

Birlingham Parish Council

Minutes of meeting held on Wednesday 16 July 2014

at Birlingham Village Hall

Councillors:

Councillor Morris
Councillor Hill
Councillor New
Councillor Yates

Present:

Chris Reynard

Apologies for absence:

District Councillor Davis
Councillor Aston
Councillor Comins
Councillor Conder
Footpath Warden, Bruce Hayward
Tree Warden, Karl Grimston

Welcome

1. Declarations 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.

(Note: Councillors who have declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, or Other Disclosable Interest which falls within the terms of paragraph 12(4) of the code of conduct, must leave the room for the relevant items)

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held 21 May 2014, a copy of which had been circulated to all Councillors, were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman. It was noted that the sequential numbering of the minutes from March to May was not consistent and went from 304 to 306.

3. Election of Vice-chairman

John Hill had been persuaded to stand as Vice-chairman and was duly elected. He was overwhelmed to be taking on the position.

4. Democratic Opening

Appendix ¹

5. Progress Reports

a) Footpaths

- i) Footpath 502 (path to Defford Bridge) – cleared.
- ii) Footpath 511 (Withy Walk) – cut back and strimmed.
- iii) Footpath 520 (other side of Nafford Lock) – strimmed.

b) District Councillor

- i) Still striving to identify other areas for further cost savings to be made – sharing a CEO/MD with Malvern Hill is a possibility but this still needs to be ratified by everyone.

- ii) Research into our car park system of charging and asset value is being commissioned.
- iii) Sainsbury potential development at Evesham is still ongoing.
- iv) The District Council's treasury position – still acceptable with £36.8m on deposit.
- v) We now consider we have a 5 year land supply follow link:
www.wychavon.gov.uk/planning-news

Thanks to Councillor Davis for the report during his absence from the meeting.

- c) County Councillor – absent.
- d) Clerk - see Appendix 2

6. Planning

- a) Current applications pending - none
- b) Applications granted / refused – none
- c) A summary for April 2013 – May 2014 was circulated. File copy.

7. Financial Matters

- a) Bank Balance: £4,277.39 as at 24 June 2014
- b) The Accounts for 2014/2015 were agreed
- c) Receipts –

£40.00 – Worcestershire County Council Lengthsman

Payments –

£100.00 – Lengthsman (Feb) – cheque number 303
 £500.00 - Village Hall contribution – cheque number 304
 £243.80 – Zurich insurance June 2014 – May 2015 – cheque number 305
 £151.54 – CALC service charge and affiliation fee – cheque number 306
 £40.00 – Lengthsman (March/April) – cheque number 308
 £50.00 – Internal auditor ('We' the parish council apply the rules on a contracted auditor and they have the relevant qualifications for the position)

- d) Future payments

£25.00 – Worcestershire CALC – Clerk training '3M's'
 £125.00 – HM Revenue & Customs (April, May, June)
 £500.00 – Clerks pay (April, May, June)
 £25.00 – Clerks expenses (April, May, June)
 £20.74 – reimburse Clerk for payment of gift for Tree Warden
 £70.00 – Lengthsman (May)
 £105.00 – Lengthsman (June)

- e) Audit – Grant Thornton - Acknowledgement received from Bridget Bowen at Grant Thornton for the Annual Return. Their audit work will commence in a few weeks and they will contact if they have any queries.

8. Birlingham Cricket Club request for funding see Appendix 3

Further discussion on the club's enquiry for support in funding their renovations and how the Council would fund their project i.e. New Homes Bonus. It was agreed that the request should be funded through the New Homes Bonus scheme as there was money available. How much was required?

An application should be submitted which would be looked at favourably.

There had also been a verbal request from the Jubilee Committee for new trestle tables for use by village organisations.

9. Wychavon Parish Games

A note from Sue Collins, organiser of the games, quotes "I am sure you will be delighted to know that Birlingham have entered two events in this year's Parish Games. An invoice for the entry fee for these two events - £12.00 will be sent to you at the end of July or beginning of August".

Members were not aware that there was a charge. However, this is a community event and everyone supported the games participants and Denise McGowen who would oversee the games in Birlingham. The two events are skittles and darts. It was resolved to pay £6.00 for each team.

10. Standing Orders

Review standing orders including dispensation item – should this be a separate minute item or summarised under declarations of interest? Receipt of agenda – are members accepting of the agenda by email as it should officially be received by hard copy?

It was agreed to carry on with the dispensation item under declarations.

Members agreed that they would accept the agenda by email if they had an email address.

