Birlingham Parish Council

Minutes of meeting held on Wednesday 16 September 2020

By videoconferencing

Councillors:

Councillor Aston, Byrne, Cook, Griffiths, Luff, Porter and Yates.

Present:

County Councillor Hardman, District Councillor Davies and June Hiden (Clerk). No Public Attended.

Welcome – The Chairman thanked everyone for attending.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were tendered by the Footpath Warden, Bruce Hayward, Lengthsman, Carl Brassington, Karl Grimston, Tree Warden and Rupert Keys.

2. Declaration of Interest

a) Register of Interests: Councillors are reminded of the need to update their register of interests.
b) To declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in items on the agenda and their nature.
c) To declare any Other Disclosable Interests in items on the agenda and their nature.
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.
e) Dispensation forms have been received from all Councillors for the term of office ended May 2024.

Interests were declared by Councillor Aston regarding Item 5 and Item 9.

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 the Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on 15 July 2020, a copy of which has been circulated to all Councillors, was agreed as a true record and duly signed by the Chairman.

Democratic Opening

The meeting was adjourned for public question time. There were no questions.

4. Progress Reports

a) Footpath Warden:

i. Footpath 511 (Withy Walk) - fallen tree cleared x 2 by owners of Whitehall House.
ii. Footpath 511 (Withy Walk) – strimmed.
iii. Footpath 519 (by Almhouses) – kissing gate repaired.
It was further reported that this was a good repair.

b) Tree Warden:

Karl Grimston sent the following report:

Tree Warden September 2020

Jubilee Way – There are areas where the newly planted trees are well established, especially towards the far end of the track. However, there are some areas where even after 3 plantings the trees have not survived. I would suggest moving forward that fewer but more mature trees are planted into these spaces. There is also the usual autumn work of removing the unwanted growth to be done soon. We have discussed in the past the idea of inviting village residents to plant trees in memory of a loved one. I still think this is worth considering.

Withy Walk Barns – There are now no surviving trees. The remaining few have fallen victim to the grass cutting.

Church Street – These are now well established and will require further pruning especially of the hedge type ones to ensure they grow as trees.

Broadway Road –Side growths were removed last year and these are generally in good condition.

Gun Club – Replacement trees for those lost to hedge trimming have been requested. I am applying to the Woodland Trust for 105 saplings from them.

I'm more than happy to bring the new warden up to speed on these and transfer over the paperwork and guides that I have.

It was noted that members of the Gun Club may have spare saplings.

Karl has decided to resign from his position which he took on from Stuart Crowther in 2014. When he took over the role, he was working from home but businesses are now consuming more of his time and he feels the role requires more attention. Rupert Keys has said he will take over the role of Tree Warden and will obtain information about the role from Karl.

The Chairman thanked Karl for his work over the last six years and his efforts in maintaining the trees and hedges around the village.

The Chairman has spoken to Karl and Rupert who will meet to ensure a smooth handover of activities.

c) District Councillor:

Question raised with District Councillor Ron Davies regarding the rumours in an amalgamation of Worcestershire South and Worcestershire North districts? He confirmed that there have been talks about a consolidation for some time but this is not substantiated at this time and there are no plans to go unitary at the moment.

Berwick Lane: The issue of the gate in Berwick lane was raised. Councillor Davies will report this to Wychavon District Council alongside what has already gone through to Worcestershire County Council regarding a gate at Berwick Brook bridge and a potential gating order. Councillor Davies is aware that the landowner, Smiths Industries fishermen and the tenant, Tony Hall must be kept updated.

There had been reports of a potential rave at Nafford. The County Councillor had also been made aware of this by the landowner and of vandalism in the location. Nothing materialised over the suspected weekend and nearby residents were asked to report any activity.

Catalyst converter: A resident from Birlingham had reported that a catalyst converter was stolen from a car whilst in the Asda car park. Councillor Davies has asked the new Chief Executive of Malvern Hills and Wychavon District Councils about CCTV cameras and if they can be scrutinised. This has been reported to the Police.

i. Covid-19 is beginning to return to parts of the West Midlands so we must follow the guidelines laid down.
ii. At Wychavon we are beginning the Budget process for the ensuring year which should prove to be interesting. We have yet to feel the full impact of the Coronavirus pandemic from a financial viewpoint.
iii. Wychavon District Councils finances are in good shape and we should come out in a reasonable position.

Councillor Davies was thanked for his attendance.

d) County Councillor: Questions were raised with Councillor Adrian Hardman regarding Birlingham Roads and the Highway issues.

Broadway Road at the lower end is now in a poor state of repair. Councillor Adrian Hardman said "*With regards to Broadway Road I will do my best and see if we can get it resurfaced or surface dressed next year; we have a tendency to construct our work programmes after we have done inspections on condition and I will make sure this is noticed by the Department. I can't at this stage promise anything, but we live in hope*."

Upper End near Hills Cottage. There has been flooding due to blocked/broken drains. Councillor Hardman will visit on 18 September 2020 to meet with the owners of Hills Cottage to understand the problem.

Councillor Aston will travel round the village with County Councillor Hardman if this assists in identifying the highway issues.

County Councillor Hardman reported:

i. Covid-19 is back in the county in some scale. Wychavon District is seeing a doubling of cases each week and there is further concern with care homes and the connectivity with the return to schools.

ii. Test centre at County Hall and one at Redditch. The responsibility to run the centres has been taken away from the Army.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Hardman for joining the meeting and hoped he had made a full recovery from the virus.

e) Clerk - See ***Appendix 1***

Information from the Lengthsman is included.

5. Planning

a) Planning applications pending:-

i. 20/009701442/FUL: Hills Cottage, Upper End WR10 3AA

Construction of a garage by the enclosure of a bay within an existing car part. Change of use of a piece of land from agricultural use to domestic use

Mr Nicholas Aston

Parish Council comments:

"*Garage*

The Parish Council supports the application provided the consent requires sympathetic materials and construction to be used, with submission of details for planning and conservation officer approval.

Change of use

The Parish Council support the change of use. The land in question has not been in agricultural use for many years, in fact we understand that the heavy clay that is just below the surface make it very poor agricultural land and historical maps show it as no more than an orchard. We have been informed that the conditions of sale to the current owner, who is making the application, prevents development on the extension to the garden and the wooded area is covered by a TPO. We would ask you to consider imposing a suitable planning condition to ensure no further development on this piece of land, subject to the application, can take place whether by construction or further change of use."

ii. 20/01443/LB: Hills Cottage, Upper End WR10 3AA

Construction of a garage by the enclosure of a bay within an existing car port

Mr Nicholas Aston

Parish Council comments:

"*The Parish Council supports the application provided the consent requires sympathetic materials and construction to be used, with submission of details for planning and conservation officer approval.*"

b) Applications granted:-

i. 20/00975/HP: Stable Cottage, Eckington Road, WR10 3DA

Internal and external modifications. Conversion and incorporation of attached barn as kitchen. Two storey rear extension

Mr and Mrs Porter

Parish Council comments:

"*The parish council would support the application. We would however expect the appointed planning officer to ensure the materials and architectural detailing to be kept in line with the existing structure*."

