

Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly, held on Tuesday, 15 March 2022, at Leek Wootton Village Hall

Present: Councillors Coates [RC] (Chairman), Allison, Eldridge [PE], Elsy, Knott [KK] and Tunkle, Chief Constable Debbie Tedds, Warwickshire Police [DT], Philip Seccombe, Police & Crime Commissioner for Warwickshire [PS], 12 members of the public [MoP] and the Clerk

Apologies for Absence: Cllr Kirkwood, District/Cllr Wright, Leek Wootton WI, Leek Wootton Scout Group, Leek Wootton & Hill Wootton Neighbourhood Watch Coordinators, Leek Wootton Village Hall, All Saints' Leek Wootton CofE Academy

1. Introduction and welcome

The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming everyone to the meeting, explaining its purpose and introducing Chief Constable Debbie Tedds and the Police & Crime Commissioner for Warwickshire.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Tuesday, 4 May 2021 were approved (Proposer: Cllr Allison / Seconded: Cllr Knott) and signed and are available to view at <https://www.leekwootton.org.uk/2021/05/24/annual-parish-assembly-2021-4-may-draft-minutes/>

a. There were no matters arising from the minutes

3. Report on 2021/22

The Chairman read his report for 2021/22.

4. Speaker: Chief Constable Debbie Tedds, Warwickshire Police

Chief Constable Tedds gave a brief history of her career, having joined Warwickshire Police in 1989 and held every position within the Service. She also described herself as 'Leamington Spa born and bred', which gives her a good understanding of the requirements of Warwickshire. She has also worked in partnership with other Services, working on events like the G7 Summit 2021 in Cornwall and COP26 in Glasgow.

CC Tedds described the current position of Warwickshire Police. For seven years Warwickshire Police was in an Alliance with West Mercia Police. In November 2018 West Mercia Police announced that it no longer wished to continue with the Alliance and a 12-month termination period began. Warwickshire Police decided to stand as an independent service, with Woodcote, Leek Wootton as its Head Quarters. This required re-building several services, including HR, finance, IT and training. It also has partnerships with other services, e.g. forensics with West Midlands.

At the end of March Warwickshire Police will be a fully stand-alone service.

This period of re-building has coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic, during which the nature of crimes experienced changed; there was an increase in societal crime and suppression of crimes like burglary and theft. COVID-19 also caused a suspension of services like pop-up surgeries, which are planned to be reinstated over the next 2 weeks.

Warwickshire Connected is a new service with reliable, timely information enabled by the new IT system.

Now there will be a full review of the policing model, which is set to report in the middle of the year. Safer Neighbourhoods Teams are at the heart of the policing model. PCSO Paul Coleman retired, but the new team will shortly be in place.

Empower

There are three streams to the policing model:

- Tech – The new kit will see officers out and about and not in stations
- Places – Moved back to Leek Wootton quickly. In the estates plan the Police have committed to Woodcote and the Justice Centres at Leamington Spa and Nuneaton and Stuart Ross House (new control room building). They are reviewing who and where people go, e.g. firearms, dogs, etc.

- People – The operating model will be informed by the review. The importance of community engagement and a high level of victim care and conformity to The Victims' Code

The move back to Leek Wootton has been rapid. Circa 450 people are based at HQ. Officers are not employees, but servants of the crown and as such must have a base location for the purpose of shift patterns and IT, so not all people based at HQ will be on site, so it is hard to say how many people are on site.

Infrastructure was still in place at Woodcote, i.e. IT, telephony, etc., so the move back was fairly easy.

There are advantages and disadvantages to the return. Officers should limit use of two-tones and lights in the village and do not park off-site.

In conclusion, the Police want to be part of the community.

5. Public Forum

a. Open Forum

The Chairman invited those present to speak or raise questions:

RC: Publicity about a County Lines arrest being made within the parish? **DT:** Did not give details of individual incidents, but talked about the advantage of the ANPR (automatic number plate recognition) system that can alert Officers to offenders' vehicles.

RC: Raised the concern of residents about blue-lights and rapid response vehicles. **DT:** There is a protocol in place to limit the use of lights and 'two-tones' (sirens) within Leek Wootton, but sometimes it is necessary. Lights and 'two-tones' are used for the safety of the public.

MoP 1: Conflicting statements that have been made over the years include Woodcote "not being fit for purpose" in 2011; 2018, "collaboration would not affect sale of HQ"; 2019 – reversal. We have had various proposals of retirement village, etc. What is the agenda/future? **PS:** Likened the collapse of the Alliance to a divorce. 95% of Warwickshire money was going into the Alliance. Warwickshire Police had no idea what was coming. First thing was to consider options, whether another Alliance was possible, negotiation. The decision took time and once decided to stand as an independent force, a new-build HQ was not affordable. The Police were lucky that Woodcote had not been sold, although a sale had been agreed, but this was put on hold immediately. There was no other option. Services were moved back from Hindlip. The control room remained unfit for purpose and the new control room will be in Warwick. Re-housing an organisation of 2,000 people required quick and logical thinking. **DT:** Agreed that statements have been inconsistent. With operational independence, the first thing was to commit to Leek Wootton, although it may not be operationally perfect it remains that it is in a strategic location for the force, being central in the county.

