

LAPWORTH PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY - 14TH MARCH 2022

1. OPENING COMMENTS AND WELCOME

Cllr Henderson welcomed the speakers, members of the public and Councillors.

2. APOLOGIES

The Council had received apologies from:

- Dr. Nicol, Chairman of Lapworth Charity
- Dr. Bates, Lapworth Surgery
- Mrs J McCluskey, Head of Lapworth Primary School
- Cllr Hales (Warwick District Council)
- Cllr Jonathan Child
- Cllr Joy Doyle

There were seven members of the public present.

3. MINUTES OF THE 2021 ASSEMBLY

These were signed.

4. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT, CLLR HENDERSON

Lapworth Parish Council consists of 9 parish councillors elected by 1,600 registered electors in the parish (each of whom is eligible to stand in elections held every four years, next due 4th May 2023). I would like to express my thanks to our parish councillors for taking on this unpaid role, when the appeal for new councillors goes out to fill vacancies by co-option we are always surprised at the support, skills and dedication on offer. Our roles can only be filled with the help of our county and district councillors and their contribution is essential to our work, thank you for your commitment and contribution.

Lapworth Parish is an area of 8 square miles Population 1,828 (2011).

What we do:

- Safeguard assets on your behalf: the Village Hall, the playground, the Village Green, Noticeboards, Allotments
- Planning: notified of planning applications in Parish. Comments we submit to the WDC planning authority must be taken into account
- We act to pass on local concerns and problems to Warwick District Council, Warwickshire County Council and other agencies
- Maintains the War Memorial
- Maintains public toilets in Bromehall Lane car park
- Village Hall playground
- Village Green

How we are funded:

- A Council Tax precept of £22,664 [£22,900 for 2022/23]
- Allotment rent £475
- Total income £23,139 for 2021/22

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Over the last 12 months we have:

- Held 12 Monthly Meetings on 2nd Monday of each month
- Taken part in the creation and coordination of a Lapworth Volunteers Group and dedicated email address and helpline number (Lapworth Charity assisted funding) to deal with Covid issues. We commenced winding its activities down when the call numbers dropped to low levels.
- In April set up the ability to make online bank payments for the first time
- In June we interviewed and co-opted two new councillors to fill vacancies
- In July we interviewed and recruited Helen du Bois as clerk to replace Elaine Priestly who had served for 9 years
- Considered and commented on around 100 Planning Applications in the Parish
- Continued to consider speeding complaints and issues (more details later)
- Ongoing specific reports throughout the year on potholes, roadside verge damage and obstructions placed by nearby residents, overgrown hedges and dangerous trees - Please report these via <https://customer.warwickshire.gov.uk/MyServices>

How we communicate:

The parish plan in 2014 reported that the majority then favoured email updates on key issues, however there was no central list and GDPR issues.

Today our key routes as follows:

- More promptly through the NextDoor App to 907 subscribers in Lapworth 62% of the over 17 population/electorate
- 8 noticeboards giving notice of PC meetings and agendas. These are in poor condition, and we will be reviewing whether we need to repair/replace all of them. Parish Council website <http://lapworthpc.org.uk/> giving agenda and minutes of all PC meetings and links to other areas
- Regular Clerk's column in the Parish Magazine summarising meetings (the PC appreciates the universal distribution of the Parish magazine)
- Each PC meeting begins with a public participation session for you to raise your areas of concern – please tell us

Thanks to everyone for attending and especially those who have prepared and presented reports to us tonight. Lapworth is clearly an active and thriving village where people are willing to do their bit for the community for the benefit of all. This dedication has been particularly in evidence over the last 24 months as we have faced Covid 19 and its impact here in Warwickshire and Lapworth in particular

5. VILLAGE HALL COMMITTEE REPORT, TONY HULL

Firstly, can I thank the Parish Council for asking me to give a report on behalf of the village hall and secondly for allowing me to go on first as I have to be in Henley at around 8pm for another meeting.