Approved - 20 July

ii. 20/01451/FUL: The Swan Inn, Church Street WR10 3AQ

Construction of single storey partially open-sided external seating area (retrospective)

Mrs Zoe Haines

Parish Council comments:

"*All members of the Parish Council fully support this application. We note there have already been several letters of support from villagers on this retrospective application.*

We endorse the view that the Swan is a vital centre of community life and so its survival is a matter of some importance to the Parish. We feel the design of the new structure fits well within the limited space available and helps the operation meet the current COVID-19 regulations. We feel the materials are in keeping with the location and applaud the use of locally sourced timber used in a creatively.

Please note the following;

In 2015 the parish council conducted an extensive village survey of all 302 Birlingham residents. Survey results showed that the Swan was important to 80% of respondents with 90% visiting several times a year and 60% several times a month. Villagers saw it as an important social hub for local people to meet, drink and enjoy the excellent food.
We believe in c 2015 a planning consent for a Micro-Brewery was secured by the then owners in a location to the rear of the car park. This was not implemented. The scale of the consented property being a similar size to the current retrospective application, albeit for a different use. We are sure you will check this point, and consider to the extent you can, this proposal as a substitution to the 2015 consented proposal."

Approved - 15 September

c) Enforcement – none

d) Proposed Certificate of Lawful Use – Shepherds Hut

Councillor Byrne wished to make it known as a matter of courtesy that he intends to submit an application of Certificate of Lawful Use for the temporary change of use of land for the siting of two shepherd huts for family gatherings. He explained that the huts do not require planning permission but that due to possible sensitivities over his position on the parish council he will still apply for a Certificate of Lawful Use anyway.

Planning permission is usually required for material changes of use of land. However, there are exceptions where permitted development applies. This is set out under Part 4 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (As Amended). Class B - the temporary use of land states that it is permitted development. The aim is for the shepherd huts to be used by family and friends when gatherings are held at 'The Manor House'. The huts will not be used for more than 28 days in a calendar year. The huts will not form part of a caravan site. The huts will be sited in his meadow on land outside of the curtilage of 'The Manor House'. When not in use for the 28 days of the year, the huts will be stored within an existing storage area.

6. Financial Matters

a) The Accounts for 2020/2021

i. Bank balance (current) is £7,830.09 as at 3 August 2020. Business saving balance is £6,789.69 as at 10 August 2020.

ii. Receipts –

£90.00 – Worcestershire County Council (Lengthsman May)
£40.00 – Birlingham Village Hall refund

iii. Payments: –

i. £55.00 - Internal audit (588)
ii. £140.00 - PAYE (April, May, June) (584)
iii. £580.00 – Clerk's salary (April, May, June) (on agenda as £560 but members agreed to back date as per rate increased July 2020) (586)

iv. £104.28 – Clerk's standard expenses (April, May, June) (587)
Clerks payments as agreed in the budget. Further clarification to be made after the meeting with the Councillors once the Clerk has left.
v. £90.00 - Lengthsman May (589)
vi. £96.00 – payments due to Lengthsman for work carried out February 2019 (585)
(BACS receipt 16 April 2019)

b) Payments for consideration –

i. £145.00 – PAYE (July, August, September)
ii. £580.00 – Clerk's salary (July, August, September)
iii. £135.00 – Lengthsman July
iv. £255.00 – Lengthsman August

The Accounts for 2019/2020 logged as 'exempt from a limited assurance review' confirmed by the SBA Team, for and on behalf of PKF Littlejohn LLP.

Clerk requested village website maintainer to display the completed Certificate of Exemption, Annual Return (pages 4, 5 and 6), variances and bank reconciliation on the Parish Council pages of the website.

c) Budget setting at the November meeting Correction of 2019/2020

It was agreed to hold a budget meeting on 12 November 2020 with the Chairman, Vice-chairwoman and Financial Support Officer to discuss a draft budget in preparation for the November meeting. The Financial Support Officer would lead. A Zoom invitation would be sent out. Members are welcome to attend if they wish.

The Chairman asked for a copy of the Lengthsman's hours/timesheet for review.

d) Remembrance Day

At this time, it is not known how Covid-19 will affect the Remembrance Day services. The Parish Council will be supporting the events as usual and Councillor Maxine Cook volunteered to attend at Eckington on Sunday 8 November 2020 and Councillor Julia Luff would attend at Birlingham on Remembrance Day. The Clerk will action the two wreaths.

7. Day of Parish Council meeting

There has been a request from Birlingham Village Hall to move the Wednesday meeting to either a Tuesday or Thursday evening. At the present time the pandemic is affecting the situation and government guidelines restrict face to face meetings. The Parish Council is meeting via videoconferencing and will do for the foreseeable future. The members are therefore not in a position short term to decide on a committed booking. The Parish Council can not stand in the way of the BVH however they wish it to be known that the May 2021 meeting, which usually coincides with the Annual public meeting, should stand and a booking is in place. Clerk to notify the Bookings Secretary of BVH.

8. Traffic – increase in movements, vehicle size and type, passing place(s)

Whitehall Lane

The Parish Council was contacted by a resident of Whitehall Lane concerned about an increase in traffic. After some investigation with the engineering company and the landowner

at Whitehall barns it was established that the gate into the yard at the end of the lane was open to allow vehicles delivering to houses to turn round, as the alternative turning area (private drive) has now been gated. Some vehicle movements to the yard were also using Whitehall Lane as the alternative drive access via Church Street was in a poor state of repair. The Parish Council have been informed that the holes in the drive will be fixed shortly. There is a general increase in traffic in the village due to the move to online shopping and a self - employed resident having regular drops. Councillor Maxine Cook, who lives in Whitehall Lane, will monitor the situation.

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. HGVs delivering to Red Star Growers are instructed to use the route via Upper End and this seems to be followed most of the time. Other HGVs may be using Church Lane after following a satnav. The 'not suitable for heavy vehicles' sign on the junction of Eckington Road and New Barn Road is only advisory. The Chairman has replied and addressed the concerns.

The Parish Clerk will ask if tractors can use the route on the other side of the church to avoid Church Lane, provided they don't damage the plane tree on the village green, which has a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) on it.

Councillor Michael Porter will ask the landowner if any overhanging tree branches on Church Lane can be cut back to avoid high-sided vehicles. These trees are also protected as part of the Conservation Area and have TPOs limiting unnecessary felling or pruning.

The Parish Council have previously asked that vehicle registrations and company names are recorded so that any issues can be addressed but 'speed' has already been looked at by the police and no further enforcement action will be taken.

9. Flooding and drainage

Discussion took place on flooding issues at the following locations.

A4104 (Pershore to Upton upon Severn road) – above The Marina

The localised heavy rain was difficult to deal with. However, the drainage that is already there cannot alleviate what falls. The Lengthsman has looked at some pipes and eyelets and they are blocked. This is an 'A' road and must take higher priority now as there have been multiple incidents of flooding on the top of Tiddesley Bank on the bend near Lower Farm. This has caused significant disruption and danger to traffic during the winter and in recent months during heavy rainfalls. Reported and jetting teams will investigate blocked pipes.