11. Councillors' reports and items for next agenda

Councillor Comins report on Badsey – attached Appendix 4

Councillor Comins was thanked for his attendance.

Chairman – attendance at the Environment Agency at Tewkesbury organised by CALC. It was a very useful and informative visit. The flood emergency room display was viewed. Advised that the sluice gates are operated automatic so there is no truth about letting the Avon 'back up'.

Tree Warden – "I met with David Kew regarding the memorial wood. The trees and shrubs that were listed were in several key areas where we also lost established trees. We are trying to get replacement plants from the same source as before. Another option for here and elsewhere in the village would be if anyone has any unwanted small trees in their gardens or on their land that we could transplant. Karl requested that the village be made aware of the request".

Can this go on Birlingham news?

12. Closure with nothing further to discuss the meeting closed at 8.57pm.

The next Parish Council meeting is on Wednesday 17 September at 7.45pm.

Signed: **Councillor Steve Morris, Chairman**

Date:

Appendix 1: Democratic Opening

The concern over the amount of houses planned for Eckington was raised and the issues regarding infrastructure, particularly the ancient bridge. There is already an increase in traffic due to development in Bredon.

Using Birlingham as a 'rat run' when the Eckington Road junction is busy.

Does the Neighbourhood Plan carry any weight? Discussion on the preferred option sites. Chairman and Councillor Comins still to send out a letter to villagers.

Appendix 2: Clerks Report

i) News e-mail

Birlingham News 51 - 2 June

It's the Birlingham Evening Fete at Brockham this Friday; come along and bring your friends!
July 2014

In this issue:

1. Alan Cooper
2. Cuppa & Chat, 4th June
3. Evening Fete, 6th June
4. Striking Competition, 14th June
5. New Tree Warden
6. Courier Fraud Alert

[5. New Tree Warden](#)

At the Annual Parish Meeting on 21st May, Birlingham Parish Council appointed Karl Grimston as tree warden to take care of the parish's trees. Karl replaces Stuart Crowther, who has been warden for the last 14 years, during which time he has planted and maintained about 40 trees around the village.

Reports were also received from various individuals and organisations and these will be available to read when the minutes of the meeting are published.

[Birlingham News 52 - 10 June](#)

[The Swan Inn](#)

Tonight (Tuesday 10th June) will be Nic and Imogen's last night at the Swan Inn. After more than 11 years as superb landlords at the Swan, we hope everyone will come along to help them celebrate their move. We wish Nic, Imo, Romilly and Iona a happy life in their new home in Eckington.

The Swan Inn will now be closed for a brief period but all are welcome at Birlingham Cricket Club, where the bar will be open for a few nights a week – more details to follow soon.

[Birlingham News 53 - 12 June](#)

Entries for the Wychavon Parish Games must be completed by 30th June – see below for more details.

In this issue:

1. Cricket Club Bar Opening Times
2. Service at St James's Church, 15th June
3. Wychavon Parish Games Meeting, 20th June
4. Vintage & Classic Car Rally, 18th July
5. Coach to Darlington, 25th July
6. Recycling at the Swan Inn

[3. Wychavon Parish Games Meeting, 20th June](#)

Denise McGowan is hosting a meeting to finalise Birlingham's entry in the Wychavon Parish Games. The meeting will be held at 1 Tudor Cottage, Church Street at 7.00pm on Friday 20th June. Entries for the games have to be in by 30th June.

If you would like to join one of the teams, or organise a particular team, please come along to the meeting or contact Denise on 01386 750443.

[6. Recycling at the Swan Inn](#)

The Swan Inn have been asked to remove their recycling bins from the car park, so these facilities will no longer be available in the village.

All recycling should now be placed in your green bins. Additional recycling bins are available on request from Wychavon District Council. Phone Client Services on 01386 565018 for more information (Monday–Friday 9.00am–5.00pm).

[Birlingham News 53 - update 17 June](#)

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Cricket Club Bar Opening Times. The bar at Birlingham Cricket Club will be open at 6.30pm from Wednesday to Sunday every week until further notice.

[Birlingham News 54 - 5 July](#)

The schedule for this year's Birlingham Flower & Produce Show has now been distributed, so it's time to start planning your entries.

In this issue:

1. Family Service, 6th July
2. Wychavon Parish Games Entries
3. St James's Churchyard
4. Birlingham Flower & Produce Show Schedule
5. Swan Inn Article
6. West Mercia Police Information

[2. Wychavon Parish Games Entries](#)

Birlingham is entering a darts team and a skittles team in this year's Wychavon Parish Games. If you would like to join one of these teams, please contact Denise McGowan on 01386 750443.

