

Wigginton and Hopwas Parish Council

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2019

Draft Minutes

The Annual Parish Meeting was held at Thomas Barnes School, Hopwas, on Thursday 9th May 2019 at 19.15.

Present: Chair Councillor Stevens, Councillors Croft and Shirtliff, 3 members of the public, Clerk Mrs M. Jones.

1. To receive Apologies.

All present.

2. To approve the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of May 3rd 2018.

The Minutes were approved.

3. To receive the Chairman's Annual Report of Wigginton and Hopwas Parish Council for the year 2018 - 19.

The Chairman's Annual Report had been included in the last newsletter; please see the attached report.

4. To receive comments on matters of local concern from residents.

A resident had attended to raise the matter of speeding traffic in Lichfield Road, Hopwas. There was a danger from all kinds of vehicles travelling too fast down Hopwas Hill to parents and children walking from Lichfield Crescent to School Lane. There had been several near misses as well as a serious accident near to the Red Lion. There were no permanent Speed Indicator Devices and she asked for Speed Cameras to help slow the traffic.

Another resident said that he had been contacted by others objecting to the removal of the goal post at Hopwas Playing Field as it would remove an important play facility for the young people of the village. The Chair said that a letter had been received from Chris Pincher MP, writing on behalf of a resident who objected to the removal. After discussion of the issues involved the Chair said that this matter would be considered during the Parish Council meeting that would follow this meeting.

Chair's Report 2019

May I start by thanking my fellow Councillors for the time and effort they have given in the past year to support the work of the Council. It is on occasions a thankless task but I hope that residents appreciate the work undertaken. As always, I must give a special vote of thanks to our clerk, Margaret Jones, for her contribution to the work of the Council. We are extremely fortunate to have her continued services and benefit greatly from her expert knowledge. We currently have five Councillors from a permitted maximum of seven. We are therefore always happy to welcome other residents to fill the vacancies.

I am at last pleased to be able to report that the speed indicator devices have been installed and commissioned in Main Road Wigginton, as a result of many requests from residents over several years. These came at some considerable cost to the Council but residents have said it is making a difference. Also in Wigginton, many residents have reported problems with parking on Main Road. Many consider that the staff at Wigginton Cottage are parking for long periods adjacent to the building causing problems. They have been approached and asked to find an alternative solution. The Council is investigating the possibility of having double yellow lines placed in the most difficult positions. Whilst I would be reluctant to see such a visual encroachment in the village it is probably the lesser of two evils. Residents most affected will be consulted before any decision is made. Hopwas has also had problems of traffic reported in Lichfield Road. These are speeding and the use of the road by HGVs. Representations have been made to both the Highways authority and to individual users. Highways continue to monitor the situation, hopefully this will help. Staffordshire CC earlier in the year suggested that they would stop financing the school crossing patrol county wide. This would have meant that the service in Hopwas would be lost. The Parish Council did object to this change and SCC have now had a change of heart. I do not think however that we can take full credit for this.

Last year the Council was approached with the idea that it could become a 'Dementia Aware' organisation. The Council embraced this and I am pleased to report that Councillor Gibson has taken this on board, completed the training and is using the knowledge to assist those affected.

The Council has continued to maintain the play areas in Hopwas and Comberford as well as the highway verges in the Parish. Residents have not only simply complained, they have put on their work gear and made an effort by clearing litter and overgrown areas. I thank them for their efforts.

The planning authority, in our case Lichfield DC, have a statutory duty to consult with Parish Councils in respect of any planning application made in their area. This Council accepts that it has very little influence over many of the decisions made but does comment on almost all cases presented to it. These may range from simply replacing windows or doors in a house to a development of several hundred houses. The neighbourhood plan that was produced a couple of years ago does provide some protection against unwanted development and the Council aims to keep this up to date. As most will be aware however there are several large scale developments either approved or in the process of approval in the Parish or close by. This regrettably is a fact of life and there seems little that even the planning authority can do to limit this. There is just too great a demand for housing. Even the green belt is under threat. The Council will however do all it can to mitigate any adverse impact. Lichfield DC are in the process of reviewing the conservation area in Wigginton. The Council have been consulted on these proposed changes. They are minor and only amount to updates to reflect the current situation. The Council therefore found no reason to comment other than to welcome the changes.

Finally, Councillors consider the financial position to be sound and sustainable. However as the work that we take on is growing, to a large extent due to cut backs at County level, we feel it prudent to increase the amount we demand from the council tax by about 5%. Not only has there not been an increase for some years but the amount demanded from each household should not increase due to the increase in the number of households. I hope that all agree they receive good value for money.

Keith Stevens