

**Minutes of Meeting of Burton Dassett Parish Council held
on Monday, 21st March 2011, at Temple Herdewyke School
at 7.15 p.m.**

Present: Parish Councillors A.J. Wolstenholme (Chairman), Mrs. C. Bick, R.M.A. Lapworth, W.E. Pearson, Mrs. S. Smethurst and K. Williams.

In Attendance: Mrs. R.I. Manning (Clerk), Mr. J. Anderson (RFO), and County Councillor C.R. Williams for part of the meeting.

Apologies: Councillors Mrs. C. Bettany, Mrs. E.L. Woodward and District Councillor S. Jackson.

1. **Matter from the Public:** Mr. J. Anderson drew attention to the formal service at Burton Dassett Church on 12th April at 7.30 p.m. at which the new Priest in Charge of Burton Dassett, the Reverend Mike Cadwallader would be Licensed. Mr. Anderson was concerned at the number of potholes on the road to the church and the possibility that those attending the service might trip up in the dark. The Chairman said that he would draw the matter to the attention of Patch Byrne and ask him to take what action he could.
2. **Resignation of Councillor E.L. Woodward (Temple Herdewyke Ward):** The contents of an e-mail from Mrs. Woodward resigning from the Parish Council were conveyed to the meeting. The Clerk said that the usual notice about the vacancy would be put up at Temple Herdewyke.
3. **Minutes:** The minutes of the meeting held on 17th January 2011 were approved and signed as a correct record.
4. **County Councillor's Report:** County Cllr. Williams reported that following a lengthy debate the budget for Warwickshire had been set on 15th February, with no change in the level of Council Tax. However, less money would be available than in previous years and in consequence all departments within the County Council were faced with a 20% cut in funding, which would mean a reduction in staff of over 1,000. The following changes were mentioned: (i) no new care homes for the elderly would be built, existing ones would be sold and care of the elderly would be improved to enable them to stay in their own homes; (ii) street lights on major roads would be turned off between midnight and 5.00 a.m; the annual cost of transport for students aged 16 and above would increase £475 to £660, a saving of £700,000 p.a; the transfer of the Youth Service to allow local communities to become more involved with Youth Clubs; removal of Sunday and evening rural bus services and reduction of urban Flexibus services. The Monday to Saturday once a day service from Northend to Banbury would remain but the additional journeys to Banbury on Thursdays and Saturdays, together with the peak service to

Leamington, were currently scheduled to be withdrawn unless additional money could be found. As far as the Library Service was concerned £2 million had had to be cut over the next three years from the current expenditure of £7.4 million, necessitating a major reform of the service. Currently there were 34 separate library buildings in Warwickshire and of these just 4 accounted for 90% of the total use in the County. Proposals include reducing library opening hours and reducing the number of mobile libraries from five to three. The options being considered in the current consultations were: (a) extending existing services to housebound people provided by volunteers, (b) order and direct delivery by village and community agents or volunteers, (c) community drop-off points for books, (d) continuing to support a postal service to visually impaired people, (e) providing library-related learning activities at community venues, children's centres, etc. (f) books could be delivered to one's home but a charge would be likely for this, (g) community-run libraries. (Views using 'Consult online' at www.warwickshire.gov.uk/facingthechallenge.before9.6.11.) Harbury Parish Council would provide people to run its library and the books would be made available by the County Council.

County Cllr. Williams said that one consequence of the bad weather during November and December was the damage to roads in the area. Unlike last winter, when there had been a succession of frosts and thaws, this year there had been one relatively slow thaw, resulting in less damage than encountered the previous winter. The priorities had been to repair A and B roads first and then the C and D roads would be dealt with as soon as possible. The County Council was aware that on country roads where there was no kerbing the roadside had broken rather than potholes being created in the centre of the road and the restoration would probably be spread throughout the year, with potholes, where necessary being temporarily filled. It was worth noting that the snow clearance programme in Warwickshire had been far more effective than in neighbouring counties and full credit should be given to the Highways team for its performance.

