

LAPWORTH PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY – 11TH MARCH 2024

1. OPENING COMMENTS AND WELCOME, Cllr Rees

Thank you very much for being here this evening. I promise that my introduction will be short so that we can move on to contributions from the different groups in the Parish.

It has been a relatively quiet year for the Parish Council. The major event, which was anticipated to develop this year, the South Warwickshire Local Plan through to 2050, has been delayed. It is expected to move forward again in coming months but there must be a good chance that the expected General Election will cause delay as the parties focus their efforts on trying to win votes! I believe that we will hear more about the situation from Councillor Aizlewood in a few moments.

At last year's meeting I expressed some concern that road repairs and markings were taking a long time to happen. I'm pleased to report that the planned road markings have now been done and some repairs have been carried out on Rising Lane, Packwood Lane, Grove Lane and Chessetts Wood Road to improve the road edges. In addition, a much improved pavement has been put in from Station Lane to the canal bridge on the Old Warwick Road. We would like to thank Councillor Cooke for helping to fund these improvements. Flooding incidents continue to arise in the Parish and details are sent to WCC Highways Department to review and consider what improvement works are justified and likely to be effective. Sadly, it seems there is no simple solution to many of the flooded areas.

A Health and Safety inspection of the Council's assets led to the on-going repair or replacement of several of the Council's noticeboards and the removal of the trip fence at Lapworth Oaks. All were found to be rotten or rotting and needing action.

On the financial side the Parish Council was pleased to allocate £9502, being the last of the Indoor Sports Grant, to the Village Hall for an improved sound system. This use of the money has been approved by Warwickshire County Council. We also granted £1530 of CIL money to the Lapworth Community Church (the previous Lees Chapel) for a defibrillator.

Finally, as we shall hear shortly, three volunteer off-shoots from the Parish Council are continuing to do good work to improve both the safety and environment of the area– the Community Speedwatch Group, two footpath wardens to report on the state of footpaths and stiles, and the Friends of Lapworth Station Group. The Parish Council appreciates and values all that they do to help the Parish

On that positive note, I would like to hand over to our Chairman to commence the main business of the Assembly.

2. APOLOGIES

The Council had received apologies from Cllr Hall, Cllr Hales (WDC) and Cllr Armstrong (WDC). There were five members of the public present.

3. MINUTES OF THE 2023 ASSEMBLY

These were signed.

4. VILLAGE HALL COMMITTEE REPORT, Anthony Hull

This year has continued to be busy as usual with bookings rising slightly year on year, but so do our overheads to keep the building and facilities up to our high standard.

LAPWORTH PARISH COUNCIL

Over the last 12 months we have at last been able to purchase the container from the old Scarecrow Society, this will give us greater storage away from the main hall and will free up more space behind the stage to make access a lot easier. A new window has been replaced in the Committee room, and some new items of crockery purchased for the kitchen.

As some of you are aware, we are planning to install a new surround sound audio system and new permanently fitted projector system. This when up and fitted will greatly help all of our hirers. It will be simple to use and will benefit the Lapworth Players, the Christadelphians, the Film Club, plus entertainment and party music. The hard of hearing should benefit greatly as well. This will obviously be a very costly undertaking, and I and the whole committee are grateful for the generous grant that the Lapworth Parish Council has given us towards this project. The £9,502 will help enormously with these costs. I would like it minuted that the committee are very grateful for this not inconsiderable sum towards the final invoice.

Another project that we are undertaking is the improvement and modernisation of the toilet and washroom facilities. This will include new tiling, flooring, toilets and hand basins. We feel that this has been an area that has needed some attention for a considerable time, so we are busy getting ideas and obtaining quotes for the four rooms.

With regard to fundraising and community events, in September last year we had a successful Murder Mystery evening jointly with the Lapworth players. This proved to be a very enjoyable event and raised about £1,400 towards Hall funds. We are hoping that the 2 or 3 events that we have planned for this year will be equally successful.

A positive note from last year was the arrival of our new Caretaker, Neil Wright. He has proved to be a real asset, not only to the committee but also for the various Societies that he helps with setting up seating, tables etc, and with putting away afterwards. He has quickly become a valuable member of the Village Hall family.

