

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Minutes of meeting held on Wednesday 15 May 2013
Birlingham Village Hall

Welcome

- 1) Present: Councillors Hall, Morris, Aston, Butler, Comins, and Hill
- 2) In attendance: District Councillor Davis, Footpath Warden, Lengthsman, PACT Representative and Mr and Mrs Fitch
- 3) Apologies: – Councillor New
- 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) Register of Interests: Councillors are reminded of the need to update their register of interests.
 - b) To declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in items on the agenda and their nature.
 - c) To declare any Other Disclosable Interests in items on the agenda and their nature.
- 6) Election of Vice Chairman

Steve Morris was elected as Vice Chairman. Councillor Morris requested that if a site meeting or other gathering was needed he would ask for a couple of days' notice if he was out of the village.
- 7) Appointment of Financial Support Officer

It was proposed and seconded that John Hill be appointed Financial Support Officer.
- 8) Appointment of Footpath Warden

Mr Hayward had stated that he was quite happy to continue as Footpath Warden. It was proposed and seconded that 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

Mr Brassington was happy to carry on with the duty of Lengthsman. It was proposed and seconded that Carl Brassington be appointed as Lengthsman. Carl gave a copy of his insurance policy for the record.
- 11) Planning Group

The delegation of the Planning Group was agreed. Councillor Comins will continue to steer the Group with Councillor's Morris and Aston forming the other team members. Councillor Butler will make up the team as and when 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 16 May 2012, were verified by Councillors as a true record and duly signed by the Chairman.

13) Chairman's Report

Thank you for all your support and work during the last twelve months: To **all Committee Members**; Steve as Vice-Chair, John as Financial Support Officer, Paula, John and Charlotte. Welcome to Marion and thank you for joining the team.

To John, Steve and Paula for the planning group. The Clerk.

Bruce Hayward for **footpaths** and **Mark Smith** for assisting. Your volunteering efforts are very much appreciated and you are working for Worcestershire County Council under the Volunteer route and not through the PC as previously. Thank you for the continued updates on footpath clearance and equipment that you replace/upkeep.

Carl Brassington for his role as **Lengthsman** Thank you Carl for all your hard work and support in making the Lengthsman Scheme such a success. Thank you for the upkeep of the roads and verges especially during the snow and flooding.

Stuart Crowther for **trees**. Many thanks to Stuart for continuing to look after our trees and hedges.

Chris Reynard. Chris remains very much involved with the PC as a representative for PACT and the Councillors and I wish to put on record our thanks to Chris for his work over the last year.

Steve Morris. Steve for your work on the website and Birlingham News. Thank you for keeping us up together. It is appreciated.

David Maxwell. We are very sorry that our friend David Maxwell from Carron Lodge died after a short illness. David had put in so much effort with the village green.

Chairman's summary of the year was read out, as below. He thanked all those involved for taking part and would see what the year ahead brings.

14) Footpath Wardens Report

The Footpath Warden has sent a report which was circulated. Report as follows:

Birlingham has 2 volunteers who, together with local landowners, look after the Parish footpaths on behalf of the County Council. The County Council meet any small expenses incurred, and will often supply 'furniture' (e.g. gates, stiles etc.) that needs to be replaced.

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

All the footpaths in Worcestershire are shown on the Public Rights of Way web map which is maintained by the County Council Countryside Service; visit www.worcestershire.gov.uk/countryside and click on Public Rights of Way and then Interactive Map. (There is a link from the village website).

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

15) Lengthsman's Report

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

I thank the Council for the past year and confirm that I am happy to continue into the new financial year on the same basis.

Since December many ditches have been cleared and the system seems generally able to cope with the rainfall we have had over the winter months. Flooding has been minimal in the New Year and there are no major issues to report.

Over the year I have increased my activity as requested and in general I believe that the scheme works well, keeping small highways issues under control and reporting problems to WCC. I have mentioned to Roy Fullee at Highways about liaising with me when contractors are in the village but it seems that three-way communications are more difficult than I can imagine.

Some items have been added to the Lengthsman remit including "other work with specific approval of the Manager".

If the Council have any other work that they would like to be carried out and of which they specifically approve I would be happy to oblige. One item may be maintaining the village green which, as I am cutting the verge visibility splays anyway, is a small additional but necessary item.

Additional note: Still a broken drain belonging to Severn Trent at Lower End.

Possibly broken drain where new stable (Manor House) has been erected.

16) Tree Warden's Report

General

Most of the newly planted trees in The Broadway are in good health, just a couple have suffered under the flails of the hedge cutters and verge trimmers in spite of them being well identified. It is not yet time to remove the banners from them.

The two horse chestnut and hollies planted to the east of Church Street have now been integrated into a new hedge planted by a nearby resident.

Many of the horse chestnut trees west of Withy Walk were again damaged when the asparagus field was topped.