Reference was also made to the fact that the entire Footpaths team was being cut at a time when the Parish was facing the demise of its own Parish Paths Volunteers who had done such sterling work over the years. The Chairman said that the Parish Council could continue attend to footpath maintenance using volunteers if there was a demand. Legal footpath matters would continue to be dealt with by the County Council.

Cty Cllr. Williams said that the Police were facing a reduction from £100 m. to £80 m. which would mean 400 fewer policemen in Warwickshire, combining with other forces and a cut-back in community policing (which did not have the same statutory requirements as other parts of the service), backroom staff would be cut out, paperwork reduced and Wellesbourne Police Station closed.

In the absence of the District Councillor, Cllr. Williams said that neither the County Council nor the District Council had put up Council Tax and it would be kept fixed for four years. The District Council was considering changing the ownership of public toilets, which could result in a lot of buildings that were no longer needed. Ken Williams pointed out that such buildings could not be taken over by Parish Councils unless funding came with them.

Mention was made of various works that had been undertaken on the Burton Dassett Hills to provide disabled access. The County Councillor apologised that the Parks and Countryside Department had not advised the Parish Council of the intended works prior to commencement. The Chairman said that it would have been helpful if the Parish Council had been pre-warned. Instead there had been an exchange of correspondence after the fact. Cllr. Williams said that had the work in question not been done the County Council could have faced a legal challenge. Prior approach to the Parish Council had been overlooked. The Chairman thanked the County Councillor for his report and he then left the meeting.

5. **Finance: (a) Accounts for Payment:** Cllr. Bick having declared an interest, on the proposal of the Chairman, seconded by Cllr. Pearson, it was unanimously agreed that the following payments be approved:

RFO report dated 17.1.11	£12,257.29	
AGD Playground Contractors (play equipment repair)	<u>£807.07</u>	apprv'd 17.1.11 & paid
Payments made year 2010/11 to date	<u>£13,064.36</u>	
Eon (street light maintenance)	£151.40	see below
Eon (street light electricity)	£177.25	invoice due
Eon (pavilion electricity)	£54.06	apprv'd 17.1.11 not paid yet
Knightcote Village Hall (hire 17.1.11)	£15.00	
RFO's expenses	£41.26	
Broadleaf Graphical (newsletter)	£150.00	
CPRE (subscription)	£29.00	
Burton Dassett Village Hall (grant – use as post office)	£256.00	apprv'd 17.1.11 not paid yet
Clerk's expenses	£54.80	

The RFO said that the Eon invoice for street light maintenance had been reduced by £98 pa. (16%) but no notification has been received and he suspected that this could be an error. The RFO's expenses claim related in the main to a financial clinic he had attended. The expenses claims from the RFO and the Clerk were scrutinised by Cllr. Williams. Approval was given to Cllrs. Williams and Lapworth signing the cheques.

(b) Receipts: The RFO said that since the last meeting £388.45 (£1.64 - interest Money Manager A/c, £10.19 – interest 3 & 6 month bonds and £376.62 from the now defunct Burton Dassett Parish Paths Volunteers) had been received. Additional interest from bonds notified at this meeting was £8.92, giving a total of £44.05 in 2010/11.

(c) Bank Balances: The RFO reported that the financial position as at 28.2.11 stood at £31,732.93, consisting of Current A/c £1,734.46

Business Money Manager A/c £14,987.13 and Business High Interest Deposit Bonds £15,011.34. The financial position as at 1.4.11 was £27,215.82, a change in balance of £6,576.68. The bank statements and cashbook were examined and signed by Cllr. Williams.

(d) Banking Arrangements: The RFO reported that the £5,000 High Interest Bond set up on 10.11.10 had matured on 10.2.11 at 0.40%. The £5,000 High Interest Bond set up on 9.12.10 had matured on 9.3.11 at 0.40%. The £5,000 High Interest Bond set up on 10.2.10 by the RFO would mature on 10.5.11 at 0.40% and the £5,000 High Interest Bond set up on 9.3.11 also by the RFO would mature on 9.6.11 at 0.40%.

