

# Birlingham Parish Council

Minutes of meeting held on Wednesday 13 January 2016

at Birlingham Village Hall

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## Councillors present:

Councillor Allen  
Councillor Conder  
Councillor Hill  
Councillor Morris  
Councillor New  
Councillor Yates

## In attendance:

Councillor Ron Davis  
Clerk

## Welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

### 1. Apologies for absence:

Councillor Fitch was absent as he was abroad. He had tendered his apologies and they were accepted.

The Footpath Warden and the Tree Warden had also sent their apologies due to other commitments.

### 2. 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.
- d) Written requests for the Council to grant a dispensation (S33 of the Localism Act 2011) are to be with the Clerk at least four clear days prior to a meeting.

Councillor Allen declared an interest in Item 7 c) and 7 d) for his membership of BVH.

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. Failure to register or declare a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest may be a criminal offence.

### 3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held 18 November 2015, a copy of which had been circulated to all Councillors, were discussed. Councillor Davis had asked that his report (page 195 item c), be amended. The draft minutes had been amended and were agreed as a true record and duly signed by the Chairman.

### 4. Democratic Opening

The Chairman asked Councillors if there was any matter they wished to raise at this point as it was also their opportunity for discussion. There were no matters arising so the meeting was not adjourned for a Public Question Time.

## 5. Progress Reports

- a) Footpath Warden – none. Communication has however been received with reference to Item 11.
- b) Tree Warden

The Tree Wardens report was read out.

- i. I was unable to attend the Tree Warden Forum in November due to other commitments.
  - ii. Jubilee Way – newly planted trees all appear to be doing well with buds already showing on many. Damaged or loose canes and missing protectors have been replaced. Trees from the initial planting are also surviving but still way behind where they should be.
  - iii. Withy Way barn (off Whitehall Lane) – those directly behind the barns have not survived. I have replacements to plant there. I will also be fixing larger stakes to each of these.
  - iv. Church Street – mixture of trees and shrubs doing OK and surviving the nettles.
  - v. I recall that a suggestion was made to let villagers plant trees in Jubilee Way in memory of people. Was this ever discussed?
- c) District Councillor

Councillor Davis wished everyone a Happy New Year.

- i. The Executive Board at WDC had met to discuss two parcels of land for sale and it had only taken eighteen minutes to formalise and conclude the meeting.
  - ii. The Council tax base increase was resolved at 2.78%. The Grant would be maintained as in previous years and therefore helping towards precept.
  - iii. WDC have been through their budgets. Quite sound at the moment.
  - iv. The Clerk was given the Community Grants scheme leaflet for information. The closing date for the scheme is 31 March 2016.
  - v. The County Councillor still has his budget until the end of March.
- d) County Councillor – none.
  - e) Clerk - [See appendix 1 clerks report](#)

## 6. Planning

- a) Current applications pending:
  - i. W/15/03049/PP - 1 Brook Cottage, Eckington Road, Birlingham WR10 3DA  
Two-storey rear / side extension and porch to front elevation  
Parish Council comments – awaited
  - ii. W/15/03010/PP - The Old Rectory, New Barn Lane, Birlingham WR10 3AB  
Demolition of garden structures and erection of Garage block  
Parish Council comments – awaited
  - iii. W/15/02882/PP - 4 Church Street, Birlingham WR10 3AQ  
Two storey extension to side of property  
Birlingham Parish Council comments: The Parish Council has considered the proposal and the conclusion is that the overall design of the extension will not detract from the principles of the conservation area.  
The extension is to the rear of the property and will not result in neighbouring properties being unduly overlooked. The parish council therefore does not see any reasons to oppose this planning application.
- b) Current applications approved/refused:
  - i. W/15/02357/PP (planning application) - The Old Rectory, New Barn Lane, Birlingham WR10 3AB  
Erection of a garden room  
Approved - 27 NOVEMBER

- ii. W/15/02358/LBC (listed building consent) - The Old Rectory, New Barn Lane, Birlingham WR10 3AB  
Erection of a garden room  
Approved – 27 November  
Parish Council comments: The parish council considers that the view of the property from the public footpath is insufficient to make a judgement on the planning application. An on-site meeting was requested, however it was not possible to organise and access was not allowed. Therefore, the Parish Council are unable to comment.

During Councillor Fitch's absence Councillor Conder will collate planning comments.

The Chairman asked that the Planning Group be re-considered and/or restructured. The notifications come online whereas in the past they were circulated by the 'brown envelope' system. As there are four members on the delegated group and it has become usual to copy in the remaining on-line Councillors by default everyone is involved anyway. Consider whether to have a delegated 'group' or a co-ordinator. Recently all members have been making comments anyway.

The Councillors agreed that everyone was now involved. At the May meeting under considerations of the Council's Scheme of Delegation and to Appoint members, that the Planning Group be discontinued and a co-ordinator and title be agreed.

It was agreed that Councillor New would be texted planning information upon receipt from WDC; any comments on consultations and decisions. Any circulations between Councillors for considerations and comments to be made would be given to Councillor New by the Group Leader (until May) and then the 'Co-ordinator' (after May).

