ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Minutes of meeting held on Wednesday 19 May 2021
via videoconference

Welcome

Present:

Councillors Aston, Byrne, Cook, Griffin, Luff, Porter and Yates.

In attendance

County Councillor Adrian Hardman, Katie Parsons and June Hiden (Clerk).

1) Election of Chairman

Councillor Ian Yates was elected as Chairman (*the Chair of the Parish Council must preside if present*).

2) Welcome from the Chairman and those present

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. The Chairman explained the meeting saying that it gave residents an opportunity for annual reports of activities and achievements from the County Council, District Council, Wardens, and community groups. He thanked all those who had presented reports and said they were appreciated. The Chairman, members and County Councillor introduced themselves to the resident present.

3) Apologies:

District Councillor Ron Davies (full Council at Chambers), Carl Brassington (Lengthsman), Bruce Hayward (Footpath Warden), Rupert Keys (Tree Warden) (all attending other meetings) and Julie Pardoe (West Mercia Police).

4) Declaration of Interest for Councillors

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.

5) Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting

The Minutes of the Parish Meeting, held on 29 May 2019, no meeting in 2020 due to Covid restrictions, were verified by Councillors as a true record and duly signed by the Chairman.

6) Parish Council Chairman's Report

Councillor Yates presented his report:

"This report is a summary of the many activities that have taken place over the last 12 months. It has been a difficult year due to Covid which has curtailed many of the usual activities and forced meetings to be held virtually. The Annual Parish Meeting in May 2020 also had to be cancelled. Never-the-less an extensive list of projects were dealt with and real progress was made on a number of issues important to residents.

As always, I would like to begin by thanking everyone who have given their time for the benefit of the parish. A special thank you goes to June Hiden for the long hours she puts in as Clerk. The Parish Council could not function effectively without her hard work and we have all found her knowledge and experience invaluable.

My thanks also to all the members of the Parish Council; Vice Chair Paula Aston, Maxine Cook, Julia Luff, Steven Byrne, Terry Griffin and Michael Porter. They have all been involved in the many different projects undertaken by the Parish Council over the last 12 months as detailed later in this report.

Our thanks also go to those involved in the Parish Council's scheme of delegation:

- *Bruce Hayward, Footpath Warden ably assisted by Mark Smith who have spent many hours maintaining the parish footpaths. This is their 15th year, and we are all very grateful for their on-going dedication and effort! On a related point, our thanks to Revills who have kept the footpaths that cross their ground clear either by leaving a one-meter gap to crops or by not cultivating.*

- *Karl Grimston, Tree Warden, who has monitored and maintained the village trees for several years now and to Rupert Keys who has recently agreed to take over these duties from Karl.*

- *Carl Brassington the village Lengthsman, who despite difficulties with health and safety and insurance due to the Covid restrictions has worked hard to keep our gullies, drains and verges clear, significantly reducing the impact of flooding.*

I would also like to thank the following: County Councillor Adrian Hardman, for his help with organising the work on the village roads and for arranging funding for 'Cuppa and Chat'. District Councillor Ron Davis, for his regular newsletter support during the pandemic, supply of PPE to volunteers and organising a large grant for Birlingham Village Hall. They both continue to support the village in many different ways, and it is much appreciated that they find time to attend our meetings whenever possible. Thanks also to Steve Morris who continues to develop and maintain the village website, including a page for the Parish Council and for his skill in setting up the Village Forum.

<u>Annual Parish Meeting</u>
This meeting must be held between March and the end of May. In 2016 village clubs and societies were invited to present their activities at the parish meeting which was held at the cricket club. It was hoped that a similar event could be arranged this year and Councillor Michael Porter has been in touch with village clubs and societies to gauge their interest. Unfortunately, when the government published its roadmap out of Covid lockdown it was clear that we could not run the event in May and meet the restrictions. As a result, this meeting has had to be held via Zoom.