UPPER END

Hills Cottage area

The drainage team from Worcestershire County Council have been out to site and established that a pipe has collapsed.

Parsons Pleck - water leak and road closure. Initially attended by Severn Trent Water who concluded it was a rainwater drainage problem that was pushing up the road surface. Highways at Worcestershire County Council then attended but found it was a mains water leak. STW then sent a team to fix the water leak but were disputing who is responsible for reinstating the road. The Parish Clerk is escalating the issue to try and get a fast resolution. The County Councillor suggested that this should be sent to the Chief Executive at Coventry.

THE AVENUE

The Old Coach House – manhole

Water flooding from manhole in front garden of the Old Coach House. This is a Severn Trent Water problem and they have been informed and will action. A team has been out to site today and marked the manhole.

The Old Post Office

The drains outside the property have been marked.

LOWER END

Berwick Lane

Water leak at the top of Berwick Lane. Pipes have been jetted and it appears to have stopped the leak. Resident at Gardeners Cottage will monitor. Clerk is investigating this further.

10. Broadway Road

As discussed earlier, County Councillor Hardman will seek to budget this item for next year. He has driven round the village with the Asset Manager from Worcestershire County Council and will try to programme works for 2021/2022. It may be patching first to get the surface back.

Councillor Julia Luff will progress-chase this.

11. Litter Pick

Due to Covid restrictions the normal annual litter pick will not take place this year. Instead, the Parish Council are encouraging residents to participate in the national 'Great British September Clean' during 11 to 17 September 2020. There are two ways to participate. As an individual you can 'pledge to pick' or as a group (maximum 6) but this has to be registered with the Clean. Any resident wishing to borrow a litter-picking stick can do so by contacting the Clerk. This will be advertised in the Birlingham News.

12. Councillors' reports and items for next agenda

Updates on SmartWater, Millennium Bench and the Outdoor Gym.

SmartWater

As previously discussed, the Parish Council wants to fund the provision of SmartWater so that it is free to all Birlingham residents. Councillor Paula Aston has been registering interest and has 64 out of 146 Birlingham properties now signed up for the scheme in addition to 20 properties that were already users. The Parish Council would like to increase this 84 to 117 because at 80% usage it has been shown to create a no-go area for criminals. The application will enable 25% funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner. £300.00 will be funded by the Parish Council from Projects.

Millennium Bench (New Homes Bonus. Removal and relocation on the village green)

Councillor Maxine Cook reported that the work on reinstalling the bench has been delayed due to difficulties with the preferred contractor. An alternative contractor is being sought. Councillor Cook will progress again and keep updating the members.

Outdoor Gym

Councillor Michael Porter reported. This proposal seems to be a non-starter due to the need for public land.

Other reports:-

Volunteers

With the number of Covid-19 cases on the rise again, the Parish Council agreed to remind villagers of the Volunteer Group. Councillor Paula Aston will send out a reminder to the WhatsApp Group to say that it is still 'live' and are the members willing to carry on. A further reminder will be put in the Birlingham News to inform residents that the volunteers are still active and details of how to contact it are still on the Birlingham Village Forum.

13. **Closure and date of next ordinary meeting** - with nothing further to discuss the meeting closed at 8.55pm and the Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance.

The next Parish Council Meeting is on Wednesday18 November 2020 at 7.00pm which is proposed to be held by video conferencing.

Signed: ..... Councillor Ian Yates, Chairman

Date: ……..……..……

Appendix 1 – Clerk's Report

Lengthsman

Reporting:

Upper End

Hills Cottage area

20 August - Reference Number 912884 drain blocked gully overflows when raining

WCC update: 19/08/20 Thank you for your enquiry. We inspected this site on 17/08/2 and have raised a 1-week order, CEN/52110 to clean and jet the gully.

25 August – Carl Brassington says

> *"I have today inspected the gullies above Hill's Cottage and the offending gully is still full.*
>
> *The jetting team were round yesterday and I asked them about it and they said they had done one in that area but that the problem is the pipe is too small to cope with an inundation of rainwater.*
>
> *This cannot be correct as the gully would eventually empty so either it or the pipework is blocked.*
>
> *It may be on the next to-do list but I cannot see the required red marking at the moment so it may have been missed.*

27 August

> *"Outside Hill's Cottage the gullies were over-running again due to the blocked pipework."*

Maryworth Barn

> *"There was also some flooding outside Maryworth Barn again due to a blocked gully which has been reported."*

Barncroft

> *"I also attended outside Bancroft to clear the grids and the system is coping well."*

Broadway Road

21 August - Reference Number 914839 - Pothole issue

Our Update:
24/08/2020 - *Thank you for your enquiry we have inspected the site and there are no intervention level.*

24 August - Reference Number 914838 - manhole access covers dislodged in verge leaving a hole into culvert (Jim's field)

Our Update:
24/08/2020 - *Thank you for your enquiry we have raised a four-week order for the cover to be re set.*

27 August

> *"I cut several grips in Broadway Road/Shorthill near the farm and spoke to John in the office regarding clearing the ditch opposite the farmhouse."*

Berwick Lane

28 August

"*Spoke to the jetters the drain at Berwick Lane was full of roots which they cut back. I also asked them to try and clear the gully by the pumping station which they said they would*."

The Avenue - flooding out of the drain (Old Coach House)

27 August

"I have today been out and cleared the grids again in Broadway which are clear except for the ones adjacent to Terry's house as the pipework is blocked. I put out the FLOOD signs as the road was becoming dangerous."





Lower End / Grange Road

27 August

"There was more flooding in Grange Road due to a blocked gully which I am convinced is something to do with the ongoing problem in Berwick Lane."

28 August

Drainage team in the road this morning

Training:

Lengthsman training

20 August 2020 – Lengthsman to Scheme Manager, Worcestershire County Council

"Dear Alex

I am pleased to say that I have successfully completed TTMBC and 12D M1 (T1) courses with Uptospeed Training and my certificate is attached.

Normal service has now been resumed.

Regards Carl"

Lengthsman has sent a copy of the certificate to the Clerk for record. (registration of successful completion off the job Temporary Traffic Management (TTM) training course for National Highways Sector Schemes 12AB/12C/12D)

Grants to Village Halls

16 July 2020

The District Councillor, Ron Davis has confirmed to the Chairman, Ian Yates that £10K has been paid to Birlingham Village Hall.

Drainage/Flooding

Berwick Lane

Drain

22 July – resident report of water running down the road again.

23 July - highways

> *"I'll ask the jet vac to attend as it may be roots again. If it is it might be time to consider replacing the pipe on a different line to avoid trees/undergrowth if its possible avoiding services. I'll wait and see what the outcome of the jet vac visit is. Bear with us though as we have a high number of issues county wide that we are dealing with from the floods last year and this year, Corona virus lockdown and flash floods from last week!"*

Owners of Gardeners Cottage and Tadpole Cottage thanks for clearance of highway drain.