## 7. Financial Matters

a) The Accounts for 2015/2016

i. Bank balance £5,985.27 as at end of November 2015.

ii. Receipts: none

iii. Payments to be agreed:

- £21.00 - Hire of Birlingham Village Hall for Survey meeting (3hours at £7) (cheque number 417)
- £128.00 - HMRC (October, November, December) (cheque number 418)
- £156.00 – Lengthsman September (cheque number 420)
- Poppy wreaths – budget at £55.00 (correction of agenda item states £46) (£50.00 given last year) *Chris Reynard has actioned two wreaths – receipt received dated 9 December 2015*  
£50.00 agreed (cheque number 421)
- £72.00 – Hire of projector for Village Survey presentation (cheque number 423) (*Reimbursement to Councillor Yates - awaiting Councillor Allen as signatory*)
- £96.00 – Lengthsman October (cheque number 424)
- £6.00 – Postage of book token. Reimbursement to Clerk (cheque number 425)
- £512.00 - Clerks pay (October, November, December) (cheque number 426)
- £25.00 - Clerks expenses (cheque number 427)

b) Future Payments for consideration:

£120.00 – Lengthsman (November 2015)

£156.00 – Lengthsman (December 2015)

c) Contributions to village community buildings / organisations [See appendix 2 community buildings](#)

Consideration of community buildings and the contribution given to the village hall. History of contributions to BVH circulated to all Councillors before the meeting. For several years a contribution of up to £1000 had been given for the roof repairs and then this was reduced to £500. BVH do not need a grant for the day to day running of the hall.

CALC has questioned the foundation of the contribution to BVH during the Health Check last year.

Hire of the village hall to comply with the Code. Again CALC has questioned why the use of the hall was given free of charge and this was not formalised anywhere.

Due to licencing of other premises it was agreed that BVH is the first choice for holding meetings and that consideration should be given for the future hiring of the hall. Discussion took place on the cost of hire, the potential for block booking and one annual invoice.

There was a concept of paying for the hire of BVH for Parish Council meetings and a separate item in respect of giving a grant. Previously, the Parish Council has said that if BVH ran into difficulties requiring major capital outlay they could come to the Parish Council for assistance. That is a promise that the Parish Council can no longer keep. Finding money quickly is not possible unless it comes from reserves and the Parish Council may not be able to recoup the money the following year by increasing the precept due to government legislation.

Discussion took place on setting a principle balance which would be for all causes. A "Community Fund" (or charity provision) would be set up which could be 'topped up' with the New Homes Bonus. This would comply with CALC's advice on a provision or grant.

Further to CALC's comments and as a result of the Village Survey comments, it was therefore proposed that a sum of money would be allocated each year to a Community Provision to which any village organisation could apply. The Chairman of the BVH would be informed of this decision.

All members were in agreement with the principle of having a Community Provision.

#### d) Budget

A discussion commenced with the level of balances it is appropriate for the Council to hold. Question - Increase by what percentage?

Further discussion and agreement:-

Clerks pay and expenses (quarterly payments as per the financial year and in line with RTI) and in line with NALC's recommended pay scale.

The Chairman reported that he has been in contact with Richard Levett of CALC regarding the Clerk's salary and expenses and it was agreed that a meeting should be set up with CALC so that the Council can get advice on the appropriate pay scale and expenses.

The Clerks salary and expenses have been 'hap hazard' over the years. It is now time to put in a more official footing and scale. The Clerk was asked if she gave her permission for a meeting with CALC and that she could also attend. The Clerk agreed to accompany the Chairman and the Chairman would go ahead and confirm a meeting with Richard Levett within a few weeks. The Clerk was asked to monitor the hours she was working. The members were made aware again that the Clerk was highly regarded by CALC and the Ward Member. A report would be given at the next meeting following CALC's advice.

Contribution to BVH or/and other organisations as discussed at c).

Poppy wreaths and insurance.

CALC membership is 47.38 pence per elector.

Training, Wychavon Sports, internal audit and external audit – all to continue  
Provisions – any transfers would be carried out at financial year end – defer until the March meeting for agreement.

The Lengthsman continues until year end as per the agreement with Worcestershire County Council.

Provisions and charity – to be deferred and reviewed at the March meeting for a final decision.

e) Precept

There was much discussion on the level to be agreed for the precept which had been part of the debate at d). Should it be 2% or not? Reserves should be £4,000.00. Should the increase to the reserve be £500.00. Could be ambitious to put extra into the reserves.

Final agreement - application to be returned to WDC by 5 February 2016  
Council Tax Base 2015/16 – approximately 60 properties on Band E.  
Projections - for next year's calculation to give a Band D Council Tax figure of £30.78 equivalent to an increase of 2%.

The Financial Support Advisor has actioned a draft budget. The Chairman thanked Councillor Hill for his assistance.

After much debate the precept was agreed at an increase of 1.99%

The detailed budget for 2016-2017 to be finalised at the next meeting.

f) External Audit

As advised by CALC quotes, "The current contracts for the external audit of parish and town councils runs out in 2017. They were traditionally led by the Audit Commission, which the government has abolished. Now, councils must appoint their own external auditor when the current contract expires, or subscribe to a sector led body which will procure external audit for them. NALC, the SLCC and the Association of Drainage Authorities have jointly set up a sector led body. The new arrangements will apply to the council". [See appendix 3 Future of audit procurement](#)

The deadline for the end of January has been extended until the end of March. Discuss further at the March meeting allowing for any more information.