<u>Covid Volunteers</u>
The pandemic dominated Parish Council activities during the early part of 2020. As the potential impact of Covid -19 became apparent work started on how to support vulnerable residents who were self-isolating. The Parish Council put out a call for volunteers that would be prepared to help and was grateful to some 20 villagers who came forward. The group was co-ordinated, through a Birlingham Volunteers WhatsApp group, and the volunteers did their best to help with essential food shopping and the collection of prescriptions. Central contact numbers were setup that residents could ring, and my thanks go in particular to Paula Aston, Nick and Charlotte Baskerville and Marion New who agreed to be the first points of contact. Residents were grateful for the support given by all volunteers with a special mention to Sue Hermon for her prescription collections, Will Haines for veg box deliveries and Marion New for her cooked meals. In addition, an on-line notice board (Birlingham Village Forum) carrying messages of relevance to villagers was setup by Steve Morris and proved very useful at keeping everyone informed.

Roads and flooding

The Parish Council dealt with a large number of road and flooding issues in the village.

- *Parsons Pleck, Upper End. A substantial water leak that pushed up the road surface forcing closure.*
- *Water leak at the top of Berwick Lane which created a hazard in cold weather due to freezing.*
- *Broadway Road and Lower End were in a poor state of repair. They were patched ahead of resurfacing which will take place later in Spring 2021.*
- *New Barn Lane was also patched.*
- *Whitehall Lane. A large pothole reported by a resident was filled.*
- *Due to multiple incidents of flooding on the A4104, at the top of Tiddesley Bank on the bend near Lower Farm, the ditches were cleared, and drains jetted.*
- *Hills Cottage, Upper End. Blocked drains were cleared but further work is required due to soil runoff from fields.*
- *Flooding across the road near The Manor House and The Moors. Severn Trent Water attended to investigate the blocked drain in the paddock next to the road.*
- *Water flooding from the manhole in front garden of The Old Coach House. Severn Trent Water attended, and a new pipe is required as the old one is blocked by tree roots.*
- *Berwick Lane. The Environment Agency is carrying out maintenance work on the weir near Nafford Lock as some of the gabions needed replacing. As a result, they re-stoned the surface of the 'fisherman's' carpark at the end of Berwick Lane as well as the track from the carpark to the weir. The owner and the Environment Agency also discussed with the authorities' provision of a new gate to be placed at the end of Berwick Lane to allow pedestrian access but control vehicular access to the carpark to reduce cases of anti-social behaviour seen during summer 2020.*

The Parish Council thanked Worcestershire County Councillor Adrian Hardman, Councillor Julia Luff and Clerk, June Hiden, for their assistance in getting this work done.

Traffic movements

- *Whitehall Lane. The Parish Council was contacted in September by a resident of Whitehall Lane concerned about an increase in the volume and speed of traffic now that the gate into the farmyard was being left open. Councillor Maxine Cook who lives in Whitehall Lane monitored the situation. The Parish Council contacted the owner of Hall Farm and obtained their agreement to write to the farm tenants/licensees requesting that they minimise traffic movements as much as possible by using the alternative access into Church Street.*
- *Church Lane. The Parish Council received a letter from a resident in Church Lane concerned about HGV and tractor use of the lane. The concern was about safety, noise and damage to verges, overhanging trees and house foundations. HGV's delivering to Redstar Growers are instructed to use the route via Upper End and this seems to be followed most of the time.*

Other HGV's may be using Church Lane after following a satnav. The 'no HGV' sign on the junction of Eckington Road and New Barn Road is only advisory. The Parish Clerk contacted Redstar to ask if tractors could use the route on the other side of the church to avoid Church Lane. Councillor Michael Porter also arranged for overhanging tree branches on Church Lane to be cut back to avoid high sided vehicles.

New Homes Bonus

This scheme was introduced by the government in 2011 and was designed to ensure the economic benefits of housing growth are returned to the communities in which the growth takes place. Birlingham has had very little housing development and so the value of our NHB is relatively small. However, the Parish Council submitted funding proposals for three schemes. These proposals were for the repositioning and refurbishment of the Millennium Bench, the addition of a missing inscription on the war memorial and printing of a WW2 commemoration booklet. All three projects were delayed due to Covid but are now proceeding.
Millennium Bench.

The Millennium Bench had to be removed from around the plane tree on the village green as it was damaging the tree. Councillor Maxine Cook identified a carpenter to remove the bench and restore it. Work was delayed by the lockdown. However, it is hoped the bench will be restored and ready for installation in a new location on the village green from mid-2021. Our thanks to Rupert Keys who has agreed to provide a digger and materials to prepare the site for the bench.