Without stating the obvious reasons, the last two years have been very unusual and challenging for those of us associated with the hall. I have only just joined the committee when we were all but shut down.

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However, we used this time to carry out improvements and maintenance, some obvious and some less so. We re-decorated parts of the hall, some internal and much more outside. The floor in the main area, without being re-sanded, was treated and varnished. The leaking roof was repaired. The windows were replaced in the police post with double glazed UPVC. All the lighting was upgraded to LED, a hearing loop for the main hall is currently being set up at a cost of approximately £2,500 and in the next few weeks a new dishwasher will be purchased for the kitchen, approximately £4,500.

Whilst our income virtually stopped due to Covid, we were able to obtain grants from the Government and local council to help us through this time. Some were almost automatic, and others took more applying for, but were nevertheless thankfully received.

Once the lockdown was lifted we were able to open again and we now seem to be busier than ever. We had a very successful fundraising and community evening in the form of the ABBA night, which was greatly enjoyed by the whole audience. This was down to the hard work of all the committee ably overseen by Joyce Ludlow.

A sub-committee is working hard to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee here in June. This will be a free, so non-profit making, community event which should be a great success, lets hope for some good weather.

The hall committee is a tight unit with the bookings secretary, the treasurer, maintenance officer and myself being in touch on a near daily basis. We are able to keep things going fairly smoothly. The borders, flowerbeds and hay nets are well looked after. People often comment on how nice the garden is kept. My thanks go to Lorraine Tobin, Christine Hughes and Nikki Hull for their efforts.

6. WARWICKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT, CLLR COOKE

Coronavirus dominated activities & Services run by WCC in the earlier part of 2021. I have trawled through my reports during the year and made a selection that gives a flavour of WCC's work.

MARCH 2021: Fire and Rescue Service recognised by Fire Inspectorate for Covid community work

Warwickshire County Council's Fire and Rescue Service (WFRS) was recognised for its response to the Covid-19 pandemic by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS). HMICFRS said they "were impressed" with how WFRS continued with responding to emergency incidents, whilst increasing the support available to help those most vulnerable in the community during the pandemic.

APRIL: Families urged to test twice weekly as Covid 19 cases rise in North Warwickshire

Public Health officers urged local communities to get regularly tested and help to avoid transmission by identifying cases with no symptoms. As well as testing, Warwickshire's Director of Public Health Dr Shade Agboola urged local communities to continue to be vigilant and follow government guidance, particularly around social distancing. Fully trained and qualified counsellors and emotional wellbeing practitioners are available from midday to 10pm, and from 6pm to 10pm at weekends, 365 days a year to provide a much needed out-of-hours service for emotional support in an accessible way. Sessions can be booked in advance or they can drop in for one-to-one instant text-based chats.

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MAY: Second round of funding through £1.5million business support grant scheme

WCC invited local small businesses in the retail, hospitality, tourism & leisure sectors and their supply chains to apply for a range of grants in the 2nd round of its Adapt and Diversify Grants. The scheme was launched to support those businesses most affected by the Covid-19 crisis and it complemented the Government grants available through the District and Borough Councils.

JUNE: Have your say on Transport and Highways Services in Warwickshire

Feedback was sought on a range of issues from the condition of roads and footpaths to the quality of cycling facilities across the County. A questionnaire was sent to a random sample of 3000 Warwickshire residents. The answers would be compared with the views of other members of the public across England and Scotland, as part of the National Highways and Transport Public Satisfaction survey.

JULY: Residents have chance to share thoughts about parking outside schools.

Inconsiderate, unsafe and illegal parking around schools is an ongoing concern for Head teachers, parents/carers and residents and puts the safety of children, and others, at risk. Partners and organisations are working together to review parking issues outside schools to greater understand and address the problems schools, parents and the wider community experience.

