



# Bidford-on-Avon Parish Council

IN THE COUNTY OF WARWICKSHIRE

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Mrs. E. Uggerløse – Clerk to the Parish Council

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Cllr. Richard Hobbs  
Cabinet Member for Community Protection  
Warwickshire County Council  
Shire Hall  
Warwick  
CV34 4RR

28<sup>th</sup> July 2009

Dear Cllr. Hobbs,

The issue of the review of the Report of the Chief Fire Officer – item 21 of the Agenda of the Cabinet Meeting of Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> July (exempt items), and the accompanying rumours that it includes the proposal to close Bidford Fire Station, was raised by members of a very concerned public, at last night's Parish Council Meeting in Bidford.

As the report in question is highly confidential, neither the Parish Council nor Cllr. Barnes, Bidford's County Councillor, were in a position to give a satisfactory answer. However, the local community have made their concerns very clear and I was instructed by the Parish Council to write to you, and your fellow Cabinet Members, to urge you to take due consideration of the importance of the Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service, something that, regrettably, was highlighted, especially in our community, not that long ago when the tragic events in Atherstone caused the death of 4 firefighters from the neighbouring stations at Alcester and Stratford – all of them well known within our own community.

The Parish Office is situated in Bramley Way, Bidford-on-Avon, B50 4QG  
and is open to members of the public 10.00 a.m. – 1.00p.m. Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and  
Fridays and from 1.30-4.30 pm Thursdays

If you are unable to attend during these times, please call for an appointment.

Bidford Fire Station provide first attending appliance/first response for:

Bidford-on-Avon	Salford Priors	Abbots Salford	Pitchill
Cock Bevington	Wood Bevington	Dunnington	Broom
Wixford	Ardens Grafton	Temple Grafton	Exhall
Braggington	Dorsington	Cranhill	Marlciff
Barton	Hillborough	Welford-on-Avon	Long Marston
Binton			

In other words, it provides safety and peace of mind to over 10,000 residents of the area, a high percentage of whom are in the high risk band, which the WRFS itself has identified as being the elderly, young and disabled.

Furthermore, it often goes to the assistance of its neighbours in Worcester as it has a superior turn out time, average 3 minutes 20 seconds, compared to Pebworth with an average time of 7 minutes 26 seconds and Evesham which averages 6 minutes 19.seconds.

During the 2007 floods, when Bidford was cut off, the local fire fighters did sterling work ensuring the safety of the local residents. And it is on record that 2008 was the busiest year ever for Bidford Fire Station. With a growing population in this area (Stratford District require a further 15,000 dwellings) this will only increase.

Bidford Fire Station is also one of the few retained stations that fully meet the role of a modern fire station by:

- Carrying out its own home fire safety checks and fire alarm fitting services
- Delivering fire safety talks to key stages 1 and 2 in the four local schools and other local groups
- Running a Young Firefighters unit of youngsters between the ages of 11-17 on a voluntary basis and considered the best not, only in the county, but the whole of the West Midlands Region. It is also one of the few activities open to older children as Bidford has no secondary school.

The Parish Council is extremely concerned that this report, which is of paramount importance to the whole of Warwickshire, and in particular to Bidford-on-Avon and surrounding villages, is being discussed "in camera", with no consultation, despite WCC's assurances to Bidford Parish Council that there would be full and open consultation for any future changes.

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The Parish Council believes that the safety of the people of Warwickshire should be of the upmost importance and that any talk of reducing cover, closing stations etc. after the tragedy of Atherstone is contrary to the responsibilities of the Fire and Rescue Services, which should be looking to increase its level of service and not putting lives in danger. The risks involved in having a reduced service, which will be often overstretched and dependant on neighbouring services to assist, are too high for them to be taken lightly: it not only endangers the lives of the population, but those of the firefighters, who will often be tired due to overwork.

In view of the above, Bidford Parish Council would urge you to think seriously of the future of the Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service;

- It performs a number of important services in the County,
- It is paramount to the safety of the communities
- We owe a debt of gratitude to its servicemen, many of whom are part time, all willing to risk their lives for others, as recently demonstrated.
- With the increase risk of floods in our area, there will be further demand on their services.
- The population projections for Warwickshire show an increase of 90,000, again putting further demand on the service.

Yours sincerely,



Elisabeth Uggerløse  
Clerk to the Parish Council

Cc - Cllr. Alan Farnell, Leader of the Council

Cllr. Bob Stevens

Cllr. Alan Cockburn

Cllr. Peter Fowler

Cllr. Colin Hayfield

Cllr. Martin Heatley

Cllr. Chris Saint

Cllr. Izzi Seccombe

Cllr. Heather Timms

Cllr. Jerry Roodhouse – Leader of the liberal Democrat Group

Cllr. June Tandy – Leader of the Labour Group

Cllr. Peter Barnes – County Councillor for Bidford on Avon and Chairman of WCC

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