As usual, we are fully compliant with our legal requirements, Insurance, Fire regulations, Music and Drinks Licenses, and PAT testing for appliances are fully up to date, as are our obligations to the Charities Commission.

The committee has largely stayed the same for the last 12 months, with the exception that Dill Asbury has stepped down after many year of helping us. We are hoping that representatives from the Village School and The History Group will come forward and join the committee.

5. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT, Cllr Henderson

Lapworth is an area of 8 square miles Population 1,828 (2011). Lapworth Parish Council has 9 parish councillor positions 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 2027) however as only 7 of those positions are filled at the moment we can co-opt up to 2 further councillors if anyone is interested. We are funded by a Council Tax precept of around £24,000 each year and we receive an annual rental of £475 from the Vicarage Road allotments.

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 we are always surprised at the support, skills and dedication on offer. Our roles in the parish council 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.

What we do:

- Safeguard assets on your behalf: the Village Hall, the playground, the Village Green, Noticeboards, Allotments. We also help maintain the area surrounding the War Memorial and we maintain the public toilets in Bromehall Lane car park for part of the year when we can get help in opening and closing at night.

LAPWORTH PARISH COUNCIL

- Planning: we are notified of planning applications in Parish and the 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

Thanks again to everyone for attending and especially those who have prepared and presented reports to us tonight. It is clearly an active and thriving village where people are willing to do their bit for the community for the benefit of all.

6. WARWICKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT, Cllr Cooke (WCC)

A selection of some of the topics I reported on since last June:

In June, firefighters were urging people to #BeWaterAware and understand the dangers that swimming in lakes and quarries can bring. Even on a warm day the temperature in open water can remain very cold, causing cold water shock. It's also essential that people know what to do should they see someone in trouble in the water.

*There were three simple things to remember - **Call, Tell, Throw**:*

- **Call 999** – ask for Fire & Rescue if inland or the Coastguard if by the sea
- **Tell** the struggling person to try to float on their back
- **Throw** them something that floats

Warwick Library reopened with a fresh look that provides an improved experience for users

The library reopened on May 30th. The improvements included:

- A new sensory area to encourage library use by children and adults with additional needs
- Relocating the children's area to provide additional space and create a focal point to the library
- Creating a lighter, more welcoming space with an improved customer flow

Bus travel to stay cheaper for longer in Warwickshire

The government announced that adult single bus fares would continue to be capped at £2 until the end of October 2023, making it cheaper for residents to travel by bus.

In addition to this extension to the popular scheme, the government also announced that, from November 2023, single adult fares would be capped at £2.50 for another 12 months.

The scheme means that bus passengers in Warwickshire will only pay a maximum of £2 for a single bus journey, regardless of the distance travelled. Further investment has also been confirmed to protect vital bus services people rely on for work, education, medical appointments and shopping. <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/public-transport>

Leamington Farmer Given Suspended Prison Sentence and Banned from Keeping Animals

A Leamington Spa farmer who committed a number of animal health offences including causing unnecessary suffering to a ewe that had to be euthanized has been handed a 16 week prison sentence, suspended for 12 months and banned from keeping animals. The prosecution was brought by Warwickshire County Council Trading Standards.

Barnardo's to lead SENDIASS in Warwickshire Empowering Families and Supporting Children

WCC announced that from July 1, 2023, Barnardo's, the UK's largest children's charity, had been appointed as the new service provider for the Warwickshire SENDIASS (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information, Advice, and Support Service).

For more information on the new Barnardo's SENDIASS service

www.warwickshiresendiass.co.uk

LAPWORTH PARISH COUNCIL

Warwickshire County Council launched a Social Fabric Fund

An innovative new fund that will invest in the power of communities has been given the green light by Warwickshire County Council.

The £2.5m Warwickshire Social Fabric Fund will provide a route to explore the development of local projects and initiatives that will have a positive impact on communities.

The Social Fabric Fund supports the Council's commitment to harness the power of communities to create opportunities and tackle inequalities, building on the strengths and assets that already exist.