Partners were invited to participate as a parent, carer, school or local resident in a school parking survey. Feedback would help focus efforts, and shape future initiatives to address unsafe and inconsiderate school parking. <https://forms.office.com/r/jeWYQCC50S>

County council supports businesses with £140 million injection to boost local economy

Warwickshire County Council launched a significant new fund called The Warwickshire Recovery and Investment Fund (WRIF) specifically designed to address the gap that has been identified in the market for access to finance. The aim is to distribute £140m over the next five years, offering loans and other financial investments to existing and new businesses to help their long-term recovery and growth.

AUGUST: WCC success in keeping young people in education, employment or training

A recent publication from the Department for Education has shown that, once again, Warwickshire County Council (WCC) is one of the most successful local authorities in the country for ensuring 16 and 17 year old residents are either in education, employment or training.

This year, Warwickshire has 2% of 16 and 17 year olds not in education, employment or training and 1.9% whose activities were not known. This gives a combined score of 3.8% which compares to the West Midlands average of 5.7% and the England average of 5.5%.

SEPTEMBER: Warm hearted Warwickshire residents show support for Afghan families

Warwickshire welcomed a 100 people into the county as part of a Home Office plan. For some it will be a short stay as they make plans to move to be close to friends and family elsewhere in the UK. Others will be with us for longer.

Warwickshire County Council is working with partners in health and the districts and boroughs to ensure the new arrivals remain safe and well. Residents of Warwickshire have been quick to show their compassion and offer support.

OCTOBER: Warwickshire youth asked to help make Warwickshire the best it can be

WCC launched a survey specifically for young people to capture their feedback which will feed into the development of a new Council Plan to deliver services as effectively as possible

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over the next five years. Results of the survey can be found at www.warwickshire.gov.uk/councilplanyp.

As the future of our county, the council is committed to hearing what young people have to say, what matters to them and what they need. Their contributions will be essential to shape the Council Plan and help make Warwickshire the best it can be.

NOVEMBER: New look Local SEND Offer set to make a difference in Warwickshire

The Local Offer is a one stop shop for parents and carers and families of children with SEND up to the age of 25 to help them to access clear and accessible information on education, health and social care, training and employment, leisure and support in preparing for adulthood. It aims to provide information and support from early help through to more complex needs.

New site is at - <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/send> feedback to fis@warwickshire.gov.uk

DECEMBER: 40,000 Illegal Cigarettes Seized

Warwickshire County Council Trading Standards seized almost 2000 packets of cigarettes and 186 packets of hand rolling tobacco, hidden in shops in Rugby and Nuneaton. Officers seized illegal cigarettes and tobacco, both counterfeit and non-duty paid, with a combined illegal value of £12,765 (and a value if genuine of approximately £30,000). You can report the sale of illegal tobacco to Warwickshire Trading Standards via the Central England Trading Standards Authorities anonymous automated hotline: 0300 303 2636 or online: <https://centsa.org.uk/anonymous-hotline/>

JANUARY 2022: Warwickshire residents asked to share views on bus services

Warwickshire residents are being asked by the County Council to share their views on the improvements that need to be made to local bus services in Warwickshire.

More than 1,600 people took part in a consultation last summer to help shape the Warwickshire Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) which was published in November 2021.

The BSIP set out desired improvements to the bus network in response to the National Bus Strategy which, subject to funding, will encourage more of us to use buses.

This new public [consultation](#) means views are needed again to shape and finalise the next stage of an Enhanced Partnership (EP) Plan and the first Warwickshire EP Scheme, which must be formally agreed with bus operators by 1 April 2022. The consultation survey is open until 1 February 2022.

FEBRUARY: Children's Services have made great improvements according to Ofsted inspection

Warwickshire County Council (WCC) has been judged as good in all areas for its children's services according to a recent Ofsted inspection.