## 8. Review of the Council's procedures

- Standing Orders
- Handling requests made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998
- Complaints

To consider each of the above once further progress has taken place. Include on the Website for transparency and to comply with the Code of Conduct. Councillor Allen has commenced with his draft on the Complaints procedure. The Chairman and Clerk still need to action the other procedures which are ongoing. Finalise for the March meeting.

## 9. Action on Survey Raw Data Results

The raw data is held by the Parish Council Clerk on behalf of all Members. A discussion took place regarding the Survey results and what action should be followed up. Councillor Hill has started to draw up a list. Further results will be brought to the March meeting. Members can then decide what action to take at this time.

## 10. Village Design Statement (VDS)

Councillor Yates and Councillor Hill are leading on the Village Design Statement. The Survey results concluded that a VDS should go ahead but what are the next steps? It was suggested that Andrew

Ford, Policy Planner at Wychavon District Council should be contacted to see how a VDS can be tackled. It would be good to get Mr Fords input. After a meeting it could then be announced to the village through the website rather than another public meeting. A committee should be set up. Who will be on the committee? Who were the volunteers and are they interested in joining a committee? Who would appoint a chairman? This is all new territory.

Should a 'template' be taken for the VDS or do the Parish Council drive a version as a document?

The following was agreed:-

That the Parish Council should lead the first meeting and that a chairman should be appointed.

A public meeting when necessary.

To source the volunteers.

That Councillors Yates and Hill should meet with Andrew Ford and report back to the Parish Council.

## 11. Cycle Path

A cycle path from Birlingham to Pershore had been one of the questions raised on the Village Survey.

The Footpath Warden had received an email response to his request to Worcestershire County Council, regarding a potential footpath and / or cycle path between Birlingham and Pershore. [See appendix 4 Worcestershire County Council reply](#)

The point of the question was to ask if the least desirable part of the A4104 to cycle on, could be improved upon but this has not been understood by the County Council.

If not a cycle path what about a footpath near the riverside?

Clerk to ask Councillor Davis if there is any grant funding available and if other parishes, Eckington and Defford could assist and give a joint statement.

Chairman, Councillor Yates and Clerk to make further enquiries.

## 12. Litter Pick

The Members were asked if they would consider a Litter Pick. Information had been circulated regarding "Clean for The Queen". [See appendix 5](#). It was agreed that a village litter pick should coincide with the campaign for Clean for The Queen weekend and that Saturday 5 March 2016 should be booked. Another litter pick was also agreed for Saturday 19 March 2016 to carry out cleaning in the Swans Neck and Nafford areas. The Clerk would organise the picks with Wychavon District Council.

## 13. Councillors' reports and items for future agenda

Councillors were reminded to use this as an opportunity to report minor matters of information not included elsewhere on the Agenda and to raise items for future agendas. Councillors were again reminded that this is not a time for debate or decision-making.

- The Annual Parish meeting on 18 May 2016 was to be promoted and made more of an event. This meeting is not a Parish Council meeting and other groups should be encouraged to attend to give their 'annual' reports. At the March meeting this will be discussed further.
- Printer – Parish Council facilities. The Chairman stated that the Clerk has been having problems with her computer and printer, which we have been aware of for some time. She has now purchased a new computer herself but the Parish Council should investigate the purchase of a suitable printer/scanner for use with Parish Council business.
- HGV's – Councillor Hardman update query.
- Berwick Lane update.

#### 14. Date of next meeting

The next Parish Council meeting is on Wednesday 16 March 2016 at 7.30pm.

With nothing further to discuss the meeting closed at 9.34 pm

Signed: ..... Councillor Steve Morris, Chairman

Date: .....

### Appendix

#### Appendix 1 Clerk's Report

##### Audit Procurement CALC Update 15 - 38

Information received from National Association of Local Councils, Society of Local Council Clerks and the Association of Drainage Authorities and circulated to all Councillors, quotes

"The future of audit procurement and the Sector Led Body.

Dear Colleagues

We are pleased to announce that we have set up a company to procure audit services on your behalf. This letter officially invites you to become an opted in authority to this scheme. When the previous Government abolished the audit commission, NALC and SLCC expressed concerns about the impact this would have on the workload of local councils and drainage boards. We successfully persuaded Government to enable us to nominate NALC and partners to form a Sector Led Body to procure your audit services simplifying arrangements and reducing the burden on you. We also successfully persuaded Government to fund the start-up costs of £540,000 which otherwise the sector would have had to raise itself. The attached note sets out further information, but at this stage you do not need to do anything unless you wish to opt out of the audit procurement arrangements, set up your own independent audit panel and procure relevant services. If you do not wish to participate

you need to tell us by 31 January 2016 that you do not wish to participate and will be making your own arrangements. If you do not opt out, you will automatically be included in the arrangement for the next five years as stated in the regulations passed at the start of the year.

