

**Notes of
ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
Held on 4 May 2021
At 6:00 pm**



Attending: Cllrs W Mack, Mrs P Pardoe, Mrs C Finnegan, Mrs S Smith, D Thomas, M Page, S Williams, G Vernon, G Hogan. Mrs Y Scriven (Clerk) Members of the Public

1. The Chairman welcomed everyone to the Annual Parish Meeting and invited the Guest Speaker, Rt Hon Mark Garnier to address the meeting.
2. MP, Mark Garnier (MG) thanked the Chairman for inviting him to the meeting. With regard to Covid, MG said that as far as the UK were concerned, restrictions had been removed too quickly last Autumn resulting in the massive surge in cases after Xmas. Vaccination was the way out of this crisis and the UK is leading the world in its response and Worcestershire was the best County in this respect. From 17 May some further restrictions would be lifted and by 21 June everything should be more or less back to normal with maybe a 1m rule. International travel will probably be on an ad hoc basis for some time to come. Covid is likely to make some fundamental changes in the way we function at work with possibly less days working in the office, less time travelling, etc. We still do not know what the effect might be on High Street shops after the massive switch to on-line buying.

The problem of Scotland's independence will not go away and whilst we do not want Scotland to leave the UK, this might still happen. Northern Ireland might also be getting closer to Unification. The present Wallpaper Gate problem has not created too much response from the public and was currently being investigated. The Lobbying issue was still ongoing and rules already existed about declaring such approaches. Post Brexit there was the forthcoming Climate Change Summit, ongoing trade deals throughout the world and how we deal with China in the future.

Mr Jonathan Swift said he was surprised that Mark Garnier had expressed support for making a register of Lobbyists and wondered if restricting access to professionals to the exclusion of others would prevent all of us in this room from lobbying you. This move could extend to County District and Parish Council. Mr Garnier said that more than 15,000 people work as Professional Lobbyists and were registered and this was not a problem. He welcomed anyone getting in touch with me if he could help, preferably by email or letter. He did prefer emails from individuals rather than group emails.

Cllr Mr Dave Thomas thanked Mr Garnier for assisting with the delivery of Broadband fibre to all properties in the Parish. With regard to the current directive about resuming face to face meetings, Mr Garnier said it was up to us how we ran our meetings and if it was more efficient and safe to continue with ZOOM meetings then we should do so. However, long term something was lost when we did not meet face to face and all restrictions should have been lifted by 21 June.

Mr Harry Grove said that if Scotland votes to leave the UK, would this lead to the dismantling of our country. Mr Garnier said that everything possible would be done to retain the whole of the UK.

Mr Garnier thanked Parish Councils for the way they engaged with the public and were an important part of the political process.

3. **Chairman's Report – Mr William Mack said:-**

This meeting last year was cancelled as at the time it appeared impossible to run with the onset of the Covid Pandemic changing everyone's lives.

Your Parish Councillors like all other Parish and Town Councillors have had to learn new IT skills in order to attend meetings virtually and the Clerk has had to adjust her work practices accordingly. In some ways the convenience of a Zoom meeting has been beneficial cutting down travelling costs and the time to attend meetings not to mention the environmental benefits. We look forward to the return of face-to-face meetings when it is safe to do so but I suspect will continue to meet by Zoom where appropriate.

I would like to thank the Clerk for adapting to these new working methods without throwing any Councillors out of Zoom meetings for not following the standing orders!

After a disappointing election where only 7 Councillors stood 11 seats, we have subsequently co-opted three new councillors leaving us with just one outstanding vacancy. New councillors are Raj Rana, Gary Hogan & Christine Finnegan.

It has all in all been a very different year for your Parish Council however special recognition is extended to Cllr Mrs Sue Smith, who took on co-ordinating welfare to the lonely and vulnerable members of the parish this included the delivery of prescriptions, shopping as well as setting up an army of volunteers of which 24 obtained DBS Certification! A big thank you to Janet Mundell, Jo Goucher and Yvonne Scriven who were key to this service.

Under the leadership of Cllr Mr D Thomas, a Review of the Neighbourhood Plan has been carried out which included a Call for Sites, an appraisal of sites by AECOM Consultants, and preparation of Design Codes. A working group reviewed existing Conservation Areas, Open Spaces and Protected Views. Finalisation of the Neighbourhood Plan has been delayed due to delays in adoption of the Wyre Forest District Council Local Plan. I would to extend the Parish Councils thanks for the support from Diane Dolly, Sarah Green, Elizabeth Mountford, Steve Williams and Gary Hogan.

The Parish Council have conducted business as usual. Negotiating new maintenance contracts resulting in cost savings for the parish. White gates and road markings have been provided on the A448 to help reduce speeding on this busy road through the village and near the local school. We have also with the support of the Clerk computerised the management of the allotment sites. The Clerk has organised the repair of numerous memorial headstones in the burial ground which had failed the annual inspection for health and safety. The Parish Council has commented on numerous planning applications during the year including giving evidence to the Inspectors examination of the District Local Plan.

We also welcome our new Lengthsman – Russell Peach who has already made good progress round the parish.

Cllr Mr R Rana started an application for fibre Broadband in the Village, Mustow Green, Harvington and Shenstone area with more than 400 interested parties – Government changes to the funding for these types of schemes mean this should now be picked up as part of Worcestershire-wide project. Cllr Thomas will say something more on this later in the meeting.

A volunteer Pam Alliband has raised over £5000 to purchase 3 defibrillators for Mustow Green, Harvington and Drayton. These will be fitted shortly, one utilising the BT Kiosk in Morton Road, Harvington. One will be on the wall outside The Robin Hood Drayton and another on Hills Garage, Mustow Green.

Again I would like to thank Councillor Sue Smith under whose direction we have embarked upon a programme of Wildflower planting throughout the parish. A big thank you to Mervyn Needham for his support with this.

On the ground we were helped by Chaddesley Local School Year 6 supported by Natsha Try as well as local volunteers including: Leo Stockford, Diane Dolley, Lynn and Mike Jeffs, Martin & Christine Kenrick, Gary Hogan, Hilary Boden, Sarah Green and Debbie Newbold.

We also planted daffodils on The Green. A big thank you to Jodie Poole for organising this

4. **Neighbourhood Plan Review**

Cllr Mr Dave Thomas said that so far we had completed a Housing Needs Survey and a Call for Sites and held a Consultation in a Marquee under Covid restrictions. The draft NDP was almost complete, but we are awaiting the results of the Independent Inspectors Report from the Examination of the Local Plan. We understood that the revised Local Plan will be subject to further consultation, and may not be adopted until Spring 2022, which probably meant that we would not conclude the update to our NDP until the end of 2022.

5. **Broadband** – Cllr Mr Dave Thomas thanked Mr Garnier for assisting in the past with the delivery of Broadband fibre connections to all green street cabinets in the Parish. Cllr Mr Dave Thomas said that Gigabit Voucher Fibre to Premises schemes for Drayton, Hillpool and Woodrow were progressing thanks to the match funding from Worcestershire County Council, but unfortunately later schemes for Bluntington and the Village/Harvington/Shenstone were no longer eligible for Vouchers. However, a much larger scheme involving 64,000 premises in Worcestershire should cover these areas in the future

6. Mr Hugh Richards thanked Cllr Sue Smith for organising a tremendous community service during Covid and getting together a large group of volunteers. Sue Smith thanked all the volunteers who helped her and especially Yvonne Scriven who was such a help during the first lockdown.