The latest inspection, published in a report on 1 February 2022, by Ofsted found that children and families in Warwickshire benefit from consistently good quality services at an early stage, making a real difference to their lives. Ofsted found that WCC social workers listen carefully to children and make sure that children's views inform decision-making. Social workers were found to be building stronger, more trusting relationships with families, giving parents confidence to develop their parenting skills. To see full report go to <https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50176757>

Get set for the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games in Warwickshire

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Warwickshire will be hosting 3 events during the Games period with the Bowl and para-bowls taking place at Leamington's Victoria Park and the cycling road race winding through the historic streets of Warwick.

Information will continue to be added to the website and Warwickshire County Council along with partners in Warwick District Council, will also be holding community engagement sessions, where more details will be shared, plus there will be an opportunity to ask questions about the temporary changes taking place at each location.

Find out how you can Get Set for the Games

here: <https://www.birmingham2022.com/getset/>

7. WARWICK DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT, CLLR ILLINGWORTH

Events in the last year have obviously been greatly influenced by Covid but we have taken big steps to working with Stratford District and your District Councillors have worked with your Parish Council on a number of matters,

Covid has affected the District Council in various ways. For most of the year the majority of office-based officers had to work from home with all the complications of remote working. Outside work by officers and contractors continued and operations such as rubbish and recycling continued as normal. Initially all councillors worked remotely as well and all meetings from Council down were held over Teams links. Interestingly the live coverage on YouTube was much larger than that usually obtained in a real meeting. In the Autumn the Government required decision making meetings to resume for real. This caused some problems as the Town Hall in Leamington Spa was incapable of holding the entire Council in Covid-safe conditions and alternative sites have had to be used. Smaller meetings such as Planning have been able to continue more normally. Of course, similar rules applied for your Parish Council and the District councillors were very easily able to join in your distant meetings.

The other major aspect of Covid was support to the community. Much of this involved the rapid distribution of various grants from the Government to businesses and organisations affected by the lockdowns. In total Warwick District Council issued about £45 million of which we reckon around £1.5 million came to Lapworth. This came to this Village Hall and various pubs as well as other businesses. The officers at the Council were congratulated on their efficiency in dealing with these distributions. Councillor Richard Hales was the finance portfolio holder dealing with this.

During the year we have worked very closely with Stratford District in order to save your money. Not only has there been co-operation between departments but in a number of cases senior officers have shared responsibility between the two councils reducing the numbers involved. Quite apart from the advantages from such co-operation councillors have been investigating the actual merger into one single District Council for South Warwickshire. In December separate meetings of the two Councils agreed to such a merger and the matter is now with the Secretary of State for decision.

Part of the common work, which will continue whether the merger proceeds or not, is a Local Plan for South Warwickshire. The search for land has already started and details of

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land submitted has already been circulated for consideration. Councillor John Cooke is leading this protect as part of his portfolio.

There are currently a number of contentious planning issues in Lapworth. There are four major enforcement matters to be resolved on different sites, not to mention other contentious planning applications. Councillor George Illingworth is leading on these helped obtain a Refusal, contrary to the officers' recommendation, from the Planning Committee only the other day.

Your three District councillors have played a full part in supporting Lapworth by attending your Parish Meetings and following u with relevant actions wherever possible.

8. LAPWORTH SCHOOL REPORT, READ BY CLLR HENDERSON ON BEHALF OF MRS MCCLUSKEY

The school has seen a more 'normal' year this year as we try to come to terms and overcome the effects of covid. Academically we have seen a large drop in what we would deem as children working at the required standard and we have tailored lessons and extra tuition to try and close the gap. This work still continues but has been impacted this term by very high rates of covid within our pupils and staff.

The school seems to have stabilised in numbers having on average between 175 -180 pupils, however we still have spaces available in most year groups and can hold 210. We continue to see growth in our preschool where numbers have reached maximum capacity on some days. This has meant that we now run a flourishing venture which enables us to invest in its facilities and to have a direct influence upon the education that our youngest children receive. We have already invested heavily into the facilities at the preschool and continue to build on this throughout the year as we focus on further enhancing the environment both inside and outside modernising and replacing where needed.

