

Wellesbourne and Walton Parish Council Meeting 1st October 2019

Wellesbourne Airfield took centre stage at the October meeting of Wellesbourne and Walton Parish Council when Mike Roberts of Take Flight Aviation was given the opportunity to speak in public. He spoke about the recently published Memorandum of Understanding between the owners of the airfield and the District Council. He said Take Flight is the largest operator on the airfield and in the Memorandum the landowners have until 29th October to discuss new leases with the tenants, which is the same date that the current lease of Take Flight expires. So far all the tenants except Take Flight have been offered new leases but Take Flight has not been approached by the landowners. He told the meeting that Take Flight have 15 aircraft and 300 members and are known for their high quality aircrew training and apprenticeships, which would all be lost if they had to close. Frankie Stuart, traffic controller at the airfield, also spoke about the clause in the Memorandum which appears to allow for the retention of just one just one runway, reduced in both length and width. This would greatly restrict flying functions as the runway cannot be used in all winds. It is contrary to the Neighbourhood Plan which seeks to maintain and even enhance flying functions at the airfield and is also not in accordance with the Memorandum in which the owners undertook to maintain established flying functions.

Later in the meeting the Council discussed the airfield issue and decided to write to the District Council expressing concerns over the Memorandum. In the Memorandum the owners are required to submit a planning application containing proposals for the mixed development of the airfield. It is not clear what is meant by 'mixed' nor whether the proposed restrictions to the runways will require planning permission. The Parish Council agreed to invite the Leader of the District Council to attend a Parish Council meeting and clarify the terms of the Memorandum. The Parish Council will also submit a question about the future of the airfield to the next full meeting of the District Council on October 23rd.

The Chairman, Anne Prior, reported that the Lengthsman/Handyman has given in his notice due to pressure of other work. She thanked him for the excellent service he has given Wellesbourne and adjoining parishes during his time in the post. An advertisement for this part-time post, which could be divided into two posts is in the Herald this week and next week.

County Councillor Anne Parry announced that she has a further £6,000 to give out in community grants in her ward. For further details see <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/cllrgrants>. She also drew attention to the dementia-

friendly films being shown at the Stratford Picturehouse. These screenings are open to all. To help those suffering with dementia the auditorium lights are left on low and the audience is free to walk around, join in songs etc. As a District Councillor, she also announced that the District Council has been successful in obtaining a one-off government grant to enable the Council to employ an extra member of the Planning Enforcement Team. This is in recognition of the high volume of work being undertaken by the team.

At the meeting the Council agreed the final details of the planning application to be made for the change of use of land off Newbold Road for parking and sports use. The plan is to provide up to 76 parking spaces with access from Newbold Road which will be phased in as needed. These will provide much-needed parking for the primary school and the area will only be open when the school and the new pitch is in use. The new playing pitch, sited on the far side of the Infants annexe, will be for school use but also available as a training area for local teams.

Finally it was pointed out to all drone owners, that Wellesbourne is in an exclusion zone due to the proximity of the airfield and no drone flying activities can take place over the village.