If you wish to opt out of the Sector Led Body Audit procurement you must let us know by 31 January 2016 by emailing [slboptout@nalc.gov.uk](mailto:slboptout@nalc.gov.uk) or writing to:

Audit Opt Out

Sector Led Body

National Association of Local Councils

109 Great Russell Street

London

WC1B 3LD

This has been a real triumph for the sector resulting from good joint working between NALC, the ADA and the SLCC, working closely with DCLG.

Regards

Jonathan Owen – Chief Executive NALC

The Society of Local Council Clerks

Innes Thompson – Chief Executive ADA

National Association of Local Councils, Society of Local Council Clerks and the Association of Drainage Authorities.

##### Clean for The Queen 2016

Message received from Deborah Dale (Res, Legal & Dem Services) at Worcestershire County Council

Dear Parish & Town Council Clerks,

Please see the email below sent from Allison Odgen-Newton from Keep Britain Tidy to Councillor Lucy Hodgson giving information on the 'Clean for the Queen' initiative which will be taking place in January, February and March next year.

From: Allison Ogden-Newton  
Date: November 24, 2015

Subject: Clean for The Queen

Dear Councillor Lucy Hodgson

We'd love to have the support of your Local Authority and your communities in the biggest ever clean-up of the country, which will be taking place in March 2016.

In the run up to The Queen's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday on 21 April 2016, we aim to inspire a million people to take action and enjoy a few hours together litter-picking to make the places where we live more beautiful. For Her and for us all, we want to attack the blight of litter and reclaim our beautiful countryside, our fabulous cities, our world class parks, our wonderful beaches and waterways.

All of the litter charities across the country have come together in support of this campaign together with a growing range of companies, land managers and associations.

There will be 'Clean for The Queen' litter blitzes throughout the UK in January, February and March, and the most monumental of all litter clear-ups from Friday 4 to Sunday 6 March 2016.

We'd love to have your support in making this event truly spectacular. We will shortly be sending through a downloadable resource pack for your Authority to use. It'd be great if you could encourage as many local community groups as possible across your wards to sign up to organise a clean-up through the 'Clean for The Queen' website. Furthermore, it would be fantastic if your Authority could stage its own local clean-up to allow individuals to come together and clean up a local grot spot.

Lots more will be announced over the coming weeks and months, as we build up a head of steam. But it'd be great if you could respond to [adrian@cleanforthequeen.co.uk](mailto:adrian@cleanforthequeen.co.uk) indicating your willingness to engage in the campaign – and we'll be back in touch shortly with more details.

Join us! Let's Clean for The Queen.

Allison Ogden-Newton	Adrian Evans LVO
Chief Executive	Campaign Director
Keep Britain Tidy	Clean for The Queen

### **Parish Matters**

Email received from Spencer Winnett, Communications Officer at Wychavon District Council, as follows: Please find attached the latest issue of Parish Matters for you to read and share with your colleagues and parishioners.

In this issue we have the all-important Council Tax advice for 2016, news on how to access useful planning and New Homes Bonus information, a look at another successful year for the Avon Meadows wetlands in Pershore, plus the Christmas bin collection dates.

We are no longer printing and posting out copies of Parish Matters, but I have attached two versions. The pdf file will be more printer friendly, whilst the Word version will be useful if you wish to copy and paste articles or images for your own emails and newsletters.

The next Parish Matters will be out in the spring of 2016, but if you have any feedback for this issue or you want to suggest what news items from us that you and your parishioners would find useful, please let me know at this email address.

This has been published on the Birlingham website.

### **E-sport news**

An email from the Community Services at Wychavon District Council was circulated to all Councillors.

## Leader Project

A report was circulated to all Councillors, as below:

At our last meeting I was charged with looking into LEADER and what it could mean to our local community. To this end I have made contact with Hollie Kirk at Worcestershire County Council who was very happy to explain how it works.

The money originates in the European Community and is then administered by local councils. Worcestershire has £1.959 million to distribute. The major aim is to benefit the rural economy by creating jobs and helping businesses to grow. Individual claims can be made on the basis of 40% from the claimant being matched by 60% from LEADER. The current range of funding is for projects from £2,500 to £35,000 and covers capital spending only. Any organisation/business wishing to make a claim must ensure that they have a business plan, and that any licences or planning consents have been obtained before making the application.

Priorities for claims are as follows:

Support for and the development of micro and small enterprises, including farm diversification

Support for and the development of agricultural and horticultural businesses

Support for and the development of forestry businesses

Developing local distinctiveness

Enhancing, restoring and upgrading community, cultural and natural heritage

Improving access to employment and training, with particular focus on young people

Linking businesses with local communities and supporting essential rural services.

First bids are open now and are focussed on:

Micro and small businesses

Farm diversification

Developing local distinctiveness

In the second round preference will be given to Agricultural and Horticultural businesses, and to Forestry businesses. Then in the third round it will be emphasis upon community, cultural and natural heritage, improving access and supporting essential services.

Birlingham does qualify as an area and if anyone wants to get involved they will need to contact the LAG (Local Action Group) which consists of people from several disciplines including the Local Federation of Small Business Development Manager, Mrs Angela Fitch.

10 November 2015

## West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner Precept Consultation 2016/17 Police

Email received and circulated to all Councillors, as follows:

Dear Councillors,

The Police and Crime Commissioner is consulting on his precept – please see attached leaflet. The closing date is 18<sup>th</sup> January. You will see that the consultation is open to everyone and you may wish to inform your parishes. Individuals can also respond.