Making cycling more accessible for people of all abilities

People with disabilities looking to take up cycling can benefit from a series of fully accessible cycling sessions as Heart of England Mencap receive new funding.

Heart of England Mencap was awarded £14,213 in funding as part of the scheme to create the new Cyc-Ability sessions. This money will enable them to offer fully accredited cycling sessions for people within the community who have either a disability or health issues.

The funding will be used to purchase four fully adapted trikes, meaning Heart of England Mencap can increase their capacity at the Stratford Cyc-Ability centre and to also explore the possibility of introducing Cyc-Ability sessions at Warwick's St Nicholas Park.

<https://www.heartofenglandmencap.org.uk/blog-4/category/Cyc-ability>

The Withdrawal of the Green Bus service

WCC Officers worked with a number of transport providers been in discussions to find alternative transport options for all the young people affected. Following discussions, the council announced that alternative travel provision has been secured for the 52 pupils eligible for school transport for whom the council has a statutory duty.

Dementia support in the community

Through World Alzheimer's Month during September 2023 WCC has been raised awareness about dementia and how people can support others in their community affected by the disease.

Creating dementia friendly communities supports Warwickshire residents with dementia to live well with a little help from other people. By understanding more about dementia friends and families of people living with dementia can help them to be more involved with their community and continue to do the things they enjoy and maintain independence. A Dementia Friend is somebody that learns about dementia so they can offer practical and emotional support to those with the condition. More information about Dementia Friend is at <https://www.dementiafriends.org.uk/>.

Can you help with the roll out of electric vehicle charging?

The Council was recently allocated £3.3m from the government's Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) Capital Fund. This funding will allow for the delivery of up to 2,000 charging sockets at both on-street and in car park locations. In order to deliver on this, it is now looking for residents help to nominate possible locations.

Anyone can make a location suggestion by using the following

form: <https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=BqqwiCdZu0uok4nMJxOsggWAQybZILFLvdy6xvOGDIUM0hHTUFPNVpBQkg3UII2VU1LR1JDWkNBUyQIQCN0PWcu>

Reporting Vehicle Speed Concerns - Warwickshire Road Safety Partnership

The joint approach from Warwickshire Police and Warwickshire County Council is for members of the public (including councillors and key community representatives) to submit their concerns via the Warwickshire Road Safety Partnership website [Enforcement and Community \(warksroadsafety.org\)](https://www.warwickshireroadsafety.org). This is the central reporting method for speed concerns within Warwickshire, which enables a consistent and data-led approach.

West Midlands measles cases prompt MMR vaccination call

LAPWORTH PARISH COUNCIL

People in the West Midlands are being urged to check that they, and all family members are up to date with their MMR vaccine.

Measles has been confirmed in this region. Since 1 October 2023, there have been a number of cases diagnosed in the West Midlands, with an increasing number of likely cases. Although rare, measles can prove fatal so you should all check that you are up to date on your jabs.

Final marriage ceremony after 50 years of “I do” at Pageant House

Leamington based couple Hannah and Alexander were the final couple to be married at Pageant House, at 11am on Tuesday 21 November, with the ceremony overseen by the longest-serving registrar Sue Lloyd, who joined the service in 1984.

Earlier this year the Registration Service licenced and launched newly refurbished ceremony rooms at St John’s House in Warwick.

Almost 20,000 Illegal Vapes Seized by Trading Standards

In the past 18 months, WCC Trading Standards has seized 19,600 illegal vapes from retailers. Illegal disposable vapes, which are often sold under the counter, are usually advertised as containing more than 600 puffs, an indication that the vapes contains more nicotine e-liquid than the 2ml limit. The 2ml limit is designed to help prevent nicotine poisoning, the results of which include nausea, vomiting, and headaches.

Warwickshire County Council Trading Standards Seizes Banned American Candy

The Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI) recently issued a warning that American sweets and fizzy drinks with known links to hyperactivity and cancer in children have flooded the UK. The illegal American candy and drinks cannot be sold in the UK. Consumers that buy them could be at risk from a lack of allergy labelling, or the inclusion of ingredients that don’t meet high UK food safety standards.