16 September

Clerk still communicating with Highways to resolve overall issue.

Pothole

1 September – Reference number 919663 Pothole issue

04/09/20 thank you for your enquiry contractor notified

A4104

21 July – highways

> *"Regarding A4104 I believe Barry was going to chase this with Wychavon? However please be aware that during lockdown their staff were working from home and were not allowed to carry out site visits. I know they are also suffering from being a staff member down and as such have quite a backlog."*

17 August – report to Worcestershire County Council

Reference Number 912608
Thank you for informing us of a Highways, Drainage or Flooding issue at DEFFORD ROAD.

Message from Barry Barnes copied to Adrian Hardman

"Many thanks for your e mail and attached photo. The information I have received is that the issue was sent to Wychavon Drainage to follow up regarding private blocked ditches. I've sent an e mail to the Wychavon Drainage Team asking for any updates/progress and will let you know when I receive a reply. If you would like a site visit at some time, please let me know."

Follow up message

"Just further…. the ditches were inspected by Wychavon District and a brief report sent to Mark. As a result, Mark will be arranging for a part of our system to be surveyed and checked for any blockages and condition. I'll keep you updated."

Another response.

"Andrew Fell (WDC)got back to me at the very start of my leave 2 weeks ago. He reckons there is no obvious outfall for the ditch but there is a piped system for the gully's further along. I'll try and ask DJS to attend with Traffic Management as a priority to ascertain outfall and any blockages then refer back to Wychavon if ditches need digging out."

4 September – Highways to Clerk

"A4104 – its on DJS's list to check the highway drainage system on to which the ditches appear to connect. This is a fairly big job due to the need for traffic management so bear with us whilst we work through similar jobs county wide. I am conscious we are approaching the winter period and if this does continue to be an issue will instruct our inspectors to install ice boards in appropriate locations

Upper End

Hills Cottage area

17 August – report to Worcestershire County Council

Reference Number 912614 - Thank you for informing us of a Highways, Drainage or Issue at Upper End. Flooding issue at UPPER END.

Owner of Hills Cottage

"They have already been out and have put it on a 7-day turnaround but chap reckons they will be out today."

The field next to us that's causing the issue is rented from the Porters so the farm says it would up to 'the owners' to put any drainage in there."

3 September

"I've spoken to Highways again today and they are coming out to jet the 3 drains by us over the next few days. They seem to keep missing them and they have confirmed that they have not been jetted. I'm pretty convinced the drain has collapsed as there is a dip in the road where the pipe runs. I'm on this one as so far we have had a flooded house twice and lost several parts of our new hedge through the flooding on the land."

11 September 2020

Conversation with Project Engineer, Highways – what is happening?

12 September – follow up email to Highways

15 September – drain has been jetted and there is a collapse (owners).

16 September – owner in contact with Adrian Hardman. Clerk communicating with Highways.

Parsons Pleck area – WR10 3AA

7 September – reference number 922765 – flooding
8 September – call from Highways for clarification. May be a STW issue?

8 September – Clerk to STW

Reply:

"Thanks for contacting us – you may find it will take longer than normal for us to get back to you due to the Coronavirus outbreak as some of our teams are having to self-isolate.

Our priority is to make sure everyone's as safe as they can be while ensuring we keep our services running for all of our customers.

We will get back to you as soon as possible. Thanks for bearing with us.

Kind regards,

Customer Care"

9 September – Clerk to Highways

Water flooding southwards from this location Reference Number 922765
Reply Update: *Thank you for your enquiry, we are aware of an issue in the area, this has been passed to our jetting crew, current demand for jetting is high, we will be with you as soon as we can.*

Lengthsman to Clerk

10 September

"I have put some cones around the 'eruption' which is getting worse by the minute. My signage stock is limited and I don't have one which says "DANGER MASSIVE PIMPLE AHEAD'' so it's the best I can do.

It looks as though it may be a collapsed drain as apparently Severn Trent attended on Saturday and erected barriers then took them down again so they may have tested the water for chlorine and decided that it was rainwater."



10 September

Chairman to Highways

> *"Further to my telephone call with Kerry, please find attached photos showing how the water leak outside Parsons Pleck in Upper End Birlingham is now lifting the road surface by about 18 inches creating a hazard to traffic. We have placed a cone by the damaged surface, but I am concerned that if a vehicle hits the raised section in the dark tonight there could be an accident. As a minimum we need this to be coned off immediately with warning signs and the water pressure under the surface to be relieved to prevent flooding."*

Parsons Pleck owners to Chairman

> *"Ian thank you. I have also been BACK in touch with Severn Trent (3rd time a charm)…..apparently an engineer came out last week and diagnosed ground water, which clearly it is not. As at 17.10 tonight 'the relevant teams are aware of how severe the issue is….' I will let you all know if I get any further updates from them."*

Chairman escalates the matter to Highways.

Chairman update after meeting with STW

> *"A quick update at 9:00pm.*
> *Paula and I met the STW man by Parsons Pleck. The mound continues to grow and the sink hole alongside is getting bigger. STW test show no chlorine so it's likely to be a rainwater drain problem but the guy was baffled by the effect it was having on the road. Highways had put out cones as requested but cars could only just get past. No room for HGV's. While we were there a coach for RedStar turned up and couldn't get through. It started reversing all the way back to the main*

road. Paula and I decided the road should be closed otherwise artic lorries would become stuck overnight. Paula rang the police and they will arrange closure. I spoke to the out of hours Highways People and updated them on STW findings, police closure and said they needed to attend first thing tomorrow with team to investigate. "

11 September - Redstar

"This was reported to Severn Trent yesterday morning and stressed at the time we were all afraid the road was going to 'blow' as the mound of tarmac was growing by the minute.

We have spoken to Severn Trent this morning who said they normally have 24 hours to undertake any repair and usually this has to be done by 1pm. They also said they have no jurisdiction over arranging any diversionary route if there is a road closure – this is something Highways have to organise.

I have just spoken to Highways and explained the urgency of the problem. They have recorded the incident as an emergency and assured me they would get road signs out here this morning.

I have explained we are trying to avoid any incidents by placing our own diversion signage as an interim measure but stressed that as lorries will be required to use a very narrow lane down which HGV's are prohibited, we need the official diversion immediately.

In the meantime, we have contacted all of the hauliers due into us today to update them on the problems and we are also aiming to use an alternative route (across fields where possible) to bring our tractors and trailers to our yard. This will hopefully ease potential issues of two-way traffic meeting on New Barn road if we can divert our own vehicles as a short-term measure.

This is the action taken and information we have so far, but if we hear anything in the meantime, we will of course update everyone.

Thank you."

11 September 2020, at 10:25

Clerk updates:

"Hello All

I went to Parsons Pleck this morning and spoke with Tussie and David (homeowners) Stu Norton / James Revill (Woodfield Farm) was there and Will Haines (The Swan) arrived.

