

Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly, held on Wednesday, 28 May 2019, at Leek Wootton Village Hall

Present: Councillors Coates (Chairman), Eassom, Maisey, Smith, Tunkle, D/Cllr Wright, Mr Philip Seccombe, Police & Crime Commissioner for Warwickshire, 32 members of the public and the Clerk

Apologies for Absence: Cllrs Eldridge, Kirkwood and Knott, C/Cllr Redford, D/Cllr Redford, All Saints' Church, All Saints' CofE Academy

1. Introduction and welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained its purpose

2. Minutes

The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Tuesday, 1 May 2018 were approved and signed.

a. There were no matters arising from the minutes

3. Report on 2018/19

The Chairman explained that the report for 2018/19 was written by two Chairmen, his predecessor having stepped down earlier this year due to ill health. The Chairman thanked Cllr Smith for his support and service as Chairman since 2014. He also thanked Councillors, Clerk and community for their support.

The Chairman summarised his report (The full report, together with all community group reports, is available on the Parish Council Website at <http://www.leekwootton.org.uk/your-parish/annual-parish-assembly>):

- The effect of the Police's new developments at Woodcote, now that they have made the decision to re-occupy the site.
- Its objection to the County Council's proposal to vary the Home to School walking route between Leek Wootton and Kenilworth
- Projects supported, including: 'Battle's Over' 1918 – 2018 hundred year commemoration of the ending of the First World War; The refurbishment of the children's playground with cushion soft woodchip, and; The parish Summer Fête in conjunction with All Saints' Church, Leek Wootton Sports Club and other local organisations

4a. Keynote Speakers

The Chairman introduced Mr Philip Seccombe, Police & Crime Commissioner for Warwickshire.

Mr Seccombe began by setting out the circumstances that led to the decision of Warwickshire Police to return and re-occupy Woodcote as Warwickshire Police Headquarters, in a reversal to the situation when he last visited in April 2017.

For 6 years Warwickshire Police has been in a strategic alliance with West Mercia Police. This included 25% financial contribution and was effectively a merger.

In October 2018 West Mercia Police issued Warwickshire Police with a notice of termination to take place in October 2019. High-level functions that had been shared with West Mercia Police, such as counter-terrorism, firearms will need to return to Warwickshire, as will force planning, estates and back office functions.

Local Policing will stay as it is, including Safer Neighbourhoods Teams, 999 response, etc.

Precept

The precept was raised by 12%. When surveyed 72% were in favour of this rise in the precept, on the condition that the additional funds are spent locally, with evidence. This has allowed for recruitment of 150 additional officers, an overall increase of 20%, and the recruitment process is under way. Ideally would like to see 1,000 police. There will also be an increase in PCSOs.

Also supported by the PCC Precept is: a new rural crime team working in areas such as wildlife crime and gypsy/traveller liaison; £2½million into preventative initiatives; a £500,000 grant towards road safety; assistance towards Neighbourhood Watch and Speedwatch schemes; various other initiatives looking at domestic abuse, family intervention schemes; the Dare to Dream initiative, dealing with hate crime, which is up dramatically in Warwickshire, and; Re-Think, a mental health initiative. Engaging young people is especially difficult, but pleased that the number of Police Cadets have doubled.

Woodcote

When the notice of termination was received from West Mercia Police, the Chief Constable asked Mr Seccombe to redesignate Woodcote as Warwickshire Police HQ. The control room is still in situ, although it will be moving to new facility in Warwick which is currently being fitted-out. The building is in relatively good condition, although it needs a minor refurbishment as it has not had much maintenance since the decision was taken to leave in 2011. Mr Seccombe considered it an easy decision. Woodcote was also the only empty space available in Warwickshire.

Woodcote became Police HQ in 1949 and the decision has been well-received by Police officers and staff.

There will be 150-200 staff in Warwickshire

As in the Neighbourhood plan, will also be looking for a development partner to work with on development of the paddock and tennis courts, which equates to 6 acres out of 75 and will provide up to 50 dwellings.

The development will create an increase in traffic and a potential third entrance may be created. However, any development will require a traffic management plan. Aware that the Parish Council have initiated discussions with Development Services at Warwick District Council. Any development will follow proper process. A new masterplan will be produced and subsequent development will follow this.

Mr Seccombe then took questions:

Resident 1: Please can you elaborate on traffic consequences – Traffic has increased since the merger with West Mercia?