One way for consumers to spot illegal American imports is to look at the label. If the labelling shows American weights (fluid ounce and ounce as opposed grams and millilitres), it is an import and the food labelling needs to be compliant with UK laws, with no unauthorised ingredients in the produce.

7. WARWICK DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT, CLLR HALES

In May 2023 the District Council held elections, with Kyn Aizlewood, David Armstrong and Richard Hales elected as your councillors for Abbey and Arden. We welcome any issues or questions you want to raise with us, with contacts at the end of this report.

This year saw the introduction of No Mow May for the first time at WDC. This allowed over 2 million m2 of grass to grow in May, increasing wildflower coverage, supporting biodiversity, and even helping reduce flooding. Our survey of residents found the majority were positive about the impact, with photos of nature and biodiversity springing up in our competition later in the year. Despite the positives everything didn’t go perfectly, and lessons were learned for 2024. New equipment has been purchased by our contractors to avoid issues cutting the long grass, and additional areas will be mowed throughout where appropriate. We have also included Abbey and Arden in a trial to reduce weedkiller use across the District, which along with a new Biodiversity Action Plan should continue to improve the area’s wildlife and environment.

The Council has also nearly completed moving out of its Head Office in Leamington, saving significant amounts each year. We are creating a £500k Energy Generation fund to enable more renewable energy to be developed, for example via rooftop solar installation, and ringfencing money for retrofitting of Council owned houses, decreasing energy bills and improving efficiency for residents.

LAPWORTH PARISH COUNCIL

The new budget was approved in February. This includes an increase in the WDC part of Council Tax of 2.99% (approx. £5 per year for a band D dwelling) which given the below inflation increase in the government settlement was seen as key to keeping the Council finances in a stable state.

Castle Leisure Centre had its official opening on the 24th of February, providing a modern new gym and leisure centre for residents. Alongside is a new Scout and Guide Centre, one of the biggest such facilities in the country. The swimming pool facilities at Abbey Fields have started to move again, with a contract signed and construction due to kick off in March.

Numerous planning applications have been dealt with in the Ward, with councillors getting involved where requested by residents. The most notable is the Honiley Road solar farm, where an inquiry met in February with the result still to be published.

Development of the South Warwickshire Local Plan continues, with discussions ongoing about the number of houses required and potential sites. Progress on the plan has been delayed, with the next formal consultation expected late in 2024. No sites have been selected or numbers approved as yet. All Abbey and Arden councillors are working to minimise the impact of the plan on greenfield sites in the ward. We welcome your views on this even outside of the formal consultations, to help feed into the ongoing discussions.

Kyn Aizlewood, kyn.aizlewood@warwickdc.gov.uk

David Armstrong, David.armstrong@warwickdc.gov.uk

Richard Hales, Richard.hales@warwickdc.gov.uk

8. LAPWORTH SCHOOL REPORT, read by Cllr Henderson on behalf of Mrs McCluskey

Last academic year was the first year since covid that children across the country sat national tests. The children at Lapworth performed admirably and achieved above National and Warwickshire in all years and in all areas (reading, writing, phonics, grammar and maths).

The main areas of focus for school this year are writing, times tables and wellbeing. We have launched a times tables initiative which lets the children compete against others in a fun way. Each week the class with the most time spent engaging in times tables activities is celebrated. We have also signed ourselves up to a children's wellbeing scheme. We have used this scheme to skill up staff and in turn they have trained children who have become our 'wellbeing ambassadors'. Our aim is that the wellbeing ambassadors champion wellbeing and are positive role models for others across the school.

Our preschool has really gone from strength to strength and had reached capacity three days a week. All be it this is something to celebrate, it meant that as the majority of the children were the oldest cohort there was no spaces available for younger siblings and we were not able to provide the service to the community that is clearly needed. Therefore, we took the decision to utilise the space within the school and with some reconfiguration we have split the two cohorts in the preschool to enable further growth. This has proved really successful, and the children are really flourishing in their own environments. The oldest are now based over at the school and the youngest still utilising the preschool building.