I have spoken to Severn Trent. They say no chlorine. However, this will disappear once the system 'has broken'. They are passing the buck to highways. I have messaged my contact who is going into a meeting and will discuss. I have spoken to Highway Control and they are going to ring me back. If we have had no rainfall, then we wonder how STW say this is due to storm water surge.

I am waiting for a response from Highways.
I had a call from Highways at 3.30pm, I have been to site and the work gang have now left.

This is a STW mains issue.

STW are due to attend the site within 4 hours. As of this time they are not here.

STW will have responsibility to put their action in and put the highway back as it should be. I have taken photos.

The road has a closer order and diversion on it. It is totally impassable with a trench dug and the road gully proud of the hole. I have spoken to the owner at the Old Dairy as some vehicles are still trying to come down Upper End despite the signage and have to turn in that location.

Paula is aware of the situation and will let me know if she sees any activity."

Clerk receives a 5-day road closure notice and asks for it to go on the Forum.

Clerk updates:

Update as at 12.20pm

"I have met with the STW inspector (Paula was my witness) and he has confirmed that it is a STW issue: most likely a collar 'fissing' on the mains in the Parsons Pleck/ Court House location. He has marked the area where Tussie told me the original leak (blow) was coming from.

I have the reference number raised at 12.20pm by Tom with his works.

Highly unlikely that a gang will be out this weekend as urgent works have already been scheduled with the small number of gangs operating in this area. We are probably looking at the beginning of next week."

Clerk has put a notice on the Village Forum

14 September

"Good Afternoon June!

Just had an update from the engineers on the system and it looks like we have attended the site and made a repair on the main, they are now just in the clean-up process, then following the clean-up process send a team back out to tarmac, just waiting on a specific date for that."

16 September – Vice chairwoman – will check on site for update as road still closed.

<u>Old Coach House</u>

17 August – owner

"The storm drain lid outside my house blew off during the exceptional storm as either the pipe below is blocked or too small - or both. This caused a flood below & blocked the road and a safety risk. It was interesting to note that the torrent gushing from the drain contained sandy soil in large volumes. It appears to me that this is probably the main culprit causing the pipe blockages. Until this is addressed there will be a regular need for the pipe and drains below me to be cleared."

2 September

Highways confirm that – "*this is the system that until fairly recently we didn't realise was a STW system running down The Avenue (below the memorial). In the past the system has been perceptible to root intrusion. If the Parish or residents can raise the issue with STW via their website / app. I'll speak to one of my contacts at STW to see if they can inspect the system*."

Broadway (Old Coach House southwards) – STW issue. There are combined and surface water pipes running south that are known to have had root issues in the past (team cleared roots a few years ago when the pipes weren't shown on STW plans). I have sent some info to my contact at STW but

have heard nothing back yet. Any complaints raised by the parish / residents could only help matters to get a response from them. The photos sent through would suggest it was the combined that was surcharging.

Clerk to STW
Interaction number 2004862615 The Old Coach House Birlingham WR10 3AB

4 September

"Until recently it wasn't realised that the system in the verge by the Old Coach House is a STW one. (See attached plan). It is perceptible to root intrusion which was thankfully jetted by Highways until it was known that is not their responsibility.

Every time there is now medium/ heavy rain the cover lifts, as below.

This means that the highway floods.

Can this please be actioned as soon as possible and an update given."

Reply same day - CAS-1704041-X8Z0G3

"Thanks for contacting us – you may find it will take longer than normal for us to get back to you due to the Coronavirus outbreak as some of our teams are having to self-isolate.

Our priority is to make sure everyone's as safe as they can be while ensuring we keep our services running for all of our customers.

We will get back to you as soon as possible. Thanks for bearing with us.

Kind regards,

Customer Care"

Request to landowner – public right of way

Copy from Minutes:

Footpath 510 – Birlingham House to Whitehall House. Can the farmer be reminded of the Public Right of Way and mark the footpath? It was felt this was not appropriate at this time but should be after the crop has been harvested.

Clerk to Revills:

The field (south of Whitehall Lane) has a cereal crop in it at the moment so Clerk suggesting that it be put in again once the crop has gone.

21 July 2020 reply:

"This has been forwarded on to John Sansome (GW Revill's Assistant Farm Manager) to sort out."

PCC Town and Parish Council Survey

John Campion, Police and Crime Commissioner, OPCC, West Mercia Police

"As Commissioner, I want to ensure communities have the opportunities and are given the platforms to raise the issues that matter to them, the Town and Parish Council survey is just one of a number of ways I do this.

The opinions and feedback provided last year helped to show where improvements needed to be made. I have put extra investment into roads policing as well as a variety of road safety initiatives and introduced a dedicated rural focus campaign.

I am now inviting every town and parish council across West Mercia to complete this year's survey questionnaire and would encourage as many town and parish councils as possible to complete it. Unfortunately, COVID-19 delayed the release of this survey and I understand that it has affected your current meeting arrangements that make your role more challenging but I hope you will still be able to take part.

I intend to compare this year's results to those I received in the previous two years and will be using the results to inform my discussions with the Chief Constable on local policing.

I have also sent this out through the Associations of Local Councils that you may be a member of but I wanted to send this directly to you to ensure you received it and have the chance to respond.

The results of the survey will be available to view on my website: www.westmercia-pcc.gov.uk.

Please submit only one response for your town and parish council.

If you wish to complete the survey 'offline' I have attached a word version of the document to enable you to do so. Please email your completed survey response to: opcc@westmercia.pnn.police.uk or post it to the address given at the bottom of the questionnaire.

Please submit your completed survey to me by Friday 9th October 2020."

The Chairman completed the survey 27 July 2020.

Great British September Clean

19 August 2020

From Isabel Thomson – Keep Britain Tidy

"We recently wrote to you to let you know that the Great British September Clean will take place 11 – 27 September 2020.

Tackling litter is an absolute priority, and never before has it been so important for our community to come together to take part in this amazing campaign. We know that taking part in community action has positive effects on our mental health and, right now, anything we can do to unite British citizens and empower communities to make a difference during these uncertain times is so important.

We have developed a supporter's pack for Town and Parish Councils to help you plan your activity and make some noise about the campaign on your own channels – you may want to share this with your communications teams. It can be found here and contains:

- *A one-page overview of the campaign*
- *Template communications to your community for your website/ emails*
- *A key messages and sample social media posts document*
- *Artwork for your Twitter, Instagram and Facebook accounts*
- *A template press release to celebrate our partnership and announce your participation in the Great British September Clean.*

This year, you can support the Great British September Clean by encouraging your communities to:

1. *Visit our website and Organise a private group clean-up with up to five family and friends or pledge to do their own individual litter-pick*
2. *Make some noise about the campaign using their social media accounts using the hashtag #GBSeptemberClean.*

If there are any changes to the support you are able to provide volunteers in your area, or the contact details you supplied us, please email Isabel.thomson@keepbritaintidy.org to make an amendment.

Right now, a lot of things are uncertain, but our passion for tackling litter and our love for the environment will not falter. Thank you for your help unite to communities and ignite passion in others for protecting the beautiful environment we share.