(e) Financial Clinic: The RFO reported that he had attended a Financial Clinic on 18th January and advised the Parish Council that he was no longer involved in professional accountancy. His notes on the clinic had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting and contained a number of matters that might need consideration. As far as the precept was concerned the points raised were basically good business practices which the Parish Council already followed. However at the January meeting the precept had only been approved by half the Parish Council due to absences and this was a somewhat disappointing situation and something that should be appreciated by the Councillors and avoided in future since it was the full Council's responsibility to set the budget. Grants should only be budgeted in total – not as individual items in order to avoid grants being effectively approved when it would be better to approve later upon request. Also, any Councillor who served on any body detailed should not vote on the whole precept as they had an interest. The RFO pointed out that up to this year this was what the Parish Council had in fact been doing in providing a sum of £3,500. Next year it would be necessary to revert to a total figure, with perhaps an explanation of how it was required. It was unanimously agreed that in future a single set amount be approved for grants, which would be eked out as necessary.

The RFO indicated that he had discussed the Parish Council's approach to earmarked reserves and in particular its asset replacement reserves which had enabled it to self-insure lower valued items and had saved on insurance premiums. This appeared to be a trend in other Councils. General reserves could be within the range of 3 to 12 months expenditure and the Council could nominate what was appropriate. Any decision to hold reserves outside that range must be fully reasoned and minuted. It was worth noting that, as with Charities, if a capital asset was sold then the capital receipt must be maintained and could not be used for the day to day running.

As far as VAT and Village Halls were concerned, the RFO said that the VAT Office was very hot on this and a number of Councils had encountered problems. The VAT was usually paid and then the claim was passed over for scrutiny, which could mean a claim for repayment

at a later date. The Parish Council must order the goods or services which must be supplied directly to the Village Hall and paid in full by the Parish Council with no contribution from the Village Hall. The RFO warned that care must be taken about this and recovery of VAT must not automatically be assumed. It would probably be wise to put the matter to the VAT Office before a commitment was made where there was a shared cost. The position was noted.

The security of Council records on the computers of the RFO and the Clerk was also discussed, the view being expressed by the RFO that it probably ought to go on the Risks Register. The Chairman expressed the view that someone should be tasked to look at the simplest scheme for the RFO to manage and it was agreed that Cllrs. Williams and Bick should look into the matter and report back with their recommendations.

As far as the payment authorisation procedure was concerned, it was agreed that in future the persons signing the cheques at meetings be minuted. The RFO said that it had been recommended at the Clinic that signing did not take place during the ongoing meeting because this was when fraud often was perpetrated, but that instead a period be set aside to do this. Signing outside of meetings was discouraged. If the cheque signatory was connected to the recipient then they should not sign. If no other signatories were available then the Council should instruct the signatory to sign and this should also be minuted. It was noted that this could arise in the context of grants particularly when the Parish Council was short of Councillors present. It was considered that the risk of fraud was very low and there was no need to stop the meeting during the signing of the cheques and then reconvene.

With regard to the Annual Report and Accounts the RFO said that it had been suggested, because of the May elections, that the outgoing Council should sign off the Annual Return in April. However, it was very tight to get all the accounts finished by then, particularly with the internal audit as well. This point had been countered at the Financial Clinic by the view that internal audits looked at systems and were not there to double check year end figures and so the procedure was ongoing and could be completed before the year end. It was agreed that Mr. Michael's view be sought on this. The RFO said that it was not yet known what system would replace the current one when the Audit Commission was abolished. It was noted that should a parishioner exercise the right to inspect records the Clerk/RFO should always be accompanied by a Councillor. It had been stated that the Accounts and Auditor's report should be published, as opposed to displayed, and the RFO would seek clarification of this from WALC and report back. It had also been pointed out that, under the Data Protection Act, the minutes and RFO's reports should not contain the names of the Clerk and RFO when detailing salary payments. This was agreed. Also, under new Financial Regulations, it appeared that the Parish Council might be required to publish details of expenditure

over £500. A proposal regarding the replacement of cheques was awaited.