The school also operates its own before and after school care called 'The Orchard'. Numbers at this dropped after covid as many parents continued to work from home, but this year we have seen numbers grow, not quite to pre-covid levels but we are almost there.

This year the school will go back to end of year national testing which is used to benchmark schools. We do not expect to get the very strong results of previous years when we compare to age related expectations, but all schools are facing the same obstacles.

We are not due for an Ofsted inspection as it was only done in February 2020. However, we are due to receive a SIAMS inspection which is a Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist schools. Due to a backlog of inspections, it is likely that this will not occur until next academic year.

The school focus for this academic year is to ensure that all the children receive the best possible education with a particular emphasis on writing and closing the gap that covid has created.

9. LAPWORTH CHARITY REPORT, READ BY HELEN WOLLERTON ON BEHALF OF DR NICOL

The Charity's year has fortunately been somewhat calmer than during the first year of Covid.

Most of our activity has been in relation to our three basic functions:

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- Provision of Almshouse
- Grants to Local Organisations
- Grants to Individuals

The 11 Almshouses at Pound Close were fully occupied until December. We now have one vacant property and this is now being refurbished. We are interested in receiving applications for a new resident.

The properties have been subject to quinquennial inspection, and this shows that all the properties achieve the Decent Homes Standards but that is not to say that further expenditure is not required as some of the Almshouses are now nearly 60 years old.

The Charity has continued to make regular funding to Lapworth School but in addition this year has agreed to fund new equipment required for the Preschool and made a financial contribution towards the Year 6 residential trip in the summer of 2021.

As in previous years significant grants have been made to St Mary's Church, Lapworth and St Thomas' at Nuthurst.

With regard to grants to individuals we have made the following:

- 26 winter fuel payments
- 6 grants to students in higher education
- 11 grants towards chiropody costs
- 3 grants towards school bus travel when not funded by the County Council

Sadly, Mr David Bradnock, who served the Charity as a trustee for 24 years died just a few months ago, however we have recently appointed 2 new trustees, one selected by the Parish Council and one who responded to our advertisement seeking expressions of interest.

Our income for the last financial year was about £120,000 and as has been the case for the last 5 years our expenditure exceeded our income. We are expecting a similar outcome for the current year. About a third of the Charity's income is from invested funds. So far, the returns on the investments have held up well but it remains to be seen how they will fare over the next 12 months against the longer-term effects of Covid, Energy costs and the war in Ukraine. We anticipate increasing need in respect to energy and food costs. Fortunately, the Charity has very substantial reserves which we anticipate will enable us to continue to meet the requirements of those most in need in Lapworth.

10. LAPWORTH SURGERY REPORT, READ BY CLLR REES ON BEHALF OF DR BATES

This year marks the end of an era with Dr Gareth Rowland leaving the surgery and relocating to the South Coast. We will be very sad to see him go and are grateful for his dedication, patient care and leadership at Lapworth for the past 13 years. We wish him luck in his new adventure.

Dr James Sutton, who has been with us as a Partner since 2019, will take over Dr Rowland's clinical sessions on a Monday and will jointly run the practice with Dr Caron Bates. The surgery will continue to run in the same way with the same values with no major changes planned.

We are thrilled to have moved back to a full face to face appointment system. Telephone calls are available at request if preferable.

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The list size at the surgery has increased to 2874.

We have a new receptionist called Jenny. She is already a valued member of our small team so please welcome her and be patient whilst she learns the ropes.

The Patient Participation Group (PPG) have been invaluable over the last few years giving the surgery endless support including helping out with annual flu clinics and organising a home delivery service at the height of the pandemic.

We continue to work closely with our local Primary Care Network – Arden. Through the PCN we have the following staff based at Lapworth :

- Clinical Pharmacist for medication reviews and medication queries
- Social Prescriber – to help with any social problems or aspects of care
- First contact Practitioner – for musculoskeletal problems
- Health and wellbeing coach – for blood pressure checks and hopefully to help with pre-diabetes in the future
- Digital co-ordinator to help people in the community with online issues
- If you would like to see or speak to any of the above staff appointments can be booked via reception.