Kind regards, Keep Britain Tidy"

Briefing Note on the Planning Reforms Consultations

Sent to all Councillors

28 August from the Planning Officer (Policy), Malvern Hills and Wychavon District Councils, Civic Centre

"*Dear Parish / Town Council Clerk*

As promised in the latest South Worcestershire Development Plan newsletter (sent out on 26 August 2020), please find attached a Briefing Note on the proposed changes to the current planning system and the proposed wider reforms to the planning system which are currently being consulted on by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, for your information.

Please do not hesitate to contact myself or another member of the Planning Policy team if you have any queries."

> *"Briefing Note on the August 2020 Planning Reforms Consultations. The Ministry of Housing, Housing and Local Government (MHCLG) published two documents for consultation on 6 August 2020: Changes to the Current Planning System and the Planning for the Future White Paper. These documents propose a number of wide-ranging planning reforms, including significant changes to the plan-making process. This briefing note summaries the proposed changes to the planning system detailed in these consultation documents. Changes to the Current Planning System, consultation closes on 1 October 2020 The Changes to the Current Planning System consultation is seeking views on a range of proposed changes to the current planning system, namely on changes to the standard method for calculating housing requirement, securing of First Home through developer contributions, temporarily increasing*

the small sites threshold and extending the current Permission in Principle consent regime to include major development. The consultation is open until 11.45pm on 1 October 2020. Standard Method for Calculating Housing Requirement In order to provide the current formula with more stability and to align its outputs with the Government's target of delivering 300,000 new homes by the mid-2020's, there are three significant changes proposed to the Standard Method formula: baseline need calculated on the higher of the latest household growth projections or 0.5% of existing housing stock; affordability adjustment to incorporate an element of affordability increase over the previous 10 years; and removal of the 40% cap for increase in Local Plan requirement. A transition period is proposed whereby from the publication date of the revised guidance, Local Authorities which are already at Publication consultation are given 6 months to submit their plan to the Planning Inspectorate for examination, and Local Authorities which are close to Publication consultation are to be given 3 months from the publication date of the revised guidance to publish their Publication version for consultation and a further 6 months to submit their plan to the Planning Inspectorate for examination. Delivering First Homes The Government intend to set out that 25% of all affordable housing units secured through developer contributions are to be provided as First Homes. Local plans and Neighbourhood Plans that are submitted for Examination within 6 months of this new policy being enacted will not need to reflect the First Homes policy requirements. Supporting Small and Medium-Sized Builders In order to support small and medium-sized builders, the Government are proposing to raise the small sites threshold to either 40 or 50 dwellings for an initial period of 18 months. Changing the definition of sites of between 10 and 40/50 dwellings from large sites to small sites will mean such schemes will not need to provide developer contributions. Extension of the Permission in Principle Consent Regime It is proposed that the current restriction on Permission in Principle for major developments be removed, with no limit set for commercial development schemes, and further amendments are proposed to the information and publicity requirements.

Planning for the Future White Paper The Planning for the Future White Paper consultation is seeking views on a package of proposals for reform of the planning system in England, with a focus on "streamlining and modernising the planning process, improving outcomes on design and sustainability, reforming developer contributions and ensuring more land is available for development where it is needed". The consultation is open until 11.45pm on 29 October 2020. The White Paper is made up of three pillars of the planning system, with a total of 24 proposals put forward; these are detailed below:

Pillar 1: Planning for Development

1 "The role of land use plans should be simplified. We propose that Local Plans should identify three types of land – Growth areas suitable for substantial development, Renewal areas suitable for development, and areas that are Protected" All areas of land would be divided into three distinct areas – Growth areas which are suitable for substantial development; Renewal areas which are suitable for intensification and small-scale development; and Protected areas which are to be safeguarded.

2 "Development management policies established at national scale and an altered role for Local Plans" National Planning Policy Framework to become primary source of development management policies with Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans adopting design codes and guides.

3 "Local Plans should be subject to a single statutory 'sustainable development' test, replacing the existing tests of soundness" Abolition of Sustainability Appraisal and Duty to Cooperate, replaced with a 'sustainable development' test.

4 "A standard method for establishing housing requirement figures which ensures enough land is released in the areas where affordability is worst, to stop land supply being a barrier to enough homes being built. The housing requirement would factor in land constraints and opportunities to more effectively use land, including through densification where appropriate, to ensure that the land is identified in the most appropriate areas and housing targets are met"

Updated standard method for calculating housing need using the size of existing settlements and adjustments for affordability and land constraints, with the output binding on the Local Authority. Scrapping of the Five-Year Housing Land Supply but retention of the Housing Delivery Test.

5 "Areas identified as Growth areas (suitable for substantial development) would automatically be granted outline planning permission for the principle of development, while automatic approvals would also be available for pre-established development types in other areas suitable for building" Outline planning permission granted for Growth areas on adoption of the Local Plan, with the presumption in favour of development established on Renewal areas. Planning applications for development can still be made on Protected areas and these will be assessed using the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework.

6 "Decision-making should be faster and more certain, with firm deadlines, and make greater use of digital technology" More streamlined and digitally enabled end to end process which is proportionate to the scale and nature of the development proposed, to ensure decisions are made faster. Incentive to determine planning applications within statutory timescales, including automatic rebate of planning fees to the applicant if timescales are not adhered to.

7 "Local Plans should be visual and map-based, standardised, based on the latest digital technology, and supported by a new template" Interactive, map-based Local Plans supported by a new template.

8 "Local authorities and the Planning Inspectorate will be required through legislation to meet a statutory timetable for key stages of the process, and we will consider what sanctions there would be for those who fail to do so" Statutory 30-month Local Plan timetable, with Local Plans to be reviewed at least every five years. Transition period for Local Plans adopted within the last three years or at Examination once measures are formally introduced through legislation.

9 "Neighbourhood Plans should be retained as an important means of community input, and we will support communities to make better use of digital tools" Retention of Neighbourhood Planning but refocused in line with proposed changes to Local Plan content.

10 "A stronger emphasis on build out through planning" Clear direction in the revised National Planning Policy Framework that the masterplans and design codes for sites prepared for substantial development should seek to include a variety of development types by different builders which allow more phases to come forward together.

Pillar 2: Planning for Beautiful and Sustainable Places

11 "To make design expectations more visual and predictable, we will expect design guidance and codes to be prepared locally with community involvement, and ensure that codes are more binding on decisions about development" Preparation of local design guides and codes brought forward in a number of ways: by local planning authorities to supplement and add a visual dimension to their Local Plans; through the work of Neighbourhood Planning groups; or by applicants in bringing forward proposals for significant new areas of development.

12 "To support the transition to a planning system which is more visual and rooted in local preferences and character, we will set up a body to support the delivery of provably locally-popular design codes, and propose that each authority should have a chief officer for design and place-making" New expert body which can help authorities make effective use of design guidance and codes, as well as performing a wider monitoring and challenge role for the sector in building better places, with suggestion that each Local Authority has a chief officer for design and place-making

13 "To further embed national leadership on delivering better places, we will consider how Homes England's strategic objectives can give greater emphasis to delivering beautiful

places" Government engagement with Homes England to encourage better design quality in their land disposals programme.