[5. Swan Inn Article](#)

The Swan Inn is currently undergoing alterations prior to re-opening later this month. The new owners' plans have been reported in an article in the Worcester News, which can be viewed at <http://m.worcesternews.co.uk/news/11285924>.

Meanwhile, the Cricket Club bar will be open each evening from Wednesday to Sunday.

[Birlingham News 55 - 12 July](#)

Next week sees the Birlingham Parish Council meeting on Wednesday and the 20th anniversary Vintage & Classic Car Rally on Friday.

In this issue:

1. Parish Council Meeting, 16th July
2. Vintage & Classic Car Rally, 18th July
3. Birlingham Flower & Produce Show Hanging Basket Competition
4. Evening Fete Photographs

[1. Parish Council Meeting, 16th July](#)

The next Parish Council meeting is on Wednesday 16th July at 7.45pm in Birlingham Village Hall. If you have any issues you would like to discuss, please come along.

The Agenda for the meeting is available at www.birlingham.org/pc_info/pc_agenda_2014-07-16.pdf and the minutes of the last meeting on 21st May are at www.birlingham.org/pc_info/pc_minutes_2014-05-21.pdf.

ii) Birlingham Cricket Club

Request received asking for support towards improvement works that the club has planned to maintain facilities on the ground. The club is looking to raise £1,500 for the replacement of the machine shed roof and repairs to the club house window frames.

iii) BVH

A request was received for a future contribution of £500, followed by a thank you for the contribution for this financial year.

iv) Business Insurance for Lengthsman

The schedule of insurance had been received from Carl Brassington showing his public liability cover.

v) Neighbourhood Plan Networking Event – CALC

Circulated to all Councillors. CALC will be holding a networking event for councils to come together to share ideas. We are most grateful to Chaddesley Corbett Parish Council who will be sharing their experience of producing a Plan. This event will be held at County Hall Worcester July 8th from 7pm to 9pm. There is no charge for the evening.

vi) Retirement Gift

From Stuart Crowther to Clerk:

Please pass on my grateful thanks to all the councillors and yourself for the lovely thought you all had on my standing down as tree warden. The port and chocs are really appreciated. I will still try to attend pc meetings when possible so you are not rid of me yet!! Regards Stuart

vii) Cotswolds Conservation Board – meeting of the Board 26 June

Agenda and unconfirmed minutes of 20 March circulated to all Councillors.

Reports are via the following weblink: www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/?page=meeting&itemid=268

Reminder - the Board comprises 37 members, including eight Parish Members. These Parish Members are full, voting, members of the Board and between them they represent all of the parishes in the AONB. While representatives of other parishes would be welcome to attend as Observers at Board meetings, there is no expectation or requirement for them to do so. A note of which parishes are included within the eight Parish Groups, and which Parish Members represent those Groups, is available via this link: www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/?page=parish-council-appointees

Stephen Holley, Committee Administrator to the Cotswolds Conservation Board, c/o Cotswold District Council

viii) Worcestershire CALC – training

Parish Councillor training May 2014 – certificate of attendance awarded to Clerk.

ix) Worcestershire County Council – Consultation Draft Planning Validation Document

Circulated to all Councillors – the County Planning Authority responsible for processing and determination of planning applications for minerals developments, waste management facilities and the Council's own development (libraries, schools, roads and railway stations).

To enable the authority to accept and validate planning applications in a more timely and efficient manner they have produced a Draft Document. If an applicant fails to submit an application in accordance with the requirements set out in the Document they will be entitled to declare the application invalid. Response by 30 July

x) Worcestershire County Council – Consultation on Statement of Community Involvement

Circulated to all Councillors. The County Planning Authority is responsible for preparing planning policy to guide waste and minerals development. The way the local communities, businesses, and interest groups are involved in these functions is governed by the Council's Open for Business agenda by encouraging better engagement with the planning system. The SCI dates from 2006 and is being revised to reflect changes to the planning system. Comments welcome on the draft update by 30 July.

xi) Lengthsman training

From David Hunter to Clerk:

Dear June

We have another Lengthsman training session booked for Monday 4th August. This is a half-day course starting at 9:00AM and it will be held at COUNTY HALL, Spetchley Road, Worcester WR5 2NP. If you would like to reserve a place on this course please let me know as soon as possible.

Kind regards

Dave Hunter Bsc(Hons), MCIHT, Senior Highways Liaison Engineer, Lengthsman Scheme Manager

Clerk to Carl: Do you want to or are you able to attend the session on 4th August? Let me know and I can reserve your place.