As we learn to live with Covid we still need to take caution and protect our vulnerable patients. It is still mandatory to wear a mask in healthcare settings. If you have any symptoms of Covid please avoid coming into the surgery. If you need an appointment, please ring reception – you may be asked to wait in your car and called in through the back entrance to be seen in order to protect those sat in the waiting room.

We thank you for continued support and patience throughout the pandemic and hopefully look towards a more normal 2022.

11. PACKWOOD HOUSE REPORT, OLIVIA BARNWELL COLLECTIONS & HOUSE MANAGER

Thank you for inviting us to your meeting tonight. I have come on behalf of Ann Ryan who sends her apologies as she is currently sunning herself in lovely Cornwall, well at least hopefully she has sun. My name is Liv, and I am the Collections and House Manager for both Packwood and Baddesley Clinton. I am going to talk about the National Trust in a wider sense then move onto Packwood specific information.

The organisation has gone through a lot of change in the last few years as a result of Covid-19. In 2020 we reset our plans, along with the shape and size of our organisation. The restructure of the organisation caused the largest impact as there was approximately 14,000 people made redundant. Although we also lost staff at our property, the biggest change was the merging of the Packwood and Baddesley staff structures once again. Ann Ryan who as you may know was the Property Operations Manager at Packwood, is now the Property Operations Manager at both Packwood and Baddesley. She previously worked at Baddesley for 4 years and lived there for 8 years until a few years ago, so whilst she is getting to know a new property, she already had a good amount of knowledge already.

Our Visitor reception, facilities and business teams also work across two. We have had several smaller restructures since this time so for example I used to work purely at Packwood heading their Collections Team but as a result of a mini restructure at the end of 2021, in January I started to look after both Packwood and Baddesley. As a result of the two properties being merged, we are now operating with a smaller number of staff which means that we have changed what we

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do and how we do it. This has caused a profound impact on our volunteers, for example we have restructured how they are looked after, who looks after them and their scheduling.

After reset the trust has moved towards renewal. This is the period where new teams are becoming more established, we have been able to move away from an 'Essential Tasks' approach and back to more regular patterns of opening and care. This has allowed for staff to start to look at the new and different challenges and think of different ways to help tackle them which has been rather interesting at times. As I mentioned, I worked at Packwood for a few years before I moved across the two and the moat has been an interesting challenge, thinking of how on earth I fix external windows without draining the moat.

Across the organisation, we have adopted new ways of working, from reduced travel and increased digital literacy, to more partnerships. We are now refocusing on the longer term, thinking now and forever. Two main priorities for the coming years are that of Everyone Welcome and Climate Action. Climate change is now widely acknowledged as one of the most important issues facing society. Damage caused by climate change to the places we look after is no longer theoretical; we are considering the probability of risk with plans and resources allocated to mitigate the impacts. There are opportunities though, we are looking at becoming net zero carbon as an organisation by 2030, including planting 20 million trees.

Our other goal is that by 2030 we will better reflect the changing communities we serve. We are firmly aligning this goal with all our Trust - wide activity to retain, grow and diversify audiences. At the heart of being 'for everyone', and to attract the widest range of people to the Trust, is the need to evolve how people connect to and engage with the places in our care, their stories and our people.

The strategy for Baddesley and Coughton will see 194m of hedgerow planted at Baddesley, this includes 1,314 whips of hazel, holly, dog wood, hawthorn and many other species and some major infrastructure projects continue, including Coughton's reroof and Baddesley's visitor infrastructure alterations.