14 "We intend to introduce a fast-track for beauty through changes to national policy and legislation, to incentivise and accelerate high quality development which reflects local character and preferences" Revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework to make it clear where schemes comply with local design codes or guides there is greater certainty that they will be swiftly approved, along with conditions on Growth areas outline planning permissions to require design codes / masterplans, in addition to changing the nature and increasing permitted development rights.

15 "We intend to amend the National Planning Policy Framework to ensure that it targets those areas where a reformed planning system can most effectively play a role in mitigating and adapting to climate change and maximising environmental benefits" Be clear about the role that local, spatially-specific policies can continue to play, such as in identifying important views, opportunities to improve public access or places where renewable energy or woodland and forestry creation could be accommodated, whilst also ensuring the revised National Planning Policy Framework provides a clear and robust basis for development management decisions more generally, so that reliance no longer needs to be placed on generic policies contained in Local Plans.

16 "We intend to design a quicker, simpler framework for assessing environmental impacts and enhancement opportunities, that speeds up the process while protecting and enhancing the most valuable and important habitats and species in England" Streamline existing frameworks to ensure environmental considerations are considered properly as part of the planning and development process, whilst also taking the opportunity to strengthen protections that make the biggest difference to species, habitats and ecosystems of national importance, and that matter the most to local communities.

17 "Conserving and enhancing our historic buildings and areas in the 21st century" Review and update the planning framework for listed buildings and conservation areas, to ensure their significance is conserved while allowing, where appropriate, sympathetic changes to support their continued use and address climate change. Also explore whether there are new and better ways of securing consent for routine works, to enable local planning authorities to concentrate on conserving and enhancing the most important historic buildings.

18 "To complement our planning reforms, we will facilitate ambitious improvements in the energy efficiency standards for buildings to help deliver our world-leading commitment to net-zero by 2050" Review the roadmap to the Future Homes Standard to ensure that implementation takes place to the shortest possible timeline, with an ambition that homes built under the new planning system will not need retrofitting in the future. Pillar 3: Planning for Development

19 "The Community Infrastructure Levy should be reformed to be charged as a fixed proportion of the development value above a threshold, with a mandatory nationally-set rate or rates and the current system of planning obligations abolished" Current system of planning obligations under Section 106 consolidated under a reformed, extended 'Infrastructure Levy'; this would be based upon a flat-rate, valued-based charge, set nationally, at either a single rate or at area-specific rates.

20 "The scope of the Infrastructure Levy could be extended to capture changes of use through permitted development rights" Scope of the Infrastructure Levy would be extended to better capture changes of use which require planning permission, even where there is no additional floorspace, and for some permitted development rights including office to residential conversions and new demolition and rebuild permitted development rights.

21 "The reformed Infrastructure Levy should deliver affordable housing provision" With Section 106 planning obligations proposed to be removed, under the Infrastructure Levy authorities would be able to use funds raised through the levy to secure affordable housing.

22 "More freedom could be given to local authorities over how they spend the Infrastructure Levy" Scope for more flexibility around spending, including allowing Local Authorities to spend receipts on their policy priorities once core infrastructure obligations have been met. In addition to the provision of local infrastructure, including parks, open spaces, street trees and delivery or enhancement of community facilities, this could include improving services or reducing council tax.

23 "As we develop our final proposals for this new planning system, we will develop a comprehensive resources and skills strategy for the planning sector to support the implementation of our reforms" Development of resources and skills strategy including consideration of how the planning system is funded and performance monitoring.

24 "We will seek to strengthen enforcement powers and sanctions" Review and strengthening of the existing planning enforcement powers and sanctions available to Local Authorities to ensure they support the new planning system, including the introduction of more powers to address intentional unauthorised development, consideration of higher fines, and looking into ways of supporting more enforcement activity. "

External Audit – "data logged – notification of exempt status

1 September

WO0018: Receipt of documents – notification of exempt status, 2020

This is an automated message to notify you that we have received and logged the notification of exempt status for the year ended 31 March 2020 submitted to us for Birlingham Parish Council. By notifying us that Birlingham Parish Council has claimed exemption there is no review to be performed and consequently no auditor certificate and report, or any other closure documentation, will be issued by us for this reporting year.

If you did not submit your notification of exemption by the specified submission deadline and were sent chasing letter(s), you will receive an invoice for those chaser charges calculated in accordance with the fee scales set by Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments Limited which are available to view at http://www.localaudits.co.uk/fees.html.

Unless we receive any correspondence from local electors during the period for the exercise for public rights that requires us to contact you, you will not hear from us again, except to chase any outstanding fees, until the planning for the 2020/21 review year gets underway.

Kind regards, SBA Team For and on behalf of PKF Littlejohn LLP

Cotswold AONB new name – Cotswolds National Landscape

As an active welcome to the findings in Julian Glover's Landscapes Review published in 2019, from this week, we will now be known as the Cotswolds National Landscape. This is an exciting move for us and heralds the continuation of lots of hard work and fantastic projects to help conserve, enhance, enjoy, and share this beautiful area.

The background

The Landscapes Review proposed that National Parks and AONBs should be brought together, as "one family of national landscapes"; it suggested that the title 'AONB' should be replaced – with easier-to-understand 'National Landscape'; and it reminded us that our precious natural landscapes have always been, in part, meant to provide everybody the opportunity to connect with nature. Now, in the midst of a pandemic, it is clear that people cherish the great outdoors – and that it's for all of us to enjoy and look after.

Extracts of interest

Birlingham **News 225 – 22 July 2020**

In this issue we have several reports on matters discussed at last week's Parish Council meeting.

In this issue:

1. Mary Abberley
2. Cricket Returns After Lockdown Restrictions Relaxed, Saturday 25th July
3. Parish Council Report (15th July)
4. Report by Ron Davis, Wychavon District Councillor (Parish Council, 15th July)
5. Birlingham roads and highway issues (Parish Council, 15th July)

3. Parish Council Report (15th July)

Ian Yates writes:

Birlingham Parish Council held its meeting by videoconference at 7.00pm on Wednesday 15th July 2020. Attendees at the meeting discussed or presented the following:

- **Report by Adrian Hardman**, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member Responsible for Social Care Worcester County Council – see www.birlingham.org/pc_info/pc_2020-07-15_wdc.pdf.

- **Report by Ron Davis**, Wychavon District Councillor, Eckington Ward – see item 4 below.

- **Birlingham roads and highway issues** – see item 5 below.

- **Gate across Berwick Lane**. Several residents contacted the Parish Council about a new gate that had been installed across Berwick Lane just south of Greenfields. The gate had been erected by Smith's Industries Fisherman to stop vehicular access to the car park lower down the lane, due to a number of incidents of antisocial behaviour and fly tipping. It was thought that the public highway ended at this new gate as, after that point, the lane is not publicly maintained. However, Worcestershire County Council, having consulted their records which showed the public highway extends to the bridge at Berwick Brook, asked that the gate be relocated until discussions regarding powers to limit antisocial behaviour are concluded. It should be noted that the existing pedestrian and mobility users' right of way to the footpath to Nafford Lock is unaffected.