Carl to Clerk: Yes - please reserve me a place on the course

David Hunter to Clerk: That's fine, I've booked Carl onto the course. Training starts at 9:00AM at County Hall, no need to bring any equipment. Training usually finishes around lunchtime and there is a canteen on site

xii) Parish views sought on rural housing

The Rural Housing Policy Review is now seeking views of parish councils on affordable housing.

Set up by Hastoe Housing Association, the review is exploring what has changed since the production of key reports into rural affordable housing published 2005-2008 and what now needs to happen to assist delivery.

The review group is chaired by Lord Best and includes authors of these key reports, Lord Matthew Taylor and Elinor Goodman, plus movers and shakers of rural affordable housing delivery from across the country.

Findings of the review will inform recommendations to national policy makers and assist those responsible for delivery.

The review has already sought input from local authorities and now is keen to get views from Parish Councils.

It is interested in the factors that encourage and deter parish councils from engaging in the delivery of rural affordable housing.

By responding, parish councils will help ensure the review is well informed and effective.

Completing this short tick box questionnaire will take about 10 minutes and will be enormously helpful to the review group.

Please return your completed questionnaire by 25 July to Jo.Lavis64@gmail.com

If you have problems accessing the questionnaire or any queries concerning the review, please contact Jo Lavis through her e-mail.

Are members completing the questionnaire?

xiii) BVH received unconfirmed Minutes of last Meeting.

xiv) Visit to Environment Agency Flood Warning Service – 7 July

From Margaret Rowley

Wychavon Area CALC has arranged a visit to the Environment Agency's flood warning service at Tewkesbury on Monday 7th July at 10:30 am. We will be meeting at the Agency's offices at Riversmeet House, Northway Lane, Tewkesbury GL20 8JG. Dan Trewin, Team Leader of the Flood Resilience Team will be showing us the flood incident room and giving details of how the EA forecast floods and what notice communities can expect.

As places are limited, please contact me to book a place by emailing amargaretrowley@aol.com or telephone 07899 053700.

Regards

Margaret Rowley

Chair, Wychavon Area CALC

xv) Planning application for 25 new homes in Eckington

Members are aware that a Planning application for 25 new homes has been submitted in Eckington.

Another comment: "The jungle drums tell me there are discussions about 70+ on the other side of the main road also, although plans have not been submitted yet".

xvi) Planning Enforcement Briefing sessions

Circulated to all councillors: A letter which is self-explanatory from Graeme Duerden, Planning Enforcement.

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xvii) Local Enforcement Plan

Circulated to all Councillors: version of the Local Enforcement Plan for information from Graeme Duerden, Development Control Manager (Enforcement).

xviii) Wychavon Building Design Aware 2014

From Paul Hardiman, Planning Officer (Policy)

Leaflet, poster circulated to all Councillors.

BUILDING DESIGN AWARDS 2014 - LAUNCH WEEK

This week sees the launch of the 2014 Building Design Awards in Wychavon. Press releases are being sent out by one of our Press Officers, I will be putting posters and nomination leaflets in Libraries and Contact Centres, a web page will go live on Friday and the attached nomination letter, poster and nomination leaflet is being sent out to all of the contacts on our distribution list. I would be very grateful if you could let councillors know about the competition and encourage them to nominate buildings that they feel worthy, not only within your Parish but throughout Wychavon District.

xix) CALC

To: All member councils

Dear All,

You may have seen the paragraph in last week's Update about the County Council's withdrawal of grant funding from CALC. We knew that the £25,000 per year reward grant funding from the County Partnership had ended, as that was awarded for a fixed period of four years. In addition, the County Council has given us £7,000 per year for a number of years, and that has gone as a result of the County's internal restructuring and the need for it to make budget savings.

County officers are looking for ways to continue to support CALC, and Cllr Sue Baxter, CALC Executive Committee chairman, and I, are due to meet Clare Marchant, the new County Council Chief Executive, on September 8th.

At its meeting last Wednesday, the CALC Executive Committee thought that it would be very helpful if member councils wrote to Ms Marchant to express their support for the Association and also if they raised the issue with their county councillors. The Committee thought that it was very likely that County Council members would not be aware of it.

The Committee's views were that

- The amount of the saving was a tiny proportion of the County Council's spending, even considering the total amount of the grant paid in the last four years.
- The County Council has obtained very good value from the spending on the grant to the Association
- The County Council wishes to continue to improve close links with parish and town councils to further its localism agenda
- It derives benefit itself from the support that parish and town councils obtain from membership of CALC and NALC when it works with those councils to further mutual aims
- Continued support now will help the Association to achieve long term financial stability. Its withdrawal will prejudice the likelihood of survival

Your support in writing to Ms Marchant and in canvassing the support of county councillors would be very greatly appreciated.