Over the last year the school has invested into improving its facilities, replacing and modernising some of the areas within the building. This has included new hall dining tables, cloak room areas, and updating storage and toilet areas.

Pupil numbers have stabilised over recent years and sit generally between 170 -180 at the main school with an additional 50+ children on roll at the preschool. Some year groups are full, and others still have capacity to take additional children. The school continues to operate its own before and after school care. This is a popular service that we offer for

LAPWORTH PARISH COUNCIL

parents of the school and preschool. We can offer care from 7:45am – 6pm five days a week.

We are expecting an Ofsted inspection this year and see this as an opportunity to showcase all the great things that we do.

9. LAPWORTH CHARITY REPORT, DR R NICOL

Those of you who have heard me before might re-call that the Charity has three focuses of activity:

The first of these is the provision of the 11 Almshouses underneath the water tower at Pound Close. This time last year one of these was uninhabitable because of water damage – it took another 3 months before the resident was able to return but since then we have had full occupancy.

Our 2nd focus is grants to local organisations, and by the end of this financial year the Charity will have expended £29,000 on grants to St Mary's Church, Lapworth School, the Old People's Association, and through the WI a contribution to the Coronation Commemorative bookmarks. The lion's share of this sum goes to St Mary's as was stipulated by the original benefactors of the Charity.

The 3rd area is grants to individuals. This year 41 individuals will have benefited from the Charity. £11,500 going towards winter fuel allowances, chiropody, Christmas hampers and to support 3 families with financial hardship and then another £11,500 going towards grants for those at university or college and also towards school or college transport costs.

Where does the money come from?

The Charity has about 65 acres of land and some properties and these produced an income of £40,000 last year. In addition, the Charity has invested funds which last year produced an income of £51,000.

You may well have seen the notices about alterations to the Charity's constitution. The 2 main changes being to allow the area of benefit, currently restricted to the Ancient Parish of Lapworth, to be extended to include all of the Civil Parish of Lapworth and to allow the possibility for Charity to provide for affordable housing as well as Almshouses.

The consultation process did not produce any negative feedback and the changes are likely to be formally approved by the Charity Commission shortly.

10. LAPWORTH SURGERY REPORT, read by Cllr Rees on behalf of Dr Bates & Dr Sutton

This year has been another busy year with lots of staff changes, an increasing list size and trying to cope with increased patient demand. We are trying to maintain the way that the Surgery currently runs, and our values remain the same. Appointments continue to be available as face to face or telephone and can be pre-booked or urgent on the day.

The list size has increased to over 3000 patients – this has increased significantly from 2300 in 2009. The result of increased demand, increasing patient expectation and government targets / contractual duties is putting a significant strain on the Surgery in regards to appointment availability and workload for clinical, admin and dispensary staff. We are struggling to maintain the current level of care and any further increase to the list size or proposed new contact enforcement will inevitably have a negative impact on patient care and patient access to our services. The forthcoming 24/25 contract has been rejected by GP's as unsafe and a threat to General Practice and may impact on the way we will have to run the surgery if it is enforced.

The Primary Care Network continues to grow, and we are working closely with the other six Surgeries within the PCN. The plans to develop a Hub in Alcester Health Centre have been

LAPWORTH PARISH COUNCIL

scrapped due to funding issues. One way of trying to cope with increasing pressures is to use our PCN staff where appropriate.

- Lucy our FCP who previously worked for Lapworth once a month will now be working one day a week for us every Thursday to deal with musculoskeletal problems.
- Tracey our paramedic works all day Tuesday and Friday. She has minor illness clinics and will do some urgent home visits.
- Bhavna our Clinical pharmacist works at the surgery on a Tuesday and Thursday and can do medication reviews and treat / monitor some conditions such as hypertension and high cholesterol.

The PPG continue to be a great support to the surgery and act as means of communication between the surgery and patients and provide us with invaluable feedback.

We hope to continue to provide a good service for our patients despite the ever increasing demands we are being subjected to.

