

Wilbarston Parish Assembly 22nd April 2021

There was no Assembly in 2020 due to the impact of lockdown at that time but this year a gathering went ahead via Zoom.

It was an informal meeting, with reports available from various sources but not necessarily presented in full.

It was noted that eight nominations had been received for the eight places on the new parish council therefore those people should be deemed elected with no need for a contested election. They will meet for the first time on 13th May.

In practical terms the local government reorganisation in the county has meant no change in responsibilities or contacts in the past year and that situation is likely to continue in the coming year, although that cannot be the case indefinitely. Against a background of some uncertainty the parish council is trying to remain practical and pro-active as well as playing a part on the larger stage by co-ordinating the Welland Wanderer Bus Service and the local 'collective' vehicle activated sign. An additional sign has been acquired, funded by a grant from the Police and Crime Commissioner's office, to be used entirely at our discretion.

Other points highlighted were the response to lockdown and other covid restrictions, with the shop playing a major part and the school, village hall, pub and church all functioning as the rules allowed. The Care and Good Neighbour Schemes were there for all but there was also inherent good neighbourliness with various groups coming together for different purposes and people generally helping each other out.

Thanks were due to Lawrence Dale and Keith Walkling, both standing down from the parish council, for their contributions over a number of years – in Lawrence's case 37.

As always thanks were due to all the volunteers doing various things in the parish and in particular this year to the group who have transformed the village green.

Also noted were the new wildflower scheme, the financial support recently given towards equipping our local North Northamptonshire first responder and the fact that the allotments are now fully let.

The parish is looking for a police liaison officer, to be a focal point for contact with the different elements of that force, and as soon as public meetings are again allowed volunteers will be sought for a working party to look at neighbourhood planning.

Looking ahead it was felt that the wooden village sign needs refurbishing, and various possibilities were discussed, and that speeding remains a problem both in the village and on the road between Wilbarston and Stoke Albany. It was noted that the new Vehicle Activated Sign can be used at different points in the village where problems are identified and that some work has been done on the Stoke Albany road. Reduction of speed limits in villages from 30mph to 20mph is being piloted in some places in the county and it was felt this is something we should pursue.

The items raised will be on the parish council agenda in the coming year.

Reports were received from the Village Hall Management Committee explaining the measures taken to keep the hall safe and viable whilst under lockdown and looking forward to re-opening on May 17th and from Wilbarston School thanking parents for their tremendous support during the period of home-schooling and outlining activities undertaken by the children since their return and the efforts to make their schooldays as normal as possible with the restrictions in force.

The Care Scheme reported good usage in the past few months, partly due to those requiring transport for covid vaccinations, and mentioned that as always they are on the lookout for volunteer drivers.

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