Best wishes

Richard Levett, Executive Officer, Worcestershire County Association of Local Councils

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CALC Funding IN CALC UPDATE DATED 10 JULY

Over the last few years, CALC has relied heavily on grant funding from the County Council and the County Partnership, which has now ceased. About half of the Association's income has come from this source. The Executive Committee has tried, and failed, over an extended period, to find other sources of income to replace the grants, knowing that they would not continue in the long term.

The Committee has reluctantly concluded that if CALC is to continue in existence, the majority of its funding must come from subscriptions.

At yesterday's meeting, it agreed the proposals of the Funding Working Group, which were that it should:

(1) Resolve to bring us back in to balance within 5 years, not allowing the reserves to drop below £25k in any budget.

(2) Adopt the subscription escalator at an initial rate of 11% per annum for 5 years, the rate to be reviewed each year.

(3) Pursue the identified (and others if they arise) opportunities with vigour, reducing the escalator if actual opportunities materialise (as part of the annual review of the escalator).

(4) Continue with the current subscription formula (cap at 1,306 electors) which means a rise of 11% per annum (subject to review) in the CALC elector rate. The Association has healthy reserves because of the grant funding, and they will be used to allow the programme of subscription increases to be spread over a period of years. The strategy will be reviewed regularly to ensure that it remains appropriate. Costs will continue to be kept as low as possible while maintaining service to members.

Our Chairman, Sue Baxter, and I are due to meet the new County Council Chief Executive on September 8th, to explore the possibility of alternative support.

Appendix 3: Birlingham Cricket Club

I am writing on behalf of Birlingham Cricket Club Committee to see if the Parish Council were able to provide any support in respect of improvement works the club has planned during this year. As you are aware the Cricket Ground is the main recreational area within the village and its facilities support many village events enjoyed by parishioners. In recent years we have hosted the Village Sports day, the Jubilee celebrations, the Fete and of course the biennial Classic Car Rally and occasional music nights.

Like most small clubs in the area we have to fund raise in order to maintain the facilities on the ground. Currently the club is looking to raise approximately £1500 for the replacement of the machine shed roof and repairs to the club house window frames and possible replacement of the club house doors. This is all essential improvement and upkeep which benefits the community on the occasions when Cricket Ground is used for village events.

We do hope the Parish Council would be in a position to offer financial support, however small, and look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Mark Yeomans

For and on behalf of BCC Committee

Appendix 4: Badsey Open Meeting

On the 6th of June I attended, on behalf of the Birlingham Parish Council, a meeting held by the Badsey P C to express its anger and frustration at the effects of the government's planning rules.

The key facts were:

Between 2001 and 2011, the number of dwellings in the village had increased by 19%

From 2011 to 2014 the number of additional dwellings approved had increased by 25%

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From 2014 to 2016 if all the proposed additional dwellings are approved the number of additional dwellings will be 36%

Overall from 2001 to 2016 the number of dwellings will have increased by 70% and it is estimated the population of the village will have increased from 2425 to 4873, an increase of 81%

It was explained that no members of the Wychavon planning staff or local councillors would attend as the meeting was outside the legal process and their presence might be prejudicial to future planning decisions.

Sir Peter Luff, the local M.P. (retiring at the next election) defended the government's position.

The Badsey council complained that:

Planners and district councillors seemed powerless to prevent each and every planning application being approved despite the wishes of the community
The village plan, completed after much consultation and confirming the community's opposition to massive expansion, carried no status in the planning decisions and it had been advised to replace it with a Neighbourhood Plan

Sir Peter Luff referred to the national need for more houses and declared that until the South Worcestershire Local Plan was approved nothing could be done to stem the flood of applications. He said the government could not interfere with established legal processes and in effect blamed Wychavon for not having a 5 year supply of housing sites. When it was pointed out that the new Local Plan would not be fully operational until 2015, his advice was to be patient. He mentioned that Whittington faced a possible expansion of 340%.

I think it is fair to say that, despite the M.P.'s sympathetic and considerate handling of questions, the meeting was deeply unconvinced by his argument; it was felt that the present situation had been brought about by a cynical and covert manipulation of the planning process in the government's wider aims and that it was a complete denial of the flaunted "localism". The Conservative Party may have some problems getting support in that and many other Vale villages

John Comins

9.7.2014