As part of the Jubilee celebrations a Jubilee Wood was planted with in excess of 300 saplings planted by a group of 30 plus villagers. They all appear to be progressing but time will tell. I have contingency plans to replace any that fail. It has been suggested that the track leading to the sewage farm should now be called Jubilee Walk. Can the Parish Council do that?

Courses

I went on the Tree Warden Forum at Warwick Castle in September. There we learnt about the amenity value of trees in a recreational setting and the need for regular inspection when there are many members of the public close by on many days of the year. We also learned about the selection of new trees to replace the ones being removed and choices based on amenity value of a particular species.

17) PACT Representative's Report

Chris Reynard had attended a meeting in April on behalf of the Parish Council. They are every six months with the Community Support Officer, who at the moment is Simon Williams.

The main concerns were the theft of heating oil. Plastic tanks can be drained/drilled. Thieves were caught in the act at Peopleton village hall.

Speeding. The Eckington speed awareness sign had recorded speeds over 35mph. 10,000 people had triggered the sign over 3 months but it was only information and did not record vehicle details. This is a serious issue and the police now have this evidence.

There had been no serious crime reports.

The next meeting in is October.

If there are any reports or items please give them to Chris or Chris Hermon or Graham Chidlow can be contacted.

18) Democratic Opening (Open Questions)

Could anything be done about the trench near The Old Rectory which is rather deep?

Closure – with nothing further to discuss the meeting closed at 7.30pm. **The date of the next Annual Parish Meeting in May will be posted when arranged.**

Signed: Anthony J Hall, Chairman

Date:

Chairman’s Summary of 2012 – 2013:

KIOSK

After a lengthy process, ownership of the village telephone kiosk has been transferred to the Parish Council. It’s legally the PC’s. Information regarding the adoption and any suggestions for its use have been placed on E-mail News. The Council now hope to find a suitable use for the kiosk, which was repainted shortly before the Parish Council took ownership. If there are any ideas, let us know.

VILLAGE/PARISH PLAN

It is felt a committee will be needed to drive the Plan forward. Meanwhile the PC has agreed to wait the outcome of the Development Plan and then progress further at a later stage.

LITTER PICK

The annual Communities Against Litter – litter pick has taken place with villagers volunteering. This was well attended and thanks to all who came along.

QUEENS DIAMOND JUBILEE

Celebrations in June. The Parish Council lead the way with Councillor Morris heading the “celebration” group eventually forming the Jubilee Group. Thank you to everyone who put in so much hard work to make the Jubilee weekend such a great success. It was a great day.

JUBILEE WOOD

The Jubilee Wood was planted in November and it was a brilliant job by the volunteers. 420 saplings were put in. This is still on-going for the PC on its future maintenance. Should the Parish Council take responsibility for it to secure its future and survival?

SIGNAGE

Still on-going but needed at the memorial cross “no entry for HGV’s “. County Councillor is still negotiating.

BVH FUNDING

The roof project: The PC supported the village hall by means of an application through a scheme “New Homes Bonus” at Wychavon District Council. The PC considers the hall as a vital asset to the village and the Council find it convenient and useful that the building remains as an integral part of the community. The Parish Council congratulated the Village Hall Committee on their success in its project and hard work.

General: The PC continue to contribute towards the Hall and thank them for their use during their PC meetings.

NEW HOMES BONUS

Consideration would be year on year for any community projects as the Bonus still remains.

If you think Birlingham could do with something that would bring added and on-going value to the local community and, where possible benefit communities close by, then get a proposal together and get in touch with the Parish Council.

WEBSITE / EMAIL GROUP

The **email group** notifies and keeps residents informed of what is going on. Quickly advising of important issues; planning applications, road closures, forthcoming events. Councillor Morris is heading the email contact group for any parishioners interested in keeping in touch through the Parish Council.

The News Email has been running since last February.

The **website** www.birlingham.org is headed by Councillor Morris and has been live for just over a year. Is it still to be officially launched? And we still need to tackle the advertising. It may be possible to share information with The Bystander and ensure that the magazine and website complement each other. And maybe it's possible to set up a local history group to build a set of village history pages.

Note: Since the first version of the website was launched on 11th May last year there have been 2420 visitors, viewing 8600 pages.

Again, THANKS to Councillor Morris.

FLOODING at Upper End. There is still an issue with the flooding at Upper End.

DRAINS AND DITCHES blocked and unblocked: on-going with help from the Lengthsman and informing WCC where necessary.

OFFICIALDOM We've got Standing Orders, Code of Conduct, Disclosable this and that, Disclaimers. We act to the best of our knowledge and take advice from WDC and CALC.

ROADS

The County Council have undertaken highway maintenance works at various locations around the village last October. This has been one of the issues I personally wanted to get resolved. THANK YOU to Councillor Hardman for all his efforts with this on-going project.