11. LAPWORTH SPEED WATCH REPORT, CLLR MANLEY

Lapworth Community Speed Watch was set up in July 2022 with its aim being to improve road safety within our village by reducing speeding. By monitoring vehicle speeds and reporting offenders it raises awareness among drivers and encourages them to adhere to speed limits with the ultimate goal of reducing the risk of accidents.

Since our previous Parish Assembly in June of last year we have averaged 2 or 3 monitoring sessions a month. Our aim is not necessarily to catch as many speeding motorists as we can, but to be a visible presence and a reminder to drivers to consider their speed when driving through our village.

During our monitoring sessions however, despite large visible signs and 3 people dressed in Hi-Vis jackets, we do tend to catch and report some 3 % of drivers including several repeat offenders and known village residents. As a reminder, if an offender is caught three times in a year they will get a personal visit from His Majesty's Constabulary, and we know that two local residents have had that knock on the door!

Up until now we have been using a Laser based speed gun supplied by the Police. This has always been limited in so far as rain and mist will inhibit the device and the weight of it together with having to be very accurate in aiming at the number plate, makes it not as user friendly as it could be.

We will soon be trialling a new, Police approved, Radar based device which is said to be much lighter, much simpler to use and aim, and unaffected by weather conditions, so, you have been warned!

Our group of committed volunteers' numbers about 10 with some members being able to contribute more of their time than others. We are always looking for new volunteers and so if anyone would like to find out more then please let either myself or the Clerk know.

12. FRIENDS OF LAPWORTH STATION REPORT, CLLR REES

The Friends of Lapworth Station group (FOLS) was formed three years ago to improve the appearance of the station. The area had become an eye-sore again since the last project to tidy up the site in the 1990s. Over the last three years eight planters have been bought, installed and maintained, the waiting rooms and benches repaired or replaced and painted, 12 birdboxes attached to trees, colourful posters designed and made by the children of Lapworth School attached to fences, and the area kept cleaner and tidier than before.

Future plans include the completion of posters covering the history of the station from its opening in 1854 through its renaming in 1902, its crane and siding, signal box, 3 platforms, 6 porters and up to 2000 visitors a day in the 1950s and 1960s. There also thoughts about redesigning the information board outside the station and using the phone-box as an audio

LAPWORTH PARISH COUNCIL

guide to the area and its history and businesses. Alternatively, the phone box may be set up by the Guides as a book exchange, especially during the drier seasons!

None of these would be possible though without the support and enthusiasm of the volunteers. There are currently 13 volunteers in the FOLS group who continue to turn up for tidying up sessions and buying and looking after new plants – as well as at least one annual social gathering!

As a result of the clear improvements made at the station, both Chiltern and Network Rail have taken a much greater interest in the station than they used to. They have repainted and cleared areas on a frequent basis and are actively interested in helping the FOLS group in other ways. For example, it is expected that a water tap will be installed free of charge at the station shortly to facilitate watering during the summer. We are also in active conversations with them about an educational and biodiversity initiative which would involve the school, Warwickshire Wildlife Trust and FOLS in developing an area by the third platform to encourage wildlife.

If this were to go ahead it would involve some quite large costs in clearing land, putting up fences and putting in steps – as well as ongoing maintenance. We are hopeful that Chiltern and Network Rail will fund all or most of this. There is obviously a chance though that FOLS will look for sponsorship both from its existing sponsors and new ones! Inevitably it will mean also looking for more volunteers to help with the work involved.

The FOLS are a group of friendly and active volunteers who believe that the station should be an asset to the community and to the environment rather than the run-down and dilapidated functional eye-sore it used to be. We were therefore very pleased to have had our efforts recognised by Chiltern Railway at its annual Community Rail Conference in October. We were chosen by the Chiltern Management Team to be “Group of the Year”, and we have a trophy to prove it!

If you are interested in joining us, please contact haydn.rees@outlook.com or lucyepickard@gmail.com

13. CLOSING COMMENTS, CLLR HENDERSON

Thank you to all for attending and contributing to this evening. The Council would like to give special thanks to George Illingworth for his knowledge and wise council on planning matters given so generously to the Council over the past few years.

The meeting closed at 7:54pm.

Signed:

Cllr Henderson (Chairman)

Date:
