

## **Bredon, Bredon's Norton and Westmancote Parish Council**

The minutes of Bredon's Annual Parish Meeting held at Bredon Village Hall on **Monday 10<sup>th</sup> April 2017** at 7.00 pm.

### **Present:**

Cllrs Mr Richard Coghlan, Mr Phil Handy (Chairman), Mr Mike Johns, Mr Andrew Rhodes, Mr Ian Rowland-Hill, Mr Declan Shiels, Mr Rob Sly, Mr Adrian Darby (District) and Mr Adrian Hardman (County and District).

Ms J Shields (Clerk), Mrs Alison Palmer, Mr P Kelson and Mr Tim Drew.

### **1. Apologies for Absence.**

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Mr Matt Darby and Cllr Mr Kevin Falvey and Mr Allen Frampton.

### **2. Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting Held 18<sup>th</sup> April 2016.**

The minutes having been circulated were agreed and signed as a true record.

### **3. Parish Council Chairman's Report.**

Good Evening Ladies and Gentlemen and welcome to the Annual Parish Meeting.

This time last year the Neighbourhood Plan was at the consultation stage – The Neighbourhood Plan group consists of councillors and parishioners who have had many meetings and submitted a plan for examination – I am pleased to report that the end is in sight! Referendum day is 8th June, and if the plan is approved by most those voting, it will be adopted shortly afterwards. Thanks to Matt and Alison for being the driving forces behind this and all the neighbourhood plan group. As ever planning seems to be one of the main issues - I feel that the planning group has handled this very well over the last 12 months with no real contentious issues. So, to sum up planning my thanks to Andrew, Matt & Richard who together with me make up the planning group.

As I'm sure your all aware on Wednesday evening we had travellers that setup on the Jubilee Car Park – I must thank Kevin for alerting me and for his ongoing help in eventually their removal, also Andrew & several residents who helped with the clean-up – I would also like to thank Di who suggested the Sherriff's office who we used to successfully evict them. I'm also indebted to Adrian Hardman who when contacted by me was straight on the case with advice and contacting Jack Hegarty of Wychavon who also gave advise. So, thanks to them both.

My thanks also go to:

Parish Mag – Declan.

Maintenance – Kevin.

Grasscutting – Rob.

Bredon's Norton – Richard and Brod.

BPCR – Rob.

Staffing group – Declan, Diane & Ian.

Jo Lomasney - for looking after the Village Hall.

I would also like to thank Mike and all councillors who are on a working party / group for their ongoing work with such issues as contracts, village hall, tennis club insurance to name a just a few. During the coming year, the PC plans to take ownership of the phone-boxes in Westmancote and Queensmead.

Moving on to New homes bonus:

The council has supported and approved applications for The Eckington road footway, A storage shed for the Rugby, football & BCPR, a new boiler for Bredon's Norton village hall, £5000 to the football club towards their extension, the sailing club, community care and the carpark lighting.

We have also benefitted once again from continued support from our county and district councillor Adrian Hardman who as ever has represented us at district and county level. Also, we have benefitted from the ongoing support of our other district councillor Adrian Darby who supported us especially with his expert evidence at the Gladman's enquiry.

During the year, due to life & family commitments we lost Alison Palmer as a councillor I think it no exaggeration to say that her efforts on various appeals and the Parish plan have been truly outstanding – also on a personal basis I found her help and at times reassurance invaluable, always being there to talk to and helping in whatever way she could, so a heartfelt thanks to her for her work over the years.

This is Jackie's last meeting our clerk of 11 years who has decided to ramp down her work commitments. Jackie, you will be missed by us all, when you joined the PC as clerk 11 years ago it was a very different role to that of today we have acquired the village hall which posed a huge challenge to the council but especially you with the extra role of employees and VAT responsibilities – however you met these challenges head on and thanks to you we find ourselves where we are today. You have also helped me in my role of chairman, supporting when needed and telling me if I get something wrong. I will miss our post-mortems into how we think the meeting went last night and how we could do things better etc. etc. So, I would like you all to join me in wishing Jackie good fortune for the future.

With Jackie's farewell, it is with great pleasure that I welcome Tim Drew who will be taking over from Jackie at the end of the month. So, Welcome Tim.

I would also like to thank Andrew whose role as vice chairman can go un-noticed but a source of constant support and help to us all - so Andrew a huge thank you for your advice and generally just being there and keeping it all ticking along you have been a very supportive vice chairman. It has been an honour and I'm very proud to have been your chairman We are lucky enough to live in a beautiful area and with your efforts long may that continue. So, thank you all.

#### **4. County and District Councillor Mr Adrian Hardman's Report.**

Dear All,

I am delighted to be with you tonight, and to be able to field your questions at the end of this report. Though I am no longer leader of the Council, it has meant that I have been able to take a step back and appraise how the County Council is running. But most importantly spend more time around Bredon Hill.

At the County we continue to have a series of budgetary challenges in a series of areas, some in some areas caused by demand pressure and some by the reductions in Government funding which we are still, some ten years on from the crash, having to cope with. As I highlighted last year there are four areas of concern; the numbers of Children in our care, Adult Social care, dealing with the cuts, and devolution.

We have more children in our care now than at any time in our history, with some 740 now under the care of the Council. This pressure has not helped us in our recent OFSTED inspection, where we are

found to be inadequate in some areas. This meant in the recent budget we had to find some £3.5M to fund this pressure. The issue is one of staffing and leadership in my view.

Our demographic pressure has been shown up in the performance at the Worcestershire Acute, where the pressure over the Christmas period nearly meant we had to call a stage 4 alert. We have diverted some extra £9M into the adult social care. This does not improve the service but keep it in a steady state. The improvements are to come by supporting the frail in their own homes, with enablement support. The budget has helped with some £21 M being sent from the centre to support us over the next 3 years. To be financially sound and strong is a great advantage at times such as these, so one can cope with an unexpected blow.

The devolution debate has been on pause for the year.

On the plus side of the balance sheet we still have the fourth lowest council tax, the waste to energy plant is now finished on time and even slightly under budget, so we no longer have to rely on Hill and Moor landfill. The Worcestershire economy has been the 3rd fastest growing LEP area in the Country for the past 5 years averaging over 3.2. 9 out of 10 of our schools are rated good or outstanding. We continue to invest in the road, rail, and digital infrastructure, as seen by the works on the Southern link (despite the views of the Worcester News), the Worcestershire Parkway station is under way, and broadband has been improved in the village. Unlike some Counties we continue to maintain the road network in a fair condition. Try Cheltenham for an example.

The District Council continues to manage its affairs, and finances in a prudent manner. As chairman of the Audit Committee I approve! I still continue to be concerned over the planning issues that continue to arise, but with the outstanding efforts of the Parish Council we have been able to see off the unwelcome ones. After some 27 years we are changing the Collection Company for the waste bins this year, and I hope it will be a seamless change.

On a local level, this is what really counts; the improvements to the village which we alluded to in last year's report have been delivered or underway. At last the road works in Westmancote have started, and the footway extension is started, in partnership with the parish council to connect the main village to Lower Westmancote. The school is in good health, and I was pleased to be able to help with the repair of the wall and stock proof fencing along the road, with a local members grant to help the school.

I urge you to use the 540-bus service to keep it going.

Lastly two topical subjects, sadly the Cllr for Tewkesbury East Vernon Smith has launched a consultation on new routes for the A46, one of which runs along the Carrant to Junction 9, and the other joins A46 to Junction 8 of the M5 / M50, which of course cuts Kemerton off from Bredon, crosses the SSI, and in part in the Cotswold ANOB. This idea is just a line on the map, it has no backing from Highways England, The County Council, or me. It is sad he is the Chair of the cross-county group the A46 Partnership. It would appear he needs training on Partnership working. I encourage you to respond and tell him he is nuts.

But of a more pressing issue it Tewkesbury's desire to expand into Worcestershire, by building some 500 to 1100 housing units along Mitton Bank. This idea is enclosed in the moderations launched by the inspector, and the 3 districts. This idea is opposed by us and outside their area of control. But it is an issue that won't go away easily.

Lastly, we say goodbye to our Clerk, she has done great service for us and will be much missed. Bon voyage Jackie.

#### **5. District Councillor Mr Adrian Darby Report.**

Strictly speaking this report should only cover Westmancote, which falls into my ward, but the issues mostly apply to the whole parish.

I have been looking back over my last few years report and the same major concerns turn up each year.

#### Finance

This year I was away when the budget was finalised. Once again Wychavon has continued with its business plan Grow, Save, Charge. This was its proposal to cope with a reduction of £4m of central government funding between 2010/11 and 2017/18, which represents 59% of our budget. In fact, the council has comfortably exceeded its target, realising an extra £5m so far with a further £700k targeted by March 2021.

The council tax was raised by 2%. This is only half of the £5 per house which the government would allow before requiring a referendum.

#### Planning

There have been several small-scale applications for house alterations in Westmancote during the past year all of which were determined by officers under delegated powers.

The South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP) was adopted on the 25 February 2016, and there was no referral for judicial review in the High Court. Since then the work of the planning committee, on which I serve, has been much reduced, because developers risk considerable wasted costs if they chance their arm in making applications which would conflict with the plan's policies. However, Bredon does not need only to pay attention to its own local plan, the SWDP, but also should watch carefully the situation in the adjoining county of Gloucestershire. Here the Gloucester, Cheltenham, Tewkesbury Joint Core Strategy (GCT-JCS) was intending to allocate a very large area of housing land within a quarter of a mile of the parish boundary.

It had identified the Ashchurch MOD site and some green field land to the north west of it as a strategic allocation for 2725 dwellings and 20 ha of employment land.