(f) Other Financial Matters:

(i) VAT: It was noted that a VAT refund from 1.3.11 to date would be submitted amounting to £316.39. VAT incurred on payments made at this meeting would also be included.

(ii) PAYE Returns: To be made for the year ending 5.4.11. There were no more incentive payments.

(iii) Year End Accounts: The RFO reported that the cash position at 31.3.11 was likely to be £30,800 as against the last forecast of £29,475 – an increase of £1,325. The money from the Parish Paths Volunteers (£377), underspending on “less sure” routine spends (£503) and projects underspend (£515) amounted to £1,395 and accounted for the increase.

(g) Burton Dassett Parish Paths Volunteers: The Chairman said that, following the demise of the Footpaths Group, the sum of £376.62 had been returned to the Parish Council with a suggestion that it be used to enhance Northend either with a bench or a flagpole by the war memorial. It was agreed that the money be placed in an earmarked fund until a decision could be made on how it should be used. All tools and equipment had been returned to the County Council and any stiles, marker posts and spare timbers donated to the Fenny Compton Footpath Group. It was pointed out that in future if a stile became unsuitable it was not permissible to replace it but instead a metal gate had to be installed. Mr. Anderson said that planks had been removed from the bridge on the Avon Dassett parish boundary two fields beyond the church and thrown into the stream.

6. Roads & Footways: (a) Northend hedge trimming: The Chairman's round-robin letter to landowners had not yet been produced but would be sent out shortly by the Clerk.

(b) Malthouse Lane – Replacement Bins: Cllr. Williams said that both damaged bins would be inspected by the County Council and if deemed in need of replacement this would be dealt with. He would try and get the County Council to contribute to the cost of replacement.

(c) The Jitty, Northend: The tree debris left by Eon and reported by Mr. Eames had now been cleared.

(d) Burton Dassett Hills - Salt Bin Design: Nothing to report. Chairman to progress.

(e) The Prebend and Hill Close – Parking: The Chairman said that he had drafted a letter about this and hoped, following guidance from the Land Registry, to send it out to all concerned. Legal action against

offenders would be taken if necessary, but it was hoped that people would be sensible. It was important that there should be access to the garages and that ambulances could get through. Caravans could legally be parked on the public highway.

(f) Blacksmith's Lane: The Blacksmith's Lane sign had not so far been reinstated. The Chairman said that he would enquire yet again.

(g) Northend Village Entrance Feature: Chairman to progress following a number of discussions with landowners

7. **Temple Herdewyke:** The Chairman said that he would respond to Councillor Woodward's letter. He had suggested several years ago that because of the unusual circumstances in which the residents found themselves with Mitie Temple Herdewyke should petition to come out of the Parish, which would mean that they no longer would have to pay Council Tax as well as the management fee. In the meantime the Clerk should assume that Mrs. Woodward had resigned and the filling of the casual vacancy could be dealt with in the normal manner.
8. **Asset Maintenance and Replacement:** The Chairman said that maps had been displayed on the notice boards. The proposal had also been published in the newsletter, with the maps being removed in April and instructions issued to the maintenance provider. It was reported that the light immediately outside the church in Northend was off.
9. **Website:** Cllr. Williams said that he had looked at the free website but felt it would charge too much. Cllr. Lapworth indicated that he would be happy to build a fairly basic website but would need help from others regarding content. Cllr. Williams said that he would be prepared to update it. The Chairman wondered whether a Council website was needed or whether it should take the form of a Parish one that included the Parish Council. After discussion it was agreed to work on the basis of links. The minutes would be included, plus some of the finance and a list of Councillors. It was suggested that the Fenny Compton website should be looked at. It was agreed that the matter of a Parish website be canvassed via a newsletter. The Chairman wondered whether other organisations would need to come in at the beginning and how easy it would be to adapt if necessary. Cllr. Williams said it would be best to produce something that could be added to. There would be a cost implication for maintenance. It was agreed that Cllrs. Lapworth and Williams should come to the next meeting with a proposal that included costs and a budget, so that the scheme could be rolled out within two or three months. Cllr. Williams undertook to check the domain name.
10. **Newsletter:** This had gone out. Cllr. Pearson undertook to see that the Temple Herdewyke copies were delivered to households.