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Regards

Jack Hegarty  
Chief Executive

On behalf of Bill Longmore, Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia please find attached a summary leaflet outlining the Commissioners policing precept consultation for 2016 - 17. Further information is available on our website at: [www.westmercia-pcc.gov.uk](http://www.westmercia-pcc.gov.uk)

The consultation is open until Noon on Monday 18 January 2016. Details on how to submit comments are shown in the leaflet and on our website.

The Police and Crime Commissioner very much welcomes your comments.

### **Consultation of Draft Sex Establishment Licensing Policy – Wychavon District Council**

Circulated to all Councillors, as follows:

Dear Sir / Madam,

Wychavon District Council is currently seeking views on a draft policy in relation to the licensing of sex establishments in the District including sex shops, sex cinemas and sexual entertainment venues.

This draft policy sets out how applications should be made and how they will be processed. The draft policy also sets out what will be considered when determining applications and sets out the grounds on which the Council can refuse applications. The draft policy also sets out the standard conditions that will be attached to licences granted.

Attached is a copy of the draft policy and a consultation document that contains some questions that the Council would like to receive your feedback on. There is also an opportunity within the consultation document to make any other comments you may have on the draft policy.

Completed consultation questionnaires can be returned by email to [wrsenquiries@worcesterservices.gov.uk](mailto:wrsenquiries@worcesterservices.gov.uk) using the subject line "Wychavon Sex Establishment Licensing Policy Consultation"

Alternatively, you can post your response to:

Wychavon Sex Establishment Licensing Policy Consultation  
Worcestershire Regulatory Services  
Wyre Forest House  
Finepoint Way  
Kidderminster  
Worcestershire  
DY11 7WF

This consultation will be open for responses until Friday 19<sup>th</sup> February 2016 and all responses received will be given consideration by the Council before a finalised policy is approved and implemented.

Kind regards  
Dave Etheridge  
Senior Practitioner (Licensing)

### **Grant Opportunities**

An email was received from Wychavon District Council and circulated to all Councillors, as below:-

The grants programme is managed by Groundwork and funded by Tesco customers from the proceeds of the 5p charge for plastic carrier bags as a result of the government carrier bag levy. Projects that will get the green light as a result of the funding will include new pocket parks, sports facilities, woodland walks and

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community gardens etc. We are encouraging online applications from a wide range of organisations including: voluntary/community organisations, registered charities, health bodies, Parish/Town councils, social enterprises, Community Interest Companies, community councils, local authorities and housing organisations. Other not-for-profit organisations might also be eligible.

The current funding round has been extended until midday on Friday 11th December, and the criteria have been relaxed to allow schools and community cnts to apply alongside projects focus on open access sites. The Wychavon area is currently undersubscribed so I was wondering if there are any sites Wychavon DC would be interested in applying for (public open spaces/community cnt outdoor areas/outdoor classrooms at schools), and/or any groups you think might be interested.

Please do not let the short deadline put you off as the initial application is very simple, and full details do not need to be provided until the new year.

For more information, please follow the link below:  
<http://www.groundwork.org.uk/sites/tescocommunityscheme>

Community Development, Wychavon District Council

### **Sport E News**

Sport E News - October 2015 email. Information was circulated to all Councillors.

### **Fly tipping reported by the Lengthsman**

The Lengthsman has removed the rubbish on Revill's land in New Barn Lane and will dispose of the timber that is also at the location. The incident was reported to Wychavon District Council.

### **Planning Enforcement Scrutiny Team survey**

An email was circulated to al Councillors asking them if they wished the questionnaire to be completed, as below:

Dear District and Parish Councillors

Wychavon District Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting held on the 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2015, agreed to set up an Overview and Scrutiny Review Team to review the effectiveness of the Council's Planning Enforcement Service. It is anticipated that the Team's review should be completed by summer 2016.

As part of the Team's review it has been agreed to issue a questionnaire to District Councillors and to Town/ Parish Councillors in order to obtain your feedback on the Council's Planning Enforcement Service.

It would therefore be appreciated if you could complete this questionnaire, using the link below, by close of business on Friday 5 February 2016. A similar questionnaire will be issued to recent users of the planning enforcement service in early February.

Town and Parish Councils may prefer to complete one questionnaire for their respective councils but should individual Town/ Parish Councillors in addition (or as an alternative to one combined response) like to complete a questionnaire this too would be welcome. If your Town/Parish Council is not due to meet before the closing date of 5 February 2016 I would be grateful if you could still share this questionnaire and respond if possible as your comments would be greatly appreciated.

If you would like to complete this questionnaire but are unable to do so electronically please contact Paul Curry, Research and Intelligence Officer, on 01386 565333 to make an alternative arrangement.

The views of both District and Town/Parish Councillors will form an important part of this Overview and Scrutiny review and I look forward to receiving your feedback.

Kind regards,

Councillor Hugh C. Hamilton  
Chairman of the Review Team

Please use this link to complete the questionnaire:  
[www.wychavon.gov.uk/planningenforcement-councillors](http://www.wychavon.gov.uk/planningenforcement-councillors)

Note: Councillors discussed the questionnaire. Have we ever had a planning enforcement/compliance issue in our area? There may have been an issue some years ago but nothing recently. Therefore, it would be difficult to complete the questionnaire if we have never used their service.

