cottages, was shortly to be put in place.

The Parish Council had applied for a sign warning of ducks crossing but the reply from the Highways Department was that they had no record of duck fatalities and therefore would not budget for it. The Parish Council has not given up on this.

Still on the roads the Parish Council had purchased two new grits bins.

Parking around the Village Shop continues to be a problem which needs to be tackled. A new problem has arisen with lorries – Satnav! Tapster Lane has been their trap, trying to get up to the church from the ford end is not easy!

The Parish Council ran the public toilets from Easter to October last year with very little vandalism or graffiti. They will be open again for the same period this year. Two cigarette disposal bins had been purchased for the Village Hall.

The Village Green, in other words, the land at the corner of Station Lane and Old Warwick Road on the Oaks side, has been cleared of diseased trees and the shrubbery border on the Old Warwick Road up towards the railway bridge has been taken into Parish Council care as it could not longer ignore its neglected state. The borders outside the Village Hall had also been taken in hand.

The Parish Council was pleased that a youth club had opened and would support it anyway possible. Although Mr Armitage had been unable to attend the Parish Assembly, he gave a regular report in the Parish Magazine

There had been plenty of planning applications. Two aspects came to mind, appeals for houses to be demolished and a replacement dwelling built, this is being tightened up, and the noticeable change in the landscape where farm land had been sold off piecemeal. Different owners have erected fences, stables, stores and sheds making once open land look like large scale allotments.

There had been a small area of flooding, in the Post Office hollow and at Bushwood. A culvert at the back of the Post Office had been cleared of a large amount of debris, so hopefully, should escape

flooding again. The Parish Council now had a stock of sandbags, just in case.

The Chairman concluded that these were just a few events of the previous year, there were many more, too numerous to mention but recorded in the minutes for anyone to read. The highlight for Lapworth has been that our District Councillor, Les Caborn, has also been Chairman of the District Council. He had celebrated his year by holding his luncheon in the Village Hall and his Civic Service at St Mary's. This had been much appreciated by locals.

Councillor Mrs Francis closed by extending her sincere thanks to Les Caborn and Josie Compton for their help and to the Lapworth Parish Councillors for their time and efforts on behalf of Lapworth.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS
There was none.

There being no further business to discuss, the Chairman declared the Annual Parish Assembly closed at 8.30pm.

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SIGNED

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DATE