11. **Parish Plan:** A request for assistance had been included in the recent newsletter and offers of assistance had been received from Cllr. Mrs. Bick, Chris Cloet, Jack Richardson and John Page. Cllr. Bettany had also indicated a willingness to help.

Cllr. Bick said that Northend Village Hall Committee was currently producing a business plan and a question had arisen about the need to build a completely new Village Hall, possibly on a different site. The Chairman said that he would be in favour of such a move and, in the past, the former school buildings had been offered for the purpose. The Chairman proposed that in the summer a meeting be arranged at Northend Village Hall and publicised in the next newsletter, to which someone from the County Council dealing with Parish Plans could be invited. This was agreed.

12. **Risk Assessment:** The Chairman agreed to look at the paperwork and produce a suitable document for tabling at the next meeting. Cheque signatories to be agreed at the meeting and minuted. Data security to be sorted out. RFO to be asked to e-mail the financial documents for every meeting to Cllr. Williams. Risk to be accepted regarding the Clerk's paperwork.

13. **Training: (a) Being a Good Councillor 9.4.11 at Leek Wootton:** Cllr. Bick said that she would advise the Clerk if she could attend. Expenditure of £35 was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Cllr. Smethurst, and agreed.

(b) Stratford Development Framework – Core Strategy Workshop on Planning Policy – 1.4.11 at Harbury: Chairman and Vice-Chairman to attend.

14. **Delegated Matters:** "Managing Double Taxation" – Cllr. Bick to provide a synopsis of this for Councillors. Cllr. Williams was concerned as to how things would be managed and whether the necessary funding would be passed over to Parish Councils for things taken on or whether they would be expected to deal with matters but given no money to do so. Parish Councils should only take things on for the District Council if they had control over them, if they were within the Parish Council's remit and they were able to charge for them.

15. **Planning:** Cllr. K. Williams declared an interest in application 11/00407/FUL.

(a) New Application: The following was considered:

11/00407/FUL: Mr. A. Tasker, Glebe House, Top St., Northend: Removal of conservatory, construction of single storey extension and interior modifications: No comments.

(b) Planning Results: The following results were reported:

10/02641/FUL: Mr. R. Welford, Coxby Hall, Bottom St., Northend: Insertion of two roof lights (part retrospective): Granted.

10/02669/FUL: ATSG DMC Kineton, Marlborough Barracks, Temple Herdewyke: Provision of and siting at DMC Kineton one pre-owned training/classroom modular facility and one pre-owned welfare cabin/modular facility to enable training needs of MOD service personnel: Granted.

(c) Appeal: Refused initially by District Council but approved by Inspector on appeal:

10/01805/FUL: Broadview Energy Developments: 69m. meteorological mast

16. Publications/Correspondence Received:

Stratford District Council: Dog Fouling

Warwickshire County Council: Car trials permit 8.5.11
County Highways Defect Reporting
Reductions in levels of WCC financially supported bus services/
SpeedAware – Changes to the current scheme

Warwickshire Police Authority: Councillors' Briefing Notes

WALC: Newsletter Nos. 92 and 93
LCR – spring 2011
Clerks & Councils Direct – March 2011

CPRE: Countryside Voice – winter 2010

Glasdon: Products for Local Councils

17. Next Meeting: Annual Meeting of the Parish Council to be held at 7.15 p.m. on Monday, 16th May 2011, at Knightcote Village Hall, to be followed immediately by the Annual Parish Meeting.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 9.30 p.m.