I had been urging Wychavon to object to this unless various safeguards can be achieved. In particular, we need control of traffic to prevent rat-running through the Bredon Hill villages when there are blockages on the A46, and adequate screening from Bredon Hill plus proper protection of the sensitive biodiversity of the Carrant Valley. To make this case I attended sessions of the Examination in Public of the JCS last year. These extended beyond the end of March date which I reported to you a year ago, because the inspector had increased the total number of houses required for the strategy area. She proposed that Wychavon be requested to help meet the shortfall by allowing 500 houses to be built in its territory at Mitton between Tewkesbury and Bredons Hardwick. I drove Cllr Hardman and my son Matthew who is a member of Bredon PC to the resumed hearing on 6th July. They spoke against anything other than a small extension northward into Bredon Parish, while Wychavon's Policy Officer made it clear that Wychavon would want to retain control of any extension.

However, the whole matter has now been thrown back into the melting pot since the MoD won't release all of its site. The inspector has now produced a new set of modifications, including taking the MOD allocation out of the strategy. However, this leaves her very short of the required housing

numbers even though her latest proposed modifications include the suggestion that Wychavon commits itself to accepting her idea for Mitton (she can't actually allocate this land as it is outside her plan area). Wychavon has not yet formally responded to this suggestion and will consider it at its next full council meeting. However, it has a legal duty to cooperate with a neighbouring authority and this is specifically recognised in the SWDP. However even with Mitton it is not clear to me how Tewkesbury will meet its target and there is clearly an assumption that a lot of development will in fact happen on the Ashchurch site.

Mercifully Robert Hitchins Ltd lost their appeal for 550 houses on the part of this allocated site which is still farmland and lies to the east of the railway, south of Aston Fields Lane and north-west of the camp. The key deciding factor here seems to have been the lack of proper access to the road system and in particular to the A46. This takes me to the concern which has exploded on social media in the last few weeks over what improvements can and should be carried out to the A46 and its interchange with the M5 at junction 9. The chairman of the A46 partnership of local authorities Cllr Smith of Gloucestershire has started the hare of looking for a bypass to Ashchurch running north of the existing road from Little Beckford. He has suggested two routes one joining the M5/M50 interchange and crossing the Avon over the SSSI and going just south of Kemerton through the middle of the Kemerton Woods nature reserve, the other going along the Carrant Brook local wildlife site and joining a new M5 junction beyond Northway. He seems to be running an unofficial survey asking for comments on his ideas. Needless to say, our County Councillor who is the vice-chairman of the partnership does not think much of the idea.

Lastly, I am pleased that Wychavon have approved the Bredon Neighbourhood plan after taking account of the inspector's modifications, although like your parish council I was sorry that he made some of these amendments. I congratulate all those who put in so much hard work and urge all the residents of Bredon to vote in the referendum on 8 June.

## **6. Police Report.**

The last 12 months has continued to be busy throughout our policing area which extends from Whittington, Upton Snodsbury and Dormston in the north to Bredon and Beckford in the south. We have carried out active engagement within our policing area in the form of monthly police surgeries and local parish events. The whole team remain committed to tackling all levels of crime throughout the area including rural crime and poaching and providing security advice and support to victims and vulnerable residents.

This report is based using the recorded crime figures between 10/04/2016 and 10/04/2017 the comparison is relating to the corresponding dates in 2015/16.

Overall the police recorded 248 incidents that were reported by members of the public this is compared to 217 incidents reported the previous year.

Of the 248 incidents the Parish had 57 recordable crimes (incidents where a specific offence has occurred) this was in comparison to 50 recordable crimes the previous year.

The breakdown of offences is as follows:

	<u>2016/17</u>	<u>2015/16</u>
Burglary Dwellings	7	14
Burglary non dwelling	10	5
Theft of Vehicle	2	0
Theft from Vehicle	4	2

Vehicle crime	1	0
Theft Other	10	5
Criminal Damage	0	3
Arson	1	0
Other Offences	22	21

(Includes mostly domestic related incidents and concern for safety)

Overall the figures show a steady but low crime rate for the past few years. The number of burglaries has halved which shows that residents are taking notice of security advice given and remaining vigilant. The burglary non-dwellings (mainly sheds and outbuildings) has doubled but we believe this is due in some part to several shed breaks which occurred at the allotments near Mitton in October. We have continued with increased patrols in the area and have issued security advice, the team will also be liaising with allotment holders to carry out property marking.

The figures clearly present the picture that Bredon and the surrounding area is still a safe place to both live and work, however we all have a responsibility to ensure we maintain this. On behalf of the team and myself I should like to offer my thanks to the Parish Council for all its help over the last 12 months. I would also like to say thank you to the Parish as a whole for its continued support of the local policing team and for the numerous calls we have received relating to suspicious activity, all we ask is that you continue to do this.

Pershore Rural North and South Local Policing Team  
 Non-emergency phone number: 101

## **7. Questions from The Floor.**

Cllr Darby thanked the council on behalf of the Kemerton Conservation Trust for its donation, form the New Homes Bonus, towards the new hide.

Andrew Rhodes presented the clerk with a bouquet of flowers and the Chairman, on behalf of the council, thanked Jackie for her efforts during the past 11 years.