At Packwood specifically, we are looking to better understand & mitigate 363 wear & tear, especially to all mansion floors, Yew Garden, outdoor paths and estate compliance. We will see the return of two tapestries this year, one is one of the largest most expensive tapestries we have sent off in some time. The coronation of Marcus Aurelius went off to Belgium in 2021 for cleaning before coming back to Norfolk in July 2021 for stitching. Currently over £94,000 worth of work has been completed and we are organising for its return in the summer. In comparison the second tapestry is only mini, about 3- or 4-foot square, and will cost approximately £7,000.

We are also in the fourth year of a five-year program conserving our Drawing room glass, last Thursday another piece was taken off where it will be taken apart, cleaned all lead replaced with clear resin before it is brought back.

We will be returning and re-embedding all volunteers post pandemic, while undertaking a comprehensive twelve-month recruitment drive to fill vacancies, all with an eye to recruiting teams that reflect our Midland audiences. Refocus on the foundational basics, driving up standards of daily presentation with a particular focus on presentation audits, external decoration. As part of our continued fire compliance work, lightening protection will be fitted at both Baddesley and Packwood.

We are hoping that as a portfolio we will spend £1.5m on small and medium sized projects and fundraise around £80,000 in the coming year. Over the next 3 years our planned expenditure is £6.3m, including £4.9m on projects and £1.4m on needs / maintenance.

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In 2019-2020 we looked to welcome 238,000 visitors to Packwood as a result of covid we have reduced this to 214,000 visitors in 2022-2023.

12. SPEEDING AND ROAD SAFETY, CLLR REES

Speeding and Road Safety are amongst the most important issues that the Parish Council has to address. This is an update covering the nature and extent of the problem, the achievements and the failings to date, and the next steps.

There has been considerable anxiety in Lapworth about speeding for many years. Just in the last 8 or so years Lapworth Parish Council has been approached by concerned residents about nearly 20 sites around the area – 8 sections of the Old Warwick Road, 4 on Station Lane, 2 on Rising Lane, and one each on Chessetts Wood Road, Grove Lane, Wharf Lane and Mill Lane. A recent petition organised by a parishioner has been signed by over 250 people. All of these have been discussed at Parish Council Meetings virtually every month with Warwickshire County and District Councillors present.

What has been achieved in recent years?

New speed signs along Rising Lane

Speed gate by The Boot

New speed limit on Wharf Lane

New road markings on OWR

Multiple visits by Warwick road safety experts to look at possibility of speed humps, road crossing points, concealed driveway signage, double yellow lines to restrict parking, etc

Week-long speed data collection at 2 locations on OWR in 2016/7 and again in June 2021, plus two in Station Lane in Autumn 2021

Recruitment of a Community Speed Watch Group, frustrated by the arrival of COVID (more of this later)

What has not been achieved over the years?

A significant reduction in average speeds. The speed checks in July 2021 can be compared with those of 2016/17. The recent data show that the mean speed in both directions at the former Timber yards was just over 44 mph and the 85th percentile was 51 mph. The percentage of vehicles exceeding the 40-mph speed limit was 78% and 81%. Both are a bit higher than in 2016/7 (maybe partly explained by the number of vehicles being a bit lower at 4900 vehicles per day?)

The comparable figures for the OWR by the Village Hall were a mean speed of 35.5 mph westbound (85th percentile 43 mph) and 38.7 mph eastbound (85th percentile 45.5 mph). The percentage of vehicles exceeding the 30-mph limit was 68% westbound and 82% eastbound, both being close to the 2016/17 figures.

The figures for the site on Station Lane near the school were very similar in each direction: mean speed 24 mph, 85th percentile 29 mph, percentage exceeding 30 mph limit 9% northbound and 7 % southbound. The percentage doing over 35 mph were 1.2% (6 vehicles per day) northbound and 0.4% (2 per day) southbound.

In addition, no new traffic calming measures, road crossings, etc. have been introduced. These have all been rejected for a variety of reasons, e.g., inadequate street lighting, insufficient traffic volumes to justify, roads too narrow for pavements, no/very limited resource to enforce further parking restrictions, budgets already allocated, etc

Why has more not been achieved?