MoP 1: Is a 180-year-old house a drain on resources? **PS:** It is a listed building and North Lodge is within the curtilage listing. CALA money will go back into the building, which will be improved. There has been considerable discussion with agents around the setting. CALA wanted the whole of 'The Lunch' (woodland at rear of Waller Close). Landscaping proposals will be studied.

MoP 2: Can you confirm there is an intention to remove the gates at the end of the drive? **PS:** The driveway has not been sold and the gates will stay.

RC: Asked about the entrances and exits on Woodcote Drive for cars related to public pedestrian routes. **DT:** With the site at full occupancy a traffic management plan is needed around the site and use of the back drive. **RC:** Can the Parish Council be involved in the public side of this? **DT:** This will be considered. Safety when exiting the site is important, considering there is no pavement currently.

MoP 3: Traffic situation has worsened recently. Interested in Community Speed Watch [CSW], what power does that give? Development on police land will increase traffic on Woodcote Lane, can you advise about any plans or proposals? **DT:** The Safer Neighbourhood Team [SNT] is key contact in relation to speeding/use of main road, etc. CSW scheme contributes and letters are sent to those clocked speeding. The Anchor junction is a problem. PS is engaging with Warwickshire County Highways on this issue. **PS:** Recommend CSWs – a scheme set up on Tysoe 2-3 years ago has seen drivers' behaviour change. It is well supported by the Police. Also, Operation Snap allows members of the public to submit footage e.g. from dashcams. Warwickshire Road Safety Partnership's [WRSP] Warwickshire Road Safety Strategy to 2030 sets out an ambitious target to reduce deaths and serious

injuries on our roads by 50% by 2030. With regard to the Anchor Junction, advise the Parish Council to say to CALA and the District and County Councils that there is a problem and challenge them to work to resolve it. **RC:** The PC has raised this issue with all parties. There will be a traffic impact assessment as part of the application and the PC intends to commission professional consultants to assist with its response.

MoP 1: Why is The Lunch being leased? **PS:** The request to lease part of The Lunch made at a late stage in negotiations with CALA and PS understands this to be because CALA were struggling to fulfil open space requirements. They originally wanted the whole of The Lunch, but this was refused. CALA want to make a profit. Contracts were exchanged in November 2021 and completion was on 25 February and the site is now theirs. CALA was preferred bidder because they did not require planning permission to be in place before buying. The IT system alone has cost £32m. The remuneration from West Mercia Police and sale of land together will not repay this bill, but the new IT system will set the service up for 10-15 years without massive borrowing. **DT:** The existing footpaths have never been a Public Right of Way. From DT's point of view the operational aspects of using the estate take priority. This way The Lunch becomes public. **MoP 1:** The woodland has not been managed properly. **DT:** Agreed. For 7 years the Police were winding down their activities. **MoP 1:** Will more land be leased or sold? **DT:** No. **PS:** CALA wanted the freehold, but this was refused. **PE:** Will there be a fence? **PS:** Thinks so, yes. Police do not want to be officious.

MoP 4: Will the gate by the tennis courts which allows access onto the golf course remain open? **DT:** This needs to be locked when dogs are training, but will look at this.

MoP 5: Will the golf club land be fenced off? **DT:** The Leek Wootton site will never be 'secure'. May need presence to separate ownership, but no firm plans and do not envisage building a fence.

KK: What is the future for North Lodge? **PS:** It is a residential property within the curtilage of the estate. Considered whether it could be let or sold. Prefer to keep and let, either to Police or on open market. Currently looking at costings for refurbishment.

MoP 6: On-site traffic. Walking the dog on Monday counted a minimum of 35 cars on the tennis courts and no spaces in the main car park in front of the house. This causes concern for future parking after tennis courts are developed. **DT:** This week there have been a number of things happening, including the removal of the control room and there are additional staff on site. Removal of 150 staff will ease numbers. Mondays there are more people, corporate meetings plus maintenance of the stable block at the moment, taking away some spaces. **PS:** The Police have negotiated continued use of parking on the tennis courts until they are developed. Whilst there may be a physical barrier installed on the police land, this will not happen until after the tennis courts are developed.

5. Closure of Meeting

The Chairman thanked Chief Constable Tedds, Mr Secombe and all attending for coming and giving their time. Confirmed that his report, together with the RFO's Financial Report, the District Council Report and reports from various community organisations would be available on the website after the meeting at:

<https://www.leekwootton.org.uk/2022/03/16/annual-parish-assembly-15-march-2022-reports/>

The meeting was then closed.

Signed: Richard Coates (Chairman)

Date: 22/03/2023