



ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Monday 29 April 2019 at 7.30pm
in The Ellendune Community Centre.**

Chair: Cllr J Hewer

Attendees: Cllr P Bhardwaj
Cllr L Campisano
Cllr C Clark
Cllr H Dosanjh
Cllr H Hodd
Cllr G Jones
Cllr D Phillips
Cllr A Richards
Cllr A Woodhead

1. Welcome by Chair

The Chair of the Parish Council (Cllr J Hewer) introduced himself and welcomed those present to the Annual Parish Meeting.

2. Apologies

Cllr Spry
Cllr Kennedy
Cllr Harcourt

3. Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting held on 23 April 2018

The minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting held on 23 April 2018 were made available to all attendees and were agreed as a true record.

4. Report from the Chair of Wroughton Parish Council

For those that don't know me – I'm John Hewer, and his last year was my first year as Chair of the Parish Council - it has certainly been a busy one.

Early in the year there were resignations from Cllrs Steve Pagett, Bruce Kingstree and Holly Woodward. We welcomed Cllrs Chris Kennedy, Hazel Hodd and Diane Philips on as co-opted members.

We have recently had an uncontested election which has resulted in several long standing members choosing not to stand. I would like to show my own personal appreciation to Cllrs Steve Harcourt, Gareth Jones, Amanda Woodhead, Talis Kimberley-Fairbourn, Diane Philips, Chris Kennedy and Dave Wells for their hard work and dedication to Wroughton Parish Council over the years.

We look forward to welcoming two new Councillors in May, Cllrs Debbie Hooper and Graham Overbury. There will in due course be an option for five members to be Co-opted onto the council, I do hope that those of you present will consider joining us.

The staff team have become more settled in their roles with just one change in the Grounds Team, following the resignation of Dan Stokes, we welcomed Taylor Gill on board back in October. We have also recently approved the purchase of an additional vehicle for the Grounds Team which will enable them to cover the whole village more efficiently and also save money by emptying the village litter bins during the winter period when there is less mowing to be done.

The Office Staff have been busy gaining useful vocational qualifications. Katy Cena, our Clerical and Communications Assistant has completed the Introduction to Local Council Administration. Oliver Armstrong, our Administration Officer has completed the Certificate of Local Council Administration (meaning that he is now a qualified Clerk) and Jodie Smart, our Clerk has completed the Certificate of Higher Education in Community Governance (meaning that she is now an advanced qualified Clerk). I believe that this shows the council and council staff's commitment to providing the best quality service to our residents.

With the introduction of GDPR and the subsequent Data Protection Act 2018 the Council invested in a secure file sharing facility which also included dedicated Councillor email addresses. This ensures that all data is handled securely and in accordance with legislation. It also enables members to have access to documents via a secure web link. This also helps the council to use less paper and therefore save money. It is my hope that the new council will further take on board this initiative and strive to become a 'paper-light' organisation.

Unfortunately, some of our play areas have fallen foul to bouts of vandalism and anti-social behaviour, which also has impacted our efforts to reopen the Youth Club. We have since been working very closely with the police, which culminated in the community meeting held earlier this month. We have also invested in CCTV at some of our sites which has already proven its worth by assisting the police to identify individuals committing offences.

I hope that the new council will progress the reopening of the Youth Club, and to that end, the Youth club working party have already had promising meetings with the Youth Manager who works for Central Swindon North, and also Central Swindon South, for help and advice and are considering the next steps.

The Parish Council continues to support our local organisations such as the Wroughton Community Asset Trust (who run the library) and The Ellendune Hall Trust (who manage this Community Centre). We also work closely with organisations like Vision4Wroughton who do a fantastic job of maintaining Willow-Brook Gardens and organising village events such as the Duck Race and Advent Calendar Trail. I would like to thank all of our wonderful village organisations and hope that we will continue to work together over the coming years.

Work on developing the Maunsell Way pavilion has continued with earnest over the past twelve months. We have instructed an Architect and started public consultation with a view to submitting a planning application very soon. Thanks go to the Working Party and Deputy Clerk for their continued hard work and dedication on this project. If you haven't done so already, please do look at the plans this evening and complete a questionnaire.

The Parish Council remain committed to providing play areas for our local children. We have recently signed the lease for Badgers Brook play area which we will now take over the maintenance of from Swindon Borough Council. We also continue with plans to install new equipment at Thorney

Park providing that we can reach agreement with the land owner/Housing Association and are progressing plans to reinvigorate the Boness Road play area, plans will be available very soon.

Overall I consider that we are a very proactive and ambitious parish council that works very closely with local organisations and residents to provide the best possible service and make Wroughton a great place to live.

Thanks go to my Vice Chair, Lisa Campisano for her continued support and also to fellow members of the Council.

5. Financial Report from the Clerk

At the end of the financial year, which was the 31 March 2019, the accounts for 2018/19 which are due to be audited in mid-May, the expenditure against income showed a surplus of just over £21,500.

Budgets for 2019/20 are set very tightly. The surplus has been added to the general funds which now stand at £133,000.00 which gives us a reasonable reserve going into the next financial year and has allowed us to supplement the required precept by £15,000.00.

6. Committee Report from Chair of Community Buildings Committee – Cllr A Woodhead on behalf of Cllr S Harcourt

Cllr Woodhead read the report on behalf of Cllr S Harcourt. Cllr Woodhead stated her gratitude to Cllr Harcourt who was stepping down at the end of the term and noted his dedication, professionalism and tenacity in his outstanding contribution to the parish council and wider community. Personal thanks also go to him.

Community Buildings has dealt with a number of topics over the last 12 months which in many ways have been disappointing and frustrating.

Our biggest concern has been the delays in reopening the Youth Club. Whilst our community already benefits from a large range of activities for young people such as the Scout Groups, Guide Groups, 115 Club, Youth Football and other sports Clubs, these groups do not appeal to, or meet the needs of, all young people. The Youth Club which has operated from the Maunsell Way Pavilion for many years met a need that the other groups didn't. Sadly, Swindon Borough Council's Youth Service stopped supporting the Club in 2013 and it was then run by volunteers, with the support of the Parish Council until 2017. However, the Club then had to close because issues caused by a small group of disruptive people raised concerns for the safety of both the young people and staff.

Since then we have worked with Youth Action Wiltshire to put in place an operating model for a Youth Club which met the needs of the young people who attended, whilst providing a safe environment for volunteers. We finally felt able to open at the start of 2019 following a number of taster sessions at the end of 2018. It is very regretful that the club had to close again very shortly afterwards as a result of unacceptable behaviour from a small group of young people who were not even members of the club.

We are now looking at what the options are for re-opening the Club again, and have been promised that this time, the Community Policing Team will support the Club.

On a more positive note, work is continuing on a possible refurbishment or replacement of the pavilion at Maunsell Way. We are working with Wroughton Scouts, Wroughton Youth Football Club and Swindon's Early Years Team on a project to provide a new home for a Youth Club, the Scouts, the Youth Football Club and an Early Years (Pre-school) provider at this. Sharing the building in this way helps spread both construction and running costs between users and makes the proposal more

economically viable. I would particularly like to thank Councillor Carol Clark along with the Maunsell Way working group for the time and effort they have devoted to this project.

The Pavilion at the Weir Field has also required some works of repair and refurbishment over the last year. It is disappointing that some of this has been the result of vandalism. As a result of this, CCTV has been installed at the site which it is hoped will reduce the incidence of vandalism and allow the persons responsible to be identified and dealt with by the Police.

The Parish Council has also been responsible for the Public Toilets in Wharf Road since Swindon Borough Council stopped funding them in 2017. Over the last year we have installed automatic locking mechanisms which has enabled us to increase the opening hours of the toilets

Finally, I would like to thank all the Councillors on the Committee, along with the Office Staff, for their support and help over the last 12 months.

Cllr Woodhead stated this was her last parish meeting and thanked colleagues, staff members and all the community groups in the village. Cllr Woodhead noted her intention to continue to be involved in projects especially the Youth Club. Although she was stepping down she would still be active within the local community as a Library Trustee and Scout Chair.

7. Committee Report from Chair of Planning – Cllr H Dosanjh

The year started quietly enough, and it wasn't until July that the really "interesting" stuff started to happen.

In July 2018 Hospital Road became so pot holed that Stagecoach refused to allow the 81 bus to travel on it, so Thorney Park and Langton Park school children had to be collected by a Barnes mini bus.

Cathy Martyn managed to talk some money out of colleagues at SBC and the road, though privately owned, was resurfaced.

At the same time, we received a Planning Application to build 18 houses at Langton Park. The applicants had received written advice from Swindon saying that although the development would be in conflict with their Sustainable Development Strategy and our Neighbourhood Plan, the Council's inability to demonstrate a three-year housing supply means that permission should be granted. Everyone on Planning felt a horrible sense of déjà vu,

And then in October the bombshell hit; the SHELAA.

Councillor Gary Sumner asked for a meeting for what we thought was a general discussion about the SHELAA – The Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment.

He explained that as Swindon couldn't prove a three-year land housing supply, they basically can't stop any developers from building almost anywhere, and that being the case, if we accepted new developments en masse, instead of piecemeal applications, we might be able to get some improvements to infrastructure. Of course the alternative interpretation, might be that if we resisted we couldn't count on any support from Swindon.

We pointed out the strain any extra housing would put on Swindon Road, Marlborough Road, Wharf Road and Priors Hill, and that there was no space to improve those roads, as they are narrow and Victorian, designed for horse and cart. We complained that our infrastructure is affected by too many small developments, not sharing access. Gary was advocating a plan led approach, so that developers work more closely with them which might ease the infrastructure issues at the outset. We said we understood it was important to work closely with Swindon in the future, as we know

that larger developments could bring much needed infrastructure – a bigger Health Centre and new schools – but there would still be no guarantees. Swindon was selling this as an opportunity to redesign the village.

At this point they informed us they had been approached by a large organisation in Wroughton who would like to build 250 – 300 homes. This organisation turned out to be The Prospect. As if this wasn't enough, the White Horse Federation communicated their wish to build 100 homes on the school sports field, which, it seems, is the only way they can pay for improvements to the Ridgeway School.

Even Thames Water has investigated developing a field near Falkirk Road; although we think they might change their mind about that one.

So, when we totted up the possible number of new homes on the SHELAA map it came to 1500, including the Overtown area, Thorney and Langton Park, and land on both sides of Swindon Road. John Hewer and I went to meet with Robert Buckland, who was very understanding, but who I think had other fish to fry.

In the meantime, in December and January we objected to the Langton Park application at two Planning Committees at Swindon Borough Council. We were ably supported by members of the public who spoke about the experience of near misses from traffic travelling too fast along Priors Hill, and Cathy Martyn who listed the many reasons why this development would be a car dependent corridor. To our amazement, we successfully fought off this planning application, although as you might guess, the developer is appealing.

In January Cathy Martyn and Brian Ford organised a Public meeting so that Gary Sumner could explain the SHELAA to residents. Many Chiseldon residents attended as what affects us in terms of traffic, affects them too, and vice versa. By this point Overtown had been removed from the SHELAA map, which was one positive.

In February of this year Linden homes informed us they had decided to add another 16 houses to their development of 100. Not only this, but there was still no sign of the promised crossing across Swindon Road to allow residents to access facilities in Wroughton. This was an issue that had been rumbling on since November, when we objected. There is now a crossing on offer, but it may not be the one everyone wishes to see.

We have asked this to go before Swindon's Planning Committee, which will possibly happen in June.

The good news from 2019

Parcels 1, 2 and 3 Middle Wichel, Wichelstowe have been given the go ahead, so that's 300 dwellings, and some work has started. The bridge has been installed and the Hall and Woodhouse Pub has opened. The Deanery School is due to open in September and the Primary School with a 76 place nursery alongside it is also on target.

The Science Museum – this brilliant and hugely important storage for the nation's museum treasures has been started, and its cutting edge design will be carbon neutral.

So to conclude;

This year has been about compromise; trying to hold together the increasing gap between what we would like to see happen, and what is actually happening.

We continue to fight and argue for a better deal or a better design, or at least take the sting out of the worst applications. The Neighbourhood Plan Review is going ahead and we sincerely hope that residents will turn out to vote for this, as we have been told that Swindon might just achieve their three years of housing supply by 2020, in which case this will be a powerful weapon.

Finally, I need to say how sorry I am that Steve Harcourt and Chris Kennedy are leaving the Planning Committee after many years of incredible service to the village. They have both contributed enormously to the level of debate and organisation of the Parish Council and Planning in particular. We will miss their intellect. Unfortunately, neither of them can be here tonight as Chris is unwell and Steve is on a well-deserved holiday.

It just remains for me to say thank you to my colleagues who are still here, for their support, and hours of preparation before meetings. Thank you for your support.

8. Committee Report from Chair of Open Spaces – Cllr C Clark

This was the Open Spaces Committee's inaugural year. Last year we re-distributed agenda items, with the aim to balance the workload across the five committees. Generally, this has worked well, but the unnecessarily long Outside Spaces agendas are currently being reviewed. Considerations for improvements are; increasing the frequency of meetings and developing processes and procedures that work for councillors.

Over a 12-month period, the Open Spaces Committee deals with a wide variety of projects that aim to maintain and improve the open space facilities which serve our parish.

The highlights from the municipal year 2018 to 2019 are:

Pump Track

The pump track has been open for around 8 months and is a hit with parishioners and others from further afield. So far BMX Wroughton have held an Open Day and a Track Maintenance Day. Currently BMX Wroughton are concentrating on grass growing and securing the stability of the start hill. They have in process a planning application for flood lights around the track. BMX Wroughton continue to liaise with the Outside Spaces committee providing a verbal report on progress with the track. We thank them for their time and look forward to working with them over the coming year.

Thorney Park Play Area

The former tennis court at Thorney Park has been identified as the proposed location for a new play area. A major milestone has been reached from the parish perspective; the office has been persisting to identify the landowner of the former site. Over the years, land ownership hasn't been clear as it could be owned by the MOD and/ or a number of housing associations. We now know who are the landowners and we are in contact with them regarding this project. Thorney Park play area is a high priority for the parish council. Thanks needs to go to the Clerk for persisting to find the landowner to move this project forward.

Badgers Brook Play area

We are now pleased to confirm that finally, after many years of negotiation, the Badges Brook play area is now a Wroughton Parish Council asset. This play area has transferred from the developer via the Swindon Borough Council legal team.

Falkirk Road Football Pitches

Wroughton Youth Football Club are constantly on the lookout for youth football pitches. They currently play at Maunsell Way, Wroughton Junior and Ridgeway schools; I understand they play at other locations as well. Wroughton Parish Council have started the planning process to improve the quality of surface finish, with youth football in mind, to the Falkirk Road grassed area. This area

is currently under utilised and will support Wroughton Youth Football Club's need for additional football pitches within the parish.

Maunsell Way Re-Development

From an Outside Spaces prospective members are overseeing the retention of green open leisure space at the Maunsell Way site. Open Spaces member's sit on the Sports and Youth Facilities Working party. Whilst it is acknowledged green leisure space will be lost to the building, it is felt that the increase in participation at the site far outweighs this loss of space. The layout for the car park has been reviewed several times over and currently requires negligible amounts of green space to contribute to the building's needs. The plans are presented here this evening and I'm more than happy to run through these plans with any parishioner. We have now conducted 2 community consultations and plan to conduct another two at the pre-planning application stage.

We frequently have our plans independently reviewed by a Wiltshire Police, Designing Out Crime Officer. There are number of Police observations that we are actioning to improve the layout of the Maunsell Way Site.

At this point, I want to acknowledge the Deputy Clerk's contribution to this project. Over the last year there has been a lot of information produced and various groups to manage. Her commitment hasn't gone unnoticed, thank you.

Following the successful resurrection of Wroughton Carnival in 2016, we are pleased to be informed by the 2019 committee that they are on track to deliver another successful event on the 6th July 2019. As in recent years, WPC are underwriting the carnival to a maximum of £2,500. The Carnival is an asset to the village calendar. We wish the event and committee continued success. Another successful annual event is the Christmas tree lighting up ceremony. On behalf of the Outside Spaces Committee, I'd like to thank all involved, especially the community of volunteers that decorate the Ellendune Shopping centre mini Christmas trees. We all need to say a big thank you to Cowpocinos and Tic Toc, as they supply the electrical feed to the mini Christmas tree lights throughout the Christmas period.

Taking a different view point on the allotments this year, I'd like to first offer my sincere thanks to Oliver Armstrong for his continued dedication to managing the allotments on behalf of the parish council. From my own personal experience, I know managing and communicating with the allotment holders is a tough gig. Oli is genuinely passionate about delivering a good service, but the resources given to him are limited. I propose to carry out, via Full Council, a root and branch review of how the allotments are serviced, this is to include: committee, working party, office and grounds team. But conducting an honest internal appraisal of allotment service provision is only part of the equation. I ask every allotment holder to consider how you interact with your allotment neighbours and challenge your own expectations for parish run allotment provision and to think where additional funding could come from? Are there grants available? Are you willing to volunteer your time to improve community relations and assist new allotment holders? At this present time, councillors are not minded to further subsidise the allotments with tax payer's money. I believe it is time an allotment holder considers standing for co-option as a parish councillor should any places become available.

We are grateful for the time given by the plot holder's representatives, particularly Noel Williams and Brian Richards in assisting the parish office over a number of years; identifying problems and issues but also providing practical and workable solutions.

Unfortunately, the council was unable to hold the annual allotment holders meeting this year. I was away during September and there was no other councillor available to attend the meeting in my place. My understanding is there will be an annual meeting scheduled for 2019.

The Common Farm Link Bridge has now been installed for just over a year. Parish councillors continue to work with Vision 4 Wroughton, Swindon Borough Council and the Ridgeway School to provide creative learning opportunities to manufacture way finding footpath signs for this popular leisure walking area. I'm certainly looking forward to seeing the end results from this collaborative community project.

We have 4 outside staff employed by Wroughton Parish Council. The quality of work they produce across Wroughton parish is highly valued by councillors and I'm sure all councillors will wish to extend our gratitude towards them. Going forward, I propose that the grounds team become more visible and more familiar with the Outside Spaces Committee members. Councillors can better understand their issues if they can be communicated face to face. The proposal is, any grounds team member attends the Outside Spaces Committee no less than 2 times a year to deliver an informal verbal report and Q&A session for councillors.

At this point I would also like to thank both Swindon Borough Council's Martin Fry and Jonathan Wiltshire and the Ramblers Association for playing their part in keeping footpaths accessible throughout the parish.

Councillors have had requests to procure; new grounds team vehicles and a new build garage and workshop facility. These needs and wants will be considered against the requirement for Wroughton Parish Council to maintain the landscape at both Middle and West Wichelstowe. Both these communities are within the Wroughton Parish Boundary. This coming year, a priority for the council is to review the forthcoming service requirements for Wroughton, West and Middle Wichelstowe, to help inform the council on the overall service provision and spend going forward. As the Wichelstowe build out rate fluctuates over the coming years, this balance of service provision, needs to be reviewed annually by the Open Spaces Committee and our recommendations presented to Full Council for consideration.

It has been an honour to serve as Chair of Outside Spaces. I'd like to thank my Vice Chair Cllr Gareth Jones for all his support and commitment over the years. I'd also like to extend my thanks to Gareth's family who have given him the space and time to conduct his duty as a highly respected parish councillor from 2012 to 2019. I'd like to take this opportunity to extend my thanks and praise to my own family who have also made it possible for me to serve my community. Thank you!

My gratitude is further extended to the patience and commitment of the outside spaces committee members. This year has been tough for you, long agendas being the main issue. We are reviewing internal process, next year the agenda's and reports will better meet the committee's needs to deliver on behalf of our parishioners.

Finally, I would like to say thank you to Vision 4 Wroughton for their hard work maintaining outside spaces such as Ashen Copse and Willow-Brook gardens. Maintenance of Ashen Copse is central to the infant schools Forest School educational programme. As well as maintenance tasks, they need to be recognised for their incentives to get people out and about walking within our great outdoors. Vision 4 Wroughton volunteers organise and deliver both the New Year's Day Walk and the newly arranged Advent Calendar Window displays. Both these initiatives certainly give me a reason to get out and about during the dark, cold winter months. Thank you.

In Conclusion:

Outside Spaces relies upon all interested parties working together. The local environment is a managed environment and if it falls into disrepair and appears unloved then this could open up opportunity for others to find alternative uses for our outside spaces, ones that we may not find agreeable.