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There have been three main difficulties:

1. **Budgets:** Local Government is under huge financial pressure and is having to make difficult choices about where it spends its money. Warwickshire County Council has responsibility for road safety, road markings and all signage, whilst the Police have responsibility for enforcement of speeding. Both argue that they can't do everything that they might want to do unless they have greater resources, either from increased efficiency and/or from higher taxes.
2. **Evidence:** given the finite nature of resources, decisions have to be made on evidence of safety and value for money. For example, the more expensive types of signage such as VAS (Vehicle Activated Speed Signs) have to be shown to make a difference if they are to be installed or maintained. At present Warwickshire has suspended all new installations of VAS signs until there is evidence for their cost and accident effectiveness over years of use.

Doubts exist also about the effectiveness of more and more normal signs. There is an argument that more enforcement of existing limits would be more effective than more signs in deterring the really dangerous drivers. Enforcement is a police rather than County Council matter.

Finally, and very importantly, a key piece of evidence for Warwickshire County Council and the Police is the level of accidents at any location. Clearly there is logic in saying that finite resources should first be allocated to actual accident hot spots. In that respect Lapworth is both very fortunate and also at a disadvantage. In 2019 (the last "normal" year before COVID and lockdowns), there were 317 serious injuries and 34 deaths on Warwickshire roads. That compares with an annual average of 1.4 serious and 1.2 slight injuries and zero road accident deaths in Lapworth in the 5 years from 2014 to 2019. As a result, Lapworth is not seen as one of the highest priority areas for expenditure in Warwickshire.

3. **Prioritisation:** the above explains why it has been and continues to be hard to achieve everything that residents might like. The same concerns and worries about speeding are being repeated in virtually every town and village in Warwickshire meaning that requests for more signs and more enforcement are coming from multiple directions. The result is that County and the Police need to have criteria for setting priorities, and they have to be based on evidence - the number of accidents and injuries being a key one. Indeed, the same need for criteria would apply in Lapworth itself should we be fortunate to receive permission and money for more signs. How should we decide where the money should be spent? Of the 20 or so sites where concerns have been expressed, which should get the resource first and why? Clearly if there were obvious accident hot spots, the decision would be easy/easier.

So what happens next?

In spite of the difficulties described above, the Parish Council does not accept that nothing can or should be done. We continue to push for improvements in signage and in frequency of enforcement.

Specifically, in the last four months we have accompanied a member of the Warwickshire Traffic Planning and Road Safety department on a guided tour of the parish. She produced a list of recommendations and is having those costed. Her report is expected soon, although it has to be said that the speed of response is now very disappointing. The Parish Council has also asked for two more locations and suggestions to be costed, including possible measures

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to reduce congestion and risk by the school. It is unclear at the moment whether the Parish Council will be asked to pay for any improvement's measures decided.

We have also been in touch again with the Warwickshire Police and Crime Commissioner and he agreed to come to Lapworth Village Hall just before Christmas for a Public Meeting but that had to be cancelled due to the Omicron outbreak, we have the option to rearrange this if there is sufficient demand for it to be held.

On another positive note, Parish Councillors had a meeting last Friday with the Community Speed Watch coordinator. 3 or 4 locations for regular speed checks have been identified and dates for training at Lapworth Village Hall are expected to be published within the next month. A number of parishioners and Councillors have already put their names forward for training and been vetted by the police. We hope however that many more will come forward so that there are enough volunteers to make the scheme a long-term sustainable. We hope that a frequent high-visibility presence at different locations will prove to have a positive educational and deterrent value, as well as leading to follow-up police actions when necessary.

We hope that this update has been informative. More detailed information is available on the Parish Council website, www.lapworthpc.org.uk.

13. CLOSING COMMENTS, CLLR HENDERSON

Thank you to all for attending and contributing to this evening.

The meeting closed at 8:15pm

Signed:

Cllr Henderson (Chairman)

Date:
