

## ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Minutes of meeting held on Wednesday 18 May 2011  
Birlingham Village Hall

### Welcome

- 1) Present: Councillors Hall, Morris, Hill and Butler.  
In attendance: Clerk, District Councillor Davis, Footpath Warden, Tree Warden, Lengthsman, Mr and Mrs Stanton, Mrs Brassington, Mr Devenish and Mr and Mrs Hermon.
- 2) Apologies: – Councillors Aston and Comins
- 3) Declaration of Office of Councillors, including Chairman  
The Councillors' signed their Declaration of Acceptance of Office as this was the first meeting since the election. An acceptance of the absent Councillors' was agreed and signatures to be obtained by the Clerk before the next meeting.
- 4) Election of Chairman and signing of Declaration of Office. Mr Anthony Hall was elected as Chairman and the Declaration of Office was duly signed.
- 5) Declaration of Interest
  - a) Personal - none
  - b) Prejudicial – none
  - c) Register of Interests – none
- 6) Election of Vice Chairman  
Steve Morris was elected as Vice Chairman.
- 7) Appointment of Financial Support Officer  
It was proposed and seconded that John Hill be appointed Financial Support Officer.
- 8) Appointment of Footpath Warden  
It was proposed and seconded that Mr Bruce Hayward be appointed Footpath Warden.
- 9) Appointment of Tree Warden  
It was proposed and seconded that Mr Stuart Crowther be appointed as Tree Warden.
- 10) Appointment of Lengthsman  
It was proposed and seconded that Mr Carl Brassington be appointed as Lengthsman.
- 11) Planning Group  
The delegation of the Planning Group was agreed. Councillor Comins will steer the Group with Councillor's Morris and Aston forming the other team members. Councillor Butler will make up the team if there is a shortfall or declarations of interest as three members are needed for the Group.
- 12) Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting  
The Minutes of the Parish meeting, held on 19 May 2010, were verified by Councillors as a true record and duly signed by the Chairman.

13) Chairman's Report

The Chairman thanked all the Committee Members for their efforts during the year. Thanks was given to the Clerk. Thanks was given to Councillor Chris Reynard for acting as Vice-chair and Finance Officer and for his years of service. Thanks also to Councillors Aston, Comins, Morris and McVitte. Reluctantly Steve McVitte has resigned and was thanked for his input over the years and will be missed. It is hoped he will rejoin. Councillors' Comins, Morris and Reynard are thanked for their work with the Planning Group. Mr Bruce Hayward was thanked for his role as Footpath Warden and for keeping the village paths up together and Mr Stuart Crowther for his work as Tree Warden and for keeping us informed. Mr Mark Smith was thanked for his role with volunteering to help Mr Hayward over the past year. An acknowledgement was also made for the parishioners who assisted with the Litter Pick. A thank you was also given to Carl Brassington for his hard work and for continuing as the parish Lengthsman.

The roads are a personal on-going issue and the Chairman will keep contacting the County Council to continue with his campaign.

A Chairman's summary of the year was read out and he thanked all those involved for taking part. The Report is attached.

14) Footpath Wardens Report

The Footpath Warden has sent a report which was circulated. The budget on the County Council's Parish Improvement Plan scheme is almost depleted. Report as follows:

Birlingham has 2 volunteers who look after the Parish footpaths on behalf of the County Council. The County Council meet any expenses incurred. Occasional bigger tasks (like the clearing of the track to the north of Asham Meadow) are contracted out.

The main work in the past year has, as usual, been the controlling/clearing of undergrowth and repairs to stiles and finger-posts.

In addition, this year saw the replacing of the kissing-gate in Rough Hill orchard; work organised by the charity who owns the orchard, the People's Trust for Endangered Species, using furniture supplied by the County Council. Below is a picture of the completed gate:



This year also saw the launch of a new Public Rights of Way web map by the County Council Countryside Service; visit [www.worcestershire.gov.uk/countryside](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/countryside) and click on Public Rights of Way and then Interactive Map.

If anyone has any concerns or suggestions regarding the footpaths in the Parish, please contact me at Tadpole Cottage on 751382 or via the Parish clerk.

15) Tree Warden's Report

The Tree Warden reported for 2010/11

**General**

All the newly planted trees in The Broadway are in good health and coming on well. I continue to place banners on them to protect them from the hedge and verge cutters. These will be removed in the near future once the trees are of an appropriate size although they are not yet visible to verge cutters! The first on the left going south was badly damaged by the verge cutter. I reported it to the hub who had the contractor meet me to view the damage. He was quick to tell me that it must have happened just before his company took on the contract.

Two horse chestnuts and a number of hollies, have been planted to the east of Church Street.

The first and larger of the horse chestnut trees west of Withy Walk had the top taken out by the asparagus cutter but seems to have recovered.

The replacements planted last year at Lower End seem to have established well.

**Courses**

I went on the Tree Warden Forum at Worcester Woods Country Park in October. There we learnt about the historic uses of trees, useful trees in public places and Jon Stokes for the Tree Council spoke about the changing and important role of tree wardens.

It seems the cuts are affecting every area as all training courses designed for tree wardens and PPW's are now chargeable. So knowing that the tree budget is very low we need to find a top up from somewhere.

The Tree Warden re-reiterated that the tree budget was almost exhausted and this should be considered.

16) Lengthsman's Report

The Lengthsman's report had been circulated, as follows:

It has been a quiet year for the Lengthsman. The very dry weather over the winter and spring has meant that the usual problems of roads flooding and gulleys being blocked was not a problem.

Some cutting back of overhanging vegetation and clearing of windfalls, broken windscreens and the odd kitchen sink provided some light amusement but in general all quiet on the Lengthsman front, quote

"I shall be clearing gulleys and verges over the summer in preparation for the autumn - or even any July downpours - but I think that we are limited to what can be undertaken by our brief from the scheme operators.

I would ask the Parish Council to write to the County Council and see if we can expand the Lengthsman's duties to include some or all of the following :

1. Cutting back the roadside verges to provide a safe pedestrian footway where none exists at the moment. This would provide easy access safe haven for pedestrians and keep verges clear to facilitate good and safe visibility for traffic.

2. Allow clearing of general litter and detritus around the area with facility for the waste to be collected during a normal bin run. This would enhance the local environment and cut down the Council's need to send expensive teams to carry out this work.
  3. Inform the Council that we do not really need a roadsweeping team with a special gutter sweeping lorry to clear our roadside gutters and verges. This is carried out by the Lengthsman so it is a duplication of work.
  4. Ensure that the public litter bins are emptied regularly and provide more if available. I do not feel that these measures would add any expense to the Lengthsman scheme as the money is allocated in the budget but we do not have authority to spend it".
- Some of the issues had been addressed to the County Council by the Clerk.

17) Democratic Opening (Open Questions)

Residents asked that an explanation be given by Wychavon District Council as to why they had not notified neighbours of the planning application for equestrian use at the field in Lower End. The application had been approved on 5 May but consultees had until the 9 May to reply. The planning officer had apologised to residents that it had been approved before the deadline but said neighbours were notified as a matter of courtesy and that it was not a statutory requirement. There were conditions attached to the planning approval and the residents were pleased about the restrictions. There was anxiety that the stables would become a garage or even a dwelling. The District Councillor had not been notified and he would also investigate. He suggested that if neighbours wished they could address this to the Scrutiny Committee for their findings in irregularities. Clerk also to write to planning department to find out what has gone on.

There was a further question regarding the roads and a suggestion that contact could be made with Derek Prodger and Town Councillor Smith at Pershore who had recently had an article in The Journal.

18) Closure – with nothing further to discuss the meeting closed at 7.40pm. **The date of the next Annual Parish Meeting will be posted when arranged.**

Signed: ..... Anthony J Hall, Chairman

Date: .....