### **Neighbourhood Plan flyer**

Information circulated to all Councillors on an advertising letter from Brodie Manning Consultants and their assistance.

### **Neighbourhood Planning Workshops - January 2016.**

Information given to Councillors Yates and Hill, as follows:

Dear All,

An email from Claire Vaughan at Malvern Hills DC advises they are hosting two Neighbourhood Planning workshops at the end of this month at the Malvern Hills Council House, Avenue Road, Malvern, WR14 3AF. These have now been opened up to the Town and Parish Council's in Wychavon to attend.

If you would like to attend, please get into contact with myself or Andrew Ford (01386 565362) or [Andrew.Ford@wychavon.gov.uk](mailto:Andrew.Ford@wychavon.gov.uk) by 5pm Friday 15 January 2016.

Regards,

Reiss

**Reiss Sadler BSc (Hons)**  
Planning Officer (Policy)  
Wychavon District Council

### **Pershore High School Carol Service 2015**

An invitation was circulated to all Councillors regarding the Carol Service.

### **Preparations for Her Majesty The Queen's 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday**

An email was circulated to all Councillors, as below:

To mark Her Majesty The Queen's 90th birthday next year, on June 12th The Mall in London will be home to a giant street party in the form of the Patron's Lunch.

The focus on the event will be a celebration of the longevity and breadth of Her Majesty's patronage of over 600 organisations in the UK and around the world. There are three key themes for the lunch; charity, celebration and community. A letter from Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Worcestershire is attached to give you more details of the lunch.

To celebrate within our own county, preparations for a series of events in the City of Worcester are underway and would like to encourage everyone to play a part, have fun and raise funds for your communities and local initiatives. We would like the Parish's to be involved in this national celebration weekend as this is where the true sense of community will be felt the most.

There are many ways to mark the occasion and Worcestershire County Council will be producing a 'How To' information pack to make the festivities go with a bang!

Information will be circulated in the coming weeks in a variety of ways so access the Act Local website in the first instance to keep up with news bulletins  
<http://www.actlocalworcestershire.org/actlocal/info/27/news>

Deborah Dale  
Member Engagement Officer & Project Manager for Act Local  
Legal & Democratic Services  
Commercial & Change (COaCH) Directorate

## **BVH minutes and Agenda**

The unconfirmed minutes of the November meeting and agenda for 28 January were circulated to all Councillors

## **Birlingham email news**

### [Birlingham News 96 25 November](#)

As always, it's going to be a busy December in Birlingham and details of the first batch of events are given below.

In this issue:

1. Cuppa & Chat, 2nd December
2. Church Cleaning Party, 5th December
3. Pilgrim Course, 5th December
4. St James's Church Services – December
5. Christmas Fayre, 12th December
6. Carol Service, 20th December
7. Christmas at the Swan Inn
8. New Year's Eve Party
9. Parish Council (18th November)
10. Birlingham Cookery Book

### [9. Parish Council \(18th November\)](#)

At its meeting on 18th November, Birlingham Parish Council discussed a number of matters, including the following:

- The Council are compiling more detailed results from the Village Survey and will be addressing the issues raised over the coming months.
- Following the support of 76% of Village Survey respondents for a Village Design Statement, a public meeting will be held in the New Year to begin the process of creating the plan.
- The budget for next year was discussed and a final decision on the precept will be made at the next meeting on Wednesday 13th January.
- The Council discussed problems relating to HGVs and other traffic in New Barn Lane and Church Lane, and the poor state of the track from Berwick Lane to Nafford, and will look into ways of improving these lanes.

Full minutes of the Parish Council meeting will be available shortly at [www.birlingham.org/pc\\_info/pc\\_minutes\\_2015-11-18.pdf](http://www.birlingham.org/pc_info/pc_minutes_2015-11-18.pdf).

## [Birlingham News 97 - 9 December](#)

In this issue:

1. Christmas and New Year Events
2. Swan Inn Opening Times
3. Pershore Food Bank
4. Christmas Bin Collections
5. Planning Applications

### [4. Christmas Bin Collections](#)

Dates for bin collections in Birlingham over the Christmas period are as follows:

- Thursday 31st December: green bins (plus up to two extra clear recycling sacks) & brown bins
- Thursday 7th January: black bins (plus up to two extra refuse sacks)

Clear recycling sacks are available from the Birlingham phone box or from Pershore Civic Centre.

Full details of Christmas collections are available at [www.birlingham.org/docs/wychavon\\_christmas\\_2015.pdf](http://www.birlingham.org/docs/wychavon_christmas_2015.pdf). The bin collection calendar for next year can be viewed at [www.birlingham.org/docs/bin\\_collections\\_2016.pdf](http://www.birlingham.org/docs/bin_collections_2016.pdf).

### [5. Planning Applications](#)

The following planning application has been received by the Parish Council:

- [4 Church Street](#): Two storey extension to side of property (Case No. 15/02882). Awaiting decision by Wychavon District Council. (Consultation period ends on 1st January.) Full details can be viewed on the Wychavon DC website.

The following planning applications have been determined by Wychavon District Council:

- [The Old Rectory](#), New Barn Lane: Erection of a Garden Room (Case No. 15/02357). Approved. Full details and conditions can be viewed on the Wychavon DC website. The Parish Council comments are available at [www.birlingham.org/pc\\_info/pc\\_comments\\_15\\_02357.pdf](http://www.birlingham.org/pc_info/pc_comments_15_02357.pdf).
- [The Old Rectory](#), New Barn Lane: Erection of a Garden Room (Listed Building consent) (Case No. 15/02358). Approved. Full details and conditions/reasons for refusal can be viewed on the Wychavon DC website at [www.birlingham.org/pc\\_info/pc\\_comments\\_15\\_02358.pdf](http://www.birlingham.org/pc_info/pc_comments_15_02358.pdf).

## [Birlingham News 98 - 30 December](#)

Welcome to the final email of the year. We hope you all had a wonderful Christmas and we wish you a prosperous New Year.

In this issue:

1. St James's Church Services – January
2. Cuppa & Chat, 6th January
3. New Year's Eve Party
4. Village Break-in
5. The Butlers of Birlingham
6. General Advice for Winter Preparedness
7. Christmas Fayre
8. Planning Applications

## 6. General Advice for Winter Preparedness

We have received some general advice on preparing for winter. The information includes some useful web addresses and links.

The advice can be viewed at [www.birlingham.org/docs/winter\\_preparedness.pdf](http://www.birlingham.org/docs/winter_preparedness.pdf).

## 8. Planning Applications

The following planning applications have been received by the Parish Council:

- [The Old Rectory](#), New Barn Lane: Demolition of garden structures and erection of garage block (Case No. 15/03010). Awaiting decision by Wychavon District Council. (Consultation period ends on 22nd January.) Full details can be viewed on the Wychavon DC website.
- [1 Brook Cottage](#), Eckington Road: Proposed two-storey rear/side extension and porch to front elevation (Case No. 15/03049). Awaiting decision by Wychavon District Council. (Consultation period ends on 14th January.) Full details can be viewed on the Wychavon DC website.

### [Birlingham News 99 - 13 January](#)

The Parish Council meeting takes place this evening, a week earlier than usual.

In this issue:

1. Parish Council Meeting, 13th January
2. Queen's 90th Birthday Celebrations
3. Wychavon Parish Games Results

### 1. Parish Council Meeting, 13th January

The next meeting of Birlingham Parish Council takes place this evening (Wednesday 13th January) at 7.30pm in Birlingham Village Hall. The meeting is a week earlier than usual because of the need to set the precept (parish Council Tax) for the year. As well as setting the Council's budget, there will be an update on progress towards a Village Design Statement and a discussion on the possibility of a cycle path or footpath between Birlingham and Pershore. During the meeting there is an opportunity to express your views on local issues, so please come along.

The agenda for the meeting is available at [www.birlingham.org/pc\\_info/pc\\_agenda\\_2016-01-13.pdf](http://www.birlingham.org/pc_info/pc_agenda_2016-01-13.pdf) and the minutes of the previous Parish Council meeting on 18th November can be viewed at [www.birlingham.org/pc\\_info/pc\\_minutes\\_2015-11-18.pdf](http://www.birlingham.org/pc_info/pc_minutes_2015-11-18.pdf).

### 2. Queen's 90th Birthday Celebrations

This year sees the Queen's 90th birthday and there will be events organised nationally to commemorate the occasion. Her birthday is on 21st April but most celebrations are expected to take place on her official birthday, during the weekend of 10th-12th June. The Birlingham Jubilee Committee are planning to organise an event in the village during this period but as yet no date has been fixed.

If you would like to be involved in the preparations or have ideas for how the occasion can best be celebrated, please contact the Jubilee Committee at [news@birlingham.org](mailto:news@birlingham.org).

### 3. Wychavon Parish Games Results

We have received the results of the 2015 Wychavon Parish Games. This year Birlingham entered three of the fifteen activities and came 22nd overall (compared with 29th last year). Particular congratulations go to Jon Komor's Cross Country team, who came third, and Bruce Hayward's Skittles team, who reached the quarter finals. If you would like to organise a team for this year's games, please contact our co-ordinator, Denise McGowan.

The results of last year's games can be viewed at [www.birlingham.org/docs/pg\\_2015\\_results.pdf](http://www.birlingham.org/docs/pg_2015_results.pdf).

## Appendix 2 Community Buildings

Community buildings e.g. village halls – Section 133 of the Local Government Act 1972 states “A Parish Council may acquire or provide and furnish buildings to be used for public meetings and assemblies or contribute towards the expenses incurred by any other parish council or any other person in acquiring or providing and furnishing such a building”.

## Appendix 3 Future of audit procurement

National Association of Local Councils (NALC), Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) and the Association of Drainage Authorities circular quotes as follows:-

“We are pleased to announce that we have set up a company to procure audit services on your behalf. This letter officially invites you to become an opted in authority to this scheme. When the previous Government abolished the audit commission, NALC and SLCC expressed concerns about the impact this would have on the workload of local councils. We successfully persuaded Government to enable us to nominate NALC and partners to form a Sector Led Body to procure your audit services simplifying arrangements and reducing the burden on you.