- **SmartWater**. Councillor Paula Aston has been working on the provision of SmartWater for households in Birlingham to deter theft. The Parish Council has decided to fund the provision of SmartWater so that it is *free* to all Birlingham residents. The SmartWater kits have now been secured and funding arranged. Residents will shortly receive a letter asking them to register to receive their kits.

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

- **Millennium Bench**. Councillor Maxine Cook has now obtained three quotes for the work required to level a part of the village green and repair and reinstall the bench. The Parish

Council approved one of the quotes and the work will start shortly, as soon as the New Homes Bonus funding that has already been approved is released. Some 'crown lift' trimming of the lowest branches of the plane tree may be required and approval will be sought from the authorities.

- **Churchyard maintenance**. At the Parish Council meeting in May the Clerk received a request for funding to pay for churchyard maintenance. As reported at the time it was agreed that funding would be sought from the Friends of St James'. This funding has now been agreed.

Full minutes of the Parish Council meeting will be posted on the village website shortly.

4. Report by Ron Davis, Wychavon District Councillor (Parish Council, 15th July)

Ian Yates writes:

At the Parish Council meeting, Ron Davis reported:

- There are only three patients in hospital with COVID-19: two at the Alex in Redditch, one at Worcester Royal.

- Wychavon DC have paid out £1.35M (of the £1.4M budget) to support Wychavon businesses through the crisis. Wychavon staff have been working 24/7 to achieve this in such a short timeframe.

- Birlingham Village Hall have received a grant of £10,000.

- Wychavon co-ordinated food deliveries to those vulnerable people self-isolating will stop from 1st August.

- Jack Hegarty, Wychavon Managing Director, retires at the end of July and a new CEO will be appointed.

- Ron Davis has been contacted by a resident concerned about traffic on New Barn Road/Church Lane. The Parish Council were also contacted. Tree branches have been damaged by agricultural or high-sided vehicles when passing other cars on the single-track road. The concern has been noted and the resident will monitor the situation.

5. Birlingham roads and highway issues (Parish Council, 15th July)

Ian Yates writes:

The Parish Council raised a number of concerns with Councillor Adrian Hardman:

- Broadway Road at Lower End is now in a poor state of repair with many potholes and so needs resurfacing.

- Multiple incidents of flooding on the A4104 at the top of Tiddesley Bank on the bend near Lower Farm caused significant disruption and danger to traffic during the winter.

- Potholes on New Barn Road that have previously been filled have opened up again as tarmac was not cut in and sealed properly.

- Water has started to run out of the bank again at the top of Berwick Lane. The drains were cleared last year and this stopped it for a while but it will become an issue again once temperatures fall.

It was agreed that Councillor Hardman would arrange a visit to Birlingham to discuss an action plan.

Birlingham **News 226 – 29 July 2020**

As normality returns very slowly, we have the latest results from the Village Hall 100 Club and some new planning applications.

In this issue:

1. BVH 100 Club Winners
2. Planning Applications

2. Planning Applications

The following planning application has been determined by Wychavon District Council:

- Stable Cottage, Upper End: Internal modifications. Conversion and incorporation of attached barn as kitchen. Two storey rear extension. (Case No.20/00975). **Approved**. Full details and conditions can be viewed on the Wychavon DC website.

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

- Hills Cottage, Upper End: Construction of a garage by the enclosure of a bay within an existing car part. Change of use of a piece of land from agricultural use to domestic use (Case No. 20/01442, Listed Building Case No. 20/01443). Awaiting decision by Wychavon District Council. (Consultation period ends on 20th August.)

- Swan Inn, Church Street. Construction of single storey partially open-sided external seating area (retrospective) (Case No. 20/01451). Awaiting decision by Wychavon District Council. (Consultation period ends on 20th August).

Birlingham **News 227 – 12 August**

The free SmartWater project is now under way but more people need to sign up for it to be viable – see below.

In this issue:

1. VJ Day, Saturday 15th August
2. St James' Church Update
3. SmartWater Update
4. Crowdfund Worcestershire Funding Opportunity
5. Bystander Archives on the Village Website

3. SmartWater Update

Paula Aston writes:

You will all have received information regarding the offer of FREE SmartWater funded by the Parish Council and County Council via the Bystander delivered last week.

I have received around 30 responses but we still need more properties to respond, so if you are interested please let me know either by email at paston1976@gmail.com or by returning the slip to Hills Cottage by Monday 31st August.

If you would like any further information, please let me know.

4. Crowdfund Worcestershire Funding Opportunity

Crowdfund Worcestershire has been launched by Worcestershire County Council to help local organisations gain funding through the Spacehive crowdfunding platform.

Worcestershire County Council has a funding pot of £85,000 available through Crowdfund Worcestershire to support organisations in their bid to help in the county's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, https://www.spacehive.com/movement/worcs/supporters.

This is an opportunity for organisations that have project ideas, which need financial backing, to create a project on Spacehive and pitch for a pledge via the Crowdfund Worcestershire platform by Wednesday 30th September, clearly outlining how they may be able to help maintain progress in these five key areas:

- Food Poverty – predominately focused on families
- Social isolation/befriending – looking at virtual community connections or adapted schemes that comply with social distancing
- Return to work – helping people prepare for a return to work or helping them into work
- Maintaining our volunteering offer – helping to create a legacy of community and volunteer action post COVID-19
- Healthy Communities – activities to improve the health and wellbeing of the local community

Projects may also qualify for pledges from the County Councillor's Divisional Fund.

If you would like to find out how you can create a project and access funding please register for the FREE on-line events taking place on Thursday 13th August or Thursday 4th September by visiting https://www.spacehive.com/movement/worcs/news (Project Creator Workshop) and click on BOOK A PLACE.

Birlingham **News 228 – 16 September**

With the Flower & Produce Show cancelled and most other activities still on hold, September looks like being a quiet month.

In this issue:

1. Birlingham IW
2. St James' Church Update
3. Cuppa & Chat Update
4. Kayak – Free to Good Home

Birlingham **News 229 – 9 September**

The Parish Council's third virtual meeting takes place next Wednesday and we have news from the church and Birlingham Village Hall.

In this issue:

1. Service at St James' Church, Sunday 13th September

2. Parish Council Meeting, Wednesday 16th September
3. Birlingham Village Hall Committee Vacancies
4. Birlingham Village Hall 100 Club
5. Bystander Archives on the Village Website

2. Parish Council Meeting, Wednesday 16th September

The next meeting of Birlingham Parish Council takes place on Wednesday 16th September at 7.00pm. Due to the current restrictions, this will be a virtual meeting, held using videoconferencing. Parishioners are invited to attend (but should contact the Clerk at birlingham_clerk@yahoo.co.uk in advance for an invitation).

Items for discussion during the Democratic Opening should be submitted to the Clerk in advance of the meeting. Note that any member of the public can ask for an issue to be debated, even if they are unable to attend the videoconference.