SmartWater
The Parish Council decided to fund the provision of SmartWater so that it was free to all Birlingham residents. Councillor Paula Aston registered and distributed the SmartWater kits to all Birlingham properties that had signed up for the scheme. The Parish Council thanks Paula for her efforts in getting this scheme completed.

Parish Council Financials
In November, a budget meeting was held to discuss setting the parish precept for 21/22 based on government guidelines. It was agreed to submit an increase equivalent to just 92p per property.

Each year the parish council makes provisions from their budget to cover possible future costs in three areas. These are:

- *For the plane tree on the village green which due to its size may require surgery at some point in the future.*
- *To cover costs that the Parish Council are charged to run an election.*
- *To build a community fund to support village projects.*

In 20/21 the plane tree provision reached £4000 and as it was considered sufficient for likely tree surgery costs it was decided that in future the provisions that would have been allocated to the plane tree will now go to the Community Fund so providing additional money for village projects. My thanks to Councillor Terry Griffin and Clerk June Hiden for their management of the parish finances.

Litter Pick
Due to the COVID restrictions the normal annual litter pick did not take place in 2020. However, the Parish Council was told that Henry White and a friend had decided to fulfil their Duke of Edinburgh Award by undertaking a two-hour litter pick around the village once a week for six months. This was much appreciated by everyone in the village.

Planning
The Parish Council have commented on 18 planning applications in the last year. This is to provide Wychavon District Council who are responsible for planning decisions with a local perspective based on the residents' feedback in the Village Survey and Village Design Statement. My thanks to Councillor Steven Byrne who as Planning Group coordinator was responsible for collecting comments and summarising them for WDC.

Dog Fouling
The Parish Council agreed to fund the provision of aluminium signs which remind dog walkers of their responsibilities and these have been positioned around the village and at Eckington Bridge.

Birlingham Memories Project
The Jubilee Committee launched the Birlingham Memories Project to capture the memories of our older residents (and people who used to live in the village), either in sound or on video, so that these memories are available for future generations. The Jubilee Committee wanted to purchase recording equipment for capturing the memories, and playback and display equipment for use at an exhibition. The Parish Council agreed to support the project through their Community Fund. The Jubilee Committee also obtained funding through Wychavon's Community Grant.

Full Fibre Broadband (Fibre to the Premise – FTTP)
Councillor Steven Byrne has been investigating the Government's Gigabit Voucher Scheme that can be used to fund the provision of Full Fibre Broadband to homes as part of a community project. Full Fibre Broadband (also known as FTTP) replaces the copper telephone cable that runs between the telephone cabinet and house with a fibre optic cable. The benefit is higher speeds (up to 1Gb/s) and a more reliable service. Councillor Ian Yates has recently led a community project to bring Full Fibre to houses connected along the A4104 between Birlingham and Pershore. Councillor Byrne has been in contact with the Superfast Broadband Team at Worcester County Council and members of the Parish Council will be contacting residents shortly to get their agreement to participate in the scheme.

Remembrance Day
The Remembrance Day Service in 2020 was severely restricted by the Covid lockdown. However, Councillor Maxine Cook laid the village wreath in Eckington and Councillor Julia Luff in Birlingham.

In conclusion, 2020 will be remembered for the pandemic. However, it should also be remembered as the year when the village came together to deal with the difficulties of restrictions and lockdown. This was only possible because of the willingness of residents to volunteer their time for the benefit of the community and for that we should all be very grateful.

So, in conclusion, my thanks go to the Clerk, Councillors, Wardens, Lengthsman and others who have given their time in support of parish activities."

The Chairman recapped on his thanks to everyone. He mentioned Bruce Hayward and Mark Smith for volunteering way beyond their call of duty and it was appreciated that they continued with the maintenance of the public rights of way. Rupert Keys for taking over from Karl Grimston as Tree Warden. Carl Brassington for a lot of work despite the Covid restrictions and for offering to continue as the parish Lengthsman. He thanked Steve Morris for maintaining the website, creating the Forum and for continuing to participate in so many ways although from a remote location. A personal email has been sent to the Nick and Charlotte Baskerville, Sue Hermon, Will Haines and Marion New for their assistance during the last year. Much has been done in the last 12 months and the Chairman thanked everyone again for engaging in projects and in their community and hoped his report stood as a proud reflection.

Councillor Porter gave a note of thanks to Councillor Yates for his role as Chairman. The Chairman has participated in all the activities during the past year and has been a credit to the Parish Council and the village.

7) To receive annual reports from elected representatives

County Councillor

County Councillor Adrian Hardman gave the following Annual Report 2020/2021:

"It is with great pleasure that I can give you my annual report, following my successful re-election in the first week of May.

It's been a year that the County Council has been dominated by one issue that had emerged just before last year's parish council meeting as a real threat. That is the question of responding to the global pandemic which is COVID-19. This has dominated the activities of the County Council for the past year with three lockdowns; and tragically some 371 deaths in our care homes; and over 850 deaths in our hospitals. In a national context the death toll of 127,000 is more people than live in Wychavon. At peak of the pandemic in the third week of January 2021 we had some 3480 cases reported in a day and some 290 people in hospital suffering from the virus. Currently the position is much improved with only some 7 cases per 100,000 in the District in the past week and no cases reported in the area around the hill for over a month now, and the numbers in our hospitals are down to 8, with no admissions for 12 days. This is the success of the vaccine programme in action.

During the course of the crisis in my role as cabinet member for adult social care I saw myself engage in areas I could not have imagined; taking up the offer of a Worcestershire businessman of half of his airfreighted container so that we as a County Council could fill it in Hong Kong with PPE; making the decision to open up our care homes just as Gloucestershire were closing theirs; and booking hotel bedrooms so that we could break the train of infection by placing people in a hotel room for 10 days before sending them back to their care home, after discharge from Hospital.

Those with learning disabilities in our County had some of the hardest times during lockdown because they were especially vulnerable to the virus with over 40% all those who caught it dying and hence, we made a very early decision in March to close the resource and contact centres which meant in many cases their families had to pick up the slack and lost all contact with their friends, and routine. The great news is that some 98% of the over 45s are now vaccinated, due to the efforts of Herefordshire's Kate Bingham as Chair of the Vaccine Committee and we are starting to move to the over 40's.

Against this backdrop I have been impressed by the way that the parish council and the residents have managed to remain positive, Birlingham residents at once stepped up and formed their own community self-help group which linked into the County Councils own "here to help" scheme. Well done to the team.

The County Council did its best to keep services running during be locked down and managed to restore most of them during the summer but our facilities for the disabled, for instance, were badly affected. We did manage to keep the household waste disposal services going and the bus service did still call in the village.

Education of the pupils of Birlingham has been badly affected by school closures and the lockdowns. Work on the highways has been sporadic due to the lockdowns but by large we have managed to keep the road network to a reasonable standard and works have been caried out in the Parish.

The weather has been yet again rather severe, even snow in April. We have had a very wet autumn and winter which has led to disruption in the Bredon Hill area. While we still have work to do on flood mitigation on the highway in Upper End, but we have done a considerable amount of this work over the past 10 years. And I would applaud the efforts of the Parish Council and especially the Clerk has put in over the years so that the flooding even when we had as much rain as we had in 2007 did not cause the same scale of trouble. We have done considerable work on the main road and following this work it does seem a very deep ditch with a very small pipe at the bottom of it. Still, I am reminded of the old saying "A wet May; barns of Hay".

I am optimistic that next year we'll see a return to a more normal way of life. It has been a privilege and an honour to be in your Councillor for the past four years and I look forward to serving you for another four years."

County Councillor Hardman reiterated the part the County Council had played in the last year which had been dominated by the pandemic. The Council had not run out PPE and had learnt quickly how to work differently in what turned out to be Covid-19 and not influenza. The County Council had luckily invested in their I.T. infrastructure which assisted with 2,800 staff working from home.

Councillor Hardman hoped he had shown optimism in his updates.

He said the two main issues in Birlingham had been the flooding and/or road surfaces. The A4104 will be monitored in future years to retain the maintenance achieved. He hoped the road surfacing would be completed shortly by contractors. He had done his best to attend the parish meetings.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Hardman for his help and support with all the matters in Birlingham in particular the road resurfacing with a great result.

District Councillor

District Councillor Ron Davis, Wychavon District Council, had circulated a report as follows:-

"The last 12 months has been difficult on all fronts with all areas of the country under some form of lockdown due to the Covid-19 pandemic? It has been difficult for quite a large number of residents who have sadly lost family and friends.

Now, the infection levels in Wychavon are very low in comparison to the national picture and as of today we are moving back to some form of normality- although we still need to be mindful of safety first!!

In Wychavon over 78,000 residents have had the first jab! and on the business front we have paid out over £14.5 million in business grants.

Wychavon staff have worked tirelessly since the pandemic began and are to be congratulated for their commitment and devotion to the task that lay before them and my sincere thanks go to them all.

As a Parish you have all done your very best to adhere to the lockdown rules in an attempt to keep this virus at bay so thank you all for that.

Hopefully, the next 12 months will be a better year for us all.

My kind regards to everyone in the Parish."

The Chairman thanked Councillor Davis for his support during the pandemic and his updates and information. He gave thanks for the sourcing of the PPE for the village volunteer group and for the £10,000 grant towards Birlingham Village Hall.

8) Annual Reports from representatives

The Parish Warden reports were given.

Footpath Warden

Bruce Hayward reported, as follows:

"Birlingham has 2 volunteers who, together with local landowners and others, 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 increased use of the footpath network during lockdown has actually resulted in a reduced requirement for strimming – in fact, some of the paths are wider than I have ever seen them. The clearing of undergrowth, and repairs to stiles and fingerposts, have still been required.

At each Parish Council meeting a report is made of work undertaken during the previous two months.

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 me at Tadpole Cottage or via the Parish clerk."

Bruce was thanked for his continuing work and the best footpaths locally.

Lengthsman

Carl Brassington reported, as follows:

"The Lengthsman is employed by the Parish Council on behalf of Worcestershire County Council highways department to patrol the roads in the parish and carry out a range of duties relating to drainage and highway issues. The Lengthsman does not repair potholes but reports them to WCC for attention.

In the summer, the work mainly involves strimming borders and sight lines at road junctions and clearing headwalls and grips. In the autumn and winter, the emphasis turns to the drainage and keeping grips and gullies clear and collecting the vast number of leaves that fall on the roads.

Flooding

A major problem this year has been the flooding of the A4104 main road from Pershore to Defford. In heavy rainfall the ditch became quickly overwhelmed and flooding closed the carriageway. WCC arranged for the ditch to be cleared and the exit drains exposed which will hopefully clear up the problem for the future.

There are some other hot spots where flooding is an issue in very heavy inundations such as the Eckington Road/ Rectory Road junction and outside The Coach House in Broadway. These are being targeted by Highways to see what can be done.

Highways Department engineers have been undertaking more camera surveys of the system with a view to producing an uprated scheme in the near future. This has taken the form of mapping out the existing system and liaising with Severn Trent to integrate the highways drainage with the land drainage.

Several overgrown access points have been unearthed and hopefully a better understanding of how the system works will help to tackle the remaining flood spots.

Verges

A continuing problem is the erosion of the verges. As machinery gets bigger and activity increases the verges have taken a pounding and in some parts roadside gullies that were in the verge are now two or three feet from the new line.

To alleviate this some villagers have placed stones on the grass verge to discourage encroachment, but I have to point out that this may technically be an obstruction and the person responsible could be liable for damage caused to any vehicles.

Householders are also responsible for keeping their hedgerows and trees from obstructing the highway and I would ask anyone who has a roadside hedge to have a look and ensure that it is not overhanging.

If any villager has a concern regarding the roads or related issues, please contact me and I will do my best to help or report to the relevant department.

How to speak 'Lengthsman'

Highway Authority	*- The County Council.*
Public Highway	*- The area maintainable at Public expense comprising of carriageway, footway and verge.*
Footway	*- Pavement usually abutting the carriageway.*
Footpath	*- Usually a Public Right of Way not abutting the carriageway*
Divorced Footway	*- A tarmac footway away from the carriageway but not a Public Right of Way.*
Metalled Surface	*- A Highway with a tarmac surface.*
Gully	*- A drain in the road with a grid over.*

Ditch - Usually in rural areas a drainage channel in the verge running parallel to the carriageway.

Grip - A channel from the edge of the carriageway to the ditch which allows water to drain off the carriageway into the ditch.
Headwall - Usually a brick structure around a pipe at the end of a ditch.
Channel - The edge of the carriageway i.e. gutter.
Siding out the - The term used to remove grass that has grown over the footpath from adjacent verge.
Statutory Undertaker - The term given to the Waterboard, Electric, Gas, Telephones etc.
Street Furniture - Lighting columns, benches, barriers, litter bins, signs etc.
Reflector Post - Usually a black and white marker with a reflectorised white or red top.
Encroachments - The placement of unauthorised signs/rocks on the Public highway."

Carl was thanked for his continuing work on the highways.

Tree Warden

Rupert Keys had forwarded the following report:

"I've taken another walk around this morning and now that trees are in leaf, its more apparent on what's happening a little.

As previously mentioned, there are some dead Elm around the cricket pitch that could do with cutting down should they then decide to fall on to the highway. It may be worth taking a wonder with the Porter family to discuss the maintenance of these trees. They do tend to get more abuse from traffic than other parts of the village due to the density of trees. Although it's a beautiful drive down the Upper End on to The Avenue, overhanging branches will need maintenance.

There is also some dead on the large Oak overhanging the highway outside The Old Dairy.

There is a semi-deceased tree (Field Maple) along the verge of New Barn Road opposite St James church (Glover residence) which they may need to consider removing.

Jubilee Wood - Trees are leafing up but this area could be so much improved! We do have the contention of the traffic from Redstar, and the drainage from the track hinders some growth along with the maintenance around the trees with bramble and grasses taking over. It would be great to see if Red Star and residents of Birlingham would like to help carry out some maintenance or even plant a tree in memory of someone. Ongoing maintenance will be required to help the trees establish!"

Councillor Porter suggested that he would meet with Rupert Keys to ascertain which trees needed maintenance and the location to progress the issues.

The Chairman of the Jubilee Committee has contacted Rupert Keys regarding the Jubilee Wood. Further reference in the report below.

9) Community Groups

Groups and organisations were invited to send their reports. They are as follows:

Jubilee Committee

Steve Morris, Chairman of the Jubilee Committee, reported:

"*Like most organisations in the village, the Jubilee Committee has had its activities limited over the last 15 months.*

*Support for **Birlingham News** has continued to grow, and it is encouraging that almost all new residents have asked to be added to the mailing list over the last two years. We have delivered two issues per month during the last year (three issues for those months where there are five Wednesdays). The email is now delivered to over 90% of households, as well as many former residents.*

*In the last twelve months we have produced a further two (Lockdown Special) issues of the **Birlingham Bystander** and our ninth edition (Issue 85) is about to be delivered.*

*The **village website** continues to receive many visitors. Last year, in co-operation with the Parish Council, we set up an online **Village Forum** at the start of the first lockdown. This was well used during the first lockdown, but support has now dwindled, and it is time to think about replacing it with something more likely to be used.*

*We are planning to meet Rupert Keys to discuss the **Jubilee Wood** soon and decide on a plan of action. The wood is very much in need of some attention by a working party, but this has not been possible during the recent lockdowns. We are particularly keen to improve the area, with the Platinum Jubilee next year and Prince Charles' wish for many more trees to be planted to mark the occasion.*

*Our stock of **equipment** includes a water boiler (currently on loan to the church), 25 trestle tables, bunting, 30 camping chairs, 26 plastic chairs, heaters, glasses, music stands and road signs, all of which are available for village residents and organisations to borrow for private or public functions when events are possible again.*

*We are currently working on a booklet, **Birlingham in the Second World War**, originally intended to mark the 75th anniversary in 2020 of the end of the war. The booklet will commemorate the 39 men and women from Birlingham who saw active service during the war and will provide a picture of life in Birlingham during the war years. We are grateful to the Parish Council and our District Councillor, Ron Davis, for supporting our New Homes Bonus application for a grant towards printing costs.*

*The research for this booklet, as well as the work of the **Birlingham Memories Project**, was brought to a halt by the pandemic. The aim of the Memories Project is to capture, either in sound or on video, the memories of Birlingham's older residents and of people who used to live in the village, so that these memories are available for future generations. When we can start again, it is hoped to interview as many people as possible about their lives in Birlingham and to mount a series of exhibitions to display the results. We have been offered a grant of £800 towards equipment costs by the Wychavon District Council Community Grants Scheme. Again, we are grateful to Ron Davis for his support.*

*Along with Birlingham Cricket Club, we are organising a **Summer Gathering** at the Cricket Ground on Friday 2nd July to give villagers the opportunity to meet up in an outdoor social setting for the first time since the lockdowns began. This may have to be postponed if COVID restrictions are not lifted on 21st June.*

*Looking ahead, it is the Queen's **Platinum Jubilee** next year and we are planning to organise a series of monthly meetings, as happened in 2012, so that the village can get together to decide how they want to commemorate the occasion. Last time over 60 people were involved in running events during the summer and we hope something similar can be achieved in 2022."*

<u>West Mercia Police</u>

A report was received from PCSO Julie Pardoe, Pershore Rural North and South Local Policing Team, as follows:

"The last 12 months have certainly been different in the policing world and has bought with it new challenges. Halfway through 2020 we had a new call recording system installed which has taken a lot of adjusting to and is not user friendly when it comes to producing reports such

as these. That said due to COVID the crime figures have been skewed and to compare the figures to the previous 12 months would not achieve anything.

I have reviewed the last 12 months and there was a reduction in the number of calls and incidents as we would expect.

Throughout the year we have received a handful of reports. There was an attempt to break into some work vehicles and a storage unit in April this year when work was being carried out on the weir. Other than that, the only other concerns raised were people swimming and socialising in and around the river.

There has been a number of incidents throughout South Worcestershire where cat convertors have been cut from vehicles. A number of arrests have been made.

We have had a number of COVID breaches reported to us throughout our area. All reports were taken seriously and were dealt with via the four E's 'engage, explain, educate, enforce'. None of these have gone to enforcement.

As a team we are grateful to everyone who has followed government guidelines and stayed at home however we have been made aware and have dealt with visitors to the area who have travelled from further afield causing disruption and concern to the residents of villages especially those surrounding Bredon Hill."

There is a website www.police.uk where you can enter your postcode, and this will give you the crimes by month for your area. I'm not sure if this will be of any use to the PC for future reference."

The Clerk has forwarded a team poster sent from the Pershore policing teams to the website for publishing. Since this poster has been produced PC Daren Riley has temporarily moved to Evesham as acting Sergeant and we now have a replacement PC George Preston mobile no. 07929 783702. The poster will be brought out to the village in the near future for display.

PCSO Pardoe also forwarded a copy of the link to the latest Neighbourhood Watch newsletter. May OUR NEWS newsletter, is created by the Neighbourhood Watch Network (the umbrella organisation for Neighbourhood Watch across England and Wales) which is for all Neighbourhood Watch supporters. The newsletter can be viewed by clicking onto the following link: May OUR NEWS newsletter<http://bit.ly/OurNewsMay2021.

Inside the newsletter there is information about the launch of the first Neighbourhood Watch Annual Insights Survey which is open to members and non-members alike. There is also information about an upcoming campaign to help reduce dog theft which is launching on the 17th May. The Clerk has forwarded this information for inclusion in the next Birlingham News.

The Pershore Team were thanked for their ongoing help and support to the village.

10) Open Session

The Chairman said it was hoped that there would be the ability to implement an event for the village later in the year. There were no further issues to discuss in the open session.

Closure – with nothing further to discuss the meeting closed at 19.59pm. The members agreed that the Annual Parish meeting and the Parish Council meeting next year should be separate events. **The date of the next Annual Parish Meeting, and its format, in May 2022 will be posted when arranged but a proposed date for the diary is Friday 27 May 2022.**

Signed: . . . . . Ian Yates, Chairman

Date: . . . . . .