

Great Alne Parish Council Update – September 2020

The next Parish Council meeting will take place online on the 16th September 2020 at 7pm. This will be held via Zoom and the public are invited to attend. The Chairman will ask residents to remain muted. Should a resident wish to speak we will ask that they press the virtual 'raise hand' button which will alert the chairman that they wish to speak.

In order to try and keep the meeting as succinct as possible, an update is provided below to be read by Councillors (and residents should they wish to) ahead of the meeting.

Details on how to log in are below and will also be put on the website, Facebook and sent to the email contact group held by the Clerk, by 7th September. Please note that if you would like to attend you will need to register for the meeting via Zoom.

You are invited to a Zoom meeting.

When: Sep 16, 2020 07:00 PM London

Register in advance for this meeting:

https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEIcCprTguGNVzh5SMDQ9_wY1gEYni_5m3

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

We would politely request that if any residents have anything they wish to raise, please do so in writing to the clerk, 5 days ahead of the meeting where possible. Email address below.

Should you have any queries, please contact the clerk, Joanne Bullingham on 07833 790 375 or via email at: greatalne.parishcouncil@googlemail.com.

You can join zoom for free by following this link: <https://zoom.us/>

CORONA VIRUS

The contact details, should you require any help from the Alcester Community Resilience team, remain the same:

[Alcester Community Resilience:](#)

Helpline: 07707 598379

Email: alcester.response@outlook.com

Alcester Community Resilience is also on Facebook

4a. Alcester South SNT & crime statistics update

There have been no reports made to the police since the 7th July meeting.

The Alcester South SNT provided the following information:

The team have received increased reports of sheds being broken into and thefts at allotments across the county including Studley and Bidford. The team have asked people to be aware and assess the security they have in place with a view to adding further security measures such as CCTV, wildlife cameras, locks etc. If people require further advice on this, they can get in touch with the Alcester South SNT who will be happy to advise.

They have also provided some helpful advice in protecting your car from thieves.

1. Lock your vehicle - Locking your vehicle, even when filling up or parked on your drive, greatly reduces the possibility of it being targeted by an opportunist thief. Even if you have locked your vehicle, check you haven't left any windows or the sunroof open. Remove all valuables, especially those that can be seen from outside the vehicle. It is actually illegal to leave your vehicle running unattended while you de-ice it or warm it up in cold weather. If someone takes it while it's left like this, your insurer won't pay out because you won't be covered.

2. Keep the keys safe - Vehicles today are by and large more difficult to steal than ever, unless the thief can access your key or fob to clone them. Keep your keys safe, out of view when at home, and away from your front door. It's not uncommon for car keys to be stolen from inside your home by thieves fishing for them with a stick and hook through the letterbox. When not in use, keep your electronic car key in a security pouch to prevent it being scanned by thieves to open and steal your car nearby.

3. Be aware of carjackers - The fact that you're in the car isn't always a deterrent to someone trying to steal it. In traffic, drive with the doors locked and when queuing leave enough space in front of your vehicle to enable you to get out of a tight spot. If your vehicle is bumped from behind, wait to pull over – somewhere safe and preferably where there are people. After all, you don't know the person who has collided with you; they could well be hijackers. If you're at all suspicious, consider calling the police. If someone threatens you, it's better to hand over the keys to the vehicle than become a victim of assault. Then call 999 as soon as possible, and ask for the police. If your car is stolen, some modern vehicle alarm and tracker systems have the facility to isolate or shut down fuel systems, bringing the vehicle to a halt and leaving the thief high and dry.

4. Park responsibly - It's always advisable to avoid parking in dark and secluded areas. It's worth an extra five or ten-minute walk if it means your vehicle is left in a well-lit and busier street. And if possible, always try to park in illuminated and staffed car parks or those with a Park Mark safer parking award. To find one, simply check out Park Mark.