The majority will be back office staff working from 9 until 5, plus there is an increase in flexible working hours and working from home. There will be little or no traffic in the evenings or at weekends. 999 response, firearms and the dog section will be based at Woodcote and there will be some increase. New development will be half of what was originally proposed. A traffic management plan will be in place. The control room staff that are currently located at Woodcote and work on shift patterns at all hours, will move to Warwick in due course (possibly the Autumn). Both entrances will be used and a preference for turning left and avoiding Leek Wootton. Prepared to listen to community concerns.

Resident 2: You have talked about traffic management plan and masterplan – what will happen to the woodland and lakes?

Historic England has previously assessed that the woodland protects the setting and environment of the listed building, so they are safeguarded. **Cllr Coates:** all the trees are listed.

Resident 3: With regard to a new masterplan, the village has been in an uncertain state for a considerable time. Is there a timescale for this?

Personal preference would have been to submit a planning application, but a masterplan is required and consultation process, etc can go on for as long or short a time as it takes. Aware that this has been an issue since Chief Constable Bristow made decision to move out of Woodcote. **Resident 3:** And the cost implication over the years. I was myself a Chartered Surveyor and have experience of planning process. WDC must approve an achievable plan. **Cllr Smith:** A masterplan will be enshrined in law according to the Localism Act.

Resident 4: What will happen to the non-listed buildings, pre-fabs and residential buildings?

No buildings will be residential. Will take advice on condition of property, but no plans at this time.

Resident 5: Where will a new entrance be?

Between the two other entrances on Woodcote Lane. The remaining hedges will be maintained.

Resident 4: These hedges are very high and unmaintained on Woodcote Lane. Taken note of this.

Resident 6: Speeding through Leek Wootton – an estimated 1 in 10 cars stick to the speed limit. What can be done about this?

A speed survey can be carried out and a Speedwatch scheme can be set up. This would need volunteers. In meeting with WCC Highways Safety, the PC was told that Leek Wootton is very low on their priorities. The double white line, which means no parked cars/obstructions permits drivers to travel at speed. **Resident 4:** People don't recognise the speed limit of 30 mph begins before The Warwickshire roundabout and drivers don't reduce speed until they see the light-up sign. Don't know whether it would solve it, but having a speedwatch scheme in place and a sign saying, "You are now entering a speedwatch area" can be effective. County Highways have limited resources and have to prioritise engineering works.

Chairman: Public access to the woodland – villagers have customarily walked dogs in the woodland. Are there any plans to change this?

There are no public footpaths in place. Currently no wish to change this. Must take into consideration realising the full value of land in any future sale.

Resident 7: Is the move back into Woodcote cost dependant on the new development? **No.** How will you get planning permission – the uncertainty has been a blight on the village. 400 traffic movements plus another 360 per day – Hope to be within the next year or two. Will the precept be raised to cover this? £5.5 million has been spent on the new communication centre in Warwick. Cannot say about future increase – will be money spent.

Resident 8: Anchor junction – referred to an historical proposal for a roundabout at Tidmarsh Road. With 9-5 being a busy time and addition traffic movements at this time caused by admin staff joining this busy time. Would the Police fund this proposal?

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) paid for by developers and administered through Parish Council may be a source of funding for this.

Resident 9: Staff are often observed to be speeding to or from Woodcote?

If so, please report it. The Police are subject to the law, just like everyone else.

The Chairman thanked Mr Seccombe.

4b. Open Forum

The Chairman invited those present to speak or raise questions about issues affecting the Parish:

Resident 5: Recycling vehicles have been observed speeding off and losing rubbish along the roadside. This issue has been reported to Warwick District Council in the past. **D/Cllr Wright:** This is a common issue – please report this to me and I will contact the portfolio holder. It is a problem however that is added to by litter thrown from cars. If vans or skips are observed travelling uncovered, please note their registration number or the name of the company from the side of the vehicle. I live close by in Kenilworth and will come and look at any issues that you raise with me. **Resident 4:** There is some plastic caught in the trees on the approach to Leek Wootton from Kenilworth. It has been there for some considerable time (years), although it is less visible in summer. **D/Cllr Wright:** I will look into it.

4. Closure of Meeting

The meeting was closed and refreshments were served.

Signed: Richard Coates (Chairman)

Date: 4 May 2021