We also successfully persuaded Government to fund the start-up costs of £540,000 which otherwise the sector would have had to raise itself.

At this stage you do not need to do anything unless you wish to opt out of the audit procurement arrangements, set up your own independent audit panel and procure relevant services. If you do not wish to participate you need to tell us by 31 January 2016 that you do not wish to participate and will be making your own arrangements. If you do not opt out, you will automatically be included in the arrangement for the next five years as stated in the regulations passed at the start of the year.

If you wish to opt out of the Sector Led Body Audit procurement you must let us know by 31 January 2016 by emailing [slboptout@nalc.gov.uk](mailto:slboptout@nalc.gov.uk) or writing to:

Audit Opt Out  
Sector Led Body  
National Association of Local Councils  
109 Great Russell Street  
London  
WC1B 3LD”

Worcestershire County Association of Local Councils (Worcs CALC)

Executive Officer's Report to Area Meetings December 2015 quotes as follows:-

External Audit

1. Last week I circulated information from NALC about the future provision of external audit for parish and town councils, and this report repeats that information, as there is a tight deadline by which councils must, if they do not wish to be part of the arrangements which NALC is making with the Department for Communities and Local Government, decide to opt out of them.
2. NALC and others are setting up a sector led body, with the DCLG, to provide external audit to parish and town councils when the current contract for external audit ends in 2017.
3. Councils can opt out of this arrangement by formal resolution of the council, which they have to notify to the Sector Led Body by 31 January 2016.
4. It is expected that the vast majority of councils will not opt out, and if so, they need do nothing as they will automatically be opted in to the new arrangement. They will next have the opportunity to opt out in five years' time.
5. Councils which have an annual turnover below £25,000 must publish the transparency code information, but will not have to have external audit from 2017. However, they will still need to have an auditor appointed for the, in case there are electors' questions to answer.
6. A fee for external audit will be charged, as now, and also a small fee to cover the cost of setting up the sector led body. The contracts for external audit are to let by the end of October next year, so the charges to be made to councils should be known shortly afterwards.

It would be prudent to expect that the cost of external audit will increase from the fees currently charged.

Richard Levett  
26.11.2015

CALC Update Issue 42 17 December

Quotes, as follows:-

External Audit, 2017 onwards

Birlingham Parish Council January 2016

I understand from our chairman, Cllr Mrs Sue Baxter, who phoned on her way back from Tuesdays NALC National Council meeting, that the deadline for councils to decide to opt out of the sector led body arrangement is to be extended to 31 March. For those who have not read the information previously circulated about this, or my last report to area meetings, NALC has set up an organisation, the sector led body, to let the contracts for external audit of parish and town council which will succeed the present contracts which end in 2017. Council will be deemed to have opted in to the SLB contract if they do not decide to opt out by 31 March, and notify the SLB that they have done so. The SLB has decided that the cost of external audit to councils with an annual turnover greater than £25,000 will be no more than for 2014-15. It is working on proposals for the fees for councils with a turnover of less than £25,000."

#### Appendix 4 Worcestershire County Council reply

Quotes, "To answer your question we have no plans for any cycle routes or footways (highway) between Birlingham and Pershore. The PROW (Public Rights of Way) in the area I can see from our maps do not have any direct routes plus you have the river to contend with which meanders in the way and you have the A4014 which has neither any footways alongside and the road carries a lot of HGVs and probably the least desirable part of the A4104 to cycle on. So without any further information on an alignment, a route they are thinking of or actual PROW number etc it's hard to give any further comment.

But certainly there is no funds currently or any strategic plans to do any improvements in that specific area to my knowledge.

If the parish council have any further queries on this, then Paul Cooper ([pcooper1@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:pcooper1@worcestershire.gov.uk)) will hopefully be able to advise."

#### Appendix 5 Clean for the Queen – CALC update Issue 39 26 November 2015

Quotes as follows:

Would your parish or town council like to support the biggest ever clean-up of the country, which will be taking place in March 2016?

In the run up to the Queen's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday on 21 April 2016, Keep Britain Tidy aim to inspire a million people to take action and enjoy a few hours together litter-picking to make the places where we live more beautiful. We want to attack the blight of litter and reclaim our beautiful countryside, our fabulous cities, our world class parks, our wonderful beaches and waterways.

All of the litter charities across the country have come together in support of this campaign together with a growing range of companies, land managers and associations.

There will be "Clean for the Queen" litter blitzes throughout the UK in January, February and March, and the most monumental of all litter clear-ups from Friday 4 to Sunday 6 March 2016.

Keep Britain Tidy would love to have your support in making this event truly spectacular. It'd be great if you could encourage as many local community groups as possible to sign up to organise a clean-up through the "Clean for the Queen, website. Furthermore, it would be fantastic if your authority could stage its own local clean-up to allow individuals to come together and clean up a local grot spot.

Lots more will be announced over the coming weeks and months, as we build up a head of steam.

Could you respond to [adrian@cleanforthequeen.co.uk](mailto:adrian@cleanforthequeen.co.uk) indicating your willingness to engage in the campaign – and Keep Britain Tidy be back in touch shortly with more details.

Allison Odgen-Newton

Chief Executive

Keep Britain Tidy