We must all play our part to do more with less resource. I'm quite sure the Open Spaces committee will continue to reach out to all interested volunteer groups that serve this community well. Please continue to work with us, councillors are committed to working with you.

9. Report from Swindon Borough Councillors

Cllr Brian Ford explained the difference between a Borough Councillor and a Parish Councillor, explaining that Borough Councillors had two functions. As a representative of the relevant ward and the responsibility for entire Borough.

Cllr Ford dealt with a number of queries and complaints in his role as representative for the Wroughton & Wichelstowe ward. The queries are very diverse and Cllr Ford expressed his commitment to assist where possible.

Cllr Ford is also cabinet member for Adult Health & Social Care. This mainly encompasses the elderly care, care for people with learning difficulties and health difficulties. The Adult Health & Social Care portfolio is not responsible for hospitals or resource allocation for the NHS, and focused more on ongoing support and facilitating preventative health measures. There was a £9.5m budget for health preventions.

The spend for the care of the elderly was at £72m. The Borough does not directly care for the elderly in the homes, instead other providers are commissioned to undertake this role. One of these care homes had recently received an inadequate rating and the Borough Council were working with the provider to bring it up to standard.

In terms of achievements, Cllr Ford identified the £2.9m underspend in the budget as an impressive feat considering the portfolio was overspending by £4.5m. He attributed the underspend to the great work from the officers involved.

Cllr Ford referenced the recent consultation regarding elderly care and potentially cutting services to save £0.75m. Officers have looked at it and the service has enhanced while making a saving of £109,000.

Cllr Martyn introduced herself as one of three Borough Councillors for the Wroughton and Wichelstowe ward. She stated that she did not want to repeat the information from other councillors but explained that lobbying cabinet members was crucial to the resurfacing works on Hospital Road.

Cllr Martyn stated there had been an improvement in communication between the police, schools and councils. She encouraged the reporting of crime and relevant information to the police.

She stated that Cllr Ford and herself were lobbying the CCG for an improved local health service and a meeting was held with Wroughton Health Centre to explain some of the issues residents were experiencing.

In relation to highways, yellow Lines were painted on the entrance to Ashen Copse to improve safety at the junction with Wharf Road. Whittingham Drive would also be added to the gritting route and the grit bins would be refilled before the winter months. The footpath and crossing at Banks Place would ideally be improved but there was no guarantee this can be achieved.

There will be additional drains added along Devizes Road to improve the water run-off in the area, once this is completed Swindon Borough Council officers will re-consider whether anything further is necessary.

Cllr Martyn stated there had been a planning application at Langton park which she actively opposed due to the unsuitability of the site and impact on Wroughton. There were also plans to remove a crossing from Swindon Road, originally agreed in conjunction with the development at Berkeley Farm, to which she helped engage further with developers and officers to re-instate a crossing.

The Strategic Housing and Land Availability Assessment had been undertaken in the previous year to identify land suitable for residential and commercial development. Cllr Martyn and Cllr Ford both engaged with the SHELAA and organised a meeting with the residents of Wroughton and also lobbied hard to get several sites removed.

In conclusion, Cllr Martyn thanked the Parish Council and residents of Wroughton.

10. Questions from the Public

A resident questioned the Borough Councillors about what happened to the proposed modifications to the Ellendune Car Park. Cllr Ford responded that the car park did need remarking but any significant changes would likely bring parking charges which impacts the local services and residents. He also suggested Cllr Martyn and himself conduct another survey to determine the user groups.

A resident stated the format for this years Annual Parish Meeting was much better but was disappointed with the public turnout for the event. The resident was aware that Wroughton Parish Council will be reviewing the Neighbourhood Plan and questioned what considerations will be made for the inevitable increase of housing to the east of Wroughton as the infrastructure will not be able to cope. Cllr Hewer informed the resident that the Neighbourhood Plan review is a job in progress and confirmed Cllr Harcourt, who was instrumental in the development of the plan, would be involved once again despite stepping down as a Councillor.

A resident questioned whether Wroughton Parish Council would consider looking into becoming a living wage employer and to become affiliated with the Finance Swindon Inequality Group. The Clerk stated that the council are already a living wage employer and could look at becoming affiliated with the group.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and the meeting closed at 8:24pm.