5. Watch for illegal tow trucks - Thieves often attempt to lift vehicles from the street, literally. So, if you see a towaway crew acting suspiciously – especially if their vehicle isn't branded or if they're not in uniform – then please report it immediately. As with every report of suspicious behaviour made in good faith, we'll never blame anyone for calling us if it proves unfounded. Car parks with height-restricted entrances help prevent illegal tow trucks and removal vehicles. And fitting a Thatcham rated category 1 or 2 alarm system with tracking, immobilisation, anti-grab and movement sensors can help protect and trace your vehicle.

6. Fit good in-car security locks - Bear in mind that built-in steering locks aren't necessarily thief-proof. Many can be forced and broken. Fitting a Sold Secure steering wheel, gear lever or clutch pedal security device can give your vehicle added protection.

7. Double-check electronic locking - Electronic devices can be used to jam the electronic signal from your key fob to lock your vehicle. Always manually check your vehicle has locked before walking

away. If unsure, lock it manually, then scan the immediate area for anyone hanging around. If a potential thief who's watching feels they've been spotted, they'll probably move off.

8. Before you buy, check for cloning - Changing the identity of a vehicle, known as vehicle cloning, can be as simple as adding stolen number plates. When buying a vehicle, always check the DVLA V5 document and make sure the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) on the vehicle is the same as on the document. Make sure you check more than one of the VINs as well as the engine numbers on the vehicle. Check a used vehicle you're buying.

9. Secure your port - Many modern vehicles are fitted with engine management diagnostic ports, which can be accessed without the thief needing to open the vehicle doors, boot or bonnet, but which can unlock and start your vehicle. If your vehicle has this type of port, consider fitting a lockable cover.

10. Be aware of test drive thieves - Test drive thefts are where a thief answers an advert for a vehicle sale pretending to be a genuine buyer. When they meet the vendor, they ask for a test drive and never return with the vehicle. Take steps to avoid this by going with the prospective buyer on any test drive and don't leave anyone alone with the vehicle and its keys. Ask any potential buyer for contact details and to see their driving licence and insurance. Never leave the vehicle keys in the ignition – keep hold of them.

4b. Update on Great Alne Park development

Ben Ling, manager at Great Alne Park sent the following update:

"We are very pleased that the wild flower meadow, amphitheatre and orchard have been completed and we are very much looking forward to hosting a summer of events next year for residents and the local community.

Due to the Coronavirus situation we have not yet fully opened all areas of the village, and at present the restaurant and facilities remain for resident use only. We are continuing to review the situation regularly and the team is looking forward to welcoming back the local community as soon as possible.

I am pleased to advise that the allotments are now open and can be used. We would ask that everyone using the allotments continues to practice social distancing and follows the advice from the government and local authority".

An update on the ongoing work and development will be provided at the meeting.

4c. Memorial Hall's representative report

To be provided at the meeting.

4d. Representations from residents

To be considered at the meeting. Please raise any issues in writing to the clerk, 5 days ahead of the meeting where possible: greatalne.parcouncil@googlemail.com.

4e. County Councillors Report

To be provided at the meeting.

4f. District Councillors report

To be provided at the meeting.

4g. Creation of Unitary Authorities

A Government White Paper is to be issued in the autumn. Among other things, this will include a review of the principal authorities which will probably lead to the creation of a unitary authority of some kind in Warwickshire which will combine the functions of County and District Councils. Our county is being fast tracked and it could all happen in the next two to three years.

The government wishes to strengthen the role of local councils and other community governance arrangements. This might lead to significant changes for Parishes such as gaining control over services with money, staff and training. It may also be advisable for parishes to collaborate voluntarily together to have enough influence to be able to negotiate with the unitary authority.

There are currently two possible options being floated: a single unitary council for Warwickshire which would in effect combine the functions of the County Council and the Districts, or two unitaries, one each for the north and south of the county.

Further details will be provided as information becomes available.

5a. Hedgehog signs

The clerk has been contacted by someone who may be willing to make a generous anonymous donation towards the work detailed in July's minutes. This person has asked if the Parish Council would be willing to contribute the remainder of the costs. The clerk contacted Traffic and Safety team at WCC to get further details on what the work entails and the likelihood of it costing more than the £500 quoted for the initial work. Their response is shown below:

"As mentioned previously, the non-refundable £500 covers the investigative works and engineers time. Typically, the installation costs, traffic management, material costs and the engineer's time to design and mark out the site, does usually total up to more than the £500 deposit. The exact amount for each site varies depending on multiple factors- such as number of signs required and the complexity of work needed to be carried out.

I would imagine a scheme such as this would cost in the region of a further £500-£1500, however this is purely based on a very brief estimate, following a very brief overlook of the scheme. This estimate is by no means a promise or guarantee. If you give the go ahead for the scheme, this price may be higher or lower than the estimate I have just given (as said before, this is dependent on the number of signs required and various other factors).

We are very much data led, and therefore, following onto your next query, signs may not be seen as being feasible in this location, if the total number of accidents relating to the subject (in this case hedgehogs) falls well under our County target, or totals 0. Unfortunately, in this case, there have only been 2 accidents in the last 5 years in this location, none of which relating to hedgehogs.

Under guidance from the DfT, it is recommended that these signs should be used where there has been a number of collisions due to small mammals being on the carriageway, but they can be erected and used to give warning to the road user and to try and reduce the deaths of the animal population

if this is seen as being a large, prominent problem. This will be reviewed following a number of site visits in the investigative stage to see if unfortunately, the number of hedgehog deaths do seem an apparent, common issue”.

Cost are now estimated between £1000-£2000. The councillors will discuss this further at the meeting.

5b. U route Spernal- Coughton Fields Lane (AKA E5998)

As reported at the July meeting, the Rights of Way team at Warwickshire County Council have ordered some public highway signs to erect. This will allow the police to enforce the same laws that apply to any public highway. These have not yet been received but the clerk has contacted WCC to get a timescale. The police have not reported any incidents being logged in relation to this since the July meeting.

5c. Huff Cap Update

The new owners report that things are progressing well and they very much hope to have the pub open again as soon as it is safe and viable to do so. More information will be provided as soon as possible.

5d. General maintenance update

Damaged parapet – Ford Lane - Highways England who now look after disused railway bridges have put a new chain-link fence on both sides and the contractor who ‘made it safe’ when the issue was initially logged will arrange to get their temporary fencing collected.

Gunn Court street light - A new lighting column has been installed alongside the original. EON will attend on a later date to transfer the service supply and take away the old column. The date is not yet known. This was followed up at the end of August.

Updates on other areas will be provided at the meeting.

6a. Progress against budget

Update to be provided at the meeting.

6b. Speeding/Road Safety

Residents have contacted the clerk to reiterate their concerns over speeding in the village. Over the years, attempts have been made to reduce the speed and Councillors completely agree it is a concern. A summary is provided below:

The Parish Council have tried for many years to try and reduce the speed limit before the sharp bend (Alne Cote Corner) from 50mph to 30mph. This has always been refused by the County Council. In May 2019, the Parish Council attempted once again to have the speed limit changed and had the support of County Cllr Clive Rickhards. County Cllr Rickhards kindly put forward this request but it was rejected by County Highways. The following reasoning was provided:

“Firstly, we have a national document produced by the Department for Transport that sets out when, where and for what reasons we are allowed to introduce speed limits. This ensures that decisions on speed reductions follow a national standard and are consistent through the whole of the UK. The guidelines within this document would not allow us to introduce this section of carriageway to 30 mph.

Secondly, if we were to install speed limit signs and gateways past the double bend, this would introduce another visual distraction to the main hazard at this location which is the bend itself. On top of the chevron signs, markings and advanced warning signs, the 30 mph signs and gateways would further distract the driver and likely cause further issues.

Thirdly, the Police have to be consulted for any change of speed limit, and it is likely that they would object to the new 30 mph extents as it would not be enforceable for them”.

A flashing 30mph sign on School Rd was added a few years ago but when it stopped working, WCC Traffic and Road Safety reviewed the justification for maintaining this sign and decided they could no longer do so.

A mirror on School Rd was requested by the school to facilitate drivers leaving the premises. WCC informed the council that they do not supply or give agreement to mirrors on public highways. They confirmed they can be an obstruction and can give a distorted view of the road, giving a false sense of security.

A couple of years ago, Cllr Millard tried to set up a ‘Speed Watch’ team of volunteers to use mobile speed cameras throughout the village. Some residents undertook the relevant training but sadly, due to the lack of hours volunteers were able to commit to, this scheme could not proceed. At the end of last year, Cllr Millard appealed again for further volunteers and had a positive response. Sadly, Speed Watch training courses had stopped. Due to Corona Virus, plans had been put on hold but Cllr Millard has pursued this again with a positive outcome. The police have agreed that Mrs Sue Millard will take on the role as Speed Watch coordinator. The police met with her and have provided a pack with agreed sites within the village that the team can use and also template forms for completion when they undertake the checks. Cllr Millard needs to discuss with the original volunteers, to agree what dates they may be able to do the first session. The Parish Council would like to thank everyone involved in getting this scheme up and running.

Whilst we understand the requests for rumble strips, chicanes and a variety of other traffic calming measures may be desirable, implementing these is both costly to WCC (and therefore difficult to secure) and not as straightforward as we would hope. Traffic and Safety have to consider whether measures would be a distraction, the number of accidents recorded in the area, if speed limits would be enforceable by the police amongst many other considerations. The Parish Council completely agree that the speed vehicles pass through the village is alarming and dangerous and will continue to try and reduce this. However, we ask that residents appreciate these decisions do not lie with the Parish Council and, based on previous responses we have received from the Traffic and Safety team, it is unlikely that we will be successful in achieving any significant measures in the near future. Additionally, the Parish Council, that is Great Alne residents, would have to pay for any traffic calming measures should the application be accepted and it is by no means certain that everyone in the village would be in agreement that these are necessary or desired.

6c. Dog waste

This was discussed at the last meeting but the clerk has been asked to raise the issue again as the problem persists. May we kindly remind all residents that it is an offence not to clean up after your dog (Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act 1996). There are five dog waste bins throughout the village. Please use them where possible or dispose of the waste at home. Please contact the clerk if there appear to be particular problem areas or if you have any suggestions on managing this issue.

6d. Recreation Ground update

The following works are still outstanding.

1. Replace matting at the bottom of the silver slide, underneath the two swings and the exit from the toddler bit in to the main play area.
2. Clear the algae/moss off the playdate frame and sand any rough edges
3. Sand the rough edge on the plank of wood with the stepping stones running along it
4. Lift tree canopy to ensure a minimum clearance of 2.0m from equipment (above the birds nest swing)
5. Turf around the two benches

Lime bridge Rural Services have apologised for the delay and will action this as soon as possible.

6e. Annual playground inspection

The annual playground inspection was completed by The Play Inspection company in August. The areas to address have all been assessed as either 'very low risk' or 'low risk'. As per the council's usual procedure, the clerk will meet with the chairman and Cllr Clark to discuss the findings of the report and decide which require action and which require monitoring. This meeting is provisionally booked for 28th September at 10am. A detailed summary will be provided at the November meeting and the inspection report will be added to the website.

6f. Emergency equipment – annual check required

The chairman will arrange to do the annual check of the emergency equipment that is stored at Great Alne & Kinwarton Memorial Hall. This will be completed once the Memorial Hall re-opens.

6g. Equality and diversity policy

With the importance and high profile of Black Lives Matter, WALC have provided all local councils with information on the Equalities act. This has been distributed to all Councillors. WALC also suggested all councils should adopt an Equality and Diversity Policy. A draft policy has been sent to all councillors for consideration and this will be discussed at the meeting.

6h. NJC Salary Scales from 1st April 2020

The National Joint Council for Local Government Services (NJC) has agreed the new pay scales for 2020-21 with effect from 1st April 2020.

6i. Training

Cllr Mainwaring will be attending the 'Essential Planning Training for Councillors' course held by WALC at the beginning of October.

6j. Proposed changes to the planning system

The Government is proposing major changes to the planning system in England. The 'Planning for the future' consultation proposes reforms of the planning system to streamline and modernise the planning process, bring a new focus to design and sustainability, improve the system of developer contributions to infrastructure, and ensure more land is available for development where it is needed. The consultation period closes on 29 October 2020, and our approach to this consultation will be discussed at the meeting.

6k. Additional meeting for Councillors (on non-meeting months)

Cllr Millard has suggested that the 5 Councillors and clerk should meet via Zoom for a brief additional meeting in between the bi-monthly Parish Council meetings. This would allow decisions to be made more easily and should be a more efficient way of working. Councillors will discuss if they are happy with this during the 16th September meeting.

Planning applications

Since the last meeting the following representations have been made:

20/01854/TREE – Little Orchard – Great Alne Parish Council submitted the following: Objection - There is no evidence that the tree is not healthy or causing any structural damage, and the Councillors feel the level of light could be improved by tree surgery rather than felling.

20/017041/FUL – Whipple Tree Cottage - Great Alne Parish Council submitted the following: No objection - The design appears to be well considered, the extension is modest in scale, so does not conflict with Green Belt policy, and the development does not impact on neighbouring properties.

20/01138/FUL – Dan Skelton Racing - Re-consultation – Great Alne Parish Council submitted the following: No representation.

20/01926/TREE – Beehive Cottage - Great Alne Parish Council submitted the following: No objection.

20/01860/VARY – Cutlers Farm - Great Alne Parish Council submitted the following: No objection.

Reference	Received	Status	Address
20/02241/TREE	18/08/2020	Pending consideration	3 Gunn Court, Ashfield House, Park Lane, Great Alne
20/01926/TREE	17/07/2020	Tree works approved	Beehive Cottage, Henley Rd, Great Alne
20/01854/TREE	13/07/2020	Tree works approved	Little Orchard, Henley Rd, Great Alne
20/01860/VARY	13/07/2020	Pending consideration	Cutlers Farm, Henley Rd, Great Alne
20/01862/LBP	08/07/2020	Pending consideration	The Old Post Office, Henley Rd, Great Alne
20/01704/FUL	30/06/2020	Application withdrawn	Whipple Tree Cottage, Coughton Fields Lane
20/01744/LDP	29/06/2020	Proposed lawful development – permitted	Newlands, Alne Hills, Great Alne
19/03615/FUL & 19/03616/LBC	18/05/2020	Appeal in progress	8 Mill Cottage, Henley Rd, Great Alne
20/01223/FUL	12/05/2020	Pending consideration	Cutlers Farm, Henley Rd, Great Alne

20/01138/FUL	29/04/2020	Pending Consideration	Dan Skelton Racing, Lodge Hill, Shelfield Green, Alcester
20/01034/FUL	16/04/2020	Permission with conditions	Newlands, Alne Hills, Great Alne
20/00461/FUL	17/02/2020	Pending Consideration	Dan Skelton Racing, Lodge Hill, Shelfield Green, Alcester
20/00236/FUL & 20/00237/LBC	27/01/2020	Permission with condition and LBC approved	Keepers Cottage, Alne Hills, Great Alne
20/00146/FUL	16/01/2020	Pending Consideration	Little Orchard, Henley Rd, Great Alne
20/00008/FUL & 20/00009/LBC	02/01/2020	Listed building consent refused	Dinglewell Farm